

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

AT AUBURN,

ON THE DAY OF THE

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING,

DECEMBER 12, 1850.

BY L. E. LATHROP, D. D.

AUBURN, N. Y.
DERBY AND MILLER.
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REV. DOCTOR LATHROP:

AUBURN, December 14, 1850.

Dear Sir—Having heard with pleasure and profit, the discourse delivered by you on Thanksgiving day in this city, and believing that much good would be accomplished by a more general diffusion of the doctrines expressed by you on that occasion, the undersigned beg the favor of a copy of the discourse for publication.

J. M. SHERWOOD,	H. L. KNIGHT,
IRA HOPKINS,	J. N. STARIN,
JOSEPH T. PITNEY,	C. W. POMEROY,
JOHN PORTER,	J. C. DERBY.

AUBURN, December 17, 1850.

GENTLEMEN: Fully believing that the sentiments expressed in the discourse to which you refer are right and important, and are such as should be adopted and acted upon by all good citizens, I do not hesitate to comply with your request.

I regret that I had not time to discuss some of the topics introduced, more largely. In alluding to the fugitive slave law, it was not my object to discuss its merits or demerits, but to guard against the sacrifice of some greater good, which might come as the result of indulging in a violent and reckless spirit of insubordination, or resistance to the laws of the land.

Respectfully yours,

L. E. LATHROP.

To J. M. SHERWOOD, IRA HOPKINS, JOSEPH T. PITNEY,
JOHN PORTER, H. L. KNIGHT, J. N. STARIN, C. W.
POMEROY and J. C. DERBY.

PREFACE

Those who attentively read the following discourse will perceive that it distinctly inculcates a devout and thankful acknowledgment of Divine Providence as the source of all our blessings, and recognizes the existence of a higher law than any enacted by human authority. In accordance with the teachings of that higher law, it inculcates obedience to magistrates and subordination to the laws of the land, as the imperative duty of all good and loyal citizens. It maintains that human governments ought not to enact laws which contravene the higher law—the law of the Creator; but that the imperfection of human laws, or the occasional enactment of a law that may be, in our estimation, wrong, or in our judgment may conflict with the claims of rectitude or benevolence, would not justify the indulgence of a spirit of insubordination to the authority of civil government. It admits the right and duty of remonstrance and of petition for the repeal of such a law—and in an elective government like ours, an appeal to the right of suffrage opens the way for a peaceful and legitimate change of rulers and of laws, if such a change should be agreeable to the views and wishes of a majority of our citizens. These views the author supposes may be applicable to the “fugitive slave law,” which is of recent enactment, and leaves open the way for all the agitation, or discussion, which may be salutary. The author is aware that the views of some of his fellow-citizens do not fully concur with his own, expressed in this discourse, in regard to the great and paramount importance of inviolably maintaining the union of these confederated states, and all the great and beneficent results which it is to produce, in diffusing the blessings both of liberty and religion among the nations of the earth. But in the inculcation of any of the sentiments which the discourse contains, he is not conscious of any departure from his legitimate province as a minister of the christian religion. The discourse was written as it is, within the two or three days immediately preceding its delivery. The author being as fully aware of its defects as any who read it can be, chooses to let it pass without any apology, hoping that it may do some good, and no evil.

DISCOURSE

Psalm 3: 8. SALVATION BELONGETH UNTO THE LORD: THY BLESSING IS UPON THY PEOPLE.

This passage furnishes an appropriate subject for our present meditation. Convened by the proclamation of our chief magistrate, to render united and public thanksgiving to God, we must naturally raise our thoughts to Him from whom proceed all our blessings. He is the Author of life, and the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Salvation from temporal evils and from eternal death, belong alike unto the Lord. It is because his blessing is upon his people, that they dwell in safety, while none molest or make them afraid. Salvation, in its most comprehensive sense, denotes deliverance from evil of any kind. It is used in the scriptures to denote that great deliverance from sin and its penalties, which Christ, the Redeemer of mankind, has purchased with his blood. It seems to be here designed to convey the idea of our obligation to God for every blessing. Deliverance from a particular evil implies the enjoyment of the opposite good. The language of the text is therefore quite comprehensive in its import, and leads the mind to a consideration of the source of every blessing, whether the blessing consist in exemption from positive evil, or in the enjoyment of positive good. If there is *anything* desirable in our earthly condition, it is because his blessing is upon us—and to Him alone are we indebted for existence, and all that can render it valuable. To Him it becometh us to render our thanksgiving and our praise, for He is good, and his mercy endureth forever. It is our high privilege to enjoy a revelation of his will, and to be instructed concerning our obligations and our duties. We are taught, and are accustomed, at least outwardly and in form, to ac-

