Barnes - Thanksgiving sermon

14

THANKSGIVING SERMON.

THE

VIRTUES AND PUBLIC SERVICES

OF

WILLIAM PENN:

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA,
NOVEMBER 27, 1845,

BY ALBERT BARNES.

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Eastern District of Pennsylvania, to wit :—Be it remembered, that on the twenty-fourth day of December, Anno Domini, one thousand eight hundred and forty-five, William Sloanaker, of the said District, hath deposited in this office the title of a book, the title of which is in the words following, to wit :—"Thanksgiving Sermon, the Virtues and Public Services of William Penn: a Discourse, delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, Nov. 27, 1845, by Albert Barnes. Published by request." The right wherof he claims as proprietor, in conformity with an act of Congress, entitled "An act to amend the several acts respecting Copy-rights."

FRA. HOPKINSON, Clk. of the Dist.

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SERMON.

PSALM CV; 1—15. O give thanks unto the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him; sing pslams unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works; glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord. Seek the Lord and his strength: seek his face evermore. Remember his marvellous works that he hath done; his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth; O, ye seed of Abraham his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen. He is the Lord our God: his judgments are in all the earth. He hath remembered his covenant for ever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations: which covenant he made unto Abraham, and his oath unto Isaac; and confirmed the same unto Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant: saying, Unto thee will I give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance; when they were but a few men in number; yea, very few, and strangers in it; when they went from one nation to another, from one kingdom to another people; he suffered no man to do them wrong: yea, he reproved kings for their sakes; saying, Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.

IT is the duty of a people to celebrate, in a proper manner, the virtues of their ancestors, and to render praise to God for his goodness to them. It is a duty to cherish the memory of the Founders of a Commonwealth—to enquire by what principles they were actuated; to ask how far the designs which they had in view have been carried out; to dwell with grateful interest on any sacrifices which they may have made in order that we might enjoy the privileges which we now have; and, if they had any principles of peculiar value, and in advance of their age, to enquire whether we have been faithful in maintaining them, and are honestly transmitting them to future generations.

There is obviously no more appropriate occasion for the performance of this duty, than on a day designated as a season of public thanksgiving;—a day when, in connexion with appropriate religious services, we naturally turn our thoughts on those things, for which, as a people, we have peculiar cause of gratitude. Whatever there is in our climate or soil—our civil and religious institutions—our systems of education—our prosperity in agriculture, arts, and commerce—our peace with the nations

of the earth, and our public or private virtues—all alike the gift of God;—and whatever there has been in the dealings of God with our fathers—in the Divine interposition in their behalf in times of peril—that is suitable to lay the foundation of *praise*, is appropriate to the meditations of such a day.

Two years since, on the day designated by the Governor of this Commonwealth, as a day of Thanksgiving, I delivered a discourse on the influence of the *Puritan* character in moulding our institutions. It occurred to me that it would be a suitable theme to excite gratitude to God, to go back to the early periods of our history, and to recall the memory of those who laid the foundations of the Republic. I thought that it might be useful, also, to enquire into the principles which they held, and the influence of those principles in making us what we are. I thought it would be of use to enquire what elements had gone into our civil and political institutions, and what duties devolve on us as their descendants, to carry out the principles which were laid at the foundation of the Republic. I intimated then my purpose, if my life should be spared, and another such occasion should offer, to direct your attention to the early settlement of the Commonwealth where God has cast our lots, presuming that enough might be found here to lay a claim to our gratitude, and to impress upon our minds some valuable lessons. I purposed, also, should similar occasions occur, to extend these enquiries to the character and influence of the other colonists that early peopled our land.

No other country has been settled in the same manner as ours. No other people can look back to such ancestors as we have had. Between the character of the colonies that went out from Phenicia to people the maritime coasts of the Mediterranean; those which went out from Greece to people Ionia, and those which came to our shores, there is the most marked difference. Between the character which the ancestors of the Romans had when their Republic was founded; which the Germans had, as described by Tacitus; which the Britons had in the times of the Druids, and before the days of Alfred; which France had in the Gallic race, as portrayed by Cæsar; and which the Russians had before Peter the Great aimed to diffuse over the multitudinous hordes under

his sceptre, the traits of semi-civilization, and that of our own ancestors, there is the widest conceivable difference. And between the manner in which Mexico, Peru and Brazil, and that in which Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Virginia were settled, there was a difference as great as there is now in the character of these nations and republics. We can never understand the causes of their difference, till we understand the characters and views of their founders.

With these objects in view, I propose to dwell on the early settlement of this Commonwealth. I shall first advert to some of the historical circumstances which gave rise to the denomination of Friends or Quakers, and to the settlement of this Commonwealth by them; and shall then enquire into the bearing of the principles held by Penn and his associates on the institutions of our country.

