

AMERICAN VOICES

Original Documents, Speeches, Poems, and Stories from American History

Edited by Ray Notgrass



American Voices is a compilation of original sources from American history. It includes many different kinds of documents from the colonial period to modern times. The materials contained in it include official documents, speeches, sermons, songs, hymns, essays, poems, short stories, political writings, and Supreme Court decisions.

Spelling and other grammatical constructions in the documents are often what were used in the original, but some usage has been brought up to date.

As a rule, we present documents in their entirety; but in some cases, we have chosen to provide excerpts of longer works.

American Voices
Edited by Ray Notgrass

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A Description of New England (excerpt)

John Smith (1616)

The adventurer John Smith helped start the Jamestown colony in 1607. He later explored the Massachusetts Bay area. In 1616 he published A Description of New England, which gave the region its name. The book told of his exploits and encouraged settlement of the area. It was to this area that the Separatists and Puritans emigrated.

[If a man] have but the taste of virtue, and magnanimity, what to such a mind can be more pleasant, than planting and building a foundation for his Posterity, got from the rude earth, by God's blessing and his own industry, without prejudice [meaning: indebtedness] to any? If he have any grain of faith or zeal in Religion, what can he do less hurtful to any, or more agreeable to God, than to seek to convert those poor Savages to know Christ and humanity, whose labors with discretion will triple requite thy charge and pains? What so truly suits with honor and honesty as the discovering [of] things unknown? Erecting towns, peopling countries, informing the ignorant, reforming things unjust, teaching virtue, and gain to our native mother country a kingdom to attend to her; find employment for those that are idle, because they know not what to do; so far from wronging any, as to cause Posterity to remember thee; and remembering thee, ever honor that remembrance with praise?



Statue of John Smith in Jamestown, Virginia

Mayflower Compact (1620)

The Separatists who came to America on the Mayflower drew up this document which created a "civil Body Politick" for the settlement. It was a precedent for having a written document when a government was formed.

In the name of God, Amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the Loyal Subjects of our dread Sovereign Lord, King James, by the Grace of God, of England, France and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith, e&.,

Having undertaken for the Glory of God, and Advancement of the Christian Faith, and the Honour of our King and Country, a voyage to plant the first colony in the northern parts of Virginia; do by these presents, solemnly and mutually in the Presence of God and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil Body Politick, for our better Ordering and Preservation, and Furtherance of the Ends aforesaid; And by Virtue hereof to enact, constitute, and frame, such just and equal Laws, Ordinances, Acts, Constitutions and Offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meet and convenient for the General good of the Colony; unto which we promise all due submission and obedience.

In Witness whereof we have hereunto subscribed our names at Cape Cod the eleventh of November, in the Reign of our Sovereign Lord, King James of England, France and Ireland, the eighteenth, and of Scotland the fifty-fourth. Anno Domini, 1620.



Signing the Mayflower Compact

A Model of Christian Charity (excerpts)

John Winthrop (1630)

John Winthrop composed and delivered this sermon in 1630 while he and other Puritans were still on board the Arabella, waiting to disembark in the new land. The sermon is best known for the phrase, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us."

God almighty in His most holy and wise providence hath so disposed of the condition of mankind, as in all times some must be rich, some poor, some high and eminent in power and dignity, others mean and in subjection.

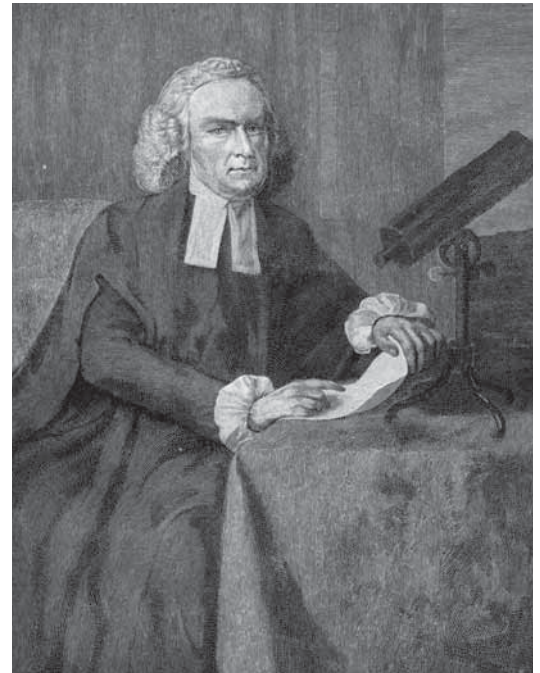
Reason: First, to hold conformity with the rest of His works, being delighted to show forth the glory of His wisdom in the variety and difference of the creatures and the glory of His power, in ordering all these differences for the preservation and good of the whole.

Reason: Secondly, that He might have the more occasion to manifest the work of His spirit. First, upon the wicked in moderating and restraining them, so that the rich and mighty should not eat up the poor, nor the poor and despised rise up against their superiors and shake off their yoke. Secondly, in the regenerate in exercising His graces in them, as in the great ones, their love, mercy, gentleness, temperance, etc., in the poor and inferior sort, their faith, patience, obedience, etc.

Reason: Thirdly, that every man might have need of other, and from hence they might all be knit more nearly together in the bond of brotherly affection. From hence it appears plainly that no man is made more honorable than another, or more wealthy, etc., out of any particular and singular respect to himself, but for the glory of his creator and the common good of the creature, man.

Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into covenant with Him for this work, we have taken out a commission, the Lord hath given us leave to draw our own articles, we have professed to enterprise these actions upon these and these ends, we have hereupon besought Him of favor and blessing. Now if the Lord shall please to hear us, and bring us in peace to the place we desire, then hath He ratified this covenant and sealed our commission, [and] will expect a strict performance of the articles contained in it, but if we shall neglect the observations of these articles which are the ends we have propounded, and dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnal intentions seeking great things for ourselves and our posterity, the Lord will surely break out in wrath against us, be revenged of such a perjured people, and make us know the price of the breach of such a covenant.

Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck and to provide for our posterity is to follow the counsel of Micah, to do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end we must be knit together in this work as one man, we must entertain each other in brotherly affection, we must be willing to abridge ourselves of our superfluities for the supply of others' necessities, we must uphold a familiar commerce together in all

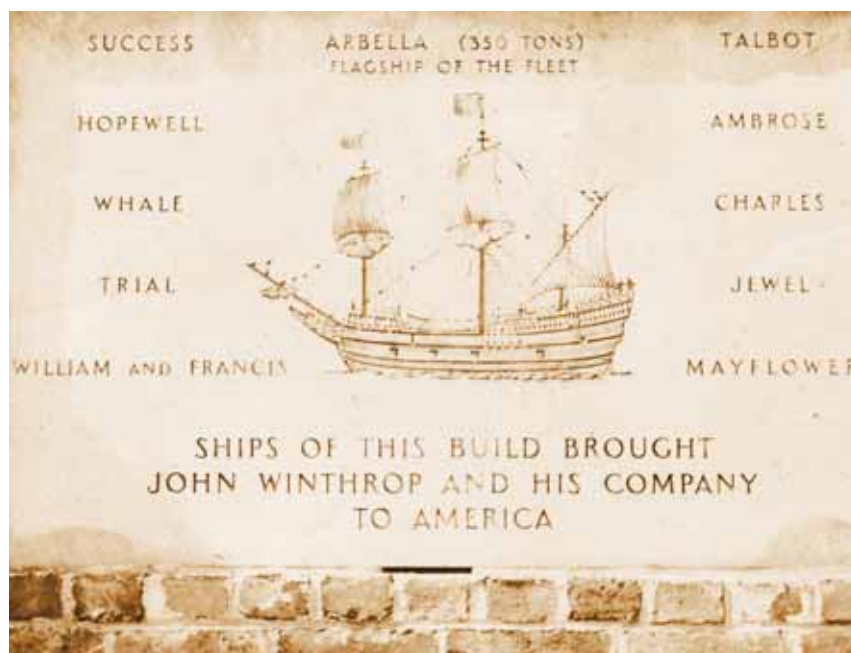


John Winthrop

meekness, gentleness, patience, and liberality, we must delight in each other, make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body. So shall we keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

The Lord will be our God and delight in all our ways, so that we shall see much more of His wisdom, power, goodness, and truth than formerly we have been acquainted with. We shall find that the God of Israel is among us, when ten of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when He shall make us a praise and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantations, the Lord make it like that of New England. For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and byword throughout the world, we shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God and all professors for God's sake, we shall shame the faces of many of God's worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.

And to shut up this discourse with that exhortation of Moses, that faithful servant of the Lord in His last farewell to Israel, Deuteronomy 30, "Beloved there is now set before us life and good, death and evil, in that we are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walk in His ways and to keep His commandments and His ordinance, and His laws, and the articles of our covenant with Him that we may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may bless us in the land whither we go to possess it. But if our hearts shall turn away so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced and worship other gods, our pleasures, our profits, and serve them, it is propounded unto us this day we shall surely perish out of the good land whither we pass over this vast sea to possess it. Therefore let us choose life, that we, and our seed, may live, and by obeying His voice, and cleaving to Him, for He is our life and our prosperity."



The John Harvard Memorial in Boston records aspects of Charlestown's early history. This tablet depicts the ship that brought John Winthrop to America.

Preamble to the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut (1639)

The Fundamental Orders of Connecticut established the government for the colony of Connecticut. This preamble stated the purpose and the faith of the colony's founders.

For as much as it hath pleased Almighty God by the wise disposition of his divine providence so to order and dispose of things that we the Inhabitants and Residents of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield are now cohabiting and dwelling in and upon the River of Connectecotte and the lands thereunto adjoining; and well knowing where a people are gathered together the word of God requires that to maintain the peace and union of such a people there should be an orderly and decent Government established according to God, to order and dispose of the affairs of the people at all seasons as occasion shall require; do therefore associate and conjoin ourselves to be as one Public State or Commonwealth; and do for ourselves and our successors and such as shall be adjoined to us at any time hereafter, enter into Combination and Confederation together, to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess, as also, the discipline of the Churches, which according to the truth of the said Gospel is now practiced amongst us; as also in our civil affairs to be guided and governed according to such Laws, Rules, Orders and Decrees as shall be made, ordered, and decreed as followeth:

The Orders then gave laws for officials, elections, and governmental bodies.



Farm near Farmington, Connecticut, c. 1870

Bay Psalm Book (excerpts)

(1640)

The first book printed in America was the The Whole Booke of Psalmes Faithfully Translated into English Metre (now referred to as the Bay Psalm Book), published in 1640. It was written to encourage the Puritans to sing the Psalms in their assemblies. The following passage from the preface states its purpose.

If therefore the verses are not always so smooth and elegant as some may desire or expect, let them consider that God's Altar needs not our polishings: Ex. 20. For we have respected rather a plain translation, than to smooth our verses with the sweetness of any paraphrase, and so have attended conscience rather than elegance, fidelity rather than poetry, in translating the Hebrew words into English language, and David's poetry into English meter; that so we may sing in Zion the Lord's songs of praise according to his own will; until he take us from hence, and wipe away all our tears, and bid us enter into our Master's joy to sing eternal hallelujahs.

*Two Psalms Rendered into English Meter in the **Bay Psalm Book***

Psalm Twenty-Three

The Lord to me a shepherd is,
Want therefore shall not I.
He in the folds of tender grass
Doth cause me down to lie:

To waters calm me gently leads
Restore my soul doth he:
He doth in paths of righteousness:
For his name's sake lead me.

Yet though in valley of death shad
I walk, none ill I'll fear:
Because thou art with me, thy rod,
And staff my comfort are.

For me a table thou hast spread,
In presence of my foes:
Thou dost anoint my head with oil,
My cup it overflows.

Goodness and mercy surely shall
All my days follow me:
And in the Lord's house I shall dwell
So long as days shall be.

Psalm One Hundred

Make ye a joyful sounding noise
Unto Jehovah, all the earth:
Serve ye Jehovah with gladness:
Before his presence come with mirth.

Know that Jehovah he is God,
Who hath us formed it is he,
And not ourselves: his own people
And sheep of his pasture are we.

Enter into his gates with praise,
Into his courts with thankfulness:
Make ye confession unto him
And his name reverently bless.

Because Jehovah he is good,
For evermore is his mercy
And unto generations all
Continue doth his verity.

Poems by Anne Bradstreet (published 1650)

Anne Bradstreet (1612-1672) was the first poet in America to have works published. She was one of the Puritan settlers who established the Massachusetts Bay colony with John Winthrop in 1630. Her husband was an important figure in the government of the colony, serving for several years as governor. The Bradstreets had eight children. A collection of her poems was published in England in 1650 as the book The Tenth Muse Lately Sprung Up in America. Most of Bradstreet's poems reflect her love of God and family.

Meditation

written after a prolonged illness

My thankful heart with glorying tongue
Shall celebrate Thy name,
Who hath restored, redeemed, recured
From sickness, death, and pain.

