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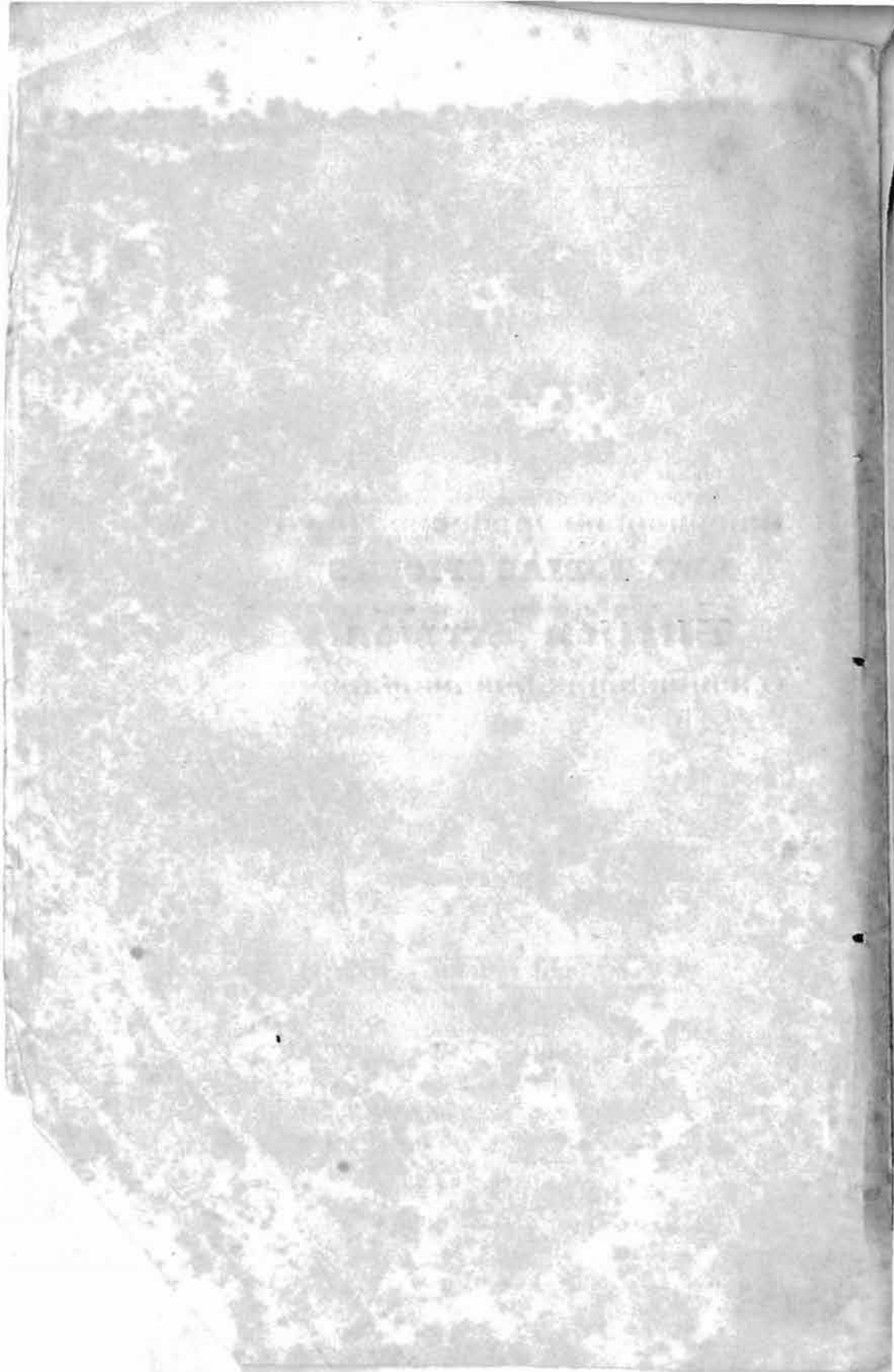
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**REV. TOBIAS SPICER'S**

**Election Sermon.**

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*Religion the only source of National Prosperity.*

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A

**SERMON,**

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

**HONORABLE LEGISLATURE**

OF THE

**STATE OF VERMONT.**

MET AT

**MONTPELIER,**

**OCTOBER 10, 1833.**

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**BY REV. TOBIAS SPICER, A. M.**

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**MONTPELIER.**

PRINTED BY GEO. W. HILL.

