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# DISCOURSE

ON THE

STATE AND TENDENCY OF SOCIETY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

LITERARY SOCIETIES

OF THE

COLLEGE OF NEW JERSEY,

AT PRINCETON, JUNE 25TH, 1867,

BY

EDWARD D. MANSFIELD, LL. D.



PHILADELPHIA:

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1867.

RESOLUTION OF THE CLOSING SOCIETY.

At a meeting of the Closing Society, held in the Hall, June 27th, 1867.

Resolved, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the Hon. Edward D. Mansfield, LL.D., for the exceedingly able and eloquent address delivered by him this morning before the Literary Societies of the College, and that a Committee be appointed to solicit a copy for publication.

James Pollock,  
Charles A. Allen,  
Committee.

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE AMERICAN WHIG SOCIETY.

At a meeting of the American Whig Society, held in the Hall, June 27th, 1867.

Resolved, That the thanks of the American Whig Society be tendered to the Hon. Edward D. Mansfield, LL.D., of Ohio, for his able and eloquent address delivered this day before the Literary Societies, and that a Committee be appointed to request a copy for publication.

Charles W. Smith,  
David A. Thompson,  
Committee.

Printed on the Hudson,  
July 2nd, 1867.

Thinking you for the politeness, which requests the publication of my address and submitting to your judgment on its merits, I enclose the manuscript for your disposal.

Yours respectfully,

EDWARD D. MANSFIELD.

To Edward D. Mansfield, James Pollock, Charles A. Allen, Charles W. Smith, Alex. R. Thompson, Committee of the Closing Society.

RESOLUTION OF THE CLIOSOPHIC SOCIETY.

At a meeting of the CLIOSOPHIC SOCIETY, held in Clio Hall, June 25th, 1867,

“RESOLVED, That the thanks of the Society be presented to the HON. EDWARD D. MANSFIELD, LL.D., for the exceedingly able and eloquent address delivered by him this morning before the Literary Societies of the College, and that a Committee be appointed to solicit a copy for publication.”

EDWARD T. GREEN, }  
JAMES POLLOCK, } Committee.  
CHARLES A. AIKEN, }

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EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE  
AMERICAN WHIG SOCIETY.

WHIG HALL, June 25th, 1867.

“RESOLVED, That the thanks of the AMERICAN WHIG SOCIETY be tendered to the HON. EDWARD D. MANSFIELD, LL.D., of Ohio, for his able and eloquent address, delivered this day before the Literary Societies, and that a Committee be appointed to request a copy for publication.”

CHARLES W. SHIELDS, }  
ALEX. R. PENDLETON, } Committee.  
DAVID A. THOMPSON, }

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FISHKILL ON THE HUDSON, }  
July 8th, 1867. }

GENTLEMEN :—

Thanking you for the politeness, which requests the publication of my address, and submitting to your judgment on its merits, I enclose the manuscript for your disposal.

Yours respectfully,

EDWARD D. MANSFIELD.

To Edward T. Green, James Pollock, Charles A. Aiken, Charles W. Shields, Alex. R. Pendleton, David A. Thompson, Committees of the Cliosophic and American Whig Societies.

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RESOLUTION OF THE ETHIOPIAN SOCIETY

Resolved, That the Society do hereby recommend to the  
Members of the Ethiopian Society, that they do  
not take any part in the proceedings of the  
Ethiopian Society, and that a Committee be appointed  
to inquire into the conduct of the Society, and  
to report thereon to the next meeting of the  
Society.

DISCOURSE

EXTRACT FROM THE MEMOIRS OF THE  
AMERICAN WHIG SOCIETY

An African Chief told the Missionary Moffat  
after his conversion, that some of the great ques-  
tions solved by his teacher had often passed through  
his mind. Wandering solitary by the shores of  
lake Nyami, he had asked himself, Why am I?  
What am I? Whether do I go?  
These are the questions of profoundest philoso-  
phy, as well as darkest ignorance, comprehending  
the whole range of human inquiry from Greek to  
African. To answer them in an absolute sense is  
the province of high theology; but to answer them  
in the limited sense of history and institutions is the  
province of political philosophy. To answer them  
in some way, is a great interest and a solemn duty  
for all those who on the threshold of life—girded  
by God and furnished by their country the wealth

## DISCOURSE.

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An African Chief told the Missionary Moffat after his conversion, that some of the great questions solved by his teacher had often passed through his mind. Wandering solitary by the shores of lake Ngami, he had asked himself, *What am I? Where am I? Whither do I go?*

These are the questions of profoundest philosophy, as well as darkest ignorance, comprehending the whole range of human inquiry from Greek to African. To answer them in an absolute sense, is the province of high theology; but to answer them in the limited sense of history and institutions, is the province of political philosophy. To answer them in some way, is a great interest and a solemn duty for all those, who on the threshold of life—gifted by God and furnished by their country the wealth

and armament of a Christian education—must, by the very laws of nature, become the legislators of mankind. For it is not the law maker—nor is it a multitude told off by numbers who govern and give direction to the great social movements—but it is the soul, highest endowed and cultured, which assumes the empire over souls and knows no limits to that empire but the decrees of God. Hence, even the African, when he begins a new and great work of life, asks himself—*what* am I? *where* am I? and *whither* do I go?

I. What am I? What are you? What are we all? This question refers to the nature of our being, and is briefest answered because God and our own consciousness give the only answer. We are *not* bodies only, for they perish, while the mind lives in transmitted ideas. We are *not* life only, for we share that in common with all animals. We are living souls, formed by God in his own image, and breathed into life by his own spirit, and given the dominion of the earth for our accommodation and immortality for our inheritance. Revelation and consciousness agree in this. Hence, there is a nobility in our nature which aspires to noble actions; a capacity for dominion which even the earth does not limit; and powers of mind, the extent of which no human experience has yet reached, and no Divine revelation has defined. *What* I am then is this living soul, immortal, ex-

pansible, indefinable, unknown to itself, nor to be known till

Pass'd the flaming bounds of place and time;  
The living throne, the sapphire blaze,  
Where Angels tremble while they gaze.