knowledge the superintending providence of our Creator. It is in accordance with established usage that we are assembled to attend upon the appropriate duties of this day. And it is a blessing for which we ought to be unfeignedly thankful—that our ancestry, who were instrumental in laying the foundations of our civil and religious privileges, were men who feared God, and observed his ordinances. They were disposed to recognize the divine hand, and to render thanksgiving to Him who controlled and so happily directed their destiny and ours. Enjoying the light of divine revelation, and the ordinances and institutions of the Most High, we are characterised as his people—as a religious people—exalted to heaven in point of privilege. We are to ascribe our salvation from a different and a darker destiny to Him whom we are taught to worship with reverence and godly fear. And it is because his blessing is upon us, his people, that we at this day enjoy so goodly a heritage: that, in the language of the proclamation which has called us together, “in this year which is about to close, an abundant harvest and profitable labor have brought rich rewards to honest industry—that peace and tranquility are established at home, and no discord disturbs our relations abroad—that health, prosperity and abundance have been freely vouchsafed to us, and that civil and religious liberty prevail throughout the length and the breadth of the land, while to all is secured the free exercise of the worship of the Creator according to their own faith. And while his inscrutable Providence has seen fit to remove, during the past year, the chief magistrate of our Union, that same Providence has preserved us, under the trial, a free and a united people—has saved us from anarchy or civil commotion, and has continued to us the mild operation of a government of our own adoption, and rulers of our own choice.”

In all these particulars the blessing of the Most High is upon us, and gratitude pre-eminently becomes us. It would be unnecessary to expatiate upon the peculiar circumstances under which these blessings have been enjoyed, or to dwell particularly upon the nature of these blessings. What appears to be most desirable, on an occasion like this, is, that we should cherish in our minds a becoming sense of our dependence upon that kind Providence, by which they are vouchsafed unto

us, and our obligations of gratitude, deep, fervent and heartfelt gratitude, to the great Author of all good.

But there may be reason to apprehend that we are not so *feelingly* alive to the true import of the sentiment contained in the text, as we ought to be. Whatever may be the blessings which we enjoy, they all proceed from one source—the great and only source of all good. Whatever may be the circumstances under which we are placed, while we acknowledge the superintending providence of the Most High, we shall find abundant cause of thankfulness to Him in whose hand is our breath, and whose are all our ways. Are we exempt this day from the evils of despotism, of anarchy, of famine, of pestilence, or war—do we consider and feel as we ought, that we are indebted for this exemption to that God to whom belongeth salvation in every sense, and whose blessing has ever been upon us? Are we in the full enjoyment of our natural, unalienable rights as men, of health and reason, and the ordinary individual and social blessings of civilized life? Do we enjoy the privileges of the gospel, and the prospect of a state of interminable bliss and glory hereafter—let us not be unmindful of that bounteous hand by which all these blessings are extended to us. Let us not be unmindful of the accountability which is connected with the enjoyment of these favors, lest by our ingratitude we should provoke their gracious Author to take them from us. Let us studiously guard against that easily besetting sin of ingratitude—that forgetfulness of God, and disregard of his providence, to which our depraved hearts so strongly incline us. Who is it but the infinite Jehovah that maketh us to differ from the millions of our race who are subject to the debasing influence of idolatry and superstition—who has raised us to the enjoyment of such ample means of knowledge and of happiness, and of all that can render our existence most valuable. And why is it that he has permitted us to know that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will—that it is He who hath appointed unto all nations the bounds of their habitation—and that it is in Him that we live and move and have our being; but that we should continually be mindful of his superintending care, and be led to an attentive consideration of our obligations to Him—and that whosoever

gloriet, may glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth the Lord, who exercises loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth?

