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“A NATION’S RIGHT TO WORSHIP GOD.”

AN ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

American Whig and Clisophic Societies

OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY.

DELIVERED JUNE 28th. 1859.

BY THE REV. J. H. M^cILVAINE, D. D.

TRENTON, N. J.:

MURPHY & BECHTEL, PRINTERS, OPPOSITE THE CITY HALL.

1859.

THE AMERICAN SOCIETY OF COLLEGE TEACHERS

June 22nd, 1893

ADDRESS

The Rev. J. H. McDivitt, D.D., Secretary, 177 North 4th Street, Philadelphia, Pa.

H. E. CARRON

A certain number of copies of the report of the Committee on the Revision of the Constitution of the American Society of College Teachers, as adopted at the meeting of the Society at New York, N.Y., on June 15th, 1893, are being distributed to the members of the Society.

COLLEGE OF NEW YORK

Respectfully, that the Board of the Society be requested to the Rev. John H. McDivitt, D.D., for the report and resolution. Address: 177 North 4th Street, Philadelphia, Pa. The Committee on the Revision of the Constitution of the American Society of College Teachers, in response to a copy of the Address for publication.

JOHN T. DUFFIELD
W. E. GRANT
H. E. CARRON

WHIG HALL,
June 28th, 1859.

Extract from the minutes of the American Whig Society :

"RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Society be tendered to the Rev. J. H. McIlvaine, D. D., for his able and eloquent address delivered to-day, and that a copy be requested for publication."

June 28th, 1859.

H. C. CAMERON,
WM. G. UPSON,
HENRY GOLDTHWAITE, } Com.

Extract from the minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Cliosophic Society,

June 28th, 1859:

RESOLVED, That the thanks of this Society be presented to the Rev. Joshua H. McIlvaine, D. D., for the eloquent and instructive Address this day delivered before the Literary Societies of the College, and that a Committee be appointed to unite with a similar Committee of the American Whig Society, in requesting a copy of the Address for publication.

JOHN T. DUFFIELD,
E. R. CRAVEN,
H. E. RUSSELL.

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VAULT

ADDRESS.

GENTLEMEN OF THE PHILOSOPHIC AND AMERICAN WHIG SOCIETIES:—

I shall have the honour to discourse before you to-day of the principles and laws of social progress; and of these, in the endeavor to elucidate THE RELATIONS BETWEEN CIVIL GOVERNMENT AND RELIGION, UNDER AMERICAN INSTITUTIONS. There are grave questions connected with this subject, which I am persuaded must soon be re-opened in this country, and come to engage the most earnest thinking of our time. With no affectation of modesty, I must be allowed to express my deep regret, that the discussion of these has not fallen on the present occasion into other and abler hands.

Let us observe, then, at the outset, that a certain faith and hope of human progress are interwoven with the very fibres of parental affection. We find it easy to persuade ourselves that our children will reflect honour upon us; and that we shall be comforted, with respect to our own errors and failures in life, by their successes and happiness. On a certain occasion, a good and wise father called his son into his presence, on the day he came of age, and said, "My son, you are no longer a child; you are now a man. From this time you have no master but God. God and your country now call you to liberty and

to duty. I wish you to remember, my son, that it was ever the aim of your father to be a man, to act a man's part in life; and that his honour is now committed into your hands. You will not betray, nor tarnish it." That was all he said to the young man, but as he turned away, with a tear of parental hope and pride, he softly added, "It is an honest lad; the boy will not discredit his name; he will do *better* than his father has done."

A single generalization from this fact gives us the faith and hope of the human heart in that physical, mental, and moral development of the race, which we call by the name of social or historical progress. This faith we hold to be indestructible. It is true, indeed, as every thinking man must be well aware, that much of what is called by the name of progress is miscalled. If the destinies of humanity were in the hands of many who vociferate this word, but who are only camp-followers to the army, intent on plunder, no victory could ever be gained, organized society would soon be dissolved, and the world engulfed in perdition. Notwithstanding, from the times of the Hebrew prophets, in whose glowing predictions it finds its most sublime utterances, this has ever been the faith and hope of all the great and good of mankind. It is, indeed, the light of human life, without which life itself would be intolerable. We cannot believe in a permanently retrograde movement. No, the deep and fervent aspirations of our hearts, and the faithful striving of our hands, are not doomed to end in disappointment. The succeeding do enter into the labours, and profit by the experience, of preceding generations. Human reason is a nobler endowment than the instinct of the beaver.

A little attention, however, to the phenomena of history reveals the striking fact, that this progress is never in a direct line, but in a zig-zag movement, like that of a ship beating to windward; which may well illustrate the actual condition of our fallen humanity. From the social evils of a given system of philosophy, or prevailing solu-

tion of the great problems of life, a reaction sets in, under the influence of which the course of human thought shoots far over into the opposite extreme. When the evils of this extreme begin to make themselves extensively felt, and others, more grievous, are threatening us, like "breakers ahead," a similar reaction takes place; again the word is passed, "About ship! helm hard down!" when we come up into the wind, and if we do not miss stays, and fall off upon rocks or quicksands, we go about, and lie over on the other tack. But head as close to the wind as we possibly can, we soon find ourselves, not indeed in the same, but in a similar extreme to the first. In the meantime a certain progress has been achieved, yet by no means so great as he imagines, who watches only the motion of the vessel through the water, but does not lift his eyes to the guiding constellations of heaven.

Sometimes, where the wind is dead ahead, and the channel very narrow, as in France for the last hundred years, these courses are very short. There we have the apotheosis of despotism under Louis XIV., the experience of the evils of that extreme, the subsequent reaction, and the subversion of that ancient and renowned monarchy. Next the opposite extreme of Jacobinism, the Reign of Terror, the reaction, and the consequent overthrow of the first Republic. Following this we have the military throne of the first Napoleon, under whom the course of national thought ran on in the same direction, through the sorrows of France depopulated by incessant wars, and of Paris occupied by the allied armies, reaching at length the extreme point of the restoration of the ancient dynasty, with most of its obsolete traditions. Hence, again, a similar reaction towards republicanism, stretching through the second expulsion of the Bourbons, and the reign of the Citizen King, to the provisional government, and the second Republic. And yet, again, a reaction set in against this movement, not so much, as it would seem, because of any extremes which

it had actually reached, nor from evils actually experienced, but from those which were apprehended as impending and inevitable. For during the brief continuance of the second Republic, the socialistic ideas had made such rapid advances as to threaten the rights of property, the integrity of the nation, and civilization itself. This was well understood at the time by the first minds in France. Cavaignac himself, that staunch republican and most incorruptible of Frenchmen, is known to have declared, that, although he would not forfeit his own consistency, yet, if Louis Napoleon, or any other capable man, chose to put himself at the head of a reactionary movement, he would not draw his sword in defence of republican ideas. This was the secret of that great man's virtual acquiescence in the *coup d'etat* which established the present order of things. He could not disguise from himself that a change was indispensable to save society from dissolution. And now, if we compare the second Republic with the first, and the present condition of the French people with that under the first Napoleon, and still farther, with that under the legitimate despotism of the old monarchy, it becomes quite evident that the result of all these conflicts has been a true and living progress.

Thus it has always been in the history of the human race. For if, to the generalization of this construction of particular facts, it be objected, as we sometimes hear it said, that French nature is not human nature, and such proceedings are never seen but in France, we are not to attribute the least force to this expression. Its wit is the chief element of its life and currency. Human nature everywhere is numerically one, and identically the same. We meet similar phenomena in Greek, Roman, and, as we shall see hereafter, even in Jewish history. In fact, throughout all past time, wherever any life and movement at all have been manifested, this progress by reaction from extremes has been going on, in more or less striking

forms, through longer or shorter reaches of thought, according to the peculiarities of each several people.