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**1833.**

*Resolved*, That a Committee of three Members be appointed to wait on the Rev. Tobias Spicer, and return him the thanks of the Legislature, for his Election Sermon, and request a copy of the same for the press.

IN GENERAL ASSEMBLY, OCTOBER 11, 1833.

*Read and Passed.*

R. PIERPONT, *Clerk.*

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## SERMON.

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Acts, XII. 23.

AND IMMEDIATELY THE ANGEL OF THE LORD SMOTE HIM, BECAUSE HE GAVE NOT GOD THE GLORY; AND HE WAS EATEN OF WORMS AND GAVE UP THE GHOST.

THE portion of holy scripture selected as the foundation for some remarks on this interesting occasion, refers us to a period in the history of the Jews, when they were tributary to the Romans, and when a king whose name was Herod, reigned over them. The sceptre had departed from Judah, for their long promised Messiah had come; he had fulfilled the numerous prophecies respecting the time, the place, and other circumstances which were to attend his advent.—The purity of his life, the excellency of his doctrine, and the many miracles which he had wrought, had abundantly established his claims. But the Jews had nevertheless, rejected him, and by their wicked hands had crucified and slain him. Though he was crucified and buried by them, he arose from the dead, for their Messiah was the son of God, and God was determined to set his king upon his holy hill, to be

H. G. Rugg, Bequest 1957

a Prince and a Savior, and the future Judge of the human race.

He had risen from the dead and had appointed his disciples to be his ministers, and had directed them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. These holy men had commenced their benevolent work, and were laboring indefatigably to spread the knowledge of salvation through the redemption that is in Christ. In the midst of efforts well calculated to promote the glory of God, the present and eternal welfare of man, this "Herod stretched forth his hands" to vex them. Some he had imprisoned and some he had already put to death, and was proceeding in this wicked work, when arrested by the providence of God and made a monument of his fearful displeasure, and a solemn warning to all future generations. He was proceeding to fill up the measure of his iniquity; for after having cruelly treated the servants of Christ, he sat on his throne arrayed in royal apparel, and made an oration to the multitude. The people who heard him gave a shout, saying "it is the voice of a god and not a man." With this adulation and idolatrous applause, Herod appears to have been highly pleased, and probably congratulated himself on account of the mighty honor which the people had conferred on him.

But this conduct of Herod and the people, was highly offensive to him who is king of kings, and who alone is worthy to be adored. He is "God" and beside him there is none other, eith-

er in earth or heaven. Immediately by divine commission, an angel who probably had seen his wicked course, and the excessive pride of his heart, smote him with a loathsome disease, while yet the robes of royalty were on him. So that he who ascended his throne in the morning in gaudy attire, amid the shouts of an admiring multitude; retired ere the sun went down with the arrows of the Almighty sticking fast within him;—Because he gave not God the Glory;—And he was eaten of worms and gave up the ghost.

From the circumstance here detailed, I shall endeavor to bring to your view, several very important lessons of instruction, to which I entreat your most serious attention.

I. As the great crime laid to the charge of this wicked king, consisted in not giving God the glory; we will first inquire what is implied in giving glory to God.

