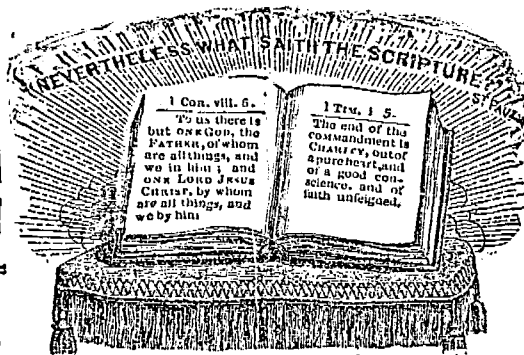


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TESTIMONY OF STATESMEN, JURISTS, PHILOSOPHERS AND OTHERS AGAINST THE DEATH PUNISHMENT.

The following valuable collection of opinions relative to Capital Punishment we take from the columns of the *Universalist Watchman*, published at Montpelier, Vermont:—

"Sanguinary laws are a bad symptom of the distemper of any State, or at least of its weak constitution. Life is the immediate gift of God to man, which neither he can resign nor can it be taken from him, unless by the command of him who gave it."—*Blackstone*.

"Let there be no rubrics of blood."—*Lord Bacon*.

"Crimes are more effectually prevented by the certainty than the severity of punishment."—*Beccaria*.

"Such is the situation of the majority of malefactors, that their existence is only a melancholy combination of all kinds of wretchedness. In all such cases, then, the dread of death has been ineffectual."—*Bentham*.

"The laws of the early Christians prohibited their adjudging capital punishment."—*Milman's History*, p. 356.

"I shall ask for the abolition of capital punishment until I have the infallibility of human judgment demonstrated to me."—*Lafayette*.

"The system (capital punishment) is worthy only the rudest savages, barren in expedients, and pursuing their object by the shortest course."—*Dr. Southwood Smith*.

"Whatever is worthy to be loved for anything, is worthy of preservation. Blocks and gibbets are the nearest objects with legislators, and their business is never with hopes and virtues."—*Landor*.

"I am of opinion that hanging is an advantage only to the executioner who is paid for putting men to death; if punishments are intended for the benefit of society, they should be useful to society."—*Montaigne*.

"I believe every thief will confess that he has sometimes ventured upon capital crimes, because he knew that those whom he injured would rather connive at his escape than cloud their minds with the horrors of his death."—*Dr. Samuel Johnson*.

"It were to be wished that instead of cutting away wretches as useless, that we tried the restrictive arts of government. We should then find that few minds are so base as that perseverance cannot amend; that man may see his last crime without dying for it," etc.—*Dr. Goldsmith*.

"We cannot be too cautious in depriving our fellow-creatures of that which God alone can give, and which, it seems to me, he alone has the right to take away."—*Dr. Hooper*.

"It is vain to suppose that jurors will enforce laws which are repugnant to the best feelings of our nature."—*Canning*.

"It is most discreditably to any men intrusted with power, when the governed turn round upon their governors and say, Your laws are so cruel or so foolish that we cannot and will not act upon them."—*Lord Brougham*.

"The power over human life is the sole prerogative of Him who gave it. Human laws, therefore, rise in rebellion against this prerogative, when they transfer it to other hands."—*Dr. Rush*.

"Laws which inflict death for murder are, in my opinion, as unchristian as those which justify or tolerate revenge."—*Dr. Benj. Franklin*.

"In my early visits to Newgate I had formed no opinion upon capital punishments; but my intercourse with the prisoners led to a decided conviction of their evil tendency."—*Elizabeth Fry*.

"Let him who advocates the taking the life of an aggressor, first show that all other means of safety are vain; then he will have adduced an argument in favor of taking life, which will not indeed be conclusive, but which will approach nearer to conclusiveness than any that has yet been adduced."—*Dymond*.

"Fellow-citizens,—Your invitation to me to attend the anniversary meetings of the National and of the New York State Societies for the Abolition of Capital Punishment, is duly received. Under circumstances which would admit of my attendance, it would give me great pleasure to meet you and the many humane citizens who will be in your city on that noble occasion. My heart is with you."—*Richard M. Johnson*.

"The principal, and in truth the only plausible ground, which advocates for capital punishments endeavor to derive a right to inflict them, is the authority of the Sacred Scriptures. But as the laws of Moses were merely local in their operation, it is vain to attempt to justify capital punishment under their authority."—*Elisha Williams*.

