



"The powers granted under the Constitution, being derived from the People of the United States, may be resumed by them, whenever perceived to their injury or oppression."—Madison.

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ADDRESS

OF THE CONVENTION OF SOUTH-CAROLINA,
Met at Columbia, on the 22d of May, 1833,

TO THE

**Democratic Republican Party of
the United States.**

We have convened, Fellow-Citizens, to deliberate on the subject of the approaching Presidential election, and have given it that serious attention which its great importance demands at all times, but more especially in the present critical condition of the country. The result is our unanimous determination to recommend to you JOHN CALDWELL CALHOUN as the candidate of the Democratic Republican Party, for next President. We are also unanimous in recommending, that the General Convention of the party should be held in Baltimore, in May, 1844; that each State should appoint so many Delegates as shall be entitled to members in the Electoral College; that two should be appointed at large, and the remainder by Districts, one from each Congressional District, where there are such in a State, and where none by the whole State, which the Republican Party of that State may prefer; and that the members should vote per capita.

We shall pass over all minor and subordinate considerations for recommending Mr. CALHOUN, and proceed directly to state the leading and paramount reasons for giving him our preference. We then rest our recommendation on his long, faithful and important public services; on his acknowledged abilities, energy, firmness, and sagacity; on his profound knowledge of the Constitution and the genius and character of our admirable system of Government; on his high administrative talents; on his devoted attachment to free and popular institutions, and the principles and doctrines of the Republican party; and, finally, on the spotless purity of his life.

These are high qualifications, but not higher than he possesses, nor, (as we believe) than a large majority of his fellow-citizens accord him. They are those, which at all times should be regarded, as paramount in the selection of the Chief Magistrate and as decisive, at such a period as the present, when the government is surrounded by perils and difficulties; when its character and credit are greatly sunk, at home and abroad; when great abuses and corruption have crept into its administration; when the principles of the Constitution have been departed from; and when universal embarrassment prevails throughout the land. It is at such a period that the great and only question should be, who is best qualified to carry the Government through its perils and difficulties; to correct its errors; reform its abuses; elevate its character and credit; re-establish the Constitution, and restore confidence and the prosperity of the country? Whoever he may be, he ought to be the man. Every subordinate consideration should yield.

Who, then, is the man for the present period? Without hesitating to underrate or disparage the high qualifications of the distinguished individuals of the party, whose names have been presented by their friends as candidates, we respond to the question, Mr. CALHOUN is the man. We sincerely believe, the honors in him, more fully, and in a higher degree, than any other individual, all the high qualities demanded by the occasion; and that his election would do more to redeem the character of the Government and country, and restore confidence and prosperity, than the selection of any other man, or occurrence of any other event.

It is not to be disguised that the deplorable condition of the country may be almost exclusively traced to errors and mismanagement of the Government. It can be charged either to the Constitution, or the dispositions of Providence. In the contrary, His dispensations have not only been just, but magnificent, in abundant harvests and almost universal health, while to the violation or neglect of the provisions of the Constitution may be traced most of the evils that have befallen us. We then must mainly look for their remedy, to the correction of the errors of the Government, and the reformation of its abuses, and for that to the selection of the President, without whose lead, an enlightened and hearty co-operation there can be no thorough and radical reform, or essential change in the course of Government, as experience has abundantly proved. What his lead and co-operation will be in the coming administration depends on the individual to be elected, and that as far as the party is concerned, on the candidate to be nominated; and hence, it is of the most important consequence of making the proper selection.

It may be supposed, that the fact of Mr. CALHOUN being a native of South Carolina has influenced us in making up an estimate of his qualifications, and that large deductions ought to be made

on that account. We are not unaware how much opinion is liable to be biased by State attachments; and have made allowance for it, but it is possible not enough. If, however, deduction is to be made on that account, from the weight of our opinion in his favor, there are other considerations, which ought at least to throw an equal weight in the opposite scale. If the fact, that we are of the State and vicinity of Mr. CALHOUN, is calculated to warp our judgement and lessen the weight of our opinion in his favor, the same fact is equally calculated in another view, to add to its weight. For while it may bias our opinion in his favor, it gives us the opportunity to view his conduct, public and private, more closely and minutely, and to make up our opinion from actual observation and full and correct knowledge. When with such advantages the jury of the vicinage—the whole State, an unanimous verdict in his favor, it ought to be entitled to full credence. We say unanimously, for their is literally, but one party in the State, as far as he is concerned.

