

# The Duty of Nations

by

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IN HIS DAYS SHALL THE RIGHTEOUS FLOURISH.

ALL NATIONS SHALL SERVE HIM.

*PSALMS.*

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Aspice, venturo laetentur ut omnia saeclo.—*VIRGIL.*

Quaeramus quid optime factum sit, non quid usitatissimum.—*SENECA.*

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Ballston-Spa:  
Brown and Miller  
1810.

Correct morals are necessary to public as well as private happiness. To discover the path of rectitude between the trampers on human rights, and those who exalt them to the exclusion of the rights of Deity, is as important as it is desirable.

To guard those committed to his pastoral care, especially the rising generation, for whom he has a peculiar concern, against the contagion of licentious and tyrannical principles, in politics, and to direct their attention to the religion of the Saviour of men, not only for bliss hereafter; but for felicity here, were principal inducements to the author, to prepare and preach the following discourse. The same motives, chiefly, influence him to commit it, through the medium of the press, to the public eye; for requests of hearers, as in most such cases, might have been set aside. Whether his feeble attempts shall, as a mean, contribute in any degree to the accomplishment of these ends is not for him to say.

A multiplicity of pastoral duties forbids due attention to correctness, which renders it probable that inaccuracies may be found; but it is now too late to apologize.

No claims are pretended to novelty. Truth though ancient and often exhibited

is, on these accounts, neither less amiable nor less important.

G[ilbert]  
M[cMaster]

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*THE DUTY OF NATIONS.*

PSALM 97:1

*The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of the isles be glad therof.*

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When the system of Created Nature was formed, God declared it to be very good. The omniscient eye of the all wise Creator could discover no defect, in the order established, throughout the wide extent of the works of his hands. The sun, in all his splendor, through the day, rolled along the heavens. The moon in all her nocturnal majesty, attended with the unnumbered hosts of stars, illumined the shadows of the night. The sons of the forest raised high their towering heads; every plain was robed in green and decorated with the blooming flowers, while Eden's garden, full of "Ambrosial fruits," presented plenty to supply the wants of man.

Man was innocent and happy. On his soul was delineated and deeply impressed the image of his God. He enjoyed the smiles of heaven. Over the inferior tribes of nature he swayed the sceptre of a gentle rule subordinate to the will of his Maker, to whom he paid a voluntary homage. God then reigned and the earth was glad.

In an evil hour, alas! from this state of innocence and peace, were our first parents seduced. Satan, lately apostatized from God, persuaded them to form an alliance with him against the Almighty. Inexperienced man, too credulous to the flattering tale of his more cunning foe, complied. Order was then violated, and confusion appeared among the works of God. The earth became, by usurpation, the empire of the prince of the power of the air, man was his slave, and the friendly presence of God was withdrawn from the scene. Clouds of guilt, pregnant with vengeance obscured the face of day, and the thunders

of wrath rolled in tremendous peals along the sky. The foundations of the earth were shaken, and all its joints were ready to desolve. Disorder reigned.

The penalty of the broken covenant presents to us this gloomy scene. The truth of this representation is confirmed, when we behold man in haste, and with trembling horror, fleeing from the face of God, the language of which was, *thy wrath maketh me afraid*.

The gospel exhibits a more delightful prospect. It presents to us one, who grasps the trembling pillars of our world, and gives them stability.[1] A crown of glory is placed on his head, and in his hand a sceptre of government, which he wields over the rebel tribes, thereby bringing them to subjection. *He must reign, til he hath put all his enemies under his feet.*[2]

The clouds disperse, the thunders cease—The sun shines forth with genial beams, and all the hosts of creation, here below, wear a smile. The heavens are called upon to rejoice—the earth, wasted with tempests, is again clad in verdant attire, and is invited to be glad. The fields are commanded to be joyful, and the trees of the wood to sing. United with the whole, the ocean with a hoarse but solemn voice, celebrates the glory of the charge.[3] A new order is introduced. The wolf dwells with the lamb, and the leopard lies down with the kid &c.[4] Earth receives her Lord, "from the bending skies." Peace prevails. Messiah reigns.

Jehovah, who is here declared to reign, can be no other than Jesus our Mediator. His government must be that, with which he is invested, as the reward of his obedience; for otherwise he occupies the place of an absolute God, and consequently must appear a consuming fire, to the inhabitants of the earth. In him as their destroyer they could not rejoice. Our text is a prophecy of the exaltation of the Redeemer of men, and its happy effects to the sons of Adam. It describes those times, when *he shall judge among the nations, and when, they shall beat their swords into plough-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more*. Without detaining, further to explain these words, it is presumed that from the, may be stated, for discussion, the following proposition.

The government of the exalted Messiah, is a ground of national joy.

To illustrate this subject, I shall answer the following queries: What is the extent of that empire which Messiah rules? Why should the nations rejoice in his government? How should their joy be expressed? What considerations

may be offered to induce nations, *thus* to express their joy? What exceptions may be made against these doctrines, and how may they be obviated? This, Christians, is the plan of my discourse.

But before I enter on the prosecution of this plan, permit me to silence the impertinent voice of that clamorous prejudice, which from different quarters arrest my ear. Have not you, my bretheren, often heard it thus declaim. "What! shall a minister of the gospel, whose duty is *to know*, among his people, *nothing, save Christ and him crucified*, waste his time and degrade his office by entering into discussions of national duty? Such discussions may be proper in the statesman and legislator; but belong not to the clergyman. From those assemblies where such discussions are permitted may I be preserved. Christianity and national policy are very different. By the latter, the temples devoted to the services of the Savior, should never be profaned &c." [5] Bear with me while *I also show my opinion*.

The ministers of Religion have all their official power from Messiah. For the honor of their Redeemer and head, that power should be employed. It is an important talent deposited with them, accompanied with this injunction *occupy till I come*. The oracles of revealed truth comprise their sacred instructions. To their guardianship, as ministers, those oracles are committed, and by them must be faithfully applied for reproof, direction and consolation to those, to whom they are addressed in the circumstances and relations in which they may stand. *These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee.* Tit. 2:15.

Though the Ambassadors of the Lamb, conscious of weakness, may often be disposed to say, with the weeping prophet, *Ah! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a child*. [6] Yet they should remember the terms on which their commission was given. These terms we have in the following inspired words: *I have this day set thee over the nations, and over the kingdom, to root out, and to pull down—to build and to plant. Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brazen walls, against the whole land; against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land*. [7] *Go ye*, says Jesus, to his ministers, *and teach all nations to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you*. [8]

Nations are not independent of God. Man into whatever relation he may enter is a subject of moral government. The thousands of individuals, who, when united together, compose a nation, have not improperly, by political and

ethical writers, been denominated a moral person; consequently must be under his law, who is emphatically styled *king of nations*. [9]

Nations may be guilty. They may, they do transgress the laws of right. Should not then the voice of warning, from the Sanctuary, be directed to them? If sin may be prevented—if repentance may be produced—if the honor or dishonor of God be concerned in the affairs of nations—if the happiness and duty of man be connected with political movements, without doubt the stewards of Divine truth should dispense it faithfully. The watchmen on Zion's walls should lift up their voice were like a trumpet. It is their duty to *say to the king and to the queen humble yourselves*, and consequently to state to them their sins.

In the pages of inspiration, the spirit of God has given directions, concerning the management of national affairs. [10] Are these salutary directions, of Israel's holy one, too profane to be touched by the ministers of the Sanctuary? Are not the kings, and the judges of the earth, commanded to yield submission to the Son? If this be denied, shall the ministers of Jesus be silent?

Before temporizers can justify themselves, in their silence, they must shew, that neither sin nor misery is concerned with civil things—that those sacred instructions, tendered to nations and their rulers, belong not to them to expound—that they may be erased, from the pages where they are inscribed—that those pages which contain them, may be torn from the volume of God's book, and be consigned to oblivion, and nomally—that men in their national capacity are unconnected with the moral empire of Jehovah. Unless these things be established, the silence of those who occupy the place of ministers of Jesus, when they see his laws violated, and his authority despised, must be accounted a base shrinking from duty and a betraying of the Redeemer's cause.

Party politics, which contemplate, chiefly the advancement of office-hunters, merit not the slightest notice, from the patriot and advocate of truth, unless it be suitably to reprove them as deeds of iniquity. On ground, higher than this should the ministers of Messiah stand. Their official concern with national affairs, is only as these are connected with right or wrong. A prostitution of Ecclesiastical influence, in behalf of party feuds, and political intrigue, has contributed much to prejudice the minds of, perhaps good men, against an exhibition of the instructions of revelation, to the civil powers. Of this infidels have taken advantage, and under its covert, have, doubtless too often, mingled their principles with national institutions. The prejudice is favorable to that indolence, so characteristic of the human mind. Hence we find iniquity

established by laws, while silence seals the lips of those, who should reprove in the gate. With the indifference of Gallio, too many are found, who care for none of these things. The public sentiment too deeply leavened with skeptical opinions, finds a protection in the negligence of public characters, and for them will be disposed to apologize. Thus, to be faithful is become unpopular. Modern evangelizers, without a blush, will boast of their indifference.

Nominal professors of the religion of Jesus, it must be confessed, have too often been found marshaling themselves under the banners of those, who are chiefly noted for their hostility to the cause of man. Those who know little of the spirit of our holy religion, but who otherwise are men of observation, have been led to apprehend, that christianity has something in it, at enmity with the natural and civil rights of man. Hence their jealousy is roused, when ecclesiastic characters are heard to speak on national affairs.[11] Christianity has, doubtless, been embraced, professionally, by selfish men, and has as often been abused to answer their sinister views. Let it however be remembered, that it stands not by the virtues of the best; nor will it fall by the hypocrisy of the worst. Independent of its professors it possesses excellencies, for which it should be embraced, and which will produce effects abundantly compensative to its friends, for all the temporary inconveniences which may attach to its profession. In one word, we may despair of ever contemplating, the fair fabric of national liberty, completely established, unless founded on the firm basis of gospel morality, and cemented with the principles of that system of good will to man.

These remarks prepare my way, for entering on the execution of my plan.

1<sup>st</sup>. What is the extent of that empire, which Messiah rules? Extensive as created nature are the dominions of our Lord. I may here be permitted to borrow the language of Zophar, Job. 40:8,9, in another case. *"It is high as heaven—deep as hell—the measures thereof is longer than the earth, and broader than the sea."*

2dly. The delightful hills of Zion are placed under his control. The thrones of judgment, established in our new testament Jerusalem pay homage to Messiah. Hear the voice of the eternal Father. *"I have set my king upon my holy hill of Zion."* He has placed upon his head the golden crown of authority. Psalms. 2:6; 21:3. This he wears, with the approbation of this spiritual corporation. Every denizen of the city of our God, viewing the glory of the divine administration, of the Church's government, and his safety under it, in the language of exultation says; *"The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our king; he will save us."* Isaiah, 33:22. None but the voluntary

slaves of sin are dissatisfied at his exaltation. Such may, by stealth, introduce themselves, to an external standing, among the citizens of Zion. Their conduct says, Messiah shall not reign over us—the eternal Prince of peace shall not be the captain of our salvation—under his banner of love we will not serve, nor will we recognize his laws. The imaginations of the people who thus speak are vain. The pillars of his throne are firmly fixed, the crown that he wears shall flourish, and under its influence his spiritual dominion *shall extend from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth.*[12]

No hand becomes the sceptre of Zion better, than that which saved her sons from going down to the pit. The redemption of the immortal spirit was precious. None among the fallen sons of men could pay the ransom. In vain is the anxious eye directed to the most virtuous of our race, or to the most potent in the ranks of creation. The children of Adam, without exception, were involved under the sentence of condemnation.[13] Vainly, then, would the benevolent heart, urge the feeble hand to attempt, the removal of the more than mountainous load of guilt. *None of them can, by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him.*[14] The same disappointment would answer the imploring voice, should it be directed to those intelligences, who excel in glory, and against whom, the charge of criminality has never been preferred. They stand high, indeed, among the works of God; but bounds are set to their power. They would sink under the pressure of those penal ills, impending over the head of the guilty man. Here we see the necessity of divine interposition. The Mediator has effected, what the prowess of creation could not accomplish. He hath set us *free from the law of sin and death.*[15] He is characterized, therefore, as the *Captain of Salvation*,[16] and the Church sets the crown thereof upon his head.