The reason of this is obvious to reflection. For the life of humanity consists, in great part, of the development under logical forms, and of the realization in action, of intellectual conceptions, principles, ideas. Facts, *res gestæ*, are the phenomena and the body of which thought is the law and the soul. History is crystalized thought. Not that principles in their abstract forms, are first apprehended by the mind; on the contrary, facts are first in the field. Some leader of human activities becomes conscious of a common want, and therefore immediately takes action. In order to justify such action, to induce others to unite with him in sharing its responsibility and its benefits, reflection is brought to bear upon it, and the principle which it contains is abstracted from it and defined. This principle now enters into a course of logical development; its contents are drawn out of it, and applied in various directions, according to their capabilities; and thus it passes into history. In so far as any such given principle or idea is both true and fruitful, the nation or people over whose history it presides for the time, is animated with a vigorous and flourishing life. The time during which it supplies impulse and energy, normal and corrective, to the human activities, is marked as an historic period: which is of longer or shorter duration, and more or less rich in grave and important events, according to the fulness and truth of the ideas by which it is inspired and governed.

Thus it is that all great movements of mankind are movements of thought in course of evolution and application to the affairs of life. And wonderful it is, to see with what vigorous, logical procedure such developments march. For although each individual be capable of but little thought, and that little may often wander, and load itself with inconsequent deductions, yet, as in orchestral music, the discords of the various instruments are assimilated and

absorbed in the full tide of the harmony, so the errors in the reasoning of individual minds are either neutralized by each other, or taken up and borne along in the vast sweep and volume of national thought, so that the mass movement follows, in the main, a logical direction. Of this our own history, as we shall presently see, affords many striking illustrations.

In order now to comprehend why such movements cannot run on for ever in the same direction, we must here take into consideration the infinite nature of the truth, and the finite capacities of the human mind. Consequently these ideas which are developed in history, are never absolute. In so far as they are true, they are but glimpses into the infinite of truth, which are liable, in the course of time, to be exhausted of their contents, so that, torture them as we may, they will yield no more consequences capable of being realized in act; whence they cease to inspire the life and energies of the people, and give place to other ideas which turn the current of history. Human life, moreover, is manifold and many-sided. No one idea, however great and fruitful, can be adequate at any time, to fill out its whole circumference. The life of each individual, much more that of a nation or race of mankind, consists in the development and realization of many different and often conflicting ideas, which have relations to each other, and will yield consequences which never can be foreseen or predicted. For it is only in life, through actual historical development, that the logical contents of any great principle can ever come to be fully known. Hence it follows that when such principles continue to be fruitful, they are liable to be pushed on to unforeseen results, which not only clash with each other, but are pernicious in themselves. For there is no principle which is capable of definition, development and realization, that is to say, there is no historical principle which will not yield, by perfectly legitimate processes, *extreme results*, which practical wisdom will steadfastly re-

fuse to adopt and act upon. Every such principle is necessarily, to a certain extent, contingent upon circumstances, in some of which its legitimate consequences are true and valid, in others, false and pernicious. However incontrovertible it may be when abstractedly stated, however beneficial its consequences when realized up to a certain point, others are sure to be evolved out of it in the course of time, with respect to which it will require to be severely limited in its application to the affairs of life.

Now where this is ill understood or neglected, where a people do not stop to apply these necessary limitations, but push on the great ideas, which animate and inspire their energies, to the remotest results of which they are capable, these extreme consequences, as they are unfolded and realized, become productive of intolerable social evils. Then it is that reaction sets in; the ship goes about, and lies over on the other tack.

The most sharply defined and typical forms of this whole procedure we have found in French history. The reason of this lies in the obvious truth, that the most striking characteristic of the Gallic national mind is logic. The French are eminently a people of ideas, in this sense, that they carry out their social theories, as if they were absolute, to the most extreme logical results of which they are capable. Your true Gaul follows his logic "down Niagara." Hence the rapidity with which they run through their historic periods; hence the frequency, and strength, and violence of their reactionary movements. The English, on the contrary, are not a people of ideas, that is to say, of theories. The grand trait of their national mind is common sense. Above all men whom we know, whether of ancient or modern times, the English are clothed with the power of arresting extreme consequences, of limiting the development of one idea by that of another. They understand the necessity of checks and balances in every human arrangement. Hence those long

reaches of thought through which their historic periods run, and the permanency of their social institutions.

In such views as these we may find ample justification of that maxim of the people's wisdom, which I take to be essentially of English origin, "It is very good in theory, but will not hold in practice"—a maxim, however ridiculed by sciolists, both sound in itself, and of extensive application. For here we see that the wisdom and safety of any act, or course of action, do not wholly rest upon its being a legitimate consequence of some received, and, in the main, sound principle. In order to demonstrate a safe practical judgment, each separate result of our guiding principles must be brought to the test of other ideas, as also of experience, and of common sense.

In the light of these principles and laws of social progress, we may now endeavour to understand ourselves, and to determine through what stage, whether of healthful action, or of extreme results, we, as a nation, are now moving in the development and realization of the grand ideas which inspire and govern our history.

And here it is necessary to ascend to the fountain head of that which only, as I think, can properly be called modern history. The historic period through which we are now moving, begins—in so far as any part of what is necessarily an organic whole, can be said to have a beginning—in Luther's first act of rebellion against the authority of the church of Rome. The principle which was contained in that act, I take to be this, that the mind and conscience of the individual are responsible to the truth and to God alone—the principle of INDIVIDUAL LIBERTY, AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY. The history of the Protestant nations, from the sixteenth century to the present time, chiefly consists of the progressive development, the further and more widely extended realization, of this idea. This mighty truth, this vast and fruitful principle, according to the strength with which it actuated Martin Luther, and according to his agency and influence in opening to

it a career of development in the world, is that which constituted him, truly and properly, an epoch-making man. With all reverence for the other great Reformers, especially for Calvin and Melancthon, it seems no way unjust to them to say, that the relation which they bear to Luther is like that of La Place to Newton.

Now this principle of individual liberty and responsibility, as all other ideas which have exerted a regenerating and transforming influence upon the world, had its birth in a fact of religion. Consequently, it was first applied to doctrinal and church reforms. Hence we have the Reformation, the Reformed Religion, with all that is signified by these words. But it was self-evident that this principle could not be limited to the sphere of the religious life. Immediately, therefore, it began to be applied to literature, science, and art, in all other directions, and to all other human affairs. Hence came Oliver Cromwell, Puritanism, the English, American, and even the French revolutions, together with all their fruits and consequences in modern history. Hence the freedom of the press, universal education, and all free institutions. Hence all freedom of scientific inquiry, experiment, and publication, and that riches and bloom of Protestant literature, science and philosophy, especially that stupendous growth of the physical sciences, in their application to the industrial arts, in the midst of which it is our happiness to live. The immeasurable superiority, with respect to all these things, of the Protestant over the Papal nations—except France alone, emancipated, to a great extent, from Papal influence by the revolution—is proof that they belong to the germinal principle of the Protestant Reformation.

But it was on this continent, in this new and vast country, and by reason of the character, antecedents, and objects of our forefathers, that this great religious, political, and social principle found a wider and more favourable sphere, than it had ever before enjoyed—its true and proper home. Consequently our history, as no other in

the world, consists of its more and more extended development and realization. This we now proceed to trace.

