

PERILS AND SAFEGUARDS OF AMERICAN LIBERTY.

# ADDRESS,

PRONOUNCED

JULY 4, 1828,

IN THE

SECOND BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE IN BOSTON,

AT THE

## RELIGIOUS CELEBRATION

OF THE

ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE,

BY THE BAPTIST CHURCHES AND SOCIETIES IN BOSTON.

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BY JAMES D. KNOWLES,

PASTOR OF THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

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**NOTE.**

The following Address is published at the request of a number of friends, for whose opinions and wishes the Author feels great respect. They have been pleased to express their approbation of the "idea and attempt to establish in our country the custom of Religious Celebrations of American Independence, as calculated to give a higher tone to the feelings of the community;" and have thought that the publication of the Address might have some tendency to attract attention to the importance of such Celebrations

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## ADDRESS.

THE great event which we this day commemorate forms the boundary line between the darkness and the light in our national history: and it ought forever to be associated in the minds of Americans with a recollection of the calamities and triumphs, the feeble infancy and the expanding growth, of our native land.

The enthusiasm of the venerable Adams did not deceive him, when, in the first glow of grateful joy at the consummation of an event for which he had long panted and toiled, he declared his belief, that the day on which the Declaration of Independence was made would be "celebrated by succeeding generations as the *great anniversary festival*." For fifty years it has been celebrated "with pomps, shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations;" and not altogether without "solemn acts of devotion to Almighty God." It has never been permitted to pass by, without summoning our countrymen from their daily toils, to participate, with glad hearts, in the duties and enjoyments of this great festival of liberty.

But it is in the nature of the human mind to lose its susceptibility of excitement from ideas frequently repeated, or from scenes often witnessed. There has been, for several years, a gradual abatement of the fervour which signalized the earlier celebrations of this day. The heart of the nation is less powerfully moved. The chord of public feeling responds less strongly to the note of festivity. One reason for this may be, that the recollections and meditations appropriate to the day have become familiar, and have, in consequence, parted with some portion of their power to arouse the mind.

Another reason may be, that the generation, who participated in the sorrows and joys of the revolutionary period, have, with comparatively few exceptions, passed away. The firm hearts and the strong hands which were then busy in their country's service, have become enfeebled by age, or are cold in death. A new race have sprung up, who were born and nurtured amid the peace and prosperity of our national independence. We cannot feel as our fathers felt. We have known nothing of the impatient indignation with which they watched the pretensions and projects of usurping power; the anxious struggle between the resolution to resist, and the consciousness of inadequate strength; the martyr-like firmness with which the decisive act of separation was at last performed; and all the absorbing earnestness with which the dubious contest was maintained, until it issued in the complete establishment of our independence. Those who did witness and feel all this, cannot forget it; and to them this

day has a voice of power, to recal from the long departed years, scenes, which renew in their bosoms the feelings of the times that tried men's souls.

But we, who have come into life at a later and happier period, cannot feel so intense a concern in the events of the revolution. There are no vivid contrasts in our memory. We look back to those events as matters of history, daily receding farther into the dimness of the past, though deeply interesting to us as parts of our national annals, and as connected, with the happiness of our present condition. The present generation cannot bring to the celebration of this day, that freshness and energy of personal feeling, which made it a jubilee to the immediate actors in the scenes of the revolution.

It is, however, what the dying Adams called it, "a great and a good day." It ought to be held in everlasting remembrance, and consecrated by this nation to joyful and devout thankfulness, and to a solemn renewal of her vows to be faithful to her duties.

But to preserve the day from comparative neglect, and to perpetuate it in our calendar, as the "great anniversary festival," it is necessary to adopt another mode of celebration. Nothing which is dependent on human feelings, and worldly principles, can be permanent. Man himself is as frail as the flower of grass. His joys and sorrows agitate his own heart, but they seldom leave any mark on the succeeding generations.

Nothing is permanent but God; and therefore nothing can endure, which does not connect itself with him. If, then, we would preserve this anniversary from the fate which befalls human things, we must connect it with religion. We must call in the aid of her everlasting principles, and give permanency to the celebration of this day, by stamping on it the impress of a religious duty. It will then take rank among the imperishable memorials of Zion.