I need hardly pause to say, that in seeking occasion for gratitude in the character and services of the Founders of the Republic, it is not to be understood that every thing in their character or views is to be approved, or that all the principles which they held are to be regarded as correct. There were doubtless some things to be lamented in the character of the "Pilgrims," and in the severe statutes which they enacted. Time would have mellowed some of their principles, and in other circumstances they would have been, in important respects, different from what they were. So, if I speak of the Friends to-day, in the language of commendation, as the Founders of this Commonwealth, and so, if, hereafter, I should have occasion to speak of the Roman Catholics in Maryland, and of the early settlers in Virginia, and of the Huguenots in the Carolinas, with the same desire to learn what valuable elements have gone into our institutions, it is not to be inferred that no defects or errors can be seen in the character or principles of either, or that they held the best kind of religion. Differing, as most of us do, in many important respects, from the views entertained by the Founders of Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, we need not be blind to their virtues, or withhold a tribute for what was truly noble and good.

The settlement of this Commonwealth, I need not inform you,

was under the auspices of William Penn, a leading mind in the denomination of Friends. This denomination of people sprung out of the great Puritan "cauldron;"* the effervescence and agitations of the times of the first and second Charles, and of the English "Commonwealth."

Some leading and important questions occur in regard to the occasion which gave occasion to the settlement of this Commonwealth. What gave rise to that denomination? What principles did they hold that could be regarded as an *advance* on those which were before held, and which were to contribute to the progress of society towards the point which it will ultimately reach? And what were the circumstances which led Penn and his associates to seek a place in the Western world where those principles might be developed?

It may be regarded as almost universally true, that every sect in philosophy and religion is raised up under Divine Providence, for the accomplishment of some important purpose. Some error or evil has been suffered long to exist, which it is of importance to remove; or it is desirable that some valuable principle in morals, philosophy, or religion, should be wrought out and established, and the sect is raised up to remove the evil, or to establish the new principle. That done, it often occurs that, having accomplished its work, the sect ceases to be needful in the progress of society; loses its vigor and vitality; and sinks away ultimately into the great mass, or is superceded by another still more in advance in the progress of society. Associations of men are thus like individuals. A period occurs in the progress of society when it is important that some great truth should be struck out, or some happy invention originated, that shall contribute to the permanent progress of the race. Some man, of richly endowed genius, is raised up, who is to give birth to the single great principle that is to immortalize his name and his times, and then, his name entrusted to society, ever to be accompanied with the honor of being associated with that truth or invention, he, having done his portion of service to the world, sinks into the grave. So Copernicus suggested the system

* Tyson.

of astronomy which bears his name; so Galileo invented the telescope; so Columbus discovered a new world; so Laurentius of Harlaem invented the art of printing; so Fulton applied steam to navigation; so Whitney invented the cotton gin, and so the magnetic telegraph is given to the world, and marks a new step in the progress of the world. When this is done, the great truth or invention takes its place, marking the permanent advance of society; and, united with the others previously established, contributes to bear society forward to the high condition which it is yet to occupy. The fame of the individual, or the association may be permanent; but the one shall be himself in the grave, and the other, dissolved, shall go into the history of extinct philosophical and religious sects or denominations.

Thus it happens, too, that some great *evil* shall have been suffered long in the world. Society had too little strength to allow of its sudden and violent disruption. It was bound to the living mass by so many cords and affiliations, that it was necessary to suffer it to remain long, until society should have a firmer growth, and could bear the process of removal. It was too much interwoven in the interests, the passions, and the affections of men; it had too much strength from its long growth; it enlisted too much public sympathy; it was connected too much with property; or too many of the great and the good were found indulging in it, to permit a violent rupture to be made, and all that could be done was to tolerate it. The polygamy was tolerated among the patriarchs, and slavery among the Hebrews, and war, with its evils, under all former dispensations, not because they were not evils, but because the world was not far enough advanced to permit their removal. The time would come, however, when society would have made progress enough, and would possess established principles enough to permit their removal, and then God would raise up some prophet, or association, or mighty man, to bring the evil to an end.

More of both these kinds of work was done about the period when the Society of Friends had its origin, than had ever been done before, and especially in regard to the *principles* which were to go into the permanent structure of civil society; and the Friends