2d. He governs the nations. He who suffered on the hill of Calvary ascended in triumph to the right hand of the majesty on high, and received *dominion—that all people, nations and languages should serve him.*[17] This you will find described in Psalms, 47:5,9. God is there represented as gone up, even God in our nature, for in any other respect he could not ascend. This presents to us our Mediator. He rules the nations. He is king of all the earth. The shields of the earth, belong to him. The constituted authorities of the nations are his. Hear the testimony of the faithful and true witness; all things are given to me of my father.[18] All under the expanded canopy of heaven are his, hence his majestic titles, *King of kings and Lord of lords—Prince of the king of the earth—exalted high above all principality and power, and every name that is named in this world.* Let me state to you,

3d. That he is exalted over heaven. *All power in heaven and in earth is given*

unto me.[19] The legions of the angelic hosts are subject to his will. They fly at his behest to execute his pleasure. *"They are all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be the heirs of salvation."* Heb. 1:14. To see this exemplified we may peruse the inspired history of former times—while Jacob is on his way to his father's house, and exposed to the power of Laban, as well as to the fury of an enraged brother; he is encouraged by the presence of God's hosts.[20] Gen. 32:1,2. Must an invading army, besieging the capital of the land where his name was revealed, and his advent expected, be destroyed? A swift executor of the divine will, from the realms of glory, in the silence of the night, numbers them with the dead.[21] Those inhabitants of glory shall attend him at the last judgment. And as a farther evidence of his power over the abodes of eternal light, behold him, at pleasure dispose of the mansions of bliss. Even when expiring on the accursed tree, he casts a shadow over all the glory of earthly kings. To the dying penitent he awards a place among the blessed. The treasures of grace are at his command. When he shall have finished the mystery of God on earth, under the more immediate reign of Divinity, he shall stand at the head of the redeemed, and confirmed throng, arrayed in all the regalia of mediatorial glory—*Of his kingdom there shall be no end.* The map of another department of his empire is presented to our view. It is that of,

4<sup>th</sup>. The abodes of despair, and their inhabitants, exiled from the hopes of joy. At his girdle are suspended, not only the keys which open the gates of glory; but also those that evince his authority over the regions, where misery largely distributes sorrows around. *He has the keys of hell.*[22] In the days when he tabernacled with man on earth, he gave sufficient evidence of his power over the infernal spirits. I shall add

Finally. That the kingdom of Providence is in his hand. *He is head over all things to the Church.*[23] At his pleasure empires rise and kingdoms fall. The conflicting passions of wicked men, and their aspiring ambition, manifested in the convulsions and overthrow of nations, he makes subservient to the interests of his kingdom of grace. *All things work together for good to them who love God.*[24]

I trust it is not necessary, after these remarks, to detain to prove that this mediatorial dominion is given to Jesus, as the reward of his voluntary obedience, in fulfilling the condition of the redeeming covenant. To the christian no truth is more familiar, and none more consolatory, than that *Jesus humbled himself, and became obedient unto death; wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and in earth, and*



*under the earth.*[25] To illustrate, this will lead us to query

## II. Why should the nations rejoice, in Messiah's government?

To this we might reply, because of the advantages resulting from his reign. His throne is not erected in vain. He sways his sceptre for the most glorious ends. The destruction of evil—exaltation of his church, and the glory of his name comprise the whole of his design. In this we should rejoice. Attend to the following particulars.

1<sup>st</sup>. The organization of Zion, is a ground of joy to the nations. This devolves upon Emmanuel. *He shall build the temple of the Lord.*[26] Here he fixes his thrones of judgment—here he places the officers of his kingdom, for the perfecting of his chosen—here he promulgates his laws for *the law goes forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem*—On the hill of Zion he establishes the ordinances of his grace. Here stands his house of prayer, where he hears the complaints, and relieves the distresses of his people—Here are the chambers of his presence, where he entertains his friends, and unfolds to them the glories of his covenant. From these sacred dwellings he sends out his gospel, as the rod of his strength, by which, he subdues transgressors to the obedience of faith. Under his gracious reign we are to expect, the introduction of that happy time when all shall know the Lord—when equity shall be established on earth, and when *none shall hurt nor destroy in all the mount of God*. Thus Zion is the joy of the whole earth,[27] as through her institutions, blessings are diffused among the nations—hence they are represented as *flowing unto her*, Isa. 2:3, and their rulers *to the brightness of her rising*. Chapt. 60:3.

2dly. Messiah's reign is cause of joy *to the nations*; for he is exalted to destroy the works of the devil, the irreconcilable foe of Jehovah's glory and man's felicity. The crown of the nations is placed upon his head, that his laws may be introduced amongst them, and the god of this world be ejected from his throne of usurped domination. The standard of righteousness is raised, and his banner unfurled, even the banner of eternal love. Song. 2:3. Around this standard since the days of Adam, numbers of the fallen family have rallied. Clad in *the armour of light*, to the prince of darkness, *they are terrible*. He knows the time is coming, and trembles at the approaching day, when under the feet of the followers of the Lamb, he shall be trampled down. The nations have already had a prelude of Messiah's final victory, in the fall of Pagan idolatry, before his triumphant arms. Nor can his majestic movements, at the head of his chosen band, be forgotten, when the hosts of the man of sin were defeated, at the reformation, from papal tyranny—when the lands of our fathers engaged,

by solemn covenant, to be his—Then did they rejoice in the Redeemer's reign. Such is this cause of joy, that the inferior orders of creation, are, in the inspired page, represented, as looking forward, with an earnest and anxious eye, for the accomplishment of those great events which Jesus shall effect. Rom. 8:19,22.

3dly. The removal of immoral establishments of civil government, is another effect of our Redeemer's reign, in which, the nations should rejoice. Constitutional hostility to the laws of heaven, is a fertile cause of those terrible judgments, by which nations are laid in desolation. If the exalted Saviour has required nations, to bow submissively to his will, should they refuse, the strokes of his justice shall bring them down.[28] Concerning such, he says, *I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more.* Ezek. 21:27. When we see national deeds established, without regard to the religion of Jesus—when we hear nations proclaim, that the system of grace, and the idolatrous superstition of Antichristian delusions shall obtain, from the, the same regard; what is the conclusion of candour itself? Can it be esteemed any less, than a defiance, of the wrath, of him, who has solemnly declared, *the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish; yea those nations shall be utterly wasted.* Isa. 60:12. *What communion hath light with darkness? What agreement hath the temple of God with idols;* that they should thus be set upon the same ground? Because of Messiah's reign.

4thly. The nations should rejoice; for he shall introduce a new order of things. He removes the thrones of iniquity. That the authorities of the nation may be restored, from the vassallage, in which they have been, contrary to their original institution, to systems of superstition. Under his administration, the light of truth, with peculiar lustre, shall break forth—*he will destroy the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations.*[29] Their constituted authorities shall then confess their Lord, and recognize his spiritual kingdom, in its visible existence. When the kingdoms of this world shall have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, no longer shall the institutions of heaven be prostituted, in defending the visible kingdom of Satan—no longer shall the peace of the children of Zion, and their sacred rights, be endangered, by the authoritative protection of the enemies of the Redeemer in their hostile movements, against the city of our God—no longer may the chair of State among the professed followers of the Lamb, be disgraced by infidelity, nor the sceptre of government be profaned by the atheists hand. The light of that period will dispell the darkness of the present day. Nations will then see, that submission, to Messiah, is the direct path to national aggrandizement, while neglect of his laws, or rebellion against his will, secures those desolating judgments, by which he scourges disobedient

lands. The Redeemer's flock shall then be regarded with parental care, while the prowling wolf shall be deemed unworthy of the protecting hand of nations. Read the promise of Israel's shepherd. Isa. 60:16. Thou shalt suck the breasts of kings.

5thly. Under Messiah's government, humanity shall have its rights restored. At this the nations will rejoice. When Zion puts on her beautiful garments, and publicly appears, the sons of oppression shall be released from their chains. He, upon whose head are *many crowns*, proclaims *deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them who are bound*. Isa. 61:1. Behold the exalted Jesus shaking, in his providence, according to an ancient prediction, *the heavens and the earth*[30] of tyrannical establishments—taking hold of those pillars, as our Almighty Samson, which have long supported the house of idols and of bondage—tearing them away, and demolishing the gloomy prison, leaving the lordly oppressors, and the servile minions of overgrown power, in silence, beneath the ruins. When this work shall have been accomplished, to the ineffable joy of every benevolent heart, shall the oppressed go free. Accursed slavery shall no more disgrace the institutions of man, nor shall the ordinance of heaven, *for good to men*, be prostituted to bind the innocent in chains. *Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hand to God*. [31] Messiah shall avenge the quarrel of Afric's sable sons.

6thly. Under his auspices shall universal peace be established. Long, long has our world been an altar, on which millions of human victims have been immolated, as sacrifices to the ambition and caprice of the basest of men. These monsters and their iniquitous systems must be removed before peace can prevail. What have we to do with peace, while Jezebel, *the mother of harlots remains*, and her whoredoms are so many? [32] While there is on earth an unjust establishment, peace cannot be universal. Encroachments on the rights of man will be made, and resistance to such encroachments may be expected. To this we may add the wrath of the God of justice shall pursue them; for *there is no peace to the wicked*. In order to the introduction of this peace, the tyrants of the earth are dashed against each other. The votaries of unrighteousness, in horror contemplate the awful scene. The indignation of Jehovah on abandoned kingdoms—thrones that were reared by the spoils of humanity, and deeply dyed in the blood of innocence, sinking under the weight of the divine curse, and the despairing agonies of expiring despotism, give occasion to them, in terror to enquire, *watchman what of the night?* They may be answered in the prophet's words. *The morning cometh, and also the night*. [33] A night of desolation to all the props of antichristian fabrics; but the morning also cometh. The day of peace will dawn in due time. We may invite the enquirer to ascend the summits of Zion, and through the prospective of

divine predictions, and immutable promises take a view of present movements, and see to what they tend. Through these mediums may be seen, the overthrow of mystic Babylon, and the consequent times when *the mountains shall bring forth peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness*. Psal. 72:3. However antichristian merchants may cry, in the bitterness of their soul, Alas! alas! when they contemplate these scenes, the friend of God and of man will rejoice that, by them, the sorrows of outraged humanity, shall be brought to an end, and those distresses, shall cease to exist, which have been recorded with the blood of freedom's, and religion's friend. [34] Again,

7thly. To the inhabitants of the nations, the peace of the church, must be desirable, when violence shall no more be heard in our land wasting, nor destruction within our borders. Isa. 60:18. Then shall many sons be brought to glory. Satan shall be bound, and the converts to Jesus, and his spotless cause, shall be numerous as the particles, which compose the clouds, pure and salutary, in character, as the pearly drops of the morning dew. Then shall the Divine Saviour *say to the north give up, and to the south keep not back, bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth*. Thus, according to the arrangements of the eternal covenant, shall he finish the mystery of God on earth, having gathered in all the objects of electing love. The church shall then appear in the beauty of perfection, without spot or wrinkle, triumphant over all her foes. Her warfare shall at that time be brought to an end. Her children then free from every unhappy division, shall through her instrumentality be united into one glorious company, with Jesus at their head. Their title to eternal life shall be recognized at the grand assize, and for their admission into rest, the gates of the heavenly Zion shall be opened wide. Into those habitations of immortal glory, the Captain of salvation shall conduct his people, all arrayed in robes of righteousness, with palms of victory in their hands, *to go no more out*. He shall give up that form of rule adapted, in divine wisdom, to the militant state of his elect sons, establishing another, in which, the glory of the Divine character, shall more conspicuously appear—*God shall be all in all*. I state an 8<sup>th</sup>

Reason of rejoicing in Messiah's reign; Divinity is glorified thereby. The ultimate end, of a rational and good being, in his actions, must be the highest possible. A display of the divine perfections is the highest end that could be proposed, in all the transactions of God; an inferior end he could not choose. When this is obtained, a good mind should be glad, and in the means of obtaining it, the righteous will rejoice. All the movements of Messiah are for this end. To it we are conducted, as we rise along the various grades of created nature. Every link, in the extended chain of providence, leads to this, as the

point in which it terminates. While contemplating the glorious scheme, the pious, the benevolent mind, expanded with the transporting view of love divine, running through the eternal plan, even here mingles its gratitude and songs, with the heavenly choir, who, in unceasing praise, celebrate the glories of redeeming grace, saying *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive—honor and glory, and blessing—Blessing and honor, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.* Rev. 5:12,13. I now haste to query

### III. How should this joy be manifested?

To this a general answer may be given; by submission to his government, and a furtherance of its important ends. This will lead us to consider the first act which is a reception of his law. This law is that which arises, out of the relation, between God and man. By this law our submission must be regulated. This law of our nature is placed in the hand of him, who is, by Divine constitution, governor of the nations; for when the commission was given him to rule, it behooved that the law, by which, the subjects of his government were bound, should also be committed to him. According to the revelation which he makes of himself he should be obeyed. Wherever, therefore, the sacred pages of the bible of truth, and unfolded, his name, as Messiah, is made known—this truth is revealed, that *all things are put under his feet*, and the duty connected therewith appears in open view, *submission* to his authority. From his hand the law should be received. If his law be not received he cannot be obeyed. If his authority be rejected, after the command of obedience is proclaimed, rebellion marks their conduct who do so, and the portion of rebels is what they deserve.

