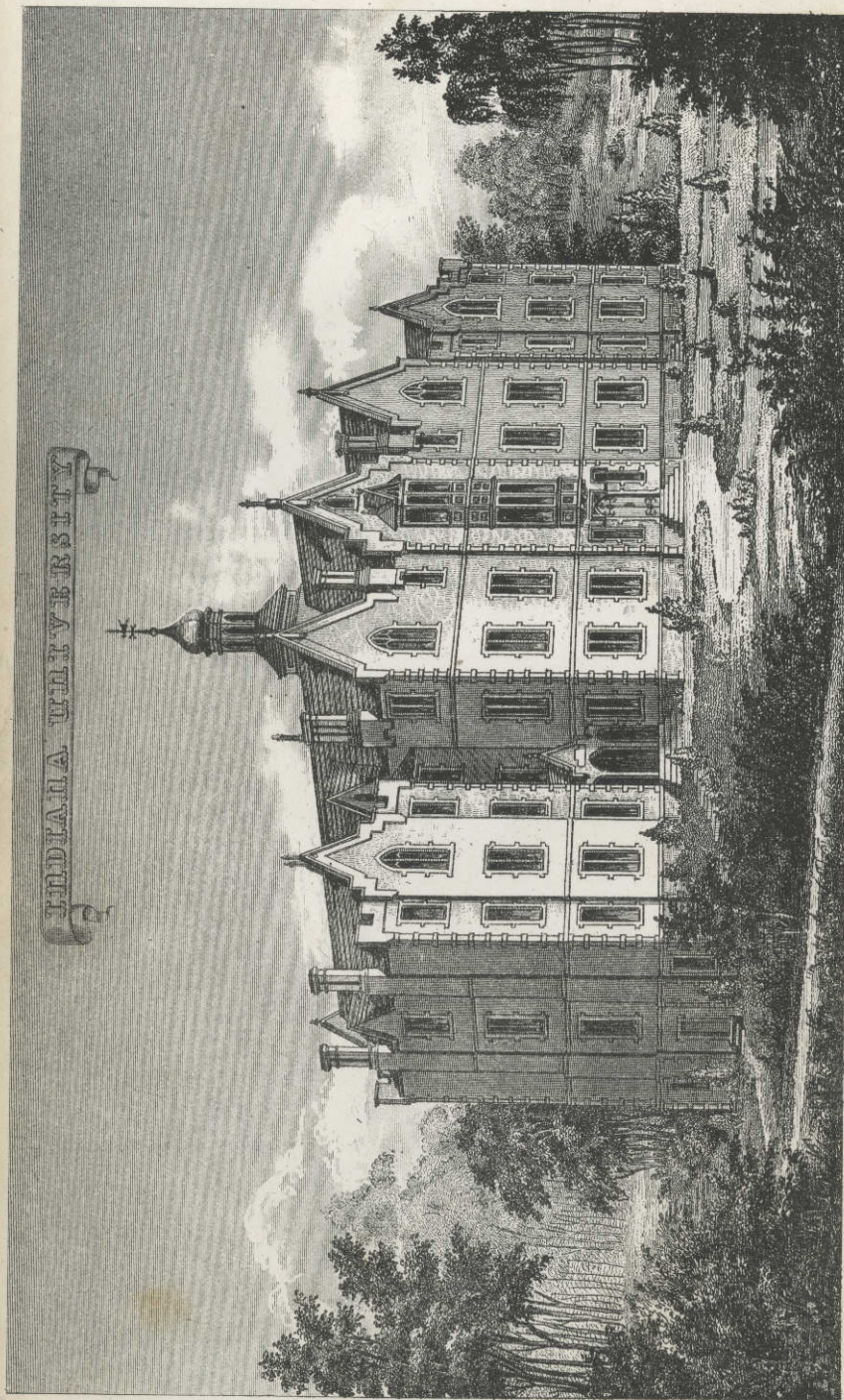


INDIANA UNIVERSITY



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THE INDIVIDUAL:

A BACCALAUREATE,

DELIVERED TO

THE CLASS OF SENIORS,

AT THE COMMENCEMENT OF

THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY,

AUGUST 13, 1851,

BY A. WYLIE, D. D., PRESIDENT.

John D. Defrees  
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## A D D R E S S .

