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Ellis Sandoz, *Political Sermons of the American Founding Era. Vol. 2 (1789-1805)* [1991]

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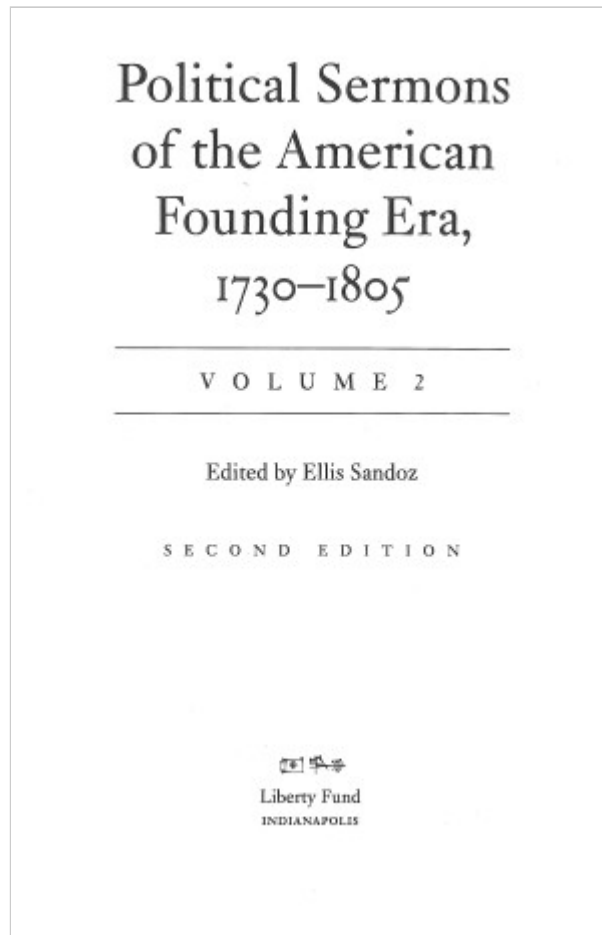
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## Edition Used:

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Editor: [Ellis Sandoz](#)

Author: [William Emerson](#)

## About This Title:

Volume 2 of a large two volume collection of sermons written between 1730-1805 by people such as Jonathan Mayhew, John Wesley, Moses Mather, John Witherspoon, Richard Price, Jonathan Edwards, and Noah Webster.

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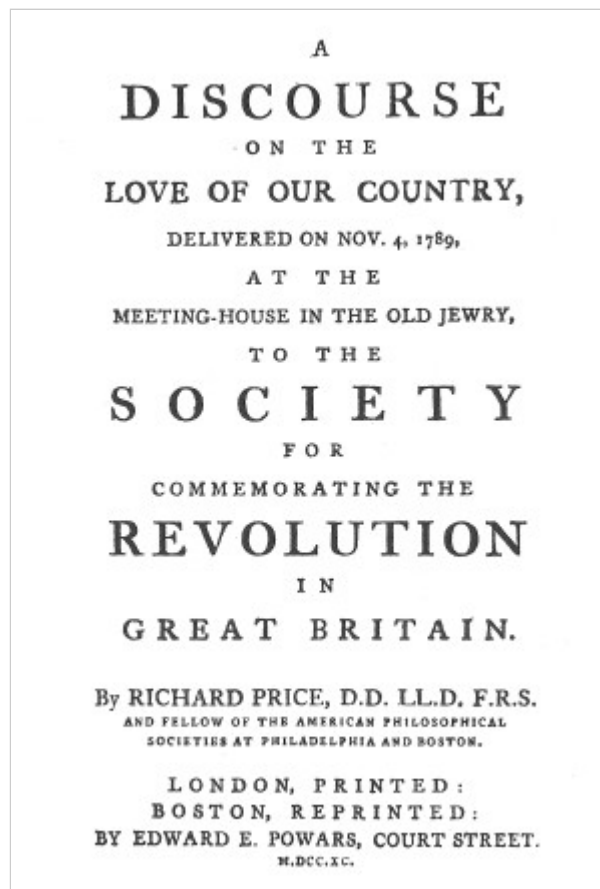
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## Table Of Contents

### [Chronology: 1789–1794](#)

- [34: Richard Price, a Discourse On the Love of Our Country](#)
- [35: James Dana, the African Slave Trade](#)
- [36: Israel Evans, a Sermon Delivered At the Annual Election](#)
- [37: John Leland, the Rights of Conscience Inalienable](#)
- [38: David Tappan, a Sermon For the Day of General Election](#)
- [39: Peter Thacher, a Sermon Preached Before the Artillery Company](#)
- [40: Samuel Miller, a Sermon On the Anniversary of the Independence of America](#)
- [41: Enos Hitchcock, an Oration In Commemoration of the Independence of the United States of America](#)
- [42: Jonathan Edwards, Jr., the Necessity of the Belief of Christianity](#)
- [43: David Osgood, the Wonderful Works of God Are to Be Remembered](#)
- [44: Noah Webster, the Revolution In France](#)

### [Chronology: 1795–1805](#)

- [45: Bishop James Madison, Manifestations of the Beneficence of Divine Providence Towards America](#)
- [46: Stephen Peabody, Sermon Before the General Court of New Hampshire At the Annual Election](#)
- [47: John Thayer, a Discourse, Delivered At the Roman Catholic Church In Boston](#)
- [48: Timothy Dwight, the Duty of Americans, At the Present Crisis](#)
- [49: Henry Holcombe, a Sermon Occasioned By the Death of Washington](#)
- [50: John Smalley, On the Evils of a Weak Government](#)
- [51: John Mitchell Mason, the Voice of Warning to Christians](#)
- [52: Tunis Wortman, a Solemn Address to Christians and Patriots](#)
- [53: Stanley Griswold, Overcoming Evil With Good](#)
- [54: William Emerson, an Oration In Commemoration of the Anniversary of American Independence](#)
- [55: John Hargrove, a Sermon, On the Second Coming of Christ](#)

## Chronology: 1789–1794

1789 The first Congress under the new Constitution meets at Federal Hall in New York (Mar. 4). George Washington is inaugurated as President (Apr. 30). The Judiciary Act creates the federal court system, and the departments of state, war, and treasury are created to compose the executive branch.

The Society of St. Tammany is organized in New York City by William Mooney as an Antifederalist political fraternity (May 12).

The French Revolution begins with the fall of the Bastille (July 14), an event witnessed by Thomas Jefferson, then minister to France.

President Washington transmits to the states the proposed amendments to the Constitution (Oct. 2). The states ratify ten of them as a Bill of Rights and reject two.

John Carroll, ordained the first Catholic bishop in America, founds Georgetown, the first Catholic university in America.

The University of North Carolina is founded.

William Hill Brown publishes the first American novel, *The Power of Sympathy*.

David Ramsay's *The History of the American Revolution*, the first national history, is published.

The first national Thanksgiving Day is established, by Congress's resolution and Washington's proclamation, to give thanks for the Constitution; the Antifederalists object, claiming that this violates states' rights (Nov. 26).

1790 A DISCOURSE ON THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY, Richard Price

A Quaker delegation petitions Congress to abolish slavery (Feb. 11).

The first census is completed (Mar. 1), showing a total U.S. population of 3,929,625, including 59,557 free blacks and 697,624 enslaved blacks. The largest cities are Philadelphia (42,000), New York (33,000), Boston (18,000), Charleston (16,000), and Baltimore (13,000). The most populous state is Virginia (820,000). Only Massachusetts reports no slaves.

Jefferson returns from France to become Secretary of State (Mar. 22).

Universalists convene in Philadelphia, led by Dr. Benjamin Rush and Reverend Elhanan Winchester, and assert an anti-Trinitarian doctrine denying the divinity of Jesus (May 25).

Rhode Island finally ratifies the Constitution, the thirteenth state to do so (May 29).

At the urging of Noah Webster, the first Copyright Act is passed and signed into law by President Washington (May 31).

A ten-square-mile Potomac River site is authorized (July 10) for a new national capital (Washington is to select the precise tract), with Philadelphia to serve in the interim (the government moves there in Dec.).

Samuel Slater builds a spinning mill for the Quaker merchant Moses Brown at Pawtucket, Rhode Island, beginning factory production in America (Dec. 21).

1791 THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE, James Dana

A SERMON DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL ELECTION, Israel Evans (not published until 1802?)

THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE INALIENABLE, John Leland

The Whiskey Act places an excise tax on distilled liquors and stills, despite the opposition of farmers who dispose of surplus grain by distilling it (Mar. 3).

Vermont becomes the fourteenth state (Mar. 4).

Jefferson and Madison organize Antifederalist factions in Middle Atlantic and New England states during a “botanizing excursion”; they oppose Washington’s and Hamilton’s Federalist policies, giving birth to the Democratic-Republican Party (May–June).

Benjamin Banneker, a black mathematician, scientist, and clockmaker, is appointed one of three commissioners to survey the site for the new federal capital on the Potomac River (July 16).

Partisan newspapers fuel the conflict between Hamilton and Jefferson; Philip Freneau’s *National Gazette* of Philadelphia is a major voice for Jeffersonian views.

Hamilton presents to Congress a report of manufacturers that aims at developing American industry and agriculture (Dec. 5).

The main office of the Bank of the United States opens in Philadelphia (Dec. 12).

Thomas Paine publishes the first part of *Rights of Man*; from opposing viewpoints, Vice President John Adams publishes *Discourses of Davila* and his son John Quincy Adams publishes the *Publicola* papers.

The University of Vermont is founded.

1792 A SERMON FOR THE DAY OF GENERAL ELECTION, David Tappan

The second part of Paine’s *Rights of Man* appears (Jan.).

Congress enacts the Militia Act in the face of growing Indian hostilities in the Northwest Territory; Gen. St. Clair, defeated by the Ohio Indians, is replaced as governor by Gen. Anthony Wayne.

Kentucky is admitted as the fifteenth state.

In a national election (Nov. 1), President George Washington and Vice President John Adams are re-elected by 132 and 77 electoral votes, respectively (results promulgated Dec. 5); the Antifederalist George Clinton, Governor of New York, receives 50 electoral votes.

The Second Congress convenes in Philadelphia (Nov. 5).

In England, Mary Wollstonecraft publishes *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, a work widely read in America.

Denmark becomes the first nation to abolish the slave trade.

The first turnpike opens, running the 60 miles from Philadelphia to Lancaster on a hard-packed surface of crushed rock.

1793 A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE ARTILLERY COMPANY, Peter Thacher

A SERMON ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA, Samuel Miller

AN ORATION IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Enos Hitchcock

King Louis XVI and Queen Marie Antoinette are guillotined in Paris (Jan. 21), dampening the enthusiasm of Americans for the French Revolution.

France's revolutionary government declares war on Great Britain, Spain, and the Netherlands (Feb. 1), further chilling American sympathies and intensifying acrimony against Jeffersonian-Antifederalist sympathies for the French Revolution.

Washington inaugurated for a second term as president (Mar. 4).

Citizen Edmond Genêt, the French minister to the United States, lands in Charleston and commissions privateers to raid British shipping. During a 28-day journey to Philadelphia to present credentials to President Washington (Apr. 8–May 18), Genêt lobbies for American support for the French Republic. However, Washington issues a proclamation of neutrality (Apr. 22).

Jefferson submits his resignation as Secretary of State (July 31), to become effective at the end of the year.

The Genêt crisis intensifies, as he appeals over Washington's head to the American public, but the Jacobins come to power in Paris and issue a warrant for his arrest. Granted asylum (June–Aug.), Genêt later becomes an American citizen and marries New York Governor Clinton's daughter.

A slave revolt in Albany, New York, devastates the city with fires (Nov. 25).

Williams College is founded.

Eli Whitney invents the cotton gin.

1794 THE NECESSITY OF THE BELIEF OF CHRISTIANITY, Jonathan Edwards, Jr.

THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD ARE TO BE REMEMBERED, David Osgood

THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE, Noah Webster

Edmund Randolph succeeds Jefferson as Secretary of State (Jan. 2).

The Whiskey Rebellion is put down in Pennsylvania by a 12,900-man militia led by Gen. Henry ("Light Horse Harry") Lee (July–mid-Nov.).

Jay's Treaty with Britain is concluded (Nov. 19), settling matters left unresolved by the Treaty of Paris (the terms publicly disclosed Mar. 1795).

"Mad" Anthony Wayne defeats a large force of Indians at the Battle of Fallen Timbers, securing what will later become the state of Ohio.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

34

## A DISCOURSE ON THE LOVE OF OUR COUNTRY

Richard Price

LONDON

1790

Richard Price (1723–1791). Born at Tynton in Glamorganshire, Wales, Price gained fame as a supporter of the American and French revolutions. A friend of Benjamin Franklin, he was a liberal Presbyterian minister and a moral philosopher whose critique of the Scottish philosophy of Francis Hutcheson in *Review of the Principal Questions and Difficulties in Morals* (1758) came to be regarded as a significant anticipation of Kant's ethics in certain respects and of nineteenth-century intuitionism in others. With Joseph Priestly, Price also published *A Free Discussion of the Doctrines of Materialism and Philosophical Necessity* (1778), written in the form of a debate. As a result of his publication of a reply to David Hume's essay on miracles, Price had a D.D. degree conferred upon him by the University of Aberdeen.

As an expert on finance and insurance, Price was selected to become a member of the Royal Society in 1765 for work on the theory of probability as applied to actuarial questions. His recommendation of a sinking fund to cope with problems of national debt influenced both French and British policy.

Price's vehement support for American independence came primarily through publication of two pamphlets that circulated widely at home and in America: *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America* (1776) and *Additional Observations . . .* (1777). Offered American citizenship, he declined, but he did address Congress when invited in 1778, was inducted into the American Philosophical Society, and was awarded (along with George Washington) an LL.D. by Yale in 1781. Price's *The Importance of the American Revolution* appeared in 1784.

The celebrated sermon that follows was preached in London on November 4, 1789, the 101st anniversary of the Glorious Revolution. It presents Price's apocalyptic view of the dawning of the millennium through the spread of liberty and happiness over the world, especially as evinced in French developments at the time. This point, according to A. J. Grieve, was for Edmund Burke the "grit around which he built up his pearl"—namely, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (1790). The gentility of Price's encomium for the French revolutionaries contrasts drastically with Burke's savage ridicule:

Is it because liberty in the abstract may be classed amongst the blessings of mankind, that I am seriously to felicitate a madman, who has escaped from the protecting

restraint and wholesome darkness of his cell, on his restoration to the enjoyment of light and liberty? Am I to congratulate a highwayman and murderer, who has broke prison, upon the recovery of his natural rights? This would be to act over again the scene of the criminals condemned to the galleys, and their heroic deliverer [Don Quixote], the metaphysic knight of the sorrowful countenance.

In rebuttal to Price's central proposition that the people of England have three fundamental rights that the French aspire to ("To choose our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to frame a government for ourselves"), Burke scathingly retorted: "We have an inheritable crown; an inheritable peerage; and a House of Commons and a people inheriting privileges, franchises, and liberties, from a long line of ancestors." Burke was answered not only by the aged, ailing Price, but also by Thomas Paine in *The Rights of Man* (1792). Paine, a writer of comparable intellect but of far less gentility—being every bit Burke's equal in the fine old art of invective—vindicated Price's three fundamental rights. Indeed, Price's sermon was the starting point for what Thomas W. Copeland designated "the most crucial ideological debate ever carried on in English."

*Our feet shall stand within thy gates, O Jerusalem, whither the tribes go up; the tribes of the Lord unto the testimony of Israel. To give thanks to the name of the Lord, for there sit the thrones of judgment; the throne of the House of David. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions sake I will now say, peace be within thee. Because of the House of the Lord our God, I will seek thy good.*

Psalm cxxii, 2d, and following verses.

In these words the Psalmist expresses, in strong and beautiful language, his love of his country, and the reasons on which he founded it; and my present design is, to take occasion from them to explain the duty we owe to our country, and the nature, foundation, and proper expressions of that love to it which we ought to cultivate.

I reckon this a subject particularly suitable to the services of this day, and to the anniversary of our deliverance at the Revolution from the dangers of popery and arbitrary power; and should I, on such an occasion, be led to touch more on political subjects than would at any other time be proper in the pulpit, you will, I doubt not, excuse me.

The love of our country has, in all times, been a subject of warm commendations; and it is certainly a noble passion; but, like all other passions, it requires regulation and direction. There are mistakes and prejudices by which, in this instance, we are in particular danger of being misled. I will briefly mention some of these to you, and observe,

First, That by our country is meant, in this case, not the soil, or the spot of earth on which we happen to have been born; not the forests and fields, but that community of which we are members; or that body of companions and friends and kindred who are

associated with us under the same constitution of government, protected by the same laws, and bound together by the same civil polity.

Secondly, It is proper to observe, that even in this sense of our country, that love of it which is our duty, does not imply any conviction of the superior value of it to other countries, or any particular preference of its laws and constitution of government. Were this implied, the love of their country would be the duty of only a very small part of mankind; for there are few countries that enjoy the advantage of laws and governments which deserve to be preferred. To found, therefore, this duty on such a preference, would be to found it on error and delusion. It is however a common delusion. There is the same partiality in countries, to themselves, that there is in individuals. All our attachments should be accompanied, as far as possible, with right opinions. We are too apt to confine wisdom and virtue within the circle of our own acquaintance and party. Our friends, our country, and, in short, every thing related to us, we are disposed to overvalue. A wise man will guard himself against this delusion. He will study to think of all things as they are, and not suffer any partial affections to blind his understanding. In other families there may be as much worth as in our own. In other circles of friends there may be as much wisdom; and in other countries as much of all that deserves esteem; but, notwithstanding this, our obligation to love our own families, friends, and country, and to seek, in the first place, their good, will remain the same.

Thirdly, It is proper I should desire you particularly to distinguish between the love of our country and that spirit of rivalry and ambition which has been common among nations. What has the love of their country hitherto been among mankind? What has it been but a love of domination; a desire of conquest, and a thirst for grandeur and glory, by extending territory, and enslaving surrounding countries? What has it been but a blind and narrow principle, producing in every country a contempt of other countries, and forming men into combinations and factions against their common rights and liberties? This is the principle that has been too often cried up as a virtue of the first rank: a principle of the same kind with that which governs clans of Indians, or tribes of Arabs, and leads them out to plunder and massacre. As most of the evils which have taken place in private life, and among individuals, have been occasioned by the desire of private interest overcoming the public affections; so most of the evils which have taken place among bodies of men have been occasioned by the desire of their own interest overcoming the principle of universal benevolence: and leading them to attack one another's territories, to encroach on one another's rights, and to endeavour to build their own advancement on the degradation of all within the reach of their power—what was the love of their country among the Jews, but a wretched partiality to themselves, and a proud contempt of all other nations? What was the love of their country among the old Romans? We have heard much of it; but I cannot hesitate in saying that, however great it appeared in some of its exertions, it was, in general, no better than a principle holding together a band of robbers in their attempts to crush all liberty but their own. What is now the love of his country in a Spaniard, a Turk, or a Russian? Can it be considered as any thing better than a passion for slavery, or a blind attachment to a spot where he enjoys no rights, and is disposed of as if he was a beast?

Let us learn by such reflections to correct and purify this passion, and to make it a just and rational principle of action.

It is very remarkable that the founder of our religion has not once mentioned this duty, or given us any recommendation of it; and this has, by unbelievers, been made an objection to Christianity. What I have said will entirely remove this objection. Certain it is, that, by inculcating on men an attachment to their country, Christianity would, at the time it was propagated, have done unspeakably more harm than good. Among the Jews, it would have been an excitement to war and insurrections; for they were then in eager expectation of becoming soon (as the favourite people of heaven) the lords and conquerors of the earth, under the triumphant reign of the Messiah. Among the Romans, likewise, this principle had, as I have just observed, exceeded its just bounds, and rendered them enemies to the peace and happiness of mankind. By inculcating it, therefore, Christianity would have confirmed both Jews and gentiles in one of the most pernicious faults. Our Lord and his apostles have done better. They have recommended that universal benevolence which is an unspeakably nobler principle than any partial affections. They have laid such stress on loving all men, even our enemies, and made an ardent and extensive charity so essential a part of virtue, that the religion they have preached may, by way of distinction from all other religions, be called the Religion of Benevolence. Nothing can be more friendly to the general rights of mankind; and were it duly regarded and practised, every man would consider every other man as his brother, and all the animosity that now takes place among contending nations would be abolished. If you want any proof of this, think of our Saviour's parable of the good Samaritan. The Jews and Samaritans were two rival nations that entertained a hatred of one another the most inveterate. The design of this parable was to shew to a Jew, that even a Samaritan, and consequently all men of all nations and religions, were included in the precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

But I am digressing from what I had chiefly in view; which was, after noticing that love of our country which is false and spurious, to explain the nature and effects of that which is just and reasonable. With this view, I must desire you to recollect that we are so constituted that our affections are more drawn to some among mankind than to others, in proportion to their degrees of nearness to us, and our power of being useful to them. It is obvious, that this is a circumstance in the constitution of our natures which proves the wisdom and goodness of our Maker; for had our affections been determined alike to all our fellow-creatures, human life would have been a scene of embarrassment and distraction. Our regards, according to the order of nature, begin with ourselves; and every man is charged primarily with the care of himself. Next come our families, and benefactors, and friends; and after them, our country. We can do little for the interest of mankind at large. To this interest, however, all other interests are subordinate. The noblest principle in our nature is the regard to general justice, and that good-will which embraces all the world. I have already observed this; but it cannot be too often repeated. Though our immediate attention must be employed in promoting our own interest and that of our nearest connexions; yet we must remember, that a narrower interest ought always to give way to a more extensive interest. In pursuing particularly the interest of our country, we ought to carry our views beyond it. We should love it ardently, but not exclusively. We ought to seek its

good, by all the means that our different circumstances and abilities will allow; but, at the same time, we ought to consider ourselves as citizens of the world, and take care to maintain a just regard to the rights of other countries.

The enquiry by what means (subject to this limitation) we may best promote the interest of our country, is very important; and all that remains of this discourse shall be employed in answering it, and in exhorting you to manifest your love to your country, by the means I shall mention.

The chief blessings of human nature are the three following: Truth—Virtue—and Liberty. These are, therefore, the blessings in the possession of which the interest of our country lies, and to the attainment of which our love of it ought to direct our endeavours. By the diffusion of knowledge it must be distinguished from a country of barbarians: by the practice of religious virtue, it must be distinguished from a country of gamblers, atheists, and libertines: and by the possession of liberty, it must be distinguished from a country of slaves. I will dwell for a few moments on each of these heads:

Our first concern, as lovers of our country, must be to enlighten it. Why are the nations of the world so patient under despotism? Why do they crouch to tyrants, and submit to be treated as if they were a herd of cattle? Is it not because they are kept in darkness, and want knowledge? Enlighten them and you will elevate them. Shew them they are men, and they will act like men. Give them just ideas of civil government, and let them know that it is an expedient for gaining protection against injury and defending their rights, and it will be impossible for them to submit to governments which, like most of those now in the world, are usurpations on the rights of men, and little better than contrivances for enabling the few to oppress the many. Convince them that the Deity is a righteous and benevolent as well as omnipotent Being, who regards with equal eye all his creatures, and connects his favour with nothing but an honest desire to know and do his will; and that zeal for mystical doctrines which has led men to hate and harass one another, will be exterminated. Set religion before them as a rational service, consisting not in any rites and ceremonies, but in worshipping God with a pure heart, and practising righteousness from the fear of his displeasure and the apprehension of a future righteous judgment, and that gloomy and cruel superstition will be abolished, which has hitherto gone under the name of religion, and to the support of which civil government has been perverted. Ignorance is the parent of bigotry, intolerance, persecution and slavery. Inform and instruct mankind, and these evils will be excluded. Happy is the person who, himself raised above vulgar errors, is conscious of having aimed at giving mankind this instruction. Happy is the scholar or philosopher who at the close of life can reflect that he has made this use of his learning and abilities: but happier far must he be, if at the same time he has reason to believe he has been successful, and actually contributed, by his instructions, to disseminate among his fellow-creatures just notions of themselves, of their rights, of religion, and the nature and end of civil government. Such were Milton, Locke, Sidney, Hoadly, &c. in this country; such were Montesquieu, Fenelon, Turgot, &c. in France. They sowed a seed which has since taken root, and is now growing up to a glorious harvest. To the information they conveyed by their writings we owe those revolutions in which every friend to

mankind is now exulting. What an encouragement is this to us all in our endeavours to enlighten the world? Every degree of illumination which we can communicate must do the greatest good. It helps to prepare the minds of men for the recovery of their rights, and hastens the overthrow of priestcraft and tyranny. In short, we may, in this instance, learn our duty from the conduct of the oppressors of the world. They know that light is hostile to them, and therefore they labour to keep men in the dark. With this intention they have appointed licensers of the press; and, in popish countries, prohibited the reading of the Bible. Remove the darkness in which they envelope the world, and their usurpations will be exposed, their power will be subverted, and the world emancipated.

The next great blessing of human nature which I have mentioned, is virtue. This ought to follow knowledge, and to be directed by it. Virtue without knowledge makes enthusiasts; and knowledge without virtue makes devils; but both united elevates to the top of human dignity and perfection. We must, therefore, if we would serve our country, make both these the objects of our zeal. We must discourage vice in all its forms; and our endeavours to enlighten must have ultimately in view a reformation of manners and virtuous practice.

I must add here, that in the practice of virtue I include the discharge of the public duties of religion. By neglecting these, we may injure our country essentially. But it is melancholy to observe that it is a common neglect among us; and in a great measure owing to a cause which is not likely to be soon removed: I mean, the defects (may I not say, the absurdities?) in our established codes of faith and worship. In foreign countries, the higher ranks of men, not distinguishing between the religion they see established and the Christian religion, are generally driven to irreligion and infidelity. The like evil is produced by the like cause in this country; and if no reformation of our established formularies can be brought about, it must be expected that religion will go on to lose its credit, and that little of it will be left except among the lower orders of people, many of whom, while their superiors give up all religion, are sinking into an enthusiasm in religion lately revived.

I hope you will not mistake what I am now saying, or consider it as the effect of my prejudices as a dissenter from the established church. The complaint I am making, is the complaint of many of the wisest and best men in the established church itself, who have been long urging the necessity of a revisal of its liturgy and articles. These were framed above two centuries ago, when Christendom was just emerging from the ignorance and barbarity of the dark ages. They remain now much the same they were then; and, therefore, cannot be properly adapted to the good sense and liberality of the present times. This imperfection, however, in our public forms of worship, affords no excuse to any person for neglecting public worship. All communities will have some religion; and it is of infinite consequence that they should be led to that which, by enforcing the obligations of virtue and putting men upon loving instead of damning one another, is most favourable to the interest of society.

If there is a Governor of the world, who directs all events, he ought to be invoked and worshipped; and those who dislike that mode of worship which is prescribed by public authority, ought (if they can find no worship out of the church which they

approve) to set up a separate worship for themselves; and by doing this, and giving an example of a rational and manly worship, men of weight, from their rank or literature, may do the greatest service to society and the world. They may bear a testimony against that application of civil power to the support of particular modes of faith, which obstructs human improvement, and perpetuates error; and they may hold out an instruction which will discountenance superstition, and at the same time recommend religion, by making it appear to be (what it certainly is when rightly understood) the strongest incentive to all that is generous and worthy, and consequently the best friend to public order and happiness.

Liberty is the next great blessing which I have mentioned as the object of patriotic zeal. It is inseparable from knowledge and virtue, and together with them completes the glory of a community. An enlightened and virtuous country must be a free country. It cannot suffer invasions of its rights, or bend to tyrants. I need not, on this occasion, take any pains to shew you how great a blessing liberty is. The smallest attention to the history of past ages, and the present state of mankind, will make you sensible of its importance. Look round the world, and you will find almost every country, respectable or contemptible, happy or miserable, a fruitful field or a frightful waste, according as it possesses or wants this blessing. Think of Greece, formerly the seat of arts and science, and the most distinguished spot under heaven; but now, having lost liberty, a vile and wretched spot, a region of darkness, poverty, and barbarity. Such reflections must convince you that, if you love your country, you cannot be zealous enough in promoting the cause of liberty in it. But it will come in my way to say more to this purpose presently.

The observations I have made include our whole duty to our country; for by endeavouring to liberalize and enlighten it, to discourage vice and to promote virtue in it, and to assert and support its liberties, we shall endeavour to do all that is necessary to make it great and happy. But it is proper that, on this occasion, I should be more explicit, and exemplify our duty to our country by observing farther, that it requires us to obey its laws, and to respect its magistrates.

Civil government (as I have before observed) is an institution of human prudence for guarding our persons, our property, and our good name, against invasion; and for securing to the members of a community that liberty to which all have an equal right, as far as they do not, by any overt act, use it to injure the liberty of others. Civil laws are regulations agreed upon by the community for gaining these ends; and civil magistrates are officers appointed by the community for executing these laws. Obedience, therefore, to the laws and to magistrates, are necessary expressions of our regard to the community; and without this obedience the ends of government cannot be obtained, or a community avoid falling into a state of anarchy that will destroy those rights and subvert that liberty, which government is instituted to protect.

I wish it was in my power to give you a just account of the importance of this observation. It shews the ground on which the duty of obeying civil governors stands, and that there are two extremes in this case which ought to be avoided. These extremes are adulation and servility on one hand; and a proud and licentious contempt on the other. The former is the extreme to which mankind in general have been most

prone; for it has oftener happened that men have been too passive than too unruly; and the rebellion of kings against their people has been more common, and done more mischief, than the rebellion of people against their kings.

Adulation is always odious, and when offered to men in power, it corrupts them, by giving them improper ideas of their situation; and it debases those who offer it, by manifesting an abjectness founded on improper ideas of themselves. I have lately observed in this kingdom too near approaches to this abjectness. In our late addresses to the king, on his recovery from the severe illness with which God has been pleased to afflict him, we have appeared more like a herd crawling at the feet of a master, than like enlightened and manly citizens rejoicing with a beloved sovereign, but at the same time conscious that he derives all his consequence from themselves. But, perhaps, these servilities in the language of our late addresses should be pardoned, as only forms of civility and expressions of an overflow of good-nature. They have, however, a dangerous tendency. The potentates of this world are sufficiently apt to consider themselves as possessed of an inherent superiority, which gives them a right to govern, and makes mankind their own; and this infatuation is almost every where fostered in them by the creeping sycophants about them, and the language of flattery which they are continually hearing.

Civil governors are properly the servants of the public; and a king is no more than the first servant of the public, created by it, maintained by it, and responsible to it: and all the homage paid him, is due to him on no other account than his relation to the public. His sacredness is the sacredness of the community. His authority is the authority of the community; and the term *majesty*, which it is usual to apply to him, is by no means his own majesty, but the *majesty of the people*. For this reason, whatever he may be in his private capacity; and though, in respect of personal qualities, not equal to, or even far below many among ourselves—for this reason, I say (that is, as representing the community and its first magistrate), he is entitled to our reverence and obedience. The words *most excellent majesty* are rightly applied to him; and there is a respect which it would be criminal to withhold from him.

You cannot be too attentive to this observation. The improvement of the world depends on the attention to it: nor will mankind be ever as virtuous and happy as they are capable of being, till the attention to it becomes universal and efficacious. If we forget it, we shall be in danger of an idolatry as gross and stupid as that of the ancient heathens, who, after fabricating blocks of wood or stone, fell down and worshipped them. The disposition in mankind to this kind of idolatry is indeed a very mortifying subject of reflection. In Turkey, millions of human beings adore a silly mortal, and are ready to throw themselves at his feet, and to submit their lives to his discretion. In Russia, the common people are only a stock on the lands of grandees, or appendages to their estates, which, like the fixtures in a house, are bought and sold with the estates. In Spain, in Germany, and under most of the governments of the world, mankind are in a similar state of humiliation. Who, that has a just sense of the dignity of his nature, can avoid execrating such a debasement of it?



Had I been to address the king on a late occasion, I should have been inclined to do it in a style very different from that of most of the addressers, and to use some such language as the following:

I rejoice, sir, in your recovery. I thank God for his goodness to you. I honour you not only as my king, but as almost the only lawful king in the world, because the only one who owes his crown to the choice of his people. May you enjoy all possible happiness. May God shew you the folly of those effusions of adulation which you are now receiving, and guard you against their effects. May you be led to such a just sense of the nature of your situation, and endowed with such wisdom, as shall render your restoration to the government of these kingdoms a blessing to it, and engage you to consider yourself as more properly the servant than the sovereign of your people.

But I must not forget the opposite extreme to that now taken notice of; that is, a disdainful pride, derived from a consciousness of equality, or, perhaps, superiority, in respect of all that gives true dignity to men in power, and producing a contempt of them, and a disposition to treat them with rudeness and insult. It is a trite observation, that extremes generally beget one another. This is particularly true in the present case. Persons justly informed on the subject of government, when they see men dazzled by looking up to high stations, and observe loyalty carried to a length that implies ignorance and servility: such persons, in such circumstances, are in danger of spurning at all public authority, and throwing off that respectful demeanor to persons invested with it, which the order of society requires. There is undoubtedly a particular deference and homage due to civil magistrates, on account of their stations and offices; nor can that man be either truly wise or truly virtuous, who despises governments, and wantonly *speaks evil of his rulers*; or who does not, by all the means in his power, endeavour to strengthen their hands, and to give weight to their exertions in the discharge of their duty. *Fear God*, says St. Peter. *Love the brotherhood. Honour all men. Honour the King. You must needs*, says St. Paul, *be subject to rulers, not only for wrath* (that is, from the fear of suffering the penalties annexed to the breach of the laws) *but for conscience sake. For rulers are ministers of God, and revengers for executing wrath on all that do evil.*

Another expression of our love to our country is defending it against enemies. These enemies are of two sorts, internal and external; or domestic and foreign. The former are the most dangerous, and they have generally been the most successful. I have just observed, that there is a submission due to the executive officers of government, which is our duty; but you must not forget what I have also observed, that it must not be a blind and slavish submission. Men in power (unless better disposed than is common) are always endeavouring to extend their power. They hate the doctrine, that it is a trust derived from the people, and not a right vested in themselves. For this reason, the tendency of every government is to despotism; and in this the best constituted governments must end, if the people are not vigilant, ready to take alarms, and determined to resist abuses as soon as they begin. This vigilance, therefore, it is our duty to maintain. Whenever it is withdrawn, and a people cease to reason about their rights and to be awake to encroachments, they are in danger of being enslaved, and their servants will soon become their masters.

I need not say how much it is our duty to defend our country against foreign enemies. When a country is attacked in any of its rights by another country, or when any attempts are made by ambitious foreign powers to injure it, a war in its defence becomes necessary: and, in such circumstances, to die for our country is meritorious and noble. These defensive wars are, in my opinion, the only just wars. Offensive wars are always unlawful; and to seek the aggrandizement of our country by them, that is, by attacking other countries, in order to extend dominion, or to gratify avarice, is wicked and detestable. Such, however, have been most of the wars which have taken place in the world; but the time is, I hope, coming, when a conviction will prevail, of the folly as well as the iniquity of wars; and when the nations of the earth, happy under just governments, and no longer in danger from the passions of kings, will find out better ways of settling their disputes; and beat (as Isaiah prophesies) *their swords into plow-shares, and their spears into pruning-hooks*.

Among the particulars included in that duty to our country, by discharging which we should shew our love to it, I will only further mention praying for it, and offering up thanksgivings to God for every event favourable to it. At the present season we are called upon to express, in this way, our love to our country. It is the business of this day and of the present service; and, therefore, it is necessary that I should now direct your attention to it particularly.

