

In presenting myself before you this evening, I shall briefly invite your attention back six thousand years, when the structure known as the globe which we now occupy was without shape or comeliness—when the now expansive ocean was not created, or the firmament which now stretches itself over our heads had come from the hands of the living God. He spake, and behold a promiscuous dark fluid, an unformed chaos, or gloomy mass of substance, such as had never before existed. And the voice of God, from the midst thereof, said, “Let there be light,” and at his command the misty darkness was dispelled, and light shone around. His own almighty mind then contemplated the vastness of his purpose. He viewed with pleasure and delight the glory thus shed around Him; and again spake, and the light was separated from the darkness. • • • •

God then proceeded, in his divine wisdom, to plan the great universe, complete in all its parts, as we now behold it—the sun, the moon, the stars, and all the various works which beautify and adorn the natural world. There are various conjectures as to the time of creation. The most learned and eminent men have differed in this matter. While Capellus and others would have the creation commenced in the spring about the 14th of April, the great Usher would have it in the

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fall. According to Usher's calculations, he would have us date the commencement on the 22d day of October, or [Tisri...] while others, equally as eminent—such as Scaliger and Spanheim—would have us date from about the first of September, or Ebul. It is evident, however, that their calculations have all been made long subsequent to creation, and as such are involved with doubt. Philosophical and mathematical calculations, which are the only true sources from which authentic information can be derived, long since failed to harmonize; and as it is a matter of no peculiar interest to us, we need not waste our time in following the airy notions of others into the abyss of despondency, but let us attend to matters more susceptible of development, and such as are more easily and readily ascertained, and, when ascertained, are of more importance to us.

We find, in the great work of creation, that when God, by his infinite wisdom, had spoken into existence this immense fabric, he stood in the midst thereof, and pronounced it good. But the great master-piece of his work had not yet been performed—the great human machinery had not yet been put in action. No mortal voice had been heard to lisp the praise of Him to whom all praise belonged. Then God said, "Let us make

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man," and by his own hands he formed man out of the dust of the earth, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of eternal life. •

• • • And while man was sole possessor of the earth, (for into his hands all beings, both animate and inanimate, were committed,) God, in his compassion, moved in his behalf, and caused a deep sleep to fall upon him, while from his side he took HER, the guardian angel of his every care. And we might here be allowed to remark, that in this the wisdom of God was most wonderfully displayed, evidently intending to show the nearness and close alliance of the one to the other, and a direct confutation of the miserable doctrine, so universally and so erroneously indulged in, of woman's inferiority to man. Woman was not taken from the head, nor yet from the feet of man, but from his side: and as from his side was she taken, so by his side shall she stand, and with him shall she walk, despite the stupid fanaticism of those who would ignorantly undervalue her worth. •

• • • We are led, in taking this cursory view of creation, to behold with wonder the beautiful and multiform works around us—And no man, unless he be clothed with a mind of sensuality and skepticism—unless he be dead to every principle of humanity, and lost to every vestige of sane reasoning, could

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or would even dare dispute the existence of an infallible and living God, the superstructure of whose hands meets our astonished vision at every gaze. Unlike the works of art, the more it is explored, the more it opens to our view sources of admiration—the more it calls for our inspection—the more it demands our praise; and whether we turn to the right or to the left—whether we at a glance encircle within our vision the green-clad valleys, or the rustic mountain tops, or whether, with John in Patmos, as a sea of glass, we behold the waters of the mighty ocean, “and then, in our imagination, penetrate the ethereal blue,” and like the adopted son of Pharaoh’s daughter, lay hold upon the shining garments of a Deity and hold communion there—whether on Pisgah’s spicy brow we “view the landscape o’er,” or from Mount Carmel, the home of the Prophets, we gaze upon the way-worn pilgrim as he descends as a herald of salvation, while the dew of heaven glisten upon his garments, or whether we turn our eyes from those delightful scenes, and consent to listen for a moment to the frantic wail from the dismal abode—we cannot but exclaim, in the language of the psalmist—“How wonderful are thy works, O Lord! thy ways are past finding

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out." The philosopher may here find an unbounded field of pleasure and delight; the mathematician may here vainly endeavor to calculate the innumerable blessings of God; while the poet may sing with ecstasy of delight, the sacred anthems of eternal praise; and when men upon earth have tuned their harps and raised their highest notes, angels with propriety may become enraptured with delight—their heavenly choruses may swell the song, while unutterable joys shall ring through the mansions of eternal bliss, and then, in the language of the poet, "His love can ne'er be told."

And were we to appeal more directly to Christians, they certainly would agree that to them this field presents itself clothed in the richest verdure of Heaven's own ordaining.—To them, every brook sparkling at the mountain base becomes a beacon, and every pebble on the bed of the chrystal stream a messenger to point them to the land of promise.