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THIS occasion, young gentlemen, is called the Commencement. The word is very significant. A commencement is a beginning: and wherever there is a beginning there also is an ending. The day is dawning and the night ending at the same moment now to the people who live at a certain distance to the west of us; and, as the earth revolves on its axis, this point is brought in succession to the eyes of all its inhabitants: and, as it pursues its annual course through the heavens, it brings, with the same unvarying regularity, the point at which one season of the year goes away and the next takes its place. What an impressive lesson does this emblem hold forth to our consideration! One generation cometh and another goeth. Life is a journey of successive stages: and at the "ultima linea rerum" where this life ends, another life begins.

The most interesting difference between that portion of life which with you is now ending and that which is in its commencement, consists in this, that, from this time onward, you are each of you to be more an individual than hitherto.

The Individual: let this be the theme, therefore, of our present meditations. I shall not undertake to discuss it fully,

but only to suggest a few things in relation to it, which may afford matter for useful reflection in reference to that part which you may severally be called upon to act in future life.

First of all, let us form to ourselves a distinct conception of what we mean by an individual.

You have all noticed the way in which the strawberry plant propagates itself. From the parent stock is sent forth what is called a runner, or, more properly, a creeper: for its progress is slow and cautious; and it keeps close to the ground in a lowly, un aspiring way. When it has extended itself to a convenient distance, a knot is formed, from which proceed a set of pointed fibres, which penetrate the soil and become roots for the new plant, which, with its tender stem and leaves, begins to shoot upwards. For some time the connecting runner to which it is attached remains in full vigor, conveying nourishment from the parent stock to the young plant. But, as this thrives, and grows from day to day stronger and stronger, less and less nourishment is supplied from the parent stock; and at length it entirely ceases; and then the connecting channel having performed its sustaining office, dies away, and is dried up. The whole process is now complete, and the young plant is an *individual*. Its life is in itself. It henceforth performs all its functions by the independent working of its own inherent powers, draining no portion of its aliment any more from any other source but the all-nourishing earth, the atmosphere, and the sun. I need not stop here to explain the points of resemblance between this phenomenon of nature and the case which it is brought to illustrate. You see what they are. But permit me, in following out the analogy a little further, to ask, Who is the gardener? For without the gardener strawberries do not grow *here*. The time was—it is not so very long ago but that some now living may have seen it—when, as I have



been told, was the case in Harrison Prairie, there grew, near the place where Terre Haute now stands, and doubtless many other places in these western wilds, extensive thick set plantations of this delightful vegetable, bearing their annual crop of delicious fruit spontaneously, a luxurious feast for the roving birds. But this state of things, like the fabled golden age of the poet, and the philosophers state of nature, which is no less a fiction,—a fiction however which has proved less innocent than that of the poet,—this state of things has passed away, to return no more. The foot of the grazing ox, the hoof of the wanton steed, the snout of the swine turning up the sod in pursuit of worms, had by this time extirpated the strawberry, even if the ploughshare and the spade and the crushing wheel had spared it. The care of the gardener, after enclosing his ground with a close and strong fence, must be employed assiduously in its cultivation, else no strawberry—not an individual plant, can be produced.

And, in the analogous case, I ask, Who is the gardener? Under God, whose kingdom ruleth over all, and whose tender care extends to all his creatures—under God, I reply, it is the *Genius of Civilization*, working through the instrumentalities, or, if the term be thought more appropriate, the Ordinances of the Family, of the State, and of the Church. Without this I am bold to affirm not only that man cannot grow and flourish as a social being in communities of any kind, but that he cannot exist as an individual: he must die out and pass away into non-existence and oblivion. This is the sure doom of the savage man; and it is fast coming upon him wherever he exists upon the face of the earth. I speak of man and of the world as they now are. If there ever had been such a state as that which philosophers of a certain school love to talk of, called “A state of nature,” in which every individual was his own judge and his own avenger, a

separate being, independent of every other, and under no obligations to any, till he might choose to bring himself under them, by a voluntary surrender of his so-called natural rights, it must have ended in a very short time.

The laws of man's nature forbid that he should prolong his existence, and, indeed, that he should exist at all, in the state of a separate, independent, individual. Unless he enters into the bonds of domestic society he must, by the common law of mortality, depart from his place, leaving no one to fill the vacancy. And this shows that the family is not a piece of human policy, but an ordinance of nature, and of Him who is the Author of nature. Though man may modify, he cannot destroy it, without, at the same time, destroying himself. If he pull down the pillars of this temple, he is crushed and buried under its ruins.

That form of social life which we call The State, and which is made up of a number of families united together by an organic law called the Constitution, exists by a necessity, not indeed essential to the being of man, but certainly to his well-being.

