



**THE "FREE PRESS,"**

By George Howard,

Is published every Friday, at THREE DOLLARS per year, consisting of 52 numbers, and in the same proportion for a shorter period. Subscribers at liberty to discontinue at any time, on paying arrears.

Advertisements inserted at fifty cents per square, or less, for the first insertion, and twenty-five cents each continuance.

Letters addressed to the Editor must be *post paid*.

**COMMUNICATIONS.**

For the Free Press.

**CAMP-MEETINGS.**

There are four objections urged by the skeptical and worldly-minded man against Camp-meetings: 1st. They ask are not the people taken from their business, and much labor and profit lost to the community? 2dly. Is there not an affected superiority in your preachers, and a pusillanimous demeanor in your people? the former showing to the world a want of theological information; the latter yielding passive obedience to many despotic rules and ecclesiastic influence, such as night guards, &c. 3dly. Are there not many ladies and delicate persons exposed (in camping out of nights) to the inclemencies of nocturnal vapors? And, 4thly. Are not the passions of the people so excited, as to produce extravagancies by the fumes of enthusiasm and false zeal? To these objections we will severally answer.

*First.* As we are a free and happy people, in a political point of view, we feel thankful that even the African slave has the privilege to exercise the liberty of conscience, and that all classes of people can worship God in the way their consciences dictate, under their own vines and fig-trees, and none dare to make them afraid. We often meet with public assemblies, paying their devotions to Bacchus; destroying both health and property; wasting the time that was given them to prepare for another and a better world than this; thereby injuring the community and undoing themselves eternally. Should we not more essentially labor for that bread which perisheth not, than for a temporal competency?

*Secondly.* That we should be termed a pusillanimous people, by the profligate and wicked, is not to be wondered at, as they only see through the medium of their carnal propensities, and cannot behold the limits of the narrow path with a strait gate at the entrance. It is very natural for people to exclaim against the preachers; because they tell them that they must be born again, that they must become as little children, and that they must become foolish before they can be made wise unto salvation; this appears to be very inconsistent logic; and so it did to Nichodemus. The reason of this is very evident, for they neither understand nor care to inform themselves in these things.

*Thirdly.* As to the delicate lady and persons of a weak constitution, there are many ways to protect them, by close arbors and tents, or wooden-roof houses and large light-wood fires, which

are known to dispel noxious and nocturnal vapors. But as we consider this as a very frivolous objection, we shall not dwell on it; knowing that people of such habits have never suffered much by going to Camp-meetings from sincere motives of being benefited thereby.

We shall now proceed to the *fourth* objection. This perhaps, it will be thought, requires much investigation in Philosophy to decide: Passion is one of the constituents of man, and is as necessary to human action as oxygen gas, or vital air, is to animal existence; it keeps in motion the human system, and gives rise to that powerful influence which the body sometimes appears to have over the soul. Grief, sorrow, fear, love and joy, are the principal traits or characters of passion, and many contingencies in the strange compound of mental faculties, which excites to motives or objects in pursuit; and we, who feel a godly sorrow for our sins, are apt to pray and weep and be afraid of eternal punishment, and the vengeance of an angry God. Those who feel their sins forgiven are excited to ecstatic raptures of love, joy, &c. as David was when he saw the Ark borne by the Levitical priesthood before God's people; and why should you censure our modern kings and priests to God, when they rejoice with that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory; when they praise God with that overwhelming power of love which fill'd the shepherd king David, when he called upon the angels, upon all His hosts, when he calls upon the sun and moon and all those glittering orbs of light to sing His praise. "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord." Psalm 150. Then lay all your prejudices aside, and meet us at our ensuing *Camp-meeting at Pierce's*, and "seek the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near."

But, alas! some of the world say, if this is the way that I am to get religion, I will live without it. Poor soul! thou mayest live without it, but what wilt thou do when thou comest to die? Dreadful thought! to die without religion! Who can reflect on it a moment and not shudder! But we will leave these trying reflections for a moment, and endeavor to persuade you to seek your eternal welfare before it is too late.

We do not pretend to say that Camp-meetings are the only places to get religion, for God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent: "his centre is every where, his circumference no where;" but he that undertakes to seek the Lord must come as a poor mendicant; he must believe that God is, and that he is a rewarder of those that diligently seek him. We think that Camp-meetings are very proper places for religious devotion; for it requires much solemnity of thought and abstraction from the things of the world to place our minds in a proper frame for prayer and thanksgiving. What can be more solemn than the true worship of God in spirit and in truth? Who can have his mind properly attuned to devotion at

a transient meeting, which lasts but an hour or two? How can the poor mourning soul that wants to see himself, be brought to a full view of himself in a few minutes, with all the cares of life surrounding him? We know that the word is quick and powerful to some, and that the change is sometimes wrought in a few minutes; but, as we observed before, it requires considerable abstraction of mind in others, to come to a full and firm resolution, and to seek God with the whole soul. But, says one, why not get religion at home? So you may, if you will make use of the proper means; but, as we observed before, you are crowded with the cares of life too much to give the mind up fully; therefore, let us again invite you to enter the ark of safety, or build your house on the Rock of eternal ages; a tried stone, the chief corner stone, which you builders do reject. You who are enemies to Camp-meetings will please to look around you, and see the good effect which they have had on your citizens. We have seen some of the profligate brought low at Camp-meetings, by divesting themselves of foolish pride, and condescending to approach the sacred altar, and there beseeching the people of God to pray for them, that they might be admitted into the family of his people; such have arisen and testified to the world that God has power on earth to forgive sins, and are now pillars of the church militant, burning and shining lights to many dark bewildered souls. Such have been the good effects of Camp-meetings in different sections of the country, and particularly in the western states, where the different denominations of Christians have united and prayed together; in this we do rejoice, that thousands can date their conversions in certain years and at certain Camp-meetings. But, awful to relate! there are a few to be found who have started the objections which we commenced with, and which we have in a feeble and concise manner endeavored to answer.