God, in the economy of his wisdom, having thus beautifully and gloriously formed the scenery by which we are surrounded, must of course have had some definite and primary object in view; and such was none other than the happiness of man and the glorification of himself. Such, my friends, was the

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great end in view; and for this was the formation of all this vast and mighty globe. The whole paraphernalia and machinery of God's entire universe has been consummated for this one important purpose. And in view of this, then, how great and important is the responsibility resting on us!

We are thus naturally led to inquire. How shall man serve the great end of his creation! How shall he serve to promote the happiness of his fellow man, and the glorification of God! We answer, without alluding particularly to spiritual duties,—that it is the duty of man to seek to promote the interest of his fellow man, by endeavoring in every respect to ameliorate and better his condition. Our earthly prospects and ambition, the objects of our highest natural attainments, our most sincere and devoted purposes so far as they comport with justice and reason, should be cared for and regarded by all; the very construction of our natures demands this of us as an imperative obligation. And where we fail to conform to it, we virtually set aside, and by our actions deny the great end of our creation. We should be careful to advance the interest of each other by bearing each other's burdens. We should endeavor to aid those in distress. We should administer to the wants of the needy. We should extend the

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helping hand and mingle the sympathising tear with those in adverse or afflicted circumstances. And thus in our hands prosper the great cause of humanity. • • •

And I might here remark, that one of the great means for the attainment of such ends is that for which your Society has been formed. The grand principle upon which your Institution has been based, is that of the dissemination of light and knowledge. You have organized for the purpose of thrusting in the sickle of truth and mowing down the base meadows of corruption which too often ripen in our midst. And should you be led on to a successful terminus, you may safely be said to be one of the springs from which emanates the true character which shall honor his creation by seeking the happiness of man and the glorification of God. EDUCATION is the great moral leveler. It elevates the down trodden to a position sufficiently eminent, while it reduces the proud and haughty to the same eminence. Pride, arrogance, deceit and superstition are compelled to flee from before [it], or in its onward course it will crush them to pieces, and fiery darts from the magazine of wisdom shall consume the last atom thereof. Education is the summary of light, knowledge and understanding; the natural promptings thereof are peace, union, love and harmony.

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The religion of Jesus Christ, in a great measure owes its happy and heavenly progress to Education. Our domestic and foreign Missionary Societies afford abundant evidence of this fact. The herald of Christ who folds his bible to his bosom and launches out upon the "Pacific," fulfilling the Divine command of, "Go ye into all the world and preach my Gospel to every creature," must not only be endowed with the grace of God, but must also have a plentiful supply of wisdom from the store-house of earthly knowledge. And the same is true of your domestic missionaries, your ministers of the gospel, your laity as well as your clergy; and men in all the various ramifications of society need in a great measure this inestimable boon, in order the more successfully to complete the great end of their being. And it is a fact, that religion and education are so closely allied that without the latter the former cannot successfully be spread; while upon the other hand, the latter is greatly indebted to the former. We learn that the preservation of the entire code of dead languages may be attributed to the zealous and unreserved efforts of the ancient christians. They collected and preserved with great care the original versions of the old Testament, which in some modern times have been translated into our various languages,

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Remove education from our land and wha[t] would be our condition? Our halls of legislation and judicial tribunals would become doubly based and corrupted; for no man is competent to administer justice who has not first learned justice himself. The law of our

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land in order to be honorably and faithfully dispensed must first be made familiar with those from whose hands it shall be administered, and a deep study and anxious solicitude is the only sure guaranty of their fitness.— Were the administration of our laws left to persons uneducated, and upon whom the rising sun of intellect as well as judgement had never shone, our moral luminary would become darkened, and the light of equity which now measurably illuminates the horizon, would become entirely extinguished. No man is fully prepared to take his station in society under any circumstances, unless to a greater or less degree he becomes educated. It is true he may pass through his home circle, he may be respected by those around him, his acts of charity and benevolence may gain for him an enviable reputation, his christian deportment may be regarded as worthy of imitation, and upon the whole he may be esteemed as a good and worthy citizen. But place that individual in a responsible station, demand of him duties which require more than natural attainments, and you find him deficient; his natural ability cannot supply the place of learning, and he consequently is left without means to effect his ends. • • • •

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superstition; and though as but the size of a man's hand the small cloud of science may begin to arise, yet if it is fanned by the breezes of perseverance, buoyed up by hope and expectation, it will continue as did the messenger of God's wrath over the guilty [antediluvian]ans, to expand until it shall have covered the entire world, and the drippings thereof shall not be as waters from the angry clouds, but shall be, as I have already remarked, Peace, Union, Love and Harmony. These are the legitimate results or benefits arising therefrom. The foundation of this great and massive temple has for centuries been laid. Its workmen are continually building upon it, yet its walls have scarce been reared above the ground, and time alone will complete the edifice. It requires more workmen. The demand is made upon every one to assist in carrying up the walls: and when this is done, which every man, as the beating anvil to the stroke, has been true to his duty, and when generations shall have spent their pilgrimage in adding to this structure, "then shall be unfolded new duties, and generations succeeding generations shall be called upon to add taste and beauty thereto. Behold you lofty temples, whose spires pierce the clouds, and by their dazzling beauty invite the inspection of heavenly seraphs; and we trace their

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commencement back to the apostolic age, to the days of Andrew, Peter, James and John, the despised but humble fishermen of Gallilee. In obedience to the divine command of their Saviour, filled with zeal and perseverance, they went forth to establish and build up the Christian church, of which Jesus Christ was the foundation; and at that time, corn cribs and palm shades of the region of Judea were their only temples; but nerved by ambition, they persevered, continually increasing in power and might, while through the channels of education have been opened daily improvements; and we now, instead of the corn crib, behold the massive temples, in whose courts may be sung the praises of our great Creator. The rapid strides that education and science have made through our land, might almost be said to be incredible, were it not that our eyes behold the glory thereof.