*What* I am is thus answered by the voice of God and by the consciousness of nature.

2. *Where* am I? Where are you? Where are we in this our realm of earth, in this finite time—brief on the eternal records, but long ages in this our mortal life? Where are we? Where are we in place and time? This, you will see, is the most difficult question. *What* I am is philosophically the largest problem; but *where* I am, is historically the most difficult. We can measure outside objects as astronomers have other orbs of the solar system, by assuming some point of departure and establishing relations with it; but how can we measure ourselves? Where is the unit? Where is the beginning; much more, where is the end of history? You will hear of a positive philosophy, but you well *know* when you look abroad upon this earth and its history, that there is nothing positive, nothing absolute.<sup>(a)</sup> All things are relative. The astronomers who measured yon starry orbs, have not to this day been able to establish an

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(a) See the Positive Philosophy of Comte as abridged by Lewes. Finding that Positive Philosophy was not consistent with a God who held a moral government over his creatures, Comte manufactured a God which his followers abandoned and denounced as folly.

absolute unit of measure upon this earth. We are enveloped in our own atmosphere; we look through a glass darkly; we look through the Universe of Being for some absolute unit; and we find it nowhere but in God himself.

*Where* then are we? We must return to the relative. We must assume history as it is, whether we measure it by monuments or by written records. And what do we find? Where is our place in it?

History has been written apparently to record, like a romance, the life, conquests, and adventures of its heroes; but this romance has ceased and real history has begun. Some modern art has discovered in the ancient manuscripts another writing beneath those old characters which it brings out to light, and reveals a new process to curious inquiry. It is thus that we bring out from under the old facts—not the brilliant heroes, the ephemeral insects of a day—but the GROWTH OF MAN, immortal man, assuming gradually but certainly, what God gave him in the dawn of his being—dominion of the earth and the inheritance of glory. History thus shows us a succession of growths; and by these growths establishes our position in the map of Being and of Progress. If we may not establish the exact beginning or end, these growths will determine our relative place. We determine that place as the woodsman determines the age of the oak, by counting the rings of its growth. I have counted by those rings five hundred years in

the body of an oak which had grown and fallen on parapets, whose building no man knew, and with which was associated neither a fact nor even a myth of the imagination. (b) So it is with our history. We may not know what, in the creation of God, preceded history, but we can know what place we occupy in it by counting the growths of man. We can know the order, measure and succession of these growths, and thus know our place in human development. Where is it? Where am I, and where are you? Here the first question is, within what limits shall we measure? We must begin somewhere; we must take some note of what we are to grow from. What is the object of this growth? Why should man grow at all? He is neither a plant nor an animal. If he is made in the image of God, why should not that image remain? What other stamp or form could be put upon him more lovely, more beautiful, or more perfect? History answers that question. History records the education of the human race; and Milton says the object of all education is to restore the lost image of God by restoring men from the ruins of the fall. (c) Without assuming the degradation of man as a theological dogma, it is never-

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(b) At Fort Ancient, on the Little Miami, (Ohio,) large oaks and poplars grow on the parapets of the old fortifications. A very large oak fell down and a party of gentlemen determined to count the rings. They counted five hundred

(c) Milton's Tractate on Education.

theless an historical fact. History everywhere finds him in a degraded condition; but everywhere finds him with capacities which may be educated to the sublimest heights of excellence. It finds him the savage on the Zambezi river, and leaves him the Paul of Christianity and the Newton of Philosophy. It is between these limits, therefore, that we must count our growths in human society.

Here we meet with another difficulty. These growths are all amidst ruins, and heretofore each growth has become a ruin; how can we measure them? How can we evolve order from what seems absolute confusion? Nation after nation appears only to be destroyed. Civilization after civilization comes up, overflows, and disappears, leaving only remnants behind. What science of progress can we evolve from this? What is it but confusion? When I had read of Hebrews on the plains of Chaldea and of their great commonwealth; when I read of Greeks sung by Homer, glorified at Marathon, and immortal in philosophy; of Romans, who built the Eternal City on the seven-hilled Tiber; when in these classic shades I had followed these brave old people to the summit of renown, I passed to that great Western land which we call new, but which is older than any history. There I found the fortifications and tombs of an unremembered people. Here I stood upon crumbling parapets on which grew the oak

of many centuries, amidst the silent forests, where dark shadows seemed to hide the mysterious builders forever from our eyes. Here was a history whose only fact was these earthen parapets and mounds. But does it follow that we cannot place them in the history of human progress? The place in growth of these very unremembered people, is defined by these earthen parapets and mound-tombs. We compare their remains with other people in Asia, and determine almost exactly their place in growth. If we can do this, we can determine still more easily where, in the order of development, is the civilization of Hebrew, Greek, Roman, Anglo-Saxon, or American. An illustrious French orator recently said that nations must perish. Nations have perished, but civilization never. Nor is this all. There must come a time when, by the very laws of progression, nations will not perish, for every progression has a final term,<sup>(d)</sup> and that term will come when? When the rising tide of civilization has reached its flood and that perfect society is attained in which man is restored to the lost image of God. By what right can we say that *any* Christian nation shall not survive to that final term? And much more, by what right can we say that our Christian republic shall not survive the wrecks of the unchristian and unre-

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(d) There may be what is called in Mathematics, an Infinite series; but every regular progression must have a first and a final term.

publican nations? Certainly, if it fulfils the condition<sup>(e)</sup> under which, by the decrees of God, nations can be prospered and men perfected. There can be no reason why this Christian republic should not be the last term in the long progression, by which the human race has advanced through overturnings and overturnings, towards its legitimate inheritance of glory and excellence. Where are we then? Are we still in the period of transition and of ruin? or have we gained a period of permanent growth? or are we approaching the final term of the series? Where are we? While in the case of the forest tree, there is but one succession of growths; in the complex movements of human society there are many. Historically, we often find one series going backwards, while another is going forwards; so that, if we measure only one, we are sure to be erroneous. Let us find our place, if possible, by those measurements, which the world most commonly uses and admits to be just tests of human progress; the tests of *time*, of *science*, and of *institutions*.