I cried, Thou seem'st to make some stay,
I sought more earnestly
And in due time Thou succour'st me
And sent'st me help from high.

Lord, whilst my fleeting time shall last,
Thy goodness let me tell,
And new experience I have gained
My future doubts repel.

An humble, faithful life, O Lord,
Forever let me walk;
Let my obedience testify
My praise lies not in talk.

Accept, O Lord, my simple mite,
For more I cannot give.
What Thou bestow'st I shall restore,
For of thine alms I live.

To My Dear and Loving Husband

If ever two were one, then surely we.
If ever man were loved by wife, then thee;
If ever wife was happy in a man,
Compare with me, ye women, if you can.
I prize thy love more than whole mines of gold,
Or all the riches that the East doth hold.
My love is such that rivers cannot quench,
Nor aught but love from thee, give recompense.
Thy love is such I can no way repay,
The heavens reward thee manifold, I pray.
Then while we live, in love let's so persevere
That when we live no more, we may live ever.



*The area of Maine pictured at right was once
a part of the Massachusetts Bay Colony.*

New England Primer (excerpts)

(1687)

The New England Primer, first published in 1687, was the standard schoolbook for generations of New England children. It contained several parts, all of which taught how to read while instilling moral truths. The primer presented the alphabet in rhyming couplets with each letter accompanied by a woodcut picture. It is said that in its various editions, the couplets for all the letters were changed at various times except the one for A.



The Primer contained a long dialogue among Christ, the Devil, and a Youth. The Youth says, in part:

Those days which God to me doth send,
In pleasure I'm resolved to spend...

The Devil tells him in response:

The resolution which you take,
Sweet youth, it doth me merry make...

The Devil then advises him on how to live: lie, be proud, fight, disobey his parents, etc. The Youth resolves to follow the Devil's advice:

These motions I will cleave unto,
And let all other counsels go:
My heart against my parents now,
Shall hardened be, and will not bow:
I won't submit at all to them,
But all good counsels will condemn,
And what I list that do will I,
And stubborn be continually.

Christ then speaks to the Youth:

Wilt thou, O youth, make such a choice,
And thus obey the Devil's voice?
Cursed sinful ways wilt thou embrace,
And hate the ways of truth and grace?

Come, think on God who did thee make,
And at his presence dread and quake.
Remember him now in thy youth
And let thy soul take hold of truth.

Grant me thy heart, thy folly leave,
And from this lion I'll thee save;
And thou shalt have sweet joy from me
Which shall last to eternity.

The Youth decides to follow the Devil. Then Death comes to the youth to take his body to the grave and send his soul to hell, where it "must lie/With Devils to eternity." The conclusion:

Thus end the days of woeful youth,
Who won't obey nor mind the truth;
Nor hearken to what preachers say,
But do their parents disobey,
They in their youth go down to hell,
Under eternal wrath to dwell.
Many don't live out half their days,
For cleaving unto sinful ways.

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray the Lord my soul to keep,
If I should die before I wake,
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Good children must:

Fear God all day,
Parents obey,
No false things say,
By no sin stray,
Love Christ always,
In secret pray,
Mind little play,
Make no delay,
In doing good.

Duty to God and our Neighbor.

Love God with all your Soul and Strength,
With all your Heart and Mind.
And love your Neighbor as yourself,
Be faithful, just and kind.
Deal with another as you'd have
Another deal with you,
What you're unwilling to receive,
Be sure you never do.

Our Saviour's Golden Rule.

Be you to others kind and true,
As you'd have others be to you:
And neither do nor say to Men
Whate'er you would not take again.

Sayings from Poor Richard's Almanack

Benjamin Franklin (published 1732-1757)

Benjamin Franklin was the classic Enlightenment man. His life (1706-1790) spanned almost all of the eighteenth century. After becoming successful in business, Franklin devoted his energies to public service, philosophy, and scientific interests. His inventions made life better for others, at least in physical terms.

Franklin published Poor Richard's Almanack from 1732 to 1757 under the pen name Richard Saunders. Almanacs were common publications in that day. They provided farming hints, information about the phases of the moon, and other practical tidbits for the average American. Below is a collection of some of the wise sayings that Franklin included in the almanac. We could call this kind of literature secular proverbs. Some of these sayings Franklin wrote himself, while others he copied from other sources. Some are obviously influenced by teachings from the Bible.

Franklin believed in God and in His providential working, but he was reluctant to accept some traditional religious doctrines and practices. We see in Franklin someone who asked questions about the world and sought to find answers. You will enjoy many of the insights that Franklin offered about successful living.

Would you live with ease,
Do what you ought, and not what you please.



Without justice, courage is weak.



Hot things, sharp things, sweet things, cold things
All rot the teeth, and make them look like old things.



Blame-all and Praise-all are two blockheads.



No man e'er was glorious, who was not laborious.



Take this remark from Richard poor and lame,
Whate'er's begun in anger ends in shame.



Look before, or you'll find yourself behind.



Approve not of him who commends all you say.



By diligence and patience, the mouse bit in two the cable.



Full of courtesie, full of craft.



The Family of Fools is ancient.



Necessity never made a good bargain.



Weighty Questions ask for deliberate Answers.



Be slow in chusing a Friend, slower in changing.



Pain wastes the Body, Pleasures the Understanding.



Humility makes great men twice honourable.



There's many witty men whose brains can't fill their bellies.



Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee.



What's given shines,
What's receiv'd is rusty.



Three may keep a Secret, if two of them are dead.



A Lie stands on one leg, Truth on two.



Deny Self for Self's sake.



Ever since Follies have pleas'd, Fools have been able to divert.



It is better to take many Injuries than to give one.



Early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.



To be humble to Superiors is Duty, to Equals
Courtesy, to Inferiors Nobleness.



An old young man, will be a young old man.



Sal laughs at every thing you say. Why?
Because she has fine Teeth.



If what most men admire, they would despise,
'Twould look as if mankind were growing wise.



The Sun never repents of the good he does,
nor does he ever demand a recompence.



Are you angry that others disappoint you?
Remember you cannot depend upon yourself.



One Mend-fault is worth two Findfaults, but one
Findfault is better than two Makefaults.



Fish and Visitors stink in three days.



He that won't be counsell'd, can't be help'd.



Benjamin Franklin

'Tis easy to see, hard to foresee.



The rotten Apple spoils his Companion.



He that can have Patience, can have what he will.



God helps them that help themselves.



None preaches better than the ant, and she says nothing.



The absent are never without fault, nor the present without excuse.



Here comes Courage! that seiz'd the lion absent, and run away from the present mouse.



Don't throw stones at your neighbours, if your own windows are glass.



Good wives and good plantations are made by good husbands.



He that speaks much, is much mistaken.



Creditors have better memories than debtors.



He that scatters Thorns, let him not go barefoot.



God heals, and the Doctor takes the Fees.



If you desire many things, many things will seem but a few.



Mary's mouth costs her nothing, for she never opens it but at others' expence.



Who pleasure gives,
Shall joy receive.



Be neither silly, nor cunning, but wise.



Jack Little sow'd little, and little he'll reap.



All things are cheap to the saving, dear to the wasteful.



Would you persuade, speak of Interest, not of Reason.



Some men grow mad by studying much to know,
But who grows mad by studying good to grow.



If you wou'd not be forgotten
As soon as you are dead and rotten,
Either write things worth reading,
or do things worth the writing.

Don't value a man for the Quality he is of, but for the Qualities he possesses.



There have been as great Souls unknown to fame as any of the most famous.



Do good to thy Friend to keep him, to thy enemy to gain him.



A good Man is seldom uneasy, an ill one never easy.



Teach your child to hold his tongue, he'll learn fast enough to speak.



He that cannot obey, cannot command.



If you would be reveng'd of your enemy, govern your self.



As sore places meet most rubs, proud folks meet most affronts.



He does not possess Wealth, it possesses him.



He that buys upon Credit, pays Interest for what he buys.



He that can take rest is greater than he that can take cities.



He that can compose himself, is wiser than he that composes books.



Well done is better than well said.



No better relation than a prudent and faithful Friend.



At the working man's house hunger looks in but dares not enter.



The worst wheel of the cart makes the most noise.



The noblest question in the world is What Good may I do in it?



Nothing so popular as GOODNESS.



Who has deceiv'd thee so oft as thy self?



Is there any thing Men take more pains about than to render themselves unhappy?



Buy what thou hast no need of; and e'er long thou shalt sell thy necessities.



Let thy Discontents be Secrets.



The painful Preacher, like a candle bright,
Consumes himself in giving others Light.



You may be more happy than Princes, if you will be more virtuous.

Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards.



Since I cannot govern my own tongue, tho' within my own teeth,
how can I hope to govern the tongues of others?



Since thou art not sure of a minute, throw not away an hour.



If you do what you should not, you must hear what you would not.



Wish not so much to live long as to live well.



As we must account for every idle word, so we must for every idle silence.



Time is an herb that cures all Diseases.



None but the well-bred man knows how to confess a fault,
or acknowledge himself in an error.



Drive thy business; let not that drive thee.



There is much difference between imitating a good man, and counterfeiting him.



Wink at small faults; remember thou hast great ones.



Search others for their virtues, thy self for thy vices.



If thou wouldst live long, live well; for Folly and Wickedness shorten Life.



Historians relate, not so much what is done, as what they would have believed.



He that falls in love with himself, will have no Rivals.



Let thy Child's first Lesson be Obedience, and the second may be what thou wilt.



Blessed is he that expects nothing, for he shall never be disappointed.



No Resolution of Repenting hereafter, can be sincere.



Honour thy Father and Mother,
i.e. Live so as to be an Honour to them tho' they are dead.



Industry need not wish.



If thou injurest Conscience, it will have its Revenge on thee.



Pay what you owe, and you'll know what's your own.



Proclaim not all thou knowest, all thou owest, all thou hast, nor all thou canst.

Sin is not hurtful because it is forbidden, but it is forbidden because it's hurtful.
 Nor is a Duty beneficial because it is commanded,
 but it is commanded, because it's beneficial.



Love, and be lov'd.



O Lazy-Bones! Dost thou think God would have given thee Arms and Legs,
 if he had not design'd thou should'st use them.



Great Beauty, great strength, and great Riches, are really and truly of no great Use;
 a right Heart exceeds all.



To bear other People's Afflictions, every one has Courage enough, and to spare.



An empty Bag cannot stand upright.



An open Foe may prove a curse;
 But a pretended friend is worse.



There are lazy Minds as well as lazy Bodies.



Those who in quarrels interpose,
 Must often wipe a bloody nose.



Promises may get thee Friends, but Nonperformance will turn them into Enemies.



In other men we faults can spy,
 And blame the mote that dims their eye;
 Each little speck and blemish find;
 To our own stronger errors blind.



When you speak to a man, look on his eyes; when he speaks to thee, look on his mouth.



Observe all men; thy self most.



Seek Virtue, and, of that possess,
 To Providence, resign the rest.



Fear to do ill, and you need fear nought else.



He makes a Foe who makes a jest.



Employ thy time well, if thou meanest to gain leisure.



E'er you remark another's Sin,
 Bid your own Conscience look within.



Anger and Folly walk cheek-by-jole; Repentance treads on both their Heels.

Be always asham'd to catch thy self idle.



At 20 years of age the Will reigns; at 30 the Wit; at 40 the Judgment.



Lying rides upon Debt's back.



They who have nothing to be troubled at, will be troubled at nothing.



If evils come not, then our fears are vain:
And if they do, Fear but augments the pain.



If you would keep your Secret from an enemy, tell it not to a friend.



Bess brags she 'as Beauty, and can prove the same;
As how? why thus, Sir, 'tis her puppy's name.



Up, Sluggard, and waste not life; in the grave will be sleeping enough.



There are no fools so troublesome as those that have wit.



Quarrels never could last long,
If on one side only lay the wrong.



Let no Pleasure tempt thee, no Profit allure thee,
no Ambition corrupt thee, no Example sway thee, no Persuasion move thee,
to do any thing which thou knowest to be Evil;
So shalt thou always live jollily: for a good Conscience is a continual Christmass.



Have you somewhat to do to-morrow; do it to-day.



Speak and speed: the closed mouth catches no flies.



Visit your Aunt, but not every Day; and call at your Brother's, but not every night.



Ben beats his Pate, and fancies wit will come;
But he may knock, there's no body at home.



What is Serving God? 'Tis doing Good to Man.



After Fish, Milk do not wish.



Death takes no bribes.



One good Husband is worth two good Wives;
for the scarcer things are the more they're valued.



He that speaks ill of the Mare, will buy her.



They who have nothing to trouble them, will be troubled at nothing.



If thou dost ill, the joy fades, not the pains;
If well, the pain doth fade, the joy remains.



To err is human, to repent divine, to persist devilish.



Money and Man a mutual Friendship show:
Man makes false Money, Money makes Man so.



With the old Almanack and the old Year,
Leave thy old Vices, tho' ever so dear.