Taken as the right of private judgment, it is this principle of individual liberty and responsibility which has given us much of that intense individualism, self-reliance, directness of thought, abounding energy, restless activity, and daring enterprise, which in religion, politics and business, are so strikingly characteristic of the American mind. Hence, also, we derive our prevailing mode, to question, examine, discuss and criticise, rather than to believe. In all the departments of thought and life—in science, art and philosophy; in theology, morals and religion; in the church, the state, and the family—there is nothing too great or too small, too high or too low, too sacred or too profane, for individual criticism. This also places us in constant and powerful resistance to the authority of the past, the deliverances of tradition, and prescriptive right. But since fashions always tend to extremes, and no less, as we have seen, in philosophy than in dress, it would not be surprising if those who come after us, should reject much that we have retained. It is certain, that if the habit of mind should continue to grow upon us, it must in time lead to the rejection of many just and true ideas; of many sound maxims and wholesome customs. The principle from which it springs, therefore, requires to be checked or limited, at least to some extent, by reverence for the past, the experience of the human race, and common sense.

The application of this idea to civil affairs, has given us the right of self-government, with all its priceless advantages over all other forms of government ever known to mankind. Hence we have our central, state, county, township, and municipal organizations; the whole country being divided and subdivided again and again, that the idea of self-government may be the more perfectly realized. But it is evident that the principle admits of a still further development, in the entire separation of the

North from the South, of the East from the West, and of each state from all the others, into so many disconnected and absolute sovereignties. Nay, its remote consequences would displace the very idea of a state or sovereignty, and constitute each individual the supreme law, and sole arbiter of his own life and conduct. Here, therefore, the principle requires to be limited by that of national unity, of which we shall have more to say hereafter.

Nor is there anything in this idea to restrain any man from marrying as many women as he can persuade to become his wives. Hence we have lived to see United States officials exercising, in a perfectly valid and recognized form, all the functions of territorial government, with harems of women around them, more numerous than that of the Grand Turk. This is a significant fact, and well worthy of being understood in connection with the principle from which it springs, and by which it is justified. Hence, also, our communities of free lovers, and the impunities they enjoy; together with the enormous multiplication of divorcees among us. For where all parties freely consent to such arrangements, the idea of individual liberty is the more perfectly realized, without violation of the civil rights of any. Here again the principle requires to be limited by that of the Christian character of our nation, of which also we shall have more to say.

The right of self-government, moreover, admits of an easy and perfectly sound translation into the received formula. All the powers of government are derived from the consent or concessions of the governed. But it is evident that a man cannot alienate from himself a right which he does not possess; and no man is possessed of the right to take away his own life, for any purpose, or in any circumstances. Consequently no man can surrender to government this right to take away his life. Government, under this formula, has no right to inflict the death penalty; and capital punishment becomes murder. Here we find the true explanation of those popular agitations

against the death penalty which we experience from time to time; which have already excluded it from the penal code of some of the States; and which must ultimately abolish it altogether, if the idea from which they spring be not limited by the Divine right of civil government, and of society to protect itself.

In fine, the principle of individual liberty, carried out to its utmost consequences in civil affairs, is, of course, simply anarchy. And such was the actual condition of the Jewish people at the close of that historic period which is covered by the Book of Judges; when *there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes*. For what state of social disorganization those words were intended to describe, is plain from that horrid affair of the Benjamite's wife, in which a whole tribe of Israel were almost exterminated by their brethren, and which closes in that stormy period. Hence the uncontrollable reaction that followed, and the establishment of the monarchy to save society. Nor is there any other way, as it would appear, to escape precisely similar results in our own history, but by the limitation of the idea of individual liberty by the correlative principles of national unity, and of the religious character of the nation.

The application of this principle to matters of religion, has given us all our individual religious liberties, with all their unspeakable blessings. From it also we derive that vast multitude of different religious sects, with their advantages and disadvantages, by which Protestant Christianity is distinguished from the outward and formal unity of Romanism. And here it would seem that we have already reached extreme results in the development of the idea, which exert no little influence to undermine and weaken the faith of the people. The church, the body of Christ, appears to exist among us in a dismembered state, its mangled limbs violently torn from each other, and the life-blood, which is faith, pouring forth from its wounds in fatal streams. I cannot but think that the inward and

spiritual unity of the church demands some outward and visible sign, in order first, that it should be a living unity, and secondly, that it should be so manifested as to convince the world that Jesus Christ is the Sent of God. This seems to be included in that repeated prayer of our blessed Lord, interceding for his people, in the words : *That they all may be one ; as thou Father art in me, and I in thee, that they all may be one in us ; that the world may believe that thou has sent me.* For how can the world, who cannot discern spiritual things, be aware that there is any spiritual unity in the church, so as to be convinced by it that Christ is sent of God, otherwise than by its going forth, and expressing itself, in some outward manifestation and visible sign ?

But not to insist upon this interpretation, it is evident that in the idea which has given birth to all these different denominations, there is nothing to restrain it from continuing to multiply them to an indefinite extent. Accordingly, we find it in full career of development and realization, up to the present time. Within the present generation it has given us Mormonism, the so-called Spiritualist Circles, and a number of new Christian sects ; and it has rent in twain the Methodist Episcopal Church, North and South, the Presbyterian Church, and twice again, the New-school branch of it. Still it threatens other communions. Where will it naturally stop ? Let it run on to the last extremes of which it is capable in logic, and it must subvert all creeds and confessions of faith, displace the very idea of church unity, and make each individual his own church, and thence, practically, his own Savior and his own God. All that is needed to ensure this result, is that the very same mental processes and acts, which have broken up the Christian church among us into the existing number of different sects, should continue to repeat themselves without let or restraint. Here therefore the principle from which they spring requires, and it must find, limitation in catholic

unity, experience and common sense. The last, and now the only hope of Romanism in the world, lies in the possibility that Protestantism, in this country, may not have the wisdom to apply these limitations in time to save the faith of the people.

We come now to consider the influence of this idea, of individual religious liberty, in moulding our governmental institutions. For in order that every individual might be not only absolutely free, but wholly unbiased by the influence of the government, in his religious opinions, the Constitution of the United States has rigorously abstained from all recognition of, and allusion to, Christianity, or to the being of a God; and all* our Constitutions prescribe and ordain "that no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification for any office or public trust." Consequently they cannot require an oath in the name of God. What is called the oath of the President elect, which is the model of all others, whether of the general or state governments, is prescribed in these words: "I do solemnly swear or affirm," &c.; in which the officer elect is left free to swear by nothing at all, and thus to leave out not only all recognition of God, but therein also the very essence of an oath. Whenever the name of God is introduced in such cases, whether under the Constitution of the United States, or of any particular state, in any department of the government, executive, legislative, judicial, educational, or military, it is purely optional.† The practical effect, whether or not the original object, of all this, is the neutrality of the government with respect to all religions, so that no possible governmental influence can be constitutionally exerted for or against any form of religious belief.

* The Constitution of North Carolina, unchanged since its adoption in 1776, is an exception to this.

† In some of the States, the form of the oath is in some cases prescribed by law so as to make a direct appeal to God, but this can always be evaded by substituting the affirmation.

This absolute neutrality in religion of the Constitution of the United States, is admitted and defended by the commentators. Says one of them: "It has been objected by some against the Constitution, that it makes no mention of religion, contains no recognition of the existence and providence of God. . . . But there were reasons why the introduction of religion would have been unseASONABLE if not improper. The Constitution was intended exclusively for civil purposes, and religion could not be regularly mentioned. The difference among the various sects of Christians is such that, in an instrument where all are entitled to equal consideration, it would be difficult to use words in which all could cordially join. . . . The purity of religion is best preserved by keeping it separate from government." For these and other reasons, he adds: "It was impossible to introduce into the Constitution even an expression of gratitude to the Almighty for the formation of the present government."* Such are the views of the commentators upon the Constitution of the United States, in which they manifest a cordial zeal for the purity of religion "by keeping it separate from government;" but unfortunately they do not inform us what is to preserve the purity of government after it has become sequestered from religion—has thus solemnly excommunicated itself. It were "devoutly to be wished" that some eminent statist of that school would speak to this point.