We find the Hebrew dating his periods of time from the birth of Abraham, who was a wanderer

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(e) Righteousness is expressly made in the Scriptures the *condition* of national prosperity; and hence the only argument against the theory of the text is that righteousness does not predominate in all nations; but did not Christ fulfil all righteousness; and if so, is not it possible for nations to be saved when they properly adopt Christianity in the same way as professing individuals?

and a pilgrim in a land of strangers. We find the Greek dating from the games of Olympus—when the heroic ages began—and poetry filled the world with the songs of glory, and pictured her gods in the myths of imagination. Then we behold the Roman dating from the Eternal City, and filling the earth with the material ideas of power and plunder, of show and splendor. And, lastly, we find the Christian dating from the year of our Lord, who proclaimed liberty to the captive and eternity to mortals. We no longer go to patriarchs wandering in the wilderness; no longer seek the summits of shadowy Olympus; no longer rest on the foundations of the Eternal City; but we go to the birth of Jesus and date from the period when liberty was given by the charter of Heaven, and immortality beamed from the night of the grave. (*f*)

Thus we see that history records in its very kalends the growth of man by the expansion of ideas. The wanderer in the wilderness, though upheld by the arm of God, still sought his favor by material sacrifices, and narrowed his ambition to his flocks on the plain and a tomb in the land of his fathers. The classic hero is filled with the love of glory and the charm of letters. The con-

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(*f*) Historical dates are all from the foundation of what may be called an original and universal civilization; but we find no new one in nearly two thousand years; hence, as Christianity is gradually going over the earth and its civilization everywhere predominant, what room is there to believe that it can ever be changed, or that it is not the last term?

queror on the Tiber widens his ambition to the domain of the earth, but fills it with slaves and with ruins! But the genius of Christianity conquers the earth to fill it with blessings, enlarges the mind to dwell with angels, and extends its ambition to an eternal world. Is not this the last development? can there be one greater than this? Can there be a happier condition than that of love? Can there be a grander idea than that which embraces eternity?

Let us take another test,—that of Science— which becomes practical in the arts of civilization. We have men who tell us of lost arts; who affect to believe with Solomon, that there is nothing new; and who think that we shall find a newspaper wrapped round a mummy, and a locomotive in the vaults of a pyramid. These people have failed to recognize a fundamental distinction in the elements of civilization—the distinction between the domestic and the social arts. The domestic arts, ministering to the necessities, the comforts, and the luxuries of life, were, in the natural order of events, brought to perfection in the earlier ages of society. We take the forms of our furniture from the palace of the Pharaoh's, the models of our architecture from the temples of Greece, and the greatest of modern Frenchmen cannot hope to have better cooking than graced the suppers of the Roman Apicius. In the domestic arts, we cannot rise above our animal nature.

We minister only to the appetites; we cultivate only the tastes of the body; and however elegant, or refined, or beautiful are the fabrics we make, they are no more than were once enjoyed by the ladies of Persia, or adorned the halls of Belshazzar, or were admired in the revels of the Roman. If we stop at this point, we should prove nothing. We should turn from the faded glories of antiquity as from withered flowers, with the conviction that they might be reproduced, but could never be excelled.

The Social Arts, however, are of a nobler and a higher order. They are founded on ideas, and they advance with ideas. The object of the social arts is to give ubiquity to the human mind and harmony to human society. In their ultimate result, they must accomplish what could not have been conceived of in Egypt or in Greece; and which was only dimly hinted at by the inspired prophets of God. They will accomplish the flowing together of ideas till they are the common property of all mankind. They will accomplish the flowing out and over of peoples till the highest civilization of any nation becomes the civilization of the whole earth. Hence, all the social arts which are so much wondered at in the last ages, tend to that one great result. They first utilize ideas, then diffuse them; then diffuse persons over the whole earth by their *voluntary* action, as God himself dis-

persed them by his power, at the foundation of Babel.

Take the very commonest examples. You know that when Cæsar and Cicero went to school in Greece, all books were in manuscript, and it was the labor of years to copy an author, and the value of a farm to buy a book. You can imagine how few could read them, and how slowly ideas were transmitted! It is not, then, in the light of a mere machine, for our pleasure, or even our education, that the art of printing is to be viewed. It is an art which makes ideas universal; which gives to the commonest boy the thoughts of Plato and of Cicero, and enables him to read books which the richest citizen of Athens could not have afforded.

Take, also, the electro-telegraph. When we hear of an event which occurred, or a plan formed, or a thought put forth in the most distant parts of the globe at the same moment, all ideas and all events become ubiquitous. The world of the ideal becomes the property of each mind, and the soul seems disembodied;(g) for, it realizes at the same moment, the scenes upon the Neva, the Tiber, and the Thames.

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(g) A remarkable illustration took place at the death of Maximilian, which remarkable event was read all over the United States and Europe at the same moment. On the third of July, the Austrian Court was going into mourning, while the newspapers of Paris, London, and New York, were all commenting at the same moment on the event they had just heard of.