It preserves the Memory, it helps the Understanding, it allays the Heat of Lust;
it brings a Man to a Consideration of his latter End;
it makes the Body a fit Tabernacle for the Lord to dwell in;
which makes us happy in this World,
and eternally happy in the World to come, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour.



How few there are who have courage enough to own their Faults,
or resolution enough to mend them!



The World is full of fools and faint hearts; and yet every one has courage enough
to bear the misfortunes, and wisdom enough to manage the Affairs of his neighbour.



Content and Riches seldom meet together,
Riches take thou, contentment I had rather.



Speak with contempt of none, from slave to king,
The meanest Bee hath, and will use, a sting.



Borgen macht sorgen.
[German: Lending makes worry.]



Tis easy to frame a good bold resolution;
but hard is the Task that concerns execution.



The sleeping Fox catches no poultry. Up! up!



What you would seem to be, be really.



Ah simple Man! when a boy two precious jewels were given thee,
Time, and good Advice; one thou hast lost, and the other thrown away.



Many a long dispute among Divines may be thus abridg'd,
It is so: It is not so. It is so; It is not so.



How many observe Christ's Birth-day! How few, his Precepts!
O! 'tis easier to keep Holidays than Commandments.



Who is strong? He that can conquer his bad Habits.
Who is rich? He that rejoices in his Portion.



He that has not got a Wife, is not yet a compleat Man.



Hear Reason, or she'll make you feel her.



Keep thou from the Opportunity, and God will keep thee from the Sin.



The same man cannot be both Friend and Flatterer.



He who multiplies Riches multiplies Cares.



The Things which hurt, instruct.



The Eye of a Master, will do more Work than his Hand.



A soft Tongue may strike hard.



If you'd be belov'd, make yourself amiable.



A true Friend is the best Possession.



Fear God, and your Enemies will fear you.



The good or ill hap of a good or ill life,
is the good or ill choice of a good or ill wife.



A quiet Conscience sleeps in Thunder,
but Rest and Guilt live far asunder.



Epitaph on a Scolding Wife by her Husband.
Here my poor Bridget's Corpse doth lie,
she is at rest—and so am I.



It's common for Men to give six pretended Reasons instead of one real one.



He's a Fool that cannot conceal his Wisdom.



You may talk too much on the best of subjects.



No gains without pains.



Many complain of their Memory, few of their Judgment.



'Tis easier to prevent bad habits than to break them.



He that resolves to mend hereafter, resolves not to mend now.



When the Well's dry, we know the Worth of Water.



A quarrelsome Man has no good Neighbours.



Vice knows she's ugly, so puts on her Mask.



Dost thou love Life? Then do not squander Time; for that's the Stuff Life is made of.



Good Sense is a Thing all need, few have, and none think they want.



Want of Care does us more Damage than Want of Knowledge.



The Sting of a Reproach, is the Truth of it.



Do me the Favour to deny me at once.



There is no Man so bad, but he secretly respects the Good.



A good Example is the best sermon.



Courage would fight, but Discretion won't let him.



We are not so sensible of the greatest Health as of the least Sickness.



Better is a little with content than much with contention.



A Slip of the Foot you may soon recover:
But a Slip of the Tongue you may never get over.



Penny wise, pound foolish.



Reader, I wish thee Health, Wealth, Happiness,
And may kind Heaven thy Year's Industry bless.



Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God

Jonathan Edwards (1741)

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is recognized as perhaps the most brilliant theologian America has ever produced. He entered Yale when he was 13 and graduated as valedictorian four years later. He was strongly Calvinistic, and he preached and wrote against any tendency to weaken Calvinist doctrine. Edwards wrote many books of theology and was a missionary to the Native Americans for a time. He was inaugurated as president of the College of New Jersey in 1758 but died five weeks later from a smallpox vaccination. He delivered the following sermon in Enfield, Connecticut, on July 8, 1741.



Jonathan Edwards

—*Their foot shall slide in due time.*—
Deuteronomy 32:35

In this verse is threatened the vengeance of God on the wicked unbelieving Israelites, who were God's visible people, and who lived under the means of grace; but who, notwithstanding all God's wonderful works towards them, remained (as verse 28) void of counsel, having no understanding in them. Under all the cultivations of heaven, they brought forth bitter and poisonous fruit; as in the two verses next preceding the text. The expression I have chosen for my text, "their foot shall slide in due time," seems to imply the following things, relating to the punishment and destruction to which these wicked Israelites were exposed.

1. That they were always exposed to destruction; as one that stands or walks in slippery places is always exposed to fall. This is implied in the manner of their destruction coming upon them, being represented by their foot sliding. The same is expressed, Psalm 73:18. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction."

2. It implies, that they were always exposed to sudden unexpected destruction. As he that walks in slippery places is every moment liable to fall, he cannot foresee one moment whether he shall stand or fall the next; and when he does fall, he falls at once without warning; Which is also expressed in Psalm 73:18, 19. "Surely thou didst set them in slippery places; thou castedst them down into destruction: How are they brought into desolation as in a moment!"

3. Another thing implied is, that they are liable to fall of themselves, without being thrown down by the hand of another; as he that stands or walks on slippery ground needs nothing but his own weight to throw him down.

4. That the reason why they are not fallen already and do not fall now is only that God's appointed time is not come. For it is said, that when that due time, or appointed time comes, their foot shall slide. Then they shall be left to fall, as they are inclined by their own weight. God will not hold them up in these slippery places any longer, but will let them go; and then, at that very instant, they shall fall into destruction; as he that stands on such slippery declining ground, on the edge of a pit, he cannot stand alone, when he is let go he immediately falls and is lost.

The observation from the words that I would now insist upon is this. "There is nothing that keeps wicked men at any one moment out of hell, but the mere pleasure of God." By the mere pleasure of God, I

mean his sovereign pleasure, his arbitrary will, restrained by no obligation, hindered by no manner of difficulty, any more than if nothing else but God's mere will had in the least degree, or in any respect whatsoever, any hand in the preservation of wicked men one moment. The truth of this observation may appear by the following considerations.



Yale University

1. There is no want of power in God to cast wicked men into hell at any moment. Men's hands cannot be strong when God rises up. The strongest have no power to resist him, nor can any deliver out of his hands. He is not only able to cast wicked men into hell, but he can most easily do it. Sometimes an earthly prince meets with a great deal of difficulty to subdue a rebel, who has found means to fortify himself, and has made himself strong by the numbers of his followers. But it is not so with God. There is no fortress that is any defence from the power of God. Though hand join in hand, and vast multitudes of God's enemies combine and associate themselves, they are easily broken in pieces. They are as great heaps of light chaff before the whirlwind; or large quantities of dry stubble before devouring flames. We find it easy to tread on and crush a worm that we see crawling on the earth; so it is easy for us to cut or singe a slender thread that any thing hangs by: thus easy is it for God, when he pleases, to cast his enemies down to hell. What are we, that we should think to stand before him, at whose rebuke the earth trembles, and before whom the rocks are thrown down?

2. They deserve to be cast into hell; so that divine justice never stands in the way, it makes no objection against God's using his power at any moment to destroy them. Yea, on the contrary, justice calls aloud for an infinite punishment of their sins. Divine justice says of the tree that brings forth such grapes of Sodom, "Cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground?" Luke 13:7. The sword of divine justice is every moment brandished over their heads, and it is nothing but the hand of arbitrary mercy, and God's mere will, that holds it back.

3. They are already under a sentence of condemnation to hell. They do not only justly deserve to be cast down thither, but the sentence of the law of God, that eternal and immutable rule of righteousness that God has fixed between him and mankind, is gone out against them, and stands against them; so that they are bound over already to hell. John 3:18. "He that believeth not is condemned already." So that every unconverted man properly belongs to hell; that is his place; from thence he is, John 8:23. "Ye are from beneath." And thither he is bound; it is the place that justice, and God's word, and the sentence of his unchangeable law assign to him.

4. They are now the objects of that very same anger and wrath of God, that is expressed in the torments of hell. And the reason why they do not go down to hell at each moment, is not because God, in whose power they are, is not then very angry with them; as he is with many miserable creatures now tormented in hell, who there feel and bear the fierceness of his wrath. Yea, God is a great deal more angry with great numbers that are now on earth: yea, doubtless, with many that are now in this congregation, who it may be are at ease, than he is with many of those who are now in the flames of hell.

So that it is not because God is unmindful of their wickedness, and does not resent it, that he does not let loose his hand and cut them off. God is not altogether such an one as themselves, though they may imagine him to be so. The wrath of God burns against them, their damnation does not slumber; the pit is prepared,

the fire is made ready, the furnace is now hot, ready to receive them; the flames do now rage and glow. The glittering sword is whet, and held over them, and the pit hath opened its mouth under them.

5. The devil stands ready to fall upon them, and seize them as his own, at what moment God shall permit him. They belong to him; he has their souls in his possession, and under his dominion. The scripture represents them as his goods, Luke 11:12. The devils watch them; they are ever by them at their right hand; they stand waiting for them, like greedy hungry lions that see their prey, and expect to have it, but are for the present kept back. If God should withdraw his hand, by which they are restrained, they would in one moment fly upon their poor souls. The old serpent is gaping for them; hell opens its mouth wide to receive them; and if God should permit it, they would be hastily swallowed up and lost.

6. There are in the souls of wicked men those hellish principles reigning, that would presently kindle and flame out into hell fire, if it were not for God's restraints. There is laid in the very nature of carnal men, a foundation for the torments of hell. There are those corrupt principles, in reigning power in them, and in full possession of them, that are seeds of hell fire. These principles are active and powerful, exceeding violent in their nature, and if it were not for the restraining hand of God upon them, they would soon break out, they would flame out after the same manner as the same corruptions, the same enmity does in the hearts of damned souls, and would beget the same torments as they do in them. The souls of the wicked are in scripture compared to the troubled sea, Isaiah 57:20. For the present, God restrains their wickedness by his mighty power, as he does the raging waves of the troubled sea, saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;" but if God should withdraw that restraining power, it would soon carry all before it. Sin is the ruin and misery of the soul; it is destructive in its nature; and if God should leave it without restraint, there would need nothing else to make the soul perfectly miserable. The corruption of the heart of man is immoderate and boundless in its fury; and while wicked men live here, it is like fire pent up by God's restraints, whereas if it were let loose, it would set on fire the course of nature; and as the heart is now a sink of sin, so if sin was not restrained, it would immediately turn the soul into a fiery oven, or a furnace of fire and brimstone.

7. It is no security to wicked men for one moment, that there are no visible means of death at hand. It is no security to a natural man, that he is now in health, and that he does not see which way he should now immediately go out of the world by any accident, and that there is no visible danger in any respect in his circumstances. The manifold and continual experience of the world in all ages, shows this is no evidence, that a man is not on the very brink of eternity, and that the next step will not be into another world. The unseen, unthought-of ways and means of persons going suddenly out of the world are innumerable and inconceivable. Unconverted men walk over the pit of hell on a rotten covering, and there are innumerable places in this covering so weak that they will not bear their weight, and these places are not seen. The arrows of death fly unseen at noon-day; the sharpest sight cannot discern them. God has so many different unsearchable ways of taking wicked men out of the world and sending them to hell, that there is nothing to make it appear, that God had need to be at the expense of a miracle, or go out of the ordinary course of his providence, to destroy any wicked man, at any moment. All the means that there are of sinners going out of the world, are so in God's hands, and so universally and absolutely subject to his power and determination, that it does not depend at all the less on the mere will of God, whether sinners shall at any moment go to hell, than if means were never made use of, or at all concerned in the case.

8. Natural men's prudence and care to preserve their own lives, or the care of others to preserve them, do not secure them a moment. To this, divine providence and universal experience do also bear testimony. There is this clear evidence that men's own wisdom is no security to them from death; that if it were otherwise we should see some difference between the wise and politic men of the world, and others, with regard to their

liableness to early and unexpected death: but how is it in fact? Ecclesiastes 2:16. "How dieth the wise man? even as the fool."

9. All wicked men's pains and contrivance which they use to escape hell, while they continue to reject Christ, and so remain wicked men, do not secure them from hell one moment. Almost every natural man that hears of hell, flatters himself that he shall escape it; he depends upon himself for his own security; he flatters himself in what he has done, in what he is now doing, or what he intends to do. Every one lays out matters in his own mind how he shall avoid damnation, and flatters himself that he contrives well for himself, and that his schemes will not fail. They hear indeed that there are but few saved, and that the greater part of men that have died heretofore are gone to hell; but each one imagines that he lays out matters better for his own escape than others have done. He does not intend to come to that place of torment; he says within himself, that he intends to take effectual care, and to order matters so for himself as not to fail.