1. I conceive in the first place it implies an acknowledgement of his existence.

In acknowledging the existence of God, we do but according to the dictates of reason.—The plainest dictates of reason lead us to conclude that every effect must have an adequate cause. Creation and providence declare an almighty cause, and this cause must of necessity be self-existent, and infinitely wise and good.—This is the being whom we call God. And the apostle says, “whoso cometh to him must believe that he is;—that is, must believe that he exists. Without this belief, there is no such



thing as giving him the glory in any sense whatever. And we must not only admit his existence, but we must also ascribe unto him those perfections which belong to him. We must not imagine that he is a being like unto ourselves, or that he is like unto any thing which is the work of men's hands. Neither the Atheist nor the Idolator give God the glory.

2. In giving glory to God, it is implied that we acknowledge his providence.

It is not sufficient that we admit his existence, and form even the most exalted notions of his perfections, if we at the same time consider him only as an idle spectator of the affairs of men. But we must also give him the glory of *governing* the world which he has made. We must acknowledge that by him kings reign, and princes decree justice. And that his kingdom is an *universal* kingdom, extending to all parts of creation, both matter and mind. His government extends to every thing in the universe, whether it constitutes the sublimities of the heavens, or the varieties of the earth. Every thing whether it rests or whether it rolls; from the unorganized particle of earth, through all the gradations of being, up to the brightest archangel in the world of light. Yes, we must acknowledge that God governs all things, and governs them by laws suited to their various natures respectively.

And we must give unto him the glory of having established not only an universal kingdom, but also a kingdom that shall be *everlasting*.—The dominion of the Lord of hosts, shall remain

forever, and unto his government there shall be no end. He shall reign in despite of all his enemies. The heathen may rage and the people may imagine a vain thing, but he that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh, he shall have them all in derision; for neither treachery nor violence, can dethrone him. He shall make even the wrath of man to praise him. He shall reign in despite of time. The all devouring hand of time, which prostrates princes in the dust, and demolishes mighty empires, will never dethrone the almighty, nor waste his everlasting empire. He shall reign when all his enemies are beneath his feet. Unto his dominion there shall be no end, for he shall reign forever and forever.

3. In giving God the glory is implied an acknowledgment that he is the author of our existence, and "the giver of every good and perfect gift."

Every man should feel that it is "in God we live and move and have our being," and that we are dependant on him for our food and raiment, and every blessing we enjoy. The cattle on a thousand hills are his. Yea, the earth and the fulness thereof belong to him. To him, therefore, should be rendered honor and praise, thanksgiving and "glory," by all the inhabitants of earth, and by all the inhabitants of heaven.

It may have been a part of the sin of Herod, that he arrogated to himself in his oration, that which the people through vain flattery, were so willing to attribute to him, viz: that their "country was nourished" *by his "clemency."* In this

then he ascribed to himself, that which belonged exclusively to God.

4. And finally, to "give God the glory" which is due unto him, implies that we acknowledge him as our rightful sovereign, our infinitely wise lawgiver, and our righteous Judge. And this should be acknowledged not merely in theory, but it should be carried out in our practice. If he is our Father, where is our reverence? If he is our Lawgiver, where is our obedience? Alas for us, we have all sinned, we have trampled his laws beneath our feet. We have incurred his most righteous displeasure. If so, where is our penitence, our sorrow for sin? Where our reformation, our earnest entreaties for pardon through the blood of the atonement?

Whoso denies the existence of the Supreme Being, or does not acknowledge his jurisdiction in the government of the world, or disregards his laws; does not give God the glory. One or the other, or perhaps all these, constituted the crime of Herod, which rendered him so displeasing in the sight of God, and exposed him to his just judgments, by which he died a most miserable death.

II. We may observe *secondly* from the circumstance mentioned in our text, that if we refuse to give "God the glory," neither prudence nor wealth, nor power, can secure our happiness.

It was said by an ancient and inspired prophet of Israel, "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, and let not the rich man glory in his rich-

es."—From this exhortation of the prophet, we may learn that our happiness does not consist in, nor is it secured by the wisdom of our counsellors, nor the strength of our armies, nor the abundance of our resources.

