

THE AMERICAN NATIONAL PREACHER.

No. 2, Vol. XXIII.

MARCH, 1849.

Whole No. 267.

SERMON CCCCXCV.

BY REV. TRYON EDWARDS, D.D.,
New London, Connecticut.

THE RICHEST TREASURE.*

"More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold."—PSALMS
19:10.

WHEN, half a century ago, the first settlers of Western New York were about leaving their home in New England for what was then a wilderness, the entire village, we are told, assembled with them at the house of God, where together they had so often worshipped. There, by the minister of Christ, they were addressed on the subject of their expedition—were commended to heaven by prayer, and then, amid weeping and sadness, took their mournful farewell—no more, as they supposed, again to meet their friends on earth. They went forth somewhat as the first settlers of New England went when leaving the shores beyond the Atlantic, with no thought of ever returning. And going with these feelings, no wonder they turned their thoughts to the religious themes suggested by the separations of *life* as of *death*, and desired to be commended to Him, without whose care no one is ever safe.

A feeling kindred to theirs doubtless originated the interesting and salutary custom which prevails here, and at other whaling ports, of preaching on board the vessel that is soon to go forth with those who follow their calling on the waves—counseling her crew from the oracles of God, and commending them to Him who rules alike on the land and on the deep. And surely the same course is most appropriate in the circumstances that assemble us this morning; assemble us in the house of God, when, but for the severity of the season, we might be gathered on the departing ship. These circumstances need no explanation. Multitudes, as we all know,

* A discourse preached to a company of California emigrants, and eminently adapted to the signs of the times.—*Ed.*

ful for time, he had no thought for eternity! *Wise for this world, he was acting the fool for the next?*

Many, yes, all of you have your plans for this world. Step by step, it may be, you could tell what next, and next, and on for years, or perhaps even down to old age! But ask yourself one question, What if death should meet you at some early stage of that future—*what then?* Or even, if you live to old age, still *what then?* What, when life shall end, and sickness and death shall come? What when eternity must be entered, and you must go and give up your account to God?—Tell me, O! tell me, *what then?—WHAT THEN?*



SERMON CCCCXCVI.

BY REV. W. A. SCOTT, D. D.

Of New Orleans, La.

HOPE OF REPUBLICS ; OR THE ELEMENTS OF PERMANENCE IN MODERN CIVILIZATION.*

“There shall no man be able to stand before you; for the Lord your God shall lay the fear of you and the dread of you upon all the land that ye shall tread upon, as He hath said unto you.”—Deut. 11: 25.

IT has been said of Lafayette, that he was worthy of Liberty, for his stout and noble soul never despaired of her cause. Betrayed, duped, and dying disappointed of the emancipation of his own country, in his own day, he lifted up his eyes to Heaven, and consoled his breaking and magnanimous heart, with the vitality, virtue, freedom, and greatness of future generations. Though born among a haughty aristocracy, his heart was with the people, and his creed their sovereignty. The ambition of a throne was base in his eyes. Despots and kings were with him synonymous terms. Had he not been Lafayette, his highest aim would have been to be a Washington. Generous and glorious Frenchman! ever dear to American Liberty—the more your tomb retreats into the shade of time, the more radiant will it be with glory to the eyes of posterity. And as the image of the sacred mountain, to which millions and generations of devotees are wont to go, grows in proportion as it recedes from view, until it stands

* Delivered on Thanksgiving Day, Dec. 21, 1848, in the Presbyterian Church, in Lafayette Square, of which Dr. Scott is Pastor.—*Ed.*

out aloft and solitary in the confines of the horizon, so Republican France, and all regenerated nations, in all coming ages, will send their sons on a pilgrimage of generosity, chivalry, truth, and liberty, to thy tomb.

Some historians profess to have discovered a law that renders the permanent prosperity of nations a moral impossibility. They tell us that *all flesh is grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass*, both of man as an individual, and of man associated—that nations, like billows, rise and decline—that all things have their ebbing and flowing.

It is true that the flower blooms only to fade. It is true that all things earthly are changing, changeable, and passing away, except the tendency to change. That alone is immutable. The history of man seems to be rising or falling. Birth, progression, decay—manhood, its vigor, maturity, and decline. And so brief is manhood's stay on the summit, that we cannot tell when it reaches the highest point, nor when it begins to go down. And must it be thus with every nation? Like a tree, is there a time for a nation to be born, take root, spread its branches, yield its fruit, and then decline, decay, fall into oblivion? Is it a fixed law of the universe, that communities, like individuals, of which they are composed, no sooner attain their manhood, than they hasten to decrepitude and decay? Has the all-wise Creator ordained that nations may advance, grow till they reach their meridian glory, and that, then, without a pause, they must decline? I do not believe there is any such law in existence. I do not believe that Ineffable Goodness has ordained any such statutes concerning the fall of nations. Again and again the Sacred Scriptures promise ever-enduring prosperity to the Hebrews, if they would continue steadfast in their obedience. There was then no necessity for them to decline. It is admitted that the law of progress and decay belongs to physical objects; but it is denied that it does necessarily attach to the intellect, and to moral and religious subjects. It is admitted that the mind may fail in some of its external expressions or functions—as in the failing of the memory—that brilliant intellect may sometimes degenerate—grow feeble for the want of exercise or by dissipation, or be oppressed with the infirmities of age. But it is earnestly denied that this is always so, or that it is absolutely necessary; and if it is admitted, as it must be, that in any solitary instance a great mind goes on improving, or even holding its own, during the entire period of the body's decline from its highest maturity to death, so that at the moment of dissolution the soul goes out on its pilgrimage from the body to the regions of eternity unimpaired; then, we have enough, from this solitary instance, to prove that it is *possible* for mental, moral, and spiritual excellence to remain unimpaired to the moment of death; and, consequently, what is possible of one mind is possible of many minds—of the minds of a whole nation. And as