On this elevated ground, we rest our preference for Mr. CALHOUN. To that, we might add many other reasons, entitled to much consideration, but of a subordinate character. Among them, that he belongs to a portion of the Union, which has never yet had a President. The Central States, the Northern and Eastern, the Western and North-Western, all have had their Presidents; but the Southern or South-Western,—the great exporting States from the exchange of whose products with the rest of the world more than two-thirds of the revenue of the Union has been drawn, and which have ever furnished their full share of talents, patriotism, eloquence, and wisdom to the councils of the nation—have never yet had one.

In this connexion there is another view not less entitled to consideration. The Presidents have heretofore been taken exclusively from the larger States. There is not an instance of one, in the long course of half a century, selected from the medium size, or smaller States. Is it to be inferred from these remarkable facts, that the smaller and weaker States and the least populous portions of the Union are to be permanently excluded from its honors?—or rather has it been an accidental course of events, without aim or design? The latter we hope has been the case, but surely on the first fitting occasion, generosity, the sense of justice and sound policy, require of the larger States, and more populous portions of the Union, that they should give practical and substantial proof, that it has been really accidental, and not designed. And what occasion can be more fitting than the present?

If the high qualifications of Mr. CALHOUN, strengthened by such long and important services, unanimously supported, as there is every reason to believe, by the whole of his State, and the portion of the Union to which he belongs, cannot ensure his election, is it to be expected that any citizen hereafter belonging to it, however eminent his talents or great his services, or from the smaller States, will ever be elected? And would there not be strong grounds for believing that their citizens are forever to be disfranchised, as far as the office of President is concerned, and that the office is to be a permanent monopoly of the larger States and more populous sections? To these, other reasons might be added of not less weight. We shall however allude to one or two, and among them, his disinterested and magnanimous course in his party relations, of which a single instance will suffice.

It is well known, that he did not hesitate, regardless of consequences, in obedience to what he believed to be the true principles and policy of the Republican Party, to separate from the great body of the party in the plenitude of its power, and when the highest rewards and honors of the country were in his grasp. It is equally well known that he subjected him, for the time, to the severest denunciations of those he separated from, and apparently forever blasted his political prospects so far as office, power, and influence were concerned. He willingly sacrificed all to maintain his principles. Nor is it unknown, when the tide of events turned against his former friends, from whom he had separated and when the party was at its greatest depression, and their old opponent ready to rush in and overwhelm them, as they believed forever, it was then that he, forgetting the past, and overlooking all personal considerations, regarding only his duty and his principles, unhesitatingly brought to them at their utmost need, his powerful aid. If events have since turned—if the party is again in the ascendant, and more powerful than ever after its great fall, it may be surely said with truth, that the happy change is, in a great measure, to be attributed to him. It is plain that in all this he sought neither gratitude nor reward; that, however, only enhances his title to both.

To this we add, that he was the first to discover, long in advance, the present dangers and disasters; to point out their causes, and warn against their approach; to use his utmost efforts, and peril his all to avert them; and, when actually arrived, to take the lead in the endeavor to pass through them in safety. In proof of all this, we refer to addresses, speeches, and reports for the last fifteen years. Now that which was then future is past, they look more like history to an the anticipations of what was to come, and afford evidence of sagacity and foresight rarely equalled and never surpassed. Although he could not avert the dangers and disasters he anticipated, it cannot be doubted he did much to lessen them; and to prepare the way finally to overcome them; and now, when the question is, How shall they be overcome? who so well qualified to give a satisfactory answer—to undertake the task, and restore health and prosperity to the body-politic, as he who has given such conclusive evidence of his thorough knowledge of the cause and nature of the disease to be remedied?

And, finally, may we not ask, without being thought to disparage the just merits of other candidates for the Presidency, which one of them do his past history and opinions more thoroughly identify with all the great articles of the Democratic creed than Mr. CALHOUN? He, as far back as 1834, discountenanced the connexion of the Government

broken asunder, he was amongst the first to advocate the necessity of the separation—to plant his foot, without fear of consequences, boldly in the front; and, under denunciations and obloquy unexampled for their bitterness in political warfare, to

