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PROGRESS
OF
CIVIL LIBERTY.

A THANKSGIVING DISCOURSE:

PRONOUNCED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ON LAFAYETTE SQUARE, NEW ORLEANS, ON THURSDAY, 9TH DEC., 1847, BEING THANKSGIVING DAY.

"Religion and our native liberty, are two things which God hath inseparably knit together, and hath disclosed to us, that they who seek to corrupt our religion, are the same that would enthrall our civil Liberty."

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

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NEW ORLEANS:
PRINTED AT THE OFFICE OF "THE DAILY DELTA."

1848.



NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 9, 1847.

DEAR SIR,

The undersigned (not members of your Church) having had the pleasure of listening to your very learned, eloquent and patriotic Thanksgiving Discourse this morning, and being desirous of giving a more extended circulation to the noble sentiments which it contains, most respectfully solicit a copy of the same for publication.

With great respect, we are your friends and obedient servants,

(Signed,)

JOHN M. BELL,
JOSEPH WALKER,
LENON LADOUX, Jr.,
EDWARD SIMON, Jr.

REV. W. A. SCOTT, D. D. New Orleans.

GENTLEMEN,

I am under great obligations to you for the kind notice you have been pleased to take of my Thanksgiving Discourse, as conveyed to me in your very polite note of yesterday. And I would take a pleasure in complying with your request, but as the Report of my Discourse in the Delta of this morning is so full, I suppose it supersedes the necessity of any further publication.

Be pleased, Gentlemen, each of you, to accept assurances of the high consideration of your fellow citizen and obedient servant.

Very respectfully,

W. A. SCOTT.

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 10, 1847.

NEW ORLEANS, Dec. 10th, 1847.

DEAR SIR,

Your note of this morning in reply to one we had the pleasure to address to you yesterday is received, with your consent we are still desirous of having your discourse published, notwithstanding the very correct report of it in the Delta, and trust you will indulge us by furnishing a copy at your earliest convenience.

Very respectfully your friends, .

JOHN M. BELL,
JOSEPH WALKER,
LENON LADOUX, Jr.
EDWARD SIMON, Jr.

REV. W. A. SCOTT, New Orleans.

PREFACE.



To what extent the author of the following discourse is indebted to the labors of others, he is not able to say. It is the embodiment of his reading and reflections on history and civil government for several years; so far, however, as he is now able to remember, due acknowledgements are made by proper references in the Discourse.

PROGRESS OF CIVIL LIBERTY.

TEXT.—“Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people, for what nation is there who hath God so nigh unto them.”—Deuteronomy, iv: 6, 7.

A day of public thanksgiving and prayer by the proclamation of our chief magistrate—in America, where the Cross is not supported by the Throne, and where the State bestows no other gifts upon the Church than the protection of its members in the free and unmolested enjoyment of all their rights and privileges—is a peculiar day. It is neither the Sabbath of the Lord our God, nor a national jubilee, as is the 4th of July. And yet we have ceased from our ordinary labors as if moved by one mind, and assembled in the sanctuary to engage in praise and prayer—we have come from the office and the warehouse to the Temple. As this is a peculiar day, so it calls for peculiar services.

On former occasions, like the present, I have dwelt upon the manifold blessings for which we should give thanks to the Great, and Good, and Glorious Being who presides over the Universe. Your experience and reflection, and the occasion itself, will not fail to remind you to-day of the light and sunshine of Heaven, of the beauty of nature, and of the rich gifts of the season—of God's tireless ministers, the dews, rains, and sunbeams, that have bestowed upon the toils of industry so rich a reward. Not a fruit comes upon our tables, in its appointed season, that does not speak to us of the stability, regularity, and beneficence of the laws by which the All-Glorious Creator governs the kingdoms of nature. The abundant fruits of the earth bestowed upon us whilst other lands are famishing for bread, the internal peace and quietness that we enjoy, while a sanguinary war is waged on our border, and the mild and salutary laws that protect our lives and property, while a large portion of the human family are the victims of anarchy or despotism. The civil and religious institutions which we enjoy in so much vigor and purity, while millions of our race are the slaves of ignorance, bigotry, superstition, and misrule; our public and private schools, flourishing commerce, and almost uninterrupted national prosperity, while a large portion of Europe is convulsed by commercial failures; our open temples, free gospel, and pure Word of God—all these inestimable blessings *preach* to us that we are the objects of a Providence that cares for our greatest as well as our minutest wants. It is to Him who is the King of all the earth that we are indebted for every one of these mercies. He has linked our planet with distant orbs and appointed its place in his vast universe. And with an unwearied energy and ceaseless beneficence, he has prepared and bestowed upon us every blessing, civil, temporal, and religious, that

distinguishes our highly favored land. With this view of the nature of this occasion, could we select a theme more appropriate than the consideration of the Providence of God, as displayed in the HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF CIVIL LIBERTY.

On a day like this we should forget the strife of life, and yield our whole hearts to works of charity and good will. We should remember the poor, the oppressed, and the stranger, the orphan and the widow, and lift up our hearts in adoring gratitude to the Giver of all good, and pour forth fervent supplications for His blessings upon all men.

We are called to-day to look only at the lights which enrobe and illumine our country, not at her shadows. Nor is there any exercise more befitting the day than the breathing forth of patriotic sentiments, and of fervent charity to all men, and of gratitude to God for our civil and religious liberties.

Christianity does not make a man less brave as a soldier, nor less incorruptible and energetic as a statesman, nor less virtuous as a citizen, a patriot or a father. The Gospel elevates every noble sentiment and strengthens every virtuous principle, enlarges the human heart and throws over all man's noble achievements the splendor of a higher and brighter glory than was ever known to the heathen. It is not incompatible with the religion of Christ to guide and mould the heart of him who votes at the polls or bleeds on the battle-field, or counsels in the Senate, or sits supreme at the helm of State. When the Christian sees God's blessings poured out upon his country, ought he not to argue that God loves his country, because he thus blesses it, and to love it the more that God's blessings are bestowed upon it. We cannot understand any principles or sentiments, political or religious, that are not for our country, our whole country, under all circumstances and forever.