We would not be understood to intimate an indiscriminate censure of the usual modes of celebration. It may sometimes, perhaps, be useful to stir the heart by military splendour, by the roar of artillery, and by the voice of eloquence. There may be high moral uses in the "storied urn and animated bust." Poetry may inspire and nourish patriotism.

But besides the objection that publick festivity is apt to issue in noisy and wasteful dissipation, it is the unhappy tendency of the usual methods of celebrating this and other similar occasions, to strengthen the common propensity to fix our attention on visible agencies. Man, the feeble and transitory instrument, is placed prominently in view, while God is almost forgotten. The martial parade, the banner, the cannon, the musick, all speak of the gallantry and pride of man. The orator dwells with enthusiasm on the intrepidity, the sufferings, and the triumphs of our fathers. The monument records their names, or marks out, for the curiosity and pious gratitude of future generations, the places where they fought or fell. Painting spreads out her canvass, and preserves their features from the power of

death. Sculpture commemorates their forms, when the body itself has crumbled into dust. Poetry utters a strain of eulogy, which may outlive the marble.

Amid all this praise of the statesman and the hero, there may be no recollection of God, the blessed and only Potentate. Obelisks and pyramids record not the praises of Jehovah. The orator too often forgets his transcendent name. Painting and sculpture still, as in classic ages, employ their proudest skill for the idolatry of human virtue and genius. It is scarcely ~~so~~ much to say, that the Muses are yet pagans.

How fit it is, then, for Christians to assemble on this day; and while they call to remembrance the deeds and sufferings by which our independence was won; while they trace the history of our country from her infancy to her present state of happiness; and while they anticipate, with joyful hope, her future prosperity, to present the tribute of grateful hearts on the altar of Jehovah. While we withhold no suitable expression of regard for the memory of the men whom he inspired with the forecast to discern, and the fortitude to resist, approaching tyranny, whom he sheltered in the day of battle, and whose toils he rewarded with victory, we should devoutly acknowledge, on this day of our country's joy, that to the God of nations belongs our first and loudest praise. His arm protected the little and adventurous bands, who, at different points along our coast, laid the foundations of this great republick. He drove out the heathen, and planted this vine.

which has since covered all the hills with its fertile boughs, and gladdened the vallies with its luxuriance. He rode in the whirlwind and directed the storm of the revolution. He enlightened the minds, and united the hearts of our countrymen, and enabled them to sacrifice their prejudices, and harmonize their jarring interests, and throw around the States of our confederacy a bond of brotherhood, which has hitherto bound them fast together; which has made us a great and a happy people, the example, the guiding and the cheering light of the struggling nations; and which, we devoutly hope, will become stronger and dearer, linking heart to heart, and binding State to State, with a closer tie, through all the coming generations. He has protected us from foreign hostility and domestick discord. He has filled our hearts with food and gladness. He has given success to the industry of our countrymen. He is now bestowing on us peace and unrivalled prosperity.

Let us, then, amid the animating recollections and hopes of this day, praise him with joyful lips. Let the strong sense of our present happiness enliven our pious gratitude. Let us, in his presence, acknowledge him to be the author of our national prosperity, and, confessing our dependence on him, let us on this, and every day, ask for the continuance of his gracious favour.

Let us, too, on this day, deliberately meditate on the interests of the nation; let us reflect on the springs of her prosperity, and the sources of her dangers; and let us elevate our minds to an en-



larged estimate of our duties as citizens. We shall thus more deeply feel our obligations to praise the Lord for his manifold benefits; and shall more clearly see, that strong as our country's institutions are, and elevated as may be her position among the nations, Jehovah alone can preserve her from the numerous perils which may else work out her ruin.

I need not now enlarge on the rapid growth and prosperity of the nation. You are all the glad witnesses of her happiness and advancing power. You all feel, in your individual rights, and daily comforts, the benign influence of her free institutions. We enjoy all the liberty which is possible, or desirable, in this disordered world. The laws meet us only as guardians and protectors; and are a terror to none but evil doers.

Agriculture, commerce, manufactures and the mechanical arts, are as prosperous perhaps as the situation of the world, and the various interests of different sections of the country, will permit.