But the foolish children of men miserably delude themselves in their own schemes, and in confidence in their own strength and wisdom; they trust to nothing but a shadow. The greater part of those who heretofore have lived under the same means of grace, and are now dead, are undoubtedly gone to hell; and it was not because they were not as wise as those who are now alive: it was not because they did not lay out matters as well for themselves to secure their own escape. If we could speak with them, and inquire of them, one by one, whether they expected, when alive, and when they used to hear about hell, ever to be the subjects of misery: we doubtless, should hear one and another reply, "No, I never intended to come here: I had laid out matters otherwise in my mind; I thought I should contrive well for myself—I thought my scheme good. I intended to take effectual care; but it came upon me unexpected; I did not look for it at that time, and in that manner; it came as a thief—Death outwitted me: God's wrath was too quick for me. Oh, my cursed foolishness! I was flattering myself, and pleasing myself with vain dreams of what I would do hereafter; and when I was saying, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction came upon me."

10. God has laid himself under no obligation, by any promise to keep any natural man out of hell one moment. God certainly has made no promises either of eternal life, or of any deliverance or preservation from eternal death, but what are contained in the covenant of grace, the promises that are given in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen. But surely they have no interest in the promises of the covenant of grace who are not the children of the covenant, who do not believe in any of the promises, and have no interest in the Mediator of the covenant.

So that, whatever some have imagined and pretended about promises made to natural men's earnest seeking and knocking, it is plain and manifest, that whatever pains a natural man takes in religion, whatever prayers he makes, till he believes in Christ, God is under no manner of obligation to keep him a moment from eternal destruction.

So that, thus it is that natural men are held in the hand of God, over the pit of hell; they have deserved the fiery pit, and are already sentenced to it; and God is dreadfully provoked, his anger is as great towards them as to those that are actually suffering the executions of the fierceness of his wrath in hell, and they have done nothing in the least to appease or abate that anger, neither is God in the least bound by any promise to hold them up one moment; the devil is waiting for them, hell is gaping for them, the flames gather and flash about them, and would fain lay hold on them, and swallow them up; the fire pent up in their own hearts is struggling to break out: and they have no interest in any Mediator, there are no means within reach that can be any security to them. In short, they have no refuge, nothing to take hold of; all that preserves them every moment is the mere arbitrary will, and uncovenanted, unobliged forbearance of an incensed God.

Application

The use of this awful subject may be for awakening unconverted persons in this congregation. This that you have heard is the case of every one of you that are out of Christ. That world of misery, that take of burning brimstone, is extended abroad under you. There is the dreadful pit of the glowing flames of the wrath of God; there is hell's wide gaping mouth open; and you have nothing to stand upon, nor any thing to take hold of; there is nothing between you and hell but the air; it is only the power and mere pleasure of God that holds you up.

You probably are not sensible of this; you find you are kept out of hell, but do not see the hand of God in it; but look at other things, as the good state of your bodily constitution, your care of your own life, and the means you use for your own preservation. But indeed these things are nothing; if God should withdraw his hand, they would avail no more to keep you from falling, than the thin air to hold up a person that is suspended in it.

Your wickedness makes you as it were heavy as lead, and to tend downwards with great weight and pressure towards hell; and if God should let you go, you would immediately sink and swiftly descend and plunge into the bottomless gulf, and your healthy constitution, and your own care and prudence, and best contrivance, and all your righteousness, would have no more influence to uphold you and keep you out of hell, than a spider's web would have to stop a falling rock. Were it not for the sovereign pleasure of God, the earth would not bear you one moment; for you are a burden to it; the creation groans with you; the creature is made subject to the bondage of your corruption, not willingly; the sun does not willingly shine upon you to give you light to serve sin and Satan; the earth does not willingly yield her increase to satisfy your lusts; nor is it willingly a stage for your wickedness to be acted upon; the air does not willingly serve you for breath to maintain the flame of life in your vitals, while you spend your life in the service of God's enemies. God's creatures are good, and were made for men to serve God with, and do not willingly subserve to any other purpose, and groan when they are abused to purposes so directly contrary to their nature and end. And the world would spew you out, were it not for the sovereign hand of him who hath subjected it in hope. There are the black clouds of God's wrath now hanging directly over your heads, full of the dreadful storm, and big with thunder; and were it not for the restraining hand of God, it would immediately burst forth upon you. The sovereign pleasure of God, for the present, stays his rough wind; otherwise it would come with fury, and your destruction would come like a whirlwind, and you would be like the chaff on the summer threshing floor.

The wrath of God is like great waters that are dammed for the present; they increase more and more, and rise higher and higher, till an outlet is given; and the longer the stream is stopped, the more rapid and mighty is its course, when once it is let loose. It is true, that judgment against your evil works has not been executed hitherto; the floods of God's vengeance have been withheld; but your guilt in the mean time is constantly increasing, and you are every day treasuring up more wrath; the waters are constantly rising, and waxing more and more mighty; and there is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, that holds the waters back, that are unwilling to be stopped, and press hard to go forward. If God should only withdraw his hand from the flood-gate, it would immediately fly open, and the fiery floods of the fierceness and wrath of God, would rush forth with inconceivable fury, and would come upon you with omnipotent power; and if your strength were ten thousand times greater than it is, yea, ten thousand times greater than the strength of the stoutest, sturdiest devil in hell, it would be nothing to withstand or endure it.

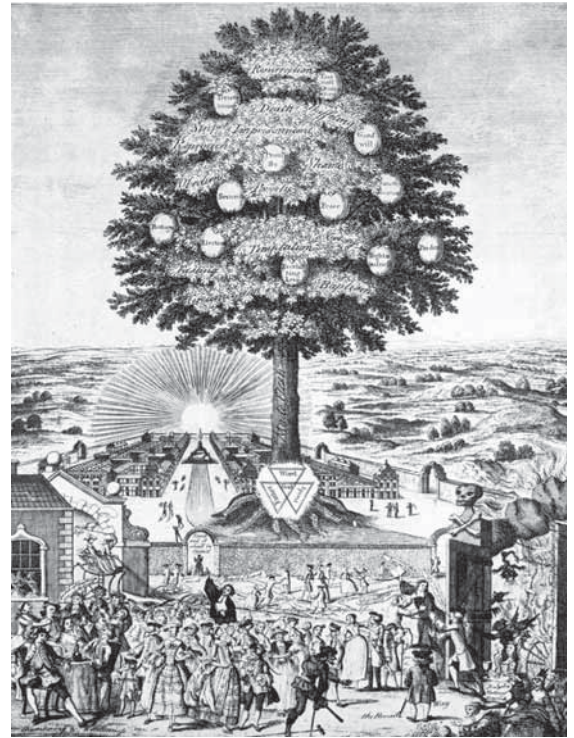
The bow of God's wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood.

Thus all you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to a state of new, and before altogether unexperienced light and life, are in the hands of an angry God. However you may have reformed your life in many things, and may have had religious affections, and may keep up a form of religion in your families and closets, and in the house of God, it is nothing but his mere pleasure that keeps you from being this moment swallowed up in everlasting destruction. However unconvinced you may now be of the truth of what you hear, by and by you will be fully convinced of it. Those that are gone from being in the like circumstances with you, see that it was so with them; for destruction came suddenly upon most of them; when they expected nothing of it, and while they were saying, Peace and safety: now they see, that those things on which they depended for peace and safety, were nothing but thin air and empty shadows.

The God that holds you over the pit of hell, much as one holds a spider, or some loathsome insect over the fire, abhors you, and is dreadfully provoked: his wrath towards you burns like fire; he looks upon you as worthy of nothing else, but to be cast into the fire; he is of purer eyes than to bear to have you in his sight; you are ten thousand times more abominable in his eyes, than the most hateful venomous serpent is in ours. You have offended him infinitely more than ever a stubborn rebel did his prince; and yet it is nothing but his hand that holds you from falling into the fire every moment. It is to be ascribed to nothing else, that you did not go to hell the last night; that you was suffered to awake again in this world, after you closed your eyes to sleep. And there is no other reason to be given, why you have not dropped into hell since you arose in the morning, but that God's hand has held you up. There is no other reason to be given why you have not gone to hell, since you have sat here in the house of God, provoking his pure eyes by your sinful wicked manner of attending his solemn worship. Yea, there is nothing else that is to be given as a reason why you do not this very moment drop down into hell.

O sinner! Consider the fearful danger you are in: it is a great furnace of wrath, a wide and bottomless pit, full of the fire of wrath, that you are held over in the hand of that God, whose wrath is provoked and incensed as much against you, as against many of the damned in hell. You hang by a slender thread, with the flames of divine wrath flashing about it, and ready every moment to singe it, and burn it asunder; and you have no interest in any Mediator, and nothing to lay hold of to save yourself, nothing to keep off the flames of wrath, nothing of your own, nothing that you ever have done, nothing that you can do, to induce God to spare you one moment. And consider here more particularly,

1. Whose wrath it is: it is the wrath of the infinite God. If it were only the wrath of man, though it were of the most potent prince, it would be comparatively little to be regarded. The wrath of kings is very much dreaded, especially of absolute monarchs, who have the possessions and lives of their subjects wholly in their power, to be disposed of at their mere will. Proverbs 20:2. "The fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion: Whoso provoketh him to anger, sinneth against his own soul." The subject that very much enrages an arbitrary prince,



This eighteenth-century illustration shows two ministers urging a crowd of sinners to choose the path of righteousness.

is liable to suffer the most extreme torments that human art can invent, or human power can inflict. But the greatest earthly potentates in their greatest majesty and strength, and when clothed in their greatest terrors, are but feeble, despicable worms of the dust, in comparison of the great and almighty Creator and King of heaven and earth. It is but little that they can do, when most enraged, and when they have exerted the utmost of their fury. All the kings of the earth, before God, are as grasshoppers; they are nothing, and less than nothing: both their love and their hatred is to be despised. The wrath of the great King of kings, is as much more terrible than theirs, as his majesty is greater. Luke 12:4, 5. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that, have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom you shall fear: fear him, which after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell: yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

2. It is the fierceness of his wrath that you are exposed to. We often read of the fury of God; as in Isaiah 59:18. "According to their deeds, accordingly he will repay fury to his adversaries." So Isaiah 66:15. "For behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with his chariots like a whirlwind, to render his anger with fury, and his rebuke with flames of fire." And in many other places. So, Revelation 19:15, we read of "the wine press of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." The words are exceeding terrible. If it had only been said, "the wrath of God," the words would have implied that which is infinitely dreadful: but it is "the fierceness and wrath of God." The fury of God! the fierceness of Jehovah! Oh, how dreadful that must be! Who can utter or conceive what such expressions carry in them! But it is also "the fierceness and wrath of almighty God." As though there would be a very great manifestation of his almighty power in what the fierceness of his wrath should inflict, as though omnipotence should be as it were enraged, and exerted, as men are wont to exert their strength in the fierceness of their wrath. Oh! then, what will be the consequence! What will become of the poor worms that shall suffer it! Whose hands can be strong? And whose heart can endure? To what a dreadful, inexpressible, inconceivable depth of misery must the poor creature be sunk who shall be the subject of this!

Consider this, you that are here present, that yet remain in an unregenerate state. That God will execute the fierceness of his anger, implies, that he will inflict wrath without any pity. When God beholds the ineffable extremity of your case, and sees your torment to be so vastly disproportioned to your strength, and sees how your poor soul is crushed, and sinks down, as it were, into an infinite gloom; he will have no compassion upon you, he will not forbear the executions of his wrath, or in the least lighten his hand; there shall be no moderation or mercy, nor will God then at all stay his rough wind; he will have no regard to your welfare, nor be at all careful lest you should suffer too much in any other sense, than only that you shall not suffer beyond what strict justice requires. Nothing shall be withheld, because it is so hard for you to bear. Ezekiel 8:18. "Therefore will I also deal in fury: mine eye shall not spare, neither will I have pity; and though they cry in mine ears with a loud voice, yet I will not hear them." Now God stands ready to pity you; this is a day of mercy; you may cry now with some encouragement of obtaining mercy. But when once the day of mercy is past, your most lamentable and dolorous cries and shrieks will be in vain; you will be wholly lost and thrown away of God, as to any regard to your welfare. God will have no other use to put you to, but to suffer misery; you shall be continued in being to no other end; for you will be a vessel of wrath fitted to destruction; and there will be no other use of this vessel, but to be filled full of wrath. God will be so far from pitying you when you cry to him, that it is said he will only "laugh and mock," Proverbs 1:25, 26, &c.

How awful are those words, Isaiah 63:3, which are the words of the great God. "I will tread them in mine anger, and will trample them in my fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon my garments, and I will stain all my raiment." It is perhaps impossible to conceive of words that carry in them greater manifestations of these three things, viz. contempt, and hatred, and fierceness of indignation. If you cry to God to pity you, he will be so far from pitying you in your doleful case, or showing you the least regard or favour, that instead of that,

he will only tread you under foot. And though he will know that you cannot bear the weight of omnipotence treading upon you, yet he will not regard that, but he will crush you under his feet without mercy; he will crush out your blood, and make it fly, and it shall be sprinkled on his garments, so as to stain all his raiment. He will not only hate you, but he will have you in the utmost contempt: no place shall be thought fit for you, but under his feet to be trodden down as the mire of the streets.

