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Rev Andrew Wyllie

Sermon

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RELIGION AND STATE;  
NOT  
CHURCH AND STATE.

A SERMON,

ON PSALM 11, 10—12.

DELIVERED, JULY FOURTH 1830.

IN THE HALL OF

THE INDIANA COLLEGE,

BLOOMINGTON;

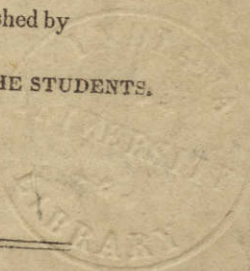
BY THE REV. A. WYLIE, D. D.

PRESIDENT OF THE COLLEGE,

And published by

REQUEST OF THE STUDENTS.

A



## SERMON.

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*"Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings: be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."*  
*Psal. 11. 10, 11, 12.*

The well being of man, considered in his social relations as well as those which belong to him as an individual, depends much more upon moral than upon physical causes. The influence of the latter upon his condition is, indeed, more direct and immediate, and, for this reason, more generally noticed. The former produce their effects, for the most part, through the medium of a series of influences such as cannot be traced but by a prying and serious consideration. Hence the reception given to the speculations of the statesman or political economist is, usually, more ready and cordial than that which is granted to those of the moralist or the theologian. The former treats of matters of trade, agriculture and the useful arts; the products of which can be seen and felt, weighed and measured, and are found, the moment they are used, to promote the comfort of the user. They constitute, indeed, the very means of his subsistence. The truth of the statements which are made by the former on these subjects every one can test by the results of his own experience, and feels, at once, to be interesting. The latter has a more difficult task. He must go for his proofs and illustrations into a region which sense has not explored and cannot explore. Instead of the scales, the bushel and the statistical table, he must have recourse to the impalpable standards of reason, conscience and faith. The principles to which he appeals are, moreover, not congenial to the natural atheism of the human heart. Although they pervade the texture of all human experience yet are they not distinctly visible, except in a long course of events and to an eye accustomed to view the affairs of men in their connexion with the government of That Being with whom "one day is as



sensible that the one before us largely partakes, and that some of the remarks which may be made upon it will, of course, meet with contempt from that class of people who have yet to learn what was taught, by so severe a lesson, to the proud monarch of Babylon, that the Most High ruleth over the kingdoms of men and giveth dominion to whomsoever he will.

The text follows a remarkable prophecy, in which the exaltation of the Mediator to the throne of universal dominion is predicted, and contains an admonition to the rulers of the world to submit to his authority. The doctrine which it implies is, *That every government conducted in hostility to Christ and his religion shall "perish from the way."* In accommodating this doctrine to the present occasion, I shall attempt to shew, that the influence of the christian religion is necessary to the preservation of the liberties and the advancement of the general interests of this nation. And, in doing this we hope to be led into such a train of reflections as shall not be inappropriate to the general purposes of this sacred day. That the day has been set apart by God himself to commemorate the works of creation and redemption ought not to be considered as a prohibition; on the part of the Supreme Ruler of the universe, to celebrate his goodness in any other particular. Under the head of these "**Mighty Works**" of the Lord all other acts of his beneficence may be considered as comprehended. And I can scarcely imagine an event, of a rank subordinate to these, which calls more loudly upon us, as subjects of the government and care of our merciful Creator, and especially, as citizens of this highly favored nation, to praise the Giver of all good, than the event of our national Independence, followed, as it has been, for half a century, by a course of unprecedented prosperity. He must be practically an Atheist who can look over the events of our history from its commencement hitherto, without feeling in his heart emotions prompting to a devout acknowledgment of the goodness of God in it all, especially in that part of it which relates to our deliverance from the oppression of a foreign yoke; and he must be unworthy of a participation in the many blessings involved in this deliverance, who feels no concern to have them perpetuated. And, in proportion as we value these blessings and are thankful to God for them, will be our care not to forfeit them, by acting a part unworthy of that exalted

knowledge of the goodness of Him who made us rational and immortal and redeemed us when ruined and lost, our ascriptions of praise for his interpositions in our behalf as a people, let us resolve, in his awful presence, that we will not frustrate the arrangements of his providence respecting us by disregarding the admonition which, in our text, He addresses to "the kings and judges of the earth." This is an admonition not inapplicable to us. For what, elsewhere, are the prerogatives of kings are here viewed and exercised as the rights of the people. With them is lodged the power; and on them rests the responsibility.