Plenty overspreads the land. There may be, it is true, much poverty and even suffering; but these, to some extent, spring necessarily from the condition of human society, from the dispensations of Providence, and in no small degree from the vices of mankind. Our country increases faster in population, power and wealth, than any other nation; and our citizens, unquestionably, enjoy an unexampled measure of the blessings of freedom, knowledge and plenty.

But there is no unmingled happiness allotted in this world to individuals or to communities. There

is no situation, however prosperous, which is not exposed to perils; and it is often the case, that the sources of prosperity are themselves the springs of danger; as the stream which beautifies and fertilizes the region through which it flows, becomes, when swollen to a torrent, the instrument of devastation and death.

This is the fact, in regard to our national condition. The high advantages which distinguish us from all other nations, elevate us to wonderful prosperity; but they expose us, by this very elevation, to more numerous dangers, and to the peril of a more precipitate and fatal fall.

1. Our perfect freedom is one of the chief causes of our national happiness and growth. To all classes of citizens, (with one melancholy exception) the avenues to power, to wealth, to distinction, to pleasure, are thrown open. Here are no artificial distinctions, grown up into solidity from the ignorance of former ages, to oppose the free exercise of talent, and the advance of aspiring genius. Here are no peculiar privileges of birth, nor monopolies of office. The rewards of industry, talents, patriotism, and learning, are bestowed on the successful competitor, without an inspection of his genealogy. The fountains of knowledge are open to all. Thought is free. The press is under no restrictions, but those which the laws provide for the guardianship of private reputation. Religious opinion has here to contend with no combatant, but pride, ignorance, and depravity.

This perfect freedom has imparted and is daily giving an unparalleled impulse to all the energies of our countrymen. It operates, with the most auspicious effect, to call into exercise the talents and virtues of all classes of men. It summons to the competition for honour and wealth, all who choose to enter the lists; and it impels onward every man in that path which he has selected. It develops, nourishes and invigorates talent, quickens invention, stimulates enterprise, and ensures the accomplishment of whatever can be done for the increase of our national prosperity. It prepares an ample supply of talent and experience for all the offices of trust and power; and thus provides for the able discharge of the functions of legislators and magistrates.

These are among the inestimable fruits of our freedom, and to these, with the blessing of God, it is mainly to be ascribed, that by so steady and rapid a progress, improvement has advanced from the rocks of Plymouth, and the banks of James river, levelling the forests, building up cities, rearing Churches, Schools and Colleges; spreading an intelligent, hardy, and industrious population over the face of a cultivated and thriving land, until the shores of the lakes, and the valley of the Mississippi, have become the abode of freemen, and the boundaries of our national domain have been extended from sea to sea, and from the lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. It is this irrepressible spirit of freedom, which has covered the ocean with our commerce, and unfurled our "star spangled banner" in every sea-port of the

globe. It is this, which has made the wilderness a fruitful field, which has pierced our mountains and bridged our vallies with roads and canals, which has covered the banks of our Rivers with manufacturing industry, and their waters with the steam-boat.

But this freedom, so powerful and so beneficent, is still an engine of fearful strength, which may be perverted to the destruction of all the happiness which it has contributed to produce.

The equality, to which allusion has just been made, while it is an inestimable fruit of our free institutions, and is one of the mainsprings of our national prosperity, may have produced an unfavourable effect on the character of our citizens. It is an equality of rights rather than of condition: for there are differences of talent, and of circumstances, which inevitably produce corresponding inequalities in the condition of mankind. Though the avenues to wealth are open to all, yet all cannot press forward to the prize with equal skill, energy, and success. Though the fountains of knowledge are unsealed, and whosoever will may drink freely, yet all cannot repair to them. This is a world of vicissitude, in which the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong. But in this country, as in every other, men will strive to rival and surpass their fellow men; and some line of discrimination will be drawn.