If we are prepared to attend upon the appropriate duties of this day with a right spirit, we shall be disposed to enter into an examination of our own hearts, and to consider the various causes of thankfulness which belong to our condition. And we should remember that if our hearts condemn us not for the sin of ingratitude, God is greater than our hearts and knoweth all things. It becomes us, indeed, to be thankful, and to consider what must be the appropriate expression of our thankfulness. It must not consist merely in the service of our lips. And however much importance may be attached to the particular duties of this day, it becomes us to remember that the exercise of true thankfulness to our Creator and Preserver, ought not to be confined to any circumstances of time and place, but that in *everything*, by prayer and supplication, with *thanksgiving*, we should make known our requests unto God. This public recognition of Divine Providence, and this public and united expression of our obligations of gratitude to the great Ruler of the universe, is truly becoming an enlightened and religious people, in possession of the multiplied blessings which we enjoy. And it is to be regretted that any should be indifferent to it, or should abstain from an appropriate observance of it; or that it should, in any instance, be made an occasion for those excesses, which are offensive to God, and debasing to the soul.

The occasion is appropriate for some reflections upon the aspects of the times. Many and great blessings belong to our condition. They have been concisely enumerated, and it is enough for our present purpose that we know what they are, and that we have them in possession. We may be threatened with dangers, and it may be proper and wise to think of them. A great republic has risen up here, and has already acquired great renown, attracting the wonder and the admiration of the world: and we believe, and have reason for that belief, that important influences upon the condition and future destinies of our race, are connected with its preservation and perpetuity. Its character, and aims, and destiny, cannot but be objects of interest to us all. While we sing of

past deliverances, and rejoice with thankfulness in present and distinguished tokens of the divine favor, we are taught to look to the same high source for the good things which may await us—for salvation from anarchy, and civil discord, and disunion, and from the utter wreck of all our cherished and high-raised hopes and expectations.

We have a constitution, unfolding the principles and lying at the foundation of the government under which we live—securing to us a larger measure of civil and religious liberty than any other constitution of civil government in the known world. This is the supreme law of the land, and any subordinate enactment which contravenes its essential and fundamental principles, is void and of no effect, when so ascertained and decided by the proper tribunal. It is a compact into which we have voluntarily entered; and as citizens of our common country, are sacredly bound to conform to its provisions. Into this compact all the states of this Union have entered, by mutual consent; and they are alike bound to discharge, with mutual fidelity, the obligations which it imposes. But no constitution of civil government can be supposed to be perfect; and the best that has ever been formed may have some defects. In relation to our own, it was not in the beginning in perfect accordance with the views of all who were concerned in the formation of it. It was adopted as the result of mutual concession, for the sake of securing higher and paramount interests. We hesitate not to say that, under the circumstances, they acted wisely. Conflicting interests were to be consulted and provided for, and the only alternative was to do this, or to forego the establishment of that wise and happy form of government, under which the confederated states of this Union have reached an elevation of prosperity, and power, and influence, unequalled for rapidity of progress and beneficence of results, in the history of our race. While we deplore whatever is defective, we still rejoice in the consummation of an object so desirable in itself, and so prolific in blessings to our countrymen and to the world. Resistance to its claims is treason. All reflecting men concur in the belief that its adoption was both wise and prudent, under the circumstances which existed. All honest men and good citizens agree that it must be maintained as it is, until by common consent it shall be differently modified.

The main feature in that instrument, which has been an occasion of threatening disquietude among our citizens, is that which sanctions a state of involuntary servitude, or slavery. The constitution does not decide whether slavery is right or wrong, but only provides in relation to it as an existing institution, which had, at that time, become so interwoven in the structure and framework of society, in one portion of these states, that the consent of those states to its relinquishment could not be obtained. Various acts of legislation have taken place with reference to the slave population; and a recent one, in relation to fugitive slaves, has been the occasion of much disquietude and dissatisfaction among a large portion of our citizens in this part of our country. This law has called forth very severe animadversions, and very impassioned and inflammatory resolutions have been passed, and language has been uttered in relation to it—language expressive of entire insubordination and resistance to its requirements. And yet, it is a law of the land, enacted by the powers that be, and that are ordained of God.