But comparatively a few years ago and the power of steam in navigating our waters was unknown; while the cities of the old world, and islands of the sea, which were then far away, have by this agency been brought nigh; and distant lands, dedicated to heathenism and idolatry, have seemingly been brought within our own borders, while the power of [Meloch] has been smitten, and the happy influences of Christianity have been shed around.

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The art of printing, this powerful engine of reform, has but for a short time been known, and the good effects arising therefrom are indeed incalculable. Our railroads, our canals, and our more modern improvement of the telegraph, all combine to show the power of science and education. And it would be vain for us to undertake to calculate the many benefits which are the natural and legitimate results thereof. But suffice it to say, that the performance of what was once considered impossible, has now become universal: and all these, together with the royal thrones of the old world, in all their splendor, and the great colossal temple, the American Republic, are but a glorious foreshadowing of man's ultimate destiny. It may be said to be but a rose in the wreath of moral, civil and political glory, which is yet to encircle the globe: and but a few centuries will elapse before the beauty and brilliancy of this now proud Republic shall have passed away, and shall be superseded by beauties far more excellent, more rational in their character, and free and humane in their principles. This is an age of progressive improvement, and under the present circumstances, you might as well undertake to snatch the moon from its orbit, or disrobe the sun of its mantle of glory, as to undertake to stop the machinery now in action, bringing about by its daily revolutions new scenes, to be

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looked upon with wonder and admiration.—  
And before the glory of this Republic shall  
depart, or before her joys shall be made full,  
a new chapter shall be revealed, a new event  
shall be commemorated, and a bright star shall  
glisten in her diadem. Freedom to the cap-  
tive shall be proclaimed throughout the length  
and breadth of her borders, while the smiling  
genius of universal liberty shall perch itself  
upon her banners, and enshroud her golden  
wings amid the stars and stripes which tri-  
umphantly shall float amid the spicy breezes of  
our own happy land. Slavery and despotism  
shall cease to sway its mighty sceptre over  
our country, and the grateful hearts of the  
American people shall make a willing sacrifice  
of this “demi-god,” baptized as he is in the  
blood of millions, upon the sacred altars of  
liberty. The hand-writing upon the wall has  
already been seen, and by using the means  
within our power, by drinking deep at the  
fountain of wisdom, we shall greatly hasten  
the day; and ere we are aware of it, the aus-  
picious morn will usher in upon us, and we  
shall then be enabled, as citizens and freemen,  
to enjoy the fruit of our labor. • • • •

In view of this, then, ladies, persevere!—  
Your influence in this matter will be felt and  
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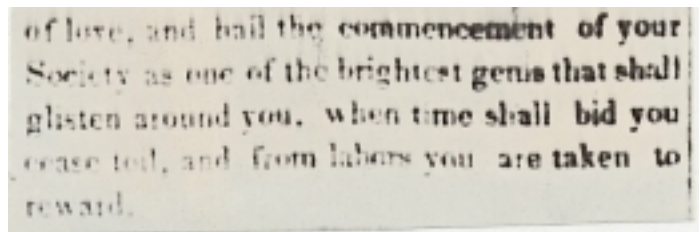


city. The rising generations which now behold your efforts, will have occasion in after years to point to your course as one eminently worthy. But, through carelessness or inattention, should you fail in your undertakings, your failure will prove a clog in the wheel of reform, which for years will impede its progress[.] But by perseverance, as did the noble matrons of Rome, so shall you be enabled to see the works of your hands prospering around you; and though you may not, as did the Roman women, see thrones and kingdoms totter and fall at your command, yet from your presence ignorance and superstition, which is the corrupting moth that undermines and saps the foundation of political glory, shall banish as by magic, and the demoralizing vices of our land, though deep-rooted, shall be plucked up; the ploughshare of truth, skillfully guided by the hand of your Association, shall run deep in the furrow, overturning and exposing to the scorching sun of contempt, which, by its heating rays, will soon wither both root and branch. A halo of light and glory shall encircle your heads, and your pathway shall become brilliant in consequence of the happy influences shed around you; the good and virtuous of [helt] and shall heap garlands of praise upon you. And when years shall have passed over you, will be enabled in ecstasies of joy to look back upon your labor

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May 11, 1849  
Weir, George Jr.  
*North Star*

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