

that they struck upon was this—"We hold these truths to be self evident, that all men are created equal, and they are endowed by their Creator with certain *inalienable* rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Almost simultaneously with them, or I believe a very little after, I will not be positive as to the date, a number of gentlemen got together in Paris, France, to lay the foundation of a government which they thought would be a government of the people, and they expressed themselves in almost similar words to those which were expressed here. And you will find, in examining the history of the world, that whenever mankind have been oppressed or bound down, there has generally been a reaction, a continual striving among the people to liberate themselves from their bondage, to gain freedom and the exercise of those inalienable rights of which I have spoken.

One great principle which has existed among men from the beginning of creation until now, is a desire, planted within them by the Almighty, to possess property—lands, houses, farms, etc., and in a national capacity, to possess territory, to increase their boundaries, and to extend their rule and dominion. As I said before, this principle is correct, only it wants controlling according to the revelations of God.

Our time on the earth is very short and transitory. No matter what we acquire it amounts to but very little, and we soon leave it. There is no great statesman, warrior, king, emperor or general, who has acquired extensive territory, but who has had to leave it soon. This is the universal history of mankind. You may go back to the old Assyrian empires, or examine the history of the kings of Babylon and Nineveh, and the

mightiest among them have passed away after a brief exercise of power; no matter how extensive their possessions were. Read their history in the Bible and, although some affect to despise that book, it is the best history we have, and contains a hundred times more information in relation to those old nations than you can find anywhere else. When the Medes and Persians dispossessed the Assyrians, they had just the same ideas as the Assyrians had—they wanted to extend their territory, and they did it, but what did it amount to? Not very much when we speak of it as immortal beings; when we speak of it as mortal beings, as butterflies that flutter around for a short time, and then die, it might be a sort of transient, passing glory, like a sunbeam when the sun shines from behind a cloud—it appears very brilliant, but it soon passes away. So it was with their glory, and where is it now? Why you can scarcely find where their mightiest cities stood. People think they can, but there is nothing definite about it, and their glory, pomp and majesty have no more existence now than their cities. They had a correct principle planted in their bosoms, but, it was perverted and corrupted, and they sought by fraud, strategy, war, robbery and plunder to possess themselves of dominion, empire and authority, and when they got through, they had to lie down among the silent dead; and could neither move a hand, stir an arm, move a leg nor open an eye, but had to be devoured by worms.

That is the history also of the Grecian and Roman kingdoms. It was said of Alexander that after he had conquered the world he sat down and wept because there was nothing more for him to subdue, and I have heard it said frequently, in regard to