In this country wealth constitutes the great distinction. It is the easiest road to pre-eminence, and is consequently thronged. Every thing else is held subordinate to this all-controlling aim. In coun-

tries where artificial and hereditary distinctions exist, wealth cannot enable its possessor to surmount the barriers which protect the privileged orders. The poorest nobleman is nevertheless superior in rank to the most opulent commoner. But wealth forms our American nobility. It is permitted to compensate for the want of talent and learning. It is supposed to dignify vulgarity of manners, and to give respectability to ignorance. It is allowed even to atone for many moral deficiencies; and it often gives extensive influence, and a passport to good society, to men, who would be despised and expelled, if they were not shielded by the panoply of wealth. The effect of this on our national character is injurious. The mere love of money is an ignoble passion, and it degrades the mind and corrupts the heart over which it bears sway. It is inconsistent with enlarged patriotism. It is, in its essence, selfish; and it looks only to present advantages. A man thoroughly under its dominion will not submit to the least sacrifice, to promote the welfare of any other class of citizens. He withholds aid from every project of improvement, unless the road to be constructed, or the canal to be cut, is directly to benefit himself. He clamours against every act of the government, which consults the interests of the whole, rather than those of a part; and threatens to divide the Union, if he happens to dislike the laws. That such an effect of the thirst for wealth is an alarming evil in a government like ours, must be evident to every man.

Another effect of our freedom is, that every citizen is eligible, and is equally entitled, to office, provided that his talents, experience and general character place him on an equality with others. We cannot expect, therefore, that every man, who feels himself to be qualified for a certain station, will forego his pretensions in favour of some other individual, who is no better qualified than himself: and in the present condition of human nature, it cannot be hoped, that a person, who has in his view an office of profit and honour, will relinquish the pursuit, even if he be opposed by persons whose qualifications he may know to be superior to his own.

Here, then, is opened a wide arena, filled with eager competitors. If the contest were maintained with proper weapons, and with a temperate spirit; and if, after the decision was made, the unsuccessful candidates would calmly and respectfully acquiesce in the result, the competition might be a benefit to the publick interests. But a little knowledge of the passions of men is sufficient to show us, that this temperate spirit and this calm acquiescence are not to be expected. Ambitious and selfish men will employ all their influence to attain their ends. They will resort to unjustifiable means. Malice and slander will be employed to injure the fame of their rivals: the interests of the electors will be appealed to, and their passions inflamed by all the arts which unprincipled intrigue can devise and execute. By means like these, incompetent and bad men may force themselves into power. If they fail of success, they will vilify their opponents, impeach their

conduct, misrepresent their measures, obstruct as much as possible the execution of their duties, and endeavour to withdraw from them the publick confidence and support. The tranquillity of the community is thus disturbed, the purity of elections stained, the respectability and influence of official stations diminished, and men of sterling worth excluded from office, because they have too much modesty and self-respect to expose themselves to the assaults of calumny, and too much principle to resort to the base methods by which others would fain rise to power.

This furious contest for office will increase with the advance of our population, because there is necessarily a great increase of the number of needy competitors for posts of emolument. The number of these is already very great. There is no office, however inconsiderable, which is not eagerly sought. Persons of this class, too, are usually ready to join the standard of any political party, which promises to reward them: Their selfishness is the only impulse to action; and they regard not their country's welfare, if they can secure their own ends. They care not who fills the higher offices of the State, if they can make the election of one individual rather than another subserve their own interests: just as the Pictorian bands of Rome bestowed the Imperial purple on him who would distribute among them the most liberal donatives.

As we approach the highest office in the nation, the contest becomes more fierce, because the prize

is more valuable, and the elections less frequent. The Presidency, as we all know, has repeatedly been the object of embittered competition; and it is probably destined to occasion a more tremendous struggle than has ever yet shaken this nation. On this delicate subject, it is not my design to express an opinion, in relation to either of the contending parties. But every lover of his country, who wishes for her peace, honour, and prosperity, must look with alarm and sorrow on some of the signs of the times. The clouds are gathering. The dark ocean is heaving. The elements are in fearful and ominous commotion. Every thing bodes a storm: And if there ever was a time when the patriot ought to pray for his country, it is now. There is an excited feeling through the nation. Men look fiercely at each other. Unsparring censures and invectives are hurled against the most distinguished men of the nation. Whatever may be the event of the approaching election, the violence which has attended it is surely sufficient to awaken our fears for the future. There is more danger, perhaps, to be apprehended from contentions for the office of President, than from any thing else in our system. Almost all civil wars have sprung from rival strife for the chief magistracy: and our country will be happy indeed if she shall escape the fate which has befallen so many other nations. There is nothing chimerical in the fear, that some bold, artful man, by the aid of a temporary popularity, and of unprincipled partizans, who will assist *him* that he may provide for *them*, may force his way to the Presidential chair;