take up this great measure of reform, and by the force of his decision and genius, principally contributed to sustain and pass it through? Few men have been so efficient in saving the liberties of the country from that most dangerous of all the instruments of Federalism, a United States Bank. Next to Mr. Jefferson, no one who has lived under our Constitution has done more, if as much, to preserve its republican features, by exposing the dangers of consolidation and resisting its encroachments. And when, in the lust for absolute power, it was madly proposed to mutilate the constitution, by abolishing the great balance wheel and conservative provision of the Veto, he was the most distinguished, of all that gallant band by whose resistance the attempt was frustrated. The best energies of his life have been spent in efforts to reform a degenerating Government, and restore it, by economy and retrenchment, to its original simplicity and purity. He is the true representative of the great essential principle of Democracy, freedom of human pursuits, in the extension of industry from unnecessary burdens and exactions. He recognizes no justice in tariffs taxing unequally the labor and capital of the farmer, the planter, the merchant, the mechanic, the shipmaster, and all other industrial pursuits, to give protection to and make the labor and capital of the manufacturer profitable. He believes that such injustice alienates affection between these classes of citizens, and causes deep dissatisfaction with and weakens the Government which sanctions it; that it excites fierce and angry struggles, by the efforts of the one to free themselves from wrongful burdens, and of the other to maintain or increase them; that out of these conflicts, occurring periodically, and mixing themselves up in all governmental questions, the best interests of the manufacturers themselves are far more deeply injured, than the unsettled condition of their existence, and the sudden and ominous changes to which it subjects their affairs, than they could possibly be by that fair protection which an equal, moderate, and just system of revenue duties would afford, and which, if just, equal, and fair, would be permanent. A power has been claimed as existing in the Government, to give *indirectly*, to the labor and capital of one class, or one section, a preference over those of another, which, at the same time it is acknowledged it would be oppressive to give *directly*; but he admits neither the constitutional right, the morality, nor the logic, by which a mere difference of mode in perpetrating a wrong, can be used to change it into a right; and denies any rightful power in the federal legislature, directly or indirectly, primarily or incidentally, to draw the exactions of the Government from the people by duties on imports, otherwise than by a fair, equal, and bona fide tariff of revenue. He views a tariff of protection and a tariff of revenue, as *entirely distinct* principles, and he holds to none as much as the other, repugnant to natural justice and the plainest principles of political economy and in their tenacity subversive of the very ends of civil society. He is not in favor of abolishing duties on imports for a system of direct or internal taxes, but for a system of duties on imports laid purely for revenue, and allowing discriminations only where true revenue principles call for it. He is in favor of burlesquing commerce and the labor which supports it with no more duties than are indispensable to the economical and necessary wants of the Government. He is unalterably opposed to all extravagance, corruption, and abuses in the expenditure of public moneys, the reform of which cannot be effected so long as all the revenue is levied on the principles of protection, which acts as a bounty on large and influential classes, enlisting them in support of extravagant expenditures as an excuse for high taxation. He believes that the Government has no power nor right to lay taxes, nor to sell the public lands, for the purpose of distributing the proceeds, or any portion thereof, amongst the States; nor that it has any right or power, directly or indirectly, to assume the debts of the States; nor to carry on a system of internal improvement. Many of these are cardinal considerations, in comparison with which, the Presidency sinks into insignificance, and no compromises of them can be tolerated, even for that high dignity.

Having now given our reasons for preferring Mr. CALHOUN, we shall next proceed to state those that govern us in making the recommendations we have in reference to the General Convention. Reason and discussion have already done much to settle most of the points connected with the Convention, and about which there was at first a difference of opinion. We regard the question as finally settled, that Baltimore is to be the place where it is to be held, and shall therefore pass it over without further comment. The expression of opinion, so far as there has been one, is so strongly in favor of May, 1844, it is scarcely to be supposed, that those who prefer November will stand out against it. But four States, Tennessee, Missouri, Virginia, and New York, have expressed opinions in favor of the latter, while Maryland, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Alabama, Mississippi, Rhode Island, and New Hampshire, have either expressed opinions in favor of, or given strong indications that they prefer, the former. In deed the argument, to afford the people ample time to make up and express their opinion, and to mark the course of events and the conduct of public men during the first session of the next Congress, especially in reference to the Tariff and the expenditures of the Government, is so strong, that we do not see how it can well be resisted. But putting aside that and other reasons which might be urged in favor of the later period, it seems to us, as a mere matter of courtesy, if time be requested by any considerable portion of the party, it should be granted, unless the period proposed be obviously unreasonably late, which cannot be alleged against that which we, with so large a portion of the party, have concurred in recommending. On this ground, if no other, we cannot believe that those highly respectable States, which have fixed on an earlier day, will be so wanting in courtesy, as to refuse to yield to so reasonable a request, and persist in adhering to November. Under this impression, we shall therefore no longer on the reasons in favor of May.