If God be necessarily king of nations—if he has given to men a law, adapted to their nature, and sufficient to direct them in every relation, in which they may be placed—if all be committed to the Mediator, confession thereof should be made, by those, to whom the discovery is given. In their transactions, the great Supreme has an important end to answer. This we have seen is ultimately the glory of his name connected with which is the security of happiness to the virtuous of his rational family. To these two ends every movement of individuals should be subservient. Nations are not exempted from attention to the same. But how shall either individuals or societies pursue these ends? Certainly according to that law, which God has given to men. The fullest, and the fairest copy, of heaven's will, should be adopted. Our Creator alone knows what is acceptable to himself. His will, therefore, in this should be our rule. He only perfectly knows the diversified relations constituted by himself., among his rational family, and the duties thence resulting. He therefore can alone give

a perfect standard, by which, the duties of those relations are to be regulated. To walk according to this law, must tend most to the security of individual and general felicity.

If this be so, nations should adopt it as the general standard of their conduct.

It is not the nature of a general law, specially to provide for every emergency. Man, in the exercise of self government, a power derived from the great Creator, must according to the general principles of this law, in the various pursuits of life, regulate himself in cases, where special directions are not given. In no case should those general principles be violated. Happy will it be for the world at large, when its inhabitants shall refer the conduct they wish to pursue, to a general principle of morality, and when the whole shall be laid aside, when found inconsistent therewith. Professions, however, are cheap: submission to our supreme moral head requires,

2. Obedience to his law. To illustrate this would lead us into a field too extensive for the present occasion. Circumstances forbid more than a few observations, very generally expressed.

Nations regulated by the laws of Heaven will establish the rights of individuals. In defence of these will their potent arm be extended, against the unprincipled invader. Under this protection,

1. The citizen will have the nation as the guardian of his life. Life is to man the first gift of heaven, which he enjoys. Inviolable should this gift remain, and fenced it should be by the severest penalties. In no case should it be disposed of unless there be a forfeiture, by acts subversive of public order, & directly ruinous to the commonwealth. These acts must also be such as the great Legislator has declared worthy of death. To extend capital punishment beyond those boundaries, which Jehovah has set, is murder—indicative of barbarism and is a presumptuous usurpation of his throne. But life is only valuable on account of its enjoyments, and the opportunities afforded of prosecuting the ends of rational existence, in doing good. Whatever contributes to these should have a governmental guard. This presents us with a

Second act of obedience; the protection of liberty. This is of equal, I should say of greater importance than life. Need I reason upon this before an audience of Americans? Were it possible that any American could doubt it, I would call to his remembrance the scenes of Lexington—direct his eye to the carnage of Nassau-Island—entreat him to open his ears to the groans of dying men in the east and the south—I would lead him to the tombs of the martyred heroes,

whose blood contributed to fertilize those plains of Saratoga. I would then enquire, why did those men jeopard their lives on the high places of the field? —Why stand in the face of danger until prostrated among the dead? His reply would be, that they might, by their fallen numbers, raise a mound, which the invader could no scale—that their country and posterity might be free from tyrants chains. But why should I reason or expostulate; that deed which freed this empire from foreign domination, and which every American reveres, declares, in accordance with the principles of eternal right, "that all men are created equal; that they are endowed with—unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." To defend these rights is an act of national justice. The law of the Saviour of men should never be forgotten, whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.

This is the law of benevolence,—of equity, not to be violated but by trampling on the remonstrances of conscience, and rejecting the authority of the Redeemer impressed on his statute.

Of no right should man be deprived, unless he shall have forfeited it by crime. That nation has but feeble claims to virtuous illumination—to generosity—to justice, which tolerates, not to mention authorizing, the merciless practice of robbing a fellow mortal of all that is valuable to him in life, his liberty. How inconsistent to establish laws to punish with severity yonder plunderer of your sheepfold, and by the same authority to enact statutes to justify him, in forcibly degrading his brother from the rank of man, and in plundering him of what is more precious than life! Do not governments, in transactions like this, more resemble a banditti of robbers, than protectors of innocence and guardians of right?[35] It is not to be contended that every individual, with the jurisdiction of a nation has a right to citizenship; nor does equity demand that every citizen should be eligible to certain important stations in government. Limitations, in many cases, cannot justly be deemed an infringement of right. While these things are granted, it ought to be noticed that none should be compelled to incorporate with the national society, and in certain causes it might also be tyranny, to compel, even a citizen, to attend upon things, which the laws of the land impose as duties. All who pursue the great ends of government, by a life of industry, virtue and peace have a right to protection, in life, liberty, and property; although they may dissent from the establishments of the land in which they reside. A pledge indeed should be given, that no foreign partialities should, on the part of such persons, be indulged to the prejudice of the nation in which they live.

The natural world is only valuable because of its subserviency to the moral. To

further the improvement of the moral system should be a special object with men. Moral institutions, therefore, should be subserved by civil society in the regulation of its affairs. The happiness of man, not merely as an animal, but as a moral being is an object of legislation. A nation guided by the light of inspiration and right reason will

3d. Not neglect the church of Christ. The connection between the civil and ecclesiastic departments has been a subject fertile of disputation. But what has not been disputed? What has not been abused? The believer in the truth of christianity has no doubt that God has a church on earth—that this society is important—that it needs protection, and I shall add, that to protect it is a national duty.

The existence of a church can be no subject of dispute on the immovable Rock of ages, eternal truth declares, the church shall be built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail. Matt. 16:13. The rolling flood of years, in its impetuous course, has swept away the establishments of human contrivance. The institutions of the Nimrods, the Pharaohs and of all the catalogue of "man destroying villains" of ancient times, are now no more. The report of their existence has only reached our ears. More ancient than those, the church of God yet continues, in all the vigour of youth. Distressed indeed she has often been, and in various attire has she appeared. In the beautiful garments of joy she sometimes has walked forth; but alas! Oftener has she sat in the sable robes of a mourner, because of oppression, and because of the unnatural behaviour of her sons. Divided among themselves, they have, by their domestic broils, too often weakened each others hands. Her existence however is a matter of notoriety. She is *a city set upon an hill that cannot be hid*.

The importance of the church is also observable. This is marked in the early attention and continued care of her Lord. Cast back your eyes to the commencement of her history, and as your thoughts are carried down the stream of time, fold over the pages of her records, and mark the instances of Divine interposition on her behalf. *Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof—Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following.*[36] The importance of this spiritual corporation will appear from future remarks.

This society needs protection. The church has a visible existence. Although she is not of this world; yet she is in it, and by the movements of its inhabitants is often deeply affected. The truth of this remark requires not a long series of reasoning for its probation. The history of her progress is evidence of this. That figure, presented to our view in the revelations of God,



denominated the mother of harlots, arrayed in scarlet robes, dyed in the martyrs' blood, with which she is also intoxicated, is to us a proof that Zion needs protection. A detail of facts would farther illustrate the point, but to you it is already sufficiently plain. I shall, therefore, not attempt to lead your minds to view the persecutions of paganism nor those more dreadful scenes of antichristian cruelty. A relation of the bloody scenes of France; the horrors of the inquisition; the butcheries of Alva; the flames of Smitfield; the unrelenting cruelty of tyrants, exercised against the followers of Jesus, shall not upon this occasion shock the mind of sensibility. On this day of thanksgiving it becomes us, with holy gratitude to acknowledge the goodness of God, in causing those days of tribulation to end. The existence of such times, however, shows us the necessity of nations discerning between right and wrong, and of raising their arm, in defence of the disciples of Jesus, in obedience to the command of Heaven. *Touch not my anointed, and do my prophets no harm.* Psal. 105:15.

This duty devolves on nations. They owe it to him who is Prince of the kings of the earth. The oracles of heaven must be consulted here, and their responses must be decisive. Reason however is not silent. If Jesus has a church on earth—if he purposes to exhibit, by it, the glory of the Divine perfections—if he decrees to save man through its instrumentality—if these ends be infinitely more important, than all other concerns of mortals—if external things may be ordered so as to subserve these ends, or if external affairs may be so arranged, as to retard their accomplishment, reason says that nations should so order their movements as to promote, in every possible manner, agreeably to the law which is the supreme rule of human conduct, the removal of obstacles and the establishment of righteousness. In this view of the subject, reason and the light of inspiration fully coincide. The evangelical prophet was led to contemplate times then distant. He saw the banner of peace unfurled in the gospel dispensation—the sons of Zion coming from far and her desolate places inhabited. What is the consequence? *Kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers.* Isa. 49:18,23. To the brightness of her rising, the resplendent beams of the sun of righteousness shining upon her, he beheld the princes of the earth approach. They minister to her. Chapt. 60:3,12. When Daniel was favoured with a view of the utter ruin of all the beastly powers, he beheld the saints taking the kingdom, and all the powers thereof serving and obeying the son of man Ch. 6:27.

If any instruction can be drawn from these and similar portions of sacred writ, it is this; that the constituted authorities are bound to treat with friendly attention the Church of God. An indifference like that of Calio can never be justified, in national more than in family government. Infidelity alone, with unblushing face, can recommend to the head of a family, and utter disregard of

its moral and religious state. Those who but in a slight degree regard religion are not more solicitous for the literary, than the moral and religious character of the seminary where their sons shall receive an education. Is the moral and religious character of a nation less important than that of a common school? Or are religion and civil order so inconsistent with each other, that those who superintend the latter, must not, in their official character, cast their eye toward the sacred temple where Jesus reveals himself! Enlightened reason and the bible of God forbid such conclusions. The church is the vehicle of Divine communication with the world. She deserves and ought to enjoy the providence of nations as such.

In order to accomplish this, a people who respect the laws of heaven, or who regard the exalted Redeemer will banish from their confidence the despiser of religion. They will compliment the church of God so far, as to commit to her sons the official management of national concerns. By the sons of the church, I mean not those wretches, who, destitute of conscience presumptuously trampled on the Saviour's blood, to qualify themselves for office, by participating of the symbols of the broken body and shed blood of Jesus, in whom they put no confidence, and whose institutions they in heart contemn—I mean not the man, whatever noise he may make about religion, who exerts all his powers, to rivet the fetters of slavery on the human family; but him, who, by an uniform tenour of life, gives evidence that he fears God and regards man. This is the man in whom nations may confide. As it is doubtless a duty to make such a selection, so it is equally incumbent to make these moral and religious qualifications a constitutional condition of eligibility to office. In vain do men inveigh against the profanity and impiety of public characters while silent respecting the constitution by which they are eligible. If a constitution of government exclude the scriptures of truth from being the rule of the nation, in managing national affairs—if it bind the hand of rulers, in their official standing, from shewing any more regard to the religion of Christ, than to the delusions of Mahomet, why should the framers thereof, why should the approvers thereof declaim against the man, who is constitutionally qualified, when invested with office? A greater inconsistency in human conduct can scarcely be found, than men's solemnly pledging themselves, either personally or by representation, to maintain inviolate a constitution which rejects the law of God, and requires no profession of religion to qualify for office under it, and at the same time reprobating the officers of government for irreligion. If those reformers be sincere let them begin at the fountain head—let the constitutions of the land be purified from infidelity—let a national mark of disapprobation be set upon impiety—all this be done let them stand at a distance from sanctioning immoral deeds; then with consistency may they reprove national immorality.