or it may be that some such man, enraged by defeat, and artfully appealing to political animosities and sectional prejudices, may raise the standard of civil war, and, collecting around him the worthless, the factious and the deluded, may plunge his parrieidal sword into the bosom of his country. This is not an imaginary danger. This country has already had a fearful warning on this point. The treasonable design of Aaron Burr originated in his resentment for his failure to reach the highest office of the nation. It is dreadful to think of so disastrous a termination of this fair experiment,—of such a downfall of this glorious republick. But to such a result it will certainly arrive, unless a better spirit pervade the land than that which seems now to predominate in many hearts.

2. The freedom of the press is another source of our prosperity. By the diffusion of knowledge, and the interchange of thought, through the medium of the press, the publick mind is enlightened and aroused to action. But this freedom is attended with danger to good morals, to liberty, and to the publick happiness. Of all the means by which the press exerts its power, the newspapers have, perhaps, the greatest influence. By their character, to a great extent, will the mind of the community be moulded. How much then is it to be regretted, that newspapers are so often made the instruments of faction, and the vehicles of falsehood and slander. While thus perverted, their influence is pernicious. They unsettle and corrupt the publick mind, inflame popular passions, distort the characters and

measures of our rulers, and prevent the exercise of a calm judgment and kind feelings.

3. The great extent of our country, is another circumstance in our condition, which adds to the strength and prosperity of the nation. A vast field is opened, for the spread of our population, for the exertion of industry and enterprise, and for the culture of the productions of almost all the climates of the earth.

But this extension of our territory is a source of danger. It occasions separate interests and feelings, which are inauspicious to the publick peace. The inhabitants of different sections are so remote from each other, that they cannot form those individual connexions and friendships, which would cement their union. Thus ignorant of each other, the voice of interest is sometimes more powerful than that of patriotism; and hence it is not surprising if irritated feelings, jealousies and sectional prejudices now exist. If any powerful cause of rupture should arise, it would be aided by all this ignorance of each other, and by these imaginary hostile interests.

4. The division of our Union into a number of separate States, is, in some respects, a happy feature of our system. It is an additional security to the people for the preservation of their freedom against the encroachments of an overshadowing national government; and, by reserving to the States the management of their local affairs, it relieves the general government from the trouble and the odium of all that private and local legislation which now devolves on the State governments.

But there is here, too, a cause of peril. The States are becoming powerful and proud. Some of them are already mighty republicks. They have their own governors, legislatures, capitals, revenues, and all the pomp and circumstance of sovereignty. These causes are fitted to nourish their pride, and to make them impatient of the control of the national government. Where the real or supposed interests of the States come into conflict with those of the Union, the latter must predominate; but the States may not always be disposed to yield to this predominance.

It is impossible to conjecture what may be the consequence of an extension of the power of the individual States, until some of them shall contain several millions of inhabitants, and a corresponding proportion of wealth and power. They may not always be disposed to be governed by the Congress and Cabinet of the Union; and the constitution may be found a feeble tie, when opposed to the claims of interest and pride.

This review might easily be extended to other topics, and we might gather additional evidence, that our national happiness needs a firmer basis than the mere extent of our population, wealth, and power.

To what, then, shall we trust for the permanence of our institutions, and for the prosperous advance of our country in the career of national greatness, until the fondest dreams of patriotick hope shall have been surpassed by the glorious reality?

Our dangers, be it remembered, are all from within. No peril can successfully assail us from with-

out, so long as the mighty heart of this country is not dismayed, nor her strong arm unnerved by intestine strife or corruption. While we shall stand firm in our united strength, no power on earth can penetrate our thick array. Invasion from Europe has been proved, by the experience of two wars, to be utterly hopeless. From the nations of our own continent, assault is not to be feared. The ocean will more probably be the field on which our future battles will be fought. But our navy, young as it is, has already acquired a giant's strength, and has won for itself a reputation which, we may be assured, will make the proudest maritime nations pause before they provoke an encounter. But peace is the policy of this country; and unless our councils shall fall under the dominion of rashness and folly, we shall have few foreign wars. This country will not, while she remains true to her own interests, voluntarily commence hostilities; and other nations will not be much disposed to challenge her to the field.