We also regard it as substantially settled, that the Delegates, with the exception of the two proposed to be appointed by the Republican Members of the Legislature, or a State Convention, are to be

appointed by Districts. We are not aware that any State or portion of the party has expressed a preference for any other mode, except Pennsylvania, while most of the States and public meetings, where the subject of the Convention has been agitated, including Virginia, have expressed opinions in its favor. It is certainly gratifying to observe, that the tendency of a free and enlightened discussion is to unite and harmonize the party, instead of dividing and distracting it, as was feared by many would be the case; and it may be fairly anticipated, that the continuance of the discussion, in the same liberal and free manner, which has already contributed so much to set the important points it has connected with the Convention, will have the same salutary effect in settling the only two, that we regard as remaining in reality unsettled—the number of Delegates to be appointed from each District, and the mode of voting—whether per capita, that is, each member voting individually and his vote counting one, or by the majority, that is, the vote of the whole delegation of the State to be disposed of by a majority of the delegation. The recent Convention held at Richmond, recommended four delegates from each Congressional District, and that a majority of the delegates should fix the mode of the vote of the State in the Convention; in which the Legislative caucus held at Albany has concurred, while all the other States, as far as we are informed, which have expressed an opinion, are in favor of one delegate from each District, and the per capita mode of voting.

We have carefully and impartially examined and compared both, and with every respect for the source from which it emanates, we are compelled to say, that our objection is irresistibly strong against what, for brevity, we shall call the plan of the Richmond Convention, and in favor of that, with the same object, we shall call the Maryland plan, that State being the first which fully adopted and recommended it. And here it is proper to premise, that as the nomination, if acquiesced in, would in effect be the election, so far as the voice of the party is concerned, we hold it, in the first place to be indispensable, that the General Convention should conform, as nearly as may be, to the Electoral College in the manner of constituting it, and the mode of voting and counting the votes. In the next, that every practicable means should be adopted, that the voice of the Convention shall utter the voice of the People in conformity to political managers; and that the relative weight of the States, as fixed by the Constitution, in the election of President and Vice President, should be preserved. These we regard as leading and principles, by which every proposition in relation to the General Convention ought to be tested. None but those that can stand that test, should be admitted. They are so obviously just and reasonable to require illustration. He would ill deserve the name of Republican who objects to them. It is to their test we intend to bring the points of difference between the two plans, which may be regarded as still unsettled.

We object, then, to the mode of voting and counting recommended by the Richmond Convention, because it adopts a principle unknown to the Constitution, and which, combined with the number of delegates proposed to be appointed from each district, would in practice be destructive of the most important of all the compromises of the Constitution, or as we might with truth say, the fundamental compromise on which the whole rests. As strong as these assertions may appear, we shall, unless greatly deceived, establish their truth beyond controversy. It is well known to all in the last century with our political history, that the greatest difficulty experienced in framing the Constitution, was to establish the relative weight of the States, in the government of the Union. The smaller States, placing themselves on the incontestible principle of the perfect equality of rights between sovereign and independent communities, without regard to size of population, insisted on a like equality of weight in the government of the Union, while the larger and more populous, admitting the correctness of that principle, insisted that in a Federal Republic, composed of States of unequal size, and united for the common defence of the whole, the States which brought to the common stock of power, and means the greater share should in fairness and justice have a proportionate weight in the government. Such was the difficulty, with which both sides maintained their ground, but at one time it was seriously apprehended the object of the Convention would fail, and its labors end in doing nothing. The alarm, when this caused, led to a compromise. The larger States agreed to an equality of representation in the Senate, and the smaller to representation in the House proportional to population estimated in federal numbers. From these two elements, all the materials for constructing our beautiful and solid political fabric were drawn. The Electoral College for the choosing of President and Vice President consists of the two blended, so as to give to each State the number of electors that she may have in members in the two Houses of Congress.

The modes of voting, as prescribed by the Constitution, are in unison with these elements. As there are but two modes of voting known to the Constitution—the per capita, and that by a majority, corresponding with the two elements. When the States are regarded in their original equality, and independent and sovereign character, the mode of voting prescribed is by delegation, each delegation voting by itself, and the majority disposing of the vote of the State; but the vote of the State in such cases, without regard to the number of delegates, counts but one. Such was the mode of voting and counting in the formation of the Constitution, and such the mode prescribed for propositions to amend it, and in the election of President, when the choice devotes on the House, by the failure of the Electoral College to elect. But when the States are not intended to be so regarded, the vote and count is always per capita, and such is the mode, accordingly, prescribed for the two Houses of Congress in all cases, except the instance cited, and also for the Electoral College, in voting for a President and Vice President.

It is well known, that it was very difficult to agree on the mode of electing those distinguished officers, resulting from the same conflict between the large and small States, that ending, as has been stated, the formation of the Constitution result-

That, too, ended in a compromise, which gave the larger States a preponderance in the election by the Electoral College, and the smaller a preponderance in case of a failure of choice, and the election devolving on the House.