3. The misery you are exposed to is that which God will inflict to that end, that he might show what that wrath of Jehovah is. God hath had it on his heart to show to angels and men, both how excellent his love is, and also how terrible his wrath is. Sometimes earthly kings have a mind to show how terrible their wrath is, by the extreme punishments they would execute on those that would provoke them. Nebuchadnezzar, that mighty and haughty monarch of the Chaldean empire, was willing to show his wrath when enraged with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; and accordingly gave orders that the burning fiery furnace should be heated seven times hotter than it was before; doubtless, it was raised to the utmost degree of fierceness that human art could raise it. But the great God is also willing to show his wrath, and magnify his awful majesty and mighty power in the extreme sufferings of his enemies. Romans 9:22. "What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endured with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction?" And seeing this is his design, and what he has determined, even to show how terrible the unrestrained wrath, the fury and fierceness of Jehovah is, he will do it to effect. There will be something accomplished and brought to pass that will be dreadful with a witness. When the great and angry God hath risen up and executed his awful vengeance on the poor sinner, and the wretch is actually suffering the infinite weight and power of his indignation, then will God call upon the whole universe to behold that awful majesty and mighty power that is to be seen in it. Isaiah 33:12-14. "And the people shall be as the burnings of lime, as thorns cut up shall they be burnt in the fire. Hear ye that are far off, what I have done; and ye that are near, acknowledge my might. The sinners in Zion are afraid; fearfulness hath surprised the hypocrites," &c.

Thus it will be with you that are in an unconverted state, if you continue in it; the infinite might, and majesty, and terribleness of the omnipotent God shall be magnified upon you, in the ineffable strength of your torments. You shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb; and when you shall be in this state of suffering, the glorious inhabitants of heaven shall go forth and look on the awful spectacle, that they may see what the wrath and fierceness of the Almighty is; and when they have seen it, they will fall down and adore that great power and majesty. Isaiah 66:23, 24. "And it shall come to pass, that from one new moon to another, and from one sabbath to another, shall all flesh come to worship before me, saith the Lord. And they shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against me; for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched, and they shall be an abhorring unto all flesh."

4. It is everlasting wrath. It would be dreadful to suffer this fierceness and wrath of Almighty God one moment; but you must suffer it to all eternity. There will be no end to this exquisite horrible misery. When you look forward, you shall see a long for ever, a boundless duration before you, which will swallow up your thoughts, and amaze your soul; and you will absolutely despair of ever having any deliverance, any end, any mitigation, any rest at all. You will know certainly that you must wear out long ages, millions of millions of ages, in wrestling and conflicting with this almighty merciless vengeance; and then when you have so done, when so many ages have actually been spent by you in this manner, you will know that all is but a point to what remains. So that your punishment will indeed be infinite. Oh, who can express what the state of a soul in such circumstances is! All that we can possibly say about it, gives but a very feeble, faint representation of it; it is inexpressible and inconceivable: For "who knows the power of God's anger?"

How dreadful is the state of those that are daily and hourly in the danger of this great wrath and infinite misery! But this is the dismal case of every soul in this congregation that has not been born again, however moral and strict, sober and religious, they may otherwise be. Oh that you would consider it, whether you be young or old! There is reason to think, that there are many in this congregation now hearing this discourse, that will actually be the subjects of this very misery to all eternity. We know not who they are, or in what seats they sit, or what thoughts they now have. It may be they are now at ease, and hear all these things without much disturbance, and are now flattering themselves that they are not the persons, promising themselves that they shall escape. If we knew that there was one person, and but one, in the whole congregation, that was to be the subject of this misery, what an awful thing would it be to think of! If we knew who it was, what an awful sight would it be to see such a person! How might all the rest of the congregation lift up a lamentable and bitter cry over him! But, alas! instead of one, how many is it likely will remember this discourse in hell? And it would be a wonder, if some that are now present should not be in hell in a very short time, even before this year is out. And it would be no wonder if some persons, that now sit here, in some seats of this meeting-house, in health, quiet and secure, should be there before tomorrow morning. Those of you that finally continue in a natural condition, that shall keep out of hell longest will be there in a little time! your damnation does not slumber; it will come swiftly, and, in all probability, very suddenly upon many of you. You have reason to wonder that you are not already in hell. It is doubtless the case of some whom you have seen and known, that never deserved hell more than you, and that heretofore appeared as likely to have been now alive as you. Their case is past all hope; they are crying in extreme misery and perfect despair; but here you are in the land of the living and in the house of God, and have an opportunity to obtain salvation. What would not those poor damned hopeless souls give for one day's opportunity such as you now enjoy!

And now you have an extraordinary opportunity, a day wherein Christ has thrown the door of mercy wide open, and stands in calling and crying with a loud voice to poor sinners; a day wherein many are flocking to him, and pressing into the kingdom of God. Many are daily coming from the east, west, north and south; many that were very lately in the same miserable condition that you are in, are now in a happy state, with their hearts filled with love to him who has loved them, and washed them from their sins in his own blood, and rejoicing in hope of the glory of God. How awful is it to be left behind at such a day! To see so many others feasting, while you are pining and perishing! To see so many rejoicing and singing for joy of heart, while you have cause to mourn for sorrow of heart, and howl for vexation of spirit! How can you rest one moment in such a condition? Are not your souls as precious as the souls of the people at Suffield, where they are flocking from day to day to Christ?

Are there not many here who have lived long in the world, and are not to this day born again? and so are aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and have done nothing ever since they have lived, but treasure up wrath against the day of wrath? Oh, sirs, your case, in an especial manner, is extremely dangerous. Your guilt and hardness of heart is extremely great. Do you not see how generally persons of your years are passed over and left, in the present remarkable and wonderful dispensation of God's mercy? You had need to consider yourselves, and awake thoroughly out of sleep. You cannot bear the fierceness and wrath of the infinite God. And you, young men, and young women, will you neglect this precious season which you now enjoy, when so many others of your age are renouncing all youthful vanities, and flocking to Christ? You especially have now an extraordinary opportunity; but if you neglect it, it will soon be with you as with those persons who spent all the precious days of youth in sin, and are now come to such a dreadful pass in blindness and hardness. And you, children, who are unconverted, do not you know that you are going down to hell, to bear the dreadful wrath of that God, who is now angry with you every day and every night? Will you be content to be the

children of the devil, when so many other children in the land are converted, and are become the holy and happy children of the King of kings?

And let every one that is yet out of Christ, and hanging over the pit of hell, whether they be old men and women, or middle aged, or young people, or little children, now hearken to the loud calls of God's word and providence. This acceptable year of the Lord, a day of such great favour to some, will doubtless be a day of as remarkable vengeance to others. Men's hearts harden, and their guilt increases apace at such a day as this, if they neglect their souls; and never was there so great danger of such persons being given up to hardness of heart and blindness of mind. God seems now to be hastily gathering in his elect in all parts of the land; and probably the greater part of adult persons that ever shall be saved, will be brought in now in a little time, and that it will be as it was on the great out-pouring of the Spirit upon the Jews in the apostles' days; the election will obtain, and the rest will be blinded. If this should be the case with you, you will eternally curse this day, and will curse the day that ever you was born, to see such a season of the pouring out of God's Spirit, and will wish that you had died and gone to hell before you had seen it. Now undoubtedly it is, as it was in the days of John the Baptist, the axe is in an extraordinary manner laid at the root of the trees, that every tree which brings not forth good fruit, may be hewn down and cast into the fire.

Therefore, let every one that is out of Christ, now awake and fly from the wrath to come. The wrath of Almighty God is now undoubtedly hanging over a great part of this congregation. Let every one fly out of Sodom: "Haste and escape for your lives, look not behind you, escape to the mountain, lest you be consumed."



Painting of Sodom and Gomorrah from the Sixteenth Century

Albany Plan of Union (1754)



Lobby Detail in a 1934 Federal Building, Albany, New York

Benjamin Franklin proposed this plan for a government for all thirteen American colonies at a meeting of colonial representatives in Albany, New York, as the French and Indian War was starting. The plan was not adopted, but some of its ideas were used when the colonies did form a continental government several years later.

It is proposed that humble application be made for an act of Parliament of Great Britain, by virtue of which one general government may be formed in America, including all the said colonies, within and under which government each colony may retain its present constitution, except in the particulars wherein a change may be directed by the said act, as hereafter follows.

That the said general government be administered by a President-General, to be appointed and supported by the crown; and a Grand Council, to be chosen by the representatives of the people of the several Colonies met in their respective assemblies.

That within ____ months after the passing of such act, the House of Representatives that happen to be sitting within that time, or that shall be especially for that purpose convened, may and shall choose members for the Grand Council, in the following proportion, that is to say,

——— who shall meet for the first time at the city of Philadelphia, being called by the President-General as soon as conveniently may be after his appointment.

That there shall be a new election of the members of the Grand Council every three years; and, on the death or resignation of any member, his place should be supplied by a new choice at the next sitting of the Assembly of the Colony he represented.

That after the first three years, when the proportion of money arising out of each Colony to the general treasury can be known, the number of members to be chosen for each Colony shall, from time to time, in all ensuing elections, be regulated by that proportion, yet so as that the number to be chosen by any one Province be not more than seven, nor less than two.

That the Grand Council shall meet once in every year, and oftener if occasion require, at such time and place as they shall adjourn to at the last preceding meeting, or as they shall be called to meet at by the President-General on any emergency; he having first obtained in writing the consent of seven of the members to such call, and sent duly and timely notice to the whole.

That the Grand Council have power to choose their speaker; and shall neither be dissolved, prorogued, nor continued sitting longer than six weeks at one time, without their own consent or the special command of the crown.

That the members of the Grand Council shall be allowed for their service ten shillings sterling per diem, during their session and journey to and from the place of meeting; twenty miles to be reckoned a day's journey.

That the assent of the President-General be requisite to all acts of the Grand Council, and that it be his office and duty to cause them to be carried into execution.

That the President-General, with the advice of the Grand Council, hold or direct all Indian treaties, in which the general interest of the Colonies may be concerned; and make peace or declare war with Indian nations.

That they make all purchases from Indians, for the crown, of lands not now within the bounds of particular Colonies, or that shall not be within their bounds when some of them are reduced to more convenient dimensions.

That they make new settlements on such purchases, by granting lands in the King's name, reserving a quitrent to the crown for the use of the general treasury.

That they make laws for regulating and governing such new settlements, till the crown shall think fit to form them into particular governments.

That they raise and pay soldiers and build forts for the defence of any of the Colonies, and equip vessels of force to guard the coasts and protect the trade on the ocean, lakes, or great rivers; but they shall not impress men in any Colony, without the consent of the Legislature.

That for these purposes they have power to make laws, and lay and levy such general duties, imposts, or taxes, as to them shall appear most equal and just (considering the ability and other circumstances of the inhabitants in the several Colonies), and such as may be collected with the least inconvenience to the people; rather discouraging luxury, than loading industry with unnecessary burdens.

That they may appoint a General Treasurer and Particular Treasurer in each government when necessary; and, from time to time, may order the sums in the treasuries of each government into the general treasury; or draw on them for special payments, as they find most convenient.

Yet no money to issue but by joint orders of the President-General and Grand Council; except where sums have been appropriated to particular purposes, and the President-General is previously empowered by an act to draw such sums.

That the general accounts shall be yearly settled and reported to the several Assemblies.

That a quorum of the Grand Council, empowered to act with the President-General, do consist of twenty-five members; among whom there shall be one or more from a majority of the Colonies.

That the laws made by them for the purposes aforesaid shall not be repugnant, but, as near as may be, agreeable to the laws of England, and shall be transmitted to the King in Council for approbation, as soon as may be after their passing; and if not disapproved within three years after presentation, to remain in force.

That, in case of the death of the President-General, the Speaker of the Grand Council for the time being shall succeed, and be vested with the same powers and authorities, to continue till the King's pleasure be known.

That all military commission officers, whether for land or sea service, to act under this general constitution, shall be nominated by the President-General; but the approbation of the Grand Council is to be obtained, before they receive their commissions. And all civil officers are to be nominated by the Grand Council, and to receive the President-General's approbation before they officiate.

But, in case of vacancy by death or removal of any officer, civil or military, under this constitution, the Governor of the Province in which such vacancy happens may appoint, till the pleasure of the President-General and Grand Council can be known.

That the particular military as well as civil establishments in each Colony remain in their present state, the general constitution notwithstanding; and that on sudden emergencies any Colony may defend itself, and lay the accounts of expense thence arising before the President-General and General Council, who may allow and order payment of the same, as far as they judge such accounts just and reasonable.

Letters from a Farmer in Pennsylvania (excerpts from Letter 2) *John Dickinson (1767-1768)*

This series of letters by John Dickinson helped to crystallize colonists' opposition to the policies of the British government toward the colonies.



John Dickinson

My dear Country men,

There is another late act of parliament, which appears to me to be unconstitutional, and as destructive to the liberty of these colonies, as that mentioned in my last letter; that is, the act for granting the duties on paper, glass, &c. [the Townshend Act].