were raised up to perform their share in the work, and to strike out some principles which were to contribute to the permanent advancement of mankind. It was an age of agitation, and ferment, and discussion. The art of printing had been discovered. The Reformation—that great modern advance in the progress of society—had been effected. Men had began to breathe freely after the long incubus of the dark ages. It was a time when men began to inquire what constitutes liberty; what is the authority of conscience; what are the rights of kings; what are the rights of the lower classes of people. This was the age in which, whatever there is of liberty in the British constitution was originated; and in such times as those in which Pym, and Hampden, and Milton lived, it could not be but that society should make progress. They set themselves to the work of looking at the true nature of liberty, and the rights of conscience, and the just principles of government. They enquired what *evils* had remained attached to the state, which ought to be removed. They asked what new principles could be applied to promote the progress of mankind. They resolved to *detach* all these evils from the state; to put society on a new basis; to incorporate a class of new and mighty principles of liberty in the British constitution. It resulted from the nature of the case, that there should be commotion. The head of Charles fell; and the government was overturned; and the Protectorate was established; and the mighty arm of Cromwell ruled the political elements; and the working of the new principles at once made England more feared and honored abroad than she had ever been before. It is true, there was disorder, and true that the state of things in the Protectorate could not always continue. British society was not ripe for it. But there was progress made. Principles of liberty were originated, of which the world was never to lose its hold again, and which were henceforward to go into the permanent fixtures of society. From that point the world was not to go back. The great principles which came out of the agitation that began before the time of James, were to go permanently into the British constitution; were to be embedded in the Puritan mind; were to accompany

them to Holland, to Plymouth, and to Jamestown; and were ultimately to spread all over this land, and over the world.

It was during the effervescence consequent on these discussions, that the Quakers had their origin. There were great questions which were agitated, and which were not settled, and which, in their turn, gave birth to others; and a portion of the agitated mass was concentrated under the auspices of George Fox, Robert Barclay, and William Penn, in the denomination of Friends. The equality of man; the evils of hereditary orders; the claims of conscience; the freedom of opinion; the toleration of religion; the nature of true liberty; the work of the Spirit; the evils of priestcraft, and of what James called "kingcraft," were great points which were as yet unsettled, and which gave rise to the peculiarities of this denomination. There were evils of war and slavery, too, still in the world, which were entirely in conflict with many of the principles which *had been* settled, and against which God meant that, at some time, men should lift up their voice.

It was a most remarkable and happy circumstance, that the views of the Friends so soon found a convert, a representative, and an advocate in William Penn. Some such mind was needed to defend and illustrate these new principles, and to apply them on some broad field for the good of the race. England was not large enough, and was not ripe for the application of the principles that had grown out of these conflicts. Some broader territory was needed, where the whole of the Puritan principles that were to be permanent, could have expansion and play; and God had reserved this broad land through many generations of the world for this experiment. The application of the principles embraced by this portion of the great Anglo-Saxon family; the conducting of the experiment in this case, was entrusted by the Ruler of Nations, to William Penn. It would have been difficult to have found, among all the Anglo-Saxons of his time, a man better endowed by nature for this work, or one who had been so well disciplined for the performance of a great undertaking like this. "He was born to a competent estate, with the advantages of an honorable descent, and the highest political connexions in

England. The only son of Admiral Penn, who had added not a little to the naval glory of his country, he was carefully educated at the University of Oxford, and gave promise of an elevated and brilliant manhood." His contemporaries describe him as possessing "a striking countenance, a fine person, a manly and refined demeanor, a playful wit, an open and ever-joyous disposition."* "The son and grandson of naval officers, his thoughts had been, from boyhood, directed to the ocean; the conquest of Jamaica, by his father, had early familiarized his imagination with the New World; and, in Oxford, at the age of seventeen, he indulged in visions of happiness, of which America was the scene. Bred in the school of Independency, he had, while hardly twelve years old, learned to listen to the voice of God in the soul; and, at Oxford, where his excellent genius received the benefits of learning, the words of a Quaker preacher so touched his heart, that he was fined, and afterwards expelled for non-conformity. His father, bent on subduing his enthusiasm, beat him, and turned him into the street, to choose between poverty with a pure conscience, or fortune with obedience. But how could the hot anger of a petulant sailor continue against an only son? It was in the days of the glory of Descartes, that, to complete his education, William Penn received permission of his father to visit the Continent.

"From the excitements and the instruction of travel, for which the passion is sometimes stronger than love or ambition, the young exile turned aside to the cottage of Saumur, where under the guidance of the gifted and benevolent Amyrault, his mind was trained in the severities of Calvinism, as tempered by the spirit of universal love. In the next year, Penn, having crossed the Alps, was just entering on the magnificence of Piedmont, when the appointment of his father to the command of a British squadron, in the naval war with Holland, compelled his return to the care and the estates of his family. The discipline of society and travel had given him grace of manners, enhanced by the severe but unpretending purity of his morals; and in London the traveled student of Lincoln's Inn, if diligent in gaining a knowledge of

* Tyson's Address, p. 4.