moral goodness is not affected essentially by the material organization with which the soul is encompassed while in this world, so the mind and its habitudes of goodness and piety, are not, by any inexorable fatality, subjected to the physical laws that govern the decay and dissolution of its material habitation; and in a mind that not only remains without decay, but goes on improving, both in intellectual strength and moral excellence, up to the moment of its elimination from the body, we have all the essential elements of prosperity and perpetuity. The developments of a nation in wealth, in arts and arms, are its *Physiques*. These belong to its material organization. These are things that are subject, in some degree, to changes, like those of the seasons of the year. But the intellect, the moral and spiritual habitudes of a nation, may be preserved as indestructible as individuality in morals—as imperishable as individual immortality. It is

———“mind, mind alone,
Hath light and hope, and life and power.”

It does not matter who has wealth, nor where it is. It is mind that governs it. It does not matter what becomes of the magnificence or vanity of material things; the mind lives, and its habitudes of virtue and piety, or their opposites, are its eternal costume. It is true of the individual physical man, that he is born, grows to greater or less maturity, and then falls into feebleness, and finally into the grave. And it is true of individual man, moral, intellectual, spiritual, that there is a time when he begins to exist, and that he progresses thenceforward, either in holiness or moral turpitude; but it is not true that he ever ceases to exist. Every soul that has ever been born into the world is still alive. Not a single intellect that has ever emanated from Jehovah, has been or ever will be annihilated. This world does not comprise all man's history. Man is not a mere animal or vegetable, that comes forth in obedience to certain physical laws, grows, ripens, and rots—then, indeed, we might fold our hands and wait our destiny, content with Napoleon's philosophy: “It is written in Heaven.” But since this world is obviously not man's goal—not the fruition but the embryo of his existence—since a thousand arguments, and a thousand and one experiences, prove that this world is probationary, and in order to a righteous retribution, some shadowings forth of which only are now visible—since it is the way of Providence to carry on the government of human things in successive and gradually advancing dispensations, as a preparation for the appearance of the new heavens and the new earth—since a law of progress is inherent in intellect—since mind in thousands and millions of instances continues to advance and expand to the last moment of its continuance in the body—since individual mind and personal virtue do, in millions of instances,

continue to advance, to expand, to grow higher, and more and more perfect, without any pause at any mundane height, and never decline—since this is confessedly true of individual virtue and individual intellect, in at least some of the persons that compose communities; and that, too, not of a few or an insignificant number, is it not palpable that a nation, composed entirely of such, *may* continue to advance in everything excellent without any decline.

While I deny that there is any necessity of Fate for a nation to fall from its glory, I admit there is danger that the cup which intoxicated Babylon, Tyre, Carthage, Athens, and Rome, may intoxicate us. There is danger that the dizzy heights which they knew not how to keep, may so turn our heads that we may not be able to stand on them. But there is no fatal necessity that it should be so. *We are able to stand, but free to fall.* While there is danger that wealth and refinement will lead to luxury, vice, degradation, and decline, we possess in Christianity all that is necessary to counteract any such tendencies. The mental vigor and tender charities of the gospel are sufficient to resist the law of decay seen so palpably in the once proud and powerful States of the old world. The Bible, and the Bible alone, can preserve the monuments of our greatness from becoming the monuments of what has been. The intellectual and moral elevation and active benevolence of the gospel, are abundantly sufficient for the glory and perpetuity of a nation. If it be asked, whether it shall ever be said of us, as of the republics of former times, that we were a great people in our day, but that, like them, we have gone glimmering into the dream of things that were—"a schoolboy's tale, the wonder of an hour"—I reply, the answer to this inquiry is in the hands of us and our children. God has left all our future in our own hands. If we can succeed in giving to our native born, and to the millions of the old world cast upon our shores in their infancy and youth, an effective education—including under this term such training as shall render their faculties prompt and active; personal independence and yet subordination, sobriety, neatness and industry—such solid knowledge as shall enlarge to the utmost the means of subsistence, by enlarging the capacities of usefulness to their fellow-citizens—such knowledge of themselves as shall inspire them with hope and with the confidence that they are men—FREEMEN—whose bodies and minds and families are really the objects of divine and human benevolence—and such moral and religious instruction as shall inspire them with just views of crime, and associate the idea of happiness with that of honest independence—as shall fill their hearts with a sense of the Divine Being and of their final accountability to Him, and with sentiments of fervent charity towards and sympathy with their fellow-men; if by the continued prosecution of agriculture and of the true principles of trade and commerce, we can develop