It is proposed to consider,

I. The dangers to which our liberties are exposed; and then,

II. The influence of christianity in preventing these dangers.

It has often been objected against a republican form of government, that it is, in its nature, more exposed to danger and less permanent, than any other. It would not be wisdom in us to deny the truth on which this objection is founded, though it would be folly to adopt the course which its authors would seem to recommend. Instead of throwing away our liberties, because they are in their own nature precarious, we should, on the contrary, resolve to guard them with the greater vigilance. The truth is, a free government is more liable to danger than any other, because it is *superior to every other*. To be capable of governing themselves mankind must be raised above the level of their ordinary attainments; and, to prevent their sinking back again to this level, the application of sundry moral causes is constantly and indispensably requisite. In the history of the world hitherto liberty has always proved to be a transitory state of social existence. It is, in some respects, a forced state. But so is life. Despotism is, like death, tranquil and permanent. The bodies which the flood had buried have remained, ever since, in the repose of death, undisturbed by the tumults of the many generations which have, since that fearful catastrophe, been living and moving upon the earth's surface, and so they will remain till the sound of the last trumpet. So when liberty, which gives life to nations, is extinguished in the shock of some political convulsion, or gradually perishes under the slower process of moral corruption, the form of a republic is dissolved and that of arbitrary government succeeds, and may endure for ages, till at length the voice of some patriot is commissioned from heaven to sound the signal of revolution and the elements of society dissolved.



renovated life. The greater stability of monarchy is then no reason why it should be preferred to liberty,—unless indeed the Egyptian mummy, which has remained unaltered for thirty centuries, is to be chosen before the body now glowing with life and animated with intelligence, although doomed in a few short years to mingle with the dust. Nations tend to pass from a state of freedom into that of subjection to arbitrary power, both ways, by an excess of liberty degenerating into licentiousness, on the part of the many, and by the gradual accumulation of power into the hands of a few.

From these general remarks let us pass to the specification of some of the dangers to which our liberties are exposed. They are numerous. I shall mention, however, but one or two, by way of specimen.

The first that I shall mention is war. The experience of past ages and the present situation of this nation in its relations with foreign powers justify the confident expectation that causes of war will occur. The nations have never, for any considerable interval, reposed in peace. The monarchies of the old world look upon us with an eye of jealousy. They hate republics; and the example which has here been set of the capacity of the people to govern themselves will give them uneasiness precisely in proportion to the success that shall attend it; for the probability that it will induce imitation will obviously be in that proportion. To the possessions of one of these monarchies we are contiguous on the north and south, and to those of another on the northwest. That the republics of South America will long remain so, is not reasonably to be expected; and their position with respect to us may tempt them to regard us as rivals rather than friends. Our commercial relations, moreover, bring our interests into contact, and may bring them into collision with those of every nation on the globe.

Whoever will thoughtfully look at these things in the light which the history of past ages cast upon the affairs of nations, will readily perceive that occasions of foreign war are among the probabilities of the future on which this nation ought to calculate. And war, if of frequent occurrence or long continuance, must prove fatal to the liberties of any popular government. War necessarily throws power into the hands of the Executive. It creates a fondness for pomp and luxury. It engenders a thirst for conquest. It increases the natural restlessness of the human mind, and thus prepares many to forsake the quietude of domestic life in quest of adventure and glory in arms.

whom vengeance belongeth and which is true of nations as well as individuals: "He that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword."

Of civil war it would argue a degree of presumptuous security approaching to infatuation in the people of these United States, not to acknowledge the danger. Scarcely had the government been erected when it was threatened by an insurrection; and once, at least, since that time, has there existed an excitement of such violent character, as needed but the application of an impulse, which any one of a thousand contingencies might have supplied, to have plunged this nation into *that* greatest of all calamities in which a nation can be involved.