English law, was yet esteemed a most modish fine gentleman. In France, the science of the Huguenots had nourished reflection; in London every sentiment of sympathy was excited by the horrors which he witnessed during the devastations of the plague. Having thus perfected his understanding by the learning of Oxford, the religion and the philosophy of the French Huguenots in France, and the study of the laws of England, in the bloom of youth, the career of wealth and preferment opened before him through the influence of his father and the ready favor of his sovereign."*

At this period (1666) he fully embraced the principles which he held in religion during the remainder of his life. For these principles, he was turned, penniless, out of doors; and was consigned to a long and close imprisonment in the tower, and again, after his return, was consigned to Newgate. Unable to find protection in England; deprived of what was esteemed as the rights of conscience; and suffering under the penal rigors of these who refused to comply with the established religion, Penn, like the Pilgrims before him, sought the enjoyment of religious rights and privileges, in this land, and "accepted a charter of Pennsylvania from Charles II. and invited the persecuted non-conformists, and such as were desirous of change, to accompany him hither, for the enjoyment of more benignant laws amid the solitudes of the trans-atlantic west."†

It is not my purpose to go into any farther historical details in regard to the settlement of this commonwealth, nor to dwell on the character of the civil institutions which Penn proposed to establish here. These things belong more appropriately to other places and other times. We have seen some of the causes which produced the settlement of this Commonwealth, and some of the events which led its eminent Founder to seek an asylum on these western shores. The remarks made will also, I trust, do something to enable you to appreciate the kind of influence which has gone into our institutions, and to understand what constituted the original elements, out of which what there is now peculiar in our country has grown.

* Bancroft, 11. 371 Seq. † Tyson, p. 11.

I proceed, therefore, as was proposed, to notice the bearing of the principles held by the Founder of this Commonwealth, and those who acted with him, on the institutions of our country. Under this head, I propose to notice the principles which he held in common with others of that age, which have gone into our institutions; and then some peculiar principles in which he was in advance of that age, or which contributed to the *progress* of society towards the point of perfection which we may hope it will ultimately reach; principles which are destined to take their place among the settled social maxims of mankind.

I. Under the first of these heads I notice the following things:

(1.) The sacred right of conscience, and the value of religious liberty. I am very willing to admit that Penn had some views on this subject which were in advance of those who came first to this country. Sixty years of conflict and of discussion on these points had done something to modify the views which had been entertained in 1620, on the enquiries raised by the general spirit of Puritanism; and at the period when he arrived here, his views were more large and liberal in many respects than were those of the earlier colonists. But still, there were substantially the *same* views in all the branches of that great Puritan family. By the Puritans that refused conformity in the days of Elizabeth, as well as by those who broke with the reigning power in the times of James, and of the first and second Charles, the great doctrine began to be held and understood that God alone is Lord of the conscience; that man is to be free in the formation of his opinions, and in the exercise of worship according to what he judges to be demanded by the word of God. This opinion they all held in opposition to that which gave origin to the Inquisition; to that which led to the scenes at Smithfield; to all the Acts of Uniformity; to all the sentiments of the Sharps and the Lauds of these times. It was the common sentiment of the Presbyterian, the Independent, and the Quaker; of the Pilgrims in Holland, and on the rock of Plymouth; and of Penn, when he laid the foundation of this city and commonwealth. No sentiment has gone deeper, or with more salutary influence, into the institutions of the Republic;—and to no other one do we owe so much in the

enjoyment of the peculiar blessings for which we should express thanksgiving to-day. In the expressive language which our fathers loved so much, " we may sit under our own vine and fig-tree, with none to molest us, or to make us afraid." We have *all* grown up under the influence of this opinion, that every man is to be left free to worship God according to his belief of what is right and true; that he is to be unmolested in this, provided he does not disturb the peace of the community; that he is to be allowed to investigate the subject of religion at pleasure, and to come to such results as he finds himself conducted, responsible only to God; that he is to be subject to no civil disabilities for his religious opinions; that for these opinions he is to be excluded from no office, and held up to no reproach by authority of law; and that he is to be required to submit to no external forms of religion as a qualification for any office whatever. To this great principle, we owe it, under God, more than to any other one thing, that we are this day what we are.

(2.) A second principle which Penn held in common with the others of that age—or a point which had heen reached, not by him alone, but by society in its onward progress, was the evil of *formalism* in religion; or the value of that religion only which does not depend on outward forms and ceremonies. Holding as I do, I cannot doubt that he pushed some of those points too far—farther than the Bible will warrant, and than society in its onward progress will sustain, and that the whole Christian world will yet unite in the belief that baptism and the Lord's supper are to be observed, and that there are advantages in stated and regular modes of devotion. But there was a great principle involved in the discussions of that age—a principle that was *worth* discussion; and though one portion may have taken positions which society in its onward progress will not sustain, yet still the principle will be adhered to. It was one that society in its progress *had come up to*, and from which it could not go back; and though it was true that the conflict might still be waged, and there might be zealous efforts to subject the race to a religion of forms, yet the world had come to feel the demand of a religion of intelligence; a religion that changed the affections, not the outer dress; that

bowed the will, and not the knee; and that consisted in internal purity, rather than in the whiteness of the lawn. This deep internal religion—the work of truth under the divine Spirit on the soul—affecting the conscience, the heart, the life, was what the world had come to see it needed; and though the earlier Puritans were reproached and ridiculed for it, as canting hypocrites, yet the Christian world had reached a period when this was demanded, and when all civil institutions were to take a new start from infusing this element into them.