adequately our vast national resources ; if we can succeed in fully developing our moral and intellectual energies, and with these, the material resources on which the maintenance of their healthy activity depends, then our Republic will stand to the end of time ; and when the sleeping dust of ages and of empires rises to meet the Son of God, the star-spangled banner shall still be floating in the breeze. Yes, my brethren, in the cultivation of our valleys—in the ores of our mountains—in the commerce of our rivers, lakes, railroads, and sea-boards—in the purity and pre-eminent influence of women—in the vigorous prosecution of our systems of public instruction—in the universal diffusion of knowledge—in the sublime morality of the Bible—in the purity, vitality, and benevolence of the gospel of Christ, we have the elements of unshaken permanence in our institutions. And I have not a doubt, but that, in spite of the sinister predictions of speculative historians ; in spite of the dreams of aristocratic philosophers, and the ill-omened vistas of monarchists, whose wishes are father to their forebodings ; in spite of our rapidly increasing population ; in spite of the intrigues of a few disappointed, restless, selfish, narrow-minded politicians, that the United States, in every essential particular as she now is, will occupy, for ages upon ages to come, an ever-increasingly glorious position amongst the nations of the earth. And to show that our hope of republics is well founded, I propose to notice still further a few grounds of doubt, and then glance at some of the elements of their permanence.

1. Let it not be argued that we must fall, sooner or later, because all preceding States and Kingdoms have either already fallen, or are in a rapid decline. The past is a good school, but not an infallible prophet. The past is only in part the cause of the present, and of the future. As no two leaves of the forest are exactly alike, nor any two human faces, so neither are any two ages or countries exactly alike. The past may have its semblance ; but it never has its exact likeness in the present. The human body is so far the same, as to preserve its personal identity from infancy to old age, and yet its particles are ever changing. The elements of society now are in part the same as the elements of society in ages past ; and in part they are different, and in some things wholly unlike and superior to those of any former age. The religious faith of modern times, especially in our country, where there is no unhallowed, adulterous connection between Church and State, is purer than was known in the ancient world : and the religious faith of a nation has a greater influence, direct and indirect, upon its prosperity, than all other causes. The predicates, therefore, of no past age are to be applied, without considerable limitations, to the present. And as the history of no other nation corresponds to the *past* and *present* of the American people, so neither should it be considered as any

prophecy of their *future*. The ages of the world and the generations of men that have rolled past to the bourne of those before the flood, are all alike in many respects ; and yet each is possessed of some peculiar feature, that gives it a distinctive prominence in the annals of the universe. It is not in classic lore only, that such distinctions have obtained as have been denominated the golden, silver, brass and iron ages ; such distinctive appellations are found in sober history, which is indeed nothing less than *philosophy teaching by example*. Even in the history of the wonderful dispensations of infinite mercy to our race, we find the distinction of Adamic, Patriarchal, Mosaic, Prophetic, and Apostolic periods, ages, or dispensations. The world, like individuals, seems to have its infancy, youth, progress, and end. What years are to individuals, centuries are to the world. Sometimes, for generations, and even for centuries, a kind of intellectual and moral sleep has hung over the earth, and the human family remained dormant. And then, again, it has pleased the Divine Ruler, who permits the world to be governed in a great degree by impulses, to call forth a spirit of advancement in light and knowledge, in arts and sciences, and even in our holy religion. In the stormy times of Cromwell, whose history is yet to be written, and who was one of the purest and best and ablest men that England has ever produced, there was a strength of intellect, an earnestness, and a grasp of mind and character, that made such men as Howe, Baxter, and Milton, and a host of their compeers, tower high amid their generation, and stand forth to all coming times, as the beacon-lights of freedom of thought and of conscience. The *Crusades* was an age of strange and almost unaccountable excitements. It well nigh paralyzes belief to read of the tide of living men that Europe poured forth upon Asia for a useless achievement. Millions laid their bones to bleach on the sands of Syria ; but the result was, that the arts, sciences, literature, and civilization of the East were brought into half barbarous Europe. The Protestant Reformation was an age of intense religious excitement. The discovery of this continent was the embodiment of an age intensely excited to make discoveries. The results of the civil wars of England, of the Crusades, of the Reformation, and of the discovery of this continent, were not foreseen by the respective agents of these different stupendous events. The immediate actors in carrying out these parts of the world's history, never dreamed of what has resulted from their labors. The mysterious directions of Providence seem first to blind genius as to any consciousness of its own greatness, and then by it, to accomplish the greatest, most unlooked for, and yet most beneficial results. So it has been with the English in Asia and China, and with the Americans on this continent. And hence, history should be regarded by us not merely as the *annals of political events*, but as the progress of science, inventions, and literature, and of all the great interests of

mankind. History is nothing more or less than a written account of the dispensation of Divine Providence to nations and countries. And whatever the predominant spirit of any age may be, whether it be for war, or for philosophical or religious speculations, it is the outlet of the over-excited feelings of its communities.