We grant; nay, we contend, that enlightened statesmen who are wise and prudent, are great national blessings. But men will need to be more than mere politicians, to come up to this dignified character, and to be qualified to discharge all their duty. It may be presumed, that in many respects, Herod was an enlightened statesman. He seemed aware, as every statesman should be, that he was placed in that high station which he occupied for the benefit of the people. This appears from the third verse of this chapter. Here we are informed that he pursued a certain course, "because he saw that it pleased the Jews." But his desire to please the people was not founded in correct principle, and therefore it led him to acts of injustice and cruelty; for he took the life of the innocent to satisfy popular clamor. He killed James, the brother of John with the sword. Thus we see that a spirit of persecution may exist under a pretence of zeal for public good. And we see also the necessity there is, that rulers should be men of virtue and integrity. Men who have other qualities beside knowledge of human jurisprudence, and zeal for their own party. The fear of the Lord, which is said to be the beginning of wisdom, and a respect for virtue, nay, I may say the practice of virtue, enter into the

character of a truly enlightened statesman. And we repeat it, a truly enlightened statesman is a national blessing.

It is also readily acknowledged, that wealth may furnish a nation as well as individuals, with abundant resources of comfort and convenience. And also, that powerful armies may by the blessing of heaven, repel invading foes. But what can might or riches do, when the Lord of Hosts is offended? "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." Of what avail was Herod's *power*, although a mighty monarch, and under the protection of the Emperor of Rome? What though he had a numerous train of servants, and powerful armies well skilled in war, at his command? There was an angel more mighty than he, who smote him with an invisible hand; with a wound for which there was no cure. And of what avail were all his *riches* and costly robes of royalty, or glittering diadems? His body although encircled around with garments embroidered with gold, became eaten with worms, and he gave up the ghost. He lingered awhile and died, his wisdom, and might, and riches, notwithstanding, for the hand of the Lord was against him. He had pleased the people, and thereby secured popular applause; but he had displeased the mighty God. Wicked rulers not only expose themselves to the displeasure of Heaven, but they expose the people over whom they rule. They are a national curse, for when they bear rule the people generally mourn.

What befel Herod literally, will in a sense be-

fal every man and every nation, who lift themselves up against the Almighty. For who hath rebelled against the Lord and prospered?—Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. Who hath not read that the Lord bringeth the wisdom of the wise to nought, and that he overthrew the counsel of the far famed Ahithophel? Who has not heard of the destruction of Pharaoh and his army, when the Lord overthrew the horse and his rider in the deep? We have not forgotten these fearful scenes, of which the sacred writers make mention. Nor have we forgotten Senecharib, and his mighty hosts, nor Xerxes the great, nor the Spanish Armada, nor the catastrophe of Waterloo. We remember when thousands, yea, millions went out to battle against numbers far inferior, but we beheld, and lo, few very few returned. And we also remember the solemn caution in God's word, "Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast,"—for the Lord raiseth up one and pulleth down another.

And as it respects *wealth*, we have seen in our own day, in the history of Spain, that it is insufficient to secure the happiness of a nation.—While her coffers were filling with the precious metals from her South American mines, she has been sinking in the lap of voluptuousness and sensuality, and her sons have been declining in their physical and moral energies. An angel of God, it would seem, had smitten her, and the worms have commenced their fearful depredations. What is she with all her mines of gold,

and sumptuous fare, compared with our beloved republic? And what are her sons in point of physical and moral worth, compared with the citizens of our enlightened, and I may say, virtuous New England; or even with the dwellers among the evergreen mountains of our beloved State?

Why has not South America long since firmly established her independence, and permanently settled her government? Why with her abundant resources, has she accomplished comparatively so little? Is it not owing in a great measure to her defects in moral character? Her history, we think, goes to confirm the doctrine for which we now contend.