On every other ground, either their sincerity or discernment may be justly disputed.

IV. What are the considerations calculated to induce to this expression of joy?

These considerations are many. The exaltation of the Redeemer to be the prince of the kings of the earth—the importance of religion to society and the danger of rejecting Messiah's authority, are powerful reasons to enforce obedience.

On the first of these, beside what is already said I shall not enlarge, as you have among your hands, on this subject, a moveable and extensive discussion, [37] than I can presume to give. I shall therefore conduct you in the

Second place to consider the importance of religion to society. The immediate object of civil society is the attainment of human happiness. The happiness of a nation is composed of that of individuals. This felicity, whether we view it as it respects an individual or a community, depends much on the existence and state of religion. Who knows not the influence of the religious or irreligious character of the higher orders of society on the inferior? Psal. 12:8. *The wicked walk on every side when the vilest of men are exalted.* To the existence of happiness virtue is essential, and without religion there is no stable foundation for virtue.

Should I detain and illustrate the happy influence of religion on the human mind in times of adversity, and its tendency to heal the wounds inflicted by distress, it would much subserve my design. When the king of terrors approaches and the evening of life draws nigh, the importance of religion appears. Its consolations can alone inspire, with fortitude, the trembling expectant of immortality. That which so largely contributes to the felicity of man, even as an individual is far from being unworthy the attention of a nation; but I shall now confine myself to its importance as it relates to society.

With propriety it has often been asserted that religion is necessary to the existence of society. On principles expressed or understood men unite for the purpose of supplying their wants and guarding against danger. I do not say that civil government originates in the wants and dangers of man. I believe its foundation is laid in the constitution of human nature. God formed man an intelligent and sociable being; these powers were not given in vain; in society alone they can be brought into action; society requires order, and order involves government.

Wants, however, man has, and to dangers he is exposed. Society is intended to mitigate those ills. But what lays the ground of confidence that the end will be obtained? Religion alone gives security. Guardians of national and individual rights are appointed; by the solemn obligation of an oath they pledge their souls to discharge, with fidelity, the trust reposed in them. Does not the whole force of this obligation arise from the influence of religious principle on the mind? Unless that he who gives the pledge believes himself destined to immortality; unless he be persuaded of the existence of an omniscient and almighty Being, who presides over the affairs, and observes the transactions of men; who is just and holy, the avenger of falsehood and iniquity, even the solemn bond of an oath will be, on his hind, like the withes on Samson's arms when he arose in strength, *as a thread of tow when it toucheth the fire*. [38] This obligation will generally be proportioned to the correctness of our apprehensions of the character of Deity.

In the christian church alone those views of divinity are given, which become the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity. A God nature does reveal; but what he is the pages of creation do not clearly tell. Go to those nations not enlightened by the gospel; read the mythology of philosophic Greece and Rome: there we shall find the gods characterized whom they served, and among them we find that virtue which such opinions are calculated to produce.

Let us again consider that the distinguishing doctrines of the christian system are, above all others, calculated to give lasting and important impressions of the Divine character.

Our minds are conducted to contemplate, while we wait on the ordinances established in the church, an illustrious personage employed in acts of wonder and beneficence. He administers consolation to the sons of affliction—controls the raging elements—suspends the operation of the laws of nature—by his agency enters the mansions of the grave—invades the ghastly dominions of the king of terrors, and wrests from him his prey. Love to God and man reigns in his heart and appears in all the acts of his life. Yet strange to tell, he was a man of sorrows and intimately acquainted with grief. How, in this, can the ways of God be justified to men? He was constituted the representative of man, *He was wounded for our transgressions*, explains the mystery. In those transactions a view is given of the turpitude of moral evil, which was never otherwise revealed, and a discovery of Divine benevolence which the organization of yonder worlds does not make. In this highest of all the dispensations of God, our fears are loudly addressed, and fast hold is taken of the more generous principles of our nature. In the work of our redemption

we contemplate Jehovah awfully just, verifying that description of his character, that he *will by no means clear the guilty*. [39] Here we have a revelation of *the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men*. [40] When under the covert of the midnight shadow, the penalty of human law, will not be able to arrest the mind of the transgressor; but the thought of Him with whom the darkness and the light are both alike, being infinitely righteous and the actual avenger of wrong, represses the evil passions of the human mind, and restrains from immoral outrage.

The love of the Redeemer manifested in submitting to evil for the sins of man, that the transgressor might be released, while the moral excellency of the Divine government is discovered, constrains to a voluntary obedience. Thus he draws with the cords of a man, and sweetly binds to obedience with the bands of love. [41]

We are further conducted to see christianity productive of the purest morality. What lessons are taught by this system? *To deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, to live soberly righteously and godly, and to be zealous of good works*. [42] The sum of the christian law is benevolence. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, and thy neighbor as thyself*. That holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, infolds, in its wide embrace, respect to the law of our nature in its extensive commands, directed to man in the various relations in which he is placed. [43] A superficial observation of the external part will not satisfy, it must proceed from the active powers of the human mind, renovated by supernatural influence. *Thou desirest truth in the inward parts*. [44]

This respect to these laws is enjoined by an authority with which mortals may not trifle. The thunders of Sinai faintly represent to the mind the terrible wo, by which obedience is enforce. *Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them*. [45] The penalty in its execution extends beyond the boundaries of time. *The smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever*. When the decrees and penal laws of nations shall have expired, the penalty of Zion's statutes shall be inflicted on their incorrigible transgressors. The motives to obedience, from advantages connected therewith are also strong. Unceasing joys shall be the portion of the obedient disciple of the Saviour, when all the blessings of time shall have been forgotten. *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard what God hath prepared for them that love him*.

From the christian system the various ranks in society may derive instruction. Power is calculated, from the moral debility of our nature, to swell with pride the feeble mind of man. The consequence is forgetfulness of the rights of

those who move in humbles spheres, and what is more—of their amenability to God. The religion of Jesus, in its doctrines and solemn rites, is calculated to correct the error. Every week is introduced with its sabbath. That day calls for devotional exercises. When the assemblies meet who worship Jehovah, what are the lessons taught? That all are children of the same Great parent—that all are subjects of the same universal Lord that soon must our mortal part mingle with its kindred dust—that the immortal spirit must appear at the tribunal of God—that those insigns of superiority, whether flowing from wealth or official exaltation must shortly be laid aside—that those honors which now bloom so gay, and in the estimation of the thoughtless crowd, promise such abundance of fruit, must fade, like the shortlived flowers, which wither under the noonday sun—that on the rapid wings of time all are hastening to that solemn day, when every secret thing shall be revealed, and final sentence passed, in righteousness, on the moral creation of God. What thoughts more calculated to humble the pride of wealth, and laugh to scorn the insolence of momentary power? Is it possible for the mind of man to hear, from day to day, these lessons, and remain insensible to their importance? Is it to be relieved from their influence, that men in power retire so often and so far, from the sanctuaries of divine worship? Are the nations of the earth so liberal, or so blind as not to suspect this?

Equally important and necessary are the lessons taught the throng, who compose the body of nations. Subordination to salutary regulations are, on their part, essential to national existence.

Abstract theories of policy are cords too weak to bind them. The majority of a nation's population are too much engaged, in the busy scenes of life, to apply to the study of abstract opinions; and though they should, yet will there not be in them force sufficient to bind to the practice of rectitude. The passions of fallen human nature cannot be restrained, by principles of common science. Present interest often comes in collision with immediate duty; the former too frequently prevails over the latter.

How, it may be enquired, will christianity help these defects? The reply is at hand: the christian system of morality leads man to view civil government as an ordinance of God, for good to men.[46] It has been already stated, that it is founded int he constitution of human nature, I now add, it is recognised in the sacred scriptures, and its duties more fully delineated, than in the book of nature, together with the qualifications of those, who should be intrusted with its important affairs.

The truth, that civil government is an ordinance of heaven; places it on a

dignified eminence above a mere human expedient, and is not without beneficial influence on the human mind. It causes the people, intelligently influenced by it, to guard against imposture, by enquiring into the characteristics of the establishment, which may call for their subjection. In the exercise of suffrage the qualifications of candidates will be examined, and proper conditions of investiture prescribed. When government is thus formed, the christian sees this external advantage in subordination, and beyond the infidel, he perceives the impression of Divine authority on the establishment of his choice, demanding his conscientious support. This view of the subject guards against tyranny on the one hand, and rebellion on the other. Against rebellion, for opposition to a morally constituted government, is hostility against heaven, whose institution it is.—It is a stretching forth the hand against the Lord's anointed, to impede the execution of wholesome laws, under the direction of such a power.—Against tyranny for it denies the right of every occupant of the chair of state, who has no better title to produce than possession. It leads to enquire for wisdom, integrity, and energy of character in those who rule—for the title by which they hold the reigns of government. Where there is in these things, a palpable or essential defect, voluntary allegiance will be withheld. This system leads us to view precious rights bestowed on us., by our bountiful Creator, and power given to defend those rights, according to the law, rising out of the relations subsisting between him and us, against aggression. A violation of this order, going into the essence of the social compact, sets free from its obligation, as formally constituted, every one who respects the prior obligation of the Almighty's law.[47]

In proportion as nations are illuminated by the gospel of Christ, so are they jealous of their rights, so are they possessed of liberty. In proportion as nations are destitute of religion, so are they enslaved. Let the history of past ages, and the state of different nations at this day bear witness to this truth. In proportion as men are influenced by the gospel, so do they respect the moral institutions of their country.

Let us once more consider, that the religion of the Redeemer of men, polishes the manners of nations wherever it obtains. It smiles on arts and under its auspices science has progressed. It commands to search out the wonderful works of God. Psalms 111:2. That gentleness and benevolence inculcated, in every page of the message of peace, tend to smooth the turbulence of human passions, and to make men *kind, tender hearted, forgiving one another*, after the example of their Father who is in heaven. Eph. 4:32. The *charity*, with which the gospel inspires, *suffers long and is kind* 1 Cor. 13:4. It gives to society a refinement, not that artificial affectation, which characterizes the trifler; but a refinement of heart and a delicacy of sentiment, which make the

intercourse of men a blessing—which lay the foundation of mutual confidence.

While the importance of these thought must appear, and the necessity of religion to the existence of society and good government, in general must be acknowledged, I cannot suppress the opinion, that it is peculiarly so in a land where the institutions are republican. Doubtless democracy is the institution of heaven, and the choice of enlightened reason. That it may answer the end designed, what is requisite? An enlightened populace. Enlightened as much as possible by the knowledge of science; but above all impressed with the importance of religions obligation. Human science of itself may give a partial view of the relations of society—of external advantages, and of obstructions to prosperity; religion alone can purify the principles of human action, and free the mind from that criminal selfishness, which is the bane of morals, and which saps the foundations of social happiness.

On a wise and prudent exercise of the right of suffrage, depends the happiness of a republican state. What half so powerful, when the throng approach the poll, to direct their interest and their sagacity for the general weal, as the though deeply fixed in the mind, of their accountability for their transactions, to the sovereign of nations? Without religious principles to direct, the powers of mind and advantages of science, will be like military armour in the hands of a maniac. Why so much intrigue at our elections? Why such a disregard to the qualifications of candidates for office? The opinion, tacitly embraced, that God has no concern in these things! Until religious principle shall govern men, never will it be better—when that time shall have arrived, feeble idiotism and raging impiety shall be banished from national councils. The blasphemer of God and his institutions, shall not be intrusted with the guardianship of the rights of nations.