While this ubiquity of ideas will soon raise the commonest races and families of men to the highest level of intellectual intelligence, it would not, in itself, cause that overflowing of the peoples which is necessary both to the subduing and the peace of the earth. Hence we have the arts of locomotion; hence we have them carried to such extraordinary results that more people flow over from Europe in a single year than constituted the whole population of some of the renowned cities of ancient and of mediæval ages. And as this vast tide of human life flows to the isles of the sea and the mountains of the West, nations are born in a day; but it is not merely the new birth of nations, but the birth of new ideas. It is the idea of a commercial unity; the idea of a final harmony; the idea of restoration to long barbarous and long oppressed peoples, which is now carried with the emigrant to the distant wilderness, and the solitary mine, to the mountain summits and the lonely isles.

This wonderful power of locomotion comes to us at the exact period when the diffusion of ideas gave supremacy to Christian civilization; so that when the peoples overflow it is no longer the overflow of barbarism, of Pagans, and Mahommedans. No Attila moves by a railroad to the conquest of Europe; no Alexander marches to the Indus; no Turk again conquers Athens, or threatens the walls

of Vienna; no colony is founded now on the bondage of slaves, or the superstitions of Greece, or the wild delusions of the false Prophet.

Thus, we see, that the Social Arts have not only advanced, but advanced beyond the dream of imagination; beyond what the prophets of Judah dare announce in their most vivid pictures of coming glory.

All these arts tend to a single grand result—the restoration of the human mind and the harmony of human society. (*h*)

Again: Let us take the test of INSTITUTIONS. The legal institutions of society, the social and political organisms, are *not*, as some suppose, the creations of human invention. Every attempt made by philosophers to form a political structure, has been a melancholy failure. Institutions are the outgrowth of social life. The islands formed by the coral insect in the ocean, are not more the inevitable result of the laws of insect life, than are the institutions of society the results of the growth, vigor, and advance of human ideas. The basis of all government and of all legal institutions, is the religious idea. (*i*) Hence, when religions change,

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(*h*) All readers of the Bible are struck with the fulfilment of the brief but exact description of the latter times given by Daniel, Chapter 12, v. 4; 2d Thessalonians, Chapt. 2, verses 9, 10, 11.

(*i*) The text was too brief to discuss this idea, but I believe it will be found universally true.

governments change, and all legal institutions conform to the elementary idea. Hence, we find Paganism filling the world with darkened despotisms, Mahommedanism cherishing servitude and sensuality; Hindooism legalizing its castes, and Christianity alone seeking the freedom and brotherhood of men.

Let us take some illustrations. For three thousand years no republic appeared upon earth. The Commonwealth of Israel was a Divine institution, yet so dark was the human mind and so heavy the pressure of human depravity, that it was compelled to give way to a monarchy terminating in the ruin of the State. For three thousands of years all of ancient glory was like the twinkling starlight of night, brilliant in itself, but only brilliant by contrast with the darkness of the firmament. We may imagine ourselves sitting with Belshazzar, surrounded with all the splendor of the sensual arts; or, with Pharaoh in the Heliopolis of the Nile, filled with the learning of the Egyptians; or, in some select circle of Persian ladies, adorned with the silks and fine linen of Tyre; but we cannot by any effort of the mind imagine ourselves to have had one particle of freedom; one right which did not perish in the glance of power; or one political idea beyond that of servitude. When Pharaoh took Joseph from prison and put upon his finger a ring which gave him power over the realm of Egypt, he aptly illustrated the whole idea of an-

cient government. The glory of power blazed from the throne, while the darkness of servitude obscured the people. The voices which come down to us from antiquity are not the voices of rejoicing, but the voices of unutterable woe coming up from an uncounted multitude of imprisoned souls. What we see in the flashes of genius, are but the sharp lightnings edging the blackness of darkness. What we hear are not the sounds of harmonious intelligences, but rather by contrast, the solemn silence of the ages upon all that concerns the growth and happiness of man.

Coming down from the dark civilization of the Nile and the Euphrates, we behold the more brilliant era of the Greek Development. Here, also, we find legal institutions conformed to religious ideas. The gods of Mount Olympus were the symbols of the intellectual faculties developed in the actions and the affections of men. Their gods of human faculties mingled in all the actions and the vicissitudes of man. We find them in the poetry of Homer leading in war, in love, in the council and the temple. Preserving much of that veneration for age which characterized the patriarchal state, they added to it the grace and brilliancy of cultivated intellect, and thus gave a certain element of freedom to Greek society. Hence the Greek republics. But *what* was that element of freedom? It was the freedom of the intellectual few, with no thought that the multitude had any

rights, or the power of conquest any limits. Thus we find Athens, the finest example of the Greek republics, with twenty thousand citizens and four hundred thousand slaves. Again we find Rome, which was a reproduction of Greece on a larger scale, in the height of its power, with sixty millions in bondage.

Electing consuls and tribunes with all the formalities of a republic, she pursued the career of vindictive and remorseless tyranny, till drunk with the blood of nations, she perished amidst the groans and anguish of an enslaved and impoverished world!

Such were the republics of the classic ages, around which scholarship has thrown the imperishable charms of literature and philosophy—but which, in the politics of history, are only remarkable as exhibiting the first small germs of republican government.