The history of Liberty—the history of the origin, rise, progress, conflicts, triumph and destiny of Liberty—the history of men and of nations struggling to be free—the history of men who have acquired their freedom—the history of those great movements in the world by which liberty has been established, diffused and perpetuated, is yet to be written. We have historians of the various eras and forms of religion and government—historians of Patriarchs, Kings, Senators, Military Leaders, Emperors, and of Patriotic Bands who have lived, by an inspiration of the Almighty, for the onward movement of our race. We have historians of men and of mind, of letters and arts, of States and of Empires—but all that has yet been written, sung or spoken, is far short of the history of man's redemption from moral and spiritual tyranny and political slavery. All that the world has yet produced can only be considered, as the French would say, *Memoirs to serve for the History of Civil Liberty*. Our ardent hope is that, as this continent is to furnish the model, so it will also furnish the painter—the subject and the writer of the great epic of mankind—not an epic of Troy, nor of Paradise Lost, but the supplement of the Holy Volume itself. Civil liberty fully developed will be the consummation of the dispensation of Jesus of Nazareth, and its history a fit sequel to the history of human redemption.

As our country has been happily signalized beyond any other in the great history of freedom, and as we live under institutions more favorable

to its diffusion than any which the world has elsewhere known, it is not presumptuous in us to hope that we shall yet have a historian for our race, as far superior to all others as his subject may transcend all others.

An apostle has said, "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Liberty, in the full and perfect sense of the term, belongs only to God. It is from and of the Creator of all things. Politically, as well as spiritually: Liberty is a stream that flows from the ineffable God-head. It began its earthly flowings forth in Eden when man was created; and when man was expelled thence, it began to go forth to subdue the earth and till the universe of mind. And its mission is for every clime and corner of the globe, and will be fulfilled only when the bow of universal freedom to all the nations of the earth shall be seen on the dark and retiring clouds of ignorance, idolatry and superstition.

By a glance at the history of Liberty in ages past, and at the prophecy of the ages to come, we see star after star arise, and constellation after constellation taking their place in the heavens, until the whole firmament becomes luminous. Shade melts into shade, and color blends with color, until the whole earth shall enjoy the full-orbed glory of the liberty of the sons of God. The principles of civil liberty are the principles of Eternal rectitude and truth; its progress is the progress of man in the recovery of the image and likeness of his Creator. The image and likeness of God in which man was made, the Holy Scriptures inform us, consisted in *knowledge, righteousness and holiness*. Knowledge, justice, goodness and purity, constitute the basis and the elements of true liberty. Virtue is freedom such as God bestows. Vice is slavery such as the wicked one endures. God, Jehovah, is the only perfect liberty, as he is by excellence a spirit pure and holy. Satan is the most perfect representation of slavery known to exist. As the elements of freedom are light, knowledge, truth, justice, goodness and holiness, so the elements of slavery are vice, ignorance, error and sin. As man progresses in the former, whether as an individual or in families, communities and States, so civil liberty progresses. As man becomes corrupt, ignorant and vicious, whether as an individual or in communities, so slavery, the bondage of the mind, the heart and soul, prevails. The more perfect our assimilation to the adorable Creator, the more perfect is our liberty. The progress of man in liberty may be upward and onward and upward forever. As two mathematical lines are said to approach each other, and yet never come together, so the progress of renovated man may ever and always be a continuous approximation towards the ineffable Jehovah.

The history of civil liberty being the history of man in his efforts to regain the image and likeness of God, the only wise, the only good, and the only free, is a subject worthy of our most thoughtful consideration. When man was made, and the Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul, then and there and that moment was human liberty born! It is like the soul itself, an offspring of God; and the more perfectly a man subdues his passions, and frees himself from ignorance, bigotry and vice, the more fully does he show forth his divine original.

Burke has happily said, "Men are free in the exact proportion that they are able to put chains upon their own appetites; in proportion

as their love of justice is above their rapacity; in proportion as their soundness and sobriety of understanding is above their vanity and presumption; in proportion as they are disposed to listen to the counsels of the wise and good in preference to the flattery of knaves." As man fallen is but little less than "archangel ruined," so all the efforts of educators, of statesmen, philanthropists, and ministers of righteousness, should be to repair the ruins of the fall, and lift the sons of men from the slavery of those passions, earthly and of earth, that weave the winding sheet of souls and lay them in the arms of death.

The human race has made all its great advancements by occasional and violent exertions. Every department of man's progress is marked with great epochs. Letters have their brilliant cycles; science its profound revolutions; and religion itself presents a history full of those remarkable developments which exhibit its never-dying spirit in mortal conflict with error. But above all, Liberty has been the most deeply and permanently affected by the grand incidents of man's career. In briefly reviewing a few of these principal incidents, we shall find that our race has only been found capable of those great exertions upon which its advancement has been suspended, when subject to intense, absorbing excitement. The intense spirit of patriotism was the governing impulse of antiquity. Then came the heroic ages, which gave birth to civilization; the bright, romantic spirit of chivalry and the warlike religion of the Middle Ages. Then the Reformation, and the Colonization of America, and subsequent events with which we are all familiar, and of which time does not allow me to speak.

As history is nothing more nor less than a written account of the dispensations of Providence towards mankind, we propose in order that we may the better comprehend the preciousness and magnitude of our blessings, to glance at a few of the dispensations, in the order of time in which they have appeared, by which the Supreme Ruler of Nations has been pleased to develop our free civil institutions. The Jewish form of government was a Theocracy. God for special ends connected with the glorious scheme of Redemption, condescended to be elected King of the Hebrews, to give them a code of civil laws, and to decide their more important questions of right and expediency. (See Jahn's Heb. Com., Sec. 3; Smyth's Ecc. Repub., p. 31.) But while the Constitution of Hebrew Polity was, in its complete form, theocratical or a divine monarchy, in its relations to men and the character of its earthly administration, it was essentially a Republican Democracy. The patriarchal form of government, which was the earliest established among men, and which generally prevailed in the East, was essentially republican, the father of the family acting as perpetual President, as among the Arabs, and the various tribes of Indians to this day. As the heads of these family states died, and they became more numerous and powerful, they began to elect the most able or popular man for their Chief Magistrate; and thus the principles of popular government were early developed, and political institutions began to assume a regular form and permanent basis. Illustrations of these are found among the inhabitants of Gibeon,

