

**THE UNION: NATIONAL AND STATE  
SOVEREIGNTY ALIKE ESSENTIAL TO  
AMERICAN LIBERTY. A DISCOURSE  
DELIVERED IN THE HALL OF THE HOUSE  
OF REPRESENTATIVES AT THE CAPITOL IN  
FRANKFORT, KY., DECEMBER 19, 1859**

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The Union: National and State Sovereignty Alike Essential to American Liberty. A Discourse delivered in the Hall of the house of representnaives at the Capitol in Frankfort, KY., December 19, 1859 by James Craik

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**JAMES CRAIK**

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NATIONAL AND STATE SOVEREIGNTY

ALIKE ESSENTIAL TO

AMERICAN LIBERTY.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

THE HALL OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

AT THE CAPITOL IN FRANKFORT, KY.,

DECEMBER 19, 1859.

BY

THE REV. JAMES CRAIK, D.D.

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LOUISVILLE, KY:  
MORTON & GRISWOLD, PRINTERS.  
1860.

FRANKFORT, February 2, 1860.

REV. JAMES CRAIK, D. D.,

Louisville, Ky:

*Dear Sir*—At this particular period of our history, when the thoughtless have been raising the mad cry for disunion, the true friends of our beloved country feel called upon to do all in their power to quiet the spirit of insubordination and strife, and to perpetuate our inestimable privileges once purchased for us by the blood of our fathers.

Believing that the able lecture which you recently delivered in the Capitol, at the solicitation of prominent citizens of the State without regard to political distinctions, will prove a timely publication to be scattered broadcast through the land, we respectfully solicit a copy for the press.

With sentiments of high regard and esteem,

Your obedient servants,

THOS. S. GRUNDY,	SAMUEL HAYCRAFT,
JOHN G. LYON,	L. W. ANDREWS,
JNO. L. IRVAN,	J. B. BRUNER,
G. W. LEWIS,	HENRY M. RUST,
W. H. M'BRATER,	CYRENIUS WAIT,
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S. E. DE HAVEN,	H. WINGATE,
EDW. H. TAYLOR,	ROBERT R. TAYLOR,

B. MAGOFFIN.

## THE UNION.

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I COME before you this evening the humble advocate of the American Constitution, and of American liberty and happiness inseparably bound up in that Constitution.

By the American Constitution I do not mean the Federal Government, but the complex system formed by that Government and the several State Governments in their due place and connection.

I come to attempt to show you why you should cherish this system as, next to Christianity, the most precious of the gifts of God to any people. I hope to prove to you that every man in this house, and every man in this country, should swear to preserve these institutions: and, as the temporal sanction of that oath, should pledge, as our fathers once did on an issue not more sacred, their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor.

As an intelligent people, placed in trust by Almighty God with the most glorious heritage ever bestowed upon men, it is our imperative duty to study well the principles of the government under which we live; and to look from time to time with earnest scrutiny at the working and progress and condition of those principles, and of the institutions founded upon them.

Society and government cannot work themselves in an invariable order, as the animal, vegetable, and inorganic systems of creation seem to do, by virtue of physiological and mechanical forces once for all applied. Society and government are subject to all the various and changing conditions of that wondrously complex being, free, intelligent, aspiring, and corrupt, who bears

in every lineament of his character the impress of the truth that he was created in the image of God, and that he has sadly fallen from that image.

Care, labor, watchfulness, diligent inquiry, constant effort, opposition to evil, struggle for the good, are the essential conditions of man's nature, and of the well-being of all that belongs to him or proceeds from him. These conditions attach with especial force to society and to government, which constantly tend to corruption, hideous and destructive, unless preserved in purity by the faithful application of these essential conditions of all human good. The merchant who imagines that his business will work itself, and leaves it to do so, will not be long in finding himself gazetted as a bankrupt. The man who undertakes to live without any struggle against the evil tendencies of his nature, but blindly follows the leadings of each passing impulse, will inevitably become a monster of depravity in that form of evil to which his nature may happen to be most inclined. So, for a people to lose all knowledge, and to abandon all care of the principles that are at the foundation of society and government, is to bring upon themselves oppression, calamity, and degradation, commensurate with the blessings they have forfeited by their negligence and folly.