We name not these nations, nor allude to the history of these individuals, for the purpose of reproaching them; but that we might profit by their loss. And thereby learn what will effectually secure the blessings of heaven on us, and on our posterity yet unborn. From what we have observed in the history of nations, and from what we find in the sacred scriptures, we are prepared to say, and we say it without fear of being contradicted by any man who has made the subject his study,—That neither human wisdom, nor wealth, nor power, can secure permanent happiness, either to a nation, or to individuals.

III. From the circumstance presented in our text, we may learn, what I shall in the *third* place attempt to show, viz. that *true religion* is of vast importance to the *present* and *eternal* welfare of man.

Here we shall occupy the high ground, that men are subjects of the Almighty, dependant on him, and accountable to him. This truth lies at the bottom of all *true* religion, and the belief of this sentiment lays the only foundation for the happiness of man.

By true religion, I mean, that system of doctrines and duties which is contained in the Holy Scriptures. Yes, I mean the religion of the Bible. A religion founded on wisdom, and possessing a character worthy of God. A religion which embraces our duty to God and our fellow creatures. It possesses dignity of principle, and is reasonable in all its requirements. All its claims are founded in reason and equity. Examine these claims one by one, if you please, and you will find they all bear this character.

The religion of the bible requires a Magistrate to be equitable, and a subject to be obedient; a father to be tender, and a son dutiful; a husband to be affectionate, and a wife faithful; a master gentle, and a servant diligent. And what is more reasonable than all this; and what more important for the welfare of society? This religion prescribes humility;—that we should not esteem ourselves by such titles and riches, such dignities and other exterior things, as we have in common with a Caligula, or a Nero. Surely nothing is more reasonable than humility, in beings who are but of yesterday, and know comparatively nothing. And who are but stewards of things which belong to another, and



for which they must render an account to the great proprietor.

Religion requires repentance towards God, and faith in Jesus Christ; and that we should love the Lord our God, with all our heart, soul, might and strength. If indeed we have sinned against God, is it any thing more than reasonable that we should repent? To be sorry for what we have done when we have done wrong, and not repeat the act again, is the least that can be required. If God has seen fit to require a reliance on his son Jesus Christ, as the condition of pardon, he had a right so to do. And is it unreasonable that there should be no other name under heaven, through which men can be saved? Or is it unreasonable that we should love the Lord with all our heart?

It has been remarked by a philosopher of some eminence, that religion in the moral and intelligent world, has a striking analogy to attraction in the material world. This remark is certainly very just, for as he farther observes, both are designed to unite in their respective spere, all the beings which compose it, in one grand harmonious system. Who does not know that by the principle of attraction, all the atoms which compose this terraqueous globe, are held together? It is by attraction that all the inhabitants of this earth, with all their habitations, are prevented from flying off in wild confusion. It is this which rolls the moon around the earth, and prevents her from running lawless through the sky. It is this which extends an influence

from the sun, the centre of the solar system, to all its planets, and constantly guides them with all the satellites, through all their ample rounds. Yes, more than this, if we may believe the calculations of some, it carries the sun with all its attendant orbs, around the centre of that *nebula* to which it belongs, and all the systems and *nebulae* of the universe, around some common centre, perhaps the throne of God. Does attraction have this power? So, in like manner, religion, pure and undefiled religion, unites man to his fellow man; and likewise it unites man, this small atom in the universe, to the ever blessed God.

Who does not perceive that if the influence of attraction were suspended, the inhabitants of our earth would fly off from its surface? Rocks and mountains would be detached from their ancient bases, and fly in wild disorder through the air. Were it not for the power of attraction, universal confusion would take place, and ruin would ensue through all the regions of illimitable space. And would not the consequences be equally disastrous in the moral world, if the influence of love and obedience to God, and the exercise of benevolence to men were suspended? We doubt not that it would. For when men cast off the fear of God, they readily trample on the rights of man.