God, who rules the destinies of men, and wills that all should come and share his pardoning mercy and his love, has ordained the means, and with an energy divine, pours out his quickening spirit into every soul that feels and sees his need of him.

True devotion, doubtless, requires a considerable degree of abstraction from the world, to hold an intercourse between us and God: the prostrate soul then rises above terrestrial things, and pours forth all its wants, wishes, hopes, fears, guilt or pleasures into the bosom of an Almighty friend. Though this devotion, in its first stage, may be a wearisome or insipid exercise, yet this merely arises from the depravity of our nature and our passions; habit will overcome this reluctance. When we have entered on our journey, we shall find that the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Fervent devotion glows in the scriptures, it warms us by its beatific beams. The holy prophets and devoted martyrs have declared to a fallen world their zeal and Christian devo-

tion. Real piety is of an animated nature, it looks up to God, sees, hears, and feels him in every event, in every vicissitude, in all places, in all seasons, and upon all occasions. It is faith substantiated by mental enjoyment. It is theory vivified by experience. It is heaven transplanted in the bosom; it is the radiance of the divinity warming and encircling man; it is spiritual sense gratified by spiritual sensations. Without this all ceremonies are inefficacious. Books, prayers, sacraments, are but a body without a soul, and no more than a statue without animation. That man is capable of such an intercourse with his Maker, there are many living witnesses to prove. God is a spirit, so is the mind; bodies can have intercourse, so can souls; when minds are in an assimilating state of purity, they have union with their Maker; this was the bliss of Paradise, sin interrupted it, and holiness must restore it. To a soul thus disposed the Creator communicates himself in a manner as insensible to the natural eye, as the falling of the dew, but not less refreshing to its secret powers than that is to vegetation. The primitive saints are describing this when they speak of their transports. David felt it when he longed for God as the hart panteth after the water brook. St. Paul knew it when he gloried in his tribulation; it was embodied in him when he was carried up into the third heaven, and heard things impossible to be uttered. St. Stephen was filled with it when he saw the Heavens opened and prayed for his murderers; by it martyrs were supported when they were stoned and sawn asunder; and until we feel it in ourselves we shall never know how gracious the Lord is. It will be of little moment what is your lot on earth, or what are the distinguishing vicissitudes of your life, a cottage or palace, affluence or adversity, will be so many objects of glory; the whole creation will become a temple, every event and every object will lead your minds to God, and in his greatness and perfection you will lose the littleness, the glare and tinsel of human things.

EUSEBIUS.

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LA FAYETTE.

The visit of La Fayette to this country having given rise to so much remark, and aroused the grateful feelings of our citizens, it may not be amiss to give the public a sketch of his life. The cause of liberty has always been next his heart, and if circumstances have not always favoured his operations in the political world, yet never has his fair fame been sullied by a single action inconsistent with his avowed principles. His life and fortune were always at the service of his country, and he has ever followed the cause of liberty with the purest disinterestedness, and the most unshaken zeal.

He was born in the year 1757, at Auvergne, in France—a province celebrated for the independence and valour of its inhabitants from the earliest times, and now composing the two de-

partments of Cantal and puy de Dome. His ancestors were among the first people of the province, and had ever been conspicuous for their independent spirit and their chivalrous contempt of danger. In the spirit of his fathers, he became the early advocate of political freedom, and falling into the society of those who had espoused his principles, he imbibed the most ardent attachment for liberty. With these feelings, it is not singular that his attention was directed to America. In spite of the obstacles placed in his way, he succeeded in leaving France in a vessel fitted out at his own expense, with which he arrived safely at Charleston, (S. C.) in January, 1777. He immediately entered and served with the army as a volunteer. On the 31st July, in the same year, he received his appointment as Major General from Congress, 'in consideration of his zeal, and illustrious family connexions,' which he accepted on condition that he should be allowed to serve without pay or reward. The Marquis distinguished himself on numerous occasions. At the battle of Brandywine, he behaved with undaunted bravery, threw himself into the hottest fire, and when wounded, refused to quit the field. On the 25th November of the same year, while still suffering from his wound, with a small party he repulsed a superior force of Hessians and British Grenadiers. For this he was entrusted with a command suitable to his rank.—After two years absence from his own country, he obtained leave to return to France. He carried with him the most flattering testimonials of his worth and services, and received a sword from the hand of the American minister, in the name of Congress, soon after his arrival at Paris. While absent, he engaged with all his soul in the cause of the United States, and succeeded in gaining the countenance of the French government.—He returned in 1780, and arrived at Boston in the *Hermione* frigate, Capt. Le Touche. It may not be improper to mention, in this place, that the French ministers, however disinterestedly they appeared to act, were said to have been influenced in their conduct at that time, by the hope of regaining Canada from the possession of the English.

In 1781, La Fayette was ordered to Annapolis, with a separate and independent command, for the purpose of driving Arnold out of Virginia, but from the want of co-operation on the part of the French fleet, the attempt failed. He was at this time of great service in checking the marauding expeditions of Gen. Phillips, and was soon afterwards opposed to Cornwallis, the greatest General sent against us during the revolution. Although his forces were few, his men badly clothed, and suffering much from a want of healthy food, La Fayette supplied their wants from his own purse, gallantly maintained his ground, and completely succeeded in the protection of the public stores, after a series of masterly manoeuvres. On first hearing that La Fayette