We are met to thank God for that event in this country to which the name of the Revolution has been given; and which, for more than a century, it has been usual for the friends of freedom, and more especially Protestant Dissenters, under the title of the Revolution Society, to celebrate with expressions of joy and exultation. My highly valued and excellent friend, who addressed you on this occasion last year, has given you an interesting account of the principal circumstances that attended this event, and of the reasons we have for rejoicing in it. By a bloodless victory, the fetters which despotism had been long preparing for us were broken; the rights of the people were asserted, a tyrant expelled, and a sovereign of our own choice appointed in his room. Security was given to our property, and our consciences were emancipated. The bounds of free enquiry were enlarged; the volume in which are the words of eternal life, was laid more open to our examination; and that æra of light and liberty was introduced among us, by which we have been made an example to other kingdoms, and became the instructors of the world. Had it not been for this deliverance, the probability is, that, instead of being thus distinguished, we should now have been a base people, groaning under the infamy and misery of popery and slavery. Let us therefore, offer thanksgivings to God, the author of all our blessings. *Had he not been on our side, we should have been swallowed up quick, and the proud waters would have gone over our souls. But our souls are escaped, and the snare has been broken. Blessed then be the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.* cxxivth Psalm.

It is well known that King James was not far from gaining his purpose; and that probably he would have succeeded, had he been less in a hurry. But he was a fool as well as a bigot. He wanted courage as well as prudence; and, therefore, fled, and left us to settle quietly for ourselves that constitution of government which is now our boast. We have particular reason, as Protestant Dissenters, to rejoice on this occasion. It was at this time we were rescued from persecution, and obtained the liberty of

worshipping God in the manner we think most acceptable to him. It was then our meeting houses were opened, our worship was taken under the protection of the law, and the principles of toleration gained a triumph. We have, therefore, on this occasion, peculiar reasons for thanksgiving—But let us remember that we ought not to satisfy ourselves with thanksgivings. Our gratitude, if genuine, will be accompanied with endeavours to give stability to the deliverance our country has obtained, and to extend and improve the happiness with which the Revolution has blest us—let us, in particular, take care not to forget the principles of the Revolution. This society has, very properly, in its reports, held out these principles, as an instruction to the public. I will only take notice of the three following:

First; The right to liberty of conscience in religious matters.

Secondly; The right to resist power when abused. And,

Thirdly; The right to chuse our own governors; to cashier them for misconduct; and to frame a government for ourselves.

On these three principles, and more especially the last, was the Revolution founded. Were it not true that liberty of conscience is a sacred right; that power abused justifies resistance; and that civil authority is a delegation from the people—were not, I say, all this true, the Revolution would have been not an assertion, but an invasion of rights; not a revolution, but a rebellion. Cherish in your breasts this conviction, and act under its influence; detesting the odious doctrines of passive obedience, non-resistance, and the divine right of kings—doctrines which, had they been acted upon in this country, would have left us at this time wretched slaves—doctrines which imply, that God made mankind to be oppressed and plundered; and which are no less a blasphemy against him, than an insult on common sense.

I would farther direct you to remember, that though the Revolution was a great work, it was by no means a perfect work; and that all was not then gained which was necessary to put the kingdom in the secure and complete possession of the blessings of liberty. In particular, you should recollect, that the toleration then obtained was imperfect. It included only those who could declare their faith in the doctrinal articles of the church of England. It has, indeed, been since extended, but not sufficiently; for there still exist penal laws on account of religious opinions, which (were they carried into execution) would shut up many of our places of worship, and silence and imprison some of our ablest and best men. The Test Laws are also still in force; and deprive of eligibility to civil and military offices, all who cannot conform to the established worship. It is with great pleasure I find that the body of Protestant Dissenters, though defeated in two late attempts to deliver their country from this disgrace to it, have determined to persevere. Should they at last succeed, they will have the satisfaction, not only of removing from themselves a proscription they do not deserve, but of contributing to lessen the number of public iniquities. For I cannot call by a gentler name, laws which convert an ordinance appointed by our Saviour to commemorate his death, into an instrument of oppressive policy, and a qualification of rakes and atheists for civil posts. I have said, should they succeed—but perhaps I ought not to suggest a doubt about their success\* And, indeed, when I consider that in

Scotland the established church is defended by no such test—that in Ireland it has been abolished—that in a great neighbouring country it has been declared to be an indefeasible right of all citizens to be equally eligible to public offices—that in the same kingdom a professed dissenter from the established church holds the first office in the state—that in the emperor's dominions Jews have been lately admitted to the enjoyment of equal privileges with other citizens—and that in this very country, a Dissenter, though excluded from the power of executing the laws, yet is allowed to be employed in making them. When, I say, I consider such facts as these, I am disposed to think it impossible that the enemies of the repeal of the Test Laws should not soon become ashamed, and give up their opposition.

But the most important instance of the imperfect state in which the Revolution left our constitution, is the *inequality of our representation*. I think, indeed, this defect in our constitution so gross and so palpable, as to make it excellent chiefly in form and theory. You should remember that a representation in the legislature of a kingdom is the basis of constitutional liberty in it, and of all legitimate government; and that without it a government is nothing but an usurpation. When the representation is fair and equal, and at the same time vested with such powers as our House of Commons possesses, a kingdom may be said to govern itself, and consequently to possess true liberty. When the representation is partial, a kingdom possesses liberty only partially; and if extremely partial, it only gives a semblance of liberty; but if not only extremely partial, but corruptly chosen, and under corrupt influence after being chosen, it becomes a nuisance, and produces the worst of all forms of government—a government by corruption, a government carried on and supported by spreading venality and profligacy through a kingdom. May heaven preserve this kingdom from a calamity so dreadful! It is the point of depravity to which abuses under such a government as ours naturally tend, and the last stage of national unhappiness. We are, at present, I hope, at a great distance from it. But it cannot be pretended that there are no advances towards it, or that there is no reason for apprehension and alarm.

The inadequateness of our representation has been long a subject of complaint. This is, in truth, our fundamental grievance; and I do not think that any thing is much more our duty, as men who love their country, and are grateful for the Revolution, than to unite our zeal in endeavouring to get it redressed. At the time of the American war, associations were formed for this purpose in London, and other parts of the kingdom; and our present minister himself has, since that war, directed to it an effort which made him a favourite with many of us. But all attention to it seems now lost, and the probability is, that this inattention will continue, and that nothing will be done towards gaining for us this essential blessing, till some great calamity again alarms our fears, or till some great abuse of power again provokes our resentment; or, perhaps, till the acquisition of a pure and equal representation by other countries (while we are mocked with the shadow) kindles our shame.

Such is the conduct by which we ought to express our gratitude for the Revolution. We should always bear in mind the principles that justify it. We should contribute all we can towards supplying what it left deficient; and shew ourselves anxious about transmitting the blessings obtained by it to our posterity, unimpaired and improved. But, brethren, while we thus shew our patriotic zeal, let us take care not to disgrace

the cause of patriotism, by any licentious, or immoral conduct. Oh! how earnestly do I wish that all who profess zeal in this cause, were as distinguished by the purity of their morals, as some of them are by their abilities; and that I could make them sensible of the advantages they would derive from a virtuous character, and of the suspicions they incur and the loss of consequence they suffer by wanting it. Oh! that I could see in men who oppose tyranny in the state, a disdain of the tyranny of low passions in themselves; or, at least, such a sense of shame, and regard to public order and decency as would induce them to bide their irregularities, and to avoid insulting the virtuous part of the community by an open exhibition of vice! I cannot reconcile myself to the idea of an immoral patriot, or to that separation of private from public virtue, which some think to be possible. Is it to be expected that—but I must forbear. I am afraid of applications, which many are too ready to make, and for which I should be sorry to give any just occasion.

I have been explaining to you the nature and expressions of a just regard to our country. Give me leave to exhort you to examine your conduct by what I have been saying. You love your country, and desire its happiness; and, without doubt, you have the greatest reason for loving it. It has been long a very distinguished and favoured country. Often has God appeared for it, and delivered it. Let us study to shew ourselves worthy of the favour shewn us. Do you practice virtue yourselves, and study to promote it in others? Do you obey the laws of your country, and aim at doing your part towards maintaining and perpetuating its privileges? Do you always give your vote on the side of public liberty; and are you ready to pour out your blood in its defence? Do you look up to God for the continuance of his favour to your country, and pray for its prosperity; preserving, at the same time, a strict regard to the rights of other countries, and always considering yourselves more as citizens of the world than as members of any particular community? If this is your temper and conduct you are blessings to your country, and were all like you, this world would soon be a heaven.

I am addressing myself to Christians. Let me, therefore, mention to you the example of our blessed Saviour. I have observed, at the beginning of this discourse, that he did not inculcate upon his hearers the love of their country, or take any notice of it as a part of our duty. Instead of doing this, I observed that he taught the obligation to love all mankind, and recommended universal benevolence, as (next to the love of God) our first duty; and, I think, I also proved to you, that this, in the circumstances of the world at that time, was an instance of incomparable wisdom and goodness in his instructions. But we must not infer from hence, that he did not include the love of our country in the number of our duties. He has shewn the contrary by his example. It appears that he possessed a particular affection for his country, though a very wicked country. We read in Luke x. 42, that when, upon approaching Jerusalem, in one of his last journies to it, he beheld it, he wept over it, and said, *Oh! that thou hadst known (even thou, at least in this thy day) the things that belong to thy peace.* What a tender solicitude about his country does the lamentation over Jerusalem imply, which is recorded in the same gospel, chap. xiii. and 34. *Oh! Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them who are sent to thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathereth her brood under her wings, but ye would not.*

It may not be improper farther to mention the love St. Paul expressed for his country, when he declared, that, for the sake of his brethren and kinsmen, he could even wish himself *accursed from Christ*. (Rom. ix. 3.) The original words are an *anathema from Christ*; and his meaning is, that he could have been contented to suffer himself the calamities which were coming on the Jewish people, were it possible for him, by such a sacrifice of himself, to save them.

It is too evident that the state of this country is such as renders it an object of concern and anxiety. It wants (I have shewn you) the grand security of public liberty. Increasing luxury has multiplied abuses in it. A monstrous weight of debt is crippling it. Vice and venality are bringing down upon it God's displeasure. That spirit to which it owes its distinctions, is declining; and some late events seem to prove that it is becoming every day more reconcilable to encroachments on the securities of its liberties. It wants, therefore, your patriotic services; and, for the sake of the distinctions it has so long enjoyed; for the sake of our brethren and companions, and all that should be dear to a free people, we ought to do our utmost to save it from the dangers that threaten it; remembering, that by acting thus, we shall promote, in the best manner, our own private interest, as well as the interest of our country; for when the community prospers, the individuals that compose it must prosper with it. But, should that not happen, or should we even suffer in our secular interest by our endeavours to promote the interest of our country, we shall feel a satisfaction in our own breasts which is preferable to all this world can give; and we shall enjoy the transporting hope of soon becoming members of a perfect community in the heavens, and having *an entrance ministered to us, abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*.

You may reasonably expect, that I should now close this address to you. But I cannot yet dismiss you. I must not conclude without recalling, particularly, to your recollection, a consideration to which I have more than once alluded, and which, probably, your thoughts have been all along anticipating: A consideration with which my mind is impressed more than I can express. I mean, the consideration of the favourableness of the present times to all exertions in the cause of public liberty.

What an eventful period is this! I am thankful that I have lived to it; and I could almost say, *Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation*. I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge, which has undermined superstition and error—I have lived to see the rights of men better understood than ever; and nations panting for liberty, which seemed to have lost the idea of it. I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice; their king led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. After sharing in the benefits of one revolution, I have been spared to be a witness to two other revolutions, both glorious. And now, methinks, I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading; a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience.

Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom, and writers in its defence! The times are auspicious. Your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors! Behold, the light you have struck out, after setting America free, reflected to France, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates Europe!

Tremble all ye oppressors of the world! Take warning all ye supporters of slavish governments, and slavish hierarchies! Call no more (absurdly and wickedly) reformation, innovation. You cannot now hold the world in darkness. Struggle no longer against increasing light and liberality. Restore to mankind their rights; and consent to the correction of abuses, before they and you are destroyed together.

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[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

35

## THE AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE

James Dana

NEW-HAVEN

1791

James Dana (1735–1812). A graduate of Harvard and an Old Light Congregationalist minister, Dana became pastor in Wallingford, Connecticut, in 1758, an event that precipitated a flurry of pamphlets between partisans of the Old and New Light factions that came to be called the Wallingford Controversy. (See Leonard Bacon, *Thirteen Historical Discourses*, [1839].) Though he overcame this inauspicious beginning to his career, gaining the admiration of his clerical colleagues generally, he continued through the years to argue the merits of the Old Divinity against the New and, hence, against the doctrines of both the elder and the younger Jonathan Edwards and their allies, Doctors Bellamy, Hopkins, and West. Early on, he strongly declared for American independence. Dana became pastor of the First Church of New Haven in 1789, a position he held until 1805, when he lost out to the brilliant preaching of Moses Stuart and was dismissed by the council. He received a D.D. from the University of Edinburgh, and he married three times. Senator and lawyer Samuel Whittelsey Dana was his son by his first wife, Cathrine Whittelsey. Dana continued to live in New Haven until his death.

*The African Slave Trade* (1791), delivered in New Haven before the Connecticut Society for the Promotion of Freedom, demonstrates Dana's abolitionist convictions. A truly remarkable document, it is one of the mere handful of his published sermons.

*So then, brethren, we are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.*

Epistle to the Galatians, IV. 31.

The churches of Galatia consisted principally of Jewish converts, who were engaged to incorporate the Mosaic ritual with the Christian profession. They boasted, at the same time, "We be Abraham's children, and were never in bondage." With great address and pertinency St. Paul reminds them, "Abraham had two sons; one by a bond-maid, the other by a free-woman." These were emblems of the two covenants. Ishmael, by Hagar the bond-woman, represented the Sinai covenant; Isaac, by Sarah the free-woman, represented the Abrahamic covenant. The former was local and temporary, founded in worldly promises, had burthensome appendages, and only a shadow of heavenly things. The latter was universal and permanent, a covenant of better hopes, and stripped of that ceremonial which was a yoke of bondage.



The apostle hath described the Christian church in distinction from the Jewish thus: The Jews under Moses were like an heir in his minority, who is under tutors and governors. The law was a schoolmaster to bring them to Christ. He came to redeem them that were under the law; that they might be no longer servants, but sons; heirs of full age, heirs of God through Christ. "Now we, brethren, are the children of promise, as was Isaac," with whom the covenant of better hopes was established. *We are not children of the bond-woman, but of the free.*

The apostle proceeds: "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." The Sinai covenant was subservient to the Abrahamic, till the seed promised to Abraham came. When this seed came, that covenant had answered its purpose, and gave place to a more liberal one. The Jewish converts acknowledged that this seed was come: But they encroached on the liberty of their fellow-Christians, by attempting to compel their observance of the abrogated ordinances of Moses. This was falling from grace, cutting themselves off from the privileges of the children of the free-woman, and desiring again to be in bondage to weak and beggarly rudiments. It was returning to a state of minority, after the time appointed of the father for their majority and freedom.

The apostle further acquaints them, that "the blessing of Abraham was come on the gentiles through Jesus Christ." For the promise was thus expressed: "In thee shall all nations be blessed." There is therefore no difference, under the Christian institution, between Jews and other nations. The latter, though by nature in bondage, are made equally free of the family of Christ as the former. This is the fulfilment of the prediction, "I will call them my people, which were not my people; and her beloved, which was not beloved. Where it was said unto them, Ye are not my people, there shall they be called the children of the living God." The text, though immediately addressed to Jewish believers, is equally applicable to believing gentiles. These are not, any more than those, children of the bond-woman, but of the free. They are "all one in Christ Jesus—children of God, whether Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female—If Christ's, then Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

Christian freedom, being alike the privilege of converts from Judaism and heathenism, primarily intends, on the part of the former, the abolition of the encumbered ritual of Moses; and, on the part of the latter, liberation from idolatrous superstition, to which they were in servile subjection: On the part of both it intends deliverance from the slavery of vicious passions.

When Christ appeared, the whole world were sunk in ignorance and wickedness. The gentiles, *professing themselves to be wise, knew not God*, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator. They were vassals to the prince of the power of the air. The Christian dispensation, accompanied with the holy Ghost sent down from heaven, called them out of darkness into marvelous light; they were turned from dumb idols, from the power of Satan, from worldly pollutions, to serve the living God. The Jewish church had corrupted and made void the law of God. Their guides taught for doctrines the commandments of men, perverted to a worldly sense the promises of spiritual redemption, and imposed a greater burthen of ceremonies than Moses had enjoined. Christ removed the vail of Moses, *consecrated a new and living way to*

God, rescued the precepts of the decalogue from the glosses of blind and interested guides, and disburthened religion of that weight under which it had groaned. *His yoke is easy, and his burthen light. Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty* in the highest sense. The spirit of life in Christ removes the dominion of sin. His disciples, made free from sin, *walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. There is no condemnation to them.* Thus emancipated, they “wait for the hope of righteousness by faith—the redemption of the body.” When made free of the kingdom promised them, sin and the curse, pain, sorrow, death shall be no more. How glorious this liberty!

Further: Christianity is a reasonable service, and founded in personal persuasion. It permits us to “call no man master; for one is our master, even Christ”; to whom alone every one must stand or fall. His religion is friendly to free enquiry: It directs us to “prove all things”—to claim the liberty of grounding our faith, not on the wisdom of man, but the power of God; and to allow others the same. Our liberty may not be judged of their consciences, nor their liberty of our conscience. They who are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak; and should take heed lest by any means their liberty, their improved knowledge in Christianity, should be a stumbling block to uninformed minds. “Use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. There is one body, and one spirit, and we are called in one hope. One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”

How then should different professors, and different denominations, endeavour to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace, with all meekness, humility and charity? The body of Christ is one, and hath many members. The members then “should have the same care one for another. If one suffer, all the members should suffer with it; or if one be honoured, all the members should rejoice with it.” Those are *carnal, and walk as men*, who contend for the system of this or that man, or body of men. The children of the bond-woman would exclude from the privileges of the Christian church, and doom to eternal chains, such as do not embrace the faith or opinions they hold: But the children of the free-woman *have not so learned Christ*. The simplicity and perspicuity of this heavenly institution, designed to guide men of common understanding in the paths of salvation, can derive no assistance from speculations too high for the generality of mankind—too high also for those who exercise themselves therein.

In going off from one extreme, let us shun the other. “We are called unto liberty”: Should it be an occasion of infidelity and indifference to all religion, the guilt and shame must be aggravated. The real friends of liberty always distinguish between freedom and licentiousness. They know that the mind cannot be free, while blinded by sceptical pride, or immersed in sensuality. Liberty consists not in subverting the foundations of society, in being without law. Nor doth it consist in reasoning against God, and providence, and revelation. Nor in attempting to explain his nature, his government, and the secret things which belong to him.

Christian liberty supposeth that we receive the record which God hath given of his Son—that we be not the servants of sin, but have our fruit unto holiness—that we abide in our callings.

Lastly, The spirit of Christianity hath the best aspect on general liberty and the rights of mankind. Would we persuade men to *look, not on their own things, but on the things of others*, let us set before them the pattern of Christ. Was ever grace or liberality like his, “who though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?” He was “in the form of God,—but took upon him the form of a servant.” He “came not to be ministred unto, but to minister, and gave his life” to purchase spiritual and eternal redemption for the slaves of Satan. Possibly for a friend, or a good man, some might dare to die. But he died for enemies, for the ungodly. Is it glorious to die for one’s country? He died for all the world. Were the same mind in us, we should love all mankind, and do good to all as we have opportunity. They who hate and persecute us would be the objects of our good wishes and forgiveness. We should pray, “Father, forgive them.” We should have compassion on them, as the good Samaritan had on the Jew whom he found helpless and ready to perish. Every natural and friendly, every private and public affection is cherished and improved by looking unto Jesus. And if we speak of universal philanthropy, how doth every example fade before his? He is not ashamed to call mankind his brethren. His love to them was stronger than death, when they had forfeited the privileges of children, and might have been consigned, with apostate spirits, to chains and blackness of darkness. They owe all the liberty they have or hope for to his friendship.

Where the spirit of Christ is, there is no envy, strife or confusion; no discord and war; no invasion of the rights of others, either those of individuals, or of societies and nations; but meekness, peace, and harmony, joy in the happiness, and commiseration of the distresses of others. This spirit doth no ill to others, but all possible good. Rulers, under its influence, are not oppressors, but benefactors. Subjects do not resist lawful authority; but render tribute, custom, fear, honour to whom they are due, leading a quiet life in godliness and honesty. When the spirit of Christianity shall universally prevail, as our hope is that it will, nations will “learn war no more; they shall not hurt nor destroy in all God’s holy mountain.”

Our Lord undertook not to say what men’s personal and civil rights are—what the prerogatives of princes, or the sovereign power of a nation, and what the privileges of subjects. He left civil distinctions among men as he found them. He taught his disciples to “render to Cesar the things that are Cesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.[”]

Among other relative duties, his religion particularly requires of servants, that they *be subject to their masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward: Shewing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things. Let every man wherein he is called, therein abide with God. Let as many servants as are under the yoke, account their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren.*

Revelation has not informed us, what form of government is best adapted to answer the ends of society. Every form must be some abridgment of natural liberty. Our being social creatures, our dependence on one another, shew that government is the will of

the Creator. The original form was probably patriarchal. The theocracy of the Jews was appropriate to them. Monarchy was a subversion of their constitution. No other form than theirs can be pronounced divine. Nations have a right to institute such form as they chuse. The government of most nations, therefore, hath been mere usurpation. Far from being sanctioned by divine authority, we might rather consider the permission of such government as his greatest scourge on mankind.

Relying on the candor which I need from my present auditory, I address myself more particularly to the design of our coming together.

A manner of address calculated to inflame the passions would neither become my station, nor be respectful to an audience well acquainted with the rights of men and citizens, educated in principles of liberty.

The Africans belong to the families for whom heaven designed a participation in the blessing of Abraham. We need not discuss the question, what the state of those, whom the Europeans have enslaved, was antecedently to such their slavery. It is more proper to enquire when and how the African slave-trade commenced—what nations have engaged in it—in what manner they have carried it on—what the probable numbers they have reduced to slavery—in what condition these slaves are held—and what reasons are offered in vindication of the trade.

A zeal for the discovery of new territory marked the fifteenth century. The first navigations of the Europeans for this purpose were concerted and directed by prince Henry, fourth son of John I. king of Portugal. He was born 1394. His valor in the assault and capture of the city Ceuta in Africa, A. D. 1415, presaged the fame he afterwards acquired. From this period he devoted himself to naval expeditions for the discovery of unknown countries. The ships he sent out subjected divers parts of Africa, and the neighbouring islands, to the dominion of Portugal. After the success in doubling cape Bojador, he gave to his father and his successors all the lands he had discovered, or might discover, and applied to pope Martin V. to ratify the donation. He engaged, that in all their expeditions the Portuguese should have mainly in view the extension of the Roman church and authority of its pontif. Martin granted the prince's request. In his bull of ratification, which was about the year 1430, it is declared, that "whatever might be discovered from the said cape to the utmost India, should pertain to the Portuguese' dominion." Edward, brother to prince Henry, succeeded to the throne of Portugal 1433, on the death of John I. Pope Eugene IV, by his bull in 1438, ratified to Edward the grant made by Martin V. A bull of Nicholas V. dated January 8, 1454, refers to the aforesaid bulls of his predecessors, Martin and Eugene. It recites the declaration prince Henry had made of his atchievements —"*that for 25 years he had not ceased to send annually almost an army*" of Portuguese, "with the greatest dangers, labors and charges, in most swift ships, to *search out the sea and maritime provinces towards the southern parts and antarctic pole*"—that these ships "came at length to the province of Guinea, and took possession of some islands, havens and sea adjoining"—that "sailing further, war was waged for some years with the people of those parts, and very many islands near thereunto were subdued and peaceably possessed, and still were possessed, with the adjacent sea"—that "many Guineans and other negroes were taken thence by force, and some

by barter.” The bull describes prince Henry as “a true soldier of Christ, a most courageous defender and intrepid champion of the faith, aspiring from his early youth with his utmost might to have the glorious name of Christ published, extolled and revered throughout the world.” It recogniseth the exclusive right of Portugal to the acquisitions and possessions aforesaid, in virtue of the letters of Martin and Eugene, which granted to the king of Portugal and prince Henry “free and ample faculty to *invade, search out, expugn, vanquish and subdue* all pagans and enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, *and their persons to reduce to perpetual slavery*, and all their kingdoms, possessions and goods to apply and appropriate,” &c. Pope Nicholas’s letter then goes on to “decree and declare, the acquests already made, and what hereafter shall happen to be acquired, after that they shall be acquired, have pertained, and forever of right do belong and pertain, to the aforesaid king and his successors, and not to any others whatever.” It forbids, on the severest penalties, all Christian powers from settling in the countries discovered by the Portuguese, or any way molesting them in their expeditions for the discovery and conquest of unknown countries. It speaks of prince Henry’s plan and his prosecution of it as “a most pious work, and most worthy of perpetual remembrance, wherein the glory of God, with the interest of the commonwealth of the universal church are concerned.”

Thus were prince Henry’s views and operations sanctioned by the highest authority at that time acknowledged in Christendom. A right derived from a source so venerable was then undisputed. The Roman pontif bound princes at his pleasure; and, as vicar of Christ, was allowed to have at his disposal all the kingdoms of the earth. This grant of Nicholas was confirmed by his successor, Calixtus III. August 6, 1458.

On the death of Edward, his son Alphonsus, then in his minority, succeeded to the throne of Portugal 1438, and died 1481. Prince Henry died 1460, or 1463. At his death the spirit of discovery languished; but revived with the accession of John II. son of Alphonsus. John, the year after his accession (1482), sent an embassy to Edward IV. of England, to acquaint him with the title acquired, by the pope’s bull, to the conquest in Guinea; and requested him to dissolve a fleet which some English merchants were fitting for the Guinea trade. The king of England shewed great respect to the ambassadors, and granted all they required. The king of Portugal assumed, and the king of England gave him, this style, *Rex Portugaliæ et Algarbiorum citra at ultra mare in Africa*. Pope Sixtus IV. not long before his death, which was August 12, 1484, confirmed all the grants made by his predecessors to the kings of Portugal and their successors.\*

“In 1481 John II. sent 100 artificers, 500 soldiers, and all necessaries, to build a fort in Guinea. The large kingdoms of Benin and Congo were discovered 1484, 1485”; and the cape of Good-Hope 1486. The Portuguese built forts and planted colonies in Africa; “established a commercial intercourse with the powerful kingdoms, and compelled the petty princes by force of arms to acknowledge themselves vassals.”

At this period, and by these means, the power and commerce of the Portuguese in Africa were well established. The wholesome decrees of five successive Roman pontifs granted, conveyed and confirmed to the most faithful king a right to appropriate the kingdoms, goods and possessions of all infidels, wherever to be found,

*to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, or destroy them from the earth, for the declared purpose of bringing the Lord's sheep into one dominical fold, under one universal pastor. Succeeding kings of Portugal have not forfeited the large grant by any undutifulness to their holy father. Portugal long enjoyed the trade to Africa and the East-Indies without the interference of any European power. For more than half a century before she exported any Negroes from Africa, she made and held many of them slaves in their native country.*

The Portuguese first imported slaves into Hispaniola, †A. D. 1508, and into their Brazilian colonies 1517. ‡ Their sugar works were first set up in these colonies 1580. Their union with Spain at that time was most unfortunate for them. Hence the Dutch became their enemies, who took from them their East-India and Brazilian conquests, and part of their African colonies. They recovered Brazil, and their African establishments 1640; but have never recovered the riches of India.

After the Dutch quitted Brazil, and the gold mines were discovered, the trade of Portugal improved, and a great importation of slaves took place. “They carry yearly from Loango to the Brazils 25,000.” At Goango “they get abundance.” At cape Lopes they “get a great many.” They themselves say, “that they carry over to Brazil 50,000 and more every year from Melinda” on the Mozambique coast. Such hath been the increase of their Brazilian and African colonies for about a century past, that they “have taken off since the year 1700 more English goods annually than Portugal and Spain had before done.”\* From their greater dominions, and greater extent of territory, in Africa, than any other European power, this quarter of the world “is not of less consideration to them, perhaps, than to all the other powers of Europe unitedly comprehended—It supplies them with Negroes in abundance, to carry on their sugar works, mines, and planting business in the Brazils. † They are said to bring annually from the Brazils £.5,000,000 sterling in gold, coined and uncoined.” ‡

“It is difficult to ascertain the number of slaves, which the Portuguese residing in Africa have in possession. Those who are least rich have fifty, an hundred, or two hundred belonging to them, and many of the most considerable possess at least three thousand. A religious society at Loanda have of their own 12,000 of all nations.” (Beawes, *lex mercatoria*, p. 790, 791.)

Spanish America hath successively received her slaves from the Genoese, Portuguese, French and English. A convention was made at London between England and Spain, A. D. 1689, for supplying the Spanish West-Indies with negro slaves from Jamaica.\* The French Guinea company contracted, in 1702, to supply them with 38,000 negroes, in ten years; and if peace should be concluded, with 48,000. In 1713 there was a treaty between England and Spain for the importation of 144,000 negroes in thirty years, or 4,800 annually. † If we include those whom the Portuguese have held in slavery in Africa, with the importations into South-America, twelve millions may be a moderate estimate from the commencement of the traffic to the present time.

We shall now attend to the importations into the West-India islands and the United States.

The English fitted out three ships for the slave trade in 1562.‡ For a full century this trade hath been vigorously pursued, without intermission, by England, France and Holland; as it had been long before, and continued to be, by Portugal.

“The trade of Barbadoes, in 1661, maintained 400 sail of ships of 150 tons one with another, and 10,000 seamen. The running cash was computed at £.200,000 at least. In 1676 this island had 80,000 negroes. In one hundred years the inhabitants of Great-Britain have received £.12,000,000 in silver by means of this plantation. On a parliamentary enquiry into the African trade 1728, it appeared that in three years only, 42,000 slaves had been imported at Barbadoes, Jamaica and Antigua, besides what were carried to their other islands.”§

In pursuance of an order from the king of France, a survey was made in 1777, of the slaves in the French islands, when the number returned was 386,500.\* The council of Paris determined, that an annual importation of 20,000 was necessary to supply the annual decrease. (Anderson, vol. V. p. 276.)

The number of slaves in the several British West-India islands is stated by Anderson at 410,000, (vol. VI. p. 921, 922.) A later account makes them 461,669.‡

“Since the peace of 1763,” saith M. le Abbe Raynal,‡ “Great-Britain hath sent annually to the coast of Guinea 195 vessels, consisting, collectively, of 23,000 tons, and 7 or 8,000 seamen. Rather more than half this number have sailed from Liverpool, and the remainder from London, Bristol and Lancaster. They have traded for 40,000 slaves.” An average for each vessel will be 205. Postlethwait informs us, that in 1752 eighty eight vessels from Liverpool to Africa brought away 25,940 slaves.§ If the Liverpool vessels brought away this number, we may suppose that those of London and Bristol made up the full number of 40,000.

M. le Abbe Raynal saith (probably without sufficient attention, vol. IV. p. 99.), “The trade of Africa hath never furnished the French colonies more than 13 or 14,000 slaves annually.” This importation, he grants, was “insufficient” for her colonies. It doth not correspond to the number of slaves in them. If the trade had not furnished a sufficiency for themselves, would they have contracted to supply Spain with 4,000 slaves annually for ten successive years? “Good judges,” saith Postlethwait (vol. I. p. 726.), “reckon that 30,000 negroes are annually imported into the French sugar islands.” But we will suppose they import 20,000 into these islands. This is the importation which their council supposed requisite to supply the decrease. The general computation is five per cent. decrease annually.

The present number of slaves in the West-Indies is 930,669.\* There are in the United States 670,633.‡ To this number may be added about 12,000 manumitted Africans. In all 1,613,302. Were the mortality among them as great in the five states south of Delaware as in the West-Indies, the above number could not be kept up but by an annual importation of 80,000. The probability is, that 70,000 hath been the annual average for a century at least.

In seventy seven years there were imported into Jamaica 535,549. ¶ By the census of the United States, taken 1791, they contain 3,925,247 souls.\* Of these, in the states south of Delaware, more than one quarter are negro slaves. In the four states next north of Maryland are 45,401 slaves. In New-England 3870. There may have been brought into all the West-India-Islands, and into the United States, from first to last, seven millions. One million more must be allowed for mortality on the passage. How many have been destroyed in the collection of them in Africa, we cannot justly conjecture. It is judged that Great-Britain sustain the loss of twice as many seamen in this, as in all their other extensive trade.

We suppose, then, that eight millions of slaves have been shipped in Africa for the West-India islands and the United States; ten millions for South-America; and, perhaps, two millions have been taken and held in slavery in Africa. Great-Britain and the United States have shipped about five millions, France two, Holland and other nations one; though we undertake not to state the proportion with exactness. The other twelve millions we set to Portugal. Twenty million slaves, at £.30 sterling each, amount to the commercial value of £.600,000,000. *Six hundred times ten hundred thousand pounds sterling traffic in the souls of men!!!*

By whom hath this commerce been opened, and so long and ardently pursued? The subjects of their *most faithful, most catholic, most Christian, most protestant majesties, defenders of the faith*; and by the citizens of the most republican States, with the sanction of St. Peter's successor. Unprovoked, without any pretended injury, these have kindled and kept alive the flame of war through three quarters of the continent of Africa; that is, all the interior as well as maritime parts south of Senegal and Abyssinia. These have taught the Africans to steal, sell and murder one another. On any or no pretence the different tribes make prisoners of each other, or the chiefs seize their own people, and drive them, as herds of cattle, to market. The natives are trepanned by one another, and by the Europeans; forced from their flocks, and fields, and tenderest connexions. This vile commerce hath depopulated the sea-coast: It must now be carried on in the inland parts.

As though it were not sufficient to force the Africans from their country, and every thing dear to them, they are made to travel in irons hundreds of miles through their native soil, through sands and morasses, down to the sea shore; and there stowed, as lumber, for transportation. The cruelty of the captains of the Guinea ships, in many instances, is not inferior to that of Clive or Hastings.

The servitude of the greatest part of the slaves after their arrival, the scantiness of their provision and its bad quality, their tyrannical and merciless discipline, are well known, and too painful to recollect. It is a law in Barbadoes, "that if any slave, under punishment by his master or his order, suffer in life or limb, no person shall be liable to any fine for the same. But if any man shall wantonly or cruelly kill his own slave, he shall pay into the treasury £.15."

With what reason or truth is it urged, that the condition of the Africans is meliorated by their slavery? They, not their masters, are the proper judges in this matter. Wretched as you may suppose their condition was in Africa, the nefarious commerce



of foreigners may have been the principal cause of that wretchedness. Should foreigners desist from this commerce, and the holders of slaves propose to transport them back to Africa, how would their *mouth be filled with laughter, and their tongue with singing*? Instead of thinking their condition meliorated by slavery, they most sincerely join in that execration on their oppressors: *Happy shall he be that taketh and dasheth thy little ones against the stones*. The imaginary expectation that death may transport them to their own country is their chief consolation. Under unlimited power, accustomed to the most inhuman usage, no example of mercy relenting for them being exhibited, no marvel that the language of insurgents is, *Death or conquest*. Their cries will sooner or later reach the ears of him to whom vengeance belongeth.

Will any one say, that their condition is meliorated by their being taught the knowledge of God and Christ? How many of their masters are in a state of brutal ignorance in this respect? A parish minister\* in the West-Indies saith, that he “drew up plain and easy instructions for the slaves, invited them to attend at particular hours on Lord’s-day, appointed hours at home, and exhorted their masters to encourage their attendance. But inconceivable was the listlessness with which he was heard, and bitter the censure heaped on him in return. It was suggested, that he aimed to render them incapable of being good slaves by making them Christians—some who approved of the plan, did not think themselves obliged to co-operate: I stood,” says he, “a rebel convict against the interest and majesty of plantership.”