The same principle substantially rules in our state Constitutions. It is true that in some of the earlier of these there is still a faint recognition of God, and even of the Christian religion. In that of North Carolina there is even a Protestant clause. But from most of those which have come into existence under the further development of the idea of individual religious liberty, either all trace of religion has disappeared, or, as in those of Missouri

* Bayard on the Constitution of the United States.

and Texas, there are provisions of positive, though, no doubt, of unconscious hostility to Christianity. The Constitution of New Jersey is an honourable exception to this statement. As revised two years ago, under the influence of the eminent Christian statesmen of that Commonwealth, it exhibits a decided tendency to return to the idea of a Christian state. But the Constitution of New York is an admirable example of this perfect religious neutrality, the more significant in so far as the inhabitants of the Empire State are a typical people. For it guarantees the largest liberty to all mankind, with respect to all religions, in the words, "without discrimination or preference." That the true intent of that clause is to place all the religions, and all the infidelities of the world, upon exact level with Christianity before the government, we have the best possible evidence. For being well acquainted with the truly eminent and accomplished gentleman to whom chiefly that Constitution owes its present form, and happening to meet him soon after its adoption, we took occasion to say, "You, sir, have done what surely no other man in the state could have accomplished. Having yourself been born, and brought up, and moulded under the influence of the Christian church, you have given us a Constitution for the government of a great Christian people, which covers a vast extent and variety of topics, and yet which carries out one idea with such perfect logical figour, that from no single word, or form of expression, could it ever be inferred that such a fact as the Christian religion ever existed." "Ah!" he replied, with manifest delight, "how well you have understood it! That was just what we intended to do." Yet was he anything but an irreligious person. He was a regular attendant, and liberal supporter of the Presbyterian church, and, indeed, formerly one of my own parishioners. But this was his theory of civil government. A Christian person, even a Christian family, he could understand; but a Christian state was an idea totally incon-

sistent, in his mind, with that of the religious liberty of the individual.

Thus far we have actually realized this principle in our Constitutions. Its further development in the same direction, leads, by necessary sequence, to the abrogation of all our laws for the protection of the Sabbath, the punishment of blasphemy, and the like; also to the banishment of all observance of the Sabbath, chaplaincies, and religious services, from our legislative bodies, our army and navy; and of all recognition of God, and of the Christian religion, from the messages of our presidents, and other executive officers, and from all other public documents, and governmental acts. Even the executive appointment of our thanksgiving days is contrary to the spirit, and many of the things mentioned, to the express letter of our Constitutions, because they are governmental acts with "discrimination and preference" in matters of religious belief, which is constitutionally repudiated. They exert a governmental influence to bias the minds of individuals in favour of Christianity against infidelity, and against all non-Christian religions; consequently against every man's position and success in public life, who is an enemy to the national faith. They are, in fact, the lingering remains of an obsolete system of ideas, with respect to which our governmental institutions are, as yet, but imperfectly purified from religion. Hence the agitation which, from time to time, calls for their abolition. They have been allowed to remain—the laws for the protection of the Sabbath, and the punishment of blasphemy, being merely a dead letter, often violated by the government itself—only because their religious influence is so ill defined, and ineffectual.

The influence of this jealous neutrality, with respect to all religions, of our supreme and state governments, upon our public men, political parties, and political life in general, is very striking. For no government can be administered and carried on, according to its true intents

and aims, but by men who are personally in sympathy with its character. And since our Constitutions do thus exclude from themselves all influences which could bias the minds of individuals either for or against any religious belief, they cannot but act, in a most subtle and powerful manner, to repel from their offices of trust, and from the political organizations under them, all men who have any religious character, and to attract those who have as few religious and conscientious scruples as possible. Accordingly, I observe, that our chief magistrates have hardly ever been professed Christians. Even when favourably disposed towards the Christian religion, commonly they have held themselves aloof from formal church membership until their retirement from office. The like is true, with noble exceptions, of our legislators, judges, aspirants to office, leaders of political parties, and public men in general. And here we find the true and all-sufficient explanation of that almost total banishment of religious ideas and restraints from politics, and of that portentous, ever-increasing political corruption, which already perplexes and appals the nation. For it is manifestly impossible thus to shut out all religious aims and objects from any sphere of human life, without weakening, and ultimately destroying, the power of religious principle within that sphere. The inevitable result, in time, of this rigorous exclusion of religion from politics, is the irretrievable demoralization of the whole sphere of public life. The idea is yet indeed but imperfectly realized. But it can hardly be denied that we have been of late, and are daily making good progress. The principle is in full career of development up to the present hour. When it has reached its last terms, all appeal to religious motives in politics, will be held to be as much out of place, and illegitimate, as is now the appeal to political motives in religion. This idea is a two-edged sword, which cuts with equal keenness both ways.

It were possible, however, to bear all this, if it were not for still another consequence of this governmental neutrality in religion, which seems to me of deeper, and farther reaching significance, than all others put together. This is its influence upon our whole educational system.

For inasmuch as our public schools are strictly governmental institutions, organized and maintained under Constitutions from which all religious objects have been sedulously excluded, from these schools must also be excluded all religious objects, worship, instruction, and influence. Accordingly, it is one of the fundamental laws of this department of the government, that "no religious test shall ever be required of the teachers of our public schools; and no teacher shall be deemed unqualified for giving instruction in them on account of his opinions in matters of religious belief." One of the most eminent of American jurists* has officially decided, that "it is no part of the object of our public school system to give religious instruction." How otherwise could he honestly interpret our Constitutions and laws? Even the reading of the Bible in these schools, although in some of the States the school laws do specify that it shall not be prohibited, is in palpable conflict with this idea of governmental neutrality in religion: under which it is the constitutional right of the Romanist to object against the common version of the Scriptures, of the Jew against the New Testament, and of the heathen and infidel against the whole. Each and every religionist can rise up and say, you have no Constitutional right to tax me for the instruction of my children in a religion which I do not believe. Nor at the point where we now stand in the development of the idea of individual religious liberty, is it possible to answer them. The logic of the case they have all their own way. And the carrying out, in good faith, of these provisions must ultimately banish the Bible, prayer, every vestige of religious worship and influence,

*The late John C. Spencer.

and all teaching of morality which is peculiar to the Christian religion, from our vast and all-moulding systems of public education. This is the inevitable logical consequence of the principle, as it is already, to a great extent, the actual result. Who that has reflected upon the subject at all, can fail to see it?