It was in the midst of these classic scenes when the gods of Olympus seemed to glorify the human intellect; when Rome reached the zenith of her dark oppressions; and when in a distant quarter of the earth Hindooism separated society into immutable castes, that Christ announced a new principle in the politics of the world. I say politics, for observe, that all politics are the outgrowth of society, and that a new principle in the social, is of necessity, a new principle in the political system. When Christ announced the BROTHERHOOD OF

MEN by virtue of a common origin and common duties, he announced a principle, which in the developments of time, must take all men from the condition of political inferiority and found all governments on the equality of human rights. (*k*) No other results are consistent with the principle. Henceforth we found our institutions as we date our kalends, from the year of our Lord. But was it so in fact? Did it look like a political revolution when Christ said—"render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's?" The dark despotisms of antiquity had indeed passed away; the intellectual freedom of Greece had come—but never had servitude so pervaded universal society. Never had so many captive millions followed the chariots of conquerors; and never had art and wealth so graced and so strengthened the fabric of political power. No wonder then that Christ likened his kingdom to a grain of mustard seed, or compared its working to that of leaven. No wonder that ages of

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(*k*) It is a curious fact that the defence of abuses, such as slavery, monarchy, legal aristocracy, and limited suffrage, made by conservative Christians, should rest altogether on the fact that Christ *recognized* them when He was on earth and did not denounce them! It might as well be said he did not denounce Pharisee and Sadducee, the Greek philosophy, or the Roman government, the Gladiatorial shows, and a hundred Pagan customs; but, that Christ knew his doctrine was opposed to all false systems in politics as well as religion, and, as a consequence, would produce an overturning, and antagonism, and war in the world, we need only to refer to 12th Luke, 49-53 verses, which has been literally fulfilled in the history of Christianity.

time must pass away before the seed became a mighty tree, or the leaven fermented all human society. In the inevitable order of events, the moral revolution must precede the political, and both must proceed from a small district, and a few individuals, till they pervaded all nations and countries.

But as the revolution of ideas proceeded, it did not work as the imagination of the early disciples had conceived. No sudden overthrow of ancient wrong took place; no omnipotent intervention came to their aid; the seed had to grow and the leaven to work, and society began to be renewed, and institutions gradually reformed, by the invifible but irrefistible force of new opinions. Amidst the wrecks of the Roman Empire the first great legal institution which arose was the feudal tenure.

Feudalism was not slavery or serfdom, but was founded on the nobler relation of the soldier to his chief. The retainer followed the noble on the simple ground of military service. By the tenure of rendering military service he held his land. Europe became a vast camp—but a camp in which there was the reward of noble honor for noble service. It was graced by knightly courtesy; it yearned for the Holy Land; it acknowledged the authority of the Church; it marched under the banners of God; and it breathed the fervor of the saint and endured the fires of the martyr. Well may they be called the ages of faith, when embat-

tled Christendom united under the consecrated cross of Christ in turning back the hofts of the false Prophet. Were not the ages of faith typical of the ages to come? Is there no time in the possible future when united Christendom shall march to its last battle under that consecrated cross? While feudalism was growing up and converting Europe into a camp, another institution began in the forests of Germany, which was the germ of those great deliberative assemblies which form the legislatures of our time. This was the Saxon Wittenagemot, or Congress of wise men. Originating among the Northmen, it was adapted by feudalism to its own purpose, and hence arose the parliaments of Paris and the parliaments of England. But the essential features of feudalism was a military aristocracy, and hence the parliaments have ever been the assemblies of the nobles and not of the people. The boasted rights of Magna Charta were wrested from the monarchs by the Barons for themselves, and not for the people.<sup>(1)</sup> Other ages came and other institutions were founded before the people came up to claim, as the children of God, an equal share in their own great inheritance. Thus we see, that dating from the era of

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(1) It would be well for those who would understand the true state of things when *Magna Charta* was granted, to *read* that document, and then read the best English historians, that they may know *who* were comprehended within the privileges of Magna Charta. Probably not one in a hundred was then entitled to the boasted rights of that instrument.

Christianity, power had passed from the tyrant to the monarch, and from the monarch to the noble. The slave had become a retainer, the retainer a freeman; and the freeman is looking round to claim peacefully, if he can, forcibly if he must, his glorious patrimony, lost by sin and withheld by fraud.

We have now applied to the growth of man the tests of Time, of Civilization, and of Institutions. We find that mankind has grown, by successive developments, in every department of human life.

We ask again, *where* are we? *Where are we* in that grand orbit of human development in which we seem to have moved; imperfect as yon fractured planet, like that fractured orb, to gain our places in the celestial sphere? Where are we? Measured by the tests we have applied, we are in the era of Christianity, in the ubiquity of Civilization, and in the freedom of Institutions. We are in the last act of the drama of human progression. But where are we *in* that act? This act may have many scenes. Some are evidently past, and some are as evidently to come. Where are we? It was not possible that Europe should be the scene of the last revolution. In the historical order of events, civilization ever journeyed to the West, and this entire continent yet remained to be occupied. Besides, how could Europe regenerate itself any more than Egypt or Assyria? What were the political

and religious aspects of Europe when America began to be peopled? Her institutions were really the mere *debris* from the wrecks of Greece and Rome. She spoke Latin in her universities, studied the heroes of Homer, adopted the code of Justinian in her civil law, took the saints in her calendar from Rome and Constantinople, and overshadowed the Church with the splendid hierarchies of the State. Such was Europe in the sixteenth century, where Goth and Hun had succeeded in overturning the oppressions of the Roman empire, but where the gods of Olympus, like the harpies in Virgil, still descended to mingle their sensualities with the feasts of Christians. It was plain that the revolution must be transferred in its final action, to another and a fresher scene. For what other purpose was this continent reserved? Why was it not peopled by Greeks and Romans? Why was the Mongol, who had passed the Pacific in his boats, left here a mere tenant at will? Why did he leave yon parapet on which the oak of centuries grows amidst the solitudes of nature? Why not, as Greek and Roman had done, multiply the arts of civilization and remain in his fortified camps and cities? Was not all this an evident preparation for future action? Was not the last continent reserved for the last scenes? What has taken place here? When we write our history and glorify our institutions, we talk of what is, rather than that from which we have escaped. We can never understand

the philosophy of history in this way. To know what our country is, we must know what Europe was. When the apostles preached to the Jews, they recited that glorious Providence by which they had been led amidst the waters of the Red Sea, through the wilderness, and through the camps of enemies, up to Mount Zion. We must know what we have escaped. To establish the American republic, it was necessary to do what for two hundred years Europe has not been able to do. It was necessary to destroy feudalism, which is the government of the few over the many, and establish a government of the whole people, in which no privileged class should exist. It was necessary to make the government of the people so elastic as to be capable of indefinite expansion; and to do this without rupturing its whole social system, it was necessary to transfer people to some new continent where old institutions did not exist.