When Archbishop Secker asked what success the missionaries “had in baptizing and converting negro slaves? how the catechist at Coddington college in Barbadoes proceeded with those slaves that belonged to the college estate,” and whom he presumed had been instructed in Christianity? He was answered, “I found one old negro, who told me he could say all his catechism. I asked him, if he did not find himself much happier and better since he became a Christian, than he was before? Why, sir, said he, I am old man, and as a driver am not put to common labour; but Christian not made for negro in this country. How so? What is your duty towards God? He repeated it. What is your duty towards your neighbor? Ah, master, I don’t say that no more. Why so? Because, master, I can’t say it from my heart, if I think of white man.”

Had African slaves the means of Christian instruction, had they been treated with humanity, still the making slaves of them hath been no more than *doing evil that good may come*. Christianity and humanity would rather have dictated the sending books and teachers into Africa, and endeavors for their civilization. Have they been treated as children of the same family with ourselves? as having the same Father, whose *tender mercies are over all his works*? as having the same natural prerogatives with other nations? Or have they been treated as outcasts from humanity?\*

The Greeks and Romans, amidst their improvements in philosophy, arts and sciences, established slavery as far as they extended their conquests. Their rage for conquest had the world for its object. They made war without having received any injury. Captives taken in war were exposed to sale. And indeed all the ancient nations considered conquest as a just foundation for slavery. Some moderns have undertaken to defend the same principle. In an age and country so well acquainted with the rights

of men, this kind of reasoning merits very little attention. It is, moreover, wholly inapplicable to the case of African slavery. Whatever just dominion conquerors may claim over the conquered must be founded in this, that the latter were the aggressors. Did the Africans first invade the rights of the nations who have carried on the slave trade? or give them a foundation of complaint? Were they ever conquered by their foreign invaders?

But the reasoning is not less unjust than inapplicable. The objects of a just war are the security of national rights, and indemnification for injuries. Superior force may enslave, but gives no right. It is inglorious, savage and brutal to insult a conquered enemy, and reduce him to the lowest servility.

“But did not the Jews make slaves of the Canaanites by the express command of God?” They did indeed. Those nations had *filled up their measure of iniquity*. The Supreme Sovereign devoted them to destruction, and commissioned Israel to be the executioners of his justice. “Thou mayest not,” said God, “consume them at once, lest the land become desolate, and the beasts of the field increase against thee. By little and little will I drive them out from before thee.” Of those nations, remaining in the land, they might purchase bond-servants, and transmit them as an inheritance to posterity. The Gibeonites, one of these devoted nations, obtained a league of peace with Joshua, under pretence that they were a very remote people. When their stratagem was detected, he saved them alive, because of his league; but he made them all bond-men, hewers of wood, and drawers of water (Lev. 25. 44, 45, 46. Joshua chap. 9th). When a like warrant can be produced, it will authorize a like practice.

“But Ishmael was the son of a bond-woman. His posterity therefore can have no claim to freedom.” This is not a just consequence; nor is this objection supported by history. The prophecy concerning Ishmael was, “He will be a wild man; his hand will be against every man, and every man’s hand against him.” His posterity, the Arabians, have lived in war with the world. The Egyptians, Assyrians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Tartars and Turks have in vain attempted to subjugate them. They have been and are free and independent.

That the heathen have no right to any possession on earth, is an article of the Roman faith. The charters of Britain to her late colonies held out the same language. But is this the language of him, whose is “the world, and they that dwell therein”? who “hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth; and determined the bounds of their habitation”? In enslaving the pagans of Africa, have the Christians of Europe and America proceeded on this principle, that the author of their religion, whose *kingdom is not of this world*, hath commissioned them to seize on the possessions, and, what is more, on the persons, of those heathen? Among the enumerated articles of commerce in mystical Babylon in the day of her fall, *slaves and souls of men* closeth the account—intimating that this kind of commerce was the consummation of her wickedness. Let such as imitate the example, consider the consequence.

Man’s obdurate heart does not feel for man.  
He finds his fellow guilty of a skin

Not colour'd like his own; and having pow'r  
T' enforce the wrong, for such a worthy cause  
Dooms and devotes him as his lawful prey.  
Thus man devotes his brother, and destroys;  
And worse than all, and most to be deplor'd,  
As human nature's broadest, foulest blot,  
Chains him, tasks him, and exacts his sweat  
With stripes, that mercy with a bleeding heart  
Weeps when she sees inflicted on a beast.  
Then what is man? And what man seeing this,  
And having human feelings, does not blush,  
And hang his head, to think himself a man?\*

Our late warfare was expressly founded on such principles as these: "All men are created equal: They are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." Admitting these just principles, we need not puzzle ourselves with the question, whether a black complexion is a token of God's wrath? If attempts to account for the color of the blacks, by ascribing it to climate, or the state of society, or both, should not be perfectly satisfactory (and perhaps they are not), shall we therefore conclude, that they did not spring from the same original parents? How then shall we account either for their origin or our own? The Mosaic, which is the only account of the origin of mankind, doth not inform us what was the complexion of Adam and Eve.

If we admit the Mosaic account, we cannot suppose that the Africans are of a different species from us: If we reject it, we have no account whence they or we sprang. Let us then receive the Mosaic history of the creation, till another and better appears. According to that, the Africans are our brethren. And, according to the principles of our religion, they are *children of the free-woman as well as we*. This instructs us, *that God is no respecter of persons, or of nations—hath put no difference between Jew and Greek, barbarian and Scythian*. In Christ Jesus, in whom it was foretold "all nations shall be blessed," those "who sometimes were far off, are brought nigh, and have access by one Spirit unto the Father." So that they "are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." The heathen will all be given him for his inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

Why then should we treat our African brethren as the elder son in the parable treated the younger, offended at the compassion of their common parent towards him? Why place them in a situation incapable of recovery from their lost state? their state of moral death? Did Jesus come to redeem us from the worst bondage? Shall his disciples then enslave those whom he came to redeem from slavery? who are the purchase of his blood? Is this *doing to others*, as he hath commanded, *whatsoever we would that they should do to us*? Is it to *love our neighbour as ourselves*?

On a view of the wretched servitude of the Africans, some may suspect, that they must have been *sinners above all men, because they suffer such things*. This way of reasoning, however common, our Lord has reprov'd—particularly in the instance of

the blind man; of those who were slain by the fall of the tower in Siloam; and of those whose blood Pilate mingled with the public sacrifices. All mankind are *the offspring of God*. His government over them is parental. Children may have the fullest proof that the government of their father is not capricious and tyrannic, but most wise and kind: At the same time, they cannot explain many parts of it; but unreservedly submit to his pleasure, having the fullest confidence in his superior wisdom, his paternal care and affection.

That such as have been educated in slavish principles, justify and practise slavery, may not seem strange. Those who profess to understand and regard the principles of liberty should cheerfully unite to abolish slavery.

Our middle and northern states have prohibited any further importation of slaves. South-Carolina passed a prohibitory act for a limited time. Consistently with the federal constitution the traffic may be stopped in seventeen years; and a duty of ten dollars may be laid on every slave now imported. By an act of the legislature of Connecticut, all blacks and mulattoes born within the state from March 1784, will be manumitted at the age of 25 years. The act of Pennsylvania liberates them at the age of twenty eight years. Such provision hath been made for the gradual abolition of slavery in the United States. Could wisdom and philanthropy have advanced further for the time?

In the northern division of the United States, the slaves live better than one quarter of the white people. Their masters are possessed of property; nor is harder labor required of the slaves, than a great part of the masters perform themselves. Might the estate of the masters be exempt from the maintenance of their slaves, but very few would hesitate to manumit them.

In co-operating with the wise measures and benevolent intentions of the legislature of Connecticut, we shall do as much as can be desired to ease the condition of slavery, and extinguish the odious distinction. Humane masters, requiring no more than is just and equal, and affording to their servants the means of moral and religious instruction, take the only sure course to make them faithful. Many receive such kind treatment, and have such affection to their masters, that they wish to abide with them. Nor is it to be doubted but many others, who may wish to be manumitted, would soon repent their choice. Still the term slave is odious, be the master's yoke ever so light. And it is very questionable whether any servant can be profitable who is not a voluntary one.

The revolution in the United States hath given free course to the principles of liberty. One ancient kingdom, illuminated by these principles, and actuated by the spirit of liberty, hath established a free constitution. The spirit will spread, and shake the throne of despotic princes. Neither an habit of submission to arbitrary rule in church and state, nor the menaced interference of neighboring kingdoms, could prevent, or counterwork, a revolution, propitious in its aspect on the rights of other nations, and of mankind. No combination of European potentates can impede the progress of freedom. The time is hastening, when their subjects will not endure to be told, that no government shall exist in any nation but such as provides for the perpetuation of absolute monarchy, and the transmission of it to the families in present possession.

The time is hastening, when no monarch in Europe shall tell his subjects, *Your silver and your gold are mine.*

The present occasion will be well improved, if we set ourselves to banish all slavish principles, and assert our liberty as men, citizens and Christians. We have all one Father: He will have all his offspring to be saved. We are disciples of one master: He will finally *gather together in one the children of God.* Let us unite in carrying into effect the purpose of the Saviour's appearance. This was to give *peace and good will to man,* and thus bring *glory to God on high.*

Being "one body in Christ, and every one members one of another"; we should take care "that there be no schism in the body." They who separate themselves, or separate others, without cause, are schismatics. Christ is not divided. A religious party is of all others the most odious and dangerous. The terms express a palpable contradiction. The dire effects of proselyting zeal in Romish, and even in Protestant, countries would have been prevented, had Christian liberty been understood, and the exercise of it permitted.

Whether ignorance or learning, weakness or craft, have bound the heaviest burthens in religion, we need not enquire. Each of them hath done much in this way in ages past. Happily for the present age of light and liberty, the spirit of bigotry and domination cannot encumber and debase Christianity as heretofore. The exercise of private judgment, an appeal to the scriptures, and the cultivation of Christian charity and philanthropy, will display the excellency of our religion.

To conclude: In vain do we assert our natural and civil liberty, or contend for the same liberty in behalf of any of our fellow-creatures, provided we ourselves are not made free from the condemnation and dominion of sin. If there is such a thing as slavery, the servant of sin is a slave—and self-made. The captive, prisoner and slave, in an outward respect, may be free in Christ, free indeed; while he who enjoys full external liberty, may, in regard to his inward man, be under the power of wicked spirits: These enter and dwell in an heart garnished to receive them. Jesus Christ, and no other, saveth from sin and wrath. The spirit of life quickeneth those who are dead in trespasses, and looseth those whom Satan hath bound. "If we be dead with him, we believe that we shall also live with him."

The new Jerusalem is free in a more exalted sense than the church on earth. True believers, "sealed with the holy Spirit of promise, have the earnest of their inheritance, until the redemption of the purchased possession." In that day of complete redemption, of glorious liberty, may God of his infinite mercy grant that we may meet all the ransomed of the Lord, with songs and everlasting joy, saying: "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne; and unto the lamb who was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by his blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Amen."

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

36

## A SERMON DELIVERED AT THE ANNUAL ELECTION

Israel Evans

CONCORD

1791

Israel Evans (1747–1807). A contemporary of James Madison at the College of New Jersey, Evans was graduated in 1772 and was ordained a Presbyterian minister in 1776. As a chaplain throughout the Revolutionary War with the New Hampshire brigade commanded by General Enoch Poor, he was involved in the Battle of Saratoga in 1777, in the campaign of 1779 against Joseph Brant's Iroquois Indians, and in the victory at Yorktown in 1781, where he preached to the combined American and French forces under Lafayette. He became the second settled minister of Concord, New Hampshire, serving from 1789 until 1797, when he resigned. He remained in the town until his death. Dartmouth College awarded Evans an A.M. degree in 1792.

An animated and patriotic preacher, Evans saw the wonder-working hand of Providence in every event of the Revolutionary War and in the national glory looming beyond the triumph over British tyranny, a glory that would blend with the fulfillment of God's plan for the world. The election sermon reprinted here was preached in Concord in 1791 before the General Court of the state of New Hampshire.

*Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.*

Galatians V. 1.

### Friends And Fellow-Citizens,

We have numbered more than twenty-seven years since your opposition to a foreign system of heavy oppression began. The year 1764 has been rendered memorable, on the one side by the folly and injustice of a hated stamp-act, and, on the other, by the resisting energy of the patriot sons of freedom. From that period, the genius of American liberty, by combating distress, misery, and hosts of enemies, waxed strong in her own defence, and hath crowned more than three millions of mankind with national independence. Instructed in the school of freedom, the inhabitants of these confederate states combined their strength in the protection of the rights of men. *They knew and they felt that freemen will be free.* By their exertions, under the favour of a righteous providence, they have established a wise constitution of federal government: they have reached the consummation of every patriot's wish, the glory and felicity of their country; and now enjoy a free system of political happiness, such

as gives pleasure, and even transport, to the enlightened patriots of many nations; and has made, perhaps, no small advancement of joy among the benevolent hosts of heaven: for, to every benevolent and virtuous being, the freedom and happiness of the human race is a most pleasing consideration. But there are some men, with the means of public prosperity in their possession, who do not realize the value of freedom; they partake of the common blessings of a free people, and yet are not conscious of national felicity. This, however, does not lessen the real worth of liberty; for in every situation of life, it is the richest inheritance. In true liberty is included, freedom, both moral and civil; it has nothing in contemplation but the happiness of mankind, and therefore it is the principal glory of man; and, in this world, there can be nothing more dignified, or more exalted. Without civil and religious liberty, man is indeed a poor, enslaved, wretched, miserable creature; neither his life, nor his property, nor the use of his conscience, is secured to him; but he is subjected to some inhuman tyrant, whose will is his law, and who *presumes to govern men without their consent*. But let not this gale of honest zeal carry us beyond the recollection of our text.

In the discussion of the text, it may be observed, that the word *liberty*, in this place, does principally imply a freedom from the injunctions of the ceremonial law. This freedom our Saviour purchased for all Christians; and in this freedom the apostle Paul exhorted the Galatians, and all the followers of Christ, to *stand fast*. When we consider the age, and state of the world, in which the Jews lived, and their fondness of show, idolatry, and superstition, we shall find that their religion was well suited to their genius and temper. The religion of the Jews had a very pointed allusion to the character and office of the Messiah, and was therefore wisely enjoined. But those typical and ritual services, after the coming of Christ, having fulfilled their design, became unnecessary. “These, said the apostle Paul, were a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ, who hath abolished the law of commandments contained in ordinances.” Without the external pomp and show of the Jewish religion, the gospel recommends the worship of God in spirit and truth. The doctrines of the gospel are calculated to promote good will and liberty among men; and where their genuine influence has been extended, mankind have been rendered more happy: they have been instructed, civilized, humanized, and made free. “The wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy.” *The true spirit of the Gospel contains the true spirit of liberty*. We may be assured, that under this benevolent institution, useful liberty of every kind is recommended by the spirit of our text.

Altho my text, in the original meaning, did not respect civil so much as religious liberty, yet I hope I shall not seem to misuse it by making it the foundation of a discourse on liberty in general.

A few observations on the nature of religious liberty, shall constitute the first part of this discourse.

I. Religious liberty is a divine right, immediately derived from the Supreme Being, without the intervention of any created authority. It is the natural privilege of worshipping God in that manner which, according to the judgment of men, is most agreeable and pleasing to the divine character. As the conscience of man is the image

and representative of God in the human soul; so to him alone it is responsible. In justice, therefore, the feelings and sentiments of conscience, and the moral practice of religion, must be independent of all finite beings. Nor hath the all-wise Creator invested any order of men with the right of judging for their fellow-creatures in the great concerns of religion. Truth and religion are subjects of determination entrusted to all men; and it is a privilege of all men to judge and determine for themselves.

Religious liberty secures every man, both in his person and property, from suffering on account of his peculiar sentiments in religion; and no practice which flows purely from this fountain of natural right can justly be punished. But when a man adopts such notions as, in their practice, counteract the peace and good order of society, he then perverts and abuses the original liberty of man; and were he to suffer for thus disturbing the peace of the community, and injuring his fellow-citizens, his punishment would be inflicted not for the exercise of a virtuous principle of conscience, but for violating that universal law of rectitude and benevolence which was intended to prevent one man from injuring another. To punish men for entertaining various religious sentiments, is to assume a power to punish them for doing what God gave them an unalienable right to do. For neither the principles of reason, nor the doctrines of the gospel, which are the perfection of reason, have empowered any man to judge for himself and for another man also: this is religious tyranny; this is to controul another man's conscience: and to controul any man's conscience is to contradict that true principle of eternal justice which Jesus Christ published to the world: *Therefore, all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.*

Suffer me a little to illustrate this maxim of primitive justice. We will suppose, that some man should endeavour to prove, that he had a right to determine what our religious principles and sentiments ought to be; but how would he be pleased when his own arguments should be turned against himself? Should this man, who was unwilling to allow us the free exercise of rational, accountable creatures, be forced, in the change of human affairs, to reside among a people very different from him in matters of religion; he however behaving himself as an honest and peaceable man, and, as a good subject of civil society, serving the interest of the country; would he not think it very unjust and tyrannical to be persecuted for his religious opinions—imprisoned, deprived of his property, and finally condemned to die, only because he could not with a clear conscience worship as they did? Only the Supreme Governour of mankind has a perfect right to receive the homage of the human mind; it is his peculiar prerogative to controul the consciences of men by his infinitely wise and equitable laws. True religion must therefore be founded in the inward persuasion and conviction of the mind; for without this it cannot be that reasonable service which is pleasing to God. The human understanding cannot be convinced by external violence of any kind; nor can the immaterial spirit be influenced by the laws of men, unless they correspond with the goodness, justice, and mercy, of our blessed Creator, our most bountiful Benefactor, and our all wise and righteous Judge. Here joy and gratitude prompt me to say, Oh happy people, who live in this land and in this age of religious liberty! here every man has equally the freedom of choosing his religion; and may *sit every man under his vine, and under his figtree*, and, on the account of



religion, *none shall make them afraid*. Let us, my friends and fellow-citizens, *stand fast, therefore, in the religious liberty wherewith God and Christ hath made us free*.

II. With submission to the professional knowledge of my political fathers, I will now venture to make some observations on the nature and principles of civil liberty. These observations shall be included within the following particulars.

1. In this happy land of light and liberty, it is a truth fully established, that all men are by nature equally free. From this principle of natural liberty we derive an indefeasible right of being governed by our own civil constitutions. *We the people* are the source of all legislative authority. Upon this just, benevolent, pleasing, and even delightful principle, the constitutions, the laws, and the governments, of these federal states, will stand fast. All men who understand the nature, and feel the spirit, of such principles, are self-instructed to be their own legislators, either in one collected body, or by representation. When all the people can assemble, and personally contribute their aid in framing constitutions and laws for the government of themselves, then their liberty is most natural and most perfect. But since great loss of time, much expense, and many inconveniences, would attend this mode of legislation, the people have agreed, in free states, to select from the whole body, some of their brethren, whom they invest with legislative power. What shall be transacted by these delegates or representatives, consistently with the constitution of the people, must be acknowledged as the act of the people. In conformity to this plan, the people keep as near the possession of natural liberty, as is convenient and really useful; and while they are truly virtuous, they will enjoy as much perfect liberty as is necessary to preserve peace, establish justice, and secure political happiness. I shall only add further, under this particular, that when a free people have, according to their constitution, determined to legislate by representatives, they should take great care that the representation may be fully adequate to the importance and welfare of the people; the elections should also be perfectly free, and sufficiently frequent.

2. The elections should be conducted agreeably to the principles of justice and honour. The privilege of electing freely, or being freely elected, is one of the fairest features in the pure image of natural liberty. A free and unbiassed election of the best and the wisest men, is a certain evidence of the flourishing state of liberty. On the other hand, when elections are under dishonest influence, and men can be sold and bought, it is a most lamentable sign that liberty is either in a deep sleep, or in a dangerous decay. When this birth-right of the people is bartered for something as mean as a mess of pottage—when they neglect and despise this natural and constitutional right—they then lose their share and influence in that government of which they were the original foundation. Having neglected that security which at first existed in themselves, and having counteracted the very design of that social compact which was intended to secure them from every species of political injury, they turn traitors to their God who made them free; and for want of exercising that natural power which their Creator gave them, their glory will depart: and, having the hearts of slaves, they will wear the livery and endure the misery of slaves. But I am not willing to spend time in representing this horrible image of slavish misery. This assembly is the image and representation of a free state. I have the honour, I have the felicity, of

speaking before men who are too well acquainted with the blessings of liberty to neglect or despise any of the natural or constitutional rights of freemen.

3. The public happiness of a people is promoted, not only by the freedom of elections, but also by the wisdom and goodness of the laws. A wise and a good representation will produce good laws. Good and wise men, who are clothed with the natural power of their constituents, will study to unite closely the interest of the country and the power of the laws; and where the representation is good, the laws will appear to carry with them the voice and common consent of the people. The laws made after this manner, are the laws of the people, and prove that they are free, and that they virtually legislate for themselves. I leave this particular, after observing, that the public happiness should be the first duty and the prime object of all legislators; and that, in every free and virtuous state, this is the pole-star of legislation.

4. It is the duty of the people, in conformity to the principles of liberty, to choose men to superintend the executive department of the nation: for no man, in a free state, can justly claim the authority of an executive magistrate, without the voice and consent of the people. In the exercise of their own natural power, by their constitution, they must appoint their chief magistrate to this place of honour and trust. In this respect, it may be said, that the people do not only make their laws, but they also execute them, and govern themselves. These considerations should have a tendency to discourage all officers of government from feeling themselves independent of their brethren, the people. With these proper views, they will be more likely to pay that attention to the wants and feelings of the people, which is necessary to increase the public happiness. When, therefore, the most exalted characters in authority feel themselves connected to the whole community by a brotherly, benevolent attachment; then the lives and the estates of the nation are most secure. In addition to this, it may also be said, that the administration of men in power will then be the most useful and honourable, when the affairs of government are conducted with moderation and justice: for the people have not appointed men to insult and injure them, but to promote their best interest. Violence & compulsion will never advance the happiness of freemen. They will know when they are governed agreeably to their constitutions and laws: they will know when they enjoy a portion of that civil prosperity which they are entitled to by their rights and privileges: and they will easily know when they are treated with civility and kindness. The people should have reason to believe, that men in office have nothing more at heart than the felicity of the nation.

5. The best measures should be adopted to establish esteem and confidence between the people and their rulers; for without this favourable impression, there will be but little peace and satisfaction in the public mind. Great care should be taken not to disturb and irritate the temper of the people; their patience should never be tortured; but they should have as many reasons to be pleased with the transactions of government, as possible, consistent with the public welfare: for good humour and satisfaction greatly contribute to the peace and happiness of government and mankind. When the people have reasonable satisfaction and rest of mind, they will be more industrious, and consequently more virtuous: the produce of the land will be more plentiful; and the strength and resources of the nation will be in proportion to the pleasure and encouragement of the mind. A free, willing, industrious, and virtuous

people, well united and well pleased, are the strength of a nation; while the great wealth of a few luxurious, idle drones, are the great bane of liberty. A people with that happy temper of mind which I have described, will be cheerfully obedient to their laws; they will respect and esteem all their good civil officers; and peace and harmony will be pleasant and lasting. The man, whom every benevolent, free and virtuous citizen respects and loves, suffer me to adorn my humble page with the name of Washington, hath declared, that *the best way to preserve the confidence of the people durably is to promote their truest interest.*

6. The principles of a free people are directly opposed to taxation without their own consent by representation. Money should never be extorted by violence, but received as the gifts and free will offerings, or contributions of the people, to pay for the security of their persons and property. Let them be convinced, that the public demands are reasonable and necessary, not merely for the benefit of civil officers, but for the general advantage of the nation; and then as a free, enlightened, generous, virtuous people, they will take pleasure cheerfully to defray the necessary expenses of government. They will be pleased when they recollect, that for a very small portion of their property they can be secured in the real possession of all the blessings of true liberty. But how will their pleasure rise still higher, when they consider, that by doing justice to their brethren, to whom they have committed the toils and dangers of public business; when they consider, I say, that by their contributions they advance not only the great prosperity of the nation, but include also their posterity in the general happiness. But here let it be observed, that no requisitions should be made but such as are really and absolutely necessary for the support and contingencies of government; and of the expenditure of money the people should have an account. Much the greater part of mankind toil severely for what property they acquire: it would therefore be very unjust and cruel to use it for the gratification of pampered pride and luxury. In a word, that government which improves the interest and happiness of the people, and manages their public affairs consistently with the principles of a generous œconomy, as well as a just and magnanimous policy, free from a prodigal and dishonest waste of the public wealth; such a government will furnish the most reasonable satisfaction, and will be the most valued and the most bravely defended.

III. Under this head of discourse, I will endeavour to shew when it may be said that a people *stand fast in the liberty wherewith they are free.* With the prosecution of this design, I will attempt to intermix the spirit and freedom of an application.

1. The people are in the habit and exercise of liberty, when they resort to the first principles of government, and trace their rights up to God the Creator: when they exercise their natural power of framing any social compact conducive to the common interest: feel independent of all human power but that which flows from themselves: disdain the subjection of their consciences to any authority but the will of God: refuse to be controuled by the will of any man who claims an independent power of disposing of their lives and estates: recollect that they entered into society to have their natural rights, which are the basis of civil rights, secured. To maintain such principles of original justice, is to stand fast in the righteous liberty of man. True liberty suffers no man to be injured in his person, estate, or character: it encourages and enables him to improve his happiness; and, within the limits of the public good,

insures to him every blessing to which imperfect human nature can attain. All the toils, sufferings, treasure and blood of men, are not lost, when they are the price and purchase of liberty. Without religious and civil liberty, we can have no security of life, or of any of the good things of God: we cannot practice the sentiments of our consciences: but where the rights of man are equally secured in the greatest degree, there is the greatest happiness—and *that is our country*.

2. When you carefully regard the election of your representatives and officers of government, you will stand fast in your liberty. It is a darling privilege of all freemen to elect the best qualified men to represent them in a state or national assembly. But do a people stand fast in the discharge of their duty—are they in the exercise of their civil rights, when they neglect to choose men of established principles of virtue and liberty? Do they wish to have good laws, and yet neglect to choose men who have proved themselves friends to the rights of their brethren? Can they reasonably expect that good laws will proceed from men who fear not God nor regard man? Will men, who feel no obligations of love and duty to their Creator, be good examples to their constituents? Will they add any weight to the laws they assisted to make, when they are so prompt to violate them? Do they not, as far as their influence will reach, defeat the very laws they voted for? Will a public and patriotic spirit originate from vicious principles? Is it natural for noble and generous sentiments to flow from vice? Do not bad principles make men selfish, narrow the mind, and banish all benevolent propensities of doing good to men? Will not the very knowledge which unprincipled men may have, degenerate into selfish low cunning, and serve only to embarrass and perplex the honesty and good common sense of men who are able and willing to promote the interest of society? I need not tell you, that men under the influence of selfish passions, will sacrifice the best interest of their country, whenever they can greatly advance their own importance; and, like a Dean and an Arnold, by the most infamous and horrible treason, betray that liberty which they once pretended to defend. Do any of the people ask me, as one of their brethren, who are the men we must choose, in order to stand fast in our liberty? First, separate, in your minds, the most wicked and unprincipled men, from being objects of your choice; and then, out of the rest, select men of understanding, for of such there will enough remain, who are actuated by principles of love and obedience to God, and animated by a generous benevolence to mankind; who really love to see their brethren free and happy: for in this every benevolent man must take pleasure. Benevolent principles will produce the noblest acts of public and patriotic good; they will enable men to discern easily the advantage of the people. “For when private interest and private views are removed, it will be easy to know what is the public good.” Let me beseech all the people to remember, that their safety and happiness in society depends upon the election of good and wise representatives. Under the smiles of providence, the prosperity of a free people is in their own hands; for they have knowledge enough, if well improved, to advance and secure their welfare. In a few words, choose the men to manage your public affairs, to whom you would not fear to entrust the most important concerns of a private nature. This is the way to stand fast in your liberty.

3. The example of civil officers has great influence on the minds of mankind. They ought to be punctual in their observation of the laws of the country. As public men, or private citizens, they should be uniform in the practice of virtue, and the defence of

liberty. The people call them fathers: we are willing to be their political children, as long as they are good parents. But, should not fathers be examples of goodness to their children? Will children do well, if the parents are wicked and do wrong? Will the children be obedient to the public laws, if the parents violate them? Will the children love freedom, if the parents disregard it? Will the children cultivate a public spirit, if the parents are selfish? Do fathers love their children, and not strive in all respects to promote their felicity? It is most reasonable, therefore, to conclude, that it is the great and indispensable duty of rulers to encourage the practice of religion by their own influence and example: and I venture to declare, that no civil officer does the half of his duty, unless he endeavours to suppress vice and disorder, and so prevent the necessity of punishment. Mankind very quickly and justly exclaim against the absurdity of allowing those men to be teachers of religion, who live in the habitual practice of vice and wickedness: Shall we not, with equal justice, condemn the practice of those men who break through those restraints which were intended to suppress vice, and consequently encourage virtue? Should they not be *ministers of God for good* to the people, in every possible way? Every man of common sense acknowledges, that religion is very useful to mankind; and especially the precepts and truths of the gospel. It is also allowed, that public worship is of particular and national advantage. To favour and practice virtue is therefore to increase the public happiness, and to answer the intention of government: and by these means their own importance and authority will be increased.

4. When the people are submissive to their laws and rulers, upon the principles already mentioned, their liberties will be permanent. Where the true spirit of religion is united to the free and generous spirit of liberty, obedience will be a pleasing duty. The author of our benevolent religion hath commanded us to *render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God, the things that are God's*. The apostles also say, *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. Render to all, their dues: tribute, to whom tribute is due; custom, to whom custom; fear, to whom fear; honour, to whom honour*. Men who are under the influence of reason and religion, will not blame the necessary measures of government. They will not be factious and turbulent, but of a reasonable and complying disposition. They will be influenced by such generous sentiments as the following: *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others*. We must endeavour to render ourselves extensively useful, and promote the good of our country; in which, not only our own happiness, but the happiness of millions, is included.

5. The liberties of a people cannot be lasting without knowledge. The human mind is capable of great cultivation. Knowledge is not only useful, but it adds dignity to man. When the minds of men are improved, they can better understand their rights—they can know what part they are to act, in contributing to the welfare of the nation. Freemen should always acquire knowledge; this is a privilege and pleasure unknown to slaves; this elevates the mind of man; this creates a conscious dignity of his importance as a rational creature, and a free agent. The happiness of mankind has been much advanced by the arts and sciences; and they have flourished the most among freemen. Slavery blots the image of the Creator, which was at first impressed upon man: it banishes knowledge, and courts misery. But men, enlightened, pursue with ardour the knowledge and recovery of their rights. Liberty is enlightened by

knowledge; and knowledge is nurtured by liberty. Where there is wisdom, virtue, and liberty, there mankind are men. In all the dark ages of the world, tyranny has been established upon the slavish ignorance of mankind. Tyrants, in time past, secured their domination by darkening the minds of their subjects. In the present day, they tremble at the approaching light of knowledge and liberty. They turn indignant from the glorious illuminations of America and France. They hear with horror the sound of freedom and the rights of men. They would still imbrute the human race, and make mankind forget that they are men. Be assured, my dear countrymen, knowledge is absolutely necessary to secure the blessings of freedom. If you wish to see your country not only free in your day, but also to feast your imaginations with the pleasing prospect of a free posterity for many ages to come; let me entreat you, to encourage and promote that knowledge which will enable the people successfully to watch all the enemies of liberty, and guard against the designs of intriguing men. Unless the people have knowledge, they may be imposed upon by men who are always lying in wait to disturb the peace of society, create disorder and confusion, and, in the tumult, overturn the liberties of the country. Be always awake to your own interest, and you will have nothing to fear: but if you sleep, the enemies of liberty will awake: sleep, and by your death-like slumbers you will give them life: for liberty has never yet appeared upon the face of the earth without meeting enemies to contend with. There have been men in America, who have reprobated what they were pleased to call the inquisitive sauciness of the people, when they wished to know how the public affairs of the country were conducted, and how justice and liberty might be secured. Nay, some men, still more unjust and tyrannical, have ventured to say—blush! ye degenerate sons of free parents! that the people, when in the possession of liberty, are unable to use it for their own advantage, and therefore they ought to be governed against their wills, and without their choice, by men, to be sure, much wiser than themselves, and more disposed to do them good. This is as much as to say, that the people ought to be robbed of their natural rights for their own advantage and happiness. But whoever is acquainted with the history of despotic power, need not be informed, that a free people will always use their freedom more consistently with the principles of justice and reason, than any men with uncontrouled power. It is a truth, and it is now too late to deny it, that no man, or body of men, are fit to be entrusted with unlimited power. This power they would most certainly abuse, whenever their unjust wills were in the least opposed. Let the youth be well educated in wisdom and virtue; let them be instructed in the true principles of freedom, and they will improve their liberty most agreeably to the rational happiness of mankind. In this free country, knowledge is peculiarly necessary, where no other qualifications are requisite, for the most important offices of government, but virtue and ability. I again say, let the children and youth be well educated. In the earliest stages of life, let a free and public spirit be infused into the youthful mind. This is the way to exclude from their young breasts all oppressing and cruel passions. Unless the doors of education are open to all the youth of the country equally, advantages may be taken by some men of cunning, to tyrannize over the rest, and become masters of their property. Every parent, and every friend to the freedom of his country, ought to be solicitous for the improvement of our youth in the principles of freedom and good government, and then the people will stand fast in their liberty for a long time; yes, as long as such principles are in their true exercise; and, with submission to the divine will, as long as they please. But what! Shall I doubt the attention and exertions of my fellow-citizens to this all-

important cause of public prosperity? Shall the children and youth of a free people be suffered to grow up ignorant of the value of those liberties you intend to commit to their trust? Shall they be unfit to take care of those political blessings which have been secured for them at the great expense of much toil, treasure, and precious blood? Oh! Liberty, thou friend to mankind, forbid it; justice, thou guardian of the rights of men, forbid it; ye patriots and fathers of your country, forbid it: but rather let me say, Oh! thou blessed God, who takest no pleasure in the misery of thy children, forbid it, for the sake of him who *hath made us free*.

6. The principles and practice of our peaceable and benevolent religion, are the foundation on which all the blessings of life and liberty must stand fast. *Righteousness exalteth a nation*. True religion will incline a people to love and honour the Most High who *ruleth among the children of men*. The Lord hath said, *Them that honour me, I will honour*. Religion is intended to unite men together in the bonds of brotherly love and good will; to prevent bad habits; to suppress disorder; to calm factious spirits; and to put an end to the shedding of brothers' blood. The influence and importance of religion should be felt by men both in their family and national connections. Without it, they can neither be happy in this world nor in a future state. May the benevolent efforts of all public teachers of true religion, be united with the affectionate influence of parents, to promote the personal and national welfare of our country. By instilling good sentiments into the tender minds of children and youth, you will teach them to stand fast in their liberty. Good impressions, made in early life, are very frequently of lasting benefit both to individuals and the public. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*. But, in addition to all your pious exertions, let me entreat you, never to forget to beseech the Father of mercies and the God of all grace, to implant in the hearts of our youth, by the divine Spirit, the true principles of holiness.

I hope it has been evident, that, in the whole body of this discourse, I have endeavoured to interweave sentiments of religion and virtue. I cannot, therefore, suppose it necessary at present, to prosecute this particular article any farther. Permit me, however, to assure you, that I have not ventured nor wished to recommend liberty without virtue; for this would have been a recommendation of licentiousness. True liberty may be summed up in this declaration: that we have a right to do all the good we can; but have no right to injure our fellow-men: we have a right to be as happy as we can; but no right to lessen the happiness of mankind.