The thoughts now offered, show the importance of religion to society. It must be remembered, however, that it is the christian religion in which these excellencies are to be found; it is the system as given by the Saviour, and illustrated by the prophets and apostles of the Lamb that produces the salutary effects presented to your view. The wild enthusiasm, the gloomy superstition, the cold blooded indifference or fiery opposition to the fundamental doctrines of redemption, which have sometimes assumed the name of religion, can have no valid claims to rank with the doctrines delivered by Jesus, nor are they productive of the wholesome fruits of his institutions.

While, therefore, we should pity the bigot, who excludes all that is good or great, from the societies beyond the narrow bounds of his own immediate



connection, and despise the bigotry that thus contracts the mind; we must guard against that spurious liberality, which proscribes, as prejudice or narrow-mindedness, a regard for truth in preference to error. Strange, that truth should be desirable in every science, and amiable in the intercourse of man with man, in every relation of life, and so trivial in religion alone! Between illiberality and infidelity there is an obvious medium.

If, then, there be a difference between truth and falsehood—between right and wrong—if the difference be important, nations, in the expression of their respect for religion, should know and mark the one from the other. Those systems that would sensualize religion, and represent the object of solemn worship in a material form, lead away the mind from the God who made the heavens and the earth; and as the object of worship is sensualized, so the whole terminates in sensual exercise; God is dishonoured, the human mind degraded, the foundation of morals is misunderstood and man is bound to duty by a feeble tie.

Man is a religious being. In some form religion is congenial to his nature. If no object more illustrious be known, the sun, the moon and stars will be adored. The ox, and the crocodile have had their votaries, and who can limit the number of Deities or the profanity of rites, to be used in their service, if fancy, under the influence of knavery, be constituted their creator. Those absurdities doubtless might have some influence, in the formation and maintenance of society. This is an important consideration for legislators and statesmen. This calls upon nations to foster with indulgent care the principles of truth, and that pure morality which in enjoins.

Deficient in the science of human nature must the man be, and unacquainted with the art of government, who denies the importance of religion, in the management of a nation; and impious must the wretch be, who in point of internal excellency and practical utility, would place any other system on an equality with that which was given by Messiah, and conveyed by providential interference, to us, uncontaminated in the volume of inspiration. These remarks lead us to the

3. Reason for submission; the danger of disobedience. If the Son be not obeyed, his anger will burn against the obstinate. *The kings and judges of the earth shall perish when his wrath is kindled but a little.* If what I have already stated be correct, respecting the importance of the gospel, inattention on the part of nations, to its injunctions must be criminal, and shall be visited with plagues, the most terrible of which is, a removal of the glad tidings of peace, and the light generally diffused by its ministrations. Rev. 2:5. Left in darkness,

they shall grope in vain for the way of safety. *Wo to them when I depart from them*, is the voice of God.[48]

Unfurl, against the Christ of God, the hostile banner, the nations may; foolish men, in the midst of their infatuation, may think to brave the thunder of his power, and tear from his head the crown he wears, indicative of authority over them; but vain the impious attempt! With righteous indignation and holy contempt, he, from the inaccessible heights of his glory, beholds the impotence of their folly, while his almighty hand holds the reigns of universal government, and by a power irresistible, and a wisdom that never errs, he conducts the complicated machinery of creation and providence, unfolding before the eyes of intelligent hosts his commission, written in characters which none can misunderstand, ALL POWER IS GIVEN UNTO ME IN HEAVEN AND IN EARTH.

Against sin justice pleads for vengeance. Nations as such, at the last day, it is generally admitted, before the tribunal of eternal Justice cannot appear. For their sins, as nations, they must be punished; this punishment must therefore be executed in time. For this purpose, in providential dispensations, the Almighty is represented as coming out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth. Executors of his wrath are readily found. The kings of the earth may combine against him, and give their power to subserve the interests of the Anti-christian beast; but he is King of kings, and their deep laid designs he will disappoint. Rev. 17:12,14. Those whom he calls to his service are chosen, qualified and shall be faithful in accomplishing his purpose. It is not requisite for this that they should be virtuous. Tyrants are his *battle-axe and weapons of war*, by whom he *breaks in pieces the nations, and destroy kingdoms*. Jer. 51:20. *The most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and in sovereign Providence, setteth up over it the basest of men*. Dan. 4:17. Base as they may be, by them, his pleasure shall be executed. For this purpose, like the sweeping tempest—the destroying bolt of heaven, and the devouring lion of hell, they are commissioned to harass sinful men. In former times were consecrated Nebuchadnezzar, a Cyrus, and Alexander and a Caesar to scourge transgressing nations; and in modern days, with oil out of the same horn, have been anointed a George, a Francis an Alexander and a Napoleon to do a similar work. Diligent they are in executing vengeance on the foes of the Redeemer. The European nations have long since marshalled themselves under the ensigns of the *man of sin*. from the hands of those oppressors who rule over them, they receive the chastisement they justly merit. Who a more faithful minister in the dispensation of righteous retribution to those oppressors and their ruthless vassals, than the Corsican who wears the Gallic crown. He is doing for Emmanuel a great service—a service more important

than Jehu performed against the house of Ahab, or Nebuchadnezzar against Tyre.[49] He who sits in heaven, and whose rights by those nations have been invaded, has girded him with strength. Let him then go on till every throne, raised and supported by usurped power shall be overturned—their crowns of unrighteousness be mingled with the dust, and their bloodstained sceptres be broken, no longer to be swayed as the scourge of human kind; and if Heaven will, let every abetter of tyranny and superstition sink in the general ruin, to rise again no more to plague the earth, nor to oppress the heritage of God.

Then let the destroyer himself fall before the indignant voice of those, who shall arise to assert the rights of God and man.

Happy for those who stand at a distance, and mingle not in those rueful scenes. But what nation is not affected by them? The shock of fallen and falling empires is felt to the ends of the earth. The danger is proportioned to the intimacy of connection, with those devoted and quaking powers.

Time will not allow that I should even name all the judgments with which Almighty God punishes disobedient nations—Pestilence walks under the covert of darkness, and spreads its baleful influence on the wings of the wind. It walks openly at noon day. Famine and war are testimonies of his displeasure. From the altar above—He scatters the coals of his indignation; the evil passions of the human mind are set on fire; the flame of faction rages, traitors are let loose in society; public and private rights are invaded by "the mighty troublers of the earth." Division in public counsels, and pusillanimous indecision against aggressions are often the harbingers of ruin. These judgments prepare the way for another, which, though not the greatest is generally most sensibly felt, the drying up the sources of national wealth.

What are nations taught by these frowning providences? Doubtless that heaven is offended; that nations and individuals should break off their sins by righteousness, and speedily return to the insulted Sovereign of nature; saying, "Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously."

No people ever hardened themselves against God and prospered. Let experience teach wisdom. Wherever immorality, in principle or practice, is made essential to a constitution of government, that constitution has the principle of its own destruction within itself. Its fate, without the spirit of prophecy, may be foreseen; the arm of the Lord of hosts is against it, and under his stroke it must fall.

These considerations lead me forward to query

V. What exceptions may be made against these doctrines, and how may they be obviated?

It is not my intention to notice every ground of "specious declamation," much less every cavil, nor to say all that might be said in reply to any. Such objections as I have usually met with and which appeared to affect the more serious class of professors, shall be stated and the reply be briefly made.

Obj. 1. Wherever religion has been nationally regarded, it has been the cause of much confusion and intrigue.

Ans. 1. It will be conceded that religion, whether nationally regarded or not, has often been the innocent *occasion* of confusion: wherever superstition has been attacked, her votaries have been roused, and with a cry similar to that of *great is Diana of the Ephesians* have raised an uproar, not only in cities, but also in nations, nor will infidelity bear the assault of truth with greater patience. That ever the religion of Jesus was the *cause* of trouble to states, is denied. No; its lessons are peace, and its instructions tend to establish order.

2. That the mantle of piety has been sometimes assigned, in order to deceive, will also be admitted. The ambitious demagogue, when he wishes to scale the ladder of preferment, will talk like a disciple of Jesus, and the blood-thirsty villain, the enemy of man, will, to cover his nefarious designs, profess attachment to the Church of God.

Mankind, by such, are sometimes deceived. The prejudice of the human mind is favorable to religion, and when religious characters, offering themselves to public notice, are few, a counterfeit may pass for a time. Is this the fault of religion? Is it not rather to be ascribed to the paucity of christian principle? To avoid this imposition, and the consequent evils, let the practice of religion be an object of public regard. When real gold is in plentiful circulation, there is less danger of deception than when it is scarcely ever seen. The consideration of superstition and falsehood producing so many evil effects, is an admonition to nations, to beware of what they foster under the name of religion, and to promote, by every proper mean, the genuine principles of Christianity.

3. The weight of the objection lies against the abuse of religion. The argument is bad. Where national freedom is enjoyed, there is no village in which it is not abused. Shall liberty therefore be banished from our shores, or its principles be erased from the constitutions of the land? No friend to christianity will dare to state this objection against its principles nor will any who wish it well, apologize for the abuses of it by wicked men. The objection must

consequently be impertinent.

Obj. 2. What you contend for proceeds upon the supposition that Jesus, in his mediatorial character is the moral Head of nations, which is not true. He in that character is Ruler of Zion, but not of the nations, as appears from Rev. 11:15. Col. 1:13. Isa. 63:19. If the Redeemer have an headship over them, how can it be said that they shall become his? If all intelligent beings be included in his kingdom, how can any in the day of effectual calling be said to be translated into it? If he rule over all, how could the spirit of truth, speaking by the mouth of his church say, *thou never bearest rule over them, i.e., over the heathen?*

Ans. 1. It is confessed that what is contended for, receives much aid, from the consideration of the Redeemer's exaltation; but on that the whole does not rest. Suppose the headship of Jesus were set aside, the laws of the Eternal would still remain, and would bind the sons of men in every relation. The gratuitous assertion, that Jesus is not the Ruler of nations, cannot be admitted as sufficient to set aside the evidence adduced in support of that truth. Eph. 1:20,21. Philip. 2:9,10.

2. The argument drawn from Rev. 11:15. will prove too much. If it prove that the anointed of God had no dominion over the kingdoms before the time alluded to; it will also prove their independence of the essential God. When they become the kingdoms of Christ, they become the kingdoms of his anointer, the Lord. Is it so that men rather than admit the truth and its consequences, will have recourse to arguments, which prostrate the rights of Divinity—rather than let Jesus reign must Almighty God be degraded from his throne!

3. The whole force of the objection is easily removed, by distinguishing those who are voluntary subjects of his government, from others in arms against him. To the former accessions are daily made, the latter he calls to obedience and punishes for their neglect. While he rules in Zion over a willing people, let it not be forgotten that he also judges among the heathen, and destroys their kings in the day of wrath. Psal. 110:3,5,6.

Obj. 3. the Divine government is just. To require obedience and not give laws regulating that obedience would be tyrannical; mediatorial laws are not known beyond the bounds of Zion. Psal. 147:19. And therefore beyond the limits of that spiritual society Jesus does not rule. As mediator he can perform no regal act over those, whom he does not teach as a prophet; for his offices are never divided.

Ans. 1. That the moral government of God, over the world, is carried on according to righteous laws revealed, cannot be disputed. Where the means of knowing the Mediator and his peculiar laws, are not bestowed, obedience to these laws cannot be required. But are there any of Adam's race entirely destitute of law? We are taught otherwise by an infallible tutor. There is, in the volume of creation, a law revealed, which leaves all without excuse, and on the tablets of the human heart are written the works of the law. Rom. 1:20. 2:14,15. According to this law the Divine government among the heathen is carried forward. May not the eternal, the essential God carry on his government in the manner his wisdom shall direct? If he has seen proper to commit the Sovereignty over the nations, to Messiah, with them has he also given that law under which they are, and if God absolutely considered may govern them by that law, why may not Jesus in his mediatorial character? Or shall it be said that in order to his government of men, he is obliged to unfold all his plans and designs? Whence does the obligation arise? We cannot see its origin.