As our Government is an elective government—a judicious combination of the best parts of the best governments that have preceded us—so our age is instinct with those elements of personal worth, enterprise, industry, and independence, and of intelligence, and of a pure religious faith, that lay the foundation of hope for permanence in its best forms of society.

II. There are, and there will be, revolutions such as the world has not yet seen. Power will pass from the less to the greater—from the weak to the strong—from the few to the many. The Old World may become feeble. As the Greece of the Greeks of Otho is not the Greece of Pericles and Leonidas; so the Europe that now is, is not the Europe that has been, nor is it the Europe that is to be. But amidst all these convulsions that now are, and are yet to be, is there any danger to ourselves? Is it foreign invasion or internal conflicts? The former cannot be seriously apprehended even by the most timid. It is true that great nations have fallen by invasions from less cultivated regions of the earth. Such has been the course of things in southern Asia, and such was the fate of the Roman Empire; but in all such cases, corruption and effeminacy have invited the conqueror to the spoils. But no one in his senses apprehends a barbarian overthrow of Europe, or of the United States. The hordes of Russia are not likely to drive Europe back to acorns and skins. The Indians of North America do not present, at present, any appearance of sweeping American arts and agriculture, manufacturies, cities, printing-presses, and churches into oblivion. On the contrary, the expanding energies of civilized man, in both hemispheres, are every year shutting up the barbarian forces of the world into smaller and still more narrow spaces. And as to internal conflicts, the greatest causes of fear with us, are the invasion of foreign emissaries, under the guise of teachers for our youth, domestic slavery, and military despotism. The first can be effectually counteracted by our public schools, and by private seminaries of the highest order of excellence for both sexes, by true-hearted republicans. The second, domestic slavery, will be happily disposed of in all its bearings, by the good sense, firmness, compromising spirit, and Christian intelligence of our people. And the last—military despotism, which is far more dangerous than either of the former, can be counteracted by a wise, healthy, and prudent public sentiment, operating through the ballot-box and the press. We are eminently a military people—a nation of soldiers; yet the extent and diversity of our soil, our agricultural and commercial

interests, and the love of our people for economy, peace, and domestic society, and of independence—all these traits in our national character and pursuits are powerful obstacles in the way of the establishment of any military despotism—and to them should be added the combined influence of our schools, of our traditions, and the influence of our Federal Constitution, for the preservation and strict interpretation of which, there is a growing regard in the minds of the American people.

III. The base of modern liberty is wide. The points of radiance of our Republic are numerous. While large towns and cities are growing up on the Pacific, to be closely allied to those of the Atlantic, and of the West, by rail-roads, and steam-vessels, and telegraphic lines, there is also such an immense agricultural region in the interior, in the valleys of our great rivers, that it is impossible for so much power to be consolidated in any one city, or in any one part of the nation, as seriously to endanger the liberties of the whole country. The distance of our cities from one another, with their different local interests, while it renders it impossible for them ever to be leagued together under any misguided, ambitious leader, in a conspiracy against the liberties of the rural districts, also allows greater freedom from petty prejudices and passions. While all the political power of France is in Paris, governments can be made and unmade in a day. The greatest obstacles in the way of the people of Europe to sovereignty, are the great cities of St. Petersburg, Vienna, Berlin, and London, with their royal armies and arsenals, and the traditions and monuments, tombs and regalia of royalty, that everywhere blind or awe the rising masses. The great elements of the world's prosperity, now, however, are such as cannot be lost. The discoveries of modern times will never be forgotten, nor our inventions lost. Men will never forget how to make gun-powder and type—the magnetic needle and the steam-engine. The only possible way for these, and such discoveries and inventions, to be superseded, is to make others that shall far surpass them. The gains of modern society over the ancients are gains that cannot be lost. Our natural discoveries can never cease to exist, nor ever cease to produce their effects on society.

If a whole nation, or a kingdom, or continent, should be sunk into the ocean, it would not destroy the rest of the globe, nor disturb the harmony of the planets. So if one part of the civilized world should go back to barbarism, it would not endanger the existence or diffusive power of the best forms of modern civilization in other parts of the world. From the pole to the equator, and from ocean to ocean, God has raised up a people in modern times to be witnesses for political freedom and religious faith; so that if it were possible for the besom of destruction to sweep out of existence the Europe of to-day, in ages to come, it would exist in another hemisphere—if not in Australia, yet certainly in America.

IV. While the base of liberty is becoming wider and wider, and therefore stronger and stronger, it is also true that the globe, for all practical purposes, is becoming smaller and smaller, and its different countries are brought nearer and nearer together. This palpable result of agencies now rapidly at work, is exerting an absolutely incalculable influence upon the destinies of mankind.