It is against dangers from within, then, that we are called on to watch and defend ourselves. It is from the excesses of our freedom, the corrupting influence of our prosperity, and the collisions of our own passions, that we have the most reason to fear disaster and ruin.

To these dangers, it is plain, we can oppose none but moral safeguards. The defences of our liberties must be laid in the minds and the hearts of our countrymen.

We are justified, certainly, in expecting much from the sober sense and loyal habits of our citizens. We

may rely with some confidence on the efficacy of a common origin, and a common language. The fame of our ancestors, and the glory of our country, constitute an inheritance of which we are all partakers, and which cannot but awaken kindred feelings, and strengthen brotherly affections. The interests of the different portions of the land, so closely interwoven with each other, and the intercourse, which is daily becoming more extended, as roads and canals are multiplied, have a powerful and growing tendency to cement our union.

Great stress, too, ought to be laid on the effect of that general education, which so honourably distinguishes and blesses our land. Our Schools and Colleges are potent fortresses of freedom. They cannot be cherished too fondly, nor multiplied too fast. A man who is wholly uneducated is an unsafe citizen; for he cannot wisely and faithfully perform the duties of a freeman, and his ignorance fits him to become the instrument of faction. He is, in fact, a slave, for he can take no intelligent and useful part in protecting his own rights. The spread of knowledge is indispensable to the existence of civil liberty; and we ought to look with joy and animating hope, at the widely diffused means of popular education.

On these, and similar things, we may place much reliance, as securities against the dangers which threaten us. But allowing to them their greatest and happiest efficacy, they are all inadequate; and if some rampart of mightier strength be not reared,

the tide of popular passions will as inevitably surmount these barriers, and sweep away our free institutions, as the torrent of Niagara would bear away and overwhelm the skiff of the hapless fisherman.

It is a truth, which every lover of his country ought to incorporate among the principles of his daily actions, and ought to teach his children, among their earliest lessons, that the Christian religion, exerting its beneficent sway over the minds and hearts of our citizens, furnishes the only moral power, which can preserve this country from destruction. This truth ought to be sounded out, with emphatick and reiterated earnestness, from every pulpit in our land; and were there no other reason for a religious celebration of this day, it would be a sufficient motive for thronging the temples of God, that we might strengthen in every heart the solemn conviction, that unless this country become a nation of Christians, not in name only, but in the reality and power of pure and undefiled religion, it will not long retain its political liberty.

I have already detained you long, and I must not enlarge on this topick. I bespeak your indulgence, however, for a few remarks.

I need not say, in this place, how direct and happy is the influence of true religion, in subduing the corrupt passions, disarming the selfishness, and repressing the vices of mankind. Were this influence predominant in every bosom, there would be nothing to fear for our national prosperity. "Hap-

py is the people that is in such a case, yea, happy is that people, whose God is the Lord."

But there are several other ways, in which the prevalence of religion would strengthen all the securities of our freedom.

1. Christianity is the friend and patron of knowledge. She aims to enlighten and enlarge the mind, while she rectifies the heart. Genuine Christianity, therefore, has always been active in fostering sound learning. The pious fathers of New England, among the first acts which they performed, erected a College, and devoted it to Christ and the Church, as the worthiest offering, which, in their weakness and their deep poverty, they could present to their Saviour. Our system of free Schools, too, had its origin in the same Christian philanthropy and wisdom. Christianity has established Bible Societies, to furnish every family with the word of God, and Tract Societies, to send abroad, on the wings of the wind, the truths and precepts of the Gospel, and Sabbath Schools, to train the youthful mind to the knowledge of the Scriptures. She erects Churches, and sustains the ministry, through which so much of intellectual and moral light is shed over the land. If, then, the spread of knowledge is essential to liberty, the more widely Christianity is diffused, the more will sound learning flourish.