2. Is it true that Jesus can perform no regal act over those, whom he does not teach as a prophet? If it be admitted, that all things being in his hand as Mediator, he gives man life and whatever light, in moral things, they possess, it is true; but the admission overturns the spirit of the objection.

At the objector I would enquire, who shall judge the world? Examine John 5:22, 27. And it will be found that full authority to execute all judgment is given to the Mediator. Is judging the heathen a real act? Does he teach the heathen in the sense of the objection? If not, the argument is unfair—*Query*. Why may not the Mediator in time govern the heathen by that law, which will guide him in his decisions at the final Judgment?

Is it true that his offices, in their execution, are never divided? With respect to the subjects of his special grace they never are. Those whom he redeems he teaches, and rules. But does he not rule his visible church and her professed members? Did he also die for them all? The standards of the Presbyterian church are decisive on this point—As our Redeemer, Christ executes the office of a King, not only in ruling and defending his people; but also in restraining and conquering his and their enemies.[50]

Obj. 4. Your principles, advocated in this discourse, call for a civil establishment of religion, which is certainly inconsistent with the rights of man.

Ans. The former part of the objection is admitted, the latter is denied. Let us

not, however, dispute about unpopular phrases; let us see what establishment of religion is called for by my principles.

The fixing on a particular denomination of christians, however pure in principle and correct in practice and raising it on the wings of governmental patronage, compelling all others in the nation, by civil penalties, to comply with its terms is not what is intended. Members of the community, compelled by the civil authority to offer themselves as candidates for communion, the church of Jesus could not receive. A conviction of the truth of religion, and of the duty of embracing it and practicing its requisitions, can only be admitted as a sufficient reason either for man offering to unite with the church, or for the church to open to them the door of communion. This conviction must be produced by arguments of a different kind for the polished steel. The sword of the spirit is the only lawful weapon to be used, in subduing men to the subjection of the government of Zion. Nor,

2. Do I mean that the members of one society of professing christians, should be spoiled of the fruits of their toils, to maintain the ministry of another, which, in the administration of Divine ordinances, they cannot in conscience attend—The church of the Saviour desires not robbery for burnt offerings.

Having stated what is not intended by an establishment of religion, I shall now state what is

3. The people who are favoured with the christian Scriptures, should recognize them as the standard of their behaviour—they should recognize the existence of the christian church, and pledge themselves to defend her from the power of the proud oppressor. They should break the arm that would be lifted against her, and duly restrain those, who would outrageously disturb her order. This may be illustrated by the establishment of civil and natural rights. How is the right to the fruits of the soil secured to the planter? By compelling his neighbors to plough his fields, and to sow where they never expect to reap? No; but by wholesome laws, defending his just possessions from the plunderer's grasp. The laws establish to a man his right to the abundant fruits of his highly cultivated field, when the robber is prohibited from touching them; though no premium be awarded as a motive to improvement.[51] When the wild beast of the field is prohibited to enter and spoil the tender vines, the vineyard of the Lord is established. Pray what in christianity, what in the laws of heaven, are thus at war with human happiness? Is that law which *is holy, just and good*, and which obliges *to do justly*, so opposite to national interests, that it would be dangerous to confess its obligation? Are the church of Christ and her peaceful laws, so repugnant to human rights, and so hostile to national

concerns, that her existence must not be known in a nation's deeds, nor her rights defended by the country's laws? Establishment of religion, rightly understood has none of this horrid aspect with which it is sometimes drawn.

Obj. 5. You admit none to be of the christian church but those of your own opinion; all others, according to your principles should be disfranchised; your Magistrate will be constituted a judge in religious affairs, and all whom he condemns must be extirpated at his pleasure.

Ans. 1. This objection has been often presented. Want of information has been sometimes found to be its origin; but much oftener has it evidently proceeded from a malignity, disposing to misrepresent what cannot be fairly disproved. With the mistaken principles and illiberal views of those, who exclude from citizenship in Zion, all who are not recognized by the prelatically ordained, or who have not been immersed in the fount or flowing stream, we have nothing to do. Our uniform practice, in recognizing the validity of ordinances dispersed in other branches of the christian church, by receiving into our communion, those baptised and ordained by them, without requiring a repetition of these ordinances, is a confutation of the slander, that we exclude from the church, or from mercy, all who are out of our immediate communion.

2. That there is with some denominations, more purity of principle and correctness in order than in others, will be admitted by all; that it may be often difficult to ascertain the system nearest the infallible standard, will not be denied, and that there are principles and practices hostile to the religion of Jesus, and subversive of national and personal morality is equally evident.

3. That men in any relation should avowedly set right and wrong on the same footing, to assert, is an outrage against common sense. Countenance may be given on one hand, without using violence on the other—As alleged in the objection, the civil magistrate is not left to judge and decide *ad libitum*. The times in which princes have ruled without control, it is hoped, are near an end. The people by solemn and deliberate deeds, in conformity with their Maker's law, should form the immediate rule by which their Executive should be regulated in all transactions. Their will, thus expressed, he is bound to obey, and it is his duty to execute their commands. The people thus guided will never form laws oppressive to themselves, and unless authorized by them, the magistrate can neither abet nor discourage, in his official character, any practice that may prevail. This will answer the impertinent question often proposed: Who will be judge?[52]

Obj. 6. The difficulties arising out of such measures would be insurmountable.



To legislate and judge aright about religious things, is perhaps impossible. Better to let them alone according to the direction of our Redeemer. Mat. 13:30.

Ans. 1. A simple letting alone may often be proper. Against this at present I am not contending. But is authoritatively proclaiming all to be equal, and solemnly engaging to afford protection in every practice, if the epithet religious can, by any means be imposed upon it, letting alone?

It is highly probable that in the present state of society, and while mankind are influenced by present prejudices it will be difficult to adopt measures more correct than those which should they not rather be exposed, and a practice more consistent even with deism itself be enjoined? But,

2. If difficulties in legislating, and in execution of laws, be a reason for warranting protection, formally to be extended, to all things in which they may occur, government is at an end. How difficult often to convict the murderer the robber and slanderer? Must no laws, therefore, be made respecting those crimes! Must no power of judging in such cases be admitted, lest that power should be abused, or because, it often has! Must laws be made authorizing the assassin, under a legal covert, to go forth at noon day and commit his deeds of blood, because it is, in many cases, difficult, even impossible to establish guilt? For a similar reason, must a constitutional right be given to the poisoned tongue of calumny, to destroy the character of the innocent? Difficulties here will not be acknowledged as a reason to justify in protection, nor even to let alone. Why then should they be pled in defence of practices equally pernicious and as evidently so? The objection is trifling.[53]

Obj. 7. These things for which you contend would inevitably lead to persecution, by violating the rights of conscience which belong to all men, and in the exercise of which, though God may be offended, yet they have a right to worship as they please. This right ought to be solemnly ratified.

Ans. Rather than speak against the rights of conscience, or do violence to the pious mind, I trust I would rather choose than these lips should be sealed in silence, and that my tongue should *cleave to the roof of my mouth*. But let the objection be examined.

1<sup>st</sup>. It is asserted that every man has a right to worship as he pleases. Man is a dependent being, therefore all his rights must be derived. Whence are they derived? From God alone. It would appear reasonable then, if God has given man a right that the exercise thereof would not offend him. It may be said that

the exercise thereof is limited by his laws. This is true; but the right ceases when the bounds are transgressed. To talk of man possessing a right, the exercise of which opposes the laws of God, is only worthy of an atheist.

2. I have no right to sin against my Creator, nor have I a right to declare that another man has. I have no toleration from the law of my nature, as a subject of Jehovah's government, or as united with fellow men to encourage them in what is calculated to provoke the wrath of heaven, and to debase the human mind. I indeed have no right to prescribe what principles, and modes of worship another shall embrace and practice. This I may very safely declare. But as little right have I to proclaim that his conscience should be his rule, and declare his right to obey its dictates, and my right to protect him in this obedience, since I know it possible, and even more than probable, that by so doing he may dishonour his God.

3. The truth is, that all the rights of man are the gift of God, and are to be exercised according to his law. God cannot give his moral creature a right to blaspheme his name, or to worship an idol. This would imply a contradiction. Why then should presumptuous man lay claim to such a power, and in the face of nations declare it to be his own? Does not the claim assimilate too much with the language of the wicked. Psal. 12:4. *Our lips are our own; who is lord over us?* Such claims belong not to nations till they make it appear that they are not accountable to Almighty God.

4. Is there no medium between declaring, that men have a right to offend God, and persecution? If not, deplorable is the situation of man! This however is not the case, there is a medium; they may be *let alone*. What father of a family does not, at times, pass over the follies of his children, without correction, when it would be more than imprudent to encourage them? What officers of the church, in some circumstance, do not prudently omit the infliction of censure, and yet it would be intolerable to abet and encourage the practice of sin? The contending for such a right, as that stated in the objection, is wicked and without necessity.[54]

Obj. 3. The church and state are distinct; with the church the civil magistrate, as a magistrate has nothing to do. To give the civil power, whose office is entirely secular, any authority about religion, would be to blend those things together, which should be kept separate, and consequently destroy the spiritual nature of the church, as well as make men hypocrites.

Ans. 1. It is admitted that church and state are distinct in origin—immediate rule and end—officers &c. and to destroy this distinction would be highly

criminal and injudicious. While this is admitted, it should be remembered that both are put into the Mediator's hand, and the reason why, should not be forgotten, as it is stated. Phil. 2:8,11. Eph 1:22. It will be found, that his headship should be confessed by every name, *every power* on earth, and in that headship the church is concerned. To maintain this distinction, is it necessary that the Son should not be kissed by nations? If not necessary, it has already appeared, that submission implies obedience to his commands; among those to nourish the church, will be found not the least important. Isa. 60<sup>th</sup> Chapt. throughout.

2. What portion of the revelation of God teaches us, that "the civil magistrate has nothing to do with the church, as a magistrate?" Civil rulers are the representatives of society. Has then civil society nothing to do with the church of Christ? Nothing to do with the exalted Jesus?—Nothing to do with God and his laws? Men can only glorify their Creator through the medium of their Redeemer, we know of no way of approach to the Redeemer but through the medium of his church; but with the church, men, in a national capacity, have nothing to do; they therefore, in a way of obedience, cannot approach the Saviour in that capacity; consequently they cannot transact national affairs to the glory of God. Thus according to *Divine constitution* it is impossible to obey the Divine command in 1 Cor. 10:13!

The promotion of the declarative glory of the Divine perfections, should be the highest end which man, in every relation of life, proposes to himself; this can only be done by promoting the interest of the system of grace. Is it then possible to admit that men, thus obliged, can lawfully form themselves into such an important association, as national society, without respect to the glory of God? If not; how will he be glorified by them in that character, if they in it have nothing to do with Jesus or his church? Q. If the doctrine of the objection be true, would it not be prudent to commit the management of public affairs entirely into the hands of Deists, and Atheists; as it is probable they would stand sufficiently far from the church? Can those who make the objection, consistently inveigh against the infidelity of civil Rulers?

3. How will a nation's declaring themselves bound, to regulate all their affairs, in subserviency to the honor of the Ruler of nations, tend to destroy the spiritual nature of the church, and replenish her with hypocrites? Has obedience to the law of our nature a tendency to promote its violation!

4. Domestic society is as distinct from the church of Jesus as national. If the latter has nothing to do with the church, how does it come that the former has? Or to guard the spiritual privileges of Zion, must the heads of families be

instructed that, as such, they have no concern with her affairs? Must the prevention of external injury being sustained, by one member of the family from another, be the extent of what a parent or master, as such, must do for the church of God?

Has God, at no time, warranted the interference of civil authority to discourage idolatry and impiety? See Exod. 34:13. Has he at no time, heretofore, warranted nations to encourage the interests of religion? It is too evident to require proof, that he has. Had God no church then on earth? We know who has said so; and the purpose for which the fact has been denied, with that subject at present, however, we have nothing to do. That the Redeemer had a church, a spiritual society, previous to the new testament dispensation of grace has been often proved; nor will it be refused by many who make the objection to which I now reply. Did national disapprobation of impiety, and civil protection of truth and piety, tend to corrupt the church, and make men dissemblers? Did the most high ever form institutions, calculated to produce such effects? Or has he, like frail mortals, by experience discovered the error, which was not perceived when his arrangements were formed? Where is thee information in the gospel, that the promise of eternal good to the virtuous, is calculated to foster hypocrisy? Do men in their declamations consider that they reproach the doctrine of God our Saviour. 1 Tim. 4:8. *Godliness is profitable—having the promise of the life that now is.*

Obj. 9. If what you contend for in the constitution of lawful civil government be requisite, it will be hard to find any on earth; but that an ordinance of God so essential to the existence of society should be lost, is not credible. If not lost, it should be recognised.

