

in individual reformation, it can never become either public or national. The remark has been already made, that the character of a nation is not to be estimated by that of a pious few who happen to be in it. Nor are we to take it from that of a number of vicious, disorderly people who are constantly trampling upon the laws. It is to the nation itself we are to look for a national character. Whatever is countenanced by public law, or supported by public opinion, may be considered as in part constituting a national character. It is in this view, and not because there were no religious people, no practical and experimental christians in our nation, that I considered we had lost our character as a christian nation.— But if the character of a christian nation is ever to be regained, how is it to be done? The answer is plain. It must be by the progress of religion among individuals. No nation ever assumed a christian character, immediately on the first propagation of the gospel among them. This must be the work of time, and the fruit of a pretty general extension and embracing christianity among individuals. Those therefore, who would wish to see us in the possession of a national christian character, will, if they act a consistent part, do every thing in their power to promote individual reformation and personal religion. Should that happy time ever come, when men shall generally know, and follow on to know the Lord, a national christian character would soon be regained, and our kings would soon become nursing fathers, and our queens nursing mothers to the church; our rulers would soon kiss the Son, or embrace JESUS CHRIST in their public capacity, and our kingdom, even as a kingdom or government of this world, would soon become the kingdom of our Lord and of his CHRIST. This can be effected in no other way than by the individuals of which these kingdoms are composed, becoming decidedly on the Lord's side. Every individual reformation is therefore one step towards our becoming a christian nation. Where is the man, who, on taking a view, either of his heart or conduct, does not find something in himself which needs reformation? Is there nothing in our general conduct which calls for reformation? Have we uniformly treated the things of religion in a manner suited to their