The parliament unquestionably possesses a legal authority to regulate the trade of Great-Britain and all her colonies. Such an authority is essential to the relation between a mother country and her colonies; and necessary for the common good of all. He, who considers these provinces as states distinct from the British empire, has very slender notions of justice, or of their interests. We are but parts of a whole; and therefore there must exist a power somewhere to preside, and preserve the connection in due order. This power is lodged in the parliament; and we are as much dependent on Great-Britain, as a perfectly free people can be on another.

I have looked over every statute relating to these colonies, from their first settlement to this time; and find every one of them founded on this principle, till the Stamp Act administration. All before, are calculated to regulate trade, and preserve or promote a mutually beneficial intercourse between the several constituent parts of the empire; and though many of them imposed duties on trade, yet those duties were always imposed with design to restrain the commerce of one part that was injurious to another, and thus to promote the general welfare. The raising of revenue thereby was never intended. . . . Never did the British parliament, till the period above mentioned think of imposing duties in America, FOR THE PURPOSE OF RAISING A REVENUE.

Here we may observe an authority expressly claimed and exerted to impose duties on these colonies; not for the regulation of trade; not for the preservation or promotion of a mutually beneficial intercourse between the several constituent parts of the empire, heretofore the sole objects of parliamentary institutions; but for the single purpose of levying money upon us.

This I call an innovation; and a most dangerous innovation. It may perhaps be objected, that Great-Britain has a right to lay what duties she pleases upon her exports, and it makes no difference to us, whether they are paid here or there.

To this I answer. These colonies require many things for their use, which the laws of Great-Britain prohibit them from getting any where but from her. Such are paper and glass.

That we may be legally bound to pay any general duties on these commodities relative to the regulation of trade, is granted; but we being obliged by the laws to take from Great-Britain, any special duties imposed on their exportation to us only, with intention to raise a revenue from us only, are as much taxes, upon us, as those imposed by the Stamp Act.

What is the difference in substance and right whether the same sum is raised upon us by the rates mentioned in the Stamp Act, on the use of paper, or by these duties, on the importation of it. It is only the edition of a former book, shifting a sentence from the end to the beginning. . . .

Some persons perhaps may say, that this act lays us under no necessity to pay the duties imposed, because we may ourselves manufacture the articles on which they are laid; whereas by the Stamp Act no instrument of writing could be good, unless made on British paper, and that too stamped.

I am told there are but two or three glass-houses on this continent, and but very few paper-mills; and suppose more should be erected, a long course of years must elapse, before they can be brought to perfection. This continent is a country of planters, farmers, and fishermen; not of manufacturers. The difficulty of establishing particular manufactures in such a country, is almost insuperable.

Great-Britain has prohibited the manufacturing of iron and steel in these colonies, without any objection being made to her right of doing it. The like right she must have to prohibit any other manufacture among us. Thus she is possessed of an undisputed precedent on that point. This authority, she will say, is founded on the original intention of settling these colonies; that is, that we should manufacture for them, and that they should supply her with materials.

Here then, my dear country men ROUSE yourselves, and behold the ruin hanging over your heads. If you ONCE admit, that Great-Britain may lay duties upon her exportations to us, for the purpose of levying money on us only, she then will have nothing to do, but to lay those duties on the articles which she prohibits us to manufacture—and the tragedy of American liberty is finished. . . . If Great-Britain can order us to come to her for necessities we want, and can order us to pay what taxes she pleases before we take them away, or when we land them here, we are as abject slaves as France and Poland can shew in wooden shoes, and with uncombed hair.



Pennsylvania Farmland

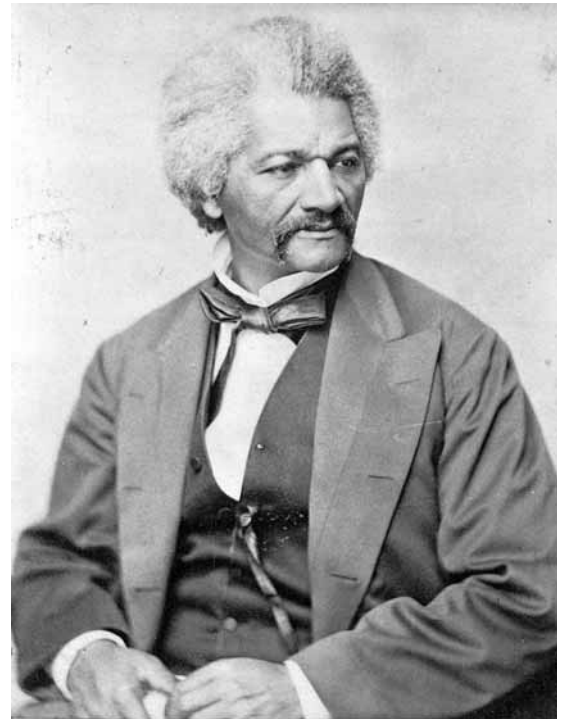
The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro (excerpts) *Frederick Douglass (1852)*

Frederick Douglass was born into slavery about 1817. He escaped from bondage in 1838. By the time he gave this speech in Rochester, New York, on July 5, 1852, Douglass had legally purchased his freedom and had been an abolitionist speaker for about ten years. Note his eloquence and his Bible knowledge and remember that Douglass had received no formal education.

Mr. President, Friends and Fellow Citizens:

He who could address this audience without a quailing sensation, has stronger nerves than I have. I do not remember ever to have appeared as a speaker before any assembly more shrinkingly, nor with greater distrust of my ability, than I do this day. A feeling has crept over me quite unfavorable to the exercise of my limited powers of speech. The task before me is one which requires much previous thought and study for its proper performance. I know that apologies of this sort are generally considered flat and unmeaning. I trust, however, that mine will not be so considered. Should I seem at ease, my appearance would much misrepresent me. The little experience I have had in addressing public meetings, in country school houses, avails me nothing on the present occasion. . . .

This, for the purpose of this celebration, is the Fourth of July. It is the birth day of your National Independence, and of your political freedom. This, to you, is what the Passover was to the emancipated people of God. It carries your minds back to the day, and to the act of your great deliverance; and to the signs, and to the wonders, associated with that act, and that day. This celebration also marks the beginning of another year of your national life; and reminds you that the Republic of America is now 76 years old. I am glad, fellow-citizens, that your nation is so young. Seventy-six years, though a good old age for a man, is but a mere speck in the life of a nation. Three score years and ten is the allotted time for individual men; but nations number their years by thousands. According to this fact, you are, even now, only in the beginning of your national career, still lingering in the period of childhood. I repeat, I am glad this is so. There is hope in the thought, and hope is much needed, under the dark clouds which lower above the horizon. The eye of the reformer is met with angry flashes, portending disastrous times; but his heart may well beat lighter at the thought that America is young, and that she is still in the impressible stage of her existence. May he not hope that high lessons of wisdom, of justice and of truth, will yet give direction to her destiny? . . .



Frederick Douglass

Fellow-citizens, I shall not presume to dwell at length on the associations that cluster about this day. The simple story of it is, that, 76 years ago, the people of this country were British subjects. The style and title of your “sovereign people” (in which you now glory) was not then born. You were under the British Crown. Your fathers esteemed the English Government as the home government; and England as the fatherland. This home government, you know, although a considerable distance from your home, did, in the exercise of its parental prerogatives, impose upon its colonial children, such restraints, burdens and limitations, as, in its mature judgment, it deemed wise, right and proper.

But your fathers, who had not adopted the fashionable idea of this day, of the infallibility of government, and the absolute character of its acts, presumed to differ from the home government in respect to the wisdom and the justice of some of those burdens and restraints. . . .

Feeling themselves harshly and unjustly treated, by the home government, your fathers, like men of honesty, and men of spirit, earnestly sought redress. They petitioned and remonstrated; they did so in a decorous, respectful, and loyal manner. Their conduct was wholly unexceptionable. This, however, did not answer the purpose. They saw themselves treated with sovereign indifference, coldness and scorn. Yet they persevered. They were not the men to look back. . . .

On the 2nd of July, 1776, the old Continental Congress, to the dismay of the lovers of ease, and the worshipers of property, clothed that dreadful idea with all the authority of national sanction. They did so in the form of a resolution; and as we seldom hit upon resolutions, drawn up in our day, whose transparency is at all equal to this, it may refresh your minds and help my story if I read it.

Resolved, That these united colonies are, and of right, ought to be free and Independent States;
that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown; and that all political connection
between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, dissolved.

Citizens, your fathers made good that resolution. They succeeded; and to-day you reap the fruits of their success. The freedom gained is yours; and you, therefore, may properly celebrate this anniversary. The 4th of July is the first great fact in your nation’s history—the very ringbolt in the chain of your yet undeveloped destiny. . . .

Fellow Citizens, I am not wanting in respect for the fathers of this republic. The signers of the Declaration of Independence were brave men. They were great men, too—great enough to give frame to a great age. It does not often happen to a nation to raise, at one time, such a number of truly great men. The point from which I am compelled to view them is not, certainly, the most favorable; and yet I cannot contemplate their great deeds with less than admiration. They were statesmen, patriots and heroes, and for the good they did, and the principles they contended for, I will unite with you to honor their memory. . . .

My business, if I have any here to-day, is with the present. The accepted time with God and His cause is the ever-living now.

Trust no future, however pleasant,
Let the dead past bury the dead;
Act, act in the living present,
Heart within, and God overhead.

. . . I say it with a sad sense of the disparity between us. I am not included within the pale of this glorious anniversary! Your high independence only reveals the immeasurable distance between us. The blessings in

which you, this day, rejoice, are not enjoyed in common. The rich inheritance of justice, liberty, prosperity and independence, bequeathed by your fathers, is shared by you, not by me. The sunlight that brought light and healing to you, has brought stripes and death to me. This Fourth July is yours, not mine. You may rejoice, I must mourn. To drag a man in fetters into the grand illuminated temple of liberty, and call upon him to join you in joyous anthems, were inhuman mockery and sacrilegious irony. Do you mean, citizens, to mock me, by asking me to speak to-day? If so, there is a parallel to your conduct. And let me warn you that it is dangerous to copy the example of a nation whose crimes, towering up to heaven, were thrown down by the breath of the Almighty, burying that nation in irrevocable ruin! I can to-day take up the plaintive lament of a peeled and woe-smitten people!

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down. Yea! we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there, they that carried us away captive, required of us a song; and they who wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion. How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth.

Fellow-citizens, above your national, tumultuous joy, I hear the mournful wail of millions! whose chains, heavy and grievous yesterday, are, to-day, rendered more intolerable by the jubilee shouts that reach them. If I do forget, if I do not faithfully remember those bleeding children of sorrow this day, "may my right hand forget her cunning, and may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth!" To forget them, to pass lightly over their wrongs, and to chime in with the popular theme, would be treason most scandalous and shocking, and would make me a reproach before God and the world. My subject, then, fellow-citizens, is American slavery. I shall see this day and its popular characteristics from the slave's point of view. Standing there identified with the American bondman, making his wrongs mine, I do not hesitate to declare, with all my soul, that the character and conduct of this nation never looked blacker to me than on this 4th of July! Whether we turn to the declarations of the past, or to the professions of the present, the conduct of the nation seems equally hideous and revolting. America is false to the past, false to the present, and solemnly binds herself to be false to the future. Standing with God and the crushed and bleeding slave on this occasion, I will, in the name of humanity which is outraged, in the name of liberty which is fettered, in the name of the constitution and the Bible which are disregarded and trampled upon, dare to call in question and to denounce, with all the emphasis I can command, everything that serves to perpetuate slavery—the great sin and shame of America! "I will not equivocate; I will not excuse"; I will use the severest language I can command; and yet not one word shall escape me that any man, whose judgment is not blinded by prejudice, or who is not at heart a slaveholder, shall not confess to be right and just. . . .

What, to the American slave, is your 4th of July? I answer: a day that reveals to him, more than all other days in the year, the gross injustice and cruelty to which he is the constant victim. To him, your celebration is a sham; your boasted liberty, an unholy license; your national greatness, swelling vanity; your sounds of



*Five Generations of Slaves on a
South Carolina Plantation, 1861*



Slaves in South Carolina, 1862

rejoicing are empty and heartless; your denunciation of tyrants, brass fronted impudence; your shouts of liberty and equality, hollow mockery; your prayers and hymns, your sermons and thanksgivings, with all your religious parade and solemnity, are, to him, mere bombast, fraud, deception, impiety, and hypocrisy—a thin veil to cover up crimes which would disgrace a nation of savages. There is not a nation on the earth guilty of practices more shocking and bloody than are the people of the United States, at this very hour.

Go where you may, search where you will, roam through all the monarchies

and despotisms of the Old World, travel through South America, search out every abuse, and when you have found the last, lay your facts by the side of the everyday practices of this nation, and you will say with me, that, for revolting barbarity and shameless hypocrisy, America reigns without a rival. . . .