So great and rapid are the means of communication in our day, that extension of territory, instead of being just ground of fear for our permanence, is, on the contrary, a means of throwing off a restless population, that will subdue the wilderness, and build cities and States equal to any that have heretofore existed. Our recent extension is the natural result of our institutions and of our growth, just as much so as it is the natural tendency of a boy's limbs to grow into the size and strength of a man, and then require a larger coat than when he was a boy. All we have to do with California and New Mexico, is to imitate the wise policy of the Romans, and win the love of their inhabitants by opening roads, and protecting their interests, and giving them the Bible, and the school-house, and the printing-press. Magnetic telegraphs, and the institutions of the pure gospel of the Saviour of mankind, will seem to modern Mexicans scarcely less the gifts of the gods, than the cannons and horses of Cortes did to their Indian ancestors. Ours are, however, the gifts of the God of peace, and not of the god of war—ours are the implements not of suffering, bondage, and death, but of freedom, life, and happiness.

V. As far as the history of the past establishes any great principle, it is, that no form of government is exempt from agitations, and revolutions, either in its spirit or form, or in both. Monarchies, limited, constitutional, or absolute, oligarchies, and democracies, are all subject to changes, if not in their forms of government, at least in their interpretation. In every government there are tendencies and dispositions apart from its mere letter, as uncontrollable in their nature, as are the human passions from which they spring. This is true of all governments; and in all governments, except in representative republics, the feelings and dispositions, hopes and fears of the mass, or at least of a very large part of the people, are not in harmony with the form and spirit of the government.

In January, France was a monarchy—apparently peaceable, contented, happy, and magnificent. There seemed to be no signs of dissolution. But it was not in harmony with the spirit of the people. In February the monarchy was vanished—utterly gone—and a republic in its stead. So sudden, so entire was the change, as if in a night some ocean volcanic island had been submerged, and in its place, before early morn, another had arisen, blooming in all the fragrance of Paradise. It cannot be denied but that the style, name, and form of the government of England, are sadly out of harmony with the spirit of the people. Under the name of monarchy, they have, to some extent, republican institutions; and

just in the degree that there is want of harmony, is there danger of revolutions. And if, in all governments, there is a spirit apart from the government, just as the spirit of a man is a something apart from and independent of his body; and if that spirit of a nation, under all forms of government, is constantly struggling to be free, and to extend itself; and if, in popular representative republics, this tendency is stronger than in other forms of government—all which is readily admitted, yet it is also affirmed that there is, in such popular representative republics, a greater capacity and fitness for the fullest exercise and extension of that power; and that, therefore, it is a great error in many writers on the permanency of republics, to suppose that in them the passions only are freely developed; whereas power, intellectual and moral power, keeps pace with and is actually quickened into life, by the development of independent man. Freedom *energizes* the whole body; it clothes the limbs; gives grace to its motions, and elegance to its whole appearance. Where has there been more energy of character than in the old republics of Greece and Rome, and in the free cities and confederations of the middle ages, and in Cromwell's Protectorate, and in the United States? If we admit therefore, that our government has a strong tendency to increase its power, it is abundantly equal, in all other respects, to sustain itself with an increase of power—while our institutions foster the instincts of acquisition and empire, they also enlarge our capacities for self-government, and multiply the disposition and means of benevolence. And, with us, the spirit and the body are harmonious. The union is happy—the form of our government is just such as the people desire; or, if it be not, we have constitutionally provided for a revolution every four years. There can be no inducement for an insurrection, or a violent overthrow of our institutions. A little patience and time will effect any change that the great body of the people really desire.

The manifest tendency of our age and of modern society, is progression—onward. Progress is the law of man. Revolutions may be turned aside—they may be thrown into improper channels, but they do not go backwards. In every convulsion, and revolution, and war in Europe, since 1688, down to this moment, the people have gained something upon their oppressors. There have been failures in attempts at revolution—great mistakes have been committed. And there will be more failures; great errors will be perpetrated. Patriots will yet fall in this glorious work—but something is gained for God and man at every blow. *Truth crushed to earth will rise again.* Long and fierce the strife may rage, but truth and liberty will prevail.

“For Freedom's battle once begun,
Bequeathed by bleeding sire to son,
Though baffled oft, is ever won.”

Among the elements of permanence in modern civilization, not yet introduced in my discourse, I shall, in conclusion, name two

—the PRINTING PRESS, AND MAN'S SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS THAT HE OUGHT TO BE FREE. The art of printing and publishing, so well understood in our day, is justly regarded as the chief of all the inventions that have marked the progress of human genius. It is the most momentous work in man's history. It is an art that contributes to ornament, elegance, and utility. In preserving the memory of former discoveries and perpetuating the knowledge of the past, it confers the greatest advantages on mankind. As the human mind gains on the ignorance of the past, the press daguerreotypes its highest and best forms for the future, and enables us to begin our enquiries at the point which the diligent research of our fathers had arrived at. But the utility of the press is not only seen in its power of perpetuating knowledge, but also in giving to human ideas and knowledge an almost unlimited diffusion. The Creator gave man language to communicate his ideas and perpetuate his discoveries. When the art of printing was not in use, the means of communication were scanty, and the method of perpetuating knowledge, still more defective. The arts of man in a savage state are handed down from father to son, and the history of their deeds, both public and private, is preserved chiefly in songs.