What must be the effect of this extrusion of religion from the public schools, both upon education itself, and upon the national character, it is not difficult to foresee. For the three great ends of education are, to communicate the most important information, to train the mind, and to form the character; and these three are one. It is not possible to attain any one of them apart from both the others. Consequently all sound education, whatever is worthy of the name, must needs be an organic process. For the knowledge which is of paramount importance is, of course, just that which pertains to the moral and spiritual world; the communication of this by right methods is the most effectual way to discipline and impart strength and steadiness to the mind; whilst these two, right knowledge and right discipline, with respect to the facts and truths of the moral and spiritual world, are the fundamental elements of a right character. By the knowledge of the facts and truths of the moral and spiritual world, and of the relations which these bear to each other, the mind is fed, and nourished, and invigorated, as the body by its appropriate food, and by healthful exercise. Ignorance is the want of intellectual food, the famine and starvation of the mind. If that which is communicated in education be of trivial importance, the mind is dwarfed, as the body by insufficient nourishment. If the relations between the facts and truths communicated be not traced out, the mind is surfeited, as the body with an overloaded stomach, and without exercise. If in the tracing of these relations unsound processes be followed, the mind is warped, as the body by unnatural exercises and contortions. If that be given for fact or truth, which is neither,

the mind is poisoned, as the body by unwholesome food. It is only when the matter of instruction in education is of the deepest significance, i. e., when it is just that which pertains to the moral and spiritual world, that which is revealed in the word of God, and when the relations of the things taught to each other, are traced out by sound processes, that the mind is adequately fed, and nourished, and invigorated, is broadly developed, and attains to the full growth and maturity of all its faculties and powers. In other words, the intellect of man is grafted in, so to speak, upon a moral and spiritual, that is to say, upon an infinite, exhaustless root, by which supported and replenished, it is rendered capable, as distinguished from the brute mind, of culture, development, and growth, from generation to generation, and from age to age. And it is necessary that it should be trained with special reference to this idea, in order that it should uphold its highest and most plentiful blossoms, and should bear its golden fruit of true wisdom. This moral and religious training is indispensable from the beginning to the end of the whole educational process. To interest the minds and hearts of children at the dawning of their intellectual and moral life; to acquaint them with all things most necessary to be known, both for this world and that which is to come; to accomplish them in the most profound, abstruse, and infallibly correct processes and methods of reasoning; to imbue them with the knowledge of history, eloquence, and poetry; to quicken their perceptions of the true, the beautiful, and the good; to inform them with sound principles of right and justice; to purify their affections, and fix them upon the most exalted objects; to make of our sons, men, and of our daughters, women, in the highest sense of these words; in fine, to ennoble, transfigure, and glorify their whole humanity—to accomplish these sublime objects the Holy Scripture alone is adequate, and indispensable,

throughout the whole course, as matter of instruction and principle of education.

All this, of necessity, is lost to the education of the masses by excluding the Bible and religious instruction from the public schools. Nor is it possible to provide a sufficient remedy by placing our children in private or select academies. For this great public school system is an all-moulding power upon the ideas themselves which are entertained of education, among all classes of society. The views of education which prevail in the public schools soon come to prevail in the nation. Religious instruction and influence driven from these, soon cease to form any part of the idea of education in the community at large.

Accordingly we find that the loss of this idea is working a revolution in the whole department of education, as also in the character of the teachers and instructors themselves. For the system, being without aims and objects, naturally attracts to its service a class of men who are personally in sympathy with it; in other words, who have as little of the religious character as possible; consequently, unconscientious, unscrupulous people, whose chief end of life is a piece of bread. Such teachers, themselves intellectually incompetent, and in order to flatter both parents and children, are easily attempted to pass rapidly over elementary exercises, and to increase the number of studies beyond all rational limits, crowding one upon another, and hurrying on with such reckless speed, that learning, in any true sense of the word, becomes impossible. Hence it is already one of the most difficult things to find an instructor under whom a child can be placed, with any rational expectation that he will obtain such a knowledge of language as will enable him to read the classics, in after life, with any facility, pleasure, or profit. The same ineffectual methods, and abortive results, are equally apparent in other branches of education. In this way, children of the brightest intellect are soon discouraged. Thoroughly instructed in what they pass over, when it is light

behind, they are easily interested in study, and learn to face, without shrinking, the darkness which lies before them. But when it becomes dark behind as well as before, they are utterly confused and disgusted; their minds are stupefied and enfeebled, instead of being educated. This evil is already enormous, and no less, perhaps even greater, in private than in public education. It is one of the greatest calamities that can befall any people. Hence the almost universal outcry from parents and guardians, What shall we do with our children? Send them where we will, they do not learn. They seem to feel no interest in study; and we cannot persuade our boys to go to college. For this is one of the chief causes of that relative decline in the number of our youth who aspire to collegiate, and the higher forms of education—they have no genial interest awakened in study, they are discouraged and disgusted with its blind and fruitless toil, in the lower departments.

The further influence of this whole system of education divorced from religion, upon the character of the young, surely cannot be misunderstood. It is already but too evident in that early loss of the simplicity and innocence of childhood, in that precocious development of subtlety and forbidden knowledge, in that disgusting manishness, which dwarfs the stature, enfeebles the mind, and, like the worm in the first ripe fruits, cause the premature decay and death of so many of our American youth. Some one has bitterly said, "There are no children in America; they are all pigmy men and women; and half of them never grow up to full size." For how is it possible that the humanity in them should continue to grow through the ordinary length of time, and attain to the full stature of men and women, when it is deprived of that religious instruction in education which is its most necessary food.

The influence of this change in education we have begun to feel in every department of life. It extends even to the fundamental relation between parents and children.

Formerly, as is well known, a certain religious character and dignity belonged to the father of the family, a certain prophetic, priestly, and kingly authority, was vested in the head of the household, in virtue of which he felt obliged to assert for himself, and for the mother of his children, a Divine right to their reverence and obedience; and to set apart some portion of the week to instruct them in their relations and duties, "as inferiors, superiors and equals." How little of all this is found among us now! How indeed could it remain after it had ceased to be a self-evident truth, that education is essentially a religious training!

In a few generations this influence must extend to the whole population of our country, and recast in its own likeness, our national character, which already tends to the merging of its original Anglo-Saxon depth and seriousness in a certain French levity and frivolity. There is no less of truth than of wit in the saying that, "Good Americans, when they die, go to Paris." For it may be safely affirmed that all other influences which go to determine our national character and destiny, are scarcely superior to that of our all-comprehending, all-moulding systems of governmental education. As are the public schools of this land, such will be the great and governing masses of the people. If they are Christian, the nation will be Christian. If the Bible shall be driven from them, it can never maintain the place it has hitherto occupied in the nation.

These are some of the extreme consequences, logically derived, already extensively realized, and in full course of realization up to the present hour, of the principle of individual liberty, taken in its widest sense. This is the course we are steering with full sails. Is it not plain to reason that if we pursue it long enough, we must find ourselves in perilous waters? And when the mast-head watch shall call out, "Breakers ahead—and close under the lee bow!" there will be no time to trim the vessel.

Then a sudden and violent change in our course will be our only and doubtful possibility of escape from disastrous shipwreck. If the principle by which we are now guided, be not limited, and its extreme consequences arrested in time, by some other principle of historical development, of equal validity, fruitfulness and power, a violent reaction against it is inevitable. And the longer this is delayed, the greater the lengths to which the now dominant idea shall yet go, the more sudden and violent that reaction must be, and the greater will be those evils of the opposite extreme, into which the American mind is as sure to run, as that it has not escaped from under the laws which have governed all preceding history. It seems plain that there is no other way to save and perpetuate the innumerable and priceless blessings which we owe to this great principle of individual liberty, but faithfully to apply these limitations in time.

And now what is that other principle of historical development, no less valid and true, no less fruitful, and no less evident, than this of individual liberty, by which it can and ought to be limited, and restrained from rushing on to these, and even greater, extremes. It is of this only that we have yet to speak; and we answer, it is the principle of NATIONAL UNITY, NATIONAL LIBERTY, AND NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. It remains to develop this idea.