The same is true, to some extent, of that other institution called the Church. How far it is true I shall not now enquire. Nor shall I attempt, in this incidental notice of it which I am now taking, to assign to the term any very strict and definite meaning, such as it bears in the discourses of theologians; but taking it in a wider and more general sense to denote any Institution having for its end the culture and training of the religious tendencies of our nature, I observe that we find distinct notices of its existence in the history of all nations. Prior to the calling of Abraham, which, next to that of the Advent, is the most remarkable among the epochs of the world's history, it seems to have existed in the family; the patriarch being the priest, as well as ruler



over his own household. Since that period it has existed not only among his descendants, but among all other nations who have made a figure in the world, in a form distinct from that of the family, and been conducted on principles and by means of an organization peculiar to itself.

Having thus, as briefly as possible, brought under our view the family, the state, and the church, let us see how the individual is affected by them.

And here it is very obvious, that the influence of that which is first in order, is pre-eminent also in importance. The individual can hardly be said to exist so long as he is growing up in the family. This is only the nursery of future men. Here they are under a process by which they are slowly and gradually but surely formed: and till this process is finished, the individual is not complete, as has been already shown; and though the influence of both Church and State may affect him, and must affect him, in many ways and in all his interests, it reaches him only through the acts of the parent, or some other guardian, who stands towards him in the place of a parent; and this, according to the manifest design and intention of nature, continues to be the case, till the infant is developed into the man. Suppose, now, that he becomes a member of the church—how much remains to him of his individual self, will depend upon the character and claims of that society, whatever it be, which, under the name of a church, admits him into its communion. If the power of pronouncing by its authoritative decrees what he is to believe and what he is not to believe upon the peril of his soul, be one of its attributes, implicit faith is his duty, as one of its members; and all further exercise of his reason, that prime element of the individual man, is superseded, and may be laid aside, except so far as may be necessary to learn what the dogmas are. And if, further, the church, or whatever



be the name of the society in question, claims, as another of its attributes, the power of affecting his spiritual interests by means of a virtue inherent in her official acts, and mechanically exerting itself, then another, and the only remaining element, which, in conjunction with the former, makes up the individual man, I mean his will, with the other faculties which ought to guide it to a proper determination, such as conscience, and the other moral sentiments;—this also is superseded, and nothing of the individual man is left which he can properly call his own, except his body. His soul is in the hands of the Mandarin, or whatever be the name of the functionary to whom the surrender of this part of himself may have been made. *Thinking* and *willing* are gone from the man. They are absorbed in the church. Implicit faith and a passive reception of the “opus operatum”—as when the heated iron receives the stroke of the hammer—have been substituted in their place.

Let this picture of the *shadow* of the individual, represent whatever may be found any where to which it will apply. Think not to find its original in the church of Rome only. It exists there, and among Protestants also, though they all disclaim it. Among the most recent of the formations calling themselves by this general name—I mean the Mormons—it is probable, judging from what we know of their history, that it exists in specimens as numerous as the members.

Practically, any society of people may be thrown for a time into a form answering to the portrait I have drawn. They may be all of them *members* and not one of them an *individual*, the mind of the individual being lost and absorbed in that of the fraternity. The phenomenon has often been seen on this earth. And it is always portentous.

Substituting temporal for spiritual matters, in the representation just given, you will have some idea—rude and imper-

fect indeed, but still an idea—of what that society is, which we call The State. This also may claim, and has often in other countries claimed, and exercised, attributes corresponding to those I have mentioned as being sometimes arrogated by the church,—attributes which absorb the individual man, and merge him into the member—the subject. That it may ever on any emergency do so of *right*, is no part of my creed: and I may be excused for mentioning it here, that the good people of the State may know, that when they send their sons to this University, they do not expose them to the danger of imbibing the doctrine, once prevalent, but now only held by semi-barbarous tyrants,—that, I mean, which was once exploded by our fathers at the cannon's mouth—the doctrine of “unlimited obedience.”