It was thus, that this great and dangerous conflict among the States was settled by compromise, and that which endangered the formation of the Constitution was, by consummate wisdom and skill, made to furnish the elements out of which the government was constructed; and what was an irreconcilably opposed to in the plan of the Richmond Convention is, that it confounds these elements by combining together incongruous modes of voting and counting, and thereby adopt a principle unknown to the Constitution, and in deadly conflict with the compromises upon which it rises, and on the observance of which its balance depends. Our objection applies not to the delegates of the General Convention voting by States, or that the vote of the States should be given by the majority; but what we do object to as blending incongruous methods is, that the vote of a State should be given by a majority, but counted per capita. It is that, which we pronounce to be unknown to the Constitution, and monstrous and destructive in its character. Virginia or any other State, may take choice, to vote by majority, or per capita; by whichever she may select, she cannot complain if she should be subject to the mode of counting, which the Constitution, in conformity to its compromises, invariably prescribes for that mode. If she should insist on a majority of her delegates disposing of her vote, she must also submit to place herself on an equality with the smallest State, and count but one, as she would in the case of the Presidential election going to the House. If she desires to have her whole delegation counted, as in the House of Representatives on all other questions, she must vote per capita, and run, as there, the hazard of a division among her delegates. She cannot, without subjecting to the principles of the Constitution, enjoy the benefit of both modes, and exempt herself from their disadvantages. She cannot concentrate her whole strength by disposing of her vote by a majority, without placing herself in the same scale with Delaware; or count her full number without the hazard of a division in her delegation. Choose which she may, we for one shall not object, but we never assent that she, or any other State, shall at the same time grasp the benefit of both, and exempt herself from their disadvantages. The advantages, and disadvantages of whichever may be selected, must be taken together.

But we consider the plan of the Richmond Convention as dangerous in its practical bearings, as it is already unconstitutional in principle. It would tend almost irresistibly to concentrate the power of selecting the President in the hands of the larger States and more populous portions of the Union, and by necessary consequence, give them an almost exclusive control over the Executive Department of the Government, and, through its power and influence, over the whole Union. We must not at things as they are. The control of the nomination, if acquiesced in, would be in fact, as has been premised, the control of the election, as far as the party is concerned; and what could be better devised to concentrate their combined power in the General Convention, than the plan of the majority giving the vote of each State, and yet at the same time counting per capita, and thereby controlling its proceedings, and through it the nomination and election? And what could tend more powerfully than that to destroy the balance of the Constitution, and convert our Federal Republic into a great consolidated and absolute Government, to be succeeded by all the disasters which must inevitably follow?

But it may be said, that the evil we apprehend has already occurred in another form; that their strength is already concentrated on the Electoral College by engaging the system of choosing electors by Districts, into that of the General Ticket; and that it is but right that they should have the same relative weight in the Convention, as they have in the Electoral College. It is indeed true, that the system of choosing electors by general ticket, in its operation, as far as the concentration of power is concerned, has the same effect, as voting by majority, and counting per capita, and it is to be feared, has already done much, and will do still more, to disturb the balance of the Government. But there is a great difference between them, so much so that the general ticket can afford neither excuse for precedent, for the plan of the Richmond Convention. If the two have the like effect in securing to the States a united vote, it is brought about in a very different manner. The General Ticket may defeat to a certain extent, the intent of the Constitution, but it does not invade its principles, as to the manner of voting and counting. The electors still vote individually, and their votes counted per capita. Had as it is to get round the principles of the Constitution in practice, it is still worse to act in open defiance and contempt of them.

Nor is this the only difference. It is well known that at the commencement of the Government, and for many years afterwards, the District system of choosing Electors generally prevailed; and that it was changed to the general ticket, or voluntarily through a convention that the late was right and the former wrong, but reluctantly, and under a general conviction, that the change was for the worse. It was caused in a great measure by compulsion, through the almost necessary operation of party conflicts. The system once commenced by any one party in a State, in order to secure victory by concentrating its united strength, almost necessarily compelled the opposite side, in order to avoid defeat, to imitate the bad example. Once started, the same cause, by its action and reaction, led to the almost universal adoption. It was a weapon forged for party warfare exclusively, and fit only for the purpose for which it was intended. But to introduce a weapon so intended, into a Convention of members of the same party, assembled, not in hostility, but for the peaceable and friendly purpose of producing and preserving harmony, union and concert, would be clearly, not only an unauthorized by the example of the general ticket, but without justification or excuse.

Another view remains preserving the most serious considerations, going to show, that the introduction of the general ticket, so far from affording reason for precedent in favor of the plan proposed by the Richmond Convention, furnishes strong grounds

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