The migrations of men have, by an eternal law of God, been the necessity of civilization. Each migration had its problem, and each new theatre of existence its new development. What was the problem of America? It was to take whatever was excellent or useful in the institutions or civilization of mankind, and planting them in the last garden of the world, produce the last and noblest fruits of humanity. Was this possible? Let us see. The colonies took the form of their confede-

racy from Greece; (*m*) their Congress from the English Parliament; the trial by jury from Magna Charta; the separation of Church from State from the Puritans; and the idea of representation from the colonial courts, which were an assembly of the Freemen, but which increasing in number, were compelled to adopt the plan of delegated authority. This is the principle of representation, which was first adopted by the towns, then by the colonies, and then by the united colonies in Congress. This is the only great political invention since the days of the Greek republics. It was representation which made the American Republic possible. Representation is capable of indefinite expansion. Hence it is possible to bring the entire American continent under one government, and bring all its machinery into harmonious and just action, with more ease than to govern the small confederacy of Greece. When the conservative mind fears and trembles for the future of our Republic on account of its magnitude, its expansion, or power, it forgets that it is not only government which moves, but it is mind which grows. It is art which adapts means

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(*m*) It was really a natural result that small provinces exposed to dangers, should unite for a common defence. The first *confederacy* was that of four New England Colonies in 1643. In 1754, a Congress assembled to form a confederacy. In 1765, a Congress of nine States assembled. In 1774, an association of twelve States was formed. In May, 1775, the first Congress of the thirteen States assembled. In 1777, the Articles of Confederation were formed; and in 1788, the Constitution adopted.

to ends ; it is genius which invents new machinery. It is the nation moving on with irresistible force. It is God converging all elements to the same great purpose of human restoration. MOTION is the great conservative force of the universe. It forms nebulous worlds in the firmament on high ; and gives birth to new nations on earth. It is the vitality of the immortal mind ; not to move is paralysis ; not to grow is idiocy ; not to aspire is brutal. Hence, a new nation planted on a new continent, must expand, nor is that expansion limited by any law of nature, or any decree of God. In the possibilities of the future, therefore, is an indefinite expansion of the American Government. Towards the expansion of Representative Government, all the social arts and movements are constantly tending. Representation would not be possible on the American continent were it not for the new arts of locomotion. Hence, when the number of States began to increase, steam began to bring them nearer together ; and the farther off the States were removed the nearer they became in fact ; till now, when the shores of the Pacific begin to be peopled, California will soon be, by railroad, nearer to the seat of government than was New England when the Government was founded. The stars of our political firmament come nearer as they thicken, and their gravitation strengthens as they multiply.

But our Government was not founded merely

on the idea of a representative Democracy. It was founded on the nobler idea—that men being the children of God, were, therefore, EQUAL BEFORE THE NATURAL AND THE DIVINE LAW.

In the foundation of American Institutions, no inequality of races was recognized, no castes existed, no military tenures were established, no hierarchy was forced upon an unwilling people; and hence when the Constitution was formed, it was no solemn mockery to say, that it was the ordination of the people to insure justice and promote the blessings of liberty. If then any form of servitude afterwards rose to importance; if it became a basis of government; if it asserted rights in property which belonged only to persons; if it affirmed the inferiority of any portion of the human race, it was just so far in opposition to the original ideas of the American republic. The idea of servitude and the idea of this republic could not co-exist together—one or the other must perish.

In vain did Ethnologists attempt to establish the inferiority of a race; in vain did the pulpit summon the dogmas of a perverted theology to affirm the divine right of masters; in vain did statesmen appeal to the equally perverted doctrines of constitutional law; in vain did Mammon summon his servants from the vaults of hell; in vain did Moloch

“——— *The strongest and the fiercest spirit,  
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair,*”

flame in the front of battle! Even he who thought

“ ——— With the Eternal to be deemed  
Equal in strength, and rather than be less  
Cared not to be at all;”

failed in our great battle for the rights of man and the rights of God, who formed man in his own image.<sup>(n)</sup> The battle field of America was the battle field of humanity. It was the last great battle which can be fought to redeem man from the idea of personal or political servitude. The Apostles represented all creation as groaning together

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(n) The history of the defence of slavery in the United States, is one of the most extraordinary chapters in the history of the human mind. Montesquieu, in his *Spirit of Laws*, had shown that slavery was founded on no right; but, when slave property became so immense in value—in an age when it was abhorrent to the natural sense of right—it was absolutely necessary to find a defence which would in some way satisfy the minds of slaveholders. Henry Clay said in the Senate (1836), that slave property amounted to fifteen hundred millions of dollars. In 1860, it was worth double that. It was necessary to defend it. The most natural defence was to pronounce the negro, either not a human being, or a human being of very inferior capacity. Hence, Nott and other Ethnologists, went to work to prove that his hair, skin and color, made him an inferior being. But this would not do unless it could be shown that we had a right to enslave these inferior beings. So Thornwell, Palmer, and a host of learned Divines, set themselves to prove, by Hebrew institutions and Roman customs, that slavery was right, and hence the entire Church of the South became impregnated with the depravities of theology, corrupted to defend wrong. But even this would not do unless the Government could be made to conform to this religious idea of slavery. Hence, the States Rights doctrine, the only real object of which was the defence of slavery. The history of this process of the slaveholding mind, is precisely that of a criminal who culminates his career of depravity in death.