"Thou shalt not kill," and "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed," are laws found in the code of that people, who, although disposed and distracted, trace their history to the Creation. The first of these precepts constitutes a tenth part of the jurisprudence which God saw fit to establish for the government of all mankind, through all generations. The latter, of less universal obligation, is still retained in our system, although other States, as intelligent and refined, as secure and peaceful, have substituted for it the more benign principle that good shall be returned for evil."—*William H. Seward*.

"The experience of mankind has fully proven, that a largely bloody code of laws has not been the most effectual to prevent crime; while the growing objections to capital punishment, and the positive refusal of juries to convict, in many instances, warn us that some other remedy ought to be tried."—*Cassius M. Clay*.

"The State teaches men to kill. If you destroy the gallows, you carry one of the strong outposts of the Devil."—*Theodore Parker*.

"It affords me much pleasure to observe that my own views on capital punishments are the theme of the best men of our nation. I have, in every legislature of which I have been a member, pressed the subject, and used every effort, publicly and privately to redeem my country from this barbarous sin. As an advocate, I have never received a fee for the prosecution of one capitally charged, and without reward I have defended, almost to the utter prostration of my health, nine-tenths of the capital cases of my circuit. As a judge, I have condemned a convict to death, only to besiege the executive chamber, several hundred miles from the court, to obtain his pardon. No vanity prompts that statement. No discouragements, no scoff nor scorn, so help me God, shall turn me back. If there is a God in Justice, so also is there a God in Mercy."—*Judge Porter, Prof. of Law in Univ. of Ala.*

"As it is now perfectly well established that the private "avenger" stays his hand the more readily when the law ceases to deal vengeance, and that the subject reveres God's image in his fellow man the more devoutly when the law displays no longer to his view its wholesale slaughters; as it is proved that we need not violate the Divine command—THOU SHALT NOT KILL, in order to protect society against the increase of crime; nay, that the blood we shed will but cause the shedding of more blood, in an endless, vicious progression, is it not natural to pause, and inquire whether the struggle of one of our fellow-creatures is a spectacle of so great a moral beauty, such an exercise of the finer feelings of nature, that society must provide for its occasional exhibition, a choice and private exhibition, now, even at the expense of the infinite evils which flow from it, as implicitly as crime begets crime?"—*Robert Rantoul, Jr.*

"The innocent and the insane have suffered on the gallows; and although this was not intended yet the best men in society upheld the State in inflicting the punishment of death. It is unfortunate, said they, if any but the guilty suffer; but this punishment is necessary and rightful, and the State must be careful in determining the question of guilt. Now, if it should turn out that this mode of punishment is neither necessary nor rightful, then the sooner a State abstains from the murder of its prisoners, and declares by the constitution that it will so abstain, the sooner will it approach

the standard of rightful government."—*E. P. Hurlburt*.

"The time has passed when criminals were looked upon as bound to make an atonement for their offences, as if man should atone to man, and not alone to God. It is for us to imitate God rather in his mercy than in his judgment."—*Judge Edmonds*.

"Gladly would I co-operate with any society whose object should be to promote the abolition of every form by which the life of man be voluntarily taken by his fellow creature, man. I do heartily wish and pray for the success of your efforts to promote the abolition of capital punishment."—*J. Q. Adams*.

"Thank God that I have lived to see the time when the great truth at last begins to find an utterance from the deep heart of mankind, earnest and clear, that all revenge is crime!"—*Whittier*.

"Upon the practical abolition of the punishment of death, totally and without reserve, my views coincide with the advocates of the measure."—*O'Connell*.

"Time and reflection have confirmed the opinion cherished by me for many years, that in our country at least, no just cause exists for the infliction of death punishment, and that its abolishment will hereafter be looked upon as evidence of the moral character of nations, as they successively shall blot it from their criminal codes."—*Vice-President Dallas*.

"I have been about thirty years in the ministry, and have never yet discovered that the founder Christianity has delegated to man any right to take away the life of his fellow man."—*Father Mathew*.

"What a lamentable thing it is to see so many Christian men and women strangled on that cursed tree, the gallows."—*Sir Edward Coke*.

"At the present day, the infliction of capital punishment is mainly confined to the crime of murder; and it is on that account that the chief difficulty is presented against its abolition. It will not, however, take many words to show, that if capital punishment is unsuitable as a remedy for other descriptions of crime, it is, above all, the most unfit to be applied as a corrective in the case of homicide."—*M. B. Sampson*.

"I have considered the subject (capital punishment) long, patiently, and carefully, on Bible principles, and I have deliberately adopted the opinion that the death penalty ought to be abolished."—*Rev. James Murphy, D. D. (Dutch Reformed)*

"Those who think that the law which takes away human life should be abolished, contend that this law conflicts with the spirit of the religion of Jesus Christ, and that it is not in accordance with his precepts."—*Rev. Hosea Ballou (Universalist)*.