Ans. 1. I presume I have contended for nothing, but what good reason and the scriptures of truth warrant. And though a lawfully constituted government could not be found, it would be no more than the christian has been taught to expect. *Israel shall be many days without a prince.* Hos. 3:4. In the revelations by John, which is a history of the church and world anticipated, we are informed that the world wondered after the beast, and worshiped him, and that the horns, or constituted authorities of the nations, in all their ramifications, gave their power to the beast, and in their constitutions and administrations made war with the Lamb. Rev. 13:3,4; 17:13,14. Can such be lawfully constituted governments? During the forty two months, in which the holy city is to be trodden under foot, and the woman is banished into the wilderness, it would be vain for any considerable length of time, to calculate on another order of things. So far from this being an objection, it may be admitted as a truth—a truth which may be improved against the infidel, and which will bear

equally heard on the advocates of every power that exists.

2. Divine Providence carries forward the government of the world, in a manner consistent with his holy designs. Through the instrumentality of the votary of superstition,—the raving fanatic, and proud usurpers over the church of Christ, some impressions of moral obligation are kept up on the minds of men, and they restrained from that outrage, which would altogether prostrate society; Yet the christian, who is taught by the word of truth, and acts under the influence of enlightened reason, could not incorporate with such, and conscientiously approve of the constitutions on which they stand. In like manner, in his sovereign dispensations, he uses for the preservation of some degree of order, even the edicts of tyrants. Could the christian and the friend of human right, consistently approve of their constitution. Approbation of what is right in either constitution or administration will not be withheld. This however is very different from giving a pledge to support a constitution, how deficient or immoral soever it may be.

3. Admit that constituted governments may be found, which will be acknowledged to be the ordinances of God, does it follow from this, that incorporation with them by binding to support their constitutions, is an indispensable duty? Might not the objector find a society of professed christians, which he could not deny to be a church of God, with which however, he could by no means unite. Why? Because in its terms of communion, he is sensible there is something contrary to the purity of gospel doctrine, or opposed to the simplicity of evangelical order; and he ought never to be required to prostitute his conscience for sake of supposed advantages, which he might obtain in its communion. May not a civil government, which has not forfeited all its claims to be the ordinance of God, be so incumbered with sinful terms of communion, as to give just occasion to stand at a distance from it, and not to mingle with its supporters in the management of its affairs?

A variety of trivial objections beside those now considered, you have heard often made—your acquaintance with the oracles of God will enable you to expose them, or rather your good sense will direct you to treat the most of them with that silence which cavils not believed by your antagonists, themselves justly merit.

It now remains that we attend to a brief

#### IMPROVEMENT.

1. The subject now discussed, presents to us important information. It exhibits

the Son of God in our nature, having in his humbled state, vanquished his foes, and so far as the eternal interests of his people are concerned, destroyed the influence of sin and the power of death, elevated to the throne of glory. His elevation, to be the moral head of the intellectual creation, presents, in a more important light, universal creation, than the mind of man, unaided by revelation, could have supposed. Under the influence of this truth, on the minds of the human family, we may hope, the glory of the latter day will be rendered complete. While the whole creation, and providence of God, are not viewed as put under the feet of Messiah, for the furtherance of the plans of his grace, men will never see the greatest devise of wisdom in its importance. While it is conceived, that any of the affairs of mortals, have no connection with the spiritual kingdom of Jesus, a competition between their secular pursuits, and the demands of the Redeemer will subsist.

Vain are all expectations of peace and concord in Zion, while the concerns of this life are not made subservient to Messiah's glory. Let the sovereignty of the crowned Mediator be confessed by men, and consistently with the confession let them act; then shall the partition walls which divide the church of God be removed, and no more mar the beauty of that divine edifice. Then, and not till then, shall contending parties untie, and under the influence of the gospel, which speaketh peace to him that is far off and to him that is near, harmoniously act in support of the cause of God and man; their minds being purified from that moral dross, which pollutes society, and destroys the value of the intercourse of men. We have every reason to believe, without doing violence to that charity which covereth a multitude of sins, that selfish considerations have vastly more influence than conscience, in effecting and maintaining divisions, in the church of God.

2. This subject addresses itself to man in every relation of life: the citizens of Zion, and especially the officers thereof are addressed. They are called upon "to keep pure and entire" the institutions of God, peculiarly recommended to their care, and pious attention. They, under the awful penalty of having their names expunged from the book of life, are forbidden to mingle the devices of human fancy, with the holy ordinances of his grace. "What thing soever I command you, observe—Thou shalt not add thereto nor diminish therefrom. In vain do ye worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." To the empires of this world its voice is also directed. "Ye nations hear it, and ye Kings obey." He is Governor among the nations. Psal. 22:27. Why confine his mediatorial glory within the limits of Zion? There indeed it appears concentrated; but far beyond her confines it extends. Let none attempt to limit, in narrow bounds, the dominion of the King of kings, lest in his victorious wrath, when in defiance of the nations' anger he takes to him his power and

reigns, he numbers you among the fallen victims of his vengeful ire. On Zion's hill, indeed, he sits supreme. On his blessed head the crown of Israel flourishes; but contemplate him once more; *on his head are many crowns*, Rev. 19:12, and among the rest, the diamonds of that of the nations shine forth, with a radiance all Divine. On his vesture and on his thigh is a name inscribed, indicative of his extensive claims. Rev. 19:16. Legislators! Consider our exalted Jesus; into his hand you are given. Recognize his authority; regard his law. Remember he holds not only the golden sceptre of grace, but also the iron rod of rectoral Executive powers of the nations! Hear his voice. Psal. 2:10. He addresses you. Do your constitutions, in your official character, oblige you to disregard the special kingdom of the Redeemer? Are you bound to foster the avowed enemies of his crown? Tremble; for your situation is terrible. Hasten from those hills of prey—flee from those lions' dens—depart from those mountains of the leopards. Rule not on principles that oblige you to be hostile to Jesus, or indifferent to his cause. Ye people; manifest your regard to his commands—evinced your obedience in your national deeds—injoin it on your representatives to confess, in their official character, allegiance to the Christ of God. Forget not, that on disobedient nations, from the altar above, he hurls the fire of his wrath; and to their deep seated basis, shakes the mountains of their constituted powers.

3. The business of this day is an exercise of gratitude to the Divine Saviour, for blessings conferred on us, in his gracious dispensations. In the introductory exercise of the morning, we took a cursory view of general and particular favors, received from the everflowing fountain of heavenly goodness—The conducting of this empire, through the perils of revolution, and setting the inhabitants thereof free, from the grievous yoke of foreign domination—the preservation of peace in our borders, an unexampled prosperity, while surrounding nations have been convulsed and overthrown, have been stated as evidences of a superintending, and gracious providence over a sinful people, calling for our expression of gratitude in songs of praise. On this we shall not longer detain. Nor shall your attention be more than recalled to the prospects of our Zion, amidst the clouds of this gloomy day. The right hand of the Lord hath done valiantly; of ourselves we have little reason to speak good; to his name who ruleth over all, let the praise be ascribed.

4. The discussion to which you have been attending, affords grounds of consolation, and joy, to the mourners in Zion, and the oppressed victims of overgrown power. While reviewing those scenes which have transpired in times long gone, and considering those which pass immediately before the eye in the present day, the contemplative mind is often ready, in moments of despondency, to enquire; is there a God who directs the events of this world?

Or, by undesigning fate, are all the parts of nature mingled in chaotic disorder? To find a reply, we are not left to wander in the gloomy mazes of gentile conjecture. *Jehovah*, even our Emanuel *reigns*. He conducts those scenes by counsel. Happy will be the result of his administration. But exclude him from the helm of universal government, and horrible darkness overspreads the heavens; dreary are the prospects presented to the eye; this world is an inhospitable desert, and far as imagination itself can roam, no object rises to cheer the sight. The doctrine of our text, and its numerous illustrations in the pages of the sacred volume, dissipate the gloom, and affords a medium for the exercise of faith, whose eye penetrates beyond the horizon of our times, and attentively surveys the happy scenes of future days. Great shall be the peace of the church and of the world; the seed, of the doctrines of Divine truth, shall be sown in every land; from the springs of Zion's hill, shall issue forth those streams, which shall fertilize the parched soil of the nations. Then shall the wilderness become a fruitful field, and the barren mountains shake with fruit. The ministers of the Sanctuary shall not then complain, that few believe their report; that they labour in vain and spend their strength for nought. The city of Zion shall flourish and her citizens abound like the grass that decorates the fields.

Darkness indeed spreads over the transactions of our times. Toward the church of God, and the peace of the world the cloudy dispensations of our day, seem to look with a scowling aspect. Let the friend of righteousness console himself with the truth, that *the Lord reigneth*. The attentive observer, amidst the gloom, cannot but perceive some lines of light, greeting the clouds of the Antichristian night as *messengers* of approaching *day*. The fire of Divine wrath has been kindled in the palaces of those monsters who, covered with blood, have been faithful to the man of sin, in executing his inquisitorial mandates. The holy breathings of the souls in glory, under the altar, blow this fire of vengeance into an intenser flame. The prayers of the church of Jesus, registered for ages past in the court above, are now receiving their answer, while the horns of the Roman beast are made to hate the mother of harlots, to eat her flesh and to burn her with fire; and while the waters of the mystic *Euphrates are drying up*.<sup>[55]</sup> *Though some of the nominal*, followers of the Lamb should be found, who would lend a helping hand to support the falling chair of the usurper over the mount of God, and the rights of man, his ruin, because of their infatuation, will not be retarded. It is cause of joy that the true disciples of Jesus are not employed in the execution of the sentence of Heaven; but that those, educated in the cruel arts of the Antichristian school, are engaged to humble the proud oppressor.

Finally, my brethren, improve this discussion, by entertaining more exalted



views of the character of the glorious Savior. Let him have the highest places in your affections—Embrace him by an appropriating faith, individually, for your own salvation—deceive not yourselves, by resting in general hopes of mercy, while you reject, by unbelief, the redemption and grace of Jesus. Manifest your regard to the interest of his honor, by a conscientious respect to every Divine institution. Pray earnestly and much for the peace and prosperity of Zion—that every existing cause of division, real, or imaginary, among the disciples of our Lord may be removed—that the land in which we live may be blessed, and that a spirit of grace, poured forth upon the inhabitants thereof, may be manifested in their speedy repentance, and by submission to the exalted Jesus, and rejoicing in his reign. From your minds let the impious sentiment and its pernicious influence be banished far; that men, in their civil relations, are not bound to regard the church of God. Can the man who possesses the sensibilities of the patriot, and who, amidst the commotions of these days, trembles for the Ark of God, use such a language? Keep yourselves remote from every institution, to the existence of which, immorality is made essential. Continue to evidence your attachment to social order, by pursuing the great ends of government, in lives of virtue and of piety; omitting no opportunity of promoting, so far as you lawfully can, the general weal. Mark with your disapproving frowns the prostitution of the sacred name of Religion, to subserve the interests of the unprincipled cause of ambitious or servile factions.

*Be zealous*; be firm in your profession and practice, and at the same time, guard against that intemperate zeal, not directed by knowledge, which characterizes the enthusiast, and which worketh not the righteousness of God. Christian prudence and benevolence will teach you, that while you oppose the errors of men, their persons you should love. Endeavor to have your minds fortified with truth, so that you may not, by popular prejudice, or trifling objections, be led to abandon the testimony of Jesus. Thus shall you have the consolation of contributing, in your respective stations in life, to diffuse among men, and recommend to them that system, under which the nations of the earth shall yet be united, in the bonds of a lasting peace, which shall, in all its blessings abound while *the moon endureth*. Then *the envy of Ephraim shall depart, and the adversaries of Judah shall be cut off; Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim*. Be not discouraged because you have no prophet who can tell the time, during which Zion must yet be desolate. the time is fixed, and beyond the appointed day your Lord will not tarry. He will *arise and have mercy upon Zion*.