The grave question, then, here occurs for consideration—What is the duty of the citizen and the christian? We answer, that both patriotism and religion require that the law should be obeyed.* This is not saying that this law, or every law, must necessarily have our cordial approbation and acquiescence. In human legislation there may be, and there will be, more or less that is imperfect; and laws, too, may be enacted, about which there may be a diversity of opinion. What one man approves another may disapprove; and if each individual were to act in a spirit of insubordination and resistance, as his own predilections and habits of thought might dictate, we should have nothing but anarchy and confusion, instead of the blessings of order and good government.

Suppose that we deny the right of property in a human being, and insist upon it that one man has no *moral* right to hold another as his property in a state of involuntary servitude; still we must admit that, for

* The authority of law is maintained when a *PASSIVE OBEDIENCE* is rendered to it, as in those cases in which *CONSCIENCE* forbids a personal participation in the execution of the law, and the individual chooses quietly to incur the penalty, if there be any, of disregarding the precept. And this may be the choice of all who feel themselves bound by the paramount obligations of a higher law.

the time being, he has a *legal* right, according to the constitution and laws of the state in which he lives. Other states entering into a confederacy with this one, have agreed that it may hold slaves as property, and manage its own internal concerns in its own way. The confederacy is entered into for the security of other and commanding and common interests, which are of paramount importance. If by any act of legislation by this confederated government, we are required to restore to them that property to which they have a legal right, however much we may doubt the morality of that claim, or the law upon which it is founded, the duty of good citizenship, and the claims of true patriotism would demand obedience to the law. The responsibility in regard to the morality or the wisdom of the law rests not with us. That lies somewhere else. But with us is the responsibility of obeying the laws of the land, which have been established by the powers that be, and that are ordained of God.

Suppose you were to find a sum of money which you knew had been lost by a man who had acquired it by fraudulent dealing, and by acts of palpable dishonesty. While you might deny his *moral* right to the property, you would admit that it was legally his, and you would restore it to him. If his dwelling were to be on fire, and you should know that he had wrongfully obtained it, you would not hesitate to lend your aid to arrest the conflagration. These cases supposed, we are aware, are not in all respects parallel to the one under consideration. That involves the possibility, if not the certainty, of subjecting a fellow man to a state of suffering, by returning him to his condition of involuntary servitude. But it may afford some elucidation of the relative and personal responsibilities of men in regard to the rights of property, and of the right course of action in cases where we are called upon to make a distinction between a *moral* and *legal* right—and where a denial of the legal right, would incur palpable wrong. One wrong cannot be remedied by the perpetration of another wrong.*

* These remarks are not intended as any *JUSTIFICATION* of the fugitive slave law; neither is there a sentence in the whole discourse which can be so understood. The author is among those who most heartily regret the enactment of such a law, or that

What if it be said, and what if it be true, that slavery is a great and appalling evil—and if it be not the greatest evil in the world, yet is a very great one. There are other evils in the world besides slavery to be guarded against, or to be eradicated; and there are many other good ends to be sought and attained besides the abrogation of this evil.

This right of property in man has existed under different modifications and in different countries, and however much to be deprecated, it exists now. It existed in the Hebrew nation, and in the Roman empire; and it exists now, both among civilized and uncivilized tribes of men—and there is something but little better inflicted upon masses of the population under the despotic governments of the other continent, in the scanty wages and oppressive taxation imposed upon the laboring classes for the support of rich and splendid aristocracies, and to enhance the grandeur of imposing hierarchies. We do deprecate all this. We do lament, this day, that any portion of our beloved country is burdened and blighted by the existence of slavery. We long to see the day, when it shall be unknown; but we shall surely never reach such a consummation, so devoutly to be wished, by harsh and unmitigated denunciation of the slaveholder, and much less by a sweeping condemnation of the church and the ministry, and by maintaining a spirit of exterminating hostility among ourselves.