"The time is coming when it will be seen that it is not our duty to hang men, nor necessary to do so for our own security. And when that time comes, and the gallows shall be abolished, we shall look back upon it with the same horror with which we now regard the auto-da-fe, or the trial by torture; and our children will be astonished that such barbarities could have been so long tolerated in Christendom."—*Rev. Jas. F. Clarke, (Unitarian)*.

"The difficulty of procuring capital convictions is increasing; and it is confidently anticipated that capital punishments must cease in this country, if for no other reason, because they cannot be carried into effect."—*Prof. T. C. Upham, D. D., Bowdoin Col., (Orthodox)*.

"We join our voice in condemnation of a system (capital punishment) barbarous and condemnable, and at once unworthy of the religion we profess and the civilization we boast."—*Rev. J. Maffit, A. M., (Methodist)*.

"When I first approached the subject, I felt perfectly persuaded that the punishment of death inflicted by the civil magistrate, was not only of Divine appointment, but of universal obligation. It has been gradually and slowly that this persuasion has been changed. That it is an error, I have no longer any doubt."—*Rev. Henry Christmas, A. M., F. R. S. (Episcopalian)*.

"I am well pleased with the opportunity of signing the petition for the abolition of capital punishment. I feel well persuaded that there is nothing contained in the gospel

of Christ authorizing the infliction of capital punishment."—*Rev. B. T. Welch, D. D. (Baptist)*.

"It behoves, and well becomes the State of New York to take the initiative step in this wise and sacred philanthropy—the State from whose example and lead have already proceeded two of the greatest reforms of the age, namely, the temperance reformation and the abolition of imprisonment for debt; the State, too, that has given birth to many noble sons who have advocated this reform, (the abolition of capital punishment,) of whom two alone need here be referred to—a Tompkins and a Livingston; and to whose memories no worthier monument could be erected by a proud and grateful country, than the proposed law."—*O'Sullivan's Report*.

SOME MEN ARE UNITARIANS WITHOUT KNOWING THAT THEY ARE.

[From the New York Christian Inquirer.]

In 1821 the controversy between Unitarians and Trinitarians was perhaps, at its height. Those of your readers, who had at that time attained adult age, need not be reminded how bitter that controversy was, at least on one side.

I had just then left the Divinity School at Cambridge, and came to New-York to preach to the Church then recently gathered in the neat little chapel in Chambers street. I could fill the sheet, that now lies before me, with an account of things that were said and done by the Orthodox, while I was in your city, that evinced the suspicion or dread with which they had brought themselves to regard Unitarians. And yet it was not unfrequently the case, in that day, that we met with intelligent men in the bosom of the so-called Evangelical Church, who, could they be prevailed upon to venture a statement of their faith in their own language, not using the words of their creed, would find themselves declaring opinions very much in accordance with those denounced as heretical. Let me give you an example.

At the termination of my first engagement in Chambers street Church, it seemed good to me to occupy a few weeks, that were to transpire before the commencement of my second term of service, in visiting friends in some of the Southern cities. I was a young traveller then, and my recollections of that journey are more distinct than of any that I have taken since. Questions of doubtful dispute not unfrequently arose between my fellow travellers, which showed that the New England heresy had been pretty generally heard of, though not understood.

On the morning that we started from Fredericksburg, in Virginia, for Richmond, there got into the stage coach a gentleman between fifty and sixty years of age, with a thoughtful, intelligent, but rather genial countenance. We soon entered into conversation, which anon became so "free and easy," that he said with a significant intonation, "I guess, sir, you are from New England." To which I promptly replied, "I reckon, sir, that I am." This led to a brief, but animated discussion of the relative merits of our sectional idioms, which if it failed to improve the language of either of us, evidently increased our mutually kind regards.

After awhile, he said, "I hear there is an important religious controversy going on in your part of the country." To which, of course, I assented, at the same time exerting myself to suppress the emotion, which even an allusion to the subject, at that time, very naturally awakened in the bosom of a young man, far away from that region where the faith he held dear, was countenanced and defended by many of the wisest and best.

The gentleman continued, "I am a lawyer, and so much occupied with the studies and labors of my profession, that I have little time for any reading, but such as appertains to the law. I am, however, interested in religion. I revere its authority, and acknowledge its paramount importance. But as I have not had time to investigate thoroughly the questions in dispute between the differing sects, I have thought it more fair for me not to read the publications of either side. I know not that I have ever read a controver-