Chephirah, Beeroth and Kirjathearam; they had neither king nor prince. The national council of the people commissioned ambassadors and concluded alliances. The Philistines were governed by five princes. Among the Phœnicians, the King possessed very limited powers. The Carthagenians were ruled by an Aristocracy, similar to the Oligarchy which so long lorded it over Venice. These Aristocracies among the early nations of the world, were elected by the people. It was not one of blood or monopoly, but an aristocracy of election, as were the elders elected by the Jews to assist Moses.—(Pritchard's Researches into Nat. Hist'y of Man, vol. 3, pp. 175-7; Jahn's Heb. Com. pp. 59, 60; Archæology, p. 219. The ancient States of Gaul, Britain, and Germany, were most probably Aristocratic Republics). The magistrates of the Jews were entrusted with the execution of all the laws. But still so much power remained in the hands of the people themselves, that the magistrates could neither enact laws nor levy taxes on their own authority. Even after the establishment of a human monarchy, the control of the people over the action of the government was frequently strongly manifested. The people compelled their Monarch, notwithstanding his hasty vow, to spare the life of Jonathan. So great was the popular control in the administration of the Jewish Government, that Lowman and Michaelis have denominated the Mosaic Constitution a Democracy. The truth is, that the Hebrew Commonwealth was a Republic. It was a mixture of an Aristocracy and Democracy. For, as Webster says, "a Republic is a commonwealth; a State in which the exercise of the sovereign power is lodged in representatives elected by the people." The national affairs of the Hebrews were conducted by a regular series of gradually ascending assemblies, representing the families, the tribes, and the whole twelve tribes. These assemblies were composed of the princes or heads of tribes, and were expressly called deputies and elders to the assembly. These assemblies, like our own Congress, exercised all the rights of sovereignty. They declared war, made peace, formed alliances, chose generals, chief judges, regents, and kings. The number of these representatives was very great. We are told there were judges of tens, judges of fifties, judges of hundreds, and judges of thousands. Every tribe constituted a distinct government, invested to a certain extent with independent powers. These have been assimilated by Michaelis to the Cantons of Switzerland. The twelve tribes constituted one commonwealth.—See Joshua, chapters 23, and 24. They had general diets, and all combined against a common enemy. Some times the tribes had a general judge or a common sovereign, and sometimes they were without either; but when they had no common head, any particular tribe that refused to administer public justice, might be accused before the others, who were authorized to carry on war against it as a punishment. A remarkable instance of this is recorded in the 20th chapter of Judges.

From this brief and imperfect sketch it will be seen that our own government has been modelled upon the ancient Hebrew commonwealth. As a Republic, our institutions are more complete and firmly established than were the forms of popular administration among the ancient

Jews. So far as the Divine will is revealed in the history of the Jews, touching forms of government, it is in favor of a government by the people themselves.

The planting of the American colonies, their growth, and emancipation from European servitude; their subsequent history, laws and institutions, and their present aspect among the nations of the earth, present a strong resemblance to the ancient people of God. The hand of the Almighty has led us all this glorious way, and is now working out our high destiny on this continent, while for abused mercies our neighbors are left to fill up their cup of destruction, as were the Canaanites of old.

Next to the Hebrews and Phœnicians come the numerous colonies of the latter, whose commercial cities were the pioneers of civilization, and whose sailors and traders were the early missionaries of civil liberty; but of their deeds and glory we have no authentic memorials.

The glorious period of Grecian freedom was short, but brief and early as it was, every succeeding age has felt its power. But for the age of Pericles the world would never have seen that of Augustus, of Ann, and of Louis XIV. In the rise of the Grecian States, liberty was baptized into the loftiest civilization that can be attained without christianity, and connected even from its tenderest infancy with the grandest efforts of mental power. The priceless benefactions of Greece to the liberties of mankind, are her works of art, her oratory and poetry, her unconquerable energy, patriotism and bravery. Whatever is ornamental, beautiful, heroic and sublime of ancient Greece is connected with the inspirations of freedom. The spirit of Grecian freedom that poured forth the blood of heroes on the plains of Marathon, burned in the hearts of our fathers at Bunker Hill. Salamis was acted over again on Lake Erie, and the narrow defile of Thermopylæ has found its immortal counterpart in the New World on the bloody heights of Buena Vista and Cerro Gordo, and in the ensanguined valley of Mexico. The only difference is, that in ancient Greece, liberty struggled for its very existence against the myrmidons of tyrants, while in the New World its glorious achievements are the inevitable results of its natural expansion—the evidences of its vigorous growth and pledges of its ever-onward and upward progress.

It is true that the Greece of the Greeks that now are, is, and yet is not the Greece of the Greeks that were. The mountains and storied-plaints of her hero-days remain, but the Greeks of Homer and of Pericles are no more. Their spirit, however, has its resurrection in the brave of every land, and their literature and art breathe life and beauty into the minds of the artists and scholars of modern civilization. All great souls and true hearts are nearly akin. Zones and national boundaries do not limit the relationships of the kindred of liberty. They are all of one family. Their breasts throb in unison. They commune together by participation in the same aspirations, and by the life-giving clairvoyant voice of Freedom.

The achievements of Greece were won for mankind. Her history is a treasure of knowledge to the nations that have followed her. Corruption and intestine disvisions soon, however, made Greece a prey

to horrible calamities. The genius of Demosthenes seemed lent to his country only to illuminate the departure of its glory. But long after the cities, institutions, fleets and armies of Greece had ceased to command the admiration of the world; her statuary, her models, her books live to animate the lovers of civilization and freedom. Though vanquished she won the respect and obtained the homage of her conquerors. The splendid noon of Grecian greatness was followed by a still more splendid evening. So indestructible are the triumphs of mind; so enduring the glory of having advanced civilization, that Greece has never had her dark day. Her literature has always been in the ascendant:

Like the vase in which roses have once been distilled,
You may break, you may ruin the vase if you will,
But the scent of the roses will hang round it still.