in the bondage of sin, and so the nations groaned together in servitude, and never till this day could it be certainly affirmed that freedom was to be the law of the human race. If, in the only real republic on earth, it could be established that ignorance, or weakness, or color, or sex, was sufficient cause for Slavery, there was not a family of man which might not be enslaved. What Saxon, or Celt, could say, that his posterity would not come under the condition which made servitude right? What Mongol could hope ever to be free? The Gospel may be preached to the spirits in prison; but with what power could the Gospel of Righteousness be preached to those who felt that all human government was a cruel and purposed oppression? If human servitude could have been perpetuated on this continent, then farewell to the hopes of nations, to the dreams of poets, to the visions of prophets, and to the Christian idea of a regenerated world! But it was not so. The decrees of God cannot be turned back. An arch-angel's arm could not save Slavery from the grave; nor can the whole host of fallen angels obstruct the steady and now rapid progress of humanity towards its final restoration.

If we seek to imagine, what, in the Divine scheme of human development, was the part of the American Republic, we may possibly find it in the analogies of history. If the Hebrews passed through the parted waters of the Red Sea;

if Christianity had its ages of martyrdom, so has the American Republic had its awful conflict for human rights. If the Hebrew passed through the Red Sea to Mount Zion—if the Christian passed from martyrdom to glory, the American may yet pass from his field of battle and of trial to the Canaan of the nations and the Zion of regenerated man.

And now we again ask, *where* are we? By the tests of Time, of Civilization, and of Institutions, we find ourselves in the last act of the historical drama. Are we not near the last scenes? History considered as the record of human development, must terminate in the last term of the progression. Man, in a renewed state, may continue to inhabit a blooming earth—but history is merged in completion. Somewhere towards the completion of the historical period—and yet long ages may lie before the human race on earth. But if the historical period be tending to its close, we ask *whither are we going?* whither is this nation going? whither is the family of nations going? What is to be the ultimate of all these revolutions upon earth? this overturning and overturning of civilization, institutions and governments—what do they mean? whither do they go? As the ultimate results of the coming of Christ were announced by the Hebrew prophets, so the ultimate elements of society in the moral constitution of man, were delineated by the hand of Christ himself.

This world in all its growth, experience and development, is simply a school of education; and the object of that education is the restoration of man from the ruins of his original nature. To suppose that he has neither means nor capacity to accomplish that object, is to suppose that, in a universe of order and harmony, God will permit this earth to be the perpetual abode of disorder and destruction. Such a theory is not consistent with the history of human growth—with the actual condition of man in society—with the doctrines of Christianity; or, with the law of development continually demonstrated in Providence. On the contrary, the eternal decree of God, written in the human heart, and announced by Revelation, is HOPE IN THE FUTURE, by effort; FAITH, that the God who created order will restore it. This was the one great idea which upheld the old patriarchs in their pilgrimage—which animated even the Greek philosophers in their poetic fervor—which filled with glorious thoughts the Prophets of Judea—which was proclaimed by Christ on earth, and preached by the Apostles to a wondering world. Opposed to the reality of this idea, as an actual and practical experience, *is* not merely the fact of human imperfection, but a theory of social action, which, in the light of Christianity, must be deemed *false philosophy*. It is practically assumed, that while all the laws of the physical world are perfect and constantly tend to harmony—the laws of moral and

intellectual life are incapable of perfection or harmony!—that while every plant on earth, and even the heavenly bodies, have a recuperative force; and that while a planet may be fractured, and yet each piece return to its orbit; and that, even if a star wandered off, gravitation would bring it back, yet, this immortal soul has no recuperative force—no vital principle which recalls it to the world of order and of harmony! This philosophy, if true, is only conservative of perpetual ruin. I am not saying that the original impulse to growth does not come from God, but I am affirming that the moral and intellectual laws of life are as perfect and as constant to order and harmony as those of the physical universe. It is precisely because this is the fact, that society has been capable of those successive growths of civilization and institutions I have briefly traced. It is because the laws of the soul, like the laws of the planets, *do* tend to perfection and harmony, that we behold all the laws of Christian civilization gradually converging in this latter day to unity and order.

Another idea of false philosophy is, that political and religious institutions have a different origin, and, therefore, may co-exist on different principles. Religion is assumed correctly to be of divine origin; but governments are assumed to be of human invention. We may readily admit this in regard to form and details, but are the elements of government a human invention? The three essential

elements of government—the Legislative, Executive and Judicial functions, exist in every well-ordered family. When they come to be applied to a great nation, there must be many laws and institutions of various forms, by which the original elements are made operative, but the principles are the same. They were planted in man, by the act of his creation, as much as the faculties of his mind, however diversified by the progress of time and growth. The formulas of the mathematician, by which he has been able to solve the problems of the material heavens, are inventions, but they are inventions founded upon the actual facts of Nature. Man is neither the inventor of mathematics nor of government, but he has sought out many inventions by which their principles are to be applied. In doing this he is as much an experimenter as the chemist in the laboratory. For thousands of years he has gone on experimenting in the forms of government as in the formulas of mathematics. In all that long series of experiments, the most important political discovery in the administration of government is that the union of the three great functions of Government in one person is despotism, and their separation and definition is freedom. Now, if man, for so many thousands of years, so signally failed in founding government upon the natural laws of God, how much greater will be the failure if he attempts to apply the principles of government in opposition to the laws of Christianity?