No individual can indeed have the right to resist the laws. He must submit, in all cases, to the powers that be. But submission is not obedience. If the law commands the individual to do any thing which in his conscience he knows and feels that it would be sinful for him to do, rather, infinitely rather than obey, let him suffer the penalty, whatever it may be. For there is no sin in submitting to wrong in such a case, any more than to submit to sickness, or any other calamity which it may please a wise and righteous Providence to inflict. As it respects the individual this rule is universal and admits no exceptions. For the individual is always a member of some state to which he owes allegiance. With the people in a body, the case is different. They have the right of organizing rebellion, with the view not only of resisting the edicts of an oppressive and tyrannical government, but of overturning it altogether. To deny this, and to maintain the doctrine that there is no higher law than the will of government, is to sink, as with an earthquake, the whole domain of individual rights—to destroy the very ground on



which the individual stands, and to ascribe to government a power which no government has, or can have, not even that which belongs to the Supreme Ruler of the universe. It is no want of reverence towards His Adorable Majesty to say, that He cannot abolish the reality of moral distinctions by an arbitrary decree, so as to make, for example, ingratitude a duty, and honesty a crime. To ascribe to Him such a power, would be the very height and extreme of blasphemy; since it would be to suppose Him indifferent in his regard towards right and wrong.

err If it be asked what becomes of the allegiance of the individual when he joins in a revolutionary movement, the answer is at hand. It has not perished. It cannot perish. It is transformed to that organization which makes the movement. From the moment of his connexion with it, *it* becomes, to him, the State. He has become a member of it. His fate is bound up in it; and, if it fails, he is well aware of what he has to expect at the hands of that government which he means to destroy.

The boundary which encloses what belongs to the individual, as distinct from what belongs to the State, cannot well be understood without a distinct reference to land as a matter of property. Man is of the earth, earthy. Dust he is, and unto dust he returns. During life he is fed and clothed from the earth. The earth affords materials for a house and for that variety of things necessary for his comfort with which it is furnished. The earth is the material basis on which his traveling, and all the operations of trade are carried on. The earth has furnished the stuff of which books and telescopes, microscopes, and thousands of other contrivances are constructed, for the purpose of facilitating the operations of the intellect in its pursuit of knowledge. And, what is more wonderful still, there seems to emanate from

the soil on which man treads, an influence which reaches even to the depths of his moral nature, determining and fixing his judgments as to right and wrong. Why else is it that in one part of our country slavery is justified, while in another it is regarded as a mortal sin? The reason seems to be that the soil, in the one, is adapted to the growth of cotton; and, in the other, not. Accordingly, it is found, that when a man changes his residence from the one soil to the other, a change of opinion is apt to follow.

These observations on the peculiar nature of property in land, are intended to show that every State has an interest in every foot of land within its limits, which interest it holds by "the right of eminent domain," as the phrase is, to which the right of individual ownership is, and must be, subordinate. So that, should some wealthy individual buy up all the land in this and the adjoining counties, for the purpose of converting the whole into a great park, to be peopled by deer instead of human inhabitants, or by human inhabitants not subject to the government of the state, the state would, in either case, interpose to prevent the execution of such design. Individuals secede from the state and from the Union, at death. But their land remains, and the government with its right of eminent domain remains; so that, while "heir to heir succeeds, as in a rolling flood wave follows wave," each generation enjoys the protection of government with the immense advantages it implies, as surely as it does the kindly influences of Nature existent in the steadfast earth and the everlasting stars. And, as, in obedience to the decrees of fate, individuals must, each at the appointed time, secede from the government in leaving the world; so they have the undoubted right of seceding from it, at any time during life which they themselves may choose,—leaving, in both cases, *their lands behind them*, with the government's right of emi-



nent domain lying undisturbed upon them. The impossibility of doing otherwise, is, in the one case, a physical impossibility: in the other, it is only a moral. But this moral impossibility, the people of these United States can, if God pleases, change into a physical impossibility, whenever the crisis for making the experiment shall be forced upon them. On this question they do not speak their minds. They ought not. They cannot. It is not a theme for words. Words cannot utter the thoughts and feelings which true patriots have deposited within them, deep in the calm and tranquil principles of their hearts and souls, their minds and spirits. When the occasion comes—O, God Who art terrible in Thy judgments and Who dost sometimes send upon a people, whose crimes have filled up the measure of Thy forbearance, strong delusions that they may believe a lie and so rush into ruin—grant, we beseech Thee, that the occasion may never come!—but if it must come, then will the mind of this great nation, which has grown to its present greatness in so short a time by virtue of the Union, speak out in the language of deeds,—action,—slow it will certainly be, and reluctant, but—decisive. But let me turn away from the contemplation of an idea which ought seldom to be brought into view, and never but to be loathed and deprecated.