Let us observe, then, that what we call a nation, is not to be conceived of as a mere aggregate of individuals, a bare collection or collocation of men, women and children, having no other than personal relations to each other, and to God. A nation is properly an organism, with a unity of existence and life, distinct from all others, and from the individuals of which it is composed. Such an organism is a tree which, though capable of being grafted with the buds and branches of other stocks, has yet a life of its own, distinct from others, and from all the different parts of which it is composed. In like manner ethnic life must needs be conceived of as a unity, else it could

not be life at all; for life is one. As the vital force in the human body is one, and not many, so that if you wound the feet it is felt in the head, and if you kill the head the feet also die, so every body politic has a distinct life of its own, which is not many, but numerically one and the same in all its members. And I wish to be understood here in the strongest sense of a realistic philosophy. Hence it is that nations follow, to a certain extent, the analogy of individuals in the phenomena of infancy, childhood, youth, growth, and maturity—of decline, old age, decay and dissolution.

But it is worthy of observation, that this oneness of ethnic life does not wholly depend upon unity of race or tribal descent. *For God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth; (i. e., of one life: for the blood is the life.)* So that in other combinations than those of tribal descent they are capable of forming new organisms or states, which soon become as conscious of their own separate unity and identity as if they were all derived from one subordinate branch of the great family of man. There is no doubt, however, but that, even in such cases, there must be one predominant race, to which all the others are as grafts to the original stock of a tree, by whose life both the native and grafted branches are alike supported and nourished. Of this we, as a people, are now giving to the world a remarkable proof and illustration. For there is hardly any country in which the national life is more unique, or the national character more distinct and sharply defined, than in our own. The word *American* is altogether as precise in signification as the word *French*, or *Spanish*, or *English*, and far more distinct than the word *German*. Our nation, made up of all heterogenous varieties of mankind, already, whilst yet in its infancy, manifests an organic life so different from all others, so full and strong, that, as a vast galvanic battery, it easily disintegrates, assimilates, and Americanizes those dense masses of alien populations,

which, like the ocean waves that bear them, are incessantly rolling in upon us, and losing all separate form and identity in breaking upon our shores.

This principle of ethnic unity is fully recognized by nations themselves, in all their dealings with each other, and in all their sovereign acts. For the national sovereignty resides in the nation as such. It is a pernicious fallacy to speak of each American citizen as a sovereign. Individual sovereignty is anarchy. The nation, as such, and that alone, is vested with sovereign authority and power. And this national sovereignty manifests itself in constitutions, laws, the coining of money, in matters of peace and war, in governments, and in all governmental acts. In these the nation acts as a unit, and expresses its nationality, in distinction from the individuals of which it is composed. These are the acts of the nation as such, in which no distinction of individuals is, or can be, made; by the wisdom and justice of which the bad, no less than the good, are benefitted; for the sin and folly of which those who dissent and those who assent, the guilty and the innocent, suffer together; for which the people as a whole are responsible. Thus England and America, and all other nations, deal with each other. A declaration of war between any two of them affects alike those who approve and those who disapprove of it; a treaty of peace binds every individual of both nations. In all this the unity of national life is fully recognized by the nations themselves.

Nor is it less evident that God deals with nations as distinct moral entities, than that they so regard and treat each other. There is a national character and conduct of which He takes account in the moral government of the world. For he is the God of nations no less than of families and of individuals. He creates them, *and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations.* He governs them with supreme sovereignty. Hence he reveals himself as *the Governor among the nations,*

as the *King of Nations, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of lords.* All government, of whatever form, exists, and derives its essence and authority, from God alone. For *there is no power but of God. The powers that be are ordained of God.* The civil magistrate is *the minister of God; and he beareth not the sword in vain.* And here it is another great fallacy to say that all the powers of government are derived from the people. Not one of them is thence derived. All the powers of government, its authority and very essence, are from God alone. As to its form only, it is from the people. It belongs to the people simply to determine and prescribe, according to the light given them, what those powers are which God has vested in civil government. They have no more right either to take from, or add to, these, than they have to increase or diminish the powers of the Christian church. The church and the state are equally Divine institutions. God is no less the head of the one than of the other. Consequently, and as a matter of fact and observation, God deals with nations no less obviously than with individuals, by a system of rewards and punishments. With blessings and prosperity he seeks to quicken the national gratitude; with afflictions and chastisement he calls to national humiliation and repentance. In the distribution of these national rewards and punishments he makes no distinction of individuals, whether they as such be innocent or guilty, precisely as nations themselves, in dealing with each other, must ignore such personal distinctions. In times of peace, health and plenty, these blessings are not confined to the good; nor are the wicked alone cut off by war, pestilence and famine. In all this God himself fully recognizes the distinct entity, and moral unity, of nations.

From these truths it follows of necessity, that nations, as such, have a moral character, and are clothed with a moral responsibility, of their own. In other words, nations, in distinction from the individuals of which they

are composed, have relations and duties to the God of nations and Supreme Ruler of the world, no less than individuals themselves. And it is evident of itself, that these duties, and this moral responsibility, if they exist at all, cannot be conceived of as requiring anything less than some national acknowledgment of themselves. For as our individual responsibility requires recognition and acknowledgment from each individual, by his own act, so the valid acknowledgment of national responsibility must be the act of the nation. In other words, our national responsibility requires, and cannot be conceived of as being satisfied without some national acknowledgment of the being, providence, and government of God, in those acts which are the most solemn and significant, the highest, not to say, the only acts of the nation itself—the acts of government. But moral responsibility implies moral freedom. Whatever a nation is morally obliged to do, that, as a nation, it is of right free to do. Consequently, it is an inalienable right of nations to acknowledge the being and government of God, to worship, honour, and obey him, in their national and governmental acts. Such is the idea of national unity, liberty, and responsibility.

In applying this general principle to our own case, we may assume what surely does not need proof, that, in our moral and religious character, we are not a heathen, nor a Mohammedan, nor an infidel, but a Christian nation. For the emigrants from the Old World, in whom our national existence was first constituted, were, as a body, eminently religious and Christian people. It was chiefly a religious and Christian movement which brought them to this continent. Driven from their country and wealth, from their kindred, homes, and churches, they brought with them hardly anything but their religion. They sought and found in these western wilds a refuge for their persecuted faith, where they might worship God in freedom, and freely educate their children in the saving truths of the gospel. And they were not only the founders of

our nation, but also of the national character. Even so far as mere numbers can have any bearing on such a question as this, it is safe to say, that a vast preponderance of our population has always been on the side of Christianity. The great mass of our people have always been, as they still are, at least speculative believers, carrying with them into all their new settlements, as a sacred palladium, or rather as their national covenant and safety, the word of God, the preaching of the gospel, and the Christian church.

Here I would gladly arrest this argument, without any discrimination among all those who call themselves Christians. But the plain truth of the case carries us further. For our national character is no less Protestant than it is Christian. Our civil and religious liberty, all our free institutions, even our civilization itself, are, as we have seen, an outbirth and growth of Protestant Christianity. We are eminently a Protestant nation. Nor is this truth even limited by the fact that Romanism is found among us. For this is nothing properly American. It is an exotic, a purely foreign growth, not yet assimilated or Americanized. The members of that communion, in a vast proportion, are foreign born. Its head, whom both priest and people are sworn to obey in all things, both temporal and spiritual, as lord paramount, with full power to absolve them from their allegiance to the governments under which they live—a power which he has actually exercised again and again—is a foreign prince. Whilst they remain subjects to him, they cannot enter into our American and Protestant nationality. As they become Americanized they cease to be Romanists. And this is a process which is continually going on. For incredible numbers of their children, in spite of the perfection of their organization, and of all they can do to prevent it, cease to be Papists. They can no more escape from the all-transforming influence of our American institutions, the enormous assimilating power of our Protestant nation-

ality, than from the effects of the American atmosphere and climate. Accordingly, as we learn from the statistics of the Propaganda, the Papists who have emigrated to this country, have lost thereby full one-half of their numbers; that is to say, they would have been twice as numerous as they now are, if all the emigrants, with their children, had remained in their own communion. But inasmuch as they are now grafted into the stock of a Protestant nationality, the life which nourishes them, and circulates in all their veins and thoughts, is a Protestant life; which ensures that they shall cease to be Romanists in becoming Americans.