Thus far I have attempted to comply with the appointment of the civil fathers of this state. In this compliance, my diffidence and fear have given me no small anxiety, lest I should not answer the design of their appointment. I have not, therefore, been influenced by a presuming expectation of communicating to this honourable political body, any new information. I feel, nevertheless, in my mind, a pleasing persuasion, that my fathers in government will not be displeased with any sincere and humble attempt to inspire their younger sons with a just sense of the blessings and privileges they enjoy under the present legislative and executive authority. In a few years, some of the youth of the present day must be called to fill the places of the fathers now in office. The thought is serious! Who knows the consequence? Is it not then of the utmost importance that the minds of young men should be impressed with the best

sentiments of equal liberty? Shall we not exhort them to stand fast in their liberty, that their country may be free? Shall we not animate the rising generation, to transmit to their posterity that invaluable inheritance of freedom, which they must soon receive from the present race of patriots when they shall rest from their labours? This is a day of joy: it reminds you of one of the great privileges of freemen: it should be a day of gratitude also. Oh! that you did but feel and realize your happy situation, that you might send up to heaven the warmest gratitude of hearts glowing with love and praise to that blessed Saviour *who hath made us free!*

Fathers, brethren, and fellow-citizens, with the happy feelings of a brother freeman, I congratulate you on the enjoyment of that liberty which I have been describing: it involves in it every thing most conducive to your peace and prosperity on earth: clasp it to your bosoms, and religiously swear, that you will live freemen, or die bravely. I rejoice, that it is in your power, under God, to stand fast in your liberty. Shall I contrast your present situation with the deplorable state of man in ages past? Would not this draw a cloud of grief over the bright sunshine of your happy feelings? We rejoice, that the earth hath been delivered from the hands of those inhuman butchers, whose unrelenting murders have filled so many bloody pages of history; who slaughtered millions of the human race, for no other purpose but to extend their cruel and ambitious power, and oppress and lay waste the world. Tyrants, who, instead of being transmitted down to us with illustrious names, for being the most successful destroyers of their fellow-creatures, should be named after the most furious beasts of prey; and, on account of the mischief they have done to mankind, be classed with tempests, earthquakes, and plagues. We rejoice, with thankful hearts, that we are not under the power of such plagues of the human race, who wage war with the peace and happiness of mankind; who think it is an act of heroism to depopulate whole countries to gratify private revenge. We now see that the patriotic resolutions of our countrymen have not been in vain: we now see that the treasures expended in the defence of liberty, have realized a national interest of more value than ten thousand per cent: we now see that the inexpressible trials and sufferings of a patriot army, have been productive of the richest fruits; and that the blood of our heroes has been the seed of liberty. But, we commiserate the deplorable condition of many of our fellow-men, who now groan under the heavy chains of despotism: we wish the rights of men may be soon restored to them.

But I return from this digression. I find political happiness not abroad, but at home. Happy age and country in which we live! We remember no æra since the creation of the world, so favourable to the rights of mankind as the present. The histories of mankind, with only a few exceptions, are the records of human guilt, oppression, and misery. Although some shadow of rude liberty was contended for by a few small uncivilized tribes of men, yet they were subjected by those nations who were more powerful. At the beginning of the Christian æra, almost two thirds of mankind were in the most abject and cruel slavery. The Grecian and Roman nations, notwithstanding their boasted love of liberty, were not acquainted with the true principles of original, equal, and sentimental liberty. Though an imperfect civilization had made some progress among them, yet they neither understood the nature, nor practised the duties, of humanity. They who are acquainted with the true history of Greece and Rome, need not be informed, that the cruelty they exercised upon their slaves, and those



taken in war, is almost beyond the power of credibility. The proud and selfish passions have always endeavoured to suppress the spirit of freedom. Even Rome herself, while she pretended to glory in being free, endeavoured to subject and enslave the rest of mankind. But no longer shall we look to antient histories for principles and systems of pure freedom. The close of the eighteenth century, in which we live, shall teach mankind to be truly free. The freedom of America and France, shall make this age memorable. From this time forth, men shall be taught, that true greatness consists not in destroying, but in saving, the lives of men; not in conquering, but making them free; not in making war, but making peace; not in making men ignorant, but making them wise; not in firing them with brutal rage, but in making them humane; not in being ambitious, but in being good, just, and virtuous. Of France, it may be said, in the language of scripture, *Who hath heard such a thing? Who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? Or, Shall a nation be born at once?* Behold a nation of freemen, rising out of a nation of slaves! This gratifies the feelings of humanity and benevolence. We wish to see all men independent of all things but the laws of God, and the just laws of their country. And will any man blame me for saying, that, in America, every friend to justice and the rights of men wishes prosperity to that generous nation, who are allied to these United States, and who so powerfully aided them in securing their independence and peace. In the name of the Lord of hosts, let us pray, *that no weapon that is formed against their freedom, shall prosper.*

I once more invite you to join me in gratitude to that best of Beings, by whose providential goodness and power *the lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places; yea, we have a goodly heritage.* Here harvests grow for the free and cheerful husbandman: here, neither awed by lordly and rapacious injustice, nor dejected by beholding idleness high fed and fattened on the labours of other men, they reap and enjoy the pleasing fruits of their honest industry. *Ye shall eat your bread to the full, and dwell in your land of safety.* Here the people dwell together as brethren; peace, harmony, industry, and health, unite their various gifts to make this life a blessing: here poor human nature, in other parts of the world long depressed by ignorance and enslaving power, seems to reclaim the primitive blessings of creation, and to rejoice that it was made *in the image of God:* here conscience assumes her first authority; religion is no longer enslaved to the wills and laws of men; public and private happiness are guarded by the laws and government of the people. *Stand fast, therefore, in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Let us determine to be free from the unjust power of men, and free from the slavery and tyranny of sin, and we shall then be truly free. *If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

With the words of a celebrated French writer, this discourse will be concluded.

Ye people of Northamerica, let the example of all nations who have gone before you, and above all that of Greatbritain, serve you for instruction. Fear the affluence of gold, which brings with luxury the corruption of manners, the contempt of laws. Fear a too unequal distribution of riches, which exhibits a small number of citizens in opulence, and a great multitude of citizens in extreme poverty; whence springs the insolence of the former, and the debasement of the latter. Secure yourselves against

the spirit of conquest. The tranquillity of an empire diminishes in proportion to its extension. Have arms for your defence; have none for offence. Seek competency and health in labour; prosperity in the culture of lands, and the workshops of industry; power in manners and virtue. Cause arts and sciences, which distinguish the civilized from a savage man, to flourish and abound. Above all, watch carefully over the education of your children. It is from public schools, be assured, that come the wise magistrates, the capable and courageous soldiers, the good fathers, the good husbands, the good brothers, the good friends, the good men. Wherever the youth are seen depraved, the nation is on the decline. Let liberty have an immoveable foundation in the wisdom of your laws, and let it be the indestructible cement to bind your states together. Establish no legal preference amongst the different forms of worship. Superstition is innocent, wherever it is neither persecuted nor protected; and may your duration, if it be possible, equal the duration of the world!

amen

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

37

## THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE INALIENABLE

John Leland

NEW-LONDON

[1791]

John Leland (1754–1841). A key figure in the rise of religious liberty in America, the Baptist minister John Leland had two careers, one in Massachusetts, the other in Virginia. His only formal education was in the elementary schools of Grafton, Massachusetts, his birthplace, yet he became well educated and widely read. Having experienced a “sign from God,” he became a minister and went to preach in Orange County, Virginia, in 1776. During his fourteen years in Virginia, he led the fight to disestablish the Episcopal Church, to secure religious freedom, and to ratify the Constitution. He became a friend, constituent, and important ally of James Madison and made indispensable contributions to Madison’s election to the first United States Congress in 1789. Madison, particularly in fulfillment of a campaign promise to Leland, George Eve, and other Baptists (and with George Washington’s support) insisted upon adoption of the Bill of Rights as amendments to the Constitution. Leland’s views and importance are comparable to those of Isaac Backus.

In 1791 Leland returned to Massachusetts, where he spent most of his last fifty years. There and in Connecticut he proposed that the state constitutions be changed as he fought for disestablishment of the Congregationalist Standing Order and for religious liberty for Baptists and others deprived of constitutional protection. Religious liberty was secured in Connecticut in 1820, and Leland finally saw the Congregational system in Massachusetts overthrown in 1833. Leland was a liberal in politics, as well as in religion; he supported the Jeffersonian Republicans—and, later, the Jacksonian Democrats—and strongly opposed slavery and the slave trade. In 1811 he was elected on the Republican ticket to the Massachusetts legislature, his second public office, for he had served as an Orange County delegate to the Virginia convention that ratified the federal Constitution in 1788.

Leland’s nineteenth-century biographer L. F. Greene appraised him this way: “Through a long life, Elder Leland sustained, with uniform consistency, the two-fold character of the *patriot* and the *Christian*. For his religious creed he acknowledged no directory but the Bible. He loved the pure, unadulterated word of truth. . . . His political creed was based upon the ‘sufficient truths’ of equality, and of inherent and inalienable rights, recognised by the master spirits of the revolution . . .” (*Writings of Elder John Leland* [1845] pp. 50–51). Leland’s 1831 autobiographical sketch hardly mentions politics, for his mission was evangelism, and he calculated the thousands of miles he had traveled, tabulated his 1,515 baptisms, and wrote as his epitaph: “Here

lies the body of John Leland, who labored ——— to promote piety, and vindicate the civil and religious rights of all men.” (We can fill the blank with “67 years.”) In 1834 he wrote: “The plea for *religious liberty* has been long and powerful; but it has been left for the United States to acknowledge it a right inherent, and not a favor granted: to exclude religious opinions from the list of objects of legislation” (ibid., pp. 38–39).

Leland was “as courageous and resourceful a champion of the rights of conscience as America has produced,” according to Lyman H. Butterfield. “In his very individualism Leland was a representative American of his time. Self-reliant to the point of eccentricity and a tireless fighter for principle, he was without arrogance, and the reminiscences of those who knew him speak most often of his humor, his gentleness, and his humility. . . . John Leland therefore has a place in our history as well as in our folklore” (“Elder John Leland, Jeffersonian Itinerant,” *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, Oct. 15, 1952).

This 1791 sermon was probably written shortly after Leland returned to New England from Virginia; it was reprinted several times. Its original full title was *The Rights of Conscience inalienable; and therefore Religious Opinions not cognizable by Law: Or, The high-flying Churchman, stript of his legal Robe, appears a Yaho[o]*.

There are four principles contended for, as the foundation of civil government, viz. birth, property, grace, and compact. The first of these is practised upon in all hereditary monarchies, where it is believed that the son of a monarch is entitled to dominion upon the decease of his father, whether he be a wise man or a fool. The second principle is built upon in all aristocratical governments, where the rich landholders have the sole rule of all their tenants, and make laws at pleasure which are binding upon all. The third principle is adopted by those kingdoms and states that require a religious test to qualify an officer of state, proscribing all non-conformists from civil and religious liberty. This was the error of Constantine’s government, who first established the christian religion by law, and then proscribed the pagans and banished the Arian heretics. This error also filled the heads of the anabaptists in Germany (who were re-sprinklers): they supposed that none had a right to rule but gracious men. The same error prevails in the see of Rome, where his holiness exalts himself above all who are called gods (i.e. kings and rulers), and where no protestant heretic is allowed the liberty of a citizen. This principle is also plead for in the Ottoman empire, where it is death to call in question the divinity of Mahomet or the authenticity of the Alcoran.

The same evil has twisted itself into the British form of government; where, in the state-establishment of the church of England, no man is eligible to any office, civil or military, without he subscribes to the 39 articles and book of common-prayer; and even then, upon receiving a commission for the army the law obliges him to receive the sacrament of the Lord’s supper; and no non-conformist is allowed the liberty of his conscience without he subscribes to all the 39 articles but about 4. And when that is done his purse-strings are drawn by others to pay preachers in whom he has no confidence and whom he never hears.

This was the case with several of the southern states (until the revolution) in which the church of England was established.

The fourth principle (compact) is adopted in the American states as the basis of civil government. This foundation appears to be a just one by the following investigation.

Suppose a man to remove to a desolate island and take a peaceable possession of it without injuring any, so that he should be the honest inheritor of the isle. So long as he is alone he is the absolute monarch of the place, and his own will is his law, which law is as often altered or repealed as his will changes. In process of time from this man's loins ten sons are grown to manhood and possess property. So long as they are all good men each one can be as absolute, free, and sovereign as his father; but one of the ten turns vagrant, by robbing the rest; this villain is equal to if not an overmatch for any one of the nine—not one of them durst engage him in single combat: reason and safety both dictate to the nine the necessity of a confederation to unite their strength together to repel or destroy the plundering knave. Upon entering into confederation some compact or agreement would be stipulated by which each would be bound to do his equal part in fatigue and expence; it would be necessary for these nine to meet at stated times to consult means of safety and happiness; a shady tree or small cabin would answer their purpose; and in case of disagreement four must give up to five.

In this state of things their government would be perfectly democratical, every citizen being a legislator.

In a course of years, from these nine there arises nine thousand; their government can be no longer democratical, prudence would forbid it. Each tribe or district must chuse their representative, who (for the term that he is chosen) has the whole political power of his constituents. These representatives, meeting in assembly, would have power to make laws binding on their constituents; and while their time was spent in making laws for the community each one of the community must advance a little of his money as a compensation therefor. Should these representatives differ in judgment the minor must submit to the major, as in the case above.

From this simple parable the following things are demonstrated:

1. That the law was not made for a righteous man, but for the disobedient.
2. That righteous men have to part with a little of their liberty and property to preserve the rest.
3. That all power is vested in and consequently derived from the people.
4. That the law should rule over rulers, and not rulers over the law.
5. That government is founded on compact.
6. That every law made by the legislators inconsistent with the compact, modernly called a constitution, is usurpive in the legislators and not binding on the people.
7. That whenever government is found inadequate to preserve the liberty and property of the people they have an indubitable right to alter it so as to answer those purposes.
8. That legislators in their legislative capacity cannot alter the constitution, for they are hired servants of the people to act within the limits of the constitution.

From these general observations I shall pass on to examine a question, which has been the strife and contention of ages. The question is, "*Are the rights of conscience alienable, or inalienable?*"

The word *conscience* signifies *common science*, a court of judicature which the Almighty has erected in every human breast; a *ensor morum* over all his actions. Conscience will ever judge right when it is rightly informed, and speak the truth when it understands it. But to advert to the question—"Does a man upon entering into social compact surrender his conscience to that society to be controlled by the laws thereof, or can he in justice assist in making laws to bind his children's consciences before they are born?" I judge not, for the following reasons:

1. Every man must give an account of himself to God, and therefore every man ought to be at liberty to serve God in that way that he can best reconcile it to his conscience. If government can answer for individuals at the day of judgment, let men be controlled by it in religious matters; otherwise let men be free.
2. It would be sinful for a man to surrender that to man which is to be kept sacred for God. A man's mind should be always open to conviction, and an honest man will receive that doctrine which appears the best demonstrated; and what is more common than for the best of men to change their minds? Such are the prejudices of the mind, and such the force of tradition, that a man who never alters his mind is either very weak or very stubborn. How painful then must it be to an honest heart to be bound to observe the principles of his former belief after he is convinced of their imbecility? and this ever has and ever will be the case while the rights of conscience are considered alienable.
3. But supposing it was right for a man to bind his own conscience, yet surely it is very iniquitous to bind the consciences of his children; to make fetters for them before they are born is very cruel. And yet such has been the conduct of men in almost all ages that their children have been bound to believe and worship as their fathers did, or suffer shame, loss, and sometimes life; and at best to be called dissenters, because they dissent from that which they never joined voluntarily. Such conduct in parents is worse than that of the father of Hannibal, who imposed an oath upon his son while a child never to be at peace with the Romans.
4. Finally, religion is a matter between God and individuals, religious opinions of men not being the objects of civil government nor any ways under its control.

It has often been observed by the friends of religious establishment by human laws, that no state can long continue without it; that religion will perish, and nothing but infidelity and atheism prevail.

Are these things facts? Did not the christian religion prevail during the three first centuries, in a more glorious manner than ever it has since, not only without the aid of law, but in opposition to all the laws of haughty monarchs? And did not religion receive a deadly wound by being fostered in the arms of civil power and regulated by law? These things are so.

From that day to this we have but a few instances of religious liberty to judge by; for in almost all states civil rulers (by the instigation of covetous priests) have undertaken to steady the ark of religion by human laws; but yet we have a few of them without leaving our own land.

The state of Rhode-Island has stood above 160 years without any religious establishment. The state of New-York never had any. New-Jersey claims the same. Pennsylvania has also stood from its first settlement until now upon a liberal foundation; and if agriculture, the mechanical arts and commerce, have not flourished in these states equal to any of the states I judge wrong.

It may further be observed, that all the states now in union, saving two or three in New-England, have no legal force used about religion, in directing its course or supporting its preachers. And moreover the federal government is forbidden by the constitution to make any laws establishing any kind of religion. If religion cannot stand, therefore, without the aid of law, it is likely to fall soon in our nation, except in Connecticut and Massachusetts.

To say that “religion cannot stand without a state establishment” is not only contrary to fact (as has been proved already) but is a contradiction in phrase. Religion must have stood a time before any law could have been made about it; and if it did stand almost three hundred years without law it can still stand without it.

The evils of such an establishment are many.

1. Uninspired fallible men make their own opinions tests of orthodoxy, and use their own systems, as Procrustes used his iron bedstead, to stretch and measure the consciences of all others by. Where no toleration is granted to non-conformists either ignorance and superstition prevail or persecution rages; and if toleration is granted to restricted non-conformists the minds of men are biassed to embrace that religion which is favored and pampered by law (and thereby hypocrisy is nourished) while those who cannot stretch their consciences to believe any thing and every thing in the established creed are treated with contempt and opprobrious names; and by such means some are pampered to death by largesses and others confined from doing what good they otherwise could by penury. The first lie under a temptation to flatter the ruling party, to continue that form of government which brings the sure bread of idleness; the last to despise that government and those rulers that oppress them. The first have their eyes shut to all further light that would alter the religious machine; the last are always seeking new light, and often fall into enthusiasm. Such are the natural evils of establishment in religion by human laws.

2. Such establishments not only wean and alienate the affections of one from another on account of the different usages they receive in their religious sentiments, but are also very impolitic, especially in new countries; for what encouragement can strangers have to migrate with their arts and wealth into a state where they cannot enjoy their religious sentiments without exposing themselves to the law? when at the same time their religious opinions do not lead them to be mutinous. And further, how often have kingdoms and states been greatly weakened by religious tests! In the time of the

persecution in France not less than twenty thousand people fled for the enjoyment of religious liberty.

3. These establishments metamorphose the church into a creature, and religion into a principle of state; which has a natural tendency to make men conclude that bible religion is nothing but a trick of state. Hence it is that the greatest part of the well informed in literature are overrun with deism and infidelity: nor is it likely it will ever be any better while preaching is made a trade of emolument. And if there is no difference between bible religion and state religion I shall soon fall into infidelity.

4. There are no two kingdoms or states that establish the same creed or formularies of faith (which alone proves their debility). In one kingdom a man is condemned for not believing a doctrine that he would be condemned for believing in another kingdom. Both of these establishments cannot be right—but both of them can be, and surely are, wrong.

5. The nature of such establishments, further, is to keep from civil office the best of men. Good men cannot believe what they cannot believe; and they will not subscribe to what they disbelieve, and take an oath to maintain what they conclude is error: and as the best of men differ in judgment there may be some of them in any state: their talents and virtue entitle them to fill the most important posts, yet because they differ from the established creed of the state they cannot—will not fill those posts. Whereas villains make no scruple to take any oath.

If these and many more evils attend such establishments—what were and still are the causes that ever there should be a state establishment of religion?

The causes are many—some of them follow.

1. The love of importance is a general evil. It is natural to men to dictate for others; they choose to command the bushel and use the whip-row, to have the halter around the necks of others to hang them at pleasure.

2. An over-fondness for a particular system or sect. This gave rise to the first human establishment of religion, by Constantine the Great. Being converted to the christian system, he established it in the Roman empire, compelled the pagans to submit, and banished the christian heretics, built fine chapels at public expence, and forced large stipends for the preachers. All this was done out of love to the christian religion: but his love operated inadvertently; for he did the christian church more harm than all the persecuting emperors did. It is said that in his day a voice was heard from heaven, saying, “Now is the poison spued into the churches.” If this voice was not heard, it nevertheless was a truth; for from that day to this the christian religion has been made a stirrup to mount the steed of popularity, wealth, and ambition.

3. To produce uniformity in religion. Rulers often fear that if they leave every man to think, speak and worship as he pleases, that the whole cause will be wrecked in diversity; to prevent which they establish some standard of orthodoxy to effect uniformity. But is uniformity attainable? Millions of men, women and children, have



been tortured to death to produce uniformity, and yet the world has not advanced one inch towards it. And as long as men live in different parts of the world, have different habits, education and interests, they will be different in judgment, humanly speaking.

Is conformity of sentiments in matters of religion essential to the happiness of civil government? Not at all. Government has no more to do with the religious opinions of men than it has with the principles of the mathematics. Let every man speak freely without fear—maintain the principles that he believes—worship according to his own faith, either one God, three Gods, no God, or twenty Gods; and let government protect him in so doing, i.e. see that he meets with no personal abuse or loss of property for his religious opinions. Instead of discouraging of him with proscriptions, fines, confiscation or death; let him be encouraged, as a free man, to bring forth his arguments and maintain his points with all boldness; then if his doctrine is false it will be confuted, and if it is true (though ever so novel) let others credit it. When every man has this liberty what can he wish for more? A liberal man asks for nothing more of government.

The duty of magistrates is not to judge of the divinity or tendency of doctrines, but when those principles break out into overt acts of violence then to use the civil sword and punish the vagrant for what he has done and not for the religious phrenzy that he acted from.

It is not supposable that any established creed contains the whole truth and nothing but truth; but supposing it did, which established church has got it? All bigots contend for it—each society cries out “The temple of the Lord are we.” Let one society be supposed to be in possession of the whole—let that society be established by law—the creed of faith that they adopt be so consecrated by government that the man that disbelieves it must die—let this creed finally prevail over the whole world. I ask what honor *truth* gets by all this? None at all. It is famed of a Prussian, called John the Cicero, that by one oration he reconciled two contending princes actually in war; but, says the historian, “it was his six thousand horse of battle that had the most persuasive oratory.” So when one creed or church prevails over another, being armed with (a coat of mail) law and sword, truth gets no honor by the victory. Whereas if all stand upon one footing, being equally protected by law as citizens (not as saints) and one prevails over another by cool investigation and fair argument, then truth gains honor, and men more firmly believe it than if it was made an essential article of salvation by law.

Truth disdains the aid of law for its defence—it will stand upon its own merits. The heathens worshipped a goddess called truth, stark naked; and all human decorations of truth serve only to destroy her virgin beauty. It is error, and error alone, that needs human support; and whenever men fly to the law or sword to protect their system of religion and force it upon others, it is evident that they have something in their system that will not bear the light and stand upon the basis of truth.

4. The common objection “that the ignorant part of the community are not capacitated to judge for themselves” supports the popish hierarchy, and all protestant as well as Turkish and pagan establishments, in idea.

But is this idea just? Has God chosen many of the wise and learned? Has he not hidden the mystery of gospel truth from them and revealed it unto babes? Does the world by wisdom know God? Did many of the rulers believe in Christ when he was upon earth? Were not the learned clergy (the scribes) his most inveterate enemies? Do not great men differ as much as little men in judgment? Have not almost all lawless errors crept into the world through the means of wise men (so called)? Is not a simple man, who makes nature and reason his study, a competent judge of things? Is the bible written (like Caligula's laws) so intricate and high that none but the letter-learned (according to common phrase) can read it? Is not the vision written so plain that he that runs may read it? Do not those who understand the original languages which the bible was written in differ as much in judgment as others? Are the identical copies of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, together with the epistles, in every university, and in the hands of every master of arts? If not, have not the learned to trust to a human transcription, as much as the unlearned have to a translation? If these questions and others of a like nature can be confuted, then I will confess that it is wisdom for a conclave of bishops or a convocation of clergy to frame a system out of the bible and persuade the legislature to legalise it. No. It would be attended with so much expence, pride, domination, cruelty and bloodshed, that let me rather fall into infidelity; for no religion at all is better than that which is worse than none.

5. The ground work of these establishments of religion is clerical influence. Rulers, being persuaded by the clergy that an establishment of religion by human laws would promote the knowledge of the gospel, quell religious disputes, prevent heresy, produce uniformity, and finally be advantageous to the state, establish such creeds as are framed by the clergy; and this they often do the more readily when they are flattered by the clergy that if they thus defend the truth they will become nursing fathers to the church and merit something considerable for themselves.

What stimulates the clergy to recommend this mode of reasoning is,

1. Ignorance—not being able to confute error by fair argument.
2. Indolence—not being willing to spend any time to confute the heretical.
3. But chiefly covetousness, to get money—for it may be observed that in all these establishments settled salaries for the clergy recoverable by law are sure to be interwoven; and was not this the case, I am well convinced that there would not be many if any religious establishments in the christian world.

Having made the foregoing remarks, I shall next make some observations on the religion of Connecticut.

If the citizens of this state have any thing in existence that looks like a religious establishment, they ought to be very cautious; for being but a small part of the world they can never expect to extend their religion over the whole of it, without it is so well founded that it cannot be confuted.

If one third part of the face of the globe is allowed to be seas, the earthy parts would compose 4550 such states as Connecticut. The American empire would afford above 200 of them. And as there is no religion in this empire of the same stamp of the Connecticut standing order, upon the Saybrook platform, they may expect 199 against 1 at home, and 4549 against 1 abroad.

Connecticut and New-Haven were separate governments till the reign of Charles II when they were incorporated together by a charter, which charter is still considered by some as the basis of government.

At present (1791) there are in the state about 168 presbyterial, congregational and consociated preachers, 35 baptists, 20 episcopalians, 10 separate congregational, and a few of other denominations. The first are the standing order of Connecticut, to whom all others have to pay obeisance. Societies of the standing order are established by law; none have right to vote therein but men of age who possess property to the amount of 40*l*, or are in full communion in the church. Their choice of ministers is by major vote; and what the society agree to give him annually is levied upon all within the limits of the society-bounds, except they bring a certificate to the clerk of the society that they attend worship elsewhere and contribute to the satisfaction of the society where they attend. The money being levied on the people is distrainable by law, and perpetually binding on the society till the minister is dismissed by a council or by death from his charge.

It is not my intention to give a detail of all the tumults, oppression, fines and imprisonments, that have heretofore been occasioned by this law-religion. These things are partly dead and buried, and if they do not rise of themselves let them sleep peaceably in the dust forever. Let it suffice on this head to say, that it is not possible in the nature of things to establish religion by human laws without perverting the design of civil law and oppressing the people.

The certificate that a dissenter produces to the society clerk (1784) must be signed by some officer of the dissenting church, and such church must be protestant-christian, for heathens, deists, Jews and papists, are not indulged in the certificate law; all of them, as well as Turks, must therefore be taxed to the standing order, although they never go among them or know where the meeting-house is.

This certificate law is founded on this principle, “that it is the duty of all persons to support the gospel and the worship of God.” Is this principle founded in justice? Is it the duty of a deist to support that which he believes to be a threat and imposition? Is it the duty of a Jew to support the religion of Jesus Christ, when he really believes that he was an impostor? Must the papists be forced to pay men for preaching down the supremacy of the pope, whom they are sure is the head of the church? Must a Turk maintain a religion opposed to the alcoran, which he holds as the sacred oracles of heaven? These things want better confirmation. If we suppose that it is the duty of all these to support the protestant christian religion, as being the best religion in the world—yet how comes it to pass that human legislatures have right to force them so to do? I now call for an instance where Jesus Christ, the author of his religion, or the

apostles, who were divinely inspired, ever gave orders to or intimated that the civil powers on earth ought to force people to observe the rules and doctrine of the gospel.

Mahomet called in the use of law and sword to convert people to his religion; but Jesus did not, does not.

It is the duty of men to love God with all their hearts, and their neighbors as themselves; but have legislatures authority to punish men if they do not? So there are many things that Jesus and the apostles taught that men ought to obey which yet the civil law has no concerns in.

That it is the duty of men who are taught in the word to communicate to the teacher is beyond controversy, but that it is the province of the civil law to force men to do so is denied.

The charter of Charles II is supposed to be the basis of government in Connecticut; and I request any gentleman to point out a single clause in that charter which authorises the legislature to make any religious laws, establish any religion, or force people to build meeting-houses or pay preachers. If there is no constitutional clause, it follows that the laws are usurpative in the legislators and not binding on the people. I shall here add, that if the legislature of Connecticut have authority to establish the religion which they prefer to all religions, and force men to support it, then every legislature or legislator has the same authority; and if this be true, the separation of the christians from the pagans, the departure of the protestants from the papists, and the dissention of the presbyterians from the church of England, were all schisms of a criminal nature; and all the persecution that they have met with is the just effect of their stubbornness.

The certificate law supposes, 1. That the legislature have power to establish a religion: this is false. 2. That they have authority to grant indulgence to non-conformists: this is also false, for religious liberty is a *right* and not a *favor*. 3. That the legitimate power of government extends to force people to part with their money for religious purposes. This cannot be proved from the new testament.

The certificate law has lately passed a new modification. Justices of the peace must now examine them; this gives ministers of state a power over religious concerns that the new testament does not. To examine the law part by part would be needless, for the whole of it is wrong.

From what is said this question arises, "Are not contracts with ministers, i.e. between ministers and people, as obligatory as any contracts whatever?" The simple answer is, Yes. Ministers should share the same protection of the law that other men do, and no more. To proscribe them from seats of legislation, &c. is cruel. To indulge them with an exemption from taxes and bearing arms is a tempting emolument. The law should be silent about them; protect them as citizens (not as sacred officers) for the civil law knows no sacred religious officers.

In Rhode-Island, if a congregation of people agree to give a preacher a certain sum of money for preaching the bond is not recoverable by law.\*

This law was formed upon a good principle, but, unhappy for the makers of that law, they were incoherent in the superstructure.

The principle of the law is, that the gospel is not to be supported by law; that civil rulers have nothing to do with religion in their civil capacities. What business had they then to make that law? The evil seemed to arise from a blending religious right and religious opinions together. Religious right should be protected to all men, religious opinion to none; i.e. government should confirm the first unto all—the last unto none; each individual having a right to differ from all others in opinion if he is so persuaded. If a number of people in Rhode Island or elsewhere are of opinion that ministers of the gospel ought to be supported by law, and chuse to be bound by a bond to pay him, government has no just authority to declare that bond illegal; for in so doing they interfere with private contracts, and deny the people the liberty of conscience. If these people bind nobody but themselves, who is injured by their religious opinions? But if they bind an individual besides themselves, the bond is fraudulent, and ought to be declared illegal. And here lies the mischief of Connecticut religion. My lord, major vote, binds all the minor part, unless they submit to idolatry, i.e. pay an acknowledgment to a power that Jesus Christ never ordained in his church; I mean produce a certificate. Yea, further, Jews, Turks, heathens, papists and deists, if such there are in Connecticut, are bound, and have no redress: and further, this bond is not annually given, but for life, except the minister is dismissed by a number of others, who are in the same predicament with himself.

Although it is no abridgment of religious liberty for congregations to pay their preachers by legal force, in the manner prescribed above, yet it is antichristian; such a church cannot be a church of Christ, because they are not governed by Christ's laws, but by the laws of state; and such ministers do not appear like ambassadors of Christ, but like ministers of state.

The next question is this: "Suppose a congregation of people have agreed to give a minister a certain sum of money annually for life, or during good behaviour, and in a course of time some or all of them change their opinions and verily believe that the preacher is in a capital error, and really from conscience dissent from him—are they still bound to comply with their engagements to the preacher?" This question is supposable, and I believe there have been a few instances of the kind.

If men have bound themselves, honor and honesty call upon them to comply, but God and conscience call upon them to come out from among them and let such blind guides\* alone. Honor and honesty are amiable virtues; but God and conscience call to perfidiousness. This shows the impropriety of such contracts, which always may, and sometimes do lead into such labyrinths. It is time enough to pay a man after his labour is over. People are not required to communicate to the teacher before they are taught. A man called of God to preach, feels a necessity to preach, and a woe if he does not. And if he is sent by Christ, he looks to him and his laws for support; and if men comply with their duty, he finds relief; if not, he must go to his field, as the priests of

old did. A man cannot give a more glaring proof of his covetousness and irreligion, than to say, "If you will give me so much, then I will preach, but if not be assured I will not preach to you."

So that in answering the question, instead of determining which of the evils to chuse, either to disobey God and conscience, or break honor and honesty, I would recommend an escape of both evils, by entering into no such contracts: for the natural evils of imprudence, that men are fallen into, neither God nor man can prevent.

A minister must have a hard heart to wish men to be forced to pay him when (through conscience, enthusiasm, or a private pique) they dissent from his ministry. The spirit of the gospel disdains such measures.

The question before us is not applicable to many cases in Connecticut: the dissenting churches make no contracts for a longer term than a year, and most of them make none at all. Societies of the standing order rarely bind themselves in contract with preachers, without binding others beside themselves; and when that is the case the bond is fraudulent: and if those who are bound involuntarily can get clear, it is no breach of honor or honesty.

A few additional remarks shall close my piece.

I. The church of Rome was at first constituted according to the gospel, and at that time her faith was spoken of through the whole world. Being espoused to Christ, as a chaste virgin, she kept her bed pure for her husband, almost three hundred years; but afterwards she played the whore with the kings and princes of this world, who with their gold and wealth came in unto her, and she became a strumpet: and as she was the first christian church that ever forsook the laws of Christ for her conduct and received the laws of his rivals, i.e. was established by human law, and governed by the legalised edicts of councils, and received large sums of money to support her preachers and her worship by the force of civil power—she is called the *mother of harlots*: and all protestant churches, who are regulated by law, and force people to support their preachers, build meeting-houses and otherwise maintain their worship, are daughters of this holy mother.

II. I am not a citizen of Connecticut—the religious laws of the state do not oppress me, and I expect never will personally; but a love to religious liberty in general induces me thus to speak. Was I a resident in the state, I could not give or receive a certificate to be exempted from ministerial taxes; for in so doing I should confess that the legislature had authority to pamper one religious order in the state, and make all others pay obeisance to that sheef. It is high time to know whether all are to be free alike, and whether ministers of state are to be lords over God's heritage.

And here I shall ask the citizens of Connecticut, whether, in the months of April and September, when they chuse their deputies for the assembly, they mean to surrender to them the rights of conscience, and authorise them to make laws binding on their consciences. If not, then all such acts are contrary to the intention of constituent power, as well as unconstitutional and antichristian.

III. It is likely that one part of the people in Connecticut believe in conscience that gospel preachers should be supported by the force of law; and the other part believe that it is not in the province of civil law to interfere or any ways meddle with religious matters. How are both parties to be protected by law in their conscientious belief?

Very easily. Let all those whose consciences dictate that they ought to be taxed by law to maintain their preachers bring in their names to the society-clerk by a certain day, and then assess them all, according to their estates, to raise the sum stipulated in the contract; and all others go free. Both parties by this method would enjoy the full liberty of conscience without oppressing one another, the law use no force in matters of conscience, the evil of Rhode-Island law be escaped, and no persons could find fault with it (in a political point of view) but those who fear the consciences of too many would lie dormant, and therefore wish to force them to pay. Here let it be noted, that there are many in the world who believe in conscience that a minister is not entitled to any acknowledgment for his services without he is so poor that he cannot live without it (and thereby convert a gospel debt to alms). Though this opinion is not founded either on reason or scripture, yet it is a better opinion than that which would force them to pay a preacher by human law.

IV. How mortifying must it be to foreigners, and how far from conciliatory is it to citizens of the American states, who, when they come into Connecticut to reside must either conform to the religion of Connecticut or produce a certificate? Does this look like religious liberty or human friendship? Suppose that man (whose name need not be mentioned) that fills every American heart with pleasure and awe, should remove to Connecticut for his health, or any other cause—what a scandal would it be to the state to tax him to a presbyterian minister unless he produced a certificate informing them that he was an episcopalian?