But important as the art of writing was, still, even in its most improved state, it fell unspeakably short of the art of printing. In the East, and generally, it was monopolized by the priests; and when their colleges and temples were overturned and destroyed, then learning perished likewise. Among the Greeks and Romans the cost of transcribing was so great, that but few could possess copies of books, and learning was confined to few individuals. The works of authors who had written in the most elegant style, or on the most useful subjects, were continually in danger of being lost, on account of the small number of copies, by the ravages of time, fire, or civil commotion, or by coming into the possession of men utterly ignorant of their value. Learning has sustained immense losses from all of these causes in past ages; but they cannot be repeated since printing has so multiplied the copies of all the valuable works known to mankind. Nor can the world be any longer imposed upon by the forgeries, interpolations, and corruptions of bigots—such as was practised to an incredible extent in the dark ages.

By means of the press, the knowledge of different schools and of the most eminent philosophers of all countries is brought to the chamber of the student.

The press has made the acquisition and communication of all knowledge, both ancient and modern, more easy, general, and certain, and perpetuates it to all future ages. By it the continuance of learning in the world is placed beyond the reach of any temporary or local barbarism, or invasion, or national degeneracy; and by it also we are enabled to transmit our discoveries and reflections, and a knowledge of our inventions and improvements in

arts and arms, in agriculture and manufactures, and in the science of government, to the ends of the earth, and to the end of ages.

Printing is superior to every other art of a like kind in the perpetuity of its youth. It is not subject like other arts to the baneful influence of time or accident; the works of the sculptor are often broken to fragments and reduced to dust; paintings fade, or are torn to shreds, and finally perish. But printing stamps immortality upon the ideas committed to it, by renewing at will, and without ceasing, exact copies of its work.

In written discourses, images, illustration, variety of language, and power of style are perpetuated, and masterly thoughts are made to live and beget their like. We are made to stand before the living man—and see his reasonings exact, clear, overpowering—his exquisite shadings and the harmonious blending of colors—until we see beneath a transparent and glossy skin, the blood circulate, the veins turn blue, and the muscles assume their strength.

The mere speaker is like a statue placed in an elevated niche, that must be cut somewhat roughly and of a proportioned over-size to produce the proper effect at a distance. The written discourse is the life-like natural size. “The press is the tribune amplified. Speech is the vehicle of intelligence, and intelligence is the mistress of the material world.*”

Nor is the beneficial influence of the press confined to the useful arts alone, since it is also intimately connected with whatever is ornamental in the arts of man. For it is the faithful register of the refined inventions of the sublimest geniuses in the most polished ages and countries; and, though the productions of elegant artists may be destroyed—though the best contributions of modern civilization should perish, yet the *descriptions* of the artist's work, and of these institutions being preserved by the press, will serve to raise in future, other artists and other institutions, that shall rival those that have preceded. The press makes *immortal* the works of elegant authors and artists, and thereby holds up a light and example to guide and assist aspiring minds to superior excellence.

The press and the tribune were the two-edged sword of the old French Revolution, and of all the revolutions of the present year in Europe. It was the press that taught France to think and to act in 1789, and in February, 1848. The written discourses of Foy, Bignon, Lafitte, Constant, Dupont De l'Eure, Royer-Collard, and the impassioned appeals of Mirabeau and his colleagues, accomplished the political education of France. Speeches that produce but little effect in the Senate, often exercise a great influence in print. If they have less influence in the formation of laws, they have more in the formation of public opinion, and it is public opinion that gives sanction, execution, and permanence to the laws, or overturns and remodels them. He, therefore, who has a thousand readers has a greater influence than

* Benjamin Constant: Orators of France, p. 127.

he who has a thousand hearers. And as this is peculiarly an age of publishing what is *spoken*, as well as what is written: so the institution of popular liberty, founded and supported in a great degree by the press, must live and flourish so long as liberty has a voice to speak.

The Heaven-descended right of suffrage, is the mother of all our laws and institutions. It is the foundation of our whole government and of our whole constitution. *Our constitution is our body politic at rest. Our elections are our body politic in action.* And the great guarantee of the one and trumpet-call of the other is the press. An arbitrary, iniquitous, chaotic aristocracy, may grow up where there is no press, and sit like an incubus for centuries upon the inalienable rights of man. Leagues, alliances, public and secret, may be cemented by charters, monopoly grants, and royal marriages, to enable certain families and classes to consume without producing—to live without laboring, and possess themselves of all the public offices without being qualified to fill them, and to seize upon all the honors of the state, without having merited any—but when the press speaks forth, their days are numbered. There is no power in earth or hell that can prevail over and keep a people in slavery, that are taught by an unfettered press the right of self-government.

The press is more mighty than armies, kings, and senates—as rapid and intelligent as thought. None are too low for it to reach. None can be above its influence. It fascinates, inspires, and forms the masses of society for every effort. The strugglings of the press for liberty, and of the conscience for freedom, have filled all Europe with convulsions. It was the press, aided by the living teacher, that produced the great revolutions of the sixteenth century. It was the press that made England a Protestant country. The press has removed the moss of ages that had covered up the origin and root of things, and discovered their true nature. It has opened the book of inalienable rights to the people, and taught them how to resist the usurpations of force and fraud. It was the press that overthrew the parliaments of the French Restoration. And of the blood and vitals of the press were born the government and monarchy of July, 1830; and yet under his majesty, Louis Philippe, the press was fettered and tortured. For seventeen years this press-made monarch compelled the press either to lie or to be silent—compelled it either to abstain from discussing the principles of the government, or to submit to the blows of a gouty senate. It was bound hand and foot, and placed in manacles between the “ruins of confiscation and the burning tombs of Salazie.”