All governments are founded upon the elementary religious ideas of the people. The institutions of the United States cannot be put in Africa while Africa remains Pagan, nor can they be sustained in this country if it ceases to be Christian. The revolutions of eighteen hundred years in Europe have been the struggles of governments against the religious idea. Christianity was advancing—not merely against Paganism—not merely against the delusions of the false Prophet—not merely against modern skepticism, but against the political institutions founded upon the false religions of antiquity. It was struggling against principalities and powers—against Pharisee and Patrician. Hence it is, that these revolutions must go on, till governments conform to the primary ideas of Christianity—not the idea of any particular theology, or any ecclesiastical law, but to the supreme political principles of the Christian system. The politics of Christianity are simple and eternal. All men are, as affirmed by Paul to the Athenians, the offspring of God, and, therefore, as declared by Christ, bound to equal duties and equal rights. If this principle is to prevail upon earth, no political institutions can stand in opposition to it. Europe and Asia may patch up old governments and make partial reforms, but the final result will be a radical revolution in the politics of mankind. *Whither*, then, do we tend this day? we tend to the prevalence of Christian ideas in religion—in civilization—in political institutions,

and in social growth. What are those ideas?—  
**LIGHT, UNITY, HARMONY AND RESTORATION.**  
 Hence, we see the ubiquity of intelligence by  
 modern inventions—the convergence of thought  
 upon the great problems of humanity—the almost  
 unity of ideas as to how those problems should be  
 solved—the conviction that universal freedom is the  
 right of man—the increasing harmony of interna-  
 tional relations—the increasing migrations of men  
 to fill up the vacant spaces of the earth—the breaking  
 of all the old barriers of commerce—the planting  
 of civilization in Central Africa—the restoration of  
 sight, as Christ healed the blind man, to the races,  
 which for thousands of years have been overshadowed  
 in darkness; and the flowing back upon the Isles of  
 Greece, and over the walls of Byzantium, of Heli-  
 opolis, and Jerusalem, of that light, which in the  
 dawn of our human morning, flowed forth from  
 them.

We may imagine the planets when they began  
 their course, to have gradually gathered light from  
 the sun, to have increased their velocity as they  
 proceeded, to have been drawn back from wander-  
 ing by the central force: till when their circuits  
 were completed, they henceforth beamed in full  
 orbed glory, and moved harmoniously together,  
 making the melody of that music, which, in the  
 creation, was heard rejoicing through the heavens.  
 So have we seen the circuit of ideas, traveling  
 round the earth, gradually strengthening in force,

enlarging their horizon, increasing their velocity, and tending, as we believe, to the completion of that circuit, in the unity of systems, in the harmony of relations, the fulness of light, and the restoration of man to his lost estate. Who shall say this is a vision of fancy? Who shall say that it does not accord with the facts of history and the principles of philosophy?

If this view be correct, never did youth come into the world at a more auspicious period! Never did the world offer a more splendid theatre for those who aspire to benefit mankind, or elevate their country, or take part in the last drama of human achievement! If, in half a century, I have seen events, discoveries and inventions, which amaze the human mind, what may *they* not expect, who, in the morning of life, stand upon this high vantage ground? To such I would say:

Child of God! Brother of Christ! walk worthy of your high calling! Born in the happiest period of the world—gifted with the noblest faculties—bred at this seat of Christian learning, a citizen of the great republic, placed amidst those vast social movements which are overturning nations and regenerating the earth, it is yours to take part in the last great battle for the restoration of man. So swift is the velocity of events, that before another generation has passed by, this American Republic must have filled the earth with Christian liberty, or returning darkness must have covered it with

clouds and shadows forever. We might as well expect to stop the stars in their courses as to stop the force of ideas, which continually tend to Unity, Freedom and Harmony. Those ideas must go on to salvation or destruction. It is yours to direct their course to that glorious end, predicted by prophets, anticipated by philosophy, and shown to be possible by the historical progress of mankind.

Take to yourself that high moral courage which dares to *think*, and which, while it reverences all natural and all legal authority, is the slave of no dogma—the serf of no opinion—the blind retainer of no human hero, and the respecter of no institutions which put differences among men, where God made none. The weak, the imbecile and the ignorant, can afford to follow, but you cannot, for you are trained to command. You must stand in the fore-front of the great moral battle of the world, there to live, or there to die, for the rights of God, and the rights of man.

Take to yourself that high faith, without which nothing noble or great was ever done. Faith in something is the great element of all noble souls. It is said that a man who has once truly loved must have something good in him. So with the spirit that has faith in noble things; it is noble itself; it has a deathless vitality; it is hid in the glory of the future; it trusts in God; it trusts in Christ; it trusts in its country; it trusts in itself; it hopes for

the victory of its nation ; is satisfied with the favor of God, and looks to heaven—not for the vermilion hues of a Mohammedan paradise, but for the happier state of an immortal love.

Take to yourself an infinite hope! a hope in what the Infinite can do—a hope which time cannot destroy—which sorrow cannot quench—which adversity cannot intimidate, and vicissitude cannot change. You will find the world full of the faithless and the hopeless. But be thou like the seraph Abdiel—

*Among the faithless—faithful found,*

*Among innumerable false—unmoved,*

*Unbroken, unreduced, unterrified.*

The world has been put back thousands of years for want of faith. It has been put back almost as much for want of hope. And how *could* they hope upon whom the darkness of ancient ages rested? And how can you *fail* to hope, who have come to the ages of light? How can an American fail to hope, who has seen the brightest visions of man, realized in his own nation—who has passed through the last great conflict of battles, and seen every danger, and threat, and fear, which darkened the horizon of his country, pass away, till that country is rising in its full robed splendor to its meridian glory?

Stand, then, on your vantage ground, as an American and a Christian! Meet the coming

generations with new victories! Point them from darkness to glory—from the Old Zion to the New Jerusalem—from the fall of man to his restoration—from these vales of mortality to the green vales of Eden, where the river of life flows on forever!