The successors of the Greeks were the Romans, a people among the most remarkable that have ever figured on the theatre of human action. "From the very beginning," says a vigorous writer, "they undertook to conquer the world, and to civilize it; and they almost did both." But it was not Kingly Rome, nor was it the Empire, that actually subdued the earth—it was the Republic. It was liberty, such as liberty then was, everywhere aggressive—irresistible, triumphant liberty—which in Greece had been victorious in defence, that now became equally victorious in assault. Liberty, scattering throughout all the nations, in the footsteps of the Roman Legions, what she had won under the invincible banners of the Greeks, heaping contempt on all that had despised it before, crushing to atoms all that had oppressed; not only acquiring consistency, energy and self-reliance, but universality and terrible predominance. It was the era of armed, gigantic, all-conquering liberty; fulfilling the predestinated councils of God, and erecting the last and greatest in the cycle of universal empires.—(Rev. Dr. Breckinridge in the Spirit of the XIX Century, for July 1843, an able and eloquent essay.)

The cities of Italy were next the asylums of liberty. The invasion of the Northern Barbarians drove the people into the towns, where municipal and democratic governments were established. The spirit of liberty was as conspicuous in the cities and towns of Italy, as that of chivalry was among the ancient Franks. Venice was for fourteen centuries, one of the chief lights of Europe. She justly and proudly called herself the eldest daughter of Rome. Her foundation was laid in 452 of the Christian Era. "Born," says one, "amid the convulsions of expiring Rome, and perishing amid those of the French Revolution, one extremity of her epoch reposes upon the grave of ancient civilization, and the other terminates in the cradle of modern liberty—a glorious link uniting the grandest dispensations of man."—Breckinridge.

But Rome at last began to fall a victim to the energy of the barbarian invasion. The chief causes that led to her downfall were the corruption of manners, the effeminacy of the people, the small number that were entrusted with freedom, and the bravery of her invaders. Too few enjoyed the blessings of freedom to be able to preserve it. Like the Pharisees of old, the rulers feared the people

until the people were destroyed, and they in their turn, destroyed those who had distrusted them. The undue limitation of freedom was the chief element in its own decay. The contest and the catastrophe of eight centuries of conflict between barbarous and almost disorganized freedom on the one hand, and corrupt, but still powerful civilization, on the other, are among the most mournful and remarkable events of human history. The audacious courage, the enduring fixedness of purpose, the unconcerted, yet fatal unity of movement, directed through so many ages to one end, so extraordinary on the part of such a vast multitude of savages, is most extraordinary, and on the other hand the strength of discipline, the power of moral force, and the struggles of expiring civilization on the part of the Romans, even after centuries of decay, are equally astonishing.

We cannot wholly omit even in this hasty sketch of the development and progress of popular liberty, to refer for a few moments to the influence of the Christian Church in establishing the principles of Representative Republicanism. Although Christ is the Supreme Head and the only King of the Church, still the form of the government which he has appointed for its discipline upon earth is Republican. It has been generally acknowledged by the ablest men, and by the most learned writers, that the Christian Church in primitive ages, was Republican in its government, and neither a prelacy, hierarchy, nor monarchy. The proof and discussion of this proposition, however, does not come properly within my present design.

The New Testament is eminently Republican in its doctrines, its spirit and its institutions. The christian calls no man master. He stands in need of no priestly mediation to introduce him to God, the Father. Christ alone is his mediator, and by him he is put in possession of his spiritual birth-right and privileges. The whole Gospel is opposed to oppression, force, violence, and persecution. It is good will to man. The Saviour's outstretched arms on the cross embraced all mankind. The officers of the church are not a spiritual nobility. They are elected by the people from among themselves. They are servants of the people for Christ's sake. All the officers of the primitive church were chosen by the free and unrestrained votes of the people. In the body of the people was lodged the sovereign power of the primitive church. Its courts were deliberative assemblies, composed of delegates chosen by the people.*—See the election of Matthias and of Stephen in Acts 1 and 6, and the History of the Church in the Apostolic age.

Sir James McIntosh has said that Paul's doctrine of justification by faith lies at the foundation of all civil liberty; and again, "that the synods and councils formed by the clergy, afforded the first pattern of elective and representative assemblies, which were adopted by the independent genius of the Germanic race for many ages.—(History of England, vol. 1, p. 43; and also History of Henry Eighth, chapter 9, page 218.)

Hume has acknowledged that whatever liberty is found in the British constitution owes its existence there to the English puritans, who were

* Robert Hall's Political Tracts; also, late Dr. Arnold's Tracts.

remarkable for their devotion to the doctrines and institutions of the Gospel. "We all know," says Mr. Webster in his Bunker Hill address in 1825, "that the American revolution could not have lived a single day, under any well-founded imputation of possessing a tendency adverse to the Christian religion." "Evidence is not wanting to prove that while Hume and Bolingbroke leaned towards arbitrary power, that they were atheists, and that Owen, Howe, Milton and Baxter, some of the most devout and venerable characters that ever appeared, were warmly attached to liberty."

The seeds of those political principles which have resulted in the present constitution and prosperity of England, were sown in the latter end of the reign of Queen Elizabeth by the hand of the puritans, a sect which has always been most conspicuous for their love of freedom, and their attachment to the Holy Scriptures.

The knowledge and study of the word of God, so far from favoring the pretensions of despotism, have always exerted an influence in favor of rational liberty. In those countries where the Holy Scriptures are the least known, there is found the darkest superstition and the gloomiest despotism, and the least impatience of the people under the iron yoke of bondage.

The union of Protestant princes once preserved the liberties of the Germanic body, when they were in danger of being overwhelmed by the victorious arms of Charles V.

Something analogous to our Republican institutions existed amongst the Hebrews, and something like them may be found in the democracies of Greece; but the church councils were the first decided instance in the world's history of the adoption of the great *representative mode* of government, through a confederation of independent republics.