V. The federal constitution certainly had the advantage, of any of the state constitutions, in being made by the wisest men in the whole nation, and after an experiment of a number of years trial, upon republican principles; and that constitution forbids Congress ever to establish any kind of religion, or require any religious test to qualify any officer in any department of the federal government. Let a man be pagan, Turk, Jew or Christian, he is eligible to any post in that government. So that if the principles of religious liberty, contended for in the foregoing pages, are supposed to be fraught with deism, fourteen states in the Union are now fraught with the same. But the separate states have not surrendered that (supposed) right of establishing religion to Congress. Each state retains all its power, saving what is given to the general government by the federal constitution. The assembly of Connecticut, therefore, still undertake to guide the helm of religion: and if Congress were disposed yet they could not prevent it by any power vested in them by the states. Therefore, if any of the people of Connecticut feel oppressed by the certificate law, or any other of the like nature, their proper mode of procedure will be to remonstrate against the oppression and petition the assembly for a redress of grievance.

VI. Divines generally inform us that there is such a time to come (called the Latter-Day Glory) when the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters do the sea, and that this day will appear upon the destruction of antichrist. If so, I am well

convinced that Jesus will first remove all the hindrances or religious establishments, and cause all men to be free in matters of religion. When this is effected, he will say to the kings and great men of the earth, "Now see what I can do; ye have been afraid to leave the church and gospel in my hands alone, without steadying the ark by human law; but now I have taken the power and kingdom to myself, and will work for my own glory." Here let me add, that in the southern states, where there has been the greatest freedom from religious oppression, where liberty of conscience is entirely enjoyed, there has been the greatest revival of religion; which is another proof that true religion can and will prevail best where it is left entirely to Christ.

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[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

38

## A SERMON FOR THE DAY OF GENERAL ELECTION

David Tappan

BOSTON

1792

David Tappan (1752–1803). The son of a Congregational minister, Tappan was born in Manchester, Massachusetts, and was graduated in 1771 from Harvard. In 1774 he was ordained pastor of the church in the third parish of Newbury, where he remained for eighteen years. He then became Hollis Professor of Divinity at Harvard, serving in that post until his death. Theologically, he was a moderate Calvinist; politically, he was an American patriot during the Revolution and a Federalist afterward. “One of the most prolific authors of the eighteenth century” (John F. Berens in *American Writers Before 1800*, p. 1410), Tappan published numerous sermons. His *magnum opus*, entitled *Lectures on Jewish Antiquities*, was published posthumously in 1807.

Noted for a plain preaching style, Tappan at first welcomed the French Revolution as a continuation of the American Revolution, clearing the way for the coming of the millennium through the destruction of popery. But he soon turned against the French revolutionists as diabolical and atheistic and joined with Timothy Dwight in a fierce denunciation of the movement. Tappan steadily taught the vital relationship of virtue and republicanism, a theme well-developed in the election sermon printed here, preached in Newbury before Governor Hancock, Lieutenant Governor Samuel Adams, and the Massachusetts legislature on May 30, 1792.

*Thou leddest thy People like a Flock, the Hands of Moses and Aaron.*

Psalm 77, verse 20

How various and transcendent are the excellencies of the sacred writings! They combine all the different species of literary composition in their highest perfection, and consecrate them to the moral improvement, the present and future happiness of man. They furnish the best summary precepts, models, and incentives, for producing the good citizen and statesman, for effecting an orderly and prosperous state of things in the civil and temporary combinations of this world: Whilst their primary object is, to prepare men for the far nobler, the everlasting community of the blessed.

These observations are eminently illustrated by that part of the inspired volume, which relates to God’s ancient people. The words just recited, look back to the infancy of that favoured nation. They introduce the God of Israel under the beautiful figure of a shepherd leading his flock; which expresses in a very lively and endearing manner, the singular tenderness and care, with which heaven had conducted that

people from the bondage of Egypt, to the promised Canaan. The latter part of the verse, presents the subordinate and united agency of Moses and Aaron, in accomplishing that memorable series of events. These two celebrated characters had been early and closely linked together, by the ties of nature, of religion, and of common sufferings. They were afterwards united by the more awful bond of a divine commission, which constituted them plenipotentiaries from Jehovah, the king of Israel, to the Egyptian court, which employed them as instrumental saviours of their oppressed countrymen, as their guides and protectors through the dangers of the wilderness, and the prime ministers of their civil and ecclesiastical polity. Whilst the one was chief magistrate in the commonwealth, the other was high priest, or first officer in the church. And the institution and combined influence of these two orders in that community, were a most wise and salutary provision both for its public and individual happiness.

The divine appointment, then, and concurrent agency of the civil and ecclesiastical ruler, in leading the ancient people of God, naturally invite our attention to the importance and utility of political and religious guides in a christian state, and to that union of affection and of exertion for the common good, which ought to characterize and cement them. To explain and enforce this union, without confounding the church and the commonwealth, or blending the different provinces of their respective ministers, is a truly delicate task. The speaker hopes, however, that his well-meant endeavours to explore such a field, before an audience so respectable, will not be deemed either vain, or impertinent to the occasion. He flatters himself that the seasonable and momentous complexion of the subject, which cannot fail to strike every intelligent eye, will procure to the discussion and application of it a candid reception.

This joyful anniversary collects our civil and sacred leaders from various parts of the state, to one consecrated spot. It unites them, methinks, into one happy brotherhood. It brings them together to the altar of God, their common founder, master, and judge. It makes them joint partakers in a kind of yearly festival, sacred to liberty and to religion—a festival, which seems to renew and to seal mutual friendship, and their harmonious ardent affection to the general interest. Is it not congenial then with the spirit of the day, as well as decent and useful on other accounts, that these two orders should sometimes be the united object of its public addresses from the word of God; that their reciprocal influence, and their conjunct operation to the common good, should be clearly defined, and forcibly urged?

Under the solemn impression of these ideas, we will endeavour to mark out the two different provinces of Moses and Aaron, or of the ruler and the priest; the beneficent influence of each upon the public welfare; and the several ways, in which they may and ought to befriend and assist each other in leading the people of God.

The discriminating genius of the two departments may be thus defined. The one has for its immediate object, the temporal interest of mankind; the other, their spiritual and everlasting. The one aims to regulate their outward behaviour, so far as to restrain them from injuring one another or the public, and engage their contributions to the common welfare: The other contemplates the due regulation of the heart, as well as

the overt-acts which issue from that source. The one enforces its addresses by sanctions merely civil and worldly; the other by motives which chiefly respect the soul and the life to come.

Let us now turn our attention to the important and happy influence of each department upon the public interest.

The importance of such an officer in society as the civil magistrate, is immediately seen and felt by all. It grows out of the present weakness and corruption of mankind. It is suggested by the social feelings belonging to our frame, joined with a sense of mutual dependence and common danger. Accordingly, when such officer possesses the spirit of his station, and with intelligence and fidelity pursues its leading design, the effects on the community will be equally benign and diffusive. A ruler of this character, like the central orb of the planetary world, enlightens and animates, cements and beautifies the whole political system. With a skilful, steady, yet gentle hand, he moulds a confused mass of discordant materials into one regular and harmonious compound, and holds it together with a silken, yet invincible chain. By a strictly righteous, equal, and paternal administration, he spreads the blessings of justice, freedom, tranquillity, public and private prosperity, through all classes of the people. The advantages of such a magistracy transcend description. To use the delicate and splendid figures of inspiration. It resembles "the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; like the tender grass springing out of the earth by clear shining after rain."

But it is needless to expatiate on this branch of our subject. The beneficent influence of good civil rule stands confessed to the eye of reason. It is inscribed, as with a sun-beam on the face of our happy country. It has been delineated with superiour ability and address, on these anniversary solemnities.

Let us then direct our attention to the other object before us, namely, the importance and benefit to society, of the christian priesthood, or of public religious instructors. To set this point in a just and easy light, let us consider at large, the necessity of religion to the well-being of a community, and then inquire, what are the best means of diffusing and maintaining it.

The necessity of religion to public order and happiness, has been generally acknowledged by discerning minds in all countries and ages, yea, by enlightened infidels and atheists. But a set of philosophers and free-thinkers, who boast of their superiour reason and liberality, have appeared on the stage, in these days of modern refinement, who have employed all the powers of metaphysical sophistry and licentious ridicule to shake the foundations of religion: And some of them have even denied its political importance and utility, and have proposed in its stead a kind of philosophical or civil morality, as fully competent to the purposes of general order and security. A system of ideas, or at least of practical feelings, very similar to this, seems growing into fashion in various parts of the American Union; a system, which considers all religious principles, observances and instructors, as the remains of old monkish ignorance, superstition and bigotry, or the antiquated offspring of worldly policy, begotten in the early and ruder stages of society; but which are wholly

unsuitable and useless, if not a heavy tax upon the public, in this more enlightened and mature period of human affairs! But let us meet these refined politicians upon their own ground; and ask them, what they have to substitute in the room of religion, as an adequate prop to their own favourite scheme of morality.

Will they say, that civil laws and institutions, planned with wisdom, and executed with vigour, will completely answer the purpose? But these human provisions can embrace only the visible actions of the subject. They can prevent or punish those offences only, which may be known and legally proved. They consequently, leave out of their jurisdiction all secret crimes; as well as those numberless immoralities, which human laws can never distinctly define, but which operate as the poison both of private and social felicity. Civil regulations proclaim their own incompetency, even in the judicial procedures submitted to their authority: For no general rule can accommodate itself to an infinite diversity of circumstances: And therefore the aid of religious principle seems absolutely necessary to supply the defect. This will teach the legislator to construct, and the judge to interpret and apply the laws, upon so just and liberal a plan, as will present the best advantages in every case, for discovering the truth, and so for protecting the innocent, as well as chastising the wilful offender. This will induce a conscientious, a filial and generous obedience, on the part of the subject, to the reasonable authority of the magistrate and the laws. At the same time it will prevent a cowardly, degrading submission to the claims and measures of imperious despots, or a fawning, idolatrous, prostration at the feet of a dignified fellow-worm. In short, whilst human laws punish criminal actions, it is the glory of religion to prevent them, to tear up the roots from which they grow. Whilst law is deaf and unrelenting to the cries of penitent guilt, religion pardons and comforts the suppliant, returning offender, and hereby encourages and fortifies his purposes and efforts of future obedience. Whilst the one enforces strict justice only, the other inculcates the whole train of gentle and beneficent virtues: It inspires an intercourse of humane, generous kindness, and grateful attachment and fidelity, between the higher and lower classes in society; an intercourse, which like the vital fluid diffuses chearful health through the whole political body. Thus civil institutions and measures, even in their best state, require the succours of religion, to supply their deficiencies, to soften their rigour, to enforce and to sweeten their observance.

“But a sense of honour, the desire of esteem and praise, and fear of their opposites, joined to the efficacy of salutary laws, will certainly form a sufficient security of the general order and welfare.” We answer, the good influence of this principle will not bear a comparison with that of religion. For the praise or censure of the world, exerts its principal force within a very small circle, upon more splendid or public characters; whilst the great majority of the people, concealed under humble roofs, feel little of its efficacy. But religion applies its stimulating or withholding influence to the ignorant, the obscure, and the weak; as well as to the wise, the noble and the mighty. The world does not bestow its palm, till men have almost reached the goal; but religion applauds and cherishes the first virtuous desire, intention, or effort. The world often mistakes in its judgment of characters and actions; but religion places an unerring witness and judge in our very bosoms. In a word, even the esteem of men in the case before us, ultimately derives its force from religion. For if the social or moral virtues of mankind, were once stripped of the lustre, the stability, and the majesty, which

religious principles communicate, the respect paid to them, would suffer an immediate shock: The idea of honour and disgrace, connected with their performance or omission, would be greatly enfeebled: And the opinion of the world, left without a steady guide, would grow too fluctuating and capricious, to restrain or to actuate human conduct.

“But the connexion between the interest of the public and of individuals, lays a sufficient bond upon the latter to contribute to the order and welfare of the former.” We reply, this connexion is not always so immediate and striking, as to influence the unthinking, the poor and the wretched, to pay homage to the order and beauty of the social system, whilst there is nothing for them individually, but apparent deformity and misery; whilst those very principles and rules, which secure harmony to the public, wealth, power and magnificence to some of their fortunate neighbours, seem to bind them down to perpetual poverty and toil; and when a violation of these laws promises instant relief or benefit to themselves, and at the same time, perhaps threatens no direct injury to the community at large. There are some cases too, in which the more opulent ranks, or the governing powers of the state, may with reason consider the public interest and their own, as separate objects: And if their minds are not enlightened and regulated by religion, they will often view these two interests as distinct, when they really unite. They will also be supremely inclined to pursue private advantage, at the expence of every rival claim. In such instances, what is there effectually to restrain such elevated characters from sacrificing the public, at the shrine of their adored, though paltry idol? There is nothing which promises a sure and perpetual guard against these evils, but religious principles, the sentiment of a deity, and of a future state of recompence, early planted in the minds, and deeply rooted in the hearts both of the high and the low.

“But some infidel and irreligious characters have conducted well in a social and political view.” We answer, religious ideas early taught and imbibed, will secretly influence the conscience and practice, long after the understanding has begun to question, and even to reject the arguments, on which they are founded. Besides, a habit of order and propriety in conduct, once formed, is not easily subdued by after speculations; especially when an adherence to it is connected with the marks of public esteem and favour, or enforced by the commanding motive of private interest. Not to add, that there are some, who affect a superiority to the common mass of mankind, by talking like infidels, who yet feel themselves constrained to think and act, in many instances, like vulgar believers.

“But if religion be the main prop of social order, why does not the latter always relax and decline with the former?” The answer is, religion still keeps her hold of men, through the medium of natural conscience, of early habit, and some awful controlling impression of a future retribution, even when their hearts do not feel her transforming power, nor their lives display her peculiar and most attractive charms. If then religious principles have such salutary effects on society, even when their influence is feeble, and when they manage the human mind by the inferiour and precarious handle of fear; what would be their fruits, if they reigned in full glory, and commanded the free and steady services of love? If love to God and men, which is the life of religion, pervaded all classes in the community, what a copious and excellent harvest would it quickly

produce! This would ensure the universal practice of all those virtues, which nourish and exalt a nation; whilst it directly promoted the interest and comfort of all ages, conditions and stations; it would, as the great law of moral attraction, draw the affections and efforts of all to one common center, the good of the whole. Must not such a spirit and conduct immediately advance the respectability, the vigour, the temporal and spiritual prosperity of a people? Must they not draw down the approving smiles, the guardian care, the rewarding munificence of the Supreme Ruler of nations? On the other side, must not irreligion, and its natural offspring, vice, equally tend, both by a direct and a judicial operation, to disjoint, to enfeeble, to destroy a community? Does not the universal experience of public bodies from the beginning to this day, seal the truth of these observations? Is it not one mighty practical demonstration of the salutary fruit of piety and virtue, or the baneful influence of their opposites, upon the order, the liberty, the general welfare of nations?

The necessity of religion to public happiness being sufficiently proved, an interesting question arises; what are the best means of diffusing and maintaining in a community this precious and fundamental blessing? This inquiry brings up to view the importance of public religious instructors. The political necessity of such an order of men, directly results from that of religion itself, when compared with the ignorance, dulness, and depravity of the human mind, the spiritual and sublime nature of religious truths, the want of leisure as well as ability in the bulk of mankind, for studying and familiarizing them, and the influence of surrounding objects of worldly cares and amusements to intercept their view, to efface or weaken their impression. [“]In this dark and impure region,” how apt are even the most contemplative and virtuous characters to lose sight of moral and spiritual objects, and to get out of the sphere of their attractive and regulating influence! How greatly then do we all need the friendly voice of stated monitors, to recal our forgetful, wandering feet; and to enlighten and warm our hearts afresh with the divine principles and motives of religion! Those in high station need to be frequently reminded, that there is a Being above them, to whom they are accountable, equally with the lowest of the people. Persons of great genius and learning, require to be often admonished that their obligations to serve God and the public, are proportioned to their superiour talents. The worthy and good in society, need a frequent and lively inculcation of those truths, which tend to nourish and fortify their virtues, to enliven and extend their efforts of usefulness. How much more needful, then is public religious instruction to the inferiour members of the community, to the numerous class of laborious poor, to the grossly ignorant, the careless, and the vicious! Without this, how shall they obtain a competent knowledge, or an abiding practical impression of their various relations and duties to God, to man, to civil society?

In this view, the public worship of the Deity, and stated instructions in religion and morality, appear as necessary and beneficial to the state, as they are to the souls of individuals: And the institution of a weekly sabbath, devoted to those purposes, is the offspring of profound and generous policy, if viewed merely in its aspect upon our present social condition. For the decent and united observation of it, by the members of each corporation, is, an eminent mean of promoting useful knowledge, civilization and good neighbourhood; of strengthening the cords both of political and christian union; of bringing seasonable rest and refreshment to the body and mind, after the

fatigues of worldly care and toil; and of keeping alive in the minds of all ranks, an awful commanding sense of Deity, of moral and religious obligation: Agreeably, the public benefits of this institution are distinctly visible on the face of those communities, which carefully support and observe it; whilst the contrary features equally distinguish those, which despise or neglect it.

The preacher cannot do full justice to this part of his theme, or to his own profession as a gospel minister, without adding, that the christian religion, properly stated and enforced by its teachers, has a peculiarly favourable influence upon the present social state of mankind: For, it is the volume of revelation only, that fully illustrates and confirms, and with due authority presses, those great religious principles, which we have shown to be the basis of virtue and of order. At the same time it superadds a new scheme of truth, suited to the lapsed state of mankind, which at once encourages, directs, assists and constrains to universal goodness; it presents the Deity, in the full orb'd lustre of his perfections; it displays the matchless philanthropy, the generous expiation and intercession of his Son; it offers and conveys the needed succours of his spirit; it ascertains and describes the future joys and sorrows of immortality. Must not these discoveries, suitably realized, powerfully tend to check transgression—to kill the seeds of vice, and to produce, to enoble, and improve every branch of a virtuous character? The moral system too, which christianity builds upon these principles, is an eminent friend to our present felicity. For it inculcates the most extended, the most active, the most self-denying benevolence; it links us to the great brotherhood of man; yea, it unites us to the universe, to eternity, and to God, the head and sum of both. It levels all the haughty feelings of superiour rank or abilities, and places true greatness in humble, condescending, elevated goodness. By this, as well as by constantly pointing us to those two great levellers, death and an endless retribution, it introduces a kind of generous republican equality among the different orders and conditions in society. It equally regards and secures the interest of all the members of the community, by that great rule of equity, “whatever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.” By presenting the same motives and rewards of virtue to the weak and the strong, and by urging both to secret acts of goodness, from a regard to the approving eye, and final recompence of the Supreme Judge; it provides a steady support, a constant opportunity, a universal engagement to the practice of virtue. We may add, it regulates and refines those important social connexions and duties, the conjugal, parental and filial, in a manner highly favourable to the order and happiness of human society. In a word, the spirit of our religion, is uniting and peaceable: It is loyal, patriotick, and free: It is the life and support of good government and of rational liberty. Even the positive, ceremonial rites of christianity, properly administered, are important out-works, which guard the public welfare: For by striking upon the senses and imaginations of men, they bring affecting truths with peculiar force to their hearts, and hereby operate to produce a decent and regular outward deportment.

What an engine of public usefulness, then, does the christian institution put into the hands of its ministers! And how important is it to the common good, that such an order of men should be spread out over the whole community! What unspeakable aid may they afford to, as well as receive from, the civil magistrate! Whilst the people at large reap a plentiful harvest from the united labours of both! Which brings us more

distinctly to point out the several ways in which the ruler and priest may and ought to combine their influence, or to assist each other, in leading the people of God.

We mean not to advocate such a union or cooperation of the two orders, as involves a heterogeneous mixture of civil and spiritual objects; as places the magistrate upon Christ's throne, in the church, and invests the christian minister with the honors and the powers of the state: Such motley alliances are the offspring of political and priestly ambition, aided by equal cunning; are the main pillar both of civil and religious tyranny; and the source of infinite mischiefs to the intellectual and moral character as well as the temporal condition of mankind. They infect the best religion under heaven, its professors and ministers, with the spirit of this world, with a proud, cruel, persecuting and immoral disposition. As a celebrated writer observes, "persecution is not an original feature in any religion; but is always the strongly marked feature of all law, religion, or religions established by law. Take away the law-establishment, and religion re-assumes its original benignity. In America a Catholic priest is a good citizen, a good character, and a good neighbour; an Episcopalian minister is of the same description; and this proceeds from there being no law-establishment in America."

But whilst we execrate such treasonable conspiracies between rulers and priests, against the dearest rights and interests of man, we may consistently recommend to the two orders, a liberal and patriotick combination for the general good. There is indeed, in many respects, a natural alliance between intelligent, virtuous magistrates and ministers, in a free and christian state.

And first, the magistrate may and ought to cooperate with the christian instructor, by throwing the weight of his personal example and private influence into the scale of christian piety and virtue. The efficacy of example, when arrayed in all the splendour of high office, is not to be described. As religion adds grace and dignity to the most exalted station, so she derives a superiour charm and majesty from it.

When the great political characters in a community, give their uniform sanction to religion, by exhibiting her fairest features in their daily deportment; when they openly revere the name, the sabbaths, the temple, and all the sacred institutions of the Most High; when they liberally and zealously contribute to the settlement and support, the reputation and success of a learned and virtuous priesthood, to the extensive propagation of christian knowledge, and to the pious education of the rising age; when they are eminent patterns of virtue themselves, and are careful to cherish and honour it in others; how unspeakably do such examples confirm and extend the credit and influence of religion! What animation and confidence, what superiour respectability and success, do they give to its teachers! What authority and energy must the inward consciousness, and open lustre of such virtue impart to rulers themselves, in their official proceedings; especially those which have for their object, the suppression of wickedness, and the encouragement of the opposite interest! Which leads us to observe, that rulers efficaciously concur with christian ministers, when they carry the spirit of religion into their public conduct: When all their political measures are regulated by the everlasting maxims of natural justice, of christian equity and benevolence: When they accordingly distribute the burdens, apply the resources, fulfil



the engagements and discharge the debt of the public, with the scrupulous fairness, the exact economy, the assiduous attention required by those rules, in the similar transactions of private citizens: When they detest and scorn the idea of sanctioning by their public authority, any measure, which they would blush to avow or to practise in their individual capacity: In short, when the whole system of their public conduct appears to be prompted and guided by a supreme regard to the example and laws, the approbation and honour of the infinite Ruler and the good of his moral family: What a glorious attestation is here of the reality, the commanding force of religious obligation! Such a train of political measures is pregnant with various and almost inconceivable good. It inculcates various sentiments upon the public mind, with all the authority and force of the highest, the most conspicuous, and unequivocal example. It also directly and efficiently contributes to the general prosperity: For it proceeds upon principles, which are as essentially necessary and conducive to social union and happiness, as the laws which govern the material world, are to the harmony and welfare of nature.

Further, the magistrate may greatly strengthen the christian teacher, by directing his public attention to the advancement of religion and virtue as an immediate and primary object; by so arranging his measures for the increase of temporal good, as to render them in the best manner subservient to that which is spiritual and eternal; by enacting and executing laws for the prevention or punishment of profaneness and immorality; by promoting virtuous characters to offices of honor and usefulness; by neglecting and dispising the vicious; by lessening and removing the temptation to iniquity; by augmenting and multiplying the encouragements to goodness; by giving birth and efficacy to public and private means of learning, so essential to rational piety; by effectually providing for the support and decent observance of public religious worship and instruction so necessary, as we have seen, to the virtue, the civilization, and happiness, of the community. Such a legal provision for the maintainance of religious institutions, obviously falls within the province of the magistrate, on account of their transcendent importance to civil government and society: Nor does such provision adjusted upon an equal and liberal plan, make the least approach to a political establishment of any particular religious profession, nor consequently involve any invasion of the prerogative of Christ, or the sacred rights of conscience. On the other hand,

Secondly. The christian minister may and ought to strengthen the hands of the civil ruler. If he possesses those qualities of head and heart, which suit his benevolent and comprehensive office, he must have the most tender and ardent feelings for the interest of the state, as well as the church. He must perceive an important connexion between them, as well as the friendly aspect of the christian doctrine upon both. He must consequently feel a double stimulus to a prudent and faithful discharge of his trust. He therefore endeavours, both in his public ministrations, and in his private conversation and example, so to represent and enforce the christian system, as that it may, under the divine blessing, have its full effect upon the character and condition of mankind, in reference to this world and the next. He takes particular care not to make this beneficent and peaceable religion, an engine of civil or spiritual tyranny, confusion, malignant strife, or in any respect, an instrument of increasing, instead of lessening human depravity and wretchedness. He feels himself peculiarly united to the

worthy magistrate, by the ties of personal esteem and public affection. He studies that his whole deportment respecting the rulers and the laws, may express and promote a spirit of decent subjection and obedience, and he enforces such submission by all the authority and sanction of religion. His social intercourse with his family and flock, his daily prayers in private and in public, tend to kindle and to nourish the sentiments of loyalty and patriotism. He loves to mention in the ears of the rising race, the names and services of patriot rulers, of eminent public benefactors; and hereby to charm the tender mind to the love of virtue, of country, of mankind, as well as to a due veneration for, and grateful submission to such ministers of divine benevolence. His public discourses too, all tend either directly or remotely, to form his hearers into good citizens and subjects, as well as holy christians. That such a reciprocation of services between the two orders, falls within the line of propriety and important duty, is too obvious to the eye of discernment, to require a formal illustration.

It is with great satisfaction, that we appeal to the historic page of our own country, for a striking comment upon the preceding discourse. Our fathers were led out of the house of bondage in Britain, into the wilderness of America, and planted here, as in the land of promise, by the same divine Shepherd, who led ancient Israel from deep oppression and misery, to the joys of freedom and plenty. The same good spirit, which inspired Moses and Aaron, to undertake and conduct so arduous an enterprize, evidently guided and animated the leaders in that great attempt, which gave birth to New-England. The same union of friendship, of counsel and exertion in the public cause, which characterized the Hebrew lawgiver and high-priest, distinguished the political and religious fathers of Massachusetts. The rulers of the state, were at the same time members and pillars of the church. The religion which they thus solemnly professed, was the rule of their public and private conduct, and the advancement of its interests, a main object of both. For this purpose, they readily co-operated with the schemes and endeavours of worthy clergymen, and contributed their best efforts for their comfort, reputation and success.

The advice and influence of the priesthood were likewise ever at hand, to aid and succeed the operations of the magistrate, and to promote the civil, as well as religious interests of the people. It is granted, indeed, that our ancestors carried this union of church and state, to an unwarrantable length. But this was not their peculiar fault: It was the complexion of the age. And shall we, their children, who owe so much to their generous services and sufferings, shall we, like undutiful and cursed Ham, take pleasure in exposing their nakedness? No, my fellow-citizens; whilst we spread a veil of filial piety over their imperfections, let [us] with the most grateful emotions, celebrate that united agency of Moses and Aaron, which, under God, laid such early and noble foundations of freedom and order, of science and religion; which in the feeble infancy, and great poverty of the settlement gave birth to a public seminary of learning; a seminary, which from its foundation, to this day, has borne on its front the united inscription of the ruler and the priest, in the names of its founders, and benefactors, of its governors and sons! But passing over the intermediate stages of our history; you will permit me modestly to ask, does not the inscription just mentioned, appear very conspicuous on the face of our late glorious revolution? Did not these two orders remarkably unite their efforts to keep the public mind in a posture of vigilance, of information, of patriotic ardour? In those times which tried men's souls, did not the

public prayers and discourses, the private influence and example of the great body of the clergy, firmly and successfully co-operate with the civil and military measures of the country? Did not the same zealous concurrence of the two departments, procure the adoption of the excellent constitution of Massachusetts, and of the present federal system, which gives union, order, and happiness to America? Did not the same virtuous and unshaken combination eminently mark that perilous and alarming crisis, which a few years since passed over this commonwealth? Do not these striking facts evince, that the spirit of the clerical office at least, in this enlightened and free country, is an important friend to the liberty, government and happiness of society? On the other hand, it becomes us gratefully to acknowledge the support which religion and its ministers have received from the civil government of this state, from the authority and example of some of the first political characters in it; the additional reputation and success which they have instrumentally derived from that source; and the consequent face of superiour union and order, civilization and virtue, which adorns a great part of our community. These advantages would strike us with much greater force, were we allowed to contrast our situation in these respects, with that of some other parts of the Union: But decency forbids the invidious comparison.

When we look over this numerous and respectable assembly, a cloud of witnesses rushes upon our senses and hearts, in support of the ideas now advanced.

Our eye is first caught by the chief magistrate of this commonwealth, who has had a large share in the great political drama, that has been acted on the stage of the new world, and covered it with glory. The presence of his Excellency restrains the lips of delicacy from paying him a formal tribute of praise. But while his distinguished political services are engraven on every American bosom, justice to a different part of his character, constrains us to observe, that he has ever treated religion, its institutions and ministers, with a respect becoming the enlightened, consistent patriot, and ruler, in a christian state. The clergy within his jurisdiction, feel the animating influence of his attention and patronage, and wish him in return, a large experience of the comforts of our divine religion, amidst that trying scene of bodily infirmity, with which he has so long been afflicted. It is also our united prayer to God, that his Excellency may ever form his whole private and public conduct upon the divine model proposed in the life and precepts of the christian lawgiver. That so his personal example and official measures may unite their influence to spread piety and virtue as well as every temporal blessing, through the community. To this, he will feel himself urged by every motive, which can operate upon a heart of sensibility; in particular, by the interesting prospect of death and endless retribution, to which the highest earthly god is equally bound with the lowest of his subjects. May conscious fidelity cheer the solemn hour of dissolution, inspire boldness before the decisive tribunal, and be crowned with superiour glory in the kingdom of heaven.

His Honour, the lieutenant-governour, merits our tribute of respect, on account of that distinguished union of political wisdom, patriotic virtue, and christian piety, which has long dignified his character. Notwithstanding the eminence of his reputation among the civilians of the age, he has not been ashamed of the cross of Christ, but has long been inlisted under that despised, but heavenly banner. May he still continue an

ornament and pillar, both of the church and commonwealth, till his hoary head shall come down to the grave in peace.

The Honourable council claim our regards, on account of their important share in the executive department, and worthy personal qualities, which pointed them out to the suffrages of their enlightened fellow-citizens. Whilst their elevation to this office reflects on them a ray of glory, it obliges them to a correspondent dignity of sentiment and conduct: It invites them to a noble imitation of the governing wisdom, justice and mercy of him, who is the wonderful Counsellor, the King of righteousness and of peace. It particularly calls them to advise and consent to the appointment of such characters only, to interpret and execute the laws, as are exemplary themselves for the observance of human and divine injunctions, and endowed with talents and dispositions suited to the important trust. In this way they may unspeakably promote the civil and moral interests of all parts of the commonwealth.

The gentlemen who compose the two branches of the Honourable legislature, will permit our congratulations on the fresh mark of esteem and confidence, with which their constituents have honoured them. They will likewise remember that the trust, with which they are charged, is very solemn and momentous; that it is rendered still more awful, by the declarations and oaths, with which they have recently entered on its execution. As we cannot doubt their sincerity in those professions and appeals to heaven, we entertain a cheerful hope that all their transactions on this day and through the year, will be regulated by the excellent principles of that religion, and of those civil constitutions which they have publicly taken for their guide. We reasonably expect that all their laws and proceedings will be so many branches growing out of the stock of equal justice and comprehensive benevolence; that they will be strongly marked with the same integrity, virtue and honor, which suit and adorn the rational and christian character in a private capacity. They will ever remember that the same practical principles, must form the basis both of public and individual happiness and glory; and that the policy of those who would rear the fabrick of national prosperity upon a different foundation is equally unphilosophical and iniquitous. As human art, in order to produce certain useful effects must conform to the principles of nature, or the established laws of its great Architect; so the politician must build the order and welfare of society upon those moral principles and connexions, which the same Almighty Ruler, has instituted in the rational system. If he act an opposite part, he virtually, attempts a new creation: Yea, like the man of sin, he exalts himself above all that is called God; for it is the glory of the Deity himself, though he be an absolute Almighty Sovereign, that he cannot govern upon any other plan than that of inviolable truth, justice, and goodness; that he cannot lie to any of his subjects, or trifle with their reasonable petitions, expectations or claims. It will be the glory of our rulers, to copy after this divine original. No idea therefore of omnipotence or uncontrolled sovereignty, will be permitted to infect their deliberations and decisions; but their whole conduct, as it respects particular citizens, the commonwealth in general, and the great American republic, will, we trust, exhibit a fair picture of honest, enlarged and federal policy.

Honored fathers: As you do not remove out of the sphere of religious obligation, by entering the circle of politicks; as you, have all this day professed the christian belief,

and many of you are complete visible members of the Redeemer's family; you will feel under the most sacred ties, to devote the superiour powers and advantages of your present stations, to the christian interest. Whilst therefore you tenderly guard the rights of conscience, and afford equal protection to all peaceable citizens, you will make and enforce every needful provision for the general diffusion of religious and moral sentiments, and for the maintenance and observation of those christian and literary institutions, which are requisite to that end. Among such institutions, the neighbouring university has a distinguished claim to your liberal patronage. It has been one of the grand nurseries of civilization, liberty, good government and religion. Our very existence, as a respectable community, is, under God, greatly derived from that source. Filial gratitude then, as well as every sentiment of public virtue, press our rulers to nurse and cherish this their ancient parent, with a tender and generous care.

In a word, let me respectfully call upon all our civil officers, in every department, to consecrate their authority, influence and example to the greatest good of the community. You, gentlemen, collectively considered, are the moving and regulating principle of the whole political machine. If you jointly and strenuously pursue a virtuous train of conduct, it will operate like a powerful charm upon all parts of the system, and call up a new creation of beauty, virtue and happiness. Let it then be your first ambition and endeavour, to make mankind wiser, better and happier; to raise up the drooping head of virtue; to tread down irreligion and vice; to enlarge the empire of knowledge and righteousness; to augment as much as possible, the sum of created good, and of creating and redeeming glory.

And since the advancement of these great interests lies very much between you and the standing teachers of religion, let gentlemen in these different orders cultivate a friendly and patriotic alliance, by all the methods which prudence and generous virtue suggest.

Ye venerable leaders of our civil and ecclesiastical tribes; how many and how forcible are the ties which bind you together! In this land of political and religious freedom, you both derive your election to office from one source; you are fellow-labourers in one great and benevolent cause; you are important members of one civil body, and by visible profession and sacred obligation, of one christian family; in the due performance of your several offices, you display the same leading excellent talents and virtues, and mutually give and receive the most important support. Certainly then, there can be no strife, no jealous distance between you; for ye are brethren. We congratulate the people of Massachusetts, on the liberal and virtuous union, which at this moment subsists between you, and which is particularly exemplified in those numerous laudable incorporations, which embrace many of your first characters; and which have for their object, the interests of science, of arts, of education, of humanity, of christian knowledge and piety. To perpetuate this union and render it still more operative to the general good, and not the low selfishness or vanity of exalting and strengthening his own profession, considered as a separate interest, has been the preachers governing motive in this discourse; and with a view to the same grand object, he modestly submits to the candour of both departments, a few monitory hints, suggested by the present aspect of society and of religion.