The interests of different sections of our widely extended country, even of those which lie the most remote from each other, are really not at variance; yet they are capable of being so represented; and the past and the present both shew, what it is humiliating to be constrained to confess, that there are men capable of so representing them, and that some people are but too willing to lend an ear to such representations. That the measures of the government may also take such a direction as to operate against the *immediate* interests of one portion of the community, whose interests will be in the highest degree promoted by the remote operation of these same measures, is also manifest. Party spirit, also, which seems almost inseparable from free government, may furnish causes and occasions of collision. When its influence is properly restrained and moderated, it may be even salutary, and, at any rate, it ought to be tolerated for the sake of that, so precious a blessing, which it accompanies. It is one amongst a great number of instances, in which we must put up with a certain admixture of evil for sake of the greater good. But when it becomes raging and violent, and buries and obliterates all moral distinctions, it presents a symptom of ominous aspect on the body politic. By its means, as the proximate cause, all the republics that have ever been have come to ruin. In ancient Greece the people, through an excessive jealousy for liberty, proscribed and often banished those men who had distinguished themselves by their public services, till at length matters came to this, that to deserve the public confidence was the certain and only way to lose it: and then, in the dark hour of their country's peril, the only men who could have saved it consulted their own safety in retirement from its administration, while incompetent men, whom faction and party violence had bred no



distinctions of rank afforded constant occasion for civil dissensions, in which liberty did not long survive. The republics of Carthage, Venice, Genoa, Holland, and those of Great Britain under the Protector, all followed in the same track, and perished in the same quicksands. And, is any one mad enough, after so many examples, to expect that if ever party spirit should unsheath the sword of civil war in this republic, it will be returned to its scabbard, and liberty survive the conflict?

Hitherto, indeed, the lines which have separated party from party among us have not been fixed either by any set of opinions, or by any permanent distinctions of rank or calling, or by any geographical limits, or moral principles. We have seen, from time to time, the party in power pursuing the same line of policy which they had condemned in their predecessors: the north one while poised against the west and anon against the south, and the south, in its turn, evincing a capacity for corresponding transpositions. No religious sect has ever been embodied on any political question. Nor, as yet, has the demon of party arranged in two opposing columns the professed friends and the supposed enemies of all religion—though the thing has been attempted. But if the time should come—which may Heaven prevent—when party jealousies and party hate shall become fixed by any of the causes just alluded to, then may the date of the expiration of our liberties be foretold as near.

But, whatever may be the proximate causes which threaten destruction to our free institutions, there is but one remote cause and there can be no more; and that is, a general depravity of morals. There is no example of a nation that retained its liberties long after having once become corrupt; and, in the nature of things, such an example never can arise. The Author of nature has proposed the advantages of life as a reward to industry and the rest of the virtues. But vice wishes to seize and appropriate these advantages, without paying their price. Hence it resorts to violence or fraud. And violence and fraud must be restrained by power; otherwise the frame of society would be dissolved. Hence it appears that vice and liberty cannot subsist together. They are incompatible.

The corruption of a nation takes place in much the same way as in the case of an individual. First in the train comes idleness. This leads to unprofitable amusements and evil company. Profligate habits are thus formed. These are expensive, and must be supported.



Now, the wretch becomes desperate. He sees others prosperous and happy—sees and hates them. He longs for the destruction of their superior character and standing, and for a share in their property. With such a character he is prepared for “treasons, stratagems, and spoils.”—Suppose now that a majority of the people composing this nation were of this character—would they not give their votes for men of their own sort, men who, when raised to power, would pursue measures tending to squander the fruits of industry and the resources of improvement in licentiousness and folly.

Immorality contains in it the elements of social disorder as well as of private misery, elements which, sooner or later, become operative. Moral causes are as productive of their appropriate effects as physical, and the devastations of an earthquake, or a deluge do not more certainly follow, upon those combinations among the agents in the natural world which are necessary to produce them, than do national calamities—the destruction of liberty among the rest—from national depravity. When the degeneracy of the times has placed a tyrant on the throne, his removal, whether by the dagger of the conspirator, or the guillotine of the revolutionary tribunal, becomes an unavailing sacrifice to liberty. No such expedients can stay the progress of events. One despot taken off, another will succeed, or many, in his place. The evil must run its course; and they who would not obey the eternal and gentle law of reason and duty must find their appropriate punishment in being subjected to the iron rule of arbitrary power. And what makes the case the more instructive is, that this subjection is always, on the part of the people, voluntary; and they are employed in forging the chains with which themselves are to be bound. The profligate herd which are seen to-day beheading a king may be heard to-morrow shouting “Long live the emperor!”