[T]he church of this country is not only indifferent to the wrongs of the slave, it actually takes sides with the oppressors. It has made itself the bulwark of American slavery, and the shield of American slave-hunters. Many of its most eloquent Divines, who stand as the very lights of the church, have shamelessly given the sanction of religion and the Bible to the whole slave system. They have taught that man may, properly, be a slave; that the relation of master and slave is ordained of God; that to send back an escaped bondman to his master is clearly the duty of all the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ; and this horrible blasphemy is palmed off upon the world for Christianity.

For my part, I would say, welcome infidelity! welcome atheism! welcome anything! in preference to the gospel, as preached by those Divines! They convert the very name of religion into an engine of tyranny and barbarous cruelty, and serve to confirm more infidels, in this age, than all the infidel writings of Thomas Paine, Voltaire, and Bolingbroke put together have done! These ministers make religion a cold and flinty-hearted thing, having neither principles of right action nor bowels of compassion. They strip the love of God of its beauty and leave the throne of religion a huge, horrible, repulsive form. It is a religion for oppressors, tyrants, man-stealers, and thugs. It is not that “pure and undefiled religion” which is from above, and which is “first pure, then peaceable, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.” But a religion which favors the rich against the poor; which exalts the proud above the humble; which divides mankind into two classes, tyrants and slaves; which says to the man in chains, stay there; and to the oppressor, oppress on; it is a religion which may be professed and enjoyed by all the robbers and enslavers of mankind; it makes God a respecter of persons, denies his fatherhood of the race, and tramples in the dust the great truth of the brotherhood of man. All this we affirm to be true of the popular church, and the popular worship of our land and nation—a religion, a church, and a worship which, on the authority of inspired wisdom, we pronounce to be an abomination in the sight of God. In the language of Isaiah, the American church might be well addressed, “Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me: the new moons and Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting.

Your new moons, and your appointed feasts my soul hateth. They are a trouble to me; I am weary to bear them; and when ye spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you. Yea' when ye make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood; cease to do evil, learn to do well; seek judgment; relieve the oppressed; judge for the fatherless; plead for the widow."

The American church is guilty, when viewed in connection with what it is doing to uphold slavery; but it is superlatively guilty when viewed in its connection with its ability to abolish slavery.

The sin of which it is guilty is one of omission as well as of commission. Albert Barnes but uttered what the common sense of every man at all observant of the actual state of the case will receive as truth, when he declared that "There is no power out of the church that could sustain slavery an hour, if it were not sustained in it." . . .

One is struck with the difference between the attitude of the American church towards the anti-slavery movement, and that occupied by the churches in England towards a similar movement in that country. There, the church, true to its mission of ameliorating, elevating and improving the condition of mankind, came forward promptly, bound up the wounds of the West Indian slave, and restored him to his liberty. There, the question of emancipation was a high religious question. It was demanded in the name of humanity, and according to the law of the living God. The Sharps, the Clarksons, the Wilberforces, the Buxtons, the Burchells, and the Knibbs were alike famous for their piety and for their philanthropy. The anti-slavery movement there was not an anti-church movement, for the reason that the church took its full share in prosecuting that movement: and the anti-slavery movement in this country will cease to be an anti-church movement, when the church of this country shall assume a favorable instead of a hostile position towards that movement.

Americans! your republican politics, not less than your republican religion, are flagrantly inconsistent. You boast of your love of liberty, your superior civilization, and your pure Christianity, while the whole political power of the nation (as embodied in the two great political parties) is solemnly pledged to support and perpetuate the enslavement of three millions of your countrymen. You hurl your anathemas at the crowned headed tyrants of Russia and Austria and pride yourselves on your democratic institutions, while you yourselves consent to be the mere tools and body-guards of the tyrants of Virginia and Carolina. You invite to your shores fugitives of oppression from abroad, honor them with banquets, greet them with ovations, cheer them, toast them, salute them, protect them, and pour out your money to them like water; but the fugitives from oppression in your own land you advertise, hunt, arrest, shoot, and kill.

Allow me to say, in conclusion, notwithstanding the dark picture I have this day presented, of the state of the nation, I do not despair of this country. There are forces in operation which must inevitably work the downfall of slavery.

"The arm of the Lord is not shortened," and the doom of slavery is certain. I, therefore, leave off where I began, with hope. While drawing encouragement from "the Declaration of Independence," the great principles it contains, and the genius of American institutions, my spirit is also cheered by the obvious tendencies of the age. Nations do not now stand in the same relation to each other that they did ages ago. No nation can now shut itself up from the surrounding world and trot round in the same old path of its fathers without interference. The time was when such could be done. Long established customs of hurtful character could formerly fence themselves in, and do their evil work with social impunity. Knowledge was then confined and enjoyed by the privileged few, and the multitude walked on in mental darkness. But a change has now come over the affairs of mankind. Walled cities and empires have become unfashionable. The arm of commerce has borne away the gates of the strong city. Intelligence is penetrating the darkest corners of the globe. It makes its pathway over and under the sea, as well as on the earth. Wind, steam, and lightning are its chartered agents.

Oceans no longer divide, but link nations together. From Boston to London is now a holiday excursion. Space is comparatively annihilated. Thoughts expressed on one side of the Atlantic are distinctly heard on the other.

The far off and almost fabulous Pacific rolls in grandeur at our feet. The Celestial Empire, the mystery of ages, is being solved. The fiat of the Almighty, "Let there be Light," has not yet spent its force. No abuse, no outrage whether in taste, sport or avarice, can now hide itself from the all-pervading light. The iron shoe, and crippled foot of China must be seen in contrast with nature. Africa must rise and put on her yet unwoven garment. "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hand unto God." In the fervent aspirations of William Lloyd Garrison, I say, and let every heart join in saying it:

God speed the year of jubilee
The wide world o'er!
When from their galling chains set free,
Th' oppress'd shall vilely bend the knee,

And wear the yoke of tyranny
Like brutes no more.
That year will come, and freedom's reign.
To man his plundered rights again
Restore.

God speed the day when human blood
Shall cease to flow!
In every clime be understood,
The claims of human brotherhood,
And each return for evil, good,
Not blow for blow;

That day will come all feuds to end,
And change into a faithful friend
Each foe.



Slave Auction Block in Virginia

Knowing History and Knowing Who We Are

David McCullough (2005)

David McCullough is one of the most popular historical writers of our day. He has written biographies of John Adams, Harry Truman, and the young Theodore Roosevelt as well as accounts of the Johnstown, Pennsylvania, flood and the construction of the Brooklyn Bridge and the Panama Canal. He has received the Pulitzer Prize twice and the National Book Award twice. Although he loves history, his college degree was in English literature. He writes not as a professional historian but as one who simply loves the stories that history has to tell.

Harry Truman once said the only new thing in the world is the history you don't know. Lord Bolingbroke, who was an 18th century political philosopher, said that history is philosophy taught with examples. An old friend, the late Daniel Boorstin, who was a very good historian and Librarian of Congress, said that trying to plan for the future without a sense of the past is like trying to plant cut flowers. We're raising a lot of cut flowers and trying to plant them, and that's much of what I want to talk about tonight.

The task of teaching and writing history is infinitely complex and infinitely seductive and rewarding. And it seems to me that one of the truths about history that needs to be portrayed—needs to be made clear to a student or to a reader—is that nothing ever had to happen the way it happened. History could have gone off in any number of different directions in any number of different ways at any point along the way, just as your own life can. You never know. One thing leads to another. Nothing happens in a vacuum. Actions have consequences. These all sound self-evident. But they're not self-evident—particularly to a young person trying to understand life.

Nor was there ever anything like the past. Nobody lived in the past, if you stop to think about it. Jefferson, Adams, Washington—they didn't walk around saying, "Isn't this fascinating, living in the past?" They lived in the present just as we do. The difference was it was their present, not ours. And just as we don't know how things are going to turn out for us, they didn't either. It's very easy to stand on the mountaintop as an historian or biographer and find fault with people for why they did this or didn't do that, because we're not involved in it, we're not inside it, we're not confronting what we don't know—as everyone who preceded us always was.

Nor is there any such creature as a self-made man or woman. We love that expression, we Americans. But every one who's ever lived has been affected, changed, shaped, helped, hindered by other people. We all know, in our own lives, who those people are who've opened a window, given us an idea, given us encouragement, given us a sense of direction, self-approval, self-worth, or who have straightened



David McCullough

us out when we were on the wrong path. Most often they have been parents. Almost as often they have been teachers. Stop and think about those teachers who changed your life, maybe with one sentence, maybe with one lecture, maybe by just taking an interest in your struggle. Family, teachers, friends, rivals, competitors—they've all shaped us. And so too have people we've never met, never known, because they lived long before us. They have shaped us too—the people who composed the symphonies that move us, the painters, the poets, those who have written the great literature in our language. We walk around every day, every one of us, quoting Shakespeare, Cervantes, Pope. We don't know it, but we are, all the time. We think this is our way of speaking. It isn't our way of speaking—it's what we have been given. The laws we live by, the freedoms we enjoy, the institutions that we take for granted—as we should never take for granted—are all the work of other people who went before us. And to be indifferent to that isn't just to be ignorant, it's to be rude. And ingratitude is a shabby failing. How can we not want to know about the people who have made it possible for us to live as we live, to have the freedoms we have, to be citizens of this greatest of countries in all time? It's not just a birthright, it is something that others struggled for, strived for, often suffered for, often were defeated for and died for, for us, for the next generation.

Character And Destiny

Now those who wrote the Declaration of Independence in Philadelphia that fateful summer of 1776 were not superhuman by any means. Every single one had his flaws, his failings, his weaknesses. Some of them ardently disliked others of them. Every one of them did things in his life he regretted. But the fact that they could rise to the occasion as they did, these imperfect human beings, and do what they did is also, of course, a testimony to their humanity. We are not just known by our failings, by our weaknesses, by our sins. We are known by being capable of rising to the occasion and exhibiting not just a sense of direction, but strength.

The Greeks said that character is destiny, and the more I read and understand of history, the more convinced I am that they were right. You look at the great paintings by John Trumbull or Charles Willson Peale or Copley or Gilbert Stuart of those remarkable people who were present at the creation of our nation, the Founders as we call them. Those aren't just likenesses. They are delineations of character and were intended to be. And we need to understand them, and we need to understand that they knew that what they had created was no more perfect than they were. And that has been to our advantage. It has been good for us that it wasn't all just handed to us in perfect condition, all ready to run in perpetuity—that it needed to be worked at and improved and made to work better. There's a wonderful incident that took place at the Cambria Iron Company in Johnstown, Pennsylvania, in the 19th century, when they were building the first Bessemer steel machinery, adapted from what had been seen of the Bessemer process in Britain. There was a German engineer named John Fritz, and after working for months to get this machinery finished, he came into the plant one morning, and he said, "All right boys, let's start her up and see why she doesn't work." That's very American. We will find out what's not working right and we will fix it, and then maybe it will work right. That's been our star, that's what we've guided on.

I have just returned from a cruise through the Panama Canal. I think often about why the French failed at Panama and why we succeeded. One of the reasons we succeeded is that we were gifted, we were attuned to adaptation, to doing what works, whereas they were trained to do everything in a certain way. We have a gift for improvisation. We improvise in jazz; we improvise in much of our architectural breakthroughs. Improvisation is one of our traits as a nation, as a people, because it was essential, it was necessary, because we were doing again and again and again what hadn't been done before.

Keep in mind that when we were founded by those people in the late 18th century, none of them had had any prior experience in either revolutions or nation-making. They were, as we would say, winging it. And they

were idealistic and they were young. We see their faces in the old paintings done later in their lives or looking at us from the money in our wallets, and we see the awkward teeth and the powdered hair, and we think of them as elder statesmen. But George Washington, when he took command of the continental army at Cambridge in 1775, was 43 years old, and he was the oldest of them. Jefferson was 33 when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. John Adams was 40. Benjamin Rush—one of the most interesting of them all and one of the founders of the antislavery movement in Philadelphia—was 30 years old when he signed the Declaration. They were young people. They were feeling their way, improvising, trying to do what would work. They had no money, no navy, no real army. There wasn't a bank in the entire country. There wasn't but one bridge between New York and Boston. It was a little country of 2,500,000 people, 500,000 of whom were held in slavery, a little fringe of settlement along the east coast. What a story. What a noble beginning. And think of this: almost no nations in the world know when they were born. We know exactly when we began and why we began and who did it.

In the rotunda of the Capitol in Washington hangs John Trumbull's great painting, "The Declaration of Independence, Fourth of July, 1776." It's been seen by more people than any other American painting. It's our best known scene from our past. And almost nothing about it is accurate. The Declaration of Independence wasn't signed on July 4th. They didn't start to sign the Declaration until August 2nd, and only a part of the Congress was then present. They kept coming back in the months that followed from their distant states to take their turn signing the document. The chairs are wrong, the doors are in the wrong place, there were no heavy



"The Declaration of Independence, Fourth of July, 1776" by John Trumbull

draperies at the windows, and the display of military flags and banners on the back wall is strictly a figment of Trumbull's imagination. But what is accurate about it are the faces. Every single one of the 47 men in that painting is an identifiable, and thus accountable, individual. We know what they look like. We know who they were. And that's what Trumbull wanted. He wanted us to know them and . . . not to forget them. Because this momentous step wasn't a paper being handed down by a potentate or a king or a czar, it was the decision of a Congress acting freely.