We believe that this consummation will be reached; and there has been much in the history of the world, and of the church, and of individuals, which affords an admonition to wait for the fulfilment of divine promises, until the time appointed by the counsels of Infinite Wisdom. The vision may be for an appointed time. The time was fixed in the counsels of Infinite Wisdom, when the Hebrew nation should

there was deemed to be any necessity for it, as a matter of conciliation or compromise. But it is a dissuasive from open resistance or actual insubordination to an existing law of the land, and against the doctrine of "nullification," which is justly regarded as very objectionable and unsafe. If any individual feels that the claims of the higher law forbid his participation in the execution of this law, it is supposed that he will act in accordance with his honest convictions of duty, while he remembers that the higher law not only requires that he should do unto others as he would that others should do unto him, but that he should render obedience to the government which affords him protection and security. Rom. 13, 1: Titus 3, 1.

be liberated from their bondage in Egypt—when the captives should be returned from Babylon—when the walls of Jerusalem should be re-built, and when the Son of Man should be crucified. All human effort would have been utterly in vain to have brought about the accomplishment of either of these events before the appointed time. We believe that under the prevailing light of christianity a time will come, when every yoke of oppression shall be broken, and all the oppressed shall go free. There will be a time when, and there will be a way by which, it shall be done. We know that there is a sense, deeply affecting the question of human responsibility, in which it might be wrong to inculcate the waiting of God's time, and in which it might be tantamount to an inculcation of continued resistance to his authority. But we should not in the pride of our hearts forget that salvation from temporal evil, as well as from eternal death, belongeth unto the Lord; and that if He who works all things after the counsel of his own will hath declared it, the mighty deliverance will come. The sturdy champions of human freedom may spend their strength and exhaust their eloquence in vain, until He who rules among the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the earth, shall say to the waves of oppression, and of all the wrong and outrage with which earth is filled—Hitherto shall ye come, and no further.

Resistance to human enactments has been urged, and may still be urged by some, on the ground that if these enactments are wrong, they come in conflict with the demands of a higher law. This certainly is a subject worthy of some consideration. We rejoice in the announcement of a higher law, because there is a law higher than that of any human constitution of civil government, or any code of laws which has been or ever can be devised by the wisdom or ingenuity of man. It is the law of the Creator. His laws are paramount in authority to all other laws, and where his laws are known, no human laws should be passed in opposition to their requirements. Legislators and citizens will do well always to remember that there is a higher law demanding their constant obedience.

Any human government which should enact a law authorizing or legalizing murder or theft, or the violation of the Sabbath, or requir-

ing that men should not do unto others as they would that others should do unto them, would be chargeable with the guilt of legislating against the authority of Heaven.

These laws of the Bible men did not make, and men cannot unmake them. Religion may protect and save a nation, but it is not the province of any nation to alter or to destroy religion. A nation may destroy itself by disregarding its authority, and cast itself out from the favor and complacency of Heaven, by departing from that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and cherishing the sin which is a reproach to any people. But the religion of Christ, being not of this world, derives not from any human authority leave to be. It exists in defiance of all human authority, and whosoever will may be a subject of that kingdom which shall survive and flourish when thrones are crumbled and dynasties are forgotten. They whom Christ makes free shall be free indeed, and their conscience can never be enslaved. The body may be chained, incarcerated, scourged; but while the oppressor holds the body bound, he knows not what a range the spirit takes, unconscious of the chain.

But submission to the authority of the great christian Lawgiver requires no departure from those acknowledged duties which are incumbent upon men by reason of the relations which they sustain as members of civil society. It does not render it necessary that allegiance to subordinate authority should be given up—that the salutary restraints of civil government should be disregarded,—but it on the other hand enforces and sanctions obedience to parents, to magistrates, and inculcates subordination to all lawful authority. The gospel demands the observance of all duties from a primary respect to the authority by which it has been given to the world, and which enjoins whatsoever things are honest and pure and just and lovely and of good report.