Having pointed out some of the dangers to which our liberties are exposed, and which have proved fatal to the liberties of all other republics that have ever been; let us, in the next place, examine what influence the Christian religion does exert, and is likely to exert, in securing us against these dangers. Christianity takes, for its standard of truth and duty, the sacred scriptures. That the principles and rules of duty which they inculcate are such as naturally lead to a truly virtuous and peaceful course of life, will never be questioned by any candid reader of the sacred volume. He must be strangely and perversely blind to the power of belief in forming character, who

believing that there is a God, infinitely holy, just and good, who sees and knows all things, and who will bring every secret work into judgment—that his providence extends to all creatures and events—that virtue will be adequately rewarded and vice punished hereafter—that “the powers that be are ordained of God,” and that, consequently, it is his duty, under whatever government he may be placed, to live a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty—that no man liveth to himself but that all are bound, as they would hope for the favour and shun the displeasure of Almighty God, to do good to all men so far as they have opportunity—and that, so far from being allowed to retaliate the wrongs which he may suffer, he is bound to love his enemies and overcome evil with good. Is it not manifest that a religion which levels the whole force of its most tremendous sanctions against the source of our most prevalent and dangerous temptations, by prescribing the love of the world and the things of the world, and laying the axe to the root of our pride, by teaching us that we are depraved and guilty, while, at the same time, it encourages repentance by the hope of pardon and sanctification through a Redeemer—must, whenever it is cordially embraced, exert a powerful and salutary influence upon the character? Can any thing be more obvious than that, were these principles and precepts put into practice, wars would cease to the ends of the earth, and nations as well as individuals would act towards each other on terms of reciprocal kindness and forbearance? And, bad as the world is, I am fully persuaded, that, were this nation in her foreign intercourse to maintain a strict regard to the rules of Christian morality, the occasions of foreign war would be rare indeed; and as to civil war, were the majority of individuals composing the nation, or even of those who have political influence in the nation, really christian in their temper and conduct, it could never take place.

In the apprehension of the political philosopher Christianity is considered as carrying the principle of forbearance to an unreasonable length: and whatever place may be allowed to it, in the more confined department of social morality, it seems to have been agreed upon, by common consent, that it should have none, in the laws of nations. But, upon a close examination of the subject, and in its practical results, as spread out upon the broad and extended plane of the experience of nations, the policy of christian morality will be found to be the best. In secular politics the great object of interest is power, and



respect the rights of those who are able and prompt to vindicate them; but they seem not sufficiently aware, that there is no good reason why the weak should not be regarded with equal justice. Yet, on the score of right there is at least as good a reason for respecting their claims as those of the more powerful: and on the score of policy there may be even a greater; and according to the creed which every true christian has adopted there most assuredly is. For the Almighty will plead the cause of "the poor and needy," and his judgments, however slow, will fall at length with destructive certainty upon the heads of the wicked. The firm persuasion of this single truth in the minds of rulers and of the public at large would more effectually restrain the cupidity and other evil passions of men, and consequently do more to maintain peace and good order among nations as well as individuals, than the whole machinery of criminal jurisprudence, or that still more formidable and cumbrous apparatus which "the lords of the earth" have thought it necessary, with such immense cost and hazard, to maintain for the vindication of their rights. The truth of this statement is abundantly corroborated by facts. For wherever christianity has, in its purity, prevailed, "peace and good will to men" have been its genuine fruits. The institutions of christianity are admirably suited to maintain the principles of sound morality in their proper vigor. Of these institutions I shall notice at present but two; and of these the first is *The Sabbath*.