I do not now refer to the subjects of ordinary legislation, and of political controversy. To these every people possessing the slightest modicum of freedom are sufficiently attentive. And from the latter of these especially the Christian teachers of a country should religiously abstain. But I refer to those fundamental principles which are the supports of social order, and of the government which protects all alike in the enjoyment of all that is dear and valuable to man. I am here this evening because some of those fundamental principles—the philosophy of our American Constitution—do not seem to have been fully recognized by many of our later statesmen and constitutional lawyers. And yet a familiarity with this philosophy, with the



rationale of the system we have to administer, is requisite to its right administration, especially in times when the system is exposed to a peculiar pressure and trial of its quality. Bear with me, then, while we look together at the reasons which make this complicated government of ours so important to the preservation of liberty here, and to the vindication of liberty in all the world.

That the Almighty Disposer of human events has called the people of this country to a great work, and to a glorious concurrence with Him in the progressive elevation of mankind, is manifest from many circumstances of our national history.

The recent subjection of a pure and virgin continent to the sway of that Teutonic race which had already proved itself to be before and above all other races for perseverance, endurance, indomitable energy, the spirit of adventure, and strong common-sense, as distinguished from genius; the peculiar political, civil, social, and religious education, in the parent country, of that branch of this strong stock which was first engaged in the colonization of America: the hardships, privations, and incessant struggles by which a wild and rugged country, claimed by the fiercest savages in the world, was slowly and gradually subdued, thus adding force and intensity to all the national characteristics: the gradual commingling with this original population, of the best blood of Europe, driven hither by persecution, or allured by the spirit of adventure and the pursuit of fortune: the wondrously felicitous situation of the continent given to the race so admirably and variously trained, that continent extending from ocean to ocean, in equal communication with the earliest and latest seats of empire and civilization: all these facts conspire to show that God has called us to a station high above all people in working out His purposes of good-will to men.

The national character which, by a long course of Providential training, God had impressed upon the people of this country, as the meet preparation for a great and glorious mission, is beau-

tifully presented to us in its highest perfection, and in its sublime ideal, by that man whom we justly call the Father of his country. Washington stands alone, isolated, unmatched and unparalleled, among the heroes and mightiest men of ancient and modern history in the old world. The greatness of that crowd and of this man have no points of similitude, and present no elements of comparison. But among his countrymen and compatriots Washington was not alone or singular. He was, indeed, a head and shoulders above the rest, but he was like them all. He was but the perfect type, the accomplished model, of that national character which God had been forming for the accomplishment of His designs of beneficence to man. Washington was the full development, the noble standard, of an American gentleman, citizen, soldier, statesman, Christian. His generous ambition was to illustrate and show forth in its completeness, each one of these characteristics of a true man. And the noble symmetry and roundness of his character showed them all in beautiful proportion and in sublime perfection. I doubt whether the paltry thought of kingship and a crown ever crossed his mind until the degrading suggestion was intruded from without, and then it was simply treated with contempt and indifference, as too mean a thing to company for a moment with the pure and lofty purposes of his soul.

The formation of such a character, at such a crisis in the history of his country, was God's especial care, who works by fitting instrumentalities for the accomplishment of His will. That character was formed and lifted up to the contemplation of the world, to serve as the teaching example and the persuasive model for that and for all future generations of men.

I have just referred to that old world discipline by which Providence, in its slow and stately march, had prepared and furnished the elements of the American character. All of us are familiar with the millennial contest waged in England under

successive dynasties, with changing fortune, but with unchanging perseverance and determination, for *civil freedom*, and for *constitutional* government. We know the incidents of that fiercer and more stirring battle, so gloriously fought on the same ground by the same ancestry, for *religious freedom*, for the right to think, for the power to hold communion with God our Father, on the terms which He has Himself prescribed. By the issue of that mighty struggle, Priestly Despotism, the most malign dominion to which the human soul for its ignorance and unfaithfulness has ever been subjected, was thrown off from them and from their children forever. The agitations and convulsions among the conquerors in this last contest, was indeed a shameful abuse of their newly acquired liberty. But this very abuse was overruled by the Almighty, to be the means of exercising and developing to their utmost capacity all the best powers of noblest manhood.

Then came the American part of the discipline by which our countrymen were prepared for the mighty work which Providence had assigned to them. A few adventurous spirits transferred to this country the character, the freedom, the civil and municipal institutions, so nobly won at home. Here a wilderness was to be subdued; treacherous savages watched, propitiated, conquered. Here an empire was to be founded, and the administration of a self-sustaining government to become the familiar duty of every gentleman.

You see how God was working in history to form the generation of true men who achieved your glorious revolution, and placed your free institutions upon an impregnable foundation.

Let us turn now to those principles of government and of social order which the race, so trained and prepared, recognized and vindicated as the firm foundation of American liberty, and of the hopes of the world which spring from that liberty.

All government is founded upon the imperfection of human nature. If all men were sufficiently intelligent and good, there