When human governments do err, by disregarding the precepts of religion, it is the right and may be the duty of christian citizens to remonstrate, and respectfully to ask that an existing law which contravenes a divine law may be repealed, and by raising the voice of remonstrance they may save themselves from the imputation of a silent and sinful acquiescence in that which their conscience cannot approve.

But so long as christianity enjoins upon its disciples to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates, and to be ready to every good work, their example should be ever on the side of law and order, and subordination to constituted authority.*

The imperfection of human laws, or the occasional enactment of a law that may be in our estimation wrong, or in our judgment may conflict with the claims of rectitude or benevolence, would not justify the indulgence of a spirit of insubordination to the authority of civil government. Our government has many beneficent aims and tendencies—many salutary influences which it exerts—and great is the work which it is yet to accomplish, in diffusing the blessings both of liberty and religion among the nations of the earth. Let this Union be sustained in its integrity, and let no intruding spirit of disaffection be allowed to impair its strength and its energies for the good which it may accomplish.

* The author does not suppose, and these remarks are not intended to imply, that no law whatever be it ever so unjust and oppressive, would justify resistance and rebellion, or revolution; but he does not think that by any oppressive acts of the government, we are yet reduced to such an extremity. With whatever may be imperfect or wrong in any acts of our legislation, we still have too many good things in possession and in prospect to be thus sacrificed. He is opposed to slavery in every form, and has unhesitatingly and repeatedly declared this sentiment in public discourses and in person, to slaveholders themselves, on their own domain. In common with many others, in the ardor of his feelings against an institution fraught with so much evil, he has sometimes appealed to the maxim, "*Fiat justitia, ruat cælum*"—LET JUSTICE BE DONE THOUGH THE HEAVENS FALL. But he is aware that, like other aphorisms, which contain important truth, it may be injuriously applied—as in those cases which may arise, in which you put in jeopardy some greater good for the sake of eradicating an acknowledged and a palpable evil. Such a case, or somewhat analogous to it, would be that in which it was proposed to burn up a city to get rid of the yellow fever—or of the man who would burn up his barns and granaries, with all their valuable contents, to get rid of the troublesome vermin with which they were infested. The author would be unwilling to adopt any course which would tend to sever the bonds of this Union formed for many great and beneficent purposes, while he could see no prospect that it would secure the deliverance of a single captive. In such an event, those who hold them in bondage now might do so still. The author probably regards the provisions of the fugitive slave law with as little favor as any citizen of this free republic.

We hear rumors of discontent from the South, all tending to anarchy and disruption; yet, if we seek a remedy for whatever wrongs may arise, by the peaceful and legitimate means which the constitution provides, we need not fear the ultimate dismemberment of this confederacy. There may be a temporary withdrawal or secession of some small portions, attended with disaster to themselves, and to the whole body of which they are members. But ere long, amazed at their own infatuation, and ashamed of their attitude, they will gladly resume their place as a constituent portion of what will be, if it be not already, the most powerful nation on the earth. They cannot live and flourish without us, and gladly will they return and take shelter under the broad banner which has so long been reared as the emblem of our power and the pledge of our union.

We have thus briefly and desultorily alluded to one source of inquietude, and a ground of apprehension in regard to the future safety of our common country. We know that other dangers encompass our way. We know that the existence of slavery itself in our land is really an evil of great magnitude, and we have many prevalent and debasing vices, and much desecration of the Sabbath and disregard of divine institutions,—many tendencies to a depravation of manners and morals, all of which are calculated to awaken solicitude and anxiety in the bosom of the christian patriot, and lead us to fear coming disasters and the disappointment of our high-raised expectations of future good.

But it becomes us this day to remember that we have many counteracting influences. We have the presence of the Bible and of those who make it the man of their counsels and the guide to their steps, and who pray for the prosperity and peace of this our land of freedom. We have the Sabbath and its blessed influences. We have schools and colleges, and the blessings of education widely diffused. We have increasing wealth, and much of it in the hands of those who are disposed to use it for beneficent purposes. Light and knowledge are increasing; thought is free, and the press is free, and the conscience in matters of religious faith is free.