Could religion be separated from morality, or did it depend upon a set of instinctive impulses or wild impressions having no settled foundation in reason and reflection it would be beyond our control or cultivation and the Sabbath unnecessary. But this is far from being the case. It consists in a right state of moral feeling having its foundation in knowledge. Christianity in the present day cannot consist with a state of ignorance. The very evidences by which it commends itself to our approbation and acceptance cannot be discovered without research and consideration. But knowledge, in order to become practical and impressive, must be cherished into life by meditation. Devotion must be cultivated, and religious and moral impressions must be renewed, and deepened from time to time, in the performance of religious duty. There must, therefore, be time for such performance, and this time must be held sacred; otherwise the encroaching demands of secular concerns would, by degrees, engross the whole, and no interval remain, but that afforded by sickness, for attending to

The mind, if constantly engaged in the pursuit of temporal interests, would become heated to a degree of ardor incompatible with the sober decisions of the judgment in relation even to the ordinary concerns of life; much more, with regard to those of a moral and religious nature.\* A man must have *time* to think of his duties and obligations, his origin and destiny, the vanity of the world and the importance of his eternal interests, his relations to his fellow men and to his God, and to review his conduct and experience in reference to the great standard of rectitude contained in the law, or he will not think of them. And what, in a moral point of view, must be the state of that mind in which reflections of this sort never find a place?

The Sabbath stands connected with every thing sacred in religion, and by its very recurrence tends to revive a sense of it in the mind. God is its author, and it reminds us of his right in us, as our Creator and Saviour. It assembles us in the sanctuary, with our neighbors and friends, on the level of our common relation to Him, as suppliants before his throne of grace, and the objects of his love and providential care. Its solemn stillness invites to holy musing, and disposes the heart to the exercise of charity. It brings us away from our pursuits of vanity to the contemplation of our chief good, and the enjoyment of communion with the Father of our spirits. It presents a sedative to every turbulent passion, a lenitive to every care, an incitement to every duty. It is, in short, a type of heaven, and replete with power to exalt the soul in preparation for that glorious state. Its influence on the well-being of society is beyond calculation.

It is of vital importance to the purity of public morals, that instruction should be statedly and publicly given, on the great subjects of man's duties and interests, throughout the land. The experience of all ages shews that, without instruction on these subjects, man becomes ignorant, depraved and ungovernable. It is vain to talk of conscience and the light of nature. Without cultivation conscience is erroneous, or inoperative. And as to the light of nature, if that

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\*By the tenor of the above remarks it will be perceived that the author had been thinking of the question of "Sunday Mails." Since the above was written he has seen in the July number of the North American some observations on this subject well deserving the candid attention of the friends of Liberty and Religion. The piece is very ably written and ought to be copied into all the newspapers, so as to meet the eye of every citizen.



phrase be used to signify any supposed capacity of arriving at the knowledge of truth on subjects of morality and religion, without the mind's being *put* upon thought and investigation, as in all other cases of acquiring knowledge, it is a phrase without meaning. For there *is* no such capacity belonging to our nature. Is the light of nature a blind instinct, operating like appetite without reason or reflection? Is not the generation now living indebted for all the knowledge they possess to the generation preceding? The improvements in art and the advancements in science which have been made in the present day, have they not been made on the foundation of that stock of knowledge which *instruction* has handed down to us from the discoveries of the past? And can any thing be clearer than that without instruction the most civilized and enlightened states would retrograde into barbarism?

A prejudice exists against the institution of the gospel ministry, because it is conceived that instruction on matters of religion tends to fetter the mind and destroy, or, at least, infringe its liberty of judgment. Nothing can be more unreasonable than such a prejudice. Instruction does not diminish the liberty of thought, any more than light diminishes the liberty of motion. A man does not walk more freely, because he chooses to walk in the dark, nor does the judgment pronounce its decisions with greater liberty, for not perceiving the grounds on which to decide. He, surely, cannot be a moral or a religious man who does not know what morality and religion are, nor is any one likely to abstain from vice who has never considered its consequences. Evil actions proceed from blind impulses; the motives to virtuous ones are suggested by thought, reflection, consideration; and these imply knowledge.