But the day of reckoning came. For the press, like Prometheus, the more it is bound and fettered, the more eloquent, the more inspired, the more indignant, the more tempestuous, and the more Jove-defying it becomes. The very shaking of its chains sent the ungrateful monarch it had made, and all his dynasty, to the “tomb of all the Capulets,” even before a righteous Providence had given

his body to the worms. "Unlimited liberty of the press," was the exclamation with which General Bertrand closed all his public speeches. And he was right. *The bulwarks of all republics are the Bible and the unlimited freedom of the press.*

It is true that the press, like every other good thing, may be abused, and be employed to spread error and impiety. It is sometimes the case that Divine Providence permits those very means, which, when well applied, are the most effectually conducive to the best purposes, to be so abused and misapplied as to become the most potent engines of mischief.

Even the Son of Mary was set for the fall and rise of many, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. The result of Messiah's coming among men, depends altogether upon their own spiritual discernment of Him. The gospel is salvation to the believer, but destruction to the unbeliever. Salvation and doom are correlative terms. Heaven and hell are correlative places. Great blessings suppose great evils.

It is impossible for printing to spread errors more baneful than were propagated before its invention, while on the other hand, it enables the friends of truth and religion to pursue the baleful steps of their adversary with an antidote that cannot be nullified, so that this wonderful effort of human skill not only supplies the most sure methods of perpetuating every new discovery in the other arts and sciences, but at the same time affords the ablest assistance in the support of religion, truth, and virtue.

There remains one other out of many more grounds of hope for the perpetuity of Republics, that I cannot wholly omit; and that is—*Man's self-consciousness that he is a child of Liberty, and that he is capable of self-government, and of perpetuating the best principles and forms of government.* Philosophers and theologians tell us of a moral sense, and a religious sense in man, the existence of which prove that man is a moral and religious being, just as his lungs prove that he was made to breathe. So likewise the political sense, that is a faculty of being conscious that we possess within us the elements of freedom from our Maker, and which also excites all men, in all ages, to desire the fullest enjoyment of civil liberty, is a proof that man is made to be free, and to be happy only in the enjoyment of freedom. The soul's self-consciousness of its own existence, of its own free agency, and of the existence of God, has long been regarded as one of the strongest proofs of a Deity. "The longing after immortality," in all men, and in all countries, and the conjectures and hopes, even of the rudest, for a brighter existence after death, is proof almost as strong as demonstration, that there is a future immortal state of being. In like manner, the hopes of mankind, concerning a political millennium, may be deemed a prophecy of its coming. Such hopes have existed from the earliest times, and have grown stronger and stronger, and spread wider and wider, as cycle after cycle rolled down the skies. Have the ardent longings of the

purest and best men, of the wisest and the holiest men of antiquity and of modern times, been raised up merely to be thrown to the ground! Divine Providence will not thus tantalize the sons of men. The longings of our race after freedom have sometimes been embodied in tradition, in song, and in fables; but even the fables were imitations of the truth. The shadow is proof that there is a substance.

The universality of some kind of religious worship or belief—the tenacity with which most men hold to their religious dogmas, and even the excesses committed by religious zeal, bigotry, and superstition, are deemed a strong proof of the reality and vast importance of religion. There is in man a religious sense that recognizes, at the bottom of all this, the earnest desire of his soul for happiness, for communion with God, for participation in the divine nature as its true birthright. This anxious longing of man's spirit to pass the gulf which separates his God-derived soul from its glorious Creator—this ardent wish, even though to himself unconscious of its full import, to secure that union with God, the Father of all spirits, which alone can renew human nature—though ignorant of the way to accomplish it, still struggling forth amidst superincumbent masses of error, delusion, falsehood, superstition, and unbelief, and aspiring after that heart-healing, soul-vitalizing power, which Christianity only reveals, is justly regarded as a proof of the truth of the gospel.

The way for the introduction of Christianity was prepared by the co-working of supernatural with natural elements. The natural development of the heathen world had prepared them for the new light which emanated from Judea. The whole history of the Jews was preparatory to the coming of the Messiah. It was emphatically, in every sense, the fullness of time, when God made the highest manifestations of Himself to man by His Son, who was the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and the fullness of the ineffable Godhead. The Messiah was born King of the Jews, whose political life was a theocracy, and a type of the *Kingdom of God*. He was the culminating point of all Jewish light and glory; and as the particular typifies the universal—the earthly, the celestial—so David, the monarch who had raised the political theocracy of the Jews to the pinnacle of glory, typified that greater monarch, in whom the *Kingdom of God* was to display its glory.* Christ sprang from the fallen line of royal David, just as the sceptre was departing from Judah, and the law-giver from between his feet.