The foregoing remarks have been made with the view of preparing the way for the announcement of a very general and comprehensive principle, which applies to the case of the individual, in his relations to others. It is a principle so powerful in its application, that it may well be called the law of individual life relatively to others. It is, moreover, a law so exceedingly plain and simple, that an apology seems necessary for distinctly mentioning it, and still more for giving to it that degree of prominence which it holds in the sequel of this discourse. The apology shall be given, and it is this, that the

principle, which is at the same time so plain and so important, is one which in fact is too commonly either overlooked or disregarded by men in their intercourse of life. The law is this, that every relation into which a man enters with others, as well as those relations in which the hand of Nature has placed him, retrenches somewhat from his freedom of acting as an individual. To be in the relation, whatever be its nature, makes him a partner with another, and this is incompatible, to a certain extent, with his freedom as an individual: and to be in a relation to a number of others, a body, a society, an order, or whatever it may be called, makes him a member of that body, society, or order. And, as there are, or at least are supposed to be, some advantages attached to membership, and other advantages belonging to the state of individual freedom, no one can consistently claim to himself the enjoyment of both. Mankind will not allow it. The privileges which the individual hopes to enjoy by becoming a member of an association, are the measure of his duties to it: and it would be unfair for him to claim the privilege, while he refuses to render the duty which is its equivalent. This law is fundamental to all associations. If not enforced, the association goes to pieces, either in the shock of some sudden convulsion, or in the melting away of a more gradual dissolution.

Never, perhaps, was there a country or a time, in which there existed so many associations as in our own. Beside Banks, Railroad Companies, and other corporations deriving their existence by charter from the State, there are hundreds of others having a visible organization, besides I know not how many more that are invisible. Every adult individual in the Union, and many a one who is not adult, belongs to some one or other of these associations. Some individuals belong to many; so that, among hands, nothing of their indi-



viduality is left for themselves ; part of it being absorbed by one, and part by another of these greedy monsters. And, not unfrequently, it happens, that a poor fellow, struggling hard with the waves in the troubled voyage of life, falling in with some one of them more voracious than the rest, is content to be taken and swallowed whole by it, without even the chance, or the desire, of being vomited forth again upon dry land. I desire to deal not in indiscriminate censure. There are in this country, and in England, associations not a few, some of them of long standing, which have been, and continue to be, instruments in the hands of Divine Providence of diffusing, far and wide over the face of the earth, the richest blessings. Long may they flourish, and may the blessing of approving Heaven rest upon their benevolent labors!

But there are other combinations to which no such commendation will apply; and there are others of a doubtful tendency.

But, however excellent the constitution on which a society may be based, and however desirable and important be the ends towards which, in theory, it may tend, it is not possible that it should practically accomplish their ends when once it is made up of unworthy members. Vicious men do not become better by moving and acting in concert: they generally become worse. And the line, which St. Paul, by quoting it from one of the ancient heathen poets, has made sacred, should ever be borne in mind, especially by those whose characters are yet unformed: "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Indeed, so strong are the imitative propensities of our nature, which, though diminished, are by no means destroyed by advancing age, and so many and so subtle are the sympathies which tend to assimilate the members of a fraternity together, that even the man whose virtues have become habits could not trust himself safely in the fel-

lowship of bad men for any length of time. Every good man knows this; and finds the blessedness of which the Psalmist speaks in not walking in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standing in the way of sinners, nor sitting in the seat of the scornful.

The way to escape pollution is to recoil from its touch. To maintain one's individuality is indeed often a hard matter. It is like standing alone in the forest when the whirlwind passes, uprooting or twisting off the trees of ordinary growth—an honor which belongs to the poplar only, the stubborn oak not being able to withstand the shock for the reason that, as if vain and self-confident, it displays too much canvass. Some who now hear me were residing in this place when the hurricane swept through the till then unbroken forest north-east of town. Not being then in the country, I can only conceive the scene from the monuments of it which the tempest could not overturn, and which, some of them, still remain; though it is about thirty years since all their fellows of the forest were torn away by the furious blast. Often, in passing along the road, I have looked up with admiration at those sound hearted, straight, upright, towering trees! Noble trees! conquerers of the storm! the dastard axe might have spared you! But, though it dared not cut you *through*, it has basely cut off your sustenance from mother-earth, by girdling you round; yet still ye stand there in solitary grandeur, emblems, methinks, of the truly great man, who not merely holds fast his integrity when the storm of adversity, having swept away his friends and companions from his side, spends its utmost fury upon him alone, but stands erect after the keen edge of treachery has caused his spreading honors to wither, calmly waiting the hour, which, sooner or later, comes to level all that the earth sustains. But here the emblem fails. For Christianity assures the good man—or, if you prefer the ex-



pression, the great man—for they are the same—in the hopes of a continued existence, in which what we call death is but a change, a stage in his journey upward—a lifting of the vail which now hides from our view—glories—glories not utterable in human language.