The late DeWitt Clinton declared that "Christianity in its essence, its doctrines, and its forms, is republican." So analogous are the great principles of republicanism, as developed in the American Union, to the essential elements of the government of the Christian Church, that if it were not known that the Church is older than our Government, men would say, the Church had borrowed her form of government from the State. The very reverse is true beyond all successful controversy. **THE AMERICAN REPUBLIC IS FORMED UPON THE REPUBLICANISM OF THE BIBLE.***

Time would fail me to speak of Milton and Locke, of Hampden and Sidney, of the Magna Charta, the bill of Rights, the Habeas Corpus, trial by jury, the right of boroughs, a representation in Parliament, and of the inestimable principles of representation and confederation as united in the American Union. I cannot now speak of the immense enlargement of the basis of modern freedom and of the evidences of its permanent and ever enlarging institutions, nor of the rights of conscience, nor of the freedom of an independent press, nor of the blessings of having a well defined and clearly written Constitution, from which we

* Those who may desire to see this subject ably and fully set forth, are referred to the work of the Rev. Dr. Smyth, of Charleston, S. C., already cited; and to his *Essays*—extensively circulated in the late religious newspapers of the day, on the origin of the American Declaration of Independence. He undertakes to show that its type is to be found in the covenants of Scotland.

must never be driven, and from which we must never swerve a particle so long as a shred of it remains inviolate.

Nor have I time to speak of the Vandois and of the Bohemians—of Claude, Waldo, Wicklyffe, Huss and Jerome of Prague, and other scholars and saints, who stand as pillars of light before the Reformation. Nor of Melancthon, Erasmus, Knox and Calvin, actors in that great work. Nor can I glance at Luther himself, the great, courageous, simple hearted agent, by whom the great truths of the Gospel were proclaimed to nations, that heard, listened and lived.

Before the downfall of Rome, man as an individual was nothing. The State was everything. Public liberty, municipal glory absorbed all idea of personal freedom. But the daring invaders who overran the plains of Italy, and conquered her cities, taught the principle of personal liberty—that man was above the state, and almost above society—that personal liberty was above public order, and personal rights were more precious than the rights of property, and that the voice of freemen themselves should be heard in making and executing the laws that govern freemen. Modern society is under great obligations to the northern invaders of Rome.

The emancipation and enlightening of the human race enjoyed in our day, is partly owing to the example and works of antiquity, and partly owing to the inventions and discoveries of modern times, and to the rising up of fresh and new views of eternal truth in the minds of men. Mental revolutions precede the moral and the civil. Free enquiry, bold thinking and enfranchised intellect will never tolerate the bondage of reason, nor of conscience. Knowledge, righteousness and holiness, are conjointly the authors and preservers of a true Liberty. "Truth, virtue, and happiness may be distinguished from each other, but cannot be divided. They subsist by a mutual co-inherence, which gives a shadow of divinity even to our human nature."—Coleridge.

The next era is the age of Feudalism. The indomitable energy, heroic self-reliance and daring enterprise and personal independence of the fierce nations of the North that overran Southern Europe, are to be considered as an example fruitful in many important lessons to modern society. Nor is their fate less instructive. They allowed an aristocracy, that grew up and increased into a numerous landed, hereditary, feudal class that first proved to be the death of freedom, and then after the lapse of ages, became the basis or germ of its modern resurrection. Rome was first a republic and then an empire in which cities were the elements. So the feudal system was first independent barons, and then a confederation of castles. By the feudal system a rural population was created; the principle of property was anew established; property became an element of political power, and the landed aristocracy became a sort of protection, against kings on the one hand and priests on the other; the right of inheritance was established, which gave liberty a home and an interest in the soil; woman was restored to something like the condition which the Creator designed, when he made her the helpmate and companion of man and the source of sweet and pure delights, and the result was a most happy change in all the social and domestic habits of society. Another most important benefit conferred upon society by the

feudal ages, was the legal and sanctified right of armed resistance—the right publicly to bear arms—the right upon our own responsibility to take up arms—a right without which all other rights of society are utterly defenceless—a right which is essential to the preservation of man's two dearest rights—those of a free press and freedom of conscience. It was the right to think, to speak, and to bear arms, that brought the faithless tyrant Charles I, and the effeminate Louis XVI, to the block—and it was in the exercise of the same Heaven-protected rights, that this wide and powerful republic was able to sever herself, by open force, from the grasp of insolent power and stride forward to the first rank of nations. It is the consciousness of freedom to think and maintain our opinions, and the right to use fire arms upon our own individual responsibility, that makes American volunteers the conquerors of the trained minions of tyrants and monarchs.

Another benefit of feudal times was the creation of so many independent centres of influence. Centralization is always dangerous, and yet universal empire has generally been the aim of conquerors and agitators. The feudal system divided mankind into isolated sections, each of which became the point of radiation for commerce, refinement, and independence. The improvement of domestic manners consequent upon the influence of woman, the independence and commerce of baronial establishments, widened the base of civilization and liberty, and very soon that became individual which had before only belonged to the public. Personal and associated rights became triumphant.

The next era is that of the Reformation. We have so long and so fully enjoyed the benefits of the blessed Reformation of the 16th Century that we can scarcely conceive of its importance and necessity, or of the difficulties over which it was effected. For a few years a sickly tendency has been discovering itself in certain quarters to condemn the Protestant Reformation, and exclude from the race of heroes and benefactors of mankind our Puritan Fathers; but this tendency cannot live in the 19th Century. When we contemplate the progress of society since, and in consequence of the Reformation, the political developments, the increase of knowledge, of liberty and civilization, the growth of states in wealth, power and security, popular intelligence and commerce, and in the fine arts; when we consider that general education, the diffusion of popular knowledge, the cultivation of a vernacular literature in every country of Europe, the emancipation of reason and conscience, the revival of letters, the equality of *every soul in the sight of God*, the inestimable blessing of having the Holy Scriptures in our own tongue, and of their free circulation, it is not easy to exaggerate the importance of the Reformation to mankind.

The path of liberty in modern times, has been crossed by the hot wars of three remarkable periods: the Age of the Reformation; the Age of Louis XIV, and the Age of Napoleon. The wars of the first were caused by the strongest motives that can influence the human bosom: it was a struggle for religious and civil freedom. The wars of Louis XIV were the fruits of his own boundless ambition and vanity; and the wars of Napoleon, whatever personal motives at some times may have influenced him, and have operated on the minds of some of

the leaders of the French Revolution, were first in behalf of constitutional liberty and national independence, and subsequently for self-defence, on the part of Napoleon and the French people against the combined enemies of the progress of liberal principles in Europe. And during all these wars, the commercial spirit of Europe continued to acquire strength, and the fetters of mankind were broken off one by one, and liberty gained a point here and another yonder, and steadily advanced the day of the universal emancipation of the nations from tyranny and superstition. As commerce changes her highways and agents, so civilization and liberty have changed their local habitation: Freedom has removed from one country to another, but has never gone back. The awakened mind of Portugal, Spain and Holland, did much to extend commerce and liberal principles; but France, Great Britain, Germany and the United States, have far surpassed all the other nations of the earth in commerce, and in the advancement of the fine arts, and science and letters, and institutions of freedom.