But if instruction is necessary for the production and maintenance of morality and religion, should it not be communicated by men qualified for and devoted to such a service? What more reasonable expedient could be imagined or devised for this purpose, than that which the Author of Christianity has adopted—an order of men of cultivated talents, ardent piety, and unblemished integrity consecrated to the office of teaching the doctrines and dispensing the ordinances of religion, and of holding up, in their instructions and example, before the eyes of the people a lofty standard of pure morality? Will it be said that there is no security that those who aspire to this office shall be of this character? I would answer that, where they are dependent on the people for their support, as in all cases where religion

is not corrupted by an establishment, they must be, there is every security that the nature of things will admit. Their profession excludes them from secular employments, and, therefore, secures them, as far as any thing of an extrinsic nature can secure them, from the corrupting influence of ambition. They have the certain prospect of never rising above mediocrity, and the most of them of not rising up to mediocrity, in their worldly circumstances: none will therefore seek the profession from motives of avarice. Besides, even public opinion attaches a character of sanctity to the office, which will forbid a person of doubtful morality to exercise its sacred functions. Instances to the contrary there may be, but, except where the institutions of christianity have been perverted by an unhallowed union of church and state, they ever have been, and must be, rare. Let facts decide. Where did there ever exist an order of men more pure in morals, more laborious in the performance of official duty, more self-denied, more zealous in every good work, than the primitive apostles, the clergy of the reformation, those of the protestant churches since, those of the United States at the present day?

To the christian minister it belongs to wield that instrument of tried and mighty efficacy, the word of God, which, "like a fire and a hammer" breaketh and melteth the rocky heart—to apply the waters of baptism, the significant emblem of our regeneration by the spirit—and to set forth Christ Jesus "crucified and slain"—a scene of the sublimest moral grandeur, of the deepest and most tender pathos. It is his, to counsel the inexperienced, direct the enquiring, and encourage the timid in the ways of wisdom—to convince the gainsayer and reprove the disorderly—to instill good principles into the young, and to cheer the dreariness which surrounds the path of the aged—to bind up the heart which affliction and bereavement have broken—to visit and comfort the sick, and to soothe with divine consolations the agonies of the dying—to heal, or to prevent the breaches of discord, and to bind together the people of his charge in the silken bands of charity. Possessing such a character and clothed with such an office—an office giving him access, on the one hand, to ideas and scenes so holy and so impressive, and on the other, to the human heart in circumstances wherein, if ever, it will be tender and susceptible, what a powerful influence must the christian minister exert upon the character of those among whom he labors!

I see the man of God!—It is the holy Sabbath morning. The assembly are seated, waiting his arrival. As he approaches, his gait, demeanor and the deep serenity of his countenance shew that his soul is impressed. In the retirement of his study, where his habit is, assiduously to consult the sacred oracles, he has been bearing on his heart before the mercy seat the dear people of his charge, and now



he comes to them in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of peace. He rises, and with him the whole assembly, and in the language of adoration, prayer and thanksgiving, addresses Him who "ruleth over all." He is the mouth of the congregation. Their hearts go with his expressions. The sacred volume is opened and the words of eternal life fall, with divine authority, upon the listening ear—distill like refreshing rain upon the thirsty soul. The book is closed, and the voice of praise resounds. Again the soul is lifted up in prayer. The theme of discourse is announced. An air of attention, but of less deep and solemn feeling, overspreads the assembly. And as the discourse proceeds, subjects of awful moment interest the feelings; God his law, providence and grace; sin and holiness; time and eternity; life and death; heaven and hell; the incarnation and atonement; the kingdom and priesthood of the Son of God; science, nature, art—every thing within the wide range of reason and revelation is in turn brought in, to inform the understanding, to stimulate the conscience, to exalt the affections, to influence the will. The hearers are, I will not say, entertained—they are convinced and persuaded. They repent; they believe; they love, fear, hope; they resolve; and, at the conclusion of the services, they go away to put their resolves in execution, being furnished and strengthened for every "good word and work"—for the faithful discharge of all the duties of life. And thus does he continue to labour and watch, like a good shepherd over his flock, from week to week and from year to year, till his limbs totter and his voice fails with age. And though possessed of talents and learning, which might have enabled him to shine in halls of legislation, or to rise to wealth and secular respectability in any of the ways which the world proposes to its votaries; yet, for his love of Christ and his regard to the immortal interests of men, he has turned his back upon it all, and contented himself with less than the income of the humblest mechanic. And yet he has been reproached—and by men wearing the christian name too—with being mercenary in his views; and by the unreflecting world he has been stigmatized as a "hiringling priest."—But on all this he has calculated from the beginning; and therefore, with a spirit unbroken, he perseveres in his course of well doing and of patient suffering: and when he dies, and not before, does he enter upon his reward. Blessed man! Thou hast well done! Thou hast vindicated the ways of God to man. Thou hast stayed the progress of corruption. In a crooked and perverse generation thou hast been "a burning and a shining light;" and now, that thou art transferred to shine in heaven, the lustre of thy bright example continues and shall long continue to bless the world.