These, and some kindred principles which had been reached in common by those who founded the institutions this side the waters, became elementary principles; and, with some modifications, were inwrought into all the prevailing views of religion and liberty in the new world. The right of conscience; a free religion; a religion of the heart and not a religion of forms; dependence on the principles of a voluntary religion to work out great results; a hatred of oppression and wrong; a dread of formalism; a religion of the Spirit, instead of a religion of mechanism; these things characterized our fathers; and these principles, flowing in the Anglo-Saxon blood—the noblest blood on the earth—have made us what we are; and more than our skies, our climate, our rivers, our fertile soil, have laid the foundation for the gratitude which, as a part of the great American people, we should feel this day.

II. But, I remarked that there were some views and principles held by Penn and his fellow-laborers, which were *in advance* of those which were commonly held in his age; which struck farther onward into the progress of the world, and which are destined to become permanent and fixed maxims in society in its advances towards that degree of perfection which it is yet to reach. The time will not permit me to go so fully into a statement of them as justice to the subject might seem to demand, but some of the points may be briefly referred to.

(1.) Among the first of these principles, were the views held by Penn on the subject of *toleration* in religion. All the Puritan family entertained *principles* which would have led to this, but it must be admitted that they had not been so fully wrought out and

developed among the first colonists that settled this country, as they were in the mind of Penn. It is also to be admitted that the same principle found a home in the heart of Lord Baltimore, and entered into the views which prevailed in the settlement of Maryland—from what cause, and with what degree of consistency with the religion which was held by Lord Baltimore, we may perhaps consider if there is another opportunity to preach a thanksgiving sermon. In the North, these principles, though recognized in the immortal paper drawn up on board the Mayflower, found their full development only in the time of Roger Williams, and the founding of Rhode Island. In our own state, they began with the beginning. The principle of the universal toleration of religious opinions was the corner-stone of the commonwealth. The word *toleration*, however, does not exactly express the full idea, since even *that* word implies that the magistrate has a right to some kind of jurisdiction in the case. The true expression is, *equality —liberty*—for the magistrate has no more right to tolerate *me* than I have *him*—since I am as free as he is, and neither of us have any jurisdiction whatever in the premises. The great and cardinal truth, for which we can never be too grateful to God, or cherish too profound a regard for the services of Penn, which was laid at the foundation of this commonwealth, was, *that every man has an inherent right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience.* This position he had defended in England; this he sought to make inviolable by positive law. He therefore at first *declared* it essential and fundamental; it was afterwards incorporated into the Great Law of 1682;* and finally became a part of the perpetual laws and the constitution of the Province. He came, to use his own language, to establish "a free colony for all mankind." "In an age which had seen a popular revolution shipwreck popular liberty among selfish factions; which had seen Hugh Peters and Henry Vane perish by the hangman's cord and the axe; in an age when Sydney nourished the pride of patriotism rather than the sentiment of philanthropy: when Russell stood for the liberties of his order, and not for new enfranchisements; when Harrington, and Shaftesbury, and Locke, thought

*Tyson, p. 12.

government should rest on property, Penn did not despair of humanity."* He resolved to set up a government which should cherish at once the idea of entire religious freedom, and of the ability of the people for self-government;—and came to make trial of his great experiment on the shores of the Delaware.

I need not say to you that this has been in our world a principle of slow growth. It was unknown in Greece—for Socrates died because it was not understood; it was unknown in Rome—for the state there claimed the power to recognize the gods which should be worshiped in the Pantheon; it was unknown even in Judea—for a national or state religion was established there; it was unknown in Europe in the middle ages—for all the horrors of the inquisition grew out of the fact that it was unknown; it is unknown in Turkey, and in China, and in Persia, and Arabia—for the state regards religion as under its auspices; it was unknown in England up to the days of the Puritans—for all the sufferings of the non-conformists, and all the persecutions in the time of Mary, were originated by the fact that this was unknown. The sentiment of entire freedom in religion; of perfect liberty to worship God according to our own views of right; of universal toleration, or rather of entire *equality* in this respect—for the word *tolerate* does not meet the idea; the belief that religion is to be kept separate from the state, and is safe when the state shall in no way attempt to regulate its movements—is the *last point* which society is to reach *in this direction*—THE ULTIMA THULE—in its progress. It is impossible to conceive that there is to be any thing *beyond* this which mankind are to desire in their progress toward perfectness—and when this shall be every where reached, the affairs of the world will be put on a new footing. Ten thousand evils will at once flee away, and universal praise ascend before God.