Liberty is now the hallowed aspiration of our race. Like the spirit of the Lord, it is brooding over the chaos of man, and soon shall the earth arise blessed with order, beauty and goodness. There are no circumvallations to cut off her advance to the East, nor to the West, nor to the North, nor to the South.

The progress of popular liberty instead of hardening the heart and abridging the privileges of man as an *individual*, on the contrary elevates and expands his feelings. All men should rejoice in the brilliant success of Republican Institutions, for their extension and stability is a contribution to the common stock of human happiness. What nobler pride can swell the bosom of a man than that of an American, when he looks out from the smoky contracted wigwam of a party, and elances his thoughts into the bright sunshine that gleams over the world from our religious and political institutions. While they answer for us all the great ends designed by them, they furnish at the same time an example to others, and diffuse blessings beyond our own limits. "In whatever part of the globe," says New England's great orator and lawyer, "men are found contending for political liberty, they look to the United States with a feeling of brotherhood, and put forth a claim of kindred."—Webster's Speeches. vol. I, p. 100.

Seventy-five years ago there was not a foot of land on this Continent, inhabited by civilized man, that did not acknowledge the dominion of European power. Thank God; at this moment from Aroostook to the South Pole, and from sea to sea, there is hardly a foot that does, and since 1823 all European interference with American States has been denounced, and will, we trust, never be allowed under any circumstances.

It is in our day that America seems again to be discovered—not to geography, but to commerce, to social intercourse, to intelligence, to civilization, liberty and religion. The plans of Cortes, some two hundred years ago, about uniting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, are more than revived, as his conquests are far more than surpassed in their effects by the advance of American arms. The opening of a transit across the Mexican Isthmus, so as to bring the East into closer

commercial intercourse with America than with Europe, will doubtless give our age a prominence in all time to come, over all past ages. All history illustrates the fact, that the nation which has command of the commerce of the world, stands at the head of all other nations in everything else. It was so when the sons of Jacob went down to Egypt to buy corn; it is so now and will always be so.

A ship canal across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, making almost a straight voyage from New Orleans to the South of China, would throw into our hands the commerce of Asia and Australia—a commerce of 500,000,000 of people, and to the same extent open up a market for our produce and manufactures. As "Commerce is King"—a sovereign that rules the world—it only remains for us to secure the right of way from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific, and we shall place the nations of the earth at our feet. The results of such a change in the commerce of the world, are beyond all calculation. Such a communication will bring New Orleans within four days of the Pacific, and within two weeks of our possessions in California and Oregon, and New York within thirty days of Asia. It is now within ordinary calculations, if not actually within our hands, to revolutionize the commerce of the world in our favor, and increase the wealth, population and greatness of this country, and the happiness of Mexico and Central America, by means of a Canal connecting the waters of the Atlantic with those of the Pacific—a work that will doubtless be accomplished, and be the glory of this century.

From this sketch of the progress of civil institutions, imperfect as it is, it is obvious that we ought to thank God for the AGE IN WHICH WE LIVE. No man can either live or die to himself; much less can any age or generation pass away without leaving an influence upon its successor.

If we had come upon the great theatre of being before Christ, we had been deprived of his Gospel and the precious hopes and instructions therein developed; if we had lived under the Roman Empire, we must either have remained Pagans or suffered persecution; had we lived in the Middle Ages, we should have groaned under spiritual debasement and tyranny; and if we had lived at any previous age for 300 years back, we should have been involved in revolutions and convulsions—religious and political. In no past age was there enjoyed so much moral and religious influence as in this. The nature of man, and his wants, and his destiny were never so well understood. Art and science are far in advance of what they were in former ages, especially in those products and agencies that contribute to the mental and moral improvement of our race, and his physical comforts and eternal welfare. New discoveries are made almost as fast as we can find names for them. Time and space are conquered by steam and lightning. The earth is intersected and banded together by veins and arteries, along which run the throbbings of human sympathy and heavenly aspirings.

We live at a most interesting era in human affairs. The most important events are now crowded into a short period. New interests, new relations, new States and new nations spring up with almost every new year. It requires enlarged views to comprehend the destiny of our times.

Nor is our LOCAL HABITATION unworthy of special praise. It is a goodly land which the Lord our God giveth us. Its vastness and capacities and its isolation from the old world, have already marked it out as one of the greatest empires that has or ever will exist in time. Beautifully has it been said, "On the one side, the Atlantic dashes; on the other, the Pacific reposes."

The improvements in steam, navigation, the press, electricity and the art of war, that have been made during the last thirty years, have created a revolution, the results of which cannot be realized in our day, but which will be seen by the next generation. Now the great centres of thought and action instead of being one and in the centres of magnitude, are two, and like the poles, at the opposite extremes. On the East is Russia with an Autocrat governing fifty millions of people, homogeneous and swayed by one mind, possessing immense resources, rich in territory, breadstuffs and mines. On the West is the United States of North America with its twenty-five millions, and rich in agricultural and mineral wealth and republican institutions. And between lies Christian Europe with 250,000,000, embracing a great variety of principles and races. And the whole are now brought by steam, navigation and electricity within a few days of one another. It is a singular, but highly significant chapter in the record of God's ways, that despotism and republicanism should be respectively the most firmly established forms of government now existing over men, and that these should be found, the one in the extreme East and the other in the extreme West of that part of the globe that comprises the great elements of power and influence; and that all between should be, as it regards finances and politics and religion, in a transition state. COTTON, MINES AND BREADSTUFFS ARE THE RULING POWERS OF THE EARTH. The mines of Siberia have begun to supply Europe with the precious metals; and until very recently the plains of Central Russia supplied her with bread. The Russian Government already has immense investments in the public stocks of France and England, and at any moment the Emperor of Russia can destroy their public credit and produce a revolution throughout all the States of Central, or Western Europe, unless the United States is able to feed them and supply them with cotton and with the precious metals. The only counter-check to Russia is the United States. Its capabilities and energies, in a moral, physical and mental point of view, are equal, if not superior to those of Russia. Her climate, rivers, coasts, productions, and internal facilities for manufacturing are superior to those of the Russian Empire; and her principles of government far more favorable to the rights of man and the development of his social, mental and moral faculties. And at the very moment when Russia on the East was putting forth her gigantic arms to grasp in all Europe, by monopolizing her supply of bread and of gold and silver, at that very moment the Lord of Hosts breathed on our valleys and on our mountain sides, and gave us the finest of the wheat, and made our hills stand thick with corn—and sent our armies southward conquering in every battle, until we are possessed of mines more rich than those of Northern Europe. These truths in the history of the passing year seem, indeed, stranger than fiction, and surprise and