I am aware that it is the opinion of some, that all which is necessary to preserve society and promote morality, are good laws;—That with good laws we should have morality sufficient.—I cannot, however, adopt this opinion, for the

moral edifice which political regulations raise, is too much like a house begun at the roof; it has no *foundation*. But religion lays its foundation for morality in the heart, in the deep recesses of the conscience. And there it speaks a language, and produces an effect unknown to civil laws.—It enlightens our minds, it warms our sensibilities, and animates to noble deeds. In this respect it far excels in its influence, not only the penalties by which laws are sanctioned; but it excels even the desire of esteem, and love of praise, the fear of contempt, and the dread of shame, those powerful springs of action, to which many have attributed so much virtue, and which are thought by some to be all-sufficient motives to regulate our life. These are far from being able to supply the place of religion. Human nature is such in its present state, that religion must surround the whole system of morality, in order to make it permanent. It must resemble that universal and mysterious force in nature to which we have alluded.

I am aware that it is the opinion of some who think but lightly of religion, that the connexion existing between our private interests, and the *public good*, is altogether sufficient to all purposes in society. But I conceive an idea of such a connexion, would be but a feeble barrier against the overflowing flood of our fallen nature, and the mighty tempest of our depraved passions.—I cannot but conceive it highly absurd to suppose that a political society can maintain an existence by such a pretended connexion. There

would be such a multitude of opinions, sentiments, and rules; such a clashing of individual interests, that all would be confusion. Men in their present state, can never be kept in harmony by the mere lessons of wisdom; from such authority they would constantly appeal. But the awful idea that the Supreme, and ever blessed God has commanded, preserves at all times sufficient authority from which men cannot appeal.

We readily grant there are men who do not profess to be religious, who are nevertheless, good citizens. They are exceedingly amiable and useful in all their relations in life. But if we examine, we shall find that these individuals owe much to religion. For if we carefully trace their history, we shall most certainly find, that at some time of life, they have been more or less under its influence. Their earlier education prepared them in some measure for the practice of virtue; and it is to this that many things in their character are to be attributed. We know that principles inculcated in early life, have a powerful influence on the human heart, a long time even after we have rejected the reasoning which served as a basis for those principles. It has been remarked by an eminent writer, that a soul formed to the love of order at a time of life when reason first begins to dawn, and sustained in this disposition by the force of habit for a season, never entirely loses this principle. This may in part account for the amiableness of such men; and it accounts for it as you readily per-

ceive, in a manner much to the honor of true religion.

But besides this, while religion maintains a respect for morality among the greater number of men in any community, those who reject religion are however well aware that honesty leads to esteem, and all those various advantages which depend upon it. Wherever therefore, we see a virtuous atheist, we have good evidence that he was not always an atheist; and also that he lives where virtue is respected. Such a man may be compared to a beautiful piece of mechanism, which even after the chain is broken, maintains its place by the force of general equilibrium which still subsists.

There are some who reason unfavorably to the influence of religion on a nation's happiness, by citing instances in which they say it has been the cause of wars and bloodshed. But to this we need no other answer, than to state the facts in the case. We say it was fanaticism and not religion which caused the unhappy convulsions to which they allude. Religion may have furnished the pretext, but not the motive. The precepts of the gospel, it is well known, lead to goodness, and forbearance, and brotherly kindness, and not to persecution. Its principles secure to every man his natural and acquired rights. But admitting that religion has been made a pretext for persecution, and abused by fanatics and designing men, is it therefore to be blamed and condemned? Shall we therefore reject it and embrace infidelity? And will not infidelity have

its fanatics and persecutors? For an answer to this last question, we need only refer you to the history of France. Does any one think that by relating the abuses of civil authority which history records, he could thereby prove the advantages of anarchy? Or could we throw a lasting odium on science, by enumerating all the fatal results owing to scientific research?