Our Failure, Our Duty

We are raising a generation of young Americans who are by-and-large historically illiterate. And it's not their fault. There have been innumerable studies, and there's no denying it. I've experienced it myself again and again. I had a young woman come up to me after a talk one morning at the University of Missouri to tell me that she was glad she came to hear me speak, and I said I was pleased she had shown up. She said, "Yes, I'm very pleased, because until now I never understood that all of the 13 colonies—the original 13 colonies—were on the east coast." Now you hear that and you think: What in the world have we done? How could this young lady, this wonderful young American, become a student at a fine university and not know that? I taught a seminar at Dartmouth of seniors majoring in history, honor students, 25 of them. The first morning we sat

down and I said, "How many of you know who George Marshall was?" Not one. There was a long silence and finally one young man asked, "Did he have, maybe, something to do with the Marshall Plan?" And I said yes, he certainly did, and that's a good place to begin talking about George Marshall.

We have to do several things. First of all we have to get across the idea that we have to know who we were if we're to know who we are and where we're headed. This is essential. We have to value what our forebears—and not just in the 18th century, but our own parents and grandparents—did for us, or we're not going to take it very seriously, and it can slip away. If you don't care about it—if you've inherited some great work of art that is worth a fortune and you don't know that it's worth a fortune, you don't even know that it's a great work of art and you're not interested in it—you're going to lose it.

We have to do a far better job of teaching our teachers. We have too many teachers who are graduating with degrees in education. They go to schools of education or they major in education, and they graduate knowing something called education, but they don't know a subject. They're assigned to teach botany or English literature or history, and of course they can't perform as they should. Knowing a subject is important because you want to know what you're talking about when you're teaching. But beyond that, you can't love what you don't know. And the great teachers—the teachers who influence you, who change your lives—almost always, I'm sure, are the teachers that love what they are teaching. It is that wonderful teacher who says "Come over here and look in this microscope, you're really going to get a kick out of this."

There was a wonderful professor of child psychology at the University of Pittsburgh named Margaret McFarland who was so wise that I wish her teachings and her ideas and her themes were much better known. She said that attitudes aren't taught, they're caught. If the teacher has an attitude of enthusiasm for the subject, the student catches that whether the student is in second grade or is in graduate school. She said that if you show them what you love, they'll get it and they'll want to get it. Also if the teachers know what they are teaching, they are much less dependent on textbooks. And I don't know when the last time you picked up a textbook in American history might have been. And there are, to be sure, some very good ones still in print. But most of them, it appears to me, have been published in order to kill any interest that anyone might have in history. I think that students would be better served by cutting out all the pages, clipping up all the page numbers, mixing them all up and then asking students to put the pages back together in the right order. The textbooks are dreary, they're done by committee, they're often hilariously politically correct and they're not doing any good. Students should not have to read anything that we, you and I, wouldn't want to read ourselves. And there are wonderful books, past and present. There is literature in history. Let's begin with Longfellow, for example. Let's begin with Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address, for example. These are literature. They can read that too.

History isn't just something that ought to be taught or ought to be read or ought to be encouraged because it's going to make us a better citizen. It will make us a better citizen; or because it will make us a more thoughtful and understanding human being, which it will; or because it will cause us to behave better, which it will. It should be taught for pleasure: The pleasure of history, like art or music or literature, consists of an expansion of the experience of being alive, which is what education is largely about.

And we need not leave the whole job of teaching history to the teachers. If I could have you come away from what I have to say tonight remembering one thing, it would be this: The teaching of history, the emphasis on the importance of history, the enjoyment of history, should begin at home. We who are parents or grandparents should be taking our children to historic sites. We should be talking about those books in biography or history that we have particularly enjoyed, or that character or those characters in history that have meant something to us. We should be talking about what it was like when we were growing up in the olden days. Children,

particularly little children, love this. And in my view, the real focus should be at the grade school level. We all know that those little guys can learn languages so fast it takes your breath away. They can learn anything so fast it takes your breath away. And the other very important truth is that they want to learn. They can be taught to dissect a cow's eye. They can be taught anything. And there's no secret to teaching history or to making history interesting. Barbara Tuchman said it in two words, "Tell stories." That's what history is: a story. And what's a story? E.M. Forster gave a wonderful definition to it: If I say to you the king died and then the queen died, that's a sequence of events. If I say the king died and the queen died of grief, that's a story. That's human. That calls for empathy on the part of the teller of the story and of the reader or listener to the story. And we ought to be growing, encouraging, developing historians who have heart and empathy to put students in that place of those people before us who were just as human, just as real—and maybe in some ways more real than we are. We've got to teach history and nurture history and encourage history because it's an antidote to the hubris of the present—the idea that everything we have and everything we do and everything we think is the ultimate, the best.

Going through the Panama Canal, I couldn't help but think about all that I had read in my research on that story of what they endured to build that great path, how much they had to know and to learn, how many different kinds of talent it took to achieve that success, and what the Americans did under John Stevens and George Goethals in the face of unexpected breakdowns, landslides and floods. They built a canal that cost less than it was expected to cost, was finished before it was expected to be finished and is still running today exactly the same as it was in 1914 when it opened. They didn't, by present day standards for example, understand the chemistry of making concrete. But when we go and drill into those concrete locks now, we find the deterioration is practically nil and we don't know how they did it. That ingenious contrivance by the American engineers is a perfect expression of what engineering ought to be at its best—man's creations working with nature. The giant gates work because they're floating, they're hollow like airplane wings. The electric motors that open and close the gates use power which is generated by the spillway from the dam that creates the lake that bridges the isthmus. It's an extraordinary work of civilization. And we couldn't do it any better today, and in some ways we probably wouldn't do it as well. If you were to take a look, for example, at what's happened with the "Big Dig" in Boston, you realize that we maybe aren't closer to the angels by any means nearly a hundred years later.

We should never look down on those people and say that they should have known better. What do you think they're going to be saying about us in the future? They're going to be saying we should have known better. Why did we do that? What were we thinking of? All this second-guessing and the arrogance of it are unfortunate.

Listening To The Past

Samuel Eliot Morison said we ought to read history because it will help us to behave better. It does. And we ought to read history because it helps to break down the dividers between the disciplines of science, medicine, philosophy, art, music, whatever. It's all part of the human story and ought to be seen as such. You can't understand it unless you see it that way. You can't understand the 18th century, for example, unless you understand the vocabulary of the 18th century. What did they mean by those words? They didn't necessarily mean the same thing as we do. There's a line in one of the letters written by John Adams where he's telling his wife Abigail at home, "We can't guarantee success in this war, but we can do something better. We can deserve it." Think how different that is from the attitude today when all that matters is success, being number one, getting ahead, getting to the top. However you betray or gouge or claw or do whatever awful thing is immaterial if you get to the top.

That line in the Adams letter is saying that how the war turns out is in the hands of God. We can't control that, but we can control how we behave. We can deserve success. When I read that line when I was doing the research on the book, it practically lifted me out of my chair. And then about three weeks later I was reading some correspondence written by George Washington and there was the same line. I thought, wait a minute, what's going on? And I thought, they're quoting something. So, as we all often do, I got down good old Bartlett's Familiar Quotations, and I started going through the entries from the 18th century and bingo, there it was. It's a line from the play *Cato*. They were quoting something that was in the language of the time. They were quoting scripture of a kind, a kind of secular creed if you will. And you can't understand why they behaved as they did if you don't understand that. You can't understand why honor was so important to them and why they were truly ready to put their lives, their fortunes, their sacred honor on the line. Those weren't just words.

I want to read to you, in conclusion, a letter that John Quincy Adams received from his mother. Little John Adams was taken to Europe by his father when his father sailed out of Massachusetts in the midst of winter, in the midst of war, to serve our country in France. Nobody went to sea in the wintertime, on the North Atlantic, if it could possibly be avoided. And nobody did it trying to cut through the British barricade outside of Boston Harbor because the British ships were sitting out there waiting to capture somebody like John Adams and take him to London and to the Tower, where he would have been hanged as a traitor. But they sent this little ten-year-old boy with his father, risking his life, his mother knowing that she wouldn't see him for months, maybe years at best. Why? Because she and his father wanted John Quincy to be in association with Franklin and the great political philosophers of France, to learn to speak French, to travel in Europe, to be able to soak it all up. And they risked his life for that—for his education. We have no idea what people were willing to do for education in times past. It's the one sustaining theme through our whole country—that the next generation will be better educated than we are. John Adams himself is a living example of the transforming miracle of education. His father was able to write his name, we know. His mother was almost certainly illiterate. And because he had a scholarship to Harvard, everything changed for him. He said, "I discovered books and read forever," and he did. And they wanted this for their son.

Well, it was a horrendous voyage. Everything that could have happened to go wrong, went wrong. And when the little boy came back, he said he didn't ever want to go across the Atlantic again as long as he lived. And then his father was called back, and his mother said you're going back. And here is what she wrote to him. Now, keep in mind that this is being written to a little kid and listen to how different it is from how we talk to our children in our time. She's talking as if to a grownup. She's talking to someone whom they want to bring along quickly because there's work to do and survival is essential:

These are the times in which genius would wish to live. It is not in the still calm of life or the repose of a pacific station that great characters are formed. The habits of a vigorous mind are formed in contending with difficulties. Great necessities call out great virtues. When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman.

Now, there are several interesting things going on in that letter. For all the times that she mentions the mind, in the last sentence she says, "When a mind is raised and animated by scenes that engage the heart, then those qualities which would otherwise lay dormant wake into life and form the character of the hero and the statesman." In other words, the mind itself isn't enough. You have to have the heart.

Well, of course he went and the history of our country is different because of it. John Quincy Adams, in my view, was the most superbly educated and maybe the most brilliant human being who ever occupied the executive office. He was, in my view, the greatest Secretary of State we've ever had. He wrote the Monroe Doctrine, among other things. And he was a wonderful human being and a great writer. Told to keep a diary by his father when he was in Europe, he kept the diary for 65 years. And those diaries are unbelievable. They are essays on all kinds of important, heavy subjects. He never tells you who he had lunch with or what the weather's like. But if you want to know that, there's another sort of little Cliff diary that he kept about such things.

Well, after the war was over, Abigail went to Europe to be with her husband, particularly when he became our first minister to the court of Saint James. And John Quincy came home from Europe to prepare for Harvard. And he had not been home in Massachusetts very long when Abigail received a letter from her sister saying that John Quincy was a very impressive young man—and of course everybody was quite astonished that he could speak French—but that, alas, he seemed a little overly enamored with himself and with his own opinions and that this was not going over very well in town. So Abigail sat down in a house that still stands on Grosvenor Square in London—it was our first embassy if you will, a little 18th century house—and wrote a letter to John Quincy. And here's what she said:

If you are conscious to yourself that you possess more knowledge upon some subjects than others of your standing, reflect that you have had greater opportunities of seeing the world and obtaining knowledge of mankind than any of your contemporaries. That you have never wanted a book, but it has been supplied to you. That your whole time has been spent in the company of men of literature and science. How unpardonable would it have been in you to have turned out a blockhead.

How unpardonable it would be for us—with all that we have been given, all the advantages we have, all the continuing opportunities we have to enhance and increase our love of learning—to turn out blockheads or to raise blockheads. What we do in education, what these wonderful teachers and administrators and college presidents and college and university trustees do is the best, most important work there is.

So I salute you all for your interest in education and in the education of Hillsdale. I salute you for coming out tonight to be at an event like this. Not just sitting at home being a spectator. It's important that we take part. Citizenship isn't just voting. We all know that. Let's all pitch in. And let's not lose heart. They talk about what a difficult, dangerous time we live in. And it is very difficult, very dangerous and very uncertain. But so it has always been. And this nation of ours has been through darker times. And if you don't know that—as so many who broadcast the news and subject us to their opinions in the press don't seem to know—that's because we're failing in our understanding of history.

The Revolutionary War was as dark a time as we've ever been through. 1776, the year we so consistently and rightly celebrate every year, was one of the darkest times, if not the darkest time in the history of the country. Many of us here remember the first months of 1942 after Pearl Harbor when German submarines were sinking our oil tankers right off the coasts of Florida and New Jersey, in sight of the beaches, and there wasn't a thing we could do about it. Our recruits were drilling with wooden rifles, we had no air force, half of our navy had been destroyed at Pearl Harbor, and there was nothing to say or guarantee that the Nazi machine could be defeated—nothing. Who was to know? I like to think of what Churchill said when he crossed the Atlantic after Pearl Harbor and gave a magnificent speech. He said we haven't journeyed this far because we're made of sugar candy. It's as true today as it ever was.

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