astonish both ourselves and others. And is not the hand of God in all this?*

The States of Central Europe gaze upon our career with a mixture of envy and solicitude. They are themselves unable to interfere with us. They are themselves encumbered with a debt of SEVEN billions of dollars, accumulated by centuries of misrule, corruption and almost unceasing wars amongst themselves; and yet they are this hour farther from harmony than ever. Nor can their governments ever be quiet and stable so long as they oppress and fear the people. Their repose for the last quarter of a century has been but to gather strength for renewed contests. They rest with their armor on. Their ears are ever erect to catch the bugle's blast to arms!—to arms!! Their most refined and elegant city is guarded by *sixty thousand* soldiers! Their hills and valleys green with corn to-day and vocal with the peasant's song, to-morrow may be overwhelmed with the lava stream of human blood, which the slumbering volcano of European corruption in morals and religion and misrule, is on the point of throwing out. We are much mistaken if the whole fabric of society, government and religion, on the continent of Europe, is not about to be cast again into the cauldron; and Infinite wisdom only knows the result.

As distinguished merit will at last rise superior to persecution and draw fresh lustre from reproach, so the very evils that have been attributed to the progress of Christianity and of Civil Liberty and Popular Education, instead of diminishing their respective happy effects upon mankind, do but tend to enhance their preciousness. The vapors which gather round the rising sun and follow it in its course, seldom fail to form a magnificent theatre for its noon-tide glory; and to invest with variegated tints and with a softened effulgence the luminary which they cannot hide.

When first the Sun too powerful beams displays,
It draws up vapors which obscure its rays;
But e'en those clouds at last adorn its way,
Reflect new glories and augment the day.

One of the many blessings of our land is that we have no dark ages, no inquisition prisons, no annals of bloody persecution to repent of. We have no storied past. We have no ivied towers—no mouldering battlements. We are yet in our vigorous youth. Our history is all in the future. But upon us of the present generation rests a fearful responsibility. It is our privilege to give coloring to all that shall come after us. Nor can any human hand prevent the fulfillment, in less than a century, of the prophecy, that one hundred millions of freemen shall stretch from Atlantic to Pacific waters, and live under Alfred's laws, and speak the language of Shakspeare and Milton, and enjoy the pure religion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

All futurity from the North to the South pole is to have its being in

* There are more than three thousand mines of precious metals between the Mississippi and the Isthmus of Darien. Most of them are silver mines, and recent travellers tell us they are capable of producing annually five times more than has ever been produced by all Mexico. It is estimated by intelligent men, that in Anglo-Saxon hands, the mines of Mexico already known and partially worked, one hundred millions of dollars could be raised per annum—See N. Y. Herald, 26th Nov. 1847; very interesting article.

the soul, that our generation shall breathe into it. The wilderness, the solitary plain, the green seas of forests now rippling around the Mexican Gulf and on the Pacific coast unbroken to the sky, and the winding shores of our internal seas are to be covered with mighty cities and adorned with christian temples. The moral and intellectual power of the North will be baptized with the generous impulses and glowing aspirations of the South. Learning, art, science, eloquence and charity, are here to have their home when the last trumpet sounds the knell of time. As we are now a free, united and happy people, so must we be **ONE AND INSEPARABLE FOREVER.***

Not only the age and habitation that God has given us, but the *RACE of which we are sprung is also a cause of gratitude.* History teaches us that God employs races of men for the fulfilment of his providence. This is obvious enough in the history of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, the Hebrews and Canaanites.

God has a great design for this Continent, and for our generation. As the Jews of old—as the Apostles—as the Reformers—as our fathers of 1776—so are we, as a race and as a nation, a peculiar people and called to a high and glorious destiny. We cannot falter. We cannot go back. If we do, we fly in the face of Providence; we shall come under the condemnation of the Jews for their incredulity and disobedience. We are shut up to the necessity of attempting great things. We must pluck up courage—put our trust in God and go forward. As God works out his own sovereign will amongst men by *races*; let us with the lights of history, and the principles clearly evolved by Providence as to the use of human agencies, inquire what are the elements of the race that Providence might be supposed to select for so high a mission as that of the 19th century in behalf of mankind? Must it be a race mighty upon land and ocean? Must it be a people happy and free at home and respected abroad—combining the calmness of wisdom and the ethereal fire of impassioned purpose? Must it be a nation whose energy is alike unquelled amongst

* Since the delivery of this discourse the author has seen the following eloquent passage from the late report of the Secretary of the Treasury, which is so beautiful and at the same time so expressive of what he believes to be the high destiny of this country, that it is commended to the favorable notice of his readers. As to the perpetuity of the Union, "sectional fanatics, few in number at home, and despots abroad concurring with them, may hope or menace; but the American Union is a moral and physical, a political and commercial, necessity, and never can or will be dissolved. As well might we attempt to decompose the great element of nature which holds together the planets, suns and systems of the universe, as hope to sever the links of mighty lakes and rivers, of ever-extending telegraphs, railroads and canals, of free trade, of intercourse, of interest, of love and affection, of the memories of the past, the present and the future, which must forever bind together the American Union. Indeed, when we look upon the American Revolution, the framing of our Constitution, the addition of Louisiana, Florida, Texas and Oregon—our extending era, products and population—our triumphs in war and peace—we must be blind to the past, and close our eyes upon the fulfilling realities of the future, if we cannot perceive, and gratefully acknowledge, that a higher than any earthly power still guards and directs our destiny, impels us onward, and has selected our great and happy country as a model and ultimate centre of attraction for all the nations of the world." Even the Edinburgh Review has at last, in an article on American commerce and statistics, rendered something like ample justice to the thrift and enterprise of this country. And speaking of the prospective dangers of the Union, says—"But the great Federation has withstood trials quite as severe. While the combination of surrounding political circumstances seems to indicate that it is only on the threshold of its momentous destiny, there is a force and profusion of life in all its functions, which bespeaks it equal to the occasion."—Edinburgh Review, No. 174, for October, 1847.