2. Christianity will contribute to our national union by the ties which it forms between the citizens of different parts of the country. All true Chris-

tians are members of one family; and however the darkness and imperfection of the present state of existence may disturb the fellowship of saints, the bond of citizenship in the kingdom of our Lord nevertheless adds strength to the ties of national brotherhood. Christians of the same denomination, too, among whom, from natural causes, a closer intimacy subsists, are spread over the land. They feel and act together: their interests are identified. Attached to each other as fellow countrymen, they love each other with a higher and more sacred affection as brethren in the Lord. And is it possible, that any ordinary causes could inflame their hearts with angry emotions? Could local jealousies, and jarring worldly interests, ever lead the disciples of Christ to think of each other as enemies? Can you imagine that Christians in Missouri and Alabama could ever willingly consent to a dissolution of the national compact, which binds them to their brethren in New-England? and much less, that they could ever meet each other with hostile bayonets in the field? In proportion, then, as religion spreads its sway, will the enduring ties of Christian fellowship be multiplied, and our national concord strengthened.

3. Another way in which Christianity is, I doubt not, destined to operate for the salvation of this country, is, that Christians will combine their influence, more than they have ever yet done, for the support of pure political principles, and for the election of good men to offices of trust and power. The Christians of this country already form a large proportion of the



electors. If they were united in their suffrages, they might even now decide almost any great and general question. Suppose that every man in the United States who fears God should act, in reference to the Presidential election, on the same principles that he would act in choosing a minister for his Church, or a preceptor for his child, and give his vote conscientiously for that man, whose principles and conduct are most in accordance with the word of God; can you doubt, that such a union of Christian suffrages would decide the contest, which now convulses and disgraces the nation?

This union of Christians will, hereafter, regulate political power, in this and every other country. The time is coming, when our officers will be peace, and our exactors righteousness. It will then be considered almost as enormous an inconsistency, to allow an irreligious man to exercise the functions of magistracy or legislation; among a Christian people, as to suffer him to ascend the sacred desk. This will not be the result of laws, excluding all but Christians from office: for such laws would be unjust and pernicious, as experience in our own commonwealth has testified: but it will flow from the prevalence of Christianity: it will be the lawful and legitimate influence of religious principles, regulating the hearts, and directing the suffrages of the people.

But the strongest and the last reason, which I can now offer, is, that without the prevalence of religion, we cannot hope for the favour of God—nay, we must expect his vengeance. A nation of irreligious

men, is a nation of rebels against him, and they will bring upon themselves swift destruction. Let us not think, that we are in no danger from the displeasure of God. He has turned many a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwelt therein. Go, look at the sullen and dismal waters of the Dead Sea, which now cover the fertile valley, where once the cities of the plain flourished like the garden of the Lord. Go, search on the marshy and solitary banks of the Euphrates, for the ruins of the mighty Babylon. Stand on the deserted rocks of Tyre, and ask for the proud city which once defied the power of Alexander. Visit the place, which the all-grasping Romans adorned with the spoils of a conquered world, and seek among ruined temples and broken arches for the monuments of their power. Repair to the city of God, and see the crescent of Mahomet, gleaming over the sacred mount, where once stood the magnificent temple of Jehovah: And look at the wretched Jews, the miserable victims of Turkish oppression, outcasts in the very city where David and Solomon reigned, and forbidden on pain of death to approach the spot where once their fathers worshipped God. Look at all these melancholy proofs of the mutability of human things, and learn the danger of offending God. It was his wrath, which destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, which made Babylon a place for the bittern and the serpent, which swept away Tyre, and left her rocks for the fisherman to spread his nets on; which hurled the magnificent Rome from her height of grandeur and

power, and made Judea and her children a hissing and an astonishment through the earth. Truly, it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. Great and flourishing as our country is, he can bring her down to desolation. He has many ministers of his vengeance; and when he bids them empty their vials on the earth, the proudest cities and the most powerful nations become as the chaff before the whirlwind.

Let us, then, sincerely repent of our sins, and contribute all in our power to spread the influence of Christianity through our land. Let us lend our aid to check the sway of vice; remembering that "righteousness exalteth a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people. Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him, that glory may dwell in our land. Salvation will the Lord appoint for walls and bulwarks." Then will our beloved country be great and happy; and her increasing millions will enjoy the blessings of a secure and tranquil freedom, till;

Wrapt in flames, the realms of ether glow,  
And Heaven's last thunders shake the world below.

### **NOTE.**

At the close of the preceding Address, some remarks were made respecting the objects and efforts of the American Colonization Society, for the benefit of which a collection was then taken. The evils of slavery might have been introduced, as one of the topics of this Address, but the Author preferred to confine his attention to the less obvious sources of danger.