(2.) A second principle in which the Founder of this Commonwealth, and the denomination with which he acted, was in advance of his age—perhaps many generations in advance—was in regard to the evils and wrongs of war, and to the value of the blessings of peace. I will not say that *all* their sentiments on this subject were absolutely correct, nor will I say that a

* Bancroft, ii. 381, 382.

strictly defensive war is never right. But even in regard to those wars, so called, of *defence*, it might be found that there has been but a small portion of them that might not have been avoided if there had been no preparation for war in time of peace, and no holding forth those preparations in insulting language to "bully" other nations; if there had been no unjust provocations on their part; if there had been timely remonstrances and appeals to the reason, the conscience, and the sense of right of those who had injured them; if there had been a little longer patience under their provocations; if there had been more readiness on *their* part for patient negociation; and if there had been a willingness to rely on the mediation of friendly powers. It is even a great question which is not *yet* wrought out, whether the war of our own Revolution—which we are accustomed to regard as the most honorable of all wars—*might* not have been avoided, and the nation this day as independent and prosperous as now, if not a blow had been struck in return when we had been so much wronged. But, however this may be, no one can doubt that that community which settled this Commonwealth was immeasurably in advance of *that* age, and even of *this* age, in the principles which were held on war; and as little can it be doubted that society will yet in its progress *come up* to those principles, and that they will enter into the permanent maxims of the nations of the earth. No man that believes the Bible can doubt that the period is coming when the "sword shall be beat into a ploughshare, and the spear into a pruning-hook," and when "nations will learn war no more." And no man who takes a philosophic view of things, can fail to see that there are deep causes in operation now in society which will inevitably work out this result; that there are *principles* and *maxims* beginning to be universally admitted, which can never be fully expanded without putting an end to war.

There is no one subject on which men have been more wicked than in regard to war. There has been no one subject on which they have been, and are, more befooled. There is no one thing on which the sentiments of the world are more certainly destined to a change. There is no one thing on which so much reputation

has been gained, in reference to which the estimate of the world is to be reversed. There is no one thing in which praises are so certainly to be changed to execrations. There is no one thing in which the opinions which history records are so certainly destined to be set aside. There is no one thing in which there is to be such a revolution in the whole nomenclature, as that which is to be applied to the names, *glory*, and *fame*, and *military renown*. The man who dies, or has died, or shall hereafter die, with only a *military reputation*, is destined either to be ultimately forgotten, or to be remembered with dishonor. The reputation which has been founded on legislative wisdom; on discoveries in the sciences, and inventions in the arts; on having evolved some new principle of liberty; on making an elementary spelling book, or a new geography, or arithmetic; on devising some plan for alleviating the miseries of the prisoner, and setting at liberty those who are bound, is to grow brighter and brighter by increasing years, till the full splendor of these collected lights shall constitute the glory of the earth's Millenium. The man that invented the Greek fire, or that taught to temper better the Damascus blade, or that found out a more destructive spear, or that first concentrated poison in which to dip his arrow of death, or that discovered gunpowder, or that invented the rifle or the Paixhan gun, it will be well for him that his name shall be forgotten in the advancing light of the world, or he will be remembered only with that immortal band of apostate angels, described by the great poet, to whom the most terrific portion of this invention is traced,

> "On war and mutual slaughter bent."
> ——"In a moment up they turned
> "Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
> "The originals of nature in their crude
> "Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
> "They found, they mingled, and, with subtile art,
> "Concocted and adjusted, they reduced
> "To blackest grain, and into store conveyed;"

the invention of

> ——"those deep-throated engines,
> "Disgorging foul
> "Their dev'lish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
> "Of iron globes."
>
> PAR. LOST. B. vi.

Who has ever told the evils, and the curses, and the crimes of

war? Who can describe the horrors of the carnage of battle? Who can portray the fiendish passions which reign there? Who can tell the amount of the treasures wasted, and of the blood that has flowed, and of the tears that have been shed over the slain? Who can register the crimes which war has originated and sustained? If there is any thing in which earth, more than in any other, resembles *hell*, it is in its *wars*. And who, with the heart of a man—of a lover of human happiness—of a hater of carnage and crime—can look but with pity; who can repress his *contempt* in looking on all the trappings of war—the tinsel, the nodding plumes, even the animating music—designed to cover over the reality of the contemplated murder of fathers, and husbands, and sons?