the "tumbling ice-bergs of the pole, and in the panting horizons of the tropics"—whose courage can stand unqualing before the fierce onslaught of charging steel, and amidst the iron hail of battle; and remain unmoved when the tide of success seems turning; and can bleed with gladness for principle and at duty's call, and then irradiate the hour of victory with deeds of forbearance, of humanity and mercy, that make angels smile over the field of the slain? Must it be a nation whose minister of peace shall go before her conquering leaders, whose chaplets of victory are set in olive branches—and who, after her enemy's every defeat, pauses and makes a renewed tender of reconciliation? Must it be a nation whose soldiers, after having cut the enemy's troops to pieces with balls and bayonets, can step out of their ranks and take up the composing-stick, and pursue them in their retreat with the missiles (despatches) of the greatest civilizer of man—the printing press? Must it be a nation into whose armies a thousand sons of the type would voluntarily rush at their country's call—who shall fight and print as they go from city to city, and from battle-field to battle-field? Must it be a nation whose victories shall be succeeded by acts of humanity as unknown amongst ancient nations, as they are congenial to a generous and brave heart? Must it be a people of moral forethought who, while they are felling the forest, will erect their homes, and hard by the church, the temple of justice and the school-house, and thus bring out into the heart of the wilderness the sweet influences of law, education and religion? Must it be a people whose love for home, for country, and reverence for the supremacy of law, and regard for principle and duty, are equalled only by their spirit of adventure and enterprise, and by their regard for the rights and liberties of others, and surpassed only by the strength and purity of their hopes for the life to come? Must it be a people trained in arts and arms—inured to hardships, familiar with the forms of danger, and accustomed to rely on themselves, and to govern themselves? Must it be a people of general intelligence, and a people whose civilization is based upon and formed out of a pure christianity that breathes universal toleration and world-wide sympathies for man? And are not these the endowments of America? Are not these the high attributes which the Almighty has impressed upon the Anglo-Saxon race? Is not their history, both in Europe and America, ample proof that such deeds are their praises?

Disciplined for centuries on the shores of the German Ocean and on the rock-bound coasts of Great Britain, this race planted some of its shoots in this land, and here a people has grown up to fulfil the great designs of Providence—having the wisdom of an old and the vigor of a new-born nation. Great Britain and America furnish the race and the institutions, with a few collateral streams that have flown in from time to time, for the achievement of Heaven's high behest to man. It was the will of God that Spain should discover, that Spain and France should colonize, but that the English language and Anglo-Saxon laws and institutions should govern this continent. Great Britain and America are united as no two other countries ever were nor ever can be, and Providence has thus united them that they

may be instruments of Christianizing and civilizing the world. We do not speak thus from vanity. The only reason why it is so, is to be found in the inscrutable ways and sovereign will of Heaven. It is our destiny. Our responsibilities are fearful. But there is no escape. Our *age*, our *race*, our *institutions* and the *characteristics* of our *country*, *physical*, *intellectual*, *moral* and *religious*, as well as the helplessness and the sufferings of our fellow-men, groaning in chains and under grievous wrongs, call us to a glorious destiny. We are hereditary freemen. We have never been in bondage to any man. The blood of the Celts, the Normans, the unconquered Saxons, before whom Cæsar and Charlemagne alike recoiled, mingle their heroic currents alike in our veins, along with that great barbaric stream which Rome herself could not withstand. These were our primeval sires. And after them in our line of succession came the Puritans, Covenanters, Non-Conformists and Huguenots. The founders of English liberty, and the men of the Continental Reformation from Popery and the men of '76—heritage, descent and destiny, alike glorious. A necessity is laid upon us to live as freemen or not to live at all. Whoever else may forsake the sacred cause of liberty, we at least must live where freemen live, or fall where freemen perish.

And is there no sign as to what will be the result of the fearful problem now being wrought out? Are there no foreshadowings from Heaven of a brilliant era? Are there no gleams of light already falling upon the picture drawn by heavenly prophecy? Are there no palpable advances of the better and purer forms of civilization? Has not the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ gone forth as the pillar and cloud to lead God's chosen ones from bondage to the glorious heritage of the free? The means may not always be such as we had anticipated. "Mystery is God's great name." The missionary of the Cross may sometimes speak in the awful thunder of the cannon. Grim-visaged war—an evil—always one of the greatest—an evil in itself—so mysterious are the ways of God—is often employed as the forerunner or agent of the Gospel.

Pain and Sin are convicts, and toil in their fetters for good :
 The weapons of Evil are turned against itself, fighting under better banners ;
 The leech delighteth in stinging, and the wicked loveth to do harm,
 But the Wise Physician of the Universe useth that ill tendency for health.
 An aching bone saves the whole body—
 The furnace of affliction may be fierce, but it refineth the soul.—[Tupper.

The means of human regeneration, as well as the glory, belong to the Most High. We are responsible only for obedience to His will. And our encouragement lies in this: that His mouth "who is the mystery of Goodness, has spoken it," and it cannot fail, that the whole earth shall be filled with His glory. The leaven of pure religion shall quicken in the heart of the earth, and work until it redeems the kingdoms and tribes of all the globe. He whose right it is to reign will come, and His Kingdom shall be established upon the floods. America will be lighted up with universal joy at Messiah's name. Africa, long enslaved, will stretch out her hands to God, and her fetters will fall off. And China, and India, and all the Islands of every sea, shall be converted to God. The glorious

arch of Human Freedom shall span the whole Heavens, and touch the horizon at both extremities ; and, upon the summit of its bright circumference, the Sapphire Throne of the Son of God shall be erected, and the shouts of adoring nations roll upwards, like mighty thunderings, saying—HALLELUJAH ! THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH—Praise ye the Lord. Amen and Amen !