In this remark I do not wander from my subject. It conducts me to the very heart of it. For it is Christianity, more than any thing else, more than all things else, which gives to man an individuality of character. If Christianity were a Fiction, I would say it was the most cunningly devised of all fictions. Nothing could enter into the imagination of a Homer, a Scott, or a Shakspeare, so powerful to move the soul in all its depths. By showing to man his nature, as a rational and immortal being; by setting clearly before him his relations to The Creator, on whom he depends, and to whom he is accountable; by informing him of the grand fact of his Redemption by Jesus Christ, what it implies, and what is its immediate result, that, namely, of putting him upon his trial under a new dispensation of grace; and thus operating at once upon his hopes, fears, and affections; in these and many other ways, which need not here be mentioned, it *finds* man amidst the throng of his companions, and *arrests* him, with a strong, but friendly hand, takes him aside from the crowd, and from the noise and bustle of life, and shows him *his Worth, and his Responsibility, as an Individual*. Here is a mighty change; a change, may I not say, from zero to a positive quantity. For what is a man without a sense of his worth and responsibility? A nothing; morally a nothing. You may put him, like a nought, in connexion with one or more integers, and then their value will be increased tenfold: but by varying the connexion it may be *diminished* in the same proportion. “Worth makes the man, and want of it, the fellow:” and, in the mustering and arrangements of human

life, it may happen, that the "fellow" may so stand in reference to the "men" as to reduce their social value, in the way of decimals, to a very small fraction.

Look where you will through nature, and the ranks of men, and you will find that all the *realities* are *individuals*. This assembly now before me is nothing in itself. When the occasion shall have passed, and the individuals, which collectively compose it, shall have left the hall, and gone their ways, where will the assembly be? Nowhere. It will have no existence. What gives it its existence now? Not any mind that is in it: nothing but the *accordance* of the several minds of the individuals in one small point: differing in almost all things else, they agree in remaining together till the exercises are over. Hence the assembly.

Now, I say, that the faith of the Christian concerns him most as an individual, and tends, if I may so say, to make of him more of an individual than he was before, or than he ever could be without it. I speak with reference to worldly relations. What is it to him who has faith in Christ, what the world thinks, or says, or does? The spring and source of his interests and policy are not in the world, but in the things which are above. A light emanating from the cross, or, to speak more properly, from the vacated tomb of Him who expired upon the cross, and casting its rays upwards along the path of life, takes his eye;—why should he walk by the light of men's fires, and the sparks which they have kindled? There is one Master of whom he learns; one Leader whose voice he knows and follows; one Lord whom he serves, to whose hands he has confided himself, and who, he doubts not, is both faithful to the trust, and able to keep it safe "until that day;" to whom else should he go?

But since the faith of which I am speaking "cometh by hearing," let me not be understood as intimating that he who



has it, holds it apart by himself, as if it were excogitated by his own individual reason, or given personally to himself by immediate revelation. The first of these notions is absurd, and contrary to the very nature of the christian faith; the second is a most pernicious fancy, fruitful of impostures. The "word of faith," as St. Paul calls it, was preached by those who were "*sent*," commissioned to preach it. It was a *creative* word. It *made* the church, which is the mother of true believers; and of which no individual believer seeks to be independent. Yet the church member remains an individual still: and the church can not believe for him; nor perform any of his other personal duties; nor give him a dispensation from the obligation of performing them, any more than it can die for him, or be answerable for him at the bar of his Final Judge.

Whatever be the relations which place an individual in connexion with others, whether it be those of the family, those of the state, those of the church, those of the neighborhood, those of the school, or those of that unorganized society, which, existing under cover of the State, is regulated by the law of public sentiment alone, in matters, which, however important they may be as it respects decency, good order, and the enjoyments of social life, cannot be reached by any other law,—in all these relations, it is important practically to keep in view the distinction between *approbation* and *toleration*. This is a distinction so obviously dictated by the rule, founded on the necessary diversities of character and opinion in the world, which requires of every one to concede to others the liberty which he claims for himself, that one would think it could not be overlooked so frequently as it is. Whenever it is altogether neglected in any community, there ensues such a scene of confusion and strife, so much jealousy and suspicion, so much impertinence and intermeddling, so