If then we are indeed a Christian and a Protestant nation, in the name of the people, in the name of the truth, in the name of God, we have the right to say so in our Constitutions and laws, in our national and governmental acts. It is the chief element of our national religious liberty, that we should be allowed, and we are bound by the most solemn of all moral obligations, to acknowledge, worship, and obey our God, not only as individuals, but also as a free Christian and Protestant nation. For no moral creature of God, no creature which is subject to his moral government, such as we have seen a nation is, can refuse or decline to honour its Creator by public and solemn worship, with impunity. As the individual, and the family, so the nation that neglects this, must bring upon itself His sovereign displeasure, and a grievous punishment. And since all our national institutions and blessings, yea, our civilization itself, are the fruits of Protestant Christianity, in the name of the people, in the name of truth, in the name of God, we have the right, and we are morally bound, to recognize and honour, in our national acts, the source from which, and the channel through which, they have been derived to us. For it is contrary to the constitution and order of nature, it is evidence of a base mind, and can never come to good, when the child, for any reason, or to gain any object, re-

A Nation's Right to Worship God.

fuses to own its parentage. And we are bound to vindicate this right at all hazards. To yield it up, is to renounce our national parentage, birthright, and character; it is to dishonour our national religion, and the God of our fathers, yea, it is to betray ourselves, blindfold and manacled, as our children will find to their sorrow, in the very citadel of our religious liberties.

But does not all this imply some form of Erastianism, or at least some modified union of church and state, which American institutions have repudiated bodily? I answer, that it implies nothing of the kind. For Erastianism makes the church the creatures of the state, which is abomination in the sight of God and man. The union of church and state, in any right acceptation of the words, either gives the state some sort of control over the church, and makes the church, to some extent, dependent upon the state, as in England; or reverse the relation, and gives the church some control over the state, making the state, in some degree, dependent upon the church, according to the Papist theory. Both of these ideas I cordially repudiate, and that in the name of every branch of the Protestant church in this country. I do not believe there are any Protestants among us who can tolerate either of them. The doctrine here advocated is, that as the different branches of our national government, the executive, legislative, and judicial, are co-ordinate, each supreme within its own sphere, and independent of the others, but all alike responsible directly to the people, so the church and the state are co-ordinate institutions, totally independent of each other, each, in its own sphere, supreme with respect to the other, but both alike of Divine appointment, having one and the same head and fountain of all their powers, which is God. Whence both alike are bound to acknowledge, worship, and obey him. It is as great a solecism for the state to neglect this, as it would be for the church. Many seem to think that the complete separation of church and state, implies that the state, as such,

has no duties to God, and no religious character. As logically it could be inferred from the family's independence of the church, that the family has no religious character, and no duties to God. The family, the church, and the state, these are all co-ordinate institutions, severally independent of each other, yet all alike having one and the same Head, which they are equally bound in solemn form to acknowledge, worship, and obey. When the state, for any reason, declines to do this, it falls into a gross anomaly, and exemplifies that which is described in the second Psalm: *Why do the nations rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against Jehovah, and against his Anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; Jehovah shall have them in derision.*

But even if this doctrine of church and state could be refuted, we ought not to forget that there are two extremes to this question, no less than to every other, both of which are equally removed from the only practical truth. For one of these extremes king Charles lost his throne and his head; and we lose what is dearer than life, our national religious liberty, while we rush to the other. *In medio tutissimus ibis*: the golden mean is ever the path of safety.

All that for which I here contend, requires but the least possible change in the words of our Constitutions; which, moreover, would express nothing but an obvious truth: "We, avowing ourselves to be a Christian and Protestant nation, do ordain and establish this Constitution." That change would leave all denominations calling themselves Protestant Christians, whatever liberty they now enjoy, to follow their natural developments, and to exert all the influence of which they are now capable; it would complicate no question between them severally; and it would give them all a great advantage in prosecuting that glorious work in which they are all co-labourers with the

fathers of the Reformation, and of all civil and religious liberty. That constitutional change would open its true channel to the current of our national life and history, and allow it to flow with perfect freedom in its natural course. And it would give us the constitutional right to worship the God of our fathers, in our legislative bodies, army and navy; to require an oath in the name of God in our courts of justice, and of our officers elect; to observe, as a nation, and to protect by law, our Christian Sabbath; to punish blasphemy, adultery and polygamy, and to protect the unity of marriage; to inflict the death penalty for murder; and to make the word of God the matter of instruction, and the principle of education, in our all-moulding public school system.

Whatever in the idea of individual religious liberty is inconsistent with such an avowal of the Christian character of our nationality, and inconsistent with these its immediate logical results, is to be regarded as an extreme and baleful consequence of the principle from which it flows. Not long ago a California judge—and we happen to know this to be a fact—undertook to elicit the truth from a Chinaman by swearing him on a cock's head, instead of the Bible. The foolish magistrate had been instructed by some wag that this was the idolatrous sanction of witness-bearing among the Chinese, although the whole procedure must have been as incomprehensible and absurd to the witness as it was to the spectators. But the idea of the court was that the government having no religious character or preference of its own, could easily accommodate itself to those of the individual, whatever they might be*—a perfectly sound inference from the

* It is objected to this illustration, that it is an old English law maxim, and a plain dictate of common sense, that the witness must be sworn upon what he holds sacred. But I am constrained to adhere to it. In a Christian state the principle of the objection must have its limitations. For example, the worshippers of Sheitan, or Satan, visited by Mr. Layard, could take no other oath than one by appeal to the devil himself. Could a Christian court accept such an oath? And the Scriptural view of all idolatry is, that it partakes more or less of the nature of devil

principle. Upon the same ground the Mormon denies our authority to punish him for his loathsome polygamy, and insists upon his constitutional right to sit in our legislative bodies, and to fill our highest judicial and military offices, in the very eye of the nation, with all his harem around him. Upon the same ground the Papist denies our right to the reading of the Bible, to religious instruction and worship, in our public schools; and the Jew, our right to observe as a nation, and to protect by law, our Christian Sabbath. Upon the same ground, and with equal reason, the infidels, of every name, deny our right to require an oath by the name of God, in our courts of justice, and of our officers elect; our right to the appointment of chaplains in our legislative bodies, army and navy; and our right to worship or acknowledge the God of our fathers in any of our governmental or national acts. If we yield to this brazen cry of a very few in every thousand of our Christian population, we accept all those evil results to religion, morals, education, politics, and liberty itself, from which we now suffer, and which unchecked are certain, in the end, to overthrow all our free institutions, and even our national existence. If we admit these extreme consequences of the idea of individual religious liberty, we give the death-blow to national unity, liberty, and responsibility. The nation, as distinguished from the individuals of which it is composed,

worship. Whilst the theory of a Christian state recognizes God as the Supreme Judge, and invisibly present in all its courts of justice, it implies that justice is administered in his name and by his authority. It is his justice which is dispensed. In such a court none but those forms of witness-bearing which are agreeable to his mind are admissible; and nothing can be valid which does not acknowledge his authority. Surely, now it is not possible to conceive of Him, the Supreme Judge, administering an oath in which there is an appeal to the devil, or to any heathen god, or which is accompanied with any idolatrous rite. In such an oath the witness would insult and repudiate the authority of the court itself. The difficulties which would grow out of this theory of a Christian state, in such a government as that of the English in India, exhibit only one of the many anomalies which are inseparable from the subjection of a conquered people to the rule of foreign masters, and render more certain the ultimate triumph over the whole world of the great "cause of the nationalities."

is deprived of every vestige of religious liberty. Yea, the first principles of national existence itself are subverted.