There are some who reject the religion of the bible under a pretext that it tends to priestcraft. But it has been well observed in reply to this, "that priestcraft is peculiar to no kind of religion. If christianity is rejected, and driven from the land, infidelity will have its ministers, and upon this, in its various forms and degrees, may be founded a system of Priestcraft, as much to be dreaded as any that ever prevailed. The most cruel and tyrannical Priestcraft prevails now where christianity as revealed in the bible is rejected. Men want, and will have something which they call their religion; and of this religion whatever it may be, they want ministers, so that the danger of Priestcraft cannot be averted by abjuring one kind of religion and adopting another." I believe there is not as much to be feared from Priestcraft in our country as many seem to apprehend. The intelligence of the people, and the diversity of religious opinions, will sufficiently guard against this evil.

Whatever objectors may say, we shall still maintain the ground we have taken in favor of religion. We say religion secures two grand

points, viz: the maintenance of public order, and the promotion of private happiness.

It maintains public order by inspiring correct views of justice and benevolence among men.— It teaches us to do to others as we would have them do unto us. It promotes private happiness by addressing men individually, penetrating the heart, and pouring into it consolation and hope. By taking possession of our sentiments and occupying our affections and thoughts. By changing our relation to God, from rebels to royal subjects, and changing our character by imparting to us the mind which was in Christ. Religion will excite us to do good to all men; it will sustain our courage, and afford us comfort under the various incidental evils which occasionally flow from the elements of nature, or the circumstances in which we are placed. To say all in a word; it embraces pardon, peace, and salvation. It takes in its mighty grasp time and eternity.

Religion is that which no nation can dispense with and prosper, and what no individual can neglect and be happy. France tried the experiment, and it well nigh proved the entire ruin of the nation. They prostrated the Christian Ministry, and abolished the Christian Sabbath. They poured contempt on religion and all its sacred ordinances. Though their religion was in many things a corruption of christianity, yet in its downfall they sustained a dreadful loss; for in rooting up the tares they destroyed the wheat also. Take one instance from many which might be named.

Soon after the commencement of the revolution, a law was passed permitting divorces with a latitude unknown in the bible; and it is said, that in less than *three months* from its date, there were nearly as many divorces registered in the records of Paris, as there were marriages. And in the whole kingdom within the space of a year and a half, upwards of twenty thousand divorces were effected, and the nation sunk into a state of degradation, from the effects of which it has not yet recovered. This fact, as one observes, furnishes a practical proof of the danger of infringing on any of the moral arrangements which the Creator in his infinite wisdom has established.

I insist on it, that no nation can dispense with religion and prosper. Let us suppose a nation making the attempt, and its effects will soon be seen. Let us suppose the holy scriptures are discarded, and all knowledge of the true God is banished from the minds of all. Shall we not see temples erected to dumb idols, or four footed beasts, or creeping things? Let sabbaths be forgotten, and all those who minister at the sanctuary be despised. Let all the restraints of religion be shaken off as the prejudice of education;—Then shall loving kindness, justice and righteousness, be exercised no more. Then shall darkness and superstition prevail, and then shall savage barbarity have an universal reign. Leave men to the helplessness and depravity of their own nature, and philosophy will be but a weak barrier. The general good would not be con-



sulted, when it in any measure opposed private interest; mere selfishness would prevail over every other consideration. And should men entirely divest themselves of the influence of religion, our world would soon be a complete bedlam, an Aceldama or field of blood. Certain and universal ruin would ensue.

Imagine within yourselves, that you behold this "Herod the king," stretched on his dying couch. The sceptre has fallen from his palsied hand, for the angel of the Lord has smitten him. The crawling worms have invested his body around about, and riot on his burning vitals within. His friends, even his friends, turn away from him in disgust. His breath is contaminating, and his touch would be death. You see him expire in agony, and you are all ready to exclaim, let his carcass be buried from the sight of men, and let his memory perish with him; or if history hand it down to posterity, let it be to perpetuate a monument of God's displeasure against impiety. What have we here? A picture, a faint picture of that nation that rejects the religion of the bible. Of these United States, when we shall refuse "to give glory to God." When we shall shake off the wholesome restraints of the religion of our "Pilgrim Fathers." Then shall an angel of the Lord smite us, and then shall "Ichabod" be written on all our institutions.— Then shall we be eaten of worms, and give up the ghost. And some future bard will sing our funeral dirge, and perhaps adopt the language

of the Poet, when he sung over the fallen hosts of the Assyrians :

“The angel of death spread his wings on the blast,  
And breath'd in the face of the foe as he passed ;  
And the eyes of the sleepers wax'd deadly and chill,  
And their heart heaved but once, and forever stood still.”