And yet *we*, a Christian people; brothers of Christian nations; associates with Christian people abroad in purposes of philanthropy, talk coolly of going again to war; and are ready to send forth our sons to fight, and kill, and die, on the slightest pretext of quarrel with a Christian nation—a nation with whom are all our fathers' sepulchres. We talk of it as a matter of cool arithmetic; as affecting the price of flour, and pork, and cotton; as a question of close calculation between the North and the South; as likely to affect stocks and securities; and hardly dare to lisp a word of the enormous *wrong* in the face of high heaven in arming ourselves to imbrue our hands in the blood of brothers. This day, amidst our thanksgivings, our prayers should go up to Heaven for peace—universal peace—that *we* may do right, and that *others* may do right, and that the blood of carnage may never again stain our soil, or be shed on the deck of a man-of-war. There have been wars enough in this land. If it were desirable to show that, as a nation, we *have* prowess, and *can* fight well, it has been done. Let it be enough for this, that we can point the nations, if we are called on to do it, to Lake Erie, and to the Ocean; to Bunker Hill, and Trenton, and Yorktown. That is enough in *our* military glory. We are called into being, as a nation, for higher and nobler ends; and it is our vocation—and especially the vocation of the people of this Commonwealth of Penn—to show to the world the blessings of the principles of peace. When the world's history shall all be written, let not the

first pages of our own story be blackened like those of Assyria and of Rome. Let there be so much light, and so much true glory evolved from the arts of peace, that the few dark spots which war has already made—for war always does it—may be covered over with the living splendor that shall have accumulated in a long career of true glory.

In illustration of these sentiments, and to show the power and efficacy of the principles of peace, I do not know that the world has furnished a better instance than occurred in the well-known event in the life of the Founder of this Commonwealth. Penn met a race of men here—the inhabitants of the forest—who had been regarded as bloody, and cruel, and unfaithful, and always disposed to war. With portions of that race there had been long and fierce conflicts, and every colony had been made to feel the cruelties of the tomahawk and the scalping knife. Penn was on principle opposed to war, and meant to live with all mankind on terms of peace. He came unarmed—with neither battle-axe, nor buckler, nor sword, nor shield, nor cannon. "We meet," said he to them, "on the broad pathway of good faith and good will; no advantage shall be taken on either side, but all shall be openness and love. I will not call you children, for parents sometimes chide their children too severely; nor brothers, for brothers differ. The friendship between me and you, I will not compare to a chain; for that the rains might rust, or the falling tree break. We are the same as if one man's body were divided into two parts; we are all one flesh and blood."

"The children of the forest were touched by the sacred doctrine," says the historian," and renounced their guile and their revenge. 'We will live,' said they, 'in love with William Penn and his children, as long as the moon and the sun shall endure.' "

The treaty of peace and friendship made between him and them under the old elm on the banks of the Delaware, was one of the most remarkable transactions in history; one of the finest conceivable triumphs of the spirit of peace; one of the most signal rebukes of the spirit of war, and of the necessity for war. "It was not confirmed by an oath; it was not ratified by signatures and seals; no written record of the conference can be found;

and its terms and conditions had no abiding monument but on the heart. There they were written like the law of God, and there they were never forgotten. The simple sons of the wilderness, returning to their wigwams, kept the history of the covenant by strings of wampum, and long afterwards, in their cabins, would count over the shells on a clean piece of bark, and recall to their own memory, and repeat to their children or the stranger, the words of William Penn. He had come without arms; he declared his purpose to abstain from violence; he had no message but peace; and not a drop of Quaker blood was ever shed by an Indian."* Who can tell how much the same spirit would have done to disarm all hostile tribes; and who can fail to see here a sublimer victory than was ever achieved on a field of blood, and brighter and more enduring laurels than were ever gained in the carnage of battle?

(3.) There was one other point on which the denomination to which Penn belonged have been in advance of their contemporaries, to which society is slow in coming up, but which it will ultimately reach. It is in regard to human rights—to the evils and wrongs of slavery. They have been the first to urge, and to act on, the great principles on this subject in which, beyond all question, the world is yet to unite. It is true that there were principles held by the whole Puritan family which were inconsistent with holding a fellow being in bondage when he had been guilty of no crime, and with supposing that there could be a right of property in men. It is true, also, that Penn himself, and his immediate associates, did not see the result to which their own principles would fairly conduct them on this subject, and that Penn himself "employed blacks without scruple, and he himself died a slaveholder."† But the following things are *also* true in regard to the denomination of Friends.

First, that they held principles which were at war with the system; which must of necessity soon open their eyes on its evils; and which must in the end detach them for ever from it. Penn himself soon saw the evils of slavery, though he did not provide a full remedy for them. His first public act in

* Bancroft, ii. 383. 384. † Bancroft, ii. 403.

regard to this subject, substituted, after fourteen years' service, the condition of adscripts to the soil, for that of slaves.* But in common with others at that time, he held principles which must either be abandoned, or slavery must be abolished. The rights of man; the rights of conscience; the right to the avails of labor; the hatred of oppression—sentiments with which the whole Puritan family were imbued, can never be reconciled with the system of slavery; and though Penn, and the Mathers, and President Stiles, and perhaps the elder Edwards, held slaves, yet they all held at the same time principles which were utterly at variance with the system; which have led to the extinction of slavery at the North, and which need only to be acted out to bring the system every where to an end.