The doctrine for which I here contend, will give us an answer to these brazen demands. Children of the Papacy, do we not know you, in all your historical antecedents, as the sworn enemies of both civil and religious liberty? When did you ever concede, where you had the power to withhold, either the one or the other? Who can number the martyrs of both you have slain? Having fled from your own countries, where, ground to the earth by the despotism of your priests and princes, you had neither liberty, nor bread, nor hope, you have taken refuge in the protecting arms, and fostering bosom, of a free Protestant nation. We have received you to liberty, plenty, and a new life, the fruits to us of two centuries of a Christian and Protestant education in all our institutions of learning. And now you demand, in the name of religious freedom, as a right of your consciences, that we banish the word and the worship of God from all our public schools, which, as you yourselves avow, through your highest authorities, must inevitably result in making us a nation of infidels. If this, indeed, is the freedom of conscience which only will content you, once for all, you cannot be gratified. Set your hearts at rest. And if without this you cannot be contented, return to your own nationalities, to the Italian priest who is your temporal prince, and ask him for rights and liberties, and see what he will give you.

Enemies of Christianity, by whatsoever name, Jew, Pagan, Mormon, Mohammedan, or Infidel, you are called, we did not receive our free institutions, nor any of the priceless blessings which distinguish us above all other nations, from you, but from our God, and through the channel of the Christian religion. We are a Christian nation. As such, we are one, free, and responsible to God. You dwell among us. Whatsoever rights, liber-

ties, and blessings you can enjoy in consistency with this our Christian character as a nation, are freely yours. We will defend them with our blood, as promptly for you as for ourselves. But you demand in the name of religious freedom, as a right of your consciences, not only that we banish the word and the worship of God from our public schools, but also from our legislative bodies, army and navy; that we abolish all legal protection of our Sabbaths, and of marriage; that we expunge all acknowledgment of our Christian nationality, and even the name of our God, from the sacred roll of our Constitutions and laws; and that we thus repudiate the source from which, and the channel through which, we have derived all our national institutions and blessings. This, as you are well aware, would soon bring us to your ground, and make of us an infidel nation. Now, if this be the liberty of conscience which only will content you, it is time you were given to understand, that we also have a conscience, which binds us by the most sacred of all obligations, to worship our God in our most solemn and significant national acts, and to educate our children in our Christian faith. We will defend and maintain our sovereign right to do this against the world in arms. Beware how you touch it. You cannot be gratified in this thing. Set your hearts at rest. And if you cannot rest, go form a nation and a state where you can find a place, and see if infidelity will do for you what the Christian religion has done for us.

Such answer the great palpitating heart of our nation already feels to be most just and right; it needs only to be interpreted and justified to the intellect of the people. Even now it begins to make itself heard in no uncertain sounds. We hear it in the popular determination expressed from time to time, as of late in Boston, and later still in the city of New York itself, that no quack theories of government shall be permitted to drive the word and the worship of God from our public schools; and it speaks in that mighty reaction which has taken place all

over this country, in the last fifteen years, in favour of religious education. We hear it in the throes of our great cities, whose governments are clutched and held by obscene harpies, that eat up the property of the citizen, whilst they afford no protection to life. We hear it in the muttering of national perplexity over corruption in political life, which is already prodigious. Inarticulate, as yet, but full of a vast meaning, like the thundrous tramp of armed squadrons, like the ground swell of the ocean, or the heavings of the earthquake—it is the indignation of a mighty people, awaking to the conviction that they have been deceived by political quackery, into the surrender of the most precious rights of a free, Christian, and Protestant nation.

Young Gentlemen, you have come to the close of a most important and ever memorable portion of your lives; and you are now ready to go forth into the world to make proof of your manhood, and of the worth of that religious education which you have here received. The closing periods of time, and the opening of new scenes, whether marked by the courses of the heavenly bodies, or by other changes in nature, or in human life, are always solemn. In vain the artist strives to represent in painting or sculpture that nameless expression which rests, in his idea, upon the features of the dying year. Who can adequately speak of death? Therefore I have made bold to speak to you, on this occasion, upon a great and solemn theme.

But with you hope is predominant, as it ought to be; for this is your strength. You have youth, you have health, you have education, you are rich in friends, your reputations are untarnished, the red wine of life mantles in your veins, your hearts are unchilled with sorrow, and you are about to enter upon the privileges and the dignity of honourable manhood. Ah! if I could but hang these walls with pictures of the future, as it lies before your imaginations, what a gallery of rainbow scenes should we

behold! For the day star of hope is rising over your life; lord of the ascendant may it ever remain to you!

And truly old Nassau Hall would be proved to have fallen into decay if we should not hear of you, in time to come, in the walks of literature and science, in the professor's chair, in the pulpit, at the bar, on the bench, in our state and national councils, as members of conventions to form and revise constitutions, and in all the places of trust and influence in this land. The interest and honour of our Alma Mater, of our education, of our country, and of our religion, are now to be committed into your hands. You will not betray the one, nor tarnish the other. You will do better than we, who go before you, have done. I would wish to die before anything should drive out of my heart this precious faith. And allow me to say, for a good purpose, that there is more of latent power in some of you, like enough in those who are altogether innocent of ambition, than in your wildest dreams you have ever surmised. A great principle will sometimes wake up a new nature in a man, of whose capacities and powers he was before totally unconscious. Such a principle I announce to you this day, in the words, NATIONAL UNITY, NATIONAL LIBERTY, NATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY. Cherish it in your hearts; let it work in your minds; take it as your motto and watchword, to remind you unceasingly of your high duty to contend, in all situations, on all occasions, for such constitutional reforms as are indispensable to realize it in our national life.

The motives to faithfulness and energy in the fulfilment of this sovereign obligation, are all-constraining. It opens the path of honour to the greatest abilities. For the time is not far distant, as I am persuaded, when some capable man, putting himself at the head of a movement which is already making itself felt, to vindicate our national religious liberty, our inalienable right to worship God as a nation, will become the most popular candidate for the presidential chair. A Christian and Protestant

people, whose patience has become exhausted by intolerable political corruption, and indignant at the demoralization of its educational interests, will stand by him. Raising his voice in behalf of a nation's right to worship God, his words will speak into clear consciousness their own struggling thoughts; and they will hasten to crown him with their highest honours. And I think it is easy to predict, that when he comes, it will be from this seminary and nursery of so many of our purest patriots and greatest statesmen. But if this motive were wanting, the worldliness and mockery of the age have not been able to quench the sacred flame of patriotism in your hearts. For this is the true Promethean fire which cannot be extinguished, whilst an honest and brave man, or a virtuous woman, continues to exist. My fatherland, let me honour thee with my life; my mother country, I will defend thee with my blood—my countrymen, there is not one of you here present whose heart does not thrill with the power of this great mystery. And the Christian religion, the Protestant church, which has made us what we are for good—by this faith we live; for this faith we are ready to die. It is more to every one of us than husband or wife, father and mother, than kindred, home, and country. We will not betray our religion. In the strength of these all-powerful motives, we will defend and maintain, on all occasions, against all opponents, our inalienable right to avow ourselves, in our Constitutions and laws, in our national and governmental acts, a free, Christian, and Protestant nation. And the ages to come will bless us, the preservers, as we now bless the authors, of all civil and religious liberty.