And when we consider the wide extent of our territory—the largeness of our resources—the freedom of our institutions—the rapidity of our

progress in the applianee of the useful arts to agriculture and commerce and manufactures—and the elevation which we have attained—we are constrained to say in truth, God hath not dealt so with any nation. We are constrained to feel that his blessing is upon us, and that this goodly heritage has come to us from his paternal hand. We cannot but ascribe our salvation from the political thralldom in which other nations groan, being burdened, to Him whose kingdom ruleth over all. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord—his blessing has been upon us, and is so still. The motto of our pilgrim forefathers comes up to the mind as a ground of encouragement and of hope—“*Qui transtulit sustinet*.”* They felt that the same power which had preserved their frail bark amid the dangers of the deep, and brought them in safety to the rock-bound coast of that New-England which was to be their future home, would still sustain them in their future trials and struggles in the cause of liberty and religion. The same power which conducted our fathers through the bloody scenes of the revolution to final victory, and to the attainment of the object for which they struggled, which is the goodly heritage we this day enjoy, will preserve and perpetuate it—“*Qui transtulit, sustinet*.” And what a glorious realization of that sentiment, and of the hope which it implies, has the world been called to witness. Could the pilgrims of the May-Flower, or the patriots of the revolution, be re-embodied and walk among us, what visions of brightness and beauty and grandeur would rise up before them; with what amazement and joy would they look upon the wonders which God has wrought in this land of freedom.

The salvation which has been wrought out for us, has been wrought by the hand of the Lord, and all our future deliverances from impending and threatened evil must come from the same hand. The object for which this day is set apart, reminds us that salvation belongeth unto the Lord, and that his blessing is upon his people; and while we wait upon Him with thanksgiving for past and present mercies, and in expectation of future good, we are reminded of our responsibilities. While we look to Him for the safety and salvation of our country, we are to re-

* He who transplanted will sustain.

member that he employs human instrumentality for the accomplishment of his purposes; and that for securing the most propitious results, all orders of men, and each in his proper place, must decidedly take their stand on the side of law and order, of good morals and of religion. It is thus that we may wait in confident expectation that He whose providence we this day specially acknowledge, and who has brought us through all past struggles and dangers to the possession of this fair heritage, will continue to us the enjoyment of it; and that the murmurings of discontent and the threatenings of disaster will pass away; that every galling yoke of bondage will be broken, and liberty shall be proclaimed to every captive; and that every end for which this noble fabric of civil freedom has been reared will be fully answered.

In conclusion, let us bear it in mind that this festival of Thanksgiving appointed by the civil magistracy, is a religious observance, indicating the presence of christianity as an element of our social condition, and reminding us of that higher law to which all owe obedience, and of that higher authority to which all owe allegiance. Such observances may be useful in counteracting the tendencies of human nature to practical atheism, and concur with the appropriate influence of the christian Sabbath, in keeping alive a sense of religion and religious obligation in the public mind. If we disregard his authority, and cast off his fear, in vain may we look for salvation from the Lord. Of all men, our governors and judges, our senators and legislators, should be men fearing God, and loving righteousness, and hating iniquity—men who, of all others, should not be ashamed to own their Lord, or to maintain his cause—men who ought to be ashamed of infidelity and irreligion, and of whatever support and countenance they may have given to either—men who carefully observe and reverence the Sabbath, and obey the teachings of its Lord.

The annals of *christian* patriotism in our land do unfold some illustrious names; and we may hear the foremost* declaring religion and morality to be indispensable supports of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity; and another† of exalted worth, inculca-

ting with great emphasis upon all who should come after him, the sentiment, that righteousness alone exalteth a nation, and urging them ever to bear it in remembrance. Another, occupying the chief magistracy of one of the states of the Union, invites the people to pray for the outpouring of the Spirit of God, to revive pure and undefiled *religion*—the best security of our *civil* and *political* institutions. Another calls upon the people of the state to pray that God would smile on every institution for promoting true piety—and that he would deeply impress on their minds the important truth, that a *free government can be sustained only upon the principles of the christian religion*. How becoming is the utterance of such sentiments by the rulers of a christian people—religion the best security of our civil and political institutions. *And how true.*

* Washington.

† Patrick Henry.