Secondly, it is true that the Friends have been the first, as a body, to perceive the bearing of these principles, and to act on them. The history of emancipation among the Quakers, is an exceedingly interesting and instructive portion of the history of our country, and in the calm, and prudent, and persevering measures which they have adopted, is probably to be found the true way in which our country can be, and is to be, freed from this great evil. They have aimed at two things—and two only—both of them legitimate, both of them prudent and wise—*first* to remove slavery from their own body, and *then* to bear their solemn testimony, in regard to the evil, to the world. The first object was pursued year after year by patient and manly discussion, and by faithful and affectionate dealing with their brethren—not to *exclude* them but to *convince* them of the wrong—and the period at last arrived —a most triumphant period in the history of their body—when they could announce to the world that the evil of slavery was not attached to any portion of their denomination; when there was not a "Friend" who claimed a right of property in his fellow man. The other object they have as steadily pursued. They have borne, without ambiguity, and without hesitancy, and with nothing of a spirit of denunciation, their 'testimony' in regard to the evil of the system before the world. They offer no forced interference. They use no harsh words. They impugn no man's motives. They interfere with no rights protected by law. But they are a

* Bancroft, ii. 403.

plain-spoken people. They use intelligent language. They do not attempt to blink the subject, or to cover up the evil. They make no apology for slavery; they never speak of it as right; they never speak of it as sanctioned by the Bible; they never even speak of the difficulty of emancipation; they use no metaphysical distinctions on the question whether it is a moral or a political or a social wrong, or on the question whether it is in all cases a sin. They leave the impression that *they* regard it as a wrong in every sense of the word, and that they themselves deemed it *so great* a wrong that they were willing to make great sacrifices that their own denomination might be freed from it totally and forever; and they leave this solemn testimony to go forth to the world for what it is worth.

Now here, I am persuaded, is a wise model for all other denominations of Christian men, and the true idea of all successful efforts for the removal of this great evil from the land. Let all the evangelical denominations but follow the simple example of the Quakers in this country, and slavery would soon come to an end. There is not vital energy enough; there is not power of numbers and influence enough out of the church, to sustain it. Let every religious denomination in the land *detach itself* from all connection with slavery, without saying a word against others; let the time come when in all the mighty denominations of Christians, it can be announced that the evil has ceased *with them* FOR EVER; and let the voice from each denomination be lifted up in kind, but firm and solemn testimony against the system—with no "mealy" words; with no attempt at apology; with no wish to blink it; with no effort to throw the sacred shield of religion over so great an evil, and the work is done. There is no public sentiment in this land—there could be none created, that would resist the power of such a testimony; there is no power *out* of the church that could sustain slavery an hour if it were not sustained *in* it. Not a blow need be struck. Not an unkind word need be uttered. No man's motive need be impugned. No man's proper rights invaded. All that is needful is, for each Christian man, and for each Christian people, to stand up in the sacred majesty

of such a solemn testimony; to free themselves from all connection with the evil, and utter a calm and deliberate voice to the world, and the work will be done.

We have much this day, and the subject requires me to say this in connection with our residence in this Commonwealth, for which to render praise to God. Our benignant climate; our teeming soil; our agricultural and mineral wealth; our pleasant abode in this city of Penn—a city which he said, in its situation, was "not surpassed by one among all the many places he had seen in the world," and he had seen the cities of Europe from Bremen to Turin*—a city where the productions of all lands are laid at our feet; our public schools; our peace, and health, and opportunities for doing good; our holy religion—diffusing innumerable blessings over us pertaining to this life, and imparting the hope of the life to come—all these lay the foundation for gratitude and praise. "The lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage." But among the mercies which this day appeal to our hearts, not the least cause for thanksgiving is found in the fact that this is a Commonwealth of freedom —that in this large, and rich, and beautiful domain, the soil is not cursed with the foot-tread of slavery; and that in all our borders, there is no one who can be deprived of the avails of his labor, or be held as property, or be sold as a slave. There is no one here who is now a slave. There is no one born, or to be born, who is ever to be. No one can be sold; no one can be willed away; no one can be separated from wife, and children, and home but for crime, or by God when he summons man to another sphere of existence. O, that it were thus to-day in all our land; and that all over this nation there might be to-day such a jubilee of praise as may go up from the hearts of the people in the Commonwealth which owes so much to the political sagacity, the public beneficence, and the private virtues of William Penn.

Bancroft, ii. 389.