In the first place: Our leading characters in the civil and the literary line, will feel the peculiar importance, at this degenerated period of animating their clerical brethren, in every method dictated by wisdom and virtue; and particular, by encouraging them to calculate their public ministrations upon principles of the most extensive usefulness. They will consider, that many of us are connected with societies, which are chiefly composed of the labouring and more illiterate class; that these peculiarly need the privileges of a weekly sabbath and public religious instruction; and that many of them require very plain, and very pungent applications, in order to enlighten their ignorance, to rouse their stupidity, or to check their vicious career. Our christian patriots, therefore far from despising, will generously aid those teachers, who frequently endeavour, by all the methods of familiar, pathetic, or alarming address, to reach and refine these rougher parts of the community. The enlarged knowledge and experience of our learned civilians will also inspire sentiments of candour towards the priesthood, in regard to that variety of speculation, of gifts, and address, by which it is diversified; they will view this diversity as naturally resulting in great measure from the spirit of free inquiry and improvement, which characterizes the present day. They will consider too, that it furnishes public teachers suited to the various capacities, tastes and prejudices, and all the grades of character and condition, which at this period mark the face of society. They will further consider, that the operation of republican equality and religious freedom, will sometimes introduce a christian instructor not perfectly agreeable to the relish or the speculations of a few superiour members of a corporation, but perhaps very acceptable and beneficial to the general mass of the people. In such cases, does not a regard to social order, to equal rights, to the greatest moral and political good, require a generous and peaceable acquiescence?

On the other hand it becomes the clergy at this day studiously to hold up their office, and the religion which they teach, in the most respectable and pleasing light. A special attention to this object, is rendered important, by the present improved state of society; by the learning and politeness, which adorn many of our religious assemblies; by the rapid progress of loose sentiments and manners, and the consequent disrelish or contempt of christian doctrines, institutions, and teachers. To check these spreading evils it becomes the sacred order to pay great attention both to the private and public duties of their function; it becomes them, in the performance of the latter, to display a force of reasoning, a propriety of thought, of method and expression, a decency of style and address, which may at once bear down the scoffs and the sophistry of libertinism, justly please the taste of literary refinement, and at the same time exhibit the plain, the affectionate, the evangelical preacher. It becomes them both in their ministrations and personal example, to represent the christian institution and ministry, as friendly to human happiness in both worlds; as breathing a social and courteous, a candid and forbearing, a loyal, uniting, and public spirit; a spirit, which whilst it supremely attaches us to the service and rewards of the life to come cherishes a proper sensibility of our rights, duties, and enjoyments as inhabitants of the earth. It becomes them in every consistent method, to support the civil interests of the community, the respectability of its rulers, and the efficacy of its laws. And whilst law speaks to the public ear, in one uniform, inflexible tone, it is ours, my reverend fathers and brethren, to bring home the addresses of religion to the bosoms of individuals; and by a pertinent and forcible application of her peculiar truths and sanctions, to seize their consciences, their imaginations, their hearts; to possess and command their inmost

feelings. By this process, under the influence of the all creating spirit; we are first to mould them into good men, and then by an easy transition into good citizens, rulers and subjects. Above all, let us ever keep in our own realizing view, and endeavour to enforce upon our people, the primary, the infinitely weighty object of our religion and ministry, viz. the spiritual, everlasting salvation of immortal beings, and the glory of God and his Son, shining forth in the wondrous contrivance, and accomplishment of it. Whilst our rulers are pushing forward our temporal prosperity and glory, let us labour to establish and to complete that glory, by a corresponding advancement of this most important object. Into this channel let us endeavour to draw all the civil and literary, as well as religious advantages, which come within our reach. Let the united efforts of the clergy and laity, be especially employed in diffusing christian knowledge and virtue, through those vast territories of our country, whose poverty, and remote situation have precluded the stated enjoyment of religious institutions; and in promoting a more general and effectual attention to the private means of education, in various parts of the commonwealth. By such a union of public exertion, our leading characters in church and state, will resemble the two olive-trees, which the Prophet saw in vision, emptying their golden oil into the candlestick of Zion.

### Fellow-citizens Of This Great Assembly,

I felicitate you and our common country, on the natural, civil and religious advantages, by which we are so eminently exalted; and especially on the prosperous train of our national affairs, under the auspices of indulgent heaven, and its favourite minister, the President of the United States. When we mention this beloved citizen and benefactor of America, every bosom present, feels the endearing and forcible illustration, which his example gives to the leading sentiment of this discourse. For the charm of his piety, of his public and private virtue, as well as political wisdom, has been a principal cement of our national union, and so a prime source of all its attendant blessings. What then is wanting to complete the glory and happiness of our country? Nothing but the general prevalence of the same excellent spirit; a spirit of sublime virtue, corresponding to the natural grandeur and extent of America, and to its noble constitutions of government and religion. Virtue enlightened and invigorated by political and christian knowledge, is eminently the soul of a republic. It is necessary to direct, to enliven, to guard the election of its rulers, and to secure to them, the generous confidence, submission and co-operation of the people. It is peculiarly requisite in a community like ours, spread out over such an immense continent, divided by so many local governments, prejudices and interests: A people so circumstanced, can never be firmly and durably united, under one free and popular government, without the strong bands of religious and moral principle, of intelligent and enlarged patriotism. Liberty planted in such a soil, will be perpetually tending to unbridled licentiousness, distracting jealousies, and popular confusion. Let us then set up a vigilant guard against these encroaching evils. Let us not imagine that the exercise of civil liberty, consists in ignorant or envious abuse of public characters and measures; nor that religious freedom will justify careless neglect or wanton contempt of the truths, the ordinances, and ministers of that religion, which was sent down from heaven to guide us, to present and future happiness. Though we are not accountable to the civil magistrate for our religious sentiments and worship; yet we certainly are to

the Deity; and he has given us no liberty in this enlightened country, either to think with deists and sceptics, or to live like atheists; nor will the prostitution of his Sabbaths, to idleness or amusements in defiance of human and divine laws, pass in his account for a mark of superior politeness or liberality. In opposition to these wicked, but too modish abuses of liberty, let us remember that energetic government, is the guardian of freedom, and that religion, especially the christian, is the pillar of both. Let us then properly respect, support, and concur both with our civil and religious ministers. Let us exercise the most scrupulous care in the election of both, and be rationally satisfied, that their heads and hearts, their principles and morals, comport with the spirit of their several offices. But having chosen them, let us treat their persons and administrations with that confidence and honour, which become a wise and magnanimous people, and which may, by the blessing of God, give the greatest effect to their benevolent labours.

Finally: As the crown of all, let us become pious towards God, humble and obedient believers in his Son, conscientiously submissive to the government and laws of our country, sober, frugal, and diligent in our several employments, just and kind to one another, unitedly and zealously attached to the great interests of America, and of the whole human fraternity. Then we shall hold out an inviting example to all the world, of the propitious operation of a free government; we shall encourage and accelerate the progress of reason, and of liberty, through the globe. Already has the new world diffused the light and warmth of freedom across the Atlantic, into the old; which has given birth to a surprising and glorious revolution. Let us be nobly ambitious, by our future conduct, to feed and extend the generous flame; and thus to realize the wishes and hopes of all benevolent spirits in heaven and earth. Let us especially labour and pray, that these political struggles and changes, may, under the divine agency, introduce new and brighter scenes of christian knowledge and piety, till the whole world shall be covered with divine glory and human bliss. And may we in particular, after having filled our departments in society here, with usefulness and honor, be united to the more glorious community of the righteous; where the official distinctions of Moses and Aaron, are known no more; where all the followers of the Lamb, shall form one royal priesthood, one mighty combination of perfect and happy immortals; and God the original source of being and blessedness, shall be all in all.

amen



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

39

## A SERMON PREACHED BEFORE THE ARTILLERY COMPANY

Peter Thacher

BOSTON

1793

Peter Thacher (1752–1802). Thacher, the great-grandson of Reverend Peter Thacher (d. 1727), graduated in 1769 from Harvard with highest honors. He later had conferred upon him a doctor of divinity degree from the University of Edinburgh. He was pastor at the Congregational Church in Malden, Massachusetts, from 1770 to 1784, and then moved to the Brattle Street Church in Boston, where he remained until his early death from tuberculosis (in Savannah, Georgia). Regarded by George Whitefield as the ablest preacher in the colonies—he called Thacher the “young Elijah”—his oratorical powers were much valued by Massachusetts patriots, who gave him special “beating orders” to organize the coastal defense. Chaplain to the General Court, he was the probable author of the Resolutions of Malden to its General Court representative. He later represented the town in the convention that framed the 1780 state constitution. After the Revolution, he was active in a number of affairs, including the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel Among the Indians, the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, the Humane Society, the Charitable Fire Society, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He was also a founder (in 1791) and a trustee of the Massachusetts Historical Society.

Thacher published twenty-two sermons, a list of which is given in William Emerson, *A Sermon on the Decease of the Reverend Peter Thacher, D.D.* (1803).

*Then the five men departed and came to Laish, and saw the people that were therein, how they dwelt careless, after the manner of the Zidonians, quiet and secure; and there was no magistrate in the land, that might put them to shame in any thing; and they were far from the Zidonians, and had no business with any man.*

Judges XVIII.7.

All scripture is written for our instruction. It is intended not only to reveal to us the purposes of God’s mercy and the requisitions of his will, but to furnish our minds with the wisdom which is profitable to direct us in the various situations to which by Providence we are called. The history of the Bible contains a lively picture of human life and manners. It paints the various feelings which agitate the heart of man at different periods. It describes the manner in which individuals and bodies of men have conducted in different circumstances. It points out the motives of their conduct, and

the consequences which resulted from it. And thus the word of God furnishes us with maxims of wisdom, and lessons of experience, without our paying the dear price at which they are sometimes purchased. From this history we find that mankind have been much the same in all ages; that the same passions and principles have actuated them all; and that the same effects have generally resulted from the same causes.

Modern philosophers are ready to suppose that they have made great improvements in the knowledge of mankind, and in the various systems by which human governments may be formed and supported with the most happy success. But if we read the history of the Bible, we shall be ready to conclude with Solomon, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done; and there is no new thing under the sun." In this history we shall find the same general principles laid down which are now considered as the basis of free and happy states, and the same methods prescribed to preserve and increase them when they are formed. It is difficult to find any situation now to which there cannot be found some parallel in the sacred volume.

The maxim, "that it is necessary in peace to prepare for war," is now adopted by every human government. Founded in reason and good sense, this maxim will be questioned by no one who does not doubt the lawfulness of war in all cases. Experience decides positively upon its truth, and the conduct of mankind proves their conviction of its expediency. And a striking example of the truth of this maxim is given us by the words of the text. The men of Laish were careless and secure; they had no order nor government; they considered themselves as at a distance from any enemy, and in no danger of an invasion; and these very causes operated to incite the Danites to invade them, and rendered their conquest easy and certain.

"Laish," say commentators,\* "afterwards called Caesarea Philippi, was placed in a very pleasant situation between the rivers Jor and Dan, almost at the foot of mount Libanus. This town was the extreme border of Judea to the north, as Beersheba was to the south. The inhabitants dwelt after the manner of the Zidonians. The city of Zidon was nearly surrounded by the sea; it was strongly fortified, and thus its citizens felt perfectly secure. The Zidonians were a very powerful people, and had little to dread from any of the nations around them. This occasioned them to feel perfectly at ease; and the men of Laish, who were probably a colony from Zidon, caught the manners of the parent state, and without the same reason felt the same security. They were distant a day's journey from Zidon, which was sufficient to prevent them from receiving thence immediate assistance and support, in an attack suddenly commenced and finished. When the history says that they had no business with any man, it probably means that they did not carry on trade and commerce with any people, and lived entirely by themselves; or else, that they had so little care of their safety, and so high an opinion of their own abilities, as to form no league or alliance with any other people."

The history to which the text relates is briefly this: The tribe of Dan had not conquered the whole portion of land assigned to them in Canaan; and being straitened for room, they determined, by a vigorous exertion, to procure to themselves the accommodation which they needed. They acted prudently and wisely in the

prosecution of this design; for, they did not at once commence an emigration without having any certain object before them, but detached a small party to find out a place adapted to their views, and a people that could be easily conquered. Laish presented itself to them as calculated to answer both these purposes. The motives which induced the children of Dan to attack the place, and the reasons which made the conquest so easy, are briefly recounted in the report of the spies: “Arise, that ye may go up against them; for we have seen the land, and behold it is very good: And are ye still? Be not slothful to go and to enter to possess the land. When ye go, ye shall come unto a people secure, and to a large land; for God hath given it into your hands—a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth.” The fertility of the soil, and the pleasantness of the situation, animated their wishes to possess the land. The perfect security in which the people dwelt, and their total unpreparedness to defend themselves, calmed their fears of any formidable resistance. They came, they saw, they conquered. And the people of Laish fell, a melancholy proof of the danger of security, and a striking demonstration of the necessity of preparing against violence and invasion, even in a time of the most profound peace, and at the greatest distance from any enemy.

This lesson, so strikingly delineated in the history before us, is the lesson of the day. We are now met in the house of God to assist the devotions of an ancient and respectable military corps, founded by our ancestors, to guard against the very error which proved fatal to the existence and independence of Laish. This corps was intended as a nursery for the officers who should command the militia of the colony, and who might thus train them up to “fight for their brethren, their sons and their daughters, their wives and their houses.” Deeply as these good men were impressed with the peaceful religion of Jesus Christ, they still believed the lawfulness and necessity of defending the liberty and property which God had given them. Brave and hardy, like the wilderness which they subdued, they could not endure the idea of yielding their independence even to the boldest invader; and therefore by vigilance and exertion, by order and discipline, they guarded against the danger, or prepared themselves to repel it. They founded therefore this company, in which the principal men among them cheerfully enrolled themselves, and where the man who had commanded armies did not feel his honor injured, or his dignity impaired, by being commanded in his turn.

The occasion therefore, and the sentiment of the text, lead me[:]

In the first place, to remark upon the folly which a people discover, and the danger to which they expose themselves, when they live in a state of security, unprepared to resist an invasion, or defend themselves against the attacks of an enemy.

But how are we to defend ourselves when our country is invaded, and we are threatened with the loss of every thing we hold dear, by the violence and fury of an enemy? By declaring, with the honest Quaker, that we will not resist any force which may come against us, because our holy religion forbids us to fight? By long and learned and critical orations upon the injustice and cruelty of invasion, and its inconsistency with the rights of man? Shall we send the ministers of religion to meet an army of invaders, and to tell them that they are not doing as they would be done

by; that they act inconsistently with the religion of Christ, and that God will punish them for their injustice? Or, shall we spread out our supplicating hands to them, and beg them not to shed brethren's blood, nor deprive us of the liberty, the property and independence which God has bestowed upon us, and which we desire to transmit to our children?

Were all mankind actuated by the peaceful religion of Jesus Christ (as they will be at some future period) then these methods would be effectual; but under the present circumstances of human nature they would be the subject only of derision. So deeply is the human heart depraved, so strongly do ferocious passions operate upon mankind, as that the still small voice of reason and religion cannot be heard. The loud calls of ambition and avarice drown their feeble whispers, and a torrent of violence and oppression sweep away their warmest advocates.

In these circumstances, our only method is to resist force with force, to repress the violence which we do not provoke, and to let men know that we will defend with our lives the liberty and the happiness which God has given us.

But it is strange, some will observe, that doctrines of this nature should be preached by a minister of peace, who professes a religion which breathes the warmest benevolence, and teaches mankind to live and love as brethren! Our master, will they say, "came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them"; he strictly prohibits every degree of wrath and envy, and enjoins us to follow ["]peace with all men."

The lawfulness of defensive war has been so often proved from this place, upon these occasions, as that many observations upon the subject will be needless. We must take mankind as they are, because they will not be what they ought. We know that there are men, and many men, who are totally destitute of moral principle, and care not whom they wound or destroy, if they can enrich and aggrandize themselves. We know that there are nations who wish to assume universal authority, and subjugate their neighbours to their will. Can any man, in the exercise of common sense and reason, suppose that the Gospel prohibits us to resist such violence? Am I obliged to deliver my purse to an highwayman, or my life to a murderer, when I am able to defend myself? Does the religion of Christ enjoin its votaries to submit to the violence of the first ruffian nation which will attack them; to give up their liberty, and the liberty of their children, to those who would make them "hewers of wood and drawers of water?" If my brother, agitated with a delirium, attempts to injure me, or take away my life, am I to yield myself a quiet victim to his distraction? These questions carry their own answer with them, and must strike conviction to every unprejudiced mind; for to act in this manner will be to present our throats to the butcher, and to court our own destruction.

Wars undertaken to gratify the lust of power, differences excited by those "lusts from whence come wars and fightings among men," are decidedly contrary to the law of God. Every good man mourns over those fatal contentions where kindred blood is shed; and where brethren of the same family, children of the same father "bite and devour one another." But where a people contend not for glory or conquest; where they take every method to avoid an alternative so disagreeable; yet where they cannot

preserve their lives, their liberties, their estates and their religion, without “resisting unto blood,” they are to do so. If they do it not, they offend against God], and voluntarily sacrifice the birthright which he has given them. God of old commanded his people to resist such attempts, and to make war upon those who attacked them; and would he have done this had war been unlawful in all cases, and directly contrary to the nature and reason of things? I am aware that he permitted many things under former dispensations “because of the hardness of men’s hearts,” because the state of human nature would not permit them to be different; but then he never expressly enjoined men to do what was morally wrong? War he has enjoined; and Meroz was cursed by divine command, because they “came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.”

If it is lawful thus to defend ourselves, and if we have reason to expect the divine protection and support only in the use of proper means, then it is certainly wrong to neglect these means, and to live in a state of supineness and security; because discipline and military knowledge are absolutely necessary to successful war; and such discipline cannot be attained at once. All knowledge is progressive, and military skill is to be acquired in the same way, by the same exertions and perseverance which make us eminent in any other science. True it is, that native bravery and ardent enthusiasm will do much to animate men to heroic deeds in defence of their country; but with how much greater advantage do these principles operate, when they are tempered with discretion, and guided by experience! The first is the courage of a mastiff, who shuts his eyes, and runs into the very jaws of destruction, but who sometimes bears all before him; the second is the fortitude of a man, who knows the nature of his object, and the means by which it may be accomplished. A nation free and brave cannot be conquered; but its defence must cost more dearly, and its distresses must be greatly protracted, if its subjects are not acquainted with the art of war. Absurd and foolish then it is, for any people to live in security, to flatter themselves that their tranquillity shall not be interrupted, and to remain ignorant of military discipline! They act unwisely when they do not learn the art of defending themselves, until that defence is immediately necessary; and when they trust to their enemy’s beating them into skill, and instructing them to be soldiers, as the “men of Succoth were taught with briers and thorns.”

It is certainly unwise, again, for a people to live in security, without preparing against invasion until that invasion takes place, because exertions for defence suddenly made will not be so effectual, nor answer the same purpose with those which are made coolly and with time. If fortresses are suddenly erected, they will want strength and firmness. If an army is raised, and they are called to fight before they have been instructed in the first rudiments of war, they will probably be defeated. Haste is no friend to wise counsels or to effectual defence. The spur of the occasion may animate to vigorous exertions for a short time, and despair may lead a rude and undisciplined multitude to do wonderful things; but their violence will soon put them out of breath, and a cool and wary enemy will be able gradually to defeat and disperse them. In these cases, as in all others, skill and knowledge will make hard things easy, and will save much labour and pains. By a wise and judicious mode of defence, not hastily adopted, but carefully adjusted in all its various parts, much damage may be prevented, and many valuable lives may be saved. What wise people then will

neglect, even in the bosom of tranquillity, to guard against every surprise, and prepare themselves to resist the first bold intruder who may attack them!

No people can have any ground for security while they are destitute of the means of defence. They lie open to every danger, and are liable to be insulted, abused and conquered, by any nation which may think them worthy of their attention. Such a state ought to excite alarm, and no people should be easy while they are exposed to danger so imminent. But their listlessness, like that of a man in a lethargy, commonly increases with their disease, and generally terminates in the death of their liberty.

But, preparations made in peace, and an ability to resist invasion are, thirdly, the most effectual means to prevent it. Their neighbours will esteem it madness and folly to expose themselves to such a formidable resistance; and a people thus prepared and disciplined will be an object, not only of veneration, but of fear. Marauders, tyrants who wish to carry their despotism into foreign countries, or to fatten on their spoils, will not choose for their objects those hardy and skilful nations, who stand ready to defend themselves and their country. Such men will look, as did the tribe of Dan, for some people who dwell quiet and secure, without vigilance, without discipline or the means of resistance. Such a people court invasion, they invite an attack, and beckon to those who delight in spoil to “come and take away their place and nation.” Wary and prudent commanders will consider long before they attack a fortress strongly fortified and well garrisoned; and they will count the cost before they invade a country whose inhabitants are all trained to discipline, and “know how to use the sword and the bow.” But the weakness of a fortress, the ignorance or security of a people, mark them as proper subjects to be attacked and conquered.

Respectability always attends the vigilance and discipline which I am recommending. It is a proof of wisdom to look forward and prepare for futurity, to guard against any danger which may arise, and to provide remedies for every disaster which may happen. Such conduct is a proof of a healthy and vigorous state; it discovers energy in council, and an elastic well braced government. This people will stand high in the estimation of the world. Their alliance will be courted, and this will give them new strength and new defences. The saying of our Lord, alluding however to a more important circumstance, will in this case be fully accomplished—“Unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance, but from him that hath not shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have.”

The history of mankind will furnish us with numberless instances wherein the truth of these observations has been exemplified. Scarcely a page of this history can be opened which does not contain full conviction of it. But we need not go from our own age or our own times to find this conviction. The people of America have proved it to the world, and have reaped the happy consequences of vigilance and discipline, as well as of personal bravery. At the commencement of our late controversy with one of the most formidable nations upon earth, we had not the means of defence which other nations enjoy. We were without ammunition, without money, and without allies; but we had an hardy yeomanry, zealous in the cause of liberty, and versed from their infancy in the use of arms. Every man had been more or less trained and disciplined; and we had a general acquaintance with military science. We proved the benefit of

this preparation, when we met the embattled legions of Britain, and spread terror through hosts commanded by their ablest generals. The heights of Charlestown witnessed the bravery of our citizens, and furnished a convincing evidence of the wisdom of those institutions which made the people of New England soldiers from their cradle. Superior as were our foes in equipments, “in all the pomp and circumstance of war,” yet still they paid so dearly for their victory as that the acquisition of one or two more such victories would have ruined them.

And how deplorable would have been our situation, had we not been thus instructed and prepared for defence! Attacked by an enemy who claimed a right to “bind us in all cases whatsoever,” and whose high toned spirits were exasperated at the idea of resistance, we must have fallen a prey to their violence, and bidden an everlasting farewell to liberty and its blessings. Taskmasters, worse than Egyptian, would have been set over us, and our children must have toiled to support the luxury of their oppressors.

But when resistance had taken place, and we had declared ourselves independent, what miseries, what exquisite distresses would have been the probable consequences of our subjugation! An incensed soldiery would have given way to their unhallowed lusts, and disregarded the laws of God and man to gratify their cravings! Alas!—what sound is this which pierces my heart? It is the shrieks of a tender wife, wrested from the arms of a beloved husband, to gratify the appetite of a lordly master! But whence are those soft complainings, those deep drawn sighs? They are the lamentations of injured innocence, of violated virtue, of the defiled virgin, who has fallen a victim to brutal force! But why does busy imagination transport me to a scene still more painful? Why does it hurry me to the field of blood, the place of execution for the friends of American liberty? Whom does it there call me to see led to the scaffold with the dignity of Cato, the fortitude of Brutus, and the gentleness of Cicero marked deeply on his countenance? It is the gallant Washington, deserted by his countrymen, and sacrificed because he fought in their defence! Of whom consists yonder group of heroes? It is an Hancock, an Adams one and the other, a Franklin, a Rutledge!—but I repress the bursting sentiment—the bare imagination bows my soul with unutterable grief!

Thanks to the God of armies, and to the vigilance and bravery of our countrymen—these distressing scenes were never realized! Freedom, peace and independence have blessed our land; and the very nation whom we opposed, laying aside the bitterness of civil contention, has extended to us a friendly hand, and now declares herself happy in our alliance. A recurrence to past scenes should not therefore excite our resentment; it should only animate us to the vigilance, the bravery, and the active preparation which proved, under God, the means of our deliverance.

I proceed to remark, fourthly, on the necessity of government to the existence and defence of any people.

One reason assigned for the easy conquest of Laish is, “that there was no magistrate in the land, who might put them to shame in any thing,”—who could punish them for

doing wrong, or make any man ashamed of his want of virtue or patriotism. Such a people must fall an easy prey to an invader; for without government no people can remain in security, nor can any nation be defended from its enemies.

By restraining vice, the magistrate prevents men from contracting habits of effeminacy. He guards them from weakness of mind, and excites them to hardihood and patriotism. The great and noble principles of love to our country, of sacrificing private interest to public happiness, of guarding the rights of posterity, and disseminating universal felicity, cannot subsist in a mind narrowed and depraved by criminal indulgence. Vice makes cowards of mankind. It contracts and stifles the noblest principles of human action, and renders men abject in their sentiments and conduct. As far as vice is discountenanced, as far as men are made ashamed of doing base and unworthy actions, so far general security is increased, and the aggregate of national strength is enlarged.

The design of good government is to form a focus to which all the diverging rays of power in a community may be collected, and which may enable a people to bring the force of the whole to one point. This accumulated power protects every individual in his rights; it guards the weak from the violence of the strong, and the few from the oppression of the many. The same power is competent to defend the whole from invasion or other injury. Nothing can be done by way of defence where there is no government. Money cannot be raised. Men cannot be disciplined—nor can any great object be steadily pursued. When a people without government are invaded, every man will propose and pursue his own mode of defence. A thousand different schemes will be thrown out. The people will be distracted in their views; and before this distraction can be calmed, a final conquest may save them the trouble of defending themselves for the future. A nation rent with divisions, destitute of law, of subordination and rulers, presents a proper object for an attack, because it promises an easy if not a valuable conquest. The very people themselves who have been agitated by different scenes, who have no rest for the soles of their feet, who find their lives, their liberties and estates afloat, and exposed to the lawless violence of any who may be pleased to seize them, this people themselves will join an invading army, and prefer any security, any protection to none at all. Without government, indeed, without law and order, there is no liberty, no security, no peace nor prosperity. Men ought to guard their rights; they ought to resist arbitrary power of every kind; they ought to establish a free government; but no people can be safe, no nation can be happy where “every man does what is right in his own eyes,” and the people are driven about by the whirlwind of their passions.

If, again, a government is free and just, they will be cheerfully supported by the people in defending their country. Wars too often arise from the ambition or other passions of princes and great men, and the justice of them may be properly doubted. Where an interest exists in the government separate from that of the people, the latter will always feel a jealousy, and will not be ready to give them effectual support. But where “our rulers are from among ourselves, and our governors proceed from the midst of us”; where every man, elevated as his station may be, returns at stated periods to the mass of the people; where our rulers cannot injure us without hurting themselves, we may cheerfully acquiesce in their calls to defend ourselves, and may



be sure that they will not wantonly engage in a war, which exposes them as well as us to heavy expense and grievous misfortune. The conscientious soldier, who will not support a war which he does not believe to be lawful, may here feel his mind perfectly at ease, and may discover his skill and his fortitude in defending his injured country, or supporting its just claims. Happy people, who are blessed with such a government! Happy land, shadowed all around with the tree of liberty, and yet strengthened and united by a firm and vigorous government! No wonder that thou art envied by other nations, who are either crushed by arbitrary power, or distressed by confusion and anarchy!

The reasons against indulging to security, and neglecting to provide for defence, I observe once more, operate with peculiar force upon a people whose distant situation prevents their receiving assistance from their allies. The people of Laish were far from the Zidonians, and had no business or connexion with any man. The sacred historian informs us also, that the Danites came “unto Laish, unto a people that were at quiet and secure, and they smote them with the edge of the sword, and burnt the city with fire, and there was no deliverer, because it was far from Zidon.” If a people dwelling thus remotely do not defend and help themselves, no one can help them. Before their friends and allies can hear of their distress, it may be complete; and they may be subdued and ruined before the least assistance can be given them. This consideration should operate strongly upon a nation thus situated, and induce them to keep themselves in a constant state of defence; to cultivate military skill and discipline among the inhabitants; to be provided with all the means of defence; to keep a vigilant eye upon the state of all nations, so that they may not be surprised on a sudden; and to put all their fortresses into such a condition, as that they may be able to check a sudden attack, and give time for the people, the natural bulwarks of the state, to assemble and resist their daring invaders.

The past discourse, you must be sensible, hath had a respect to the situation of this country, and the duty of this day. We, my fellow citizens, dwell in a distant part of the world, far removed from any allies, and very little interested in the politics of Europe. This circumstance should not only operate to excite us to pay a close attention to the state of our militia, and the means of our defence, but it should prevent us from engaging in their quarrel, or adopting their wars. Our assistance can be of very little benefit to them, but it may essentially injure us. Our country is young, and cannot bear the loss of men, which is the certain consequence of war. It is free, and does not wish its citizens to mix with the slaves of Europe, and catch their servile manners. It venerates religion, and will find no advantage, should its people associate with those who despise religion, and trample upon every divine law. In case of a war, we cannot be supported or assisted by any European power as they can support one another; and America may be essentially injured before our allies in Europe can know that an enemy has attacked us. God in his providence has placed us in a remote part of the world, and if our brethren in other countries “fall out by the way,” we will endeavour to reconcile them, but we will not become partners in their quarrels. They have a right to choose their own governments, and manage their own affairs, without our interference. God does not call us to war. We are not attacked nor endangered; until we are, we have no right to spill our own blood, or that of our children. Let us then “study the things that make for peace.” Let us unite in repressing those restless spirits

who cannot see a quarrel going on without inserting themselves in it. Let us be ready constantly to exert our good offices in bringing about peace; and let us devoutly pray that God would hasten the time when “wars shall cease from the earth,” and the peaceful kingdom of Jesus Christ, which breathes nothing but good will to men, shall universally prevail.

Through the goodness of God, America now enjoys a great degree of peace. She has passed through an arduous contest, and having struggled long with formidable distress, she is effectually relieved; and while she breathes the pure and fragrant air of liberty, her prosperity rapidly increases, and her branches extend far and wide. On our frontiers indeed a cloud, not bigger than a man’s hand, has arisen, and has extended to a formidable and distressing degree. Our armies have been defeated, and we mourn the brave men who have fallen in the wilderness, and whose bones are now whitening in the sun. It is not for me to determine upon the necessity or expedience of this war. As a minister of religion, I can only wish and pray for peace, and anticipate the time when “the sword of the wilderness” shall destroy no more.

If, my brethren, we mean to guard ourselves from invasion, and to lengthen out our tranquillity, we must cultivate a good government; we must reverence the laws, and support the magistrate in “putting to shame those that do evil.” It is a duty enjoined by our holy religion to submit to such government, and it is a maxim founded in eternal truth, that no people can be conquered or destroyed who are united in supporting a free and good constitution. A consciousness of being freemen, of being protected in the enjoyment of life and property, by laws which know not the rich from the poor, or the great from the small; this consciousness will give men elevation of sentiment; it will inspire them with fortitude and perseverance, and make them superior to all the slaves and sycophants upon earth.

While we support our various constitutions of government, and guard against intestine divisions, we ought to pay a strict attention to the state of our militia, and the other means of defence. Americans will never suffer a standing army among them in time of peace. The militia are the natural defenders of this country. They have a stake in it. They have a share in its sovereignty; and they fight for their wives, their children, their liberty, and their all. Such men cannot be cowards; they must be brave and determined; and when any of these blessings are taken from them, or threatened to be done away, they will be “like a bear robbed of her whelps,” and will determine to conquer or die.

But this very ardor and impetuosity may be fatal to them, unless they are under the direction of judgment and discipline. These are necessary to check their effervescences, and lead their efforts to such points as may be most beneficial. Our militia then should be disciplined. Our young men should be early instructed in the art of war, and every one should hold himself in readiness to “play the man for his people, and the cities of his God.” Let us have our fortresses in good repair, and be ready at all points to resist an invasion; and this is the most likely method to prevent it.

Your institution, gentlemen of the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, is designed to answer this important purpose, and is a striking proof of the wisdom and foresight of our ancestors. Venerable men! My heart warms when I view the schools, the colleges, the churches which they founded; and when I see this company assembled, so admirably adapted “upon all our glory to create a defence.” Methinks I see them looking down from the seats of bliss, smiling to behold this favourite institution flourishing and increasing; delighting themselves in the good of which they thus laid the foundation, and charging us to transmit the freedom and happiness which they have given us, a fair and a large inheritance to the latest posterity!

You are citizens, gentlemen, as well as soldiers, and you know the necessity of order and government. These you will feel it your duty to support and preserve, while you value and defend the liberty of your country. You know that these duties do not interfere. You know that without government freedom cannot subsist, because government alone can protect the helpless individual, or restrain the lordly tyrant. You know also that a free government is necessary to animate and direct the efforts of a people in their own defence, and that the tree of liberty never flourishes, unless it is preserved from rude violence by the sacred barriers of law and justice.

Countenanced by the commander in chief, who himself formerly led a corps in some respects similar to your own, and encouraged by the good wishes and plaudits of your fellow citizens, you are becoming every year more useful and respectable. The choice which you have made of men to command you, who have known not only the parade, but the reality of war, and have bravely defended the liberties of America, has done you and your country honor. Men of the first abilities have been heretofore the objects of your choice; and I hope that the elections of this day will prove, that you are still governed by the same wisdom and prudence, which in this respect have heretofore marked your conduct.

Should you be called to defend your country, or protect its rights, I have no doubt but that you would prove your military skill to be no impediment to brave and valorous exertions. Sure I am, that you would never turn your backs to an enemy, or suffer yourselves to be defeated. You are Americans. You are descendants of men, who sacrificed every thing to assert their liberty. Many of you have “jeopardied your lives on the high places of the field,” and your bosoms glow with genuine patriotism. Such men are invincible. Nothing can subdue them but the power of that Being who hath declared, “that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

Go on, gentlemen, and prosper. In peace prepare for war. Cultivate in your own breasts, and impress upon your children, an ardent love to civil and religious liberty. And while you discharge your duty to society, forget not the Being who has made you what you are, at whose tribunal you must all stand, and whose “favour is better than life.” If you submit to his Gospel, and are governed in heart and in life by its precepts, you shall be made “more than conquerors”; your brows shall be adorned with unfading laurels, and your triumphs shall be complete and eternal!

We live, my brethren of this assembly, in a day when grand and important scenes are acting upon the theatre of the world. We have seen “kings led in chains, and nobles in

fetters of iron.” We have seen the towers of despotism, erected in dark ages, and sacred to the uses of tyranny and oppression, tumbling to the ground, and razed to their foundations. We hear “of wars and rumours of wars.” Mankind “bite and devour one another.” “Brother is pursuing brother unto death,” and the earth is crimsoned, deeply crimsoned, with Christian blood. Humanity sheds a tear over the folly of her sons, but faith lifts her keen and humble eye from earth to heaven, and anticipates the good which shall come out of this evil: She expects the fulfilment of those precious promises which speak of the future peace and happiness of man; and teaches us to exclaim, “amidst the wreck of nature and the crush of worlds,” Alleluia, the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

amen

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

40

## A SERMON ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF AMERICA

Samuel Miller

NEW-YORK

1793

Samuel Miller (1769–1850). A native of Delaware, Miller was educated at home by his father, Reverend John Miller, and his brothers, followed by a year at the University of Pennsylvania and theological training with Reverend John Nisbet, principal of Dickinson College. He was ordained a Presbyterian minister in New York City in 1793 (the year of the sermon reprinted here) and eventually became pastor of the Wall Street congregation that later became First Presbyterian Church. He was appointed professor of church history and government at Princeton Theological Seminary, which he had helped to found in 1813. Under Miller, Archibald Alexander, and George Hodge, the seminary dominated Princeton for over fifty years.

A man of great energy, Miller published dozens of books and pamphlets on a wide range of subjects, from suicide, to slavery, to the theater. His *Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century* (2 vols., 1803) won him honorary D.D.'s from Union College and from the University of Pennsylvania. He was a founder of the New York Bible Society, a corresponding member of the Philological Society of Manchester, England, corresponding secretary of the New Historical Society, a trustee of both Columbia College and the College of New Jersey, historian and later moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly, and chaplain of the first regiment of the New York State artillery.