Or he may use the still more expressive language of the Prophet of Israel, “How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed. How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished.”

But let the principles of our holy religion prevail ; let them be permitted to influence the heart and guide the actions of the human race ; this world would be transformed into a paradise, this moral desert would be changed into a fruitful field, and Eden would again appear in all its pristine beauty and loveliness. Profaneness would cease, and perjury would be unknown.—An oath for confirmation would be regarded as a solemn appeal to God who knoweth all things, and would be an end of all strife. Or what is still more likely, perhaps there would be little or no occasion for oaths, for all strifes would cease. The use of inebriating drinks would be laid aside except as a medicine, they might be given to “those who are ready to perish.” Intemperance would be known only as a matter of history of gone-by days. And to use the language of another, injustice and oppression would no longer walk in triumph through our world, plunder and devastation would cease, violence would no

more be heard in our land, nor wasting nor destruction in all our borders. Pride the source of so much human woe, would be forever banished from our race. Ambition would no more wade through seas of blood and carnage, to reach a throne, nor heedlessly trample on the rights of men. Wars would cease from all the earth, and instruments of human destruction, would be beaten into implements of agriculture. This scourge which has drenched the earth in human gore, which has convulsed every nation under heaven—which has produced more misery than all the destructive elements of nature,—and which has swept from the world, it has been estimated, not less than *fourteen hundred millions*, or one tenth of mankind;—would be regarded as an eternal disgrace. Cities would not be made to sit solitary without a voice being heard, but the sighs of the disconsolate and the groans of the dying. Nations would lift up the sword against each other no more. The spirit of jealousy and selfishness, of avarice and monopoly, which now produce so many jarring contentions, would cease to operate. Every man would see and feel, that the prosperity of the whole is the prosperity of every portion of the great community. Righteous laws would be enacted and distributive justice every where equitably administered. And most of the evils under which the human race is now doomed to groan, would be greatly mitigated, if not completely abolished from the face of the earth; and the voice of

praise and thanksgiving would be heard from the habitation of every man.

In concluding our remarks on this occasion, permit me to say, that the foregoing are the outlines of those views of the nature and importance of true religion, which we wish to present to your consideration.

With these sentiments we wish deeply to impress your minds, respected *Rulers* and *Representatives*, that you may at this time feel, and continue hereafter to feel their powerful force. That while you shall sit here in your legislative capacity, you may distinctly recollect your responsibility to God, the Judge of all the earth. And that you may be guided by their influence when you shall have departed to your respective homes, to discharge the various and important duties in the respective circles in which you shall be called to move. That deeply impressed with these sentiments, you may exert a salutary influence on community, discouraging vice in every form, and promoting virtue and piety;—A terror to evil-doers, and a praise to all who do well.

My earnest wish is, that you and your successors in the important offices you fill, may always “give God the glory,”—may be friends to true religion, and examples of virtue, a blessing to the world, and ornaments to your country. That you may excel in whatsoever is amiable and excellent; in whatsoever is lovely and of good report. That you may be as the salt of the earth, preserving society from corruption, so

that our nation be not eaten of worms and give up the ghost. And that having served your generation, you may be gathered unto your fathers in peace; and finally have an abundant admittance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord.

May the Father of all our mercies, give us national prosperity, and wise and good rulers. And unto him shall be ascribed all the honor and all the glory, now and forever, AMEN.