many jars and bickerings, that one who loves peace, rather than submit to so much annoyance, would prefer to seclude himself entirely from the world, and take up his residence in the cell of the hermit. But as this would not be right, were it even practicable, it becomes his duty as clearly as it is his interest, to *tolerate*, in his relations with others, some things which he does not approve. How much, or how little, must depend on the nature of those relations. From himself as the centre—that I may express the idea the more briefly, let me represent it in terms borrowed from geometry—let there be drawn a succession of concentric circles, each successive circle being described by the sweep of a radius longer than that of the preceding, till the last and widest shall inclose the whole human family. Let there be also, as in the solar system, elliptical orbits in the scheme, such as those in which the comets move. Such a scheme may well represent the relations in which man as an individual is more or less closely connected with others; the circles representing those which are more natural, permanent and useful, such as those of the family, those of the church, those of the state, those of friendship, those of local vicinage, and the like; and the ellipses, those which depend more upon choice; such as those of the Sons of Temperance, the Odd Fellows, Free Masons, and other fraternities without number, which diversify the firmament of social life. Now, it is manifest that, in reference to the persons, their opinions and conduct, who are considered as included within these several circles, the things to be tolerated, the points of difference between them and the individual, are more or less numerous, according as the *radius vector* which sweeps the area of the circle in which they stand shall be longer or shorter. The individual is a unit, a point: the wrong that there is in himself he ought not to tolerate. Let him give no quarters within himself to the evil which he



condemns. But when he comes out of the sphere of his personal responsibilities, the first woman that he meets—for it is always a woman—he must

“Be to her faults a little blind ;

“Be to her virtues very kind ;

“Let all her ways be unconfined”—

or, if that would be a little *too* tolerant, he must—do the best he can in the case ;—still, he is bound to be, to some extent, tolerant. To a friend he should be still more so ; to a neighbor more so than to a friend ; and to a fellow citizen more so than to a neighbor ; and to one of another State, than to one of his own State ; and to a foreigner more than to a fellow citizen ; and so on in all analogous cases. Now, if an individual should yield to any one in the attempt, or to the whole world, should the whole world combine in the attempt, to cause him to *do* any thing which in his conscience he condemns, he would degrade himself from his state of individuality, into the condition of an appendage, a tool, a slave. The conduct of Jenny Lind, in such a case, shows her not to be a “*vox et preterea nihil*,” but as strong and as noble in mind as she is sweet and captivating in song. The King of Sweden had desired her to sing in a concert, which was to be performed at his palace on Sunday. He even visited her in person with his request. It was in vain. As her sovereign he changed the request into a *command*. Still it was in vain. Her reply was respectful, and at the same time sublimely just and noble : “There is a higher King, Sire, to whom I owe my first allegiance.” It is to the spirit which prompted the heroic songstress to speak thus to the King of Sweden, that the world is indebted for whatever of civil and religious liberty is to be found any where among its inhabitants. The truth of this assertion will not be doubted by any one who has read history with an eye to the laws by which human nature is governed. It is a momentous truth. Never let it be forgotten by the lover of

his country and of the rights of man, that allegiance to the Supreme Ruler of the Universe, acknowledged and felt in the hearts of the individuals composing a nation, is the spring of that nation's liberty, and of that happiness and prosperity, and national greatness, which are its fruits. Without a sense of personal worth and individual responsibility, as we have before intimated, no man is prepared to act his part either as a citizen, or as a member of society. But without faith in God, what is his worth, or what is the estimate in which he holds his fellow. He is a reasoning animal, mortal as other animals: and to take his life is a matter of little moment. It is only diverting a few ounces of red fluid out of their natural current—which must soon become stagnant at any rate. And without faith in the moral government of God, which looks into the hidden man of the heart, takes cognizance of the overt acts which the darkness may conceal, or accomplices may cover from the scrutiny of human law, and which carries the thoughts forward to a future reckoning, in which there will be no respect of persons,—without this, where is the sense of individual responsibility? What is there to nourish it and make it strong? Honor? A love of distinction? This is a sentiment of great potency, I admit; and it has done great things. But not always on the side of liberty. Too often on the other side. Like the Argyraspides, honored by Alexander the Great, who, in the heat of an engagement, deserted the standard of Eumenes, their general, and joining the other side turned the day against him, it is open to bribery and corruption, and has, indeed, no very acute discernment in moral qualities. In monarchy, the king is the fountain of honor: and we know that in Great Britain distinction has frequently by the monarch been worthily bestowed. How often unworthily, I need not say: for it is nothing to us. *Here* the people are the fountain of honor, and distinctions



flow from their favor. I rejoice that it is so. Long may it continue so to be. All I mean to say is, that honor, as a prevailing public sentiment, is capable of yielding neither support nor security to liberty, which, properly understood, is only another name for the public good, any longer than the people remain such as to be able to distinguish solid merit from empty pretension, a thing which sounds the loudest precisely for the reason that it is empty. And this brings us back to the individual again. For the character of the people in the aggregate, is made up of the characters of the individuals, counted one by one.