Although Miller was not a striking preacher, he was a good one, and the quality of his mind and depth of learning are reflected in the sermon from July 4, 1793, published here.

*And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty.*

II. Corinthians, iii. 17.

In contemplating national advantages, and national happiness, numerous are the objects which present themselves to a wise and reflecting patriot. While he remembers the past, with thankfulness and triumph; and while he looks forward, with glowing anticipation, to future glories, he will by no means forget to enquire into the secret springs, which had an active influence in the former, and which, there is reason to believe, will be equally connected with the latter.

These ideas naturally arise, in the mind of every American citizen, especially on this anniversary of our country's natal hour. While we review, with gratitude and exultation, the various steps which have paved the way for our political advancement, we are obviously led to search for the happy principles, which laid at the foundation of these—and while we suffer fancy to draw aside, for a moment, the veil which covers futurity, and to disclose its bright scenes, we cannot overlook the same objects, on the extension and farther influence of which, we are to build our hopes.

We have convened, indeed, principally to celebrate the completion of another year of freedom to our western world. We are to keep this day as a memorial of the time which gave rise to the precious privileges we enjoy, as a sovereign and independent people. It may, therefore, be imagined, that our only proper employment, on the present occasion, is, to take a retrospect of the interesting scenes, which that glorious æra presented to the mind, and to recount the noble achievements, which, under the direction of infinite wisdom, laid the foundation of our prosperity and happiness. But why should our chief attention be directed toward these objects? They are objects, indeed, upon which to gaze, delight and elevate the patriotic mind. They are objects, which, to lose sight of, is to forfeit the character of a faithful citizen. But, at the same time, they are objects too familiar to all present to need the formality of repetition. I address many of those who were near witnesses of these stupendous transactions; and not a few who were agents in the important work. Whose hearts burn within them, at the recollection of events, which the world beheld with amazement: and who view with transport, the political greatness which these events were the means of ushering in, and establishing in our country.

In an audience of this description, then, where is the necessity of my trespassing on your patience, by a bare recital of what is so well known, and so feelingly remembered? Where is the need of my attempting, with minute care, to call up to your view, the patriotic and wise management of our counsels, in those trying times—the fortitude and enthusiastic ardor of our heroes—the splendor of our conquests—or the dignity and glory to which we are exalted by the supreme Arbiter of nations? Rather let us turn our attention to the grand Source, from which we are to expect the long continuance, and the happy increase of these invaluable gifts of heaven.

And to this choice of a subject I am also led by the recollection, that the respectable society to which this discourse is, in a particular manner, addressed, hold up, as the great object of their attention, every thing that may tend to promote the progress of civil liberty, and to transmit it, pure and undefiled, to the latest posterity. They profess to stand as guardians over those inestimable rights and privileges, which have been so dearly purchased, and, in general, to seek, in every form, the advantage of their country. To an association established upon such laudable principles, nothing that is included in these great outlines of their system, can be considered either as foreign to their plan, or beneath their attention. Nothing can be considered entirely inapplicable to their designs, in celebrating this auspicious day, that is, in any degree, connected with the promotion of public dignity and happiness.

It is under this impression, my fellow citizens, that I propose, on the present occasion, to offer you a few general remarks on the important influence of the Christian religion

in promoting political freedom. And, as the foundation of these remarks, I have chosen the words which have just been read in your hearing.

I am well aware, that these words, taken in their proper sense, have a principal reference to liberty of a different kind from that to which I would accommodate and apply them. They refer to that glorious deliverance from the power, and the ignoble chains of sin and satan, which is effected by the Spirit of the Lord, in every soul, in which his special and saving influences are found. They point out, also, that release from the bondage of the legal administration, which the gospel affords to all who receive it in sincerity and truth. But, as I am persuaded the proposition contained in our text is equally true, whether we understand it as speaking of spiritual or political liberty, we may safely apply it to the latter, without incurring the charge of unnatural perversion.

The sentiment, then, which I shall deduce from the text, and to illustrate and urge which, shall be the principal object of the present discourse, is, *That the general prevalence of real Christianity, in any government, has a direct and immediate tendency to promote, and to confirm therein, political liberty.*

This important truth may be established, both by attending to the nature of this religion, in an abstract view; and by adverting to fact, and the experimental testimony with which we are furnished by history.

That the corrupt passions and the vices of men, have, in all ages of the world, been the grand source and support of tyranny, and of every species of political and domestic oppression, is a truth too well known, and too generally admitted, to require formal proof, on the present occasion. A moment's reflection on the nature of tyranny, and of those dispositions in the constituent members of society, which lead to its origin and advancement, is sufficient to convince every unprejudiced mind, that human depravity is the life and the soul of slavery. What was it that first raised this monster from the infernal regions, and gave him a dwelling among men, but ignorance, on the one hand, and on the other, ambition and pride? These his complotters and associates, proceeding in a state of indissoluble connection, have always held up his deformed head, and wielded his iron rod. Together they have invariably come into being—together they have lived and flourished—and into one common grave have they sunk at last.

The truth is, that political liberty does not rest, solely, on the form of government, under which a nation may happen to live. It does not consist, altogether, in the arrangement or in the balance of power; nor even in the rights and privileges which the constitution offers to every citizen. These indeed, must be acknowledged to have a considerable effect in its promotion or decline. But we shall find, on a close inspection, that something else is of equal, if not of greater importance. Cases may easily be conceived, where, without a single material or glaring deficiency in any of these, true and desirable liberty may be almost unknown: and, on the other hand, where, under the most wretched organization of government, the substance of freedom may exist and flourish. Human laws are too imperfect, in themselves, to secure completely this inestimable blessing. It must have its seat in the hearts and

dispositions of those individuals which compose the body politic; and it is with the hearts and dispositions of men that Christianity is conversant. When, therefore, that *perfect law of liberty*, which this holy religion includes, prevails and governs in the minds of all, their freedom rests upon a basis more solid and immoveable, than human wisdom can devise. For the obvious tendency of this divine system, in all its parts, is, in the language of its great Author, to bring *deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to undo the heavy burthens; to let the oppressed go free; and to break every yoke.* But to be more particular—

The prevalence of real Christianity, tends to promote the principles and the love of political freedom, by the doctrines which it teaches, concerning the human character, and the unalienable rights of mankind; and by the virtues which it inculcates, and leads its votaries to practice. Let us take a hasty view of each of these—

Can oppression and slavery prevail among any people who properly understand, and are suitably impressed with, those great gospel truths, that all men are, by nature, equal—children of the same common Father—dependent upon the same mighty power, and candidates for the same glorious immortality? Must not despotism hide his head in those regions, where the relations of man to man are distinctly realized—where citizens, of every rank, are considered as a band of brethren, and where the haughty pretensions of family and blood, are viewed in all their native absurdity, and in those odious colours in which this sublime system represents them? In short, must not every sentiment, favorable to slavery, be forever banished from a nation, in which, by means of the benign light of the glorious sun of righteousness, all the human race are viewed as subject to the same great laws, and amenable to the same awful tribunal, in the end.

Christianity, on the one hand, teaches those, who are raised to places of authority, that they are not intrinsically greater than those whom they govern; and that all the rational and justifiable power with which they are invested, flows from the people, and is dependent on their sovereign pleasure. There is a love of dominion natural to every human creature; and in those who are destitute of religion, this temper is apt to reign uncontrouled. Hence experience has always testified, that rulers, left to themselves, are prone to imagine, that they are a superior order of beings, to obey whom, the ignoble multitude was made, and that their aggrandizement is the principal design of the social compact. But the religion of the gospel, rightly understood, and cordially embraced, utterly disclaims such unworthy sentiments, and banishes them with abhorrence from the mind. It contemplates the happiness of the community, as the primary object of all political associations—and it teaches those, who are placed at the helm of government, to remember, that they are called to preside over equals and friends, whose best interest, and not the demands of selfishness, is to be the object of their first and highest care.

On the other hand, Christianity, wherever it exerts its native influence, leads every citizen to reverence himself—to cherish a free and manly spirit—to think with boldness and energy—to form his principles upon fair enquiry, and to resign neither his conscience nor his person to the capricious will of men. It teaches, and it creates in the mind, a noble contempt for that abject submission to the encroachments of



despotism, to which the ignorant and the unprincipled readily yield. It forbids us to call, or to acknowledge, any one master upon earth, knowing that we have a Master in heaven, to whom both rulers, and those whom they govern, are equally accountable. In a word, Christianity, by illuminating the minds of men, leads them to consider themselves, as they really are, all co-ordinate terrestrial princes, stripped, indeed, of the empty pageantry and title, but retaining the substance of dignity and power. Under the influence of this illumination, how natural to disdain the shackles of oppression—to take the alarm at every attempt to trample on their just rights; and to pull down, with indignation, from the seat of authority, every bold invader!

But again—The prevalence of Christianity promotes the principles and the love of political freedom, not only by the knowledge which it affords of the human character, and of the unalienable rights of mankind, but also by the duties which it inculcates, and leads its votaries to discharge.

The fruits of the spirit are, justice, love, gentleness, meekness, and temperance: Or, in other words, these are among the distinguished graces and duties, which the Christian system not only commands us constantly to regard, but which it creates in the mind, and which are found to prevail, in a greater or smaller degree, in all who sincerely adopt it. Now these are unquestionably the grand supports of pure and undefiled liberty—they stand equally opposed to the chains of tyranny, and to the licentiousness of anarchy.

It is a truth denied by few, at the present day, that political and domestic slavery are inconsistent with justice, and that these must necessarily wage eternal war—so that, wherever the latter exists in perfection, the former must fly before her, or fall prostrate at her feet. What, then, would be the happy consequence, if that golden rule of our holy religion, which enjoins, that we should do unto all men whatever we would wish that they should do unto us, were universally received and adopted? We should hear no more of rulers plundering their fellow citizens of a single right; nor of the people refusing that obedience to equitable laws, which the public good requires. We should see no oppressor claiming from his equals, a subjection which they did not owe; nor should we see the latter lifting up their lawless hands, to resent the reasonable requisitions of an authority constituted by themselves. In short, were this principle universally to predominate, we should see nothing, on the one side, but demands founded on a sincere regard to the general interest; and, on the other, that ready compliance, which promotes the peace and happiness of society.

No less extensively beneficial in its effects on civil liberty, is that pure and refined benevolence, which the Christian system inculcates, and establishes in the minds of those who are under its government. Though the constitution of a country be ever so defective; yet if every rank of citizens be under the habitual influence of that universal charity and good will, which is one of the distinguished glories of our holy religion, there will freedom substantially flourish. To suppose that oppression, with the numerous hell-born woes, which follow in his train, can be cherished in regions, where the mild spirit of benevolence and love reigns, is to suppose that the most discordant principles are capable of uniting; that demons of darkness, and angels of light can dwell together in harmony. Impossible! Wherever that heavenly temper is

found, which, like the Deity himself, delights in showering down blessings, both on enemies and friends; there will the unalienable rights of men be acknowledged, and every infringement of them will be viewed with abhorrence.\*

Nor let us omit to take notice of the peculiar temperance and moderation, which the gospel system enjoins. These are of no less importance, with respect to their influence on political happiness, in general, and especially as they affect the interest of civil liberty. It is an observation as old as the fact upon which it is founded, that nothing more certainly tends, to subvert the principles of freedom, and abate a laudable enthusiasm for republican equality, than a departure from that simplicity of manners, and that prevailing moderation, which our religion inculcates and promotes. Ever since the establishment of civil society, the words of the Roman poet, when speaking of his own country, have been applicable to most great empires—

Sævior armis  
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulcisitur orbem.

Juv.

But for this evil, there is no preventive that promises so much success, no cure so effectual, as that which is here presented. Christianity, more powerful than human strength, and more efficacious than human law, regulates the passions, and roots out the corruptions of men. It not only tames the savage breast, and gives a deadly blow to barbarity of manners; but also tends to quench every extravagant thirst for power; to beat down every high thought, that exalteth itself against the general good; and to render men contented with those rights which the God of nature gave them. While these dispositions prevail, slavery must stand at an awful distance, bound in chains, and

Liberty, fair daughter of the skies!  
Walk in majestic splendor o'er the land,  
Breathing her joys around—

Having thus contemplated, in an abstract view, the native tendency of the Christian religion, to promote civil liberty; let us now take our stand with history, that mistress of wisdom, and friend of virtue, who from her exalted station, causes human events to pass in review, before her impartial tribunal.

When we compare those nations, in which Christianity was unknown, with those which have been happily favored with the light of spiritual day, we find ample reason to justify the remarks which have been made. It may be asserted, with few exceptions, that there never was a regularly organized government, since the foundation of the world, where the true religion was not received, in which political slavery did not hold a gloomy reign.\* It has been generally found, indeed, that in proportion as the faint glimmerings of the light of nature, with which pagan nations were favored, gathered strength, and grew in brightness, in the same proportion has something like social freedom been promoted and extended. But these glimmerings have still proved inadequate to the desirable purpose, of imparting to their liberty a consistent and

permanent character.† As examples of this truth, you will readily recur to the African and Asiatic kingdoms, not excepting some in other quarters of the globe.

On the other hand, it may be observed, with equal confidence, and with fewer exceptions, that there never was a government, in which the knowledge of pure and undefiled Christianity prevailed, in which, at the same time, despotism held his throne without controul.\* It is true indeed, that in the Christian world, during those centuries wherein gross superstition reigned, and the truth was buried in darkness, slavery reared his head, and scattered his poison among men. It is true, that then, the cloud of oppression sat thick and deep over the nations, and the world was threatened with a relapse into ancient barbarity. But when, at the auspicious æra of the reformation, the great source of day rose again upon the benighted world; when the true knowledge of the Lord revived, the truth speedily made men free. When, in this splendid and glorious light, they began to see what they were, and what they ought to be; they delayed not to cast off their chains, and to assert their rights, with dignity and independence. This is the light, which ever since those days, has been gradually undermining the throne of tyranny in Europe.† This is the light, which, gathering strength and refinement, by its passage over the mighty deep, hath kindled a flame in this western world, which, we trust, will continue to blaze, with increasing brightness, while the sun and moon shall endure.

Nor is it political slavery alone, that yields to the mild and benign spirit of Christianity. Experience has shewn, that domestic slavery also flies before her, unable to stand the test of her pure and holy tribunal. After the introduction of this religion into the Roman empire, every law that was made, relating to slaves, was in their favor, abating the rigors of servitude, until, at last, all the subjects of the empire were reckoned equally free.\*

Humanity, indeed, is still left to deplore the continuance of domestic slavery, in countries blest with Christian knowledge, and political freedom. The American patriot must heave an involuntary sigh, at the recollection, that, even in these happy and singularly favored republics, this offspring of infernal malice, and parent of human debasement, is yet suffered to reside. Alas, that we should so soon forget the principles, upon which our wonderful revolution was founded! But, to the glory of our holy religion, and to the honor of many benevolent minds, this monster has received a fatal blow, and will soon, we hope, fall expiring to the ground. Already does he tremble, as if his destruction were at hand. With pleasure do we behold many evident presages of the approaching period, when Christianity shall extend her sceptre of benevolence and love over every part of this growing empire—when oppression shall not only be softened of his rigours; but shall take his flight forever from our land.

That happier times, and a more extensive prevalence of liberty, are not far distant, there are numerous reasons to believe. If so signal and glorious has been the influence of Christianity, in promoting political and domestic freedom, notwithstanding her restrained and narrow operation among men, what may we not expect, when her dominion shall become universal? If such have been her trophies, amidst so much opposition, and the continual struggles of contrary principles, what may we not indulge the hope of seeing, when her empire shall be coextensive with terrestrial

inhabitants—when *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the depths of the sea?*

Then, may we not conclude, that universal harmony and love, and as the necessary consequence of these, universal liberty, shall prevail? Then, may we not confidently hope, that oppression shall be as much abhorred, and as much unknown, as freedom is, at present, in many parts of the globe? That the name of man, of whatever nation, or kindred, or people, or tongue, shall then be the signal of brotherly affection: When the whole human race, uniting as a band of brethren, shall know no other wishes, than to promote their common happiness, and to glorify their common God: When *there shall be nothing to hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain of God—when the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; and when the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ?*

*Imagine not, my fellow citizens, that these are the flights of a vain and disordered fancy. The sacred volume teaches us to comfort one another with these words, and to triumph in the glorious prospect. The Author of truth himself, bids us look forward, with joy and gladness, to—*

The blest Immanuel's gentle reign;

*—when, from the rising of the sun, to the going down thereof, his name shall have free course and be glorified.*

To the introduction of these happy days, it seems as if the present time afforded many hopeful preludes. Can we turn our eyes to the European states and kingdoms—can we behold their convulsive struggles, without considering them as all tending to hasten this heavenly æra? Especially, can we view the interesting situation of our affectionate allies, without indulging the delightful hope, that the sparks, which are there seen rising toward heaven, though in tumultuous confusion, shall soon be the means of kindling a general flame, which shall illuminate the darkest and remotest corners of the earth, and pour upon them the effulgence of tenfold glory?

The splendor of their prospects is, indeed, not altogether unclouded. But, we trust, that every difficulty and disorder will speedily vanish, and give place to harmony, and efficient government. We trust, that *He who rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm*, will wield their fierce democracy with his mighty arm—hush the rude noise of war in their borders—breathe propitious upon their counsels—and, in the end, crown their exertions with abundant success.

The glorious structure, which this once oppressed people are employed in erecting, has been assailed by numerous malignant foes. Black, and awfully threatening clouds have hung over it—the rains have descended—the floods have poured forth—the winds have blown—they have all beat violently upon it; but, as if founded upon a rock, it has yet stood. And we hope it will stand. We hope that, bidding calm defiance to the fury of every tempest, it will continue to rise with increasing greatness, until time shall be no more. Cease, then! ye shortsighted sons of ambition, who would oppose this important work; ye who delight in oppression, and who feed on the

miseries and debasement of men; cease to imagine, that by your feeble arm, you shall be able to withstand the Mighty One of Israel! Remember, that if this cause be of the Lord, you cannot overcome it; and if, haply, you be found fighting against God, your labors, like those of the unhappy sufferer of old, will but revert upon your own heads.

*Let the haughty kings of the earth, then, set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against the work of his hands;—He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh—the Lord will have them in derision.* If this wonderful Revolution be, as we trust, a great link in the chain, that is drawing on the reign of universal harmony and peace; if it be occasioned by christian principles, and be designed to pave the way for their complete establishment, however it may appear to be sullied by irreligion and vice,\* it is the cause of God, and will at last prevail

Having thus commented, in a general manner, on some of the leading objects, which presented themselves from the passage of scripture which was chosen, the first emotions which naturally arise, both from the preceding remarks, and this interesting occasion, are those of gratitude and of praise. Here, happily, our thankfulness as patriots, and our thankfulness as christians, perfectly coincide, and are inseparably connected together.

Let us unite, then, in offering our grateful acknowledgments, to the Sovereign Dispenser of all blessings, that, while many nations are covered with the mantle of darkness and superstition; and in consequence of this, are groaning under the yoke of servitude; the Sun of righteousness hath risen upon us, with healing in his wings; and hath taught us, in a political view, to know, and to maintain our proper character. Let us bless his holy name, that, under the influence of this light, we have been led to assert the dignity of human nature—to throw off the chains of oppression—to think and act for ourselves, and to acknowledge no other king than the *King of the universe*. Let us bless his name, that, under the guidance of the same light, we have been led to frame a constitution, which recognizes the natural and unalienable rights of men; which renounces all limits to human liberty, but those which necessity and wisdom prescribe; and whose great object is, the general good. *O give thanks unto the Lord! for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the oppressor, and delivered from all their destructions. O that men would praise the Lord, for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!*

Again; if it be a solemn truth, that the prevalence of Christianity, has a natural and immediate tendency to promote political freedom, then, those are the truest and the wisest patriots, who study to encrease its influence in society. Hence it becomes every American citizen to consider this as the great palladium of our liberty, demanding our first and highest care.

*The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage.* We possess an extensive, noble country. Fertility and beauty vie with each other, in favor of our ease, accommodation, and delight. Every avenue to national importance, and the felicity of individuals, is opened wide. Let it, then, in addition to all these advantages, and to

complete its glory, let it be Immanuel's land. This will refine, and inconceivably appreciate your freedom. This will render you at once the pattern, and the wonder of the world.

To each of you, then, my fellow citizens, on this anniversary of our independence, be the solemn address made! Do you wish to *stand fast in that liberty, wherewith* the Governor of the universe *hath made you free*? Do you desire the encreasing prosperity of your country? Do you wish to see the law respected—good order preserved, and universal peace to prevail? Are you convinced, that purity of morals is necessary for these important purposes? Do you believe, that the Christian religion is the firmest basis of morality? Fix its credit, then, by adopting it yourselves, and spread its glory by the lustre of your example! And while you tell to your children, and to your children's children, the wonderful works of the Lord, and the great deliverance which he hath wrought out for us, teach them to remember the Author of these blessings, and they will know how to estimate their value. Teach them to acknowledge the God of heaven as their King, and they will despise submission to earthly despots. Teach them to be Christians, and they will ever be free!

And O, thou exalted Source of liberty! not only grant and secure to us political freedom; but may we all, by the effectual working of thy mighty power, and through the mediation of Christ Jesus, be brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; that when this world, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up, we may become citizens of a better country, that is an heavenly.

amen

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

41

## AN ORATION IN COMMEMORATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Enos Hitchcock

PROVIDENCE

1793

Enos Hitchcock (1745-1803). A 1767 graduate of Harvard College, Hitchcock was a minister in Beverly, Massachusetts, and Providence, Rhode Island. He saw extensive action as chaplain during the Revolution. He was first appointed chaplain in 1776 to serve with the Third Massachusetts Continentals on their way to Crown Point and Ticonderoga. The following year he was at Ticonderoga and Saratoga when, just after the defeat of Burgoyne, captured Tories wearing Indian war paint were driven through the streets. He spent much of 1778 with his brigade at Valley Forge. At West Point the following year, the circumstances were nearly as bad as they had been at Valley Forge. And so it went through the rest of the war.

He had been home in Beverly off and on between campaigns, but finally he resigned his post there in 1780 and moved to the First Congregational Church in Providence, where he remained. His theology moved from Arminian to Unitarian over the years, but in the many disputes over doctrine, he always took a reconciling line; he would, for instance, baptize by immersion those who asked for it. He apparently had wealth, independent of his minister's salary, perhaps from his wife's family's property in Maine. He raised a fine parsonage and lived well. He was a friend of Dr. Ezra Stiles, president of Yale, who conferred an M.A. on him in 1781. He received a D.D. from Brown University in 1788, where he had been a trustee since 1782. He campaigned for the abolition of slavery and, advocating free public education, he warned: "What will be the state of American government, if they are not nurtured by general education, and strengthened by public virtue, let the fate of many fallen republics tell!" (*A Discourse on Education* [Providence, 1785], p. 10).

Hitchcock was a popular participant in patriotic events, was first chaplain of the Society of the Cincinnati in Rhode Island, and went to Philadelphia in 1787 for the constitutional convention. He campaigned for Rhode Island's ratification of the Constitution, which he regarded as the plan for a perfect government, while the alternative to federalism was anarchy.

These views can be seen in the Fourth of July, 1793, oration reprinted here, delivered at the Baptist meeting-house. Hitchcock kept extensive diaries during the war, the surviving ones being in the hands of the Rhode Island Historical Society and largely published in their *Collections* (vol. 7). He published a number of sermons and

pamphlets on patriotic themes and two large works on domestic matters: *Memoirs of the Bloomsgrave Family* (2 vols., 1790); and *The Farmer's Friend, or the History of Mr. Charles Worthy* (1793). The former work, dedicated to Martha Washington, addressed the problems of child-rearing (some of it not quite to modern taste, perhaps, such as punishing children by dipping their little heads in ice water).

The return of this anniversary hath reminded us, my respected fellow-citizens, of an event full of wonders, and pregnant with consequences important, not to this country only, but to mankind. Called again to felicitate you on this memorable day, I feel myself secure in your candour to those sentimental effusions which the occasion may suggest. There is a pleasure in the idea of addressing a free and an enlightened people, on the blessings they enjoy, and on the happiness of their condition. Americans! this day recognizes your emancipation. It is your jubilee. It is the birth-day of your independence, of your national existence! Let it never be forgotten, that, on the fourth day of July, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six, forth issued from the illustrious and patriotic Congress the following magnanimous declaration:

“We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in Congress assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name and by authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these *United Colonies* are, and of right ought to be, *free and independent States*.”

This declaration was accompanied with the reasons which compelled them to make it, and which were deemed sufficient to justify the measure in the view of the world. It was nobly made at the most eventful period of the war, when your country was bleeding at every pore, without a friend among the nations of the earth. God alone was her friend! The justice of her cause was registered in the high chancery of heaven. The stars fought in their courses for her; and the event justified a step which had so astonished the world.

To retrace the steps which led to the accomplishment of the revolution, and the causes which prepared the way for it, would be to enter into a field of discussion too large for the present occasion. It would be to repeat what has already been done in a thousand forms. Historians have collected and arranged the great mass of materials. Orators have marked, in polished periods, the great outlines of the revolution. Poets have sung its praises, and, stretching forward on the prophetic wing, the vocal muse hath assigned to it every good of which so great an event can be productive. The subject, however, is not exhausted. Sentimental gleanings still remain to be gathered through the extending field, by those whom you shall annually appoint to celebrate “this memorable event.”\* New subjects will be continually arising out of the improving condition of our own country, the progress of society, government and manners, in the world, which will result from the revolution, and from the establishment of our independence.

Our oration now turns to view the advantages of the natural situation, and political freedom, which we, as a people, enjoy.



These are suggested to us by a recognition of the independency of the American Republic. To what purpose could be the possession of the former, without the enjoyment of the latter? In both respects, our lines have fallen in pleasant places; and we have a goodly heritage. What nation on earth can boast of such a territory, in extent and fertility of soil, situation and variety of climate? The situation and extensive territory of the United States are favourable for a great variety of productions, and convenient for commerce. Extending from the thirty-first to the forty-sixth degree of north latitude, and averaging at more than one thousand miles in breadth, they comprehend such a variety of soil and climate, as to be capable of almost every kind of production, either necessary or convenient to man. The prolific soil will reward the cultivator's labour, and furnish an ample supply for its increasing inhabitants. It is not usual for any of the casualties, whereby the fruits of the earth are at any time cut off, to pervade so extensive a space at the same time. While one part is pinched with drought, or devoured by insects, others have a superabundance to supply their demands. Bounded on the Atlantic ocean by a vast extent of coast, they enjoy every advantage of foreign and domestic commerce. Intersected by many rivers, at distances favourable for internal navigation, or to supply artificial canals, the inhabitants enjoy an easy transportation for the exuberant growth of their fertile banks.

This soil is distributed in such portions amongst the inhabitants, and holden by such a tenure, as afford the greatest security to the continuation of a free government. "Most free states have studied to find out means of preventing too great an inequality in the distribution of landed property. What tumults were occasioned at Rome, in its best times, by attempts to carry into execution the agrarian law? Among the people of Israel, by direction of heaven, all estates which had been alienated during the course of fifty years, returned to the original owners at the end of that term." It is beyond a doubt, that the fee simple of the soil generally resting in the cultivators of it, and that general mediocrity of condition which follows from it, are circumstances most favourable to a republican form of government. Virtue and industry, talents and knowledge, will form the principal distinctions; and the motives to these will be increased, while the opportunities for vice are rendered fewer.

In such a state, the hereditary demagogue, and the cringing sycophant, are alike unknown. Protected by laws of their own framing, the people cannot be oppressed. Enjoying an equal government, which has no lucrative sinecures to bestow, there will be no great scope for ambitious intrigue. Such generally is the state of this country, whose inhabitants consist principally of independent and hardy yeomanry, mostly trained to the use of arms, instructed in their rights—reaping and enjoying the fruits of their own industry. Happy the people that are in such a state! all the blessings of secular and political enjoyment lie within their reach, unendangered from the rapacious hand of neighbouring powers, jealous of their growth, envious at their prosperity, and avaricious of their spoils. It is among the principal advantages of our situation, that we are not surrounded by such petulant and encroaching neighbours. Of the evil of such a situation, we may form some idea from what we suffer by the vicinity of the savage tribes.

From the natural situation of this country, and the peculiar circumstances of its inhabitants, arise many political advantages; for the enjoyment of which we are indebted to the revolution. The features of our policy have a strong resemblance to the magnificent and well-proportioned features of our country. No longer do we subscribe to the absurd doctrine of the divine right of kings, no longer bow our necks to the galling yoke of foreign legislation. Independent of these servilities, we enjoy the divine right of governing ourselves. In the exercise of this right, we have seen a complete political revolution, unawed by surrounding enemies, and uninfluenced by their intrigues. We have seen a constitution of civil government formed under the influence of reason and philanthropy, which meets the approving voice of the ablest politicians. Much has been said of its excellence by the greatest civilians. It is granted on all hands, [“]that the safety of the nation is the object of all government; and that the will of the people is the supreme law in all republican governments. But the arbitrary power of the many will produce anarchy, as that of an individual does despotism. It is necessary, therefore, that the social will be collected, and concentrated in one form or constitution of government; no state having yet appeared, where the people at once govern themselves without representation. This constitution, like the combination of organs that form the constitution of the human body, must contain within itself sufficient force and energy to carry on the necessary functions.” “The head dictates the laws, and the other members execute. It is essential that the head, which represents the legislative and judicial powers, should be calm and deliberate in its decrees; and that the arm, representing the executive, should have promptitude and force.”

Every good government must exist somewhere between absolute despotism, and absolute democracy. In either of these extremes, neither liberty nor safety can be enjoyed. It will follow, that a constitution wherein the three powers, legislative, executive and judicial, are most perfectly combined for the prosperity of the people, is the best. Indeed, the great Montesquieu has made it appear, that these three powers exist, in some degree, in every form of government, even the most absolute. As these powers display their cooperative influence, in a greater or less degree, in the governmental machine, they have received their name or stile. The name of aristocracy is given to the government of those states, where a permanent senate governs all, without ever consulting the people. “Such is Venice, which is also called a republic; it is a pure aristocracy in this sense, that the three powers are in the hands of the nobles. That state, in which the will of an individual is most frequently a law, and decides on the life or death of the subject, is called a despotic state. Such is the Turkish empire. But it is not true, that the sultan is absolute master; his power finds limits at every step he advances, and he is obliged to respect them. This empire, then, is between aristocracy and despotism; but inclines towards the latter. The state in which the will of an individual is sometimes absolute, but where co-legislative bodies always join in the exercise of power, is called a monarchy. This species of government is between despotism and aristocracy, but inclines towards the latter. The state where the people choose their magistrates for a fixed period, and often assemble to exercise the sovereignty, is a democracy, and is called a republic; such were Athens and Rome, and such are the United States of America.”

Amidst the various shades between the primitive colours in which different governments have been cast, these United States have wisely cast their's in that mild form which is most congenial to the rights of man, and the enjoyment of equal liberty—that liberty, which to independence unites security—which to *the most ample elective powers, unites strength and energy in government*. You will permit me here to felicitate you on the re-election of two of the first political characters in the world, to the two first offices in the American Republic; and on the honour your electors have done themselves by their unanimity in the election.

The present flourishing condition of these states, affords the best comment on the excellence of our constitution. All useful theories are practicable. The most perfect model of government that imagination can form will be useless, if the state of mankind renders it impracticable. Already has experience taught us, that our government is fraught with many blessings. The same internal causes that led to independence, and national existence, have guided the people of these states to a wise and deliberate choice of persons, to whom the powers of government might safely be entrusted. To the wisdom of their elections, and to the judicious appointment of officers to the several departments of state, are they to ascribe their present flourishing condition. Under the happy influence of their wisdom, fidelity and industry, we see our credit restored abroad, and established at home—our deranged finances reduced to system, and made productive beyond the calculations of the most sanguine. Although the revenue laws may, in some respects, operate unequally at present, yet the object of the government being the distribution of equal justice, such alterations and reforms will doubtless take place, as to produce all that equality which the nature of the case will admit. Who does not see reason to rejoice in the provision making for the current of justice to run pure through the Union, who but the dishonest and fraudulent debtor, or the criminal offender? The dignity, candour and impartiality, displayed from the judicial bench, augur well to the rights of individuals, and to the peace of society.

Here property is rendered secure, by the equality of law to all; and every man, being master of the fruits of his own labour, enjoys the right of property—no arbitrary imposition of taxes or of tythes, no lordly exactions of rents, chill the heart of industry, nor repress the cultivator's exertions—no mercantile corporations, with exclusive rights, damp the ardent spirit of enterprize. Hence we see a trackless wilderness, in the short space of one hundred and seventy years, converted into a fruitful field; and, in the space of ten years, we see trade and commerce, no longer limited by parliamentary restrictions, nor distressed by war, extending to all parts of the globe, from the straits of Magellan to the inhospitable regions of Kamskatka. Hence also we see the American genius springing forward in useful arts, projecting great and astonishing enterprizes, *tearing down mountains and filling up vallies,\** and making efforts unknown in those countries where despotism renders every thing precarious, and where a tyrant reaps what slaves have sown.

A polite and ingenious European traveller (Dr. Moore), tells us, “The chilling effects of despotic oppression, or the benign influence of freedom and commerce, strike the eye of the most careless traveller.” And, speaking of the disorders incident to free governments, says, “The temporary and partial disorders which are the consequence

of public freedom, have been greatly exaggerated by some people, and represented as more than an equivalent to all the advantages resulting from a free government. But if such persons had opportunities of observing the nature of those evils which spring up in absolute governments, they would soon be convinced of their error. The greatest evil that can arise from the licentiousness which accompanies civil liberty, is, that people may rashly take a dislike to liberty herself, from the teasing impertinence and absurdity of some of her real or affected well-wishers; as a man might become less fond of his best friend, if he found him always attended by a snappish cur, which without provocation was always growling and barking.

“What are the disorders of a free government, compared to the gloomy regularity produced by despotism? in which men are obliged to the most painful circumspection in all their actions; are afraid to speak their sentiments on the most common occurrences; suspicious of cherishing government spies in their household servants, distrustful of their own relations and most intimate companions; and at all times exposed to the oppression of men in power, and to the insolence of their favourites. No confusion, in my mind, can be more terrible than the stern disciplined regularity and vaunted police of arbitrary governments, where every heart is depressed by fear, where mankind dare not assume their natural character, where the free spirit must crouch to the slave in office, where genius must repress her effusions, or, like the Egyptian worshippers, offer them in sacrifice to the calves of power; and where the human mind, always in shackles, shrinks from every generous effort.”

There is a point of depression, as well as exaltation, from which human affairs naturally return in a contrary direction, and beyond which they seldom pass, either in their decline or advancement. The present is a crisis, in human affairs, that teems with great and interesting events. Long, long has the old world been sunk in ignorance, superstition and bondage. But the period of her emancipation appears to be rapidly approaching. What a mighty combination of events is now conspiring to the general spread of knowledge and freedom! Judging from what we have seen and experienced, we may conclude that the measures now taken to crush the rights of mankind, and to overturn the altar of freedom, will be productive of the contrary effect. Indeed a dark cloud at present veils the fair countenance of liberty in France. Inexperienced in the science of a free government, and unprepared for the enjoyment of it by a previous course of education, of intellectual improvement, and moral discipline, they have tarnished their glory by excesses; and, in the paroxysms of their zeal, have carried excess to outrage.

It is the misfortune of men struggling for liberty, that they are apt to be carried too far, *as we have been taught by experience*. The more the human mind hath been depressed, the greater will be its extravagancies, when it bursts forth from the shackles of tyranny into the full light of freedom. Like the vibrating pendulum, it flies from one extreme to another; and, like that, must have time to regulate itself. Shall we reject the cause of human liberty, because anarchy attends the first efforts of a people to gain it, or because ferocity marks some of their steps towards it? Or shall our confidence in its progress be overthrown, because threatened by hostile confederacies? As Americans, we must either renounce that which is our boast and glory, or warmly wish success to the great principles of the French

revolution—principles founded on the equal liberty of all men, and the empire of the laws. As rational beings, and as Christians, we should recollect, that from partial evil, it is the glory of the Supreme Ruler to bring forth general good; and that, as inspiration expresseth it, “He makes the wrath of man to praise him; but the remainder of wrath will he restrain.”