In the minds of both Jews and Pagans there were many gross errors about the coming and character of the Messiah, but neither their unbelief nor their erroneous faith, made void the truth of God. The all-wise Creator working good out of evil, sometimes uses men's errors to lead them to a knowledge of the great truths of salvation. Superstition often paves the way for faith, and incre-

* See Neander's great work, *Life of Christ*, p. 19.

dulity itself becomes the handmaid of the sublimest piety. Oppression prepares the way for liberty. Moses came when the tale of bricks was doubled. So He who *maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and restraineth the remainder of wrath*—who raiseth up one and casteth down another—and whose right it is to reign, has condescended to the plans of men in training them for civil and religious liberty. God has often condescended not merely to the feelings and thoughts of men, but even to their failings and their prejudices, not to approve of them, but to use them as a means of bringing men to the truth. "God," says Neander, "condescended to the platforms of men in training them for belief in the Redeemer, and meets the aspirations of the truth-seeking soul even in its error." The longings of the whole world for a Saviour—the earnest expectations of both Jews and Pagans, that a deliverer would come, were rays of light streaming from the invisible world, which on other subjects and in all other ways was unfathomable darkness. These rays found their embodiment in the Star of Bethlehem, which pointed to the Sun of Righteousness then risen upon the world for its universal illumination.

In patriarchial times—in the Hebrew commonwealth—in the earliest forms of Pagan governments—in the best days of Greece and Rome, Divine Providence gave some pledge and earnest of better things to come.

The great idea of man is redemption—from sin—through the Messiah, and from ignorance, slavery, and every evil, as a fruit and consequence of his redemption from sin. The two greatest days in the annals of the human race, are the day of the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the day of Representative Republicanism. And as all the previous history of the world was a preparation for the one, so also it was for the other. The longings of mankind for republican institutions, whether embodied in poetry, devotion, or romance, whether uttered by Plato or Sir Thomas Moore, were streamlets of light foretelling the luminary that was to appear in the fullness of time. All past history—the thousands of years, and the hundreds of generations that have passed, have all been in order to and co-laborers for the present. The results of their labors in their best form, are the representative republics of our day. The way for the development of the model of representative republicanism, was most wondrously prepared by the traditions, longings, and aspirations of the ancients, by the discovery of this continent, and by the precise time of the discovery, and the circumstances, condition, internal and external, civil and religious, of the nations that discovered and colonized in the New World, and especially in the times and characters that Providence ordered for the settlement of the English colonies in America.

As in the original creation, the *earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said, let there be light: and there was light*—there were faint streamings of light over the immense chaos: but no sun until afterwards the

Almighty collected the gleamings into a great globe of light, and set the sun in the *firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, and to rule over the day and over the night*. So the Ineffable, in tracing out with his finger this globe, and in writing its history, when as yet none of its stupendous events "were fashioned, being imperfect"—reserved this continent to be the firmament of the sun of human Freedom, into which should be gathered and condensed all the hopes and aspirations of bards and prophets, and of all devout and earnest true-hearted souls, who have loved their race and labored and prayed for their emancipation from error and sin. It is in the teachings of Revelation, that the world is to be filled with the glory of God; in the institutions of modern civilization, which are chiefly the effects of the gospel, and are necessary in order to the fulfilment of its glorious mission on the earth—in the promises, prophecies, and coming glorious realities of Messiah's reign, that we see the unfailling hope of Republics, and the undying elements of their perpetuity.

In all ages and in all countries, wherever the faintest effulgence of liberty has gleamed upon the soul, there have been earnest striving after its plenitude. True liberty, under constitutional forms, the sole passion of the generous heart, is the only treasure worthy of being coveted. Its victories are those of intellect, and not of brutal force; its principles pass not away, but are eternal. It holds all men to be brothers—recognizes no legal authority, but that of responsible magistrates, no moral superiority, but that of virtue. Such liberty is destined to see pass before it, the stormy flight of absolute empires, like those clouds that dim for a moment the purity of a serene sky, and will at no distant day, see disappear before her triumphal march, all custom-house barriers and secret tribunals, all prosecutions for political offences, all aristocracies, monopolies, close corporations, standing armies, censorships of the press, of schools, and of religion; and in a holy alliance in the name of Right, Independence, and of a common interest, and of civilization, tranquillity, happiness, and religion, will confederate national congresses confer for the amicable settlement of all national differences, and the sword shall perish for ever.

LIBERTY, which has been the midnight meditation of the sage, and the inspiration of the poet, and the long desired Messiah of those that have been sitting in chains and darkness for ages, and for whose almighty avater the very tombs of the past have cried out, has at last descended from heaven upon the earth to redress and embellish it; to be the life of commerce, and the inspiration of the fine arts, the first aspiration of youth, and the sublime invocations of old age, and the pathway to fadeless glory. And after that she shall have broken the chains of ignorance, meanness, covetousness, superstition, error, and bigotry; liberty will lead forth her illuminated procession with palm branches, amid hymns of glory to attend the last and eternal funeral of civil and religious despotism. AMEN.