But here, leaving unfinished the thought which I had intended to present more fully in the progress of this discourse than I find I have been able to do, I must hasten to a close.

There are now, as there always have been in the world, two sorts of men that are very distinguishable from each other. One is the self-made man; the other is the people-made man. The first is apt to be a strong man, but rough, conceited, self-willed, head-strong, hard to get along with, and, in short, an egoist: and yet it is possible to have all the other of these properties without the first,—to be a very weak man, and yet an egoist. But such never live long in the public eye, and may be left out of the account. The second sort are weak, but plausible, smooth, complaisant, pliant to the will of others, as having none of their own. These men are not social, but rather gregarious. They may be intensely selfish; hunting their prey in companies like the wolf.

But is human nature capable of no better character than either of these? I cannot allow myself to think so meanly of it. Let me rather think of it as of that wonderful element which performs so many useful offices in the grand economy of nature—water. Water is made up of drops, kindred,

indeed, but separate, and capable of the most free and easy motion among themselves; and pure no longer than such motion is allowed. See them rolling in the wide, deep, ocean;—see them rising in vapor, and diffusing themselves in clouds through the sky;—see them careering on the wings of the winds;—congregating over the mountain tops;—descending in copious showers;—dancing in rivulets down the slopes of the hills;—dripping from the rocks;—flashing in the cascade;—sporting through the gay meadows, and coming together in larger streams; uniting their force to turn the useful wheel, and to buoy up and bear along the heavy freighted vessel; till they return from their circuit to their ocean-home. Were the waters endowed with life, this is the kind of life they would choose—free, yet not lawless; individual, yet congenial: and therefore happy. Yes, happy. Hear ye not the joyous music of the waters, singing their song of ever-varying notes, as they travel merrily on in their constant journey through sea, and air, and land?

But see them in another and very different state, lying sullen and silent, consolidated by the binding frost of winter,—fit emblem of that power, whether exerted by a single despot or by a party, to which we give the name of tyranny—congealed into a flat, even and treacherous plain, on which every filthy sewer and gutter may discharge its reeking contents; and every vile beast may insultingly tread;—there it remains, inert, passive, and motionless, till broken up by the flood; then the huge mass drives on, crashing and demolishing in its resistless course, factory and mill house and bridge, and whatever useful structure it may impinge against.

Were there none but the two sorts of characters, just now mentioned, in the world, or to be in the world, there could be no hope for mankind in their social state: it must always



be either frozen into a solid mass, or broken up and driving on in the angry, headlong flood of revolution.

But there are other characters beside these two; men who—to keep up our figure of the waters—have in them and diffuse around them enough of the vital warmth of high moral and religious principle, to keep the mass of society from congelation, men in whose souls dwell the heaven-born triad, Faith, Hope and Charity, honest men and true; true to themselves, and true to their country, as being in the first place, true to their God. These men are, in the true sense of the term, conservative—a sense which the mere politician cannot understand; they are the salt of the earth, and the real conservatives of the State; and though they be rarely found in office, as indeed they do not usually aspire after it, yet, in their quiet and peaceable ways of life, they do more to promote the real welfare of the nation, I mean the happiness of the citizens in the aggregate, than all the public functionaries by their official acts. May I not call them the God-made men?

Young Gentlemen: by wisely considering your individual characters, by knowing yourselves, and of what you are capable, you may be able to judge, with some degree of certainty, to what course of life you are called by Him in whose hand are your destinies. You will naturally, henceforth, feel a burden of cares and responsibilities resting upon you, from which, hitherto, you have been free. Minute instructions sufficient for your future guidance, I do not pretend to give. I cannot. Nor can any human being. You know to whom this title, “The Counsellor,” belongs, and what awful words they are which He spake concerning the two ways, “the narrow” and “the broad!” To Him allow me, in parting, to commend you, not only for guidance, but protection.