Then Heaven and Earth renewed shall be made pure,  
To sanctity that shall receive no stain.

## FINIS.

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### Footnotes:

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[1] Psalm 75:3.

[2] 1 Corinthians 15:25.

[3] Psalm 96:10,11.

[4] Isaiah 11:6.

[5] *Much declamation of this kind is to be heard. These men would desire to impress us with the idea of their superior sanctity. Compare their piety and deportment with what is reported and what we know of the reformers. The piety of these modern spiritualizers falls as far below that of our reforming fathers as their conduct is different. Let them read the sermons, and consult the history of these times, and blush for their impertinence in libelling their practice.*

[6] Jeremiah 1:6.

[7] Verses 17,18.

[8] Matthew 28:19,20.

[9] Jeremiah 10:7.

[10] Romans 13:1,6; Deuteronomy 17, *chapter*; Psalm 2:10-12, *and other places.*

[11] *I have long considered the slavish doctrines, flowing from the lips and pens of professed Christians, as more injurious to the public interest of religion, than the attempts, against it, of the Tindals, Voltaires and Paines. They lay the ground work for such declamation as the following: "This, Horsely's doctrine of passive obedience, is foul heresy: it is the perfection of blasphemy—such men are tyrant's at heart, levellers in temper, and have done more towards unreigning the passions, and corrupting the morals of their fellow men than Paine could possibly accomplish. Finding men high in rank of spiritual honors,—attempting to distort and oppress the very sinews of *their temporal independence*, how am I to think of the hosannas and prayers weekly, indeed daily, celebrated in the praise of the most high? How am I to judge whether prayers, and hymns and humbling of hearts, be tricks to impose upon mankind or insults to the living God? How decide you between the scurility of a Paine, and the juggles of a Horsely?" *Macleod examin. of Landaff's apol. The christian who walks worthy of his high vocation, contending for the cause of God and man is invulnerable by such attacks.**

[12] Zechariah 9:10.

[13] Romans 5:12.

[14] Psalm 49:7.

[15] Romans 8:2,3.

[16] Song 3:11.

[17] Daniel 7:14.

[18] John 3:35.

[19] Matthew 28:18.

[20] *"Mahanaim, signifies two armies: the one, as some suppose, having conveyed him safe from Mesopotamia, the other was ready to welcome him to Canaan, and receive him under their protection. Or perhaps one encamped before, and the other behind, him and his company, as his guard on every side, as well from Laban as from Esau."* Scott.

[21] Isaiah 37:36.

[22] Revelation 1:18.

[23] Ephesians 1:22.

[24] Romans 8:28.

[25] Philippians 2:8-10.

[26] Zechariah 6:13.

[27] Psalm 48:2.

[28] Isaiah 25:7.

[29] Psalm 11:12.

[30] Haggai 2:6,7.

[31] Psalm 68:31.

[32] 2 Kings 9:22.

[33] Isaiah 21:11,12.

[34] Revelation 18:8,20.

[35] *While the U.S. stand, in point of justice and generosity towards foreign nations, upon a proud eminence; and the form of their government is the best adapted, of any under the sun, to secure the rights of humanity; it is no small matter of regret that their glory is tarnished with the black deeds of slavery.*

*We shall also find the sacred walks of Zion profaned by the inhuman slaveholder. In too many churches we shall find the murderer of the rights of his brother, and the outrager of the Redeemer's law of love, cordially embraced by those who minister in holy things, and while clothed with the spoils of suffering innocence, and his hand reeking with their blood, he is welcomed to sit down at the table of the Lord, as one who does justly and loves mercy, and walks humbly with God! The horse stealer is excluded and the man stealer welcomed! Query, which is the greater criminal?*

[36] Psalm 48:12,13.

[37] *Dr. M'Leod's Messiah governor of nations.*

[38] Judges 16:9.

[39] Exodus 34:7.

[40] Romans 1:18.

[41] Hosea 11:4; 2 Corinthians 5:14.

[42] Titus 2:12,14.

[43] *Between man's first condition and that under the economy of grace, there is a manifest difference. By the latter he stands in a new relation to his Creator, from which new duties must arise; to regulate these a new directory is requisite; hence the primitive law, as impressed on Adam's soul or as revealed in the constitution of nature, is inadequate to direct man at present. The supposition that it is, rests on the ground that man's present state is the same in which he was created; this reason and revelation combine to reject, whatever visionary theorists may say to the contrary. This consideration will set aside much of the specious reasoning of Deists, against the necessity of supernatural revelation.*

[44] Psalm 51: 6.

[45] Galatians 3:10.

[46] Romans 13:3,4.

[47] This subject is important. It receives not that attention which it merits. Reason and revelation unite in approving that constitution of government which is hinted at above. It may be summarily viewed under the following particulars.

1. *The representatives of a nation, whether legislators or executors, ought to be men of talents and integrity.*

2. *The powers given them should be lawful in a moral point of view.*

3. *The manner in which they become possessed of these powers should be also consistent with national liberty. This should be by the voice of the nation, fairly expressed. Assumption of power, in any other mode, in ordinary cases, is usurpation.*

4. *A constitutional exercise of power, in pursuit of the great ends of the social compact.*

Divest a government of any one of the above characters, and it can lay no claim to an oath of allegiance, or any act which necessarily implies it. To know that a power exists is all that many desire to convince them that it is an institution of heaven, demanding conscientious support. Can such believe that there ever was a throne of iniquity with which God would have no fellowship? See Psalm 94:20. It is not therefore strange to see many of these "panders of power," among the first to oppose every attempt to effect reform, and repel aggression. If the mere existence and possession of power will constitute the minister of God, then he who has the most is the greatest favorite of heaven, and they act consistently in advocating the oppressor's cause, if he only have power to execute his schemes of injustice. Thus, in proof of the duty of conscientious obedience, to every existing power, we hear it urged that, though, "Nebuchadnezzar the famed king of Babylon was an idolater,—and as to cruelty none could exceed him. The Lord's providential

disposal made the tabernacles of Nebuchadnezzar the robber to prosper as well as the tabernacles of Caesar the robber. And why should not the people of God be subject to robbers, in all things lawful, at God's bidding?" (See Fletcher's *Scriptural Loyalist*.) George the III. is represented by the same author "as a king who is meek and gentle, a lover of his subjects and the guardian of their liberties." Add as holding a "gentle sceptre which he sways over his subjects." Thus did a professed christian, and a Divine [*i.e.*, theologian] absurdly scribble in Britain, and the profane effusion to proselyte her citizens, was republished in America. As though America had forgotten the tens of thousands of her sons, who were slaughtered, by butchers at "the gracious command of this gentle king!" As though we had never heard of the more than cruel murders, perpetrated under his benign reign in India! As though we had never heard of the gentle sway of his gentle sceptre, over the inhabitants of Ireland, 50,000 of whom fell under its weight, in their late attempt to regain those rights, of which he and his predecessors have robbed them. But why should not robbers be obeyed? But was conscientious obedience required to the authority of the Nebuchadnezzars, the Caesars, &c. whom "as to cruelty none could exceed?" Then, unless we can find some tyrant, more cruel than he whom "none could exceed" in cruelty, we never can rise lawfully in hostility against any existing power, without being in danger of incurring damnation. If this be true, alas for rebellious America! To guard against such absurdities, pernicious in both a moral and political respect, it is necessary to consult, with an unbiassed mind, the oracles of God. These are the charter of our rights. Never has the God of goodness enjoined on mortals, to prostitute their conscience, in supporting a tyrannical and immoral power. The ordinance of God has another character than the association of robbers. [48] Hosea 9:12.

[49] 2 Kings 10:17; Ezekiel 20:18,19.

[50] See *Answer to Q. 26—Shorter Catechism*.

[51] Tythes have so generally been connected with an establishment of religion, that in the view of many they appear to go into its essence. A very little reflection will convince that they are not only a distinct, but also separable. In the U.S. all have an establishment, as well the believer in and worshipper of the virgin Mary, as the worshipper of Jesus, yet none have tythes.

[52] Want of attention to the ideas above suggested, it is presumed, may have been a principal cause of the evils, too often connected with civil establishments of religion. The systems established have seldom been correct, and generally have been the opinions of the prince, but not of the people. That religion should be nationally regarded is, I believe, a dictate of reason, as well as of scripture; but in manifesting this regard, the revelation of Jesus Christ, as a directory, has been too little consulted. The hand of the vigilant and active

enemy of our race, is visible in these transactions. To cast reproach on every thing which bears the image of Jesus, is his grand design. An affectionate exercise of religion is essential to its existence, and is a felicity to man. To banish the spirit of religion, advantage is taken of the imbecility of the human mind, and raging enthusiasm is produced. To avoid this extreme, the superficial observer rejects from religion all exercise of the heart. Thus to avoid the extremes, and injustice of establishments of superstition, an opposite course, equally erroneous, and perhaps leading more directly to the same evils, than its abettors are aware of, is adopted.

[53] In the laws of our states respecting these things there is a glaring inconsistency. That our Redeemer is God, is a truth and that open image-worship is a crime, is as evidently revealed, as that the first day of the week should be observed in a religious manner. A denial of the first, and an open practice of the second, are doubtless as pernicious as a violation of the sabbath, by attending to usual secular employments. These employments are lawful on other days; idolatry and blasphemy never are. Where is the consistency in restraining from doing on the sabbath what is lawful on common days, and to protect in the commission of crimes at no time lawful? The man who profanes the name of any person of the trinity in common life will be punished; but if under the pretext of religious principle he blaspheme the character of Jesus, and profane the oracles of heaven by attempting to make them prove the Saviour no more than a mortal man, he passes not only without censure, but has a right guaranteed to do so!

[54] It is a pity that the justly celebrated Author of the Notes on Virginia [Thomas Jefferson] , ever let fall from his pen, the following unguarded expression; "It does me no injury for my neighbour to say there are twenty Gods, or no God." However benevolent and liberal his intention might have been, and however correct much of his reasoning on the subject, of which he there treats may be, the atheistical tendency of the declaration, especially on superficial minds, who are led by more respectable names, than by decisions of truth resulting from investigation, is too obvious to admit of dispute. The unqualified manner in which the rights of conscience are asserted, in public deeds of the nation, come near to involve all that the expression contains, if not more. And even religious deeds, ratified with all the solemnity of ecclesiastical authority in the following language, still more atheistically absurd, avow the same principle. "Pagans—have a right to civil and religious liberty, and may be allowed to join themselves in a covenant to preserve both." (Narrative prefixed to the Testimony of the Associate Church. Page 52. See Testimony Page 9. Sect. 17, as an illustration of the same.) Consequently, should those pagans embrace a religion, which recognizes 20, or 20,000 gods, they have a right to form a league to preserve this pagan religion. Is not the destruction of paganism the effect which Christianity is designed to produce?

See Daniel 2:44. Could the approvers of the above sentiment, consistently blame the heathen for forming combinations against Christianity, which have proved so ruinous to their religion, and consequently to their religious liberty? It is much to be regretted that respectable and pious men, in deeds judicially approved, as a testimony for truth, should speak so loosely.

[55] Revelation 17:16; 16:12. "The ten horns shall hate the whore. That is some of the ten Kings; for others shall bewail and lament for her. Revelation 18:9. and shall fight, and perish in the cause of the beast Revelation 19:19,20. some of the Kings who formerly loved her, grown, sensible of her—oppressions, shall hate her, shall strip her, and expose, and plunder—and utterly consume her with fire. And as the Kings of France have contributed greatly to her advancement, it is not impossible, nor improbable, that some time or other they may also be the principal authors of her destruction." (Bp. Newton.) If Heaven make the Present emperor of France [Napoleon] the instrument of wrath against the whore of Babylon [*i.e.*, the Roman church], why should any but her abandoned train regret!