My hearers! I could not arrest the course of these thoughts. The case that I have described is no imaginary one. It has been drawn from actual observation. The truth of the description may, by the candid observer, be recognized in many a living instance in our happy land. With the uncandid and prejudiced—with the whole of those, and they are a numerous class, who have not experienced in themselves the power of those peculiar meetings.

unts as these will, I know, pass for romance, and provoke nothing but scorn and ridicule. To such, certainly, as think to put down the efforts of Bible societies, Sunday school societies and the other benevolent and christian enterprises of the day, by the cry of "Church and State! a money making scheme!" and other clamors of this sort, were useless to make an appeal. The authors of any absurd calumny are usually perverse enough to construe the most undeniable facts that may be adduced in order to expose and refute it, as a new and decisive argument in its favor: and, indeed, I shall be surprised if the humble attempt which I am now making, to shew the importance of christianity to the preservation of our civil liberties should not be adverted to by me, as an instance in point, to prove, that, on the part of its friends, there is a constant hankering after secular power. To such I have nothing to say, as they are not to be convinced. To such friends of their country and of republicanism as are not so unreasonable I would say, in behalf of my christian brethren and especially those in the ministry: When we ask, as citizens of these United States, that the institutions of christianity be not trampled on, it is not the cause of christianity but the cause of our country that we are pleading. Christianity is the most independent thing on earth. It stands complete within itself, and on its own basis. It owes the government nothing; and it craves nothing from government. It can exist under any government, and in despite of any. It has existed in the fire and in the floods, and made its way against all that the powers of earth and hell could do against it. It draws its life from the blood and grace and promise of its Author. Its "kingdom is not of this world." When taken into alliance with the state, then, indeed, is it "shorn of its beams"---shorn of its strength. Or, more properly speaking, when the state adopts its forms, it is insulted and goes away. *And Liberty goes with it.* Thus it has always been. Thus it was in the days of our fathers. Thus it came to this continent, where it has flourished and become great; and the nation with it. And let it be well marked that the liberties of the nation cannot perish but by being dashed against the rock of its strength---cannot be preserved but by the nation's letting it alone. But when the nation violates any one of its institutions, this surely, is not letting it alone.

When, therefore, we attempt to shew the importance of the Christian religion to the success of the experiment of a popular government which is now going on among us, and which, should it prove unsuccessful, is likely to be the last which will be made, at least, for ages; or when we ask of our rulers not to give to the measures of government a direction of hostility to the institutions of Christianity; or when we deprecate, and would, so far as in our power, counteract, an attempt to give to public opinion such a direction---whether such attempt should originate in the sinister zeal of her friends or the blind rage of her enemies, it matters not---let us not be understood as entertaining any fears for the cause of Christianity. It is for the liberties of our country that we fear. As it respects the former we can sing: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be cast into the midst of the sea: Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof." Psal. 46: but we have no such security to support our hopes respecting the latter. We have absolutely none at all, save what is founded in the purity of the public morals: and that this should be preserved we have less than none, if a respect for the Christian religion should cease to characterize the community. To our rulers, and to the people---for, as yet, they are the rulers in the last resort---could we sound the admonition of our text, with a trumpet's voice which should be heard over all the land---with hearty good will and in a full conviction, both that it is needed, and that it is applicable---we would sound it: "Be wise now therefore, O ye Kings; be instructed, ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son; lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."