The present war in Europe has a further object than the subjugation of France. It is a war of kings and despots, against the dearest rights and the most invaluable privileges of mankind. Should the combined powers succeed against France, and the re-establishment of monarchy there exist among possible events, what security have we, that the same attempt will not be made to restore monarchy in this country? Has not united America led the way? And may she not boast, with an honest pride, of the influence of her example in exciting the attention of many nations to their natural and civil rights? With what freedom of thought—with what enlightened and ardent philanthropy, has she inspired many of the nations of Europe! What would be her condition, if subjugated by the confederates against freedom, we may learn from the state of Poland, lately made free by a voluntary compact with its king; but now subdued by the ferocious power of the north, divided among her jealous neighbours, and the people sold with the soil, like the animals that graze upon it. Let the generous feelings of human nature rise indignant at the abhorrent idea of part of itself being thus degraded. Whatever may be the fate of France in the present contest, the great principles of the revolution will eventually find advocates in every part of the world, even among those who are now most inveterate against the conduct of the French. The doctrines of hereditary powers—of the divine right of kings—of their inviolability, and incapacity to do wrong, are fast declining, and will soon be exploded. They are solecisms of the same nature with their divine right to do wrong; and will, in future, more enlightened and liberal days, be read of with astonishment.

How often doth a hand unobserved shift the scene of the world! The calmest and stillest hour precedes the whirlwind; and it hath thundered in the serenest sky. The monarch hath drawn the chariot of state, in which he had been wont to ride in triumph; or been dragged to a scaffold, by the misguided zeal of his late admirers; and the greatest who ever awed the world, have moralized at the turn of the wheel. Such, O Louis, has been thy untimely fate! At thy urn, let pitying nature drop a sympathetic tear! Cease, thou sanguinary demon, any longer to support thy bloody standard! May the milder genius of true liberty, and more enlightened policy, speedily pervade the councils, and bless the people of France!

Our attention now returns with delight to contemplate that portion of religious and scientific freedom which our country enjoys. To the early care of our ancestors to establish literary, and encourage religious institutions, are we much indebted for the accomplishment of the late revolution, which shows us the vast importance of paying great attention to the rising sons and daughters of America, by giving them an enlightened and a virtuous education. Here the human mind, free as the air, may exert all its powers towards the various objects laid before it, and expand its faculties to an extent hitherto unknown. It has been the policy of all monarchical governments, and of some religious institutions, to keep the people in ignorance, the more easily to dazzle them into obedience by external marks of greatness, and of native superiority.

Knowledge and true religion go hand in hand. When the former is obscured, the latter is mutilated, and enveloped in the shades of superstition and bigotry. And whenever the civil power has undertaken to judge and decide concerning truth and error, to oppose the one, while it protected the other, it has invariably supported bigotry, superstition and nonsense.

“Anaxagoras was tried and condemned in Greece, for teaching that the sun and stars were not deities, but masses of corruptible matter. Accusations of a like nature contributed to the death of Socrates. The threats of bigotry, and the fear of persecution, prevented Copernicus from publishing, during his life time, his discovery of the true system of the world. Galileo was obliged to renounce the doctrine of the motion of the earth, and suffered a year’s imprisonment for having asserted it.” Many other instances of a similar nature, and much later date, might be mentioned; the tendency of which has been to cramp the human powers, to destroy in some measure the end of education, by directing the current of thought into a narrow channel. Hence the doctrine of the revolution of the earth round the sun, would have been as great “a stumbling-block to the prejudiced Jews, and as apparent foolishness to the learned Greeks, as that of a crucified Jesus to be the Saviour of the world.”

By the constitution of the United States, no man is abridged of the liberty of enquiry—no religious test is required—no bait is thrown out by government to encourage hypocrisy, or exclude the honest and deserving. In this respect it possesses a liberality unknown to any people before. It must give pleasure to every generous mind, to hear “the children of the stock of Abraham” thus addressing our beloved president: “Deprived as we have heretofore been of the invaluable rights of citizens, we now (with a deep sense of gratitude to the Almighty Disposer of all events) behold a government erected on the majesty of the people—a government which to bigotry gives no sanction, to persecution no assistance, but generously affording to all liberty of conscience, and immunities of citizenship—deeming every one, of whatever nation, tongue or language, equal parts of the governmental machine. This so ample and extensive federal union, whose basis is philanthropy, mutual confidence, and public virtue, we cannot but acknowledge to be the work of the great God, who ruleth in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth.”\*

In this view of the subject, may we not consider these as the dawn of brighter days, of a brighter sun than ever blessed the world before; as a commencement of the golden age, that introduces a better system of religion than most of those which have been hitherto professed in the world; a religion that enforces moral obligations, not a religion that relaxes and evades them; a religion of peace and charity, not of strife and party rage? The importance of religion to the peace and order of society, is unspeakably great. Every thing is replaced and established by religion. It surrounds the whole system of morality, resembling that universal force of physical nature, which retains the planets in their order, and subjects them to a regular revolution. But as to all decent modes and outward expressions of it, the rights of conscience remain untouched. Here all religious opinions are equally harmless, and render men who hold different opinions equally good subjects, because there are no laws to oppose them, no force to compel them. The use of arms, and the military art, of which we have this

day so agreeable and elegant a specimen, are directed to a very different object, the defence of freedom, and as a bulwark of the state.

May we ever show ourselves worthy of the blessings we enjoy, and never tarnish the bright lustre of this day, by any unbecoming excesses. Americans! think of the many privileges which distinguish your condition. Be grateful for your lot; and let your virtue secure what your valour, under God, hath obtained; and transmit to latest posterity the glorious inheritance. May the political edifice erected on the theatre of this new world, afford a practical lesson of liberty to mankind, and become in an eminent degree the model of that glorious temple of universal liberty which is about to be established over the civilized world.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

42

## THE NECESSITY OF THE BELIEF OF CHRISTIANITY

Jonathan Edwards, Jr.

HARTFORD

1794

Jonathan Edwards, Jr. (1745-1801). The son and namesake of one of the great American minds of the eighteenth century (Jonathan Edwards the elder died in 1758), Edwards was himself an outstanding personality. He was born in Northampton, Massachusetts, and at the age of six went with his family to live with the Mohican Indians for seven years while his father did missionary work. The family then moved in early 1758 to Princeton, New Jersey. A short time afterward, young Jonathan was orphaned by the death of his father and then of his mother, Sarah Pierpont Edwards.

Edwards was graduated from the College of New Jersey in 1765. He had experienced a powerful conversion during his college days and thereafter went to Bethlehem, Connecticut, to study theology with his father's friend Joseph Bellamy. In 1769 he became pastor of the White Haven Church in New Haven, where he remained until 1795, when he was dismissed because of doctrinal disputes and the decline of the church. After serving briefly as pastor of the church in Colebrook, he was elected president of Union College in Schenectady, New York. He died within two years. This was reminiscent of his father's fate, even more so when it is noted that both father and son chose to preach, on the first Sunday of their final years, on the same text, "This year thou shalt die" (Jeremiah 28:16).

While lacking the imagination and originality of his father, the younger Edwards had a powerful mind and wrote important works advancing a "governmental" theory of the Atonement, a defense of his father's theory of the will, and an elaborate study of the Mohican language (published in 1788). He was active in charitable and missionary endeavors and vigorously opposed slavery and the slave trade. His writings are collected in *The Works of Jonathan Edwards, D.D., . . . with a Memoir of His Life* (2 vol., 1842).

The sermon reprinted here was given on the anniversary of the election in Hartford on May 8, 1794.

*Yea, happy is that people whose God is the Lord.*

Psalm CXLIV. 15.

In this passage of sacred scripture, that people is pronounced happy, whose God is the Lord. But what is the meaning of the expression, "whose God is the Lord?" or when



may it be truly said, that the God of any people is the Lord? The answer is, when they believe, worship and obey the Lord or Jehovah, as the only true God, and that according to his revealed will. The Lord was the God of the Israelites, when they complied with the dispensation, under which they lived; and he is our God, when we cordially believe and comply with the gospel. If we do so, the text pronounces us happy; and it plainly implies, that we cannot be happy on any condition short of this.

Therefore the subject, which I beg leave to propose from our text for present consideration, is this, The necessity of a belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, in order to our public and political prosperity. This proposition is plainly implied in the text. For if that people only be happy or prosperous, whose God is the Lord; and if to believe and comply with christianity be implied in having the Lord for our God; it follows, that the belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, is necessary to our political prosperity.

Political prosperity requires the general practice of a strict morality. But this cannot be so well secured by any other means, as by a belief of christianity. Motives of a religious kind appear to be necessary to restrain men from vice and immorality. Civil pains and penalties alone are by no means sufficient to this end; nor are civil honours and rewards sufficient encouragements to the practice of virtue in general. The civil magistrate does not pretend to reward virtue in general according to its moral excellency. He does indeed reward some particular acts of virtue, which are highly beneficial to the public. But the many virtues of private life pass without any other reward from him, than the bare protection, which is afforded in common to the persons who practise those virtues, and to all who are free from gross crimes.

Nor does the magistrate pretend to punish vice in general. He does undertake to punish those gross vices, which consist in the violations of the perfect rights of men, and in those cases only, in which the violations are both manifest and are manifestly proved before a proper tribunal. But all violations of even these rights which are perpetrated in private, or which, though perpetrated publicly, are not legally proved, pass entirely free from civil pains and penalties. The same is true of all violations of the imperfect rights, as they are called, which are violated by ingratitude, selfishness, neglect of kind offices, &c. Yet these vices are in their consequences, often as hurtful to the public good, as injustice, fraud or robbery; and indeed the former are the source of the latter. Now to restrain from vices of this latter description, from all vices practised in private, and from vice in general, nothing is so useful as a full belief of a final judgment, and of a subsequent state of rewards and punishments, in which all sin not renounced by sincere repentance, shall be punished, and every man shall receive according to that which he does in the body, whether it be good or evil.

Let us suppose a citizen restrained from vice by the fear of civil penalties only. Such a person will feel himself under no obligation to pay either public or private debts, unless he expects legal judgment and execution; and under no obligation to speak the truth, unless he fears a prosecution for fraud or defamation. He will feel himself at liberty to live in idleness, profusion, intemperance and lust, and to take every advantage consistent with law, to defraud and oppress his fellow citizens. He will requite no kind offices, as he has no motive to gratitude. He will have no motive to

the greater part of his duty to his own children, and in a thousand instances may neglect them, when he is bound by the strictest moral obligation, to assist and do them good. He may indulge himself in passion and ill nature, in contention and violence, so far as not to expose himself to the law; and of course will take no pains to preserve peace among his neighbours; but will rather, as his humour happens to be, foment by words and actions, animosities, law-suits and contentions in every form. Ever complaining under the mildest and justest government, he will in numberless ways oppose measures, and especially expences, subservient and necessary to the public good; and will excite and spread discontent among others. Now is this a good citizen? What if the whole state consisted of such citizens? Could it enjoy political prosperity?

The best and perhaps the only remedy for such diseases, is a full belief of the divine universal providence, of the accountableness of all men to God for all their conduct, and of a future equal retribution.

Some religion then, and some belief of a future state is necessary to our political prosperity. But what religion shall we adopt? and what system concerning a future state is most useful to the state? It is not possible to introduce and give a general spread through the state, to Mahometanism or paganism; and it would be a work of time and of great difficulty, to lead the citizens in general into the belief of deism or what is called the philosophical religion. Therefore we seem necessitated to have recourse to christianity: and this is most excellently adapted to the ends of restraining men from vice and promoting that general practice of strict morality, which is so essential to the political prosperity of any people. It is adapted to these ends by its precepts; by the moral character of the author of those precepts; by his absolute supremacy and sovereignty; by the motives of reward and punishment with which those precepts are enforced; by the facts which it relates, and by the examples which it exhibits. It is enforced not by the bare authority of our feeble reason, but by the authority of our creator, our judge, and our all-perfect God. It depends not on the obscure investigations, subtil refinements and uncertain conclusions of human intellect; but on the omniscience, the veracity, the justice, the goodness and the will of God: And thus it is excellently adapted to the principles and feelings which are common to human nature, and which exist in the weakest and most ignorant, as well as the most intelligent and learned. A man who cannot follow the shortest and most easy chain of reasoning on the nature of things and the tendency of human actions, and who will not from such reasoning feel his obligation to virtue in general or to particular virtues, will at once feel the force of the positive and authoritative declarations and requisitions of the Almighty: and where is the man, learned or unlearned, of weak or strong powers, who does not see and feel the difference between the advice and directions of some learned and acute philosopher, and *thus saith the Lord*? Above all, the motives arising from the doctrines of the final judgment and a future state, lay an inconceivably greater restraint on the depravity of human nature, than any thing that is or can be suggested by the philosophical religion.

Let us compare this religion with christianity in a few particulars, which immediately relate to our present subject.

It is a maxim of infidelity to follow nature. Now to follow her, is to follow all the appetites and passions of which we are naturally the subjects; and this will lead to all kinds of vice. But it is a maxim of christianity, to follow the divine law, the precepts of the gospel and the example of Christ: and whether these lead to vice or virtue, I need not inform you.

Another maxim of infidelity is, that man was made for his own happiness; that is, that every man was made for his own individual happiness. This then is to be the supreme object of every man; and this object is to be pursued, as infidels themselves teach, by gratifying his natural appetites and passions, which brings us just where we were before, to all vice and wickedness: And if an infidel deny his appetites and passions, he must be governed by other motives than any which his system of morality suggests. But christianity teaches, that we were created for an end, which so far as we pursue, we cannot fail of sincere piety and strict morality.

Infidels are divided into two classes, those who deny a future state of existence, and those who allow such a state. The former deny all moral government of God, and that we are at all accountable to him; and some of the most noted among them deny any evidence of his moral perfections. Now it is manifest, that according to this system mankind can be under no restraint from vice, by the consideration of a future state of rewards and punishments, or by the consideration of their accountableness to God, or of his commands or prohibitions. Nor does this system admit of any motives derived from these sources, to the practice of virtue. Yet these motives, with respect to mankind in the gross, are the most powerful. The authors and abettors of this system seem to rely on a sense of honour, as the great motive to virtue and restraint from vice. And what is this sense of honour? If it be a sense of shame in doing wrong, and a sense of the honourableness of doing right, it is a mere sense or knowledge of right and wrong; and this so far as it is founded on truth, is undoubtedly a proper rule of conduct, and a man who is disposed to virtue, will practise according to this rule. But how are men in general, without the aid of revelation, to attain, in all cases, to the knowledge of right and wrong, of virtue and vice? It is manifest by abundant experience both antient and modern, that mere human reason is insufficient for this.

If by this sense of honour be meant, as I imagine is generally meant, a sense of our own supposed personal dignity, a pride naturally arising from this sense, and a disposition to resent and revenge every thing which is grating to our pride; this in many cases is so far from a motive to virtue and restraint from vice, that it is itself a vice. Let this sense of honour be ever so well limited and explained, it cannot be a motive to virtue and a restraint from vice to all men; because it does not reach and cannot influence all men. How many are there in every nation and country, who have very little sense of their own dignity, and very little elevation of soul in a consciousness of it? How many are there, who in a prospect of gain, would not scruple to betray their friends, to steal their neighbours property or to betray their country?

It is manifest therefore, that this philosophical religion, could it be generally introduced and established among us, would be a very great political evil, as it would

weaken and even annihilate those motives to virtue and restraints from vice, which are most powerful on the minds of men in general.

Besides: this system so far as it denies the evidence of the moral perfections of God, not only cuts off the motives to virtue, drawn from a future state and from those divine perfections; but even suggests motives to vice. If it be a matter of uncertainty, whether God be a friend to virtue or a friend to vice, it may be, that we shall please him most by an unrestrained indulgence of vice, and by the practice of virtue shall provoke his malice and vengeance. Nay, if it be a matter of uncertainty, whether the deity be a benevolent or malicious being, we can have no certainty, but that he will give us an existence in a future state, on purpose to gratify his malevolence in our everlasting torment. And to be consistent, the advocates for the system now under consideration should not say a word against the christian doctrine of endless punishment, on the ground of its supposed injustice or opposition to grace and mercy; because they acknowledge, that they know not, that God is just, gracious or merciful.

Thus this scheme, which was invented to avoid the fears of future punishment, defeats itself; and while it attempts to deliver us from a just punishment, leaves us exposed to any punishment ever so unjust, cruel and malicious.

As to that kind of infidelity, which allows the divine moral perfections and a future state of rewards and punishments; though this is more plausible than the former; yet the motives to virtue and restraints from vice, which it affords, are not to be compared with those of the gospel. Agreeably to the gospel all men are to be rewarded according to their works done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Some are to be beaten with few stripes, some with many stripes, according to their several aggravations of guilt. But in the future punishment which infidels admit, there is nothing vindictive, nothing therefore which is intended to support law and government. The only punishment which they admit, is that which is designed for the good of the person punished; and therefore as soon as the person punished repents, he is released. Now it is manifest on the slightest reflection, that the motive to avoid sin and vice on this plan, is exceedingly diminished from what it is on the plan of the gospel. On the plan of the gospel the motive is endless misery, proportioned in degree to the demerit of the person punished. On the infidel plan it is a merciful chastisement, which is to continue no longer than till the subject shall repent. And as every sinner will naturally flatter himself, that he shall repent as soon as he shall find his punishment to be intolerable; so all the punishment, which on this plan he will expect, is one that shall continue but for a moment, after it shall have become extreme or intolerable. And whether this momentary extreme punishment be an equal restraint on vice, as the endless misery threatened in the gospel, let every man judge. It is plain, that in a comparative view it is as nothing. Therefore as even this, the most plausible scheme of infidelity, cuts the sinews of morality and opens the flood-gates of vice; the prevalence of it in our state would be a very great political evil.

If we take the pains to compare christianity with antient paganism, we shall find, that the former has, even in a political view, the like advantage over the latter, which it has over infidelity. If in the account, which I shall now give of the pagan religion, some things shall be mentioned, which will be grating to those of the most delicate feelings;

I think I shall be entitled to the pardon of my hearers, as otherwise it will be impossible for me to do justice to this important subject.

Paganism, though it taught a future punishment of wicked men of certain descriptions; yet indulged and even encouraged vice in a variety of ways. It taught that there were many gods, some male and some female; some comparatively good, others exceedingly evil; but all and even the chief god, on many occasions acting a most wicked part and indulging the vilest lusts. Some of their female deities were deceased women of most abandoned characters. Jupiter, whom they called *the father of gods and men*, was himself the son of Saturn who according to some, was king of Crete; according to others, was Ham the son of Noah; according to others, was Adam; but on every hypothesis was a mere man. This man, the antient heathens believed, had a number of children, and was wont to devour them as soon as they were born: but Jupiter was saved by an artifice of his mother. He, grown to maturity, rebelled against his father, who till then was supposed to be the supreme God, drove him from his throne, and seized his authority and dominions. When Jupiter had by these means raised himself to the place of supreme deity, he was wont to transform himself into various visible shapes, to facilitate his designs of criminal intercourse with women here on earth. Now how destructive of the interests of virtue and morality must necessarily have been these ideas of the gods; and especially these ideas of the character and conduct of the supreme god, *Jupiter the greatest and the best!*

In like manner destructive to morality must have been almost all their other ideas of their gods; as of their animosities and contentions among themselves; of their intrigues and lusts; and the vicious and most abominable practices by which, in many instances, they were worshipped. The goddess Venus was openly worshipped by whoredom,\* and the feasts called Saturnalia and Bacchinalia were celebrated by the practice of every lewdness and debauchery. The vices of drunkenness and whoredom in these cases were accounted, instead of moral evils, the highest acts of virtue and piety.

Now as all these ideas and practices tended to a general depravity of morals; so their effects abundantly appeared in the vicious lives of the heathen world.

I am well aware, that it has been said, that christianity has depraved the morals of mankind; that vice is far more predominant among christians, than ever it was among the antient heathens; and that therefore we may justly conclude, that christianity is less subservient to virtue and a moral life, than paganism. This has been urged as an argument against the divine original and the truth of christianity; and may be urged as an argument against the good policy of encouraging and supporting it in any state. The consideration of this objection then is pertinent and necessary to the discussion of the subject now before us.

In answer to this objection I beg leave to observe in the first place, that if vice were more predominant in christian nations, than it was among the heathens, it would not certainly follow, that this increase of vice is the effect of christianity. Christianity prevails in civilized nations only; and in such nations there is much more opportunity for many vices and much more temptation to them, than among those who are not

civilized. Nay, in civilized nations only, is there a possibility of the prevalence of many vices. In proportion as civilization is promoted, the wants of men are increased. Their food, their drink, their apparel and the education of their children, must be more expensive, and more expence is in every respect required to their living in fashion among their neighbours. And in proportion to the increase of their wants, the temptation to covetousness, extortion, oppression, deceit and fraud, is increased. Again, in proportion as civilization is promoted, the means of luxury of every kind are increased, and with the means, the temptations to luxury and luxury itself are increased. No wonder a savage, who wishes for nothing more than what he may take in hunting and fishing, and who has furnished himself with this, does not steal, rob or extort his neighbour's property; no wonder he attempts not to obtain it by falsehood or fraud. Nor is it any wonder, that living on such a low and scanty diet as he generally does, he is very rarely guilty of a rape, of adultery or other lewdness. Nor ought it to be matter of wonder, that all these vices are far more prevalent in civilized nations, than among barbarians. But the prevalence of these vices in such nations, is not owing to christianity, but to civilization and its usual attendants. They were at least as prevalent among the antient Greeks and Romans, as they are among us. Persecution does not usually obtain among [the] heathen, because either they have no religion themselves to instigate them to persecution; or there is no religion different from their own, to be the object of their persecution; or if there be a different religion, it makes no opposition to that which they have chosen, and therefore their religious zeal is not excited against it.

This affords an answer to an objection to christianity much insisted on by some, that the heathens do not persecute; but that christians do most virulently persecute even one another; and therefore that christianity makes men worse instead of better. The answer to this objection is, that the different religious sentiments and forms of worship among the antient heathens did not in general oppose each other. They rather justified each other, as the heathens maintained an intercommunity of gods and religions. Though every nation had its own gods and religion; yet whenever the individuals went into another nation, they joined in the worship of the gods and in the observance of the rites of the nation in which they then were. Therefore there was no opportunity for persecution. But the nature of christianity is very different. It condemns and opposes all other religions as false and ruinous. Therefore as it touches the pride of those whom it condemns, it provokes opposition and the persecution of itself, merely because it tells the truth. And the professors of christianity too, by a misguided zeal, have been often led into the spirit and practice of persecution.

Now this persecution of christianity by those of other religions, is not the effect of christianity, but of opposition to it; and the persecuting spirit which has appeared in some christians, is not the effect of christianity, but of the abuse and perversion of it; and for neither of these is christianity itself answerable. The best institution in the world may be opposed and persecuted; and the best institution in the world be abused and perverted. But christianity never gave any just occasion for either the persecution or perversion of itself.

Besides, the charge of persecution may justly be retorted. For no sooner did christianity make its appearance in the world, than it was violently opposed and

virulently persecuted, by those very heathens, who in the objection now before us are said not to have been guilty of persecution. And as long as they had the power in their hands, this opposition was continued or repeated, under various Roman emperors, for ten successive and bloody persecutions, in which thousands and hundreds of thousands were martyred in various ways, the most malicious and cruel.

Nay, the heathens showed a disposition to persecute not only christians, but one another, whenever there was opportunity. No sooner did Socrates oppose the religion and polytheism of his countrymen, than they began a persecution of him, which ended in his death. And Cambyses, the Persian monarch, in contempt of the Egyptian god Apis, not only stabbed him with his dagger, but ordered the priests of Apis to be severely whipped, and all the inhabitants of Memphis to be slain, who should be found rejoicing on the occasion of the appearance of that god.\* These things demonstrate, that the ancient heathens did possess an high degree of the spirit of persecution, and not only toward the christians, but toward one another. The like spirit hath been manifested by heathens of modern times. Passing other instances, I shall mention one which took place in our own country. By the exertions of our ancestors, the first European settlers of this country, a considerable number of the aborigines were converted to the christian faith. The pagan Indians were displeased with this, banished from their society all the converts, and when they could do it with safety, put them to death, and would have massacred them all, had they not been restrained by the fear of our ancestors.†

The facts concerning Socrates and Cambyses, furnish an answer to that part of the objection under consideration, which urges that christians persecute not only heathens, but one another; whereas heathens did not persecute one another. It appears by the facts just mentioned, that heathens have persecuted one another. Besides, the same reason is to be assigned for christians persecuting one another, as for the heathens persecuting christians. The protestants say, that the religion of the papists is fundamentally wrong; on the other hand, the papists assert the same concerning the protestants. Thus by a mutual renunciation, condemnation and excommunication of each other, the false zeal of these and other different sects among christians is kindled into persecution, on the same grounds on which persecution is begun and carried on, between christians and heathens. But by reason of the forementioned intercommunity of gods and religions among the antient heathens, these grounds of persecution did not exist among them in general, though in some cases they did both exist and produce their usual fruits.

Let us now more directly attend to the charge brought against christianity, that vice is more prevalent among christians, than it was among the antient heathens.

Christians indeed have no virtue to be the ground of boasting; on the other hand they have great reason to be ashamed and humbled on account of their vices and their depravity of manners. Still I maintain, that open vice is not so prevalent in christian nations, as it was among the antient heathens. Let us compare those antient heathens, of whom we know the most and who were the most improved and polite, with the christians of whom we know the most; the antient Greeks and Romans with the citizens of the United States.

Here it is to be observed, that we labour under great disadvantage. We know our own country and its predominant vices, both public and private. In order to this we need but open our eyes and look around us. We have not the same advantage to know the antients. We are entirely dependent on history for information concerning them and their vices; and this generally relates the public transactions of nations only, as their wars and treaties, their laws and public judgments; but is mostly silent concerning the morals and private lives of individuals or of the people considered collectively; and so far as we are ignorant of the antients we have no right to charge them with vice. However, with all this disadvantage, I fear not to proceed to the comparison.

Let us then institute the comparison with respect to the principal moral virtues, as temperance, chastity, truth, justice and humanity.

1. As to temperance; though this was reckoned among the virtues by the pagan moral writers, yet it is plain from their writers in general, that drunkenness was exceedingly common among them, and among all ranks, among magistrates, philosophers and priests, as well as others. Their priests in some of their religious feasts were always intoxicated. Even Cato, though a Stoic philosopher, one of their strictest moralists and a principal magistrate, was remarkably addicted to this vice. So was Zeno, the founder of the sect of the Stoics; and Chrysippus, another Stoic philosopher died in consequence of excessive drinking at a sacrifice.\* The character of their principal magistrates, priests and philosophers, does not appear to have suffered much, if at all, by this vice. It must therefore have been considered by the people, as a very venial fault, if any at all. Indeed this is evident by all their writers. But how it is esteemed among us, and what would be the effect of it on the reputation of our principal magistrates and divines, I need not inform you.

2. As to chastity, it is manifest from the whole current of pagan writers, that they considered fornication as no crime, and therefore ran into it without reserve. Not only is this observable of Homer's heroes, but even the modest Virgil's pious Aeneas, who was meant to be a perfect character, had an amour with Dido, without the least shame or sense of indecency. Simple fornication was not only commonly practised without restraint; but was allowed by all their philosophers, and was positively encouraged by some of them.† Many of the customs of the Greeks and Romans promoted lewdness. The manner of the appearance of women in some of their public exercises, was such as directly tended to that vice; and the ideas of the lawfulness and expediency of a community of wives so far prevailed and had such an influence on practice, as not only implied the violation of chastity, but had a most baleful general tendency with respect to that virtue.‡ Though it is hardly credible, yet unnatural vices had too much the sanction of some legislators and philosophers, and were countenanced by many of them. Xenophon informs us, that the sin of Sodom was encouraged by the public laws of several of the states of Greece. It was more especially so among the Cretans, in order to prevent too great an increase of the people. Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and the celebrated law-giver of Athens, forbade this practice to slaves, which necessarily conveys the idea of his thinking it fit for free men only. According to Cicero, the Greek philosophers not only generally practised, but even gloried in this vice: And Plutarch informs us, that many parents would not suffer their children to keep the company of those philosophers, who pretended to be fond of them. Diogenes



was remarkable for indulging himself in the most abominable practices openly, and without a sense of shame; affecting, according to the maxim of the Cynics, to live according to nature.\* These unnatural vices were increased in a most astonishing manner, about the time of the promulgation of christianity. Seneca says, that in his time they were practised [“]openly and without shame at Rome.”† These accounts given by heathen writers, fully justify the charges thrown out on this head against the heathens, by the writers of the New Testament, especially by the apostle Paul, in his first chapter to the Romans: Though to christians the inspired writers need no authority, but do of themselves sufficiently prove the amazing depravity of the heathen world in this respect.

3. Truth is a moral virtue, the obligation and necessity of which are perhaps as evident as those of any virtue whatever. Yet the Stoic philosophers taught that lying was lawful, whenever it was profitable; and Plato allowed, that a man may lie, who knows how to do it at a proper time.

4. Let us inquire how far justice was maintained and practised among the antients. I now mean justice in matters of property. For that kind of justice which is opposed to oppression and cruelty, will come into view, when we shall consider the humanity of the antients. It is well known to have been a maxim at Sparta, that probity and every thing else was to be sacrificed to the good of the state. The Spartans encouraged their children to steal, but punished those who were taken in the fact, as not being dextrous in the business.

We may judge of the state of Greece, with respect to the kind of justice of which we are now speaking, from that passage in a dialogue of Xenophon—in which he humourously shows the advantages of poverty and the inconveniencies of riches; and by what Tacitus says, that the temples were full of debtors and criminals, as churches and monasteries used formerly to be in popish countries. Rome and the neighbourhood of it, in the most interesting period of its history, viz. in the time of Cicero, abounded with robbers. Sallust says, that Cataline’s army was much augmented by the accession of highwaymen about Rome. Cicero observed, that had Milo killed Clodius by night, it might have been imagined, that he had been killed by highwaymen, and that the frequency of such accidents would have favoured the supposition, though he had with him thirty slaves completely armed and accustomed to blood and danger. By the law of the twelve tables, possession for two years formed a prescription for land, and of one year for moveables; an evident mark of frequent violences, when such a law was necessary to secure a title to property.\*

How different our situation is from this, and how much more secure our persons and property are, I need not mention in this auditory.

5. We proceed now to inquire how far the antient heathens practised the duties of humanity, and how far they violated those duties by outrage, oppression and cruelty. The Stoics condemned all compassion. No wonder then that they imbibed and practised inhumanity. Some philosophers, particularly Democritus, recommended revenge; and Plato owns that forgiveness of injuries was contrary to the general doctrine of the philosophers. These ideas seem perfectly to coincide with those among

the moderns, who are the great advocates for a sense of honour. And how far these ideas are consistent with scripture, with reason or with humanity, I leave you to judge.

It was common with the Romans to make war on other nations for the end of enlarging their own dominions, and aggrandizing their empire. Generally they had no better motive to their wars than this. But what is such a war, but a complication of downright robbery, cruelty and murder? They practised equal injustice in the manner in which they carried on their wars. They enslaved their captives or put them to death in cold blood, as they pleased. Their triumphs were most oppressive and cruel. The conquered kings and generals, loaded with chains, were driven into the city, and to the capitol before their conquerors, and were followed by mimicks and buffoons, who insulted over their misfortunes. When they arrived at the forum, they were led back to prison and there strangled; and this under the pretence of taking full revenge of their enemies. What better is this, than the treatment which our savage Indians give their captives?

The treatment which they gave those captives whose lives they spared, was correspondent to this cruelty toward those whom they put to death. As has been observed, they absolutely enslaved them; and by law, slaves were considered not as men, but as mere things, the mere property of their masters, and were treated, punished, and put to death at any time and in any manner, as their masters pleased, whether by beating, starving, torture, or otherwise. "The Spartans having conquered a neighbouring nation, the Helots, enslaved them, frequently butchered them in cold blood, and applauded their youths, when they killed them by surprise." "The Romans were not ashamed to suffer their old and useless slaves, when worn out in their service, to starve on an island in the Tyber, as was their common practice. Vidius Pollio used to throw his slaves, who had disobliged him, into his fish ponds, to be preyed upon by his mullets."\*

Though to our shame, to the shame of humanity and the scandal of christianity, a slavery and a treatment of slaves similar to what existed among the Romans, exist and are tolerated in some parts of America; yet this scandal cannot be thrown on christendom in general. Such a slavery did indeed once generally obtain in Europe; but the benevolent and humane spirit of the gospel and the principles of justice taught there, have long since generally abolished it from that quarter of the world.

The proscriptions and assassinations, which were so common among the antients, are a further proof of their injustice, violence and inhumanity. It is well known that during the contests of Marius and Sylla, and during the triumvirate of Octavianus, Anthony and Lepidus, nothing was more common than to advertise a certain price for any man's or any number of men's heads; which was no other than hiring any cut-throat, and even a man's own domestics, to murder him and bring in his head. In this way the best men of Rome were murdered, and among the rest Cicero the great orator, philosopher and ornament of Rome. Amidst all the vices justly imputable to christians, they are not guilty of such barbarity and outrage as this. Such is the salutary influence of christianity, that even kings, who among the antients no sooner fell into the hands of their rivals or opposers, than they were assassinated, are now not put to death without a formal trial; which is a clear demonstration among many

others, of our improvement in civilization and humanity, beyond any thing which existed among the most enlightened heathens.

Another instance of the barbarity and inhumanity of the antients, is their treatment of their children. “The antient Roman laws gave the father a power of life and death over his children, upon this principle, that he who gave, had also the power to take away. And a son could not acquire any property of his own during the life of his father; but all his acquisitions belonged to his father, or at least the profits, for life.”\* Thus children, during the life of their fathers, were perfect slaves, and in a worse condition than the slaves in this state; for the master in this state has not the power of life and death over his slaves. Nor were these mere speculations of the Romans; but their practice was correspondent. Hence the custom of exposing children; that is, of laying them, as soon as born, in the streets, on the banks of rivers, or in other frequented places, and unless some compassionate person should take them up and provide for them, leaving them there to perish and to be devoured by dogs. The motive to this horrid practice was, that the parents might be free from the trouble and expence of their education. Both Plato and Aristotle say, that there should be laws to prevent the education of weak children. Accordingly among the other Greeks, beside the Thebans, when a child was born, it was laid on the ground, and if the father designed to educate it, he immediately took it up. But if he forbore to do this, the child was carried away and exposed. The Lacedemonians indeed had a different custom; for with them all new born children were brought before certain triers, who were some of the gravest men in their own tribes, by whom the infants were carefully viewed; and if they were found lusty and well favoured, they gave orders for their education; but if weakly and deformed, they ordered them to be cast into a deep cavern in the earth, near the mountain Taygetus, as thinking it neither for the good of the children nor for the public interest, that defective children should be brought up. [“]It was the unhappy fate of daughters especially to be thus treated, as requiring more charges to educate and settle them in the world than sons.”\*†

In several nations, not only infants, but also the aged and the infirm, were exposed and left to perish.

Another horrid inhumanity, prevalent among the antient heathens, was the practice of sacrificing captives and slaves at the funerals of the dead. Thus Achilles sacrificed twelve young Trojans to the manes of Patroclus; and Aeneas sent captives to Evander, to be sacrificed at the funeral of Pallas. This was first practised with respect to persons of great eminence only, but at length it was done at the funerals of all persons of property, and became a necessary part of the ceremony.

Another practice as horrid as any I have mentioned, was that of exhibiting gladiators, trained to fencing and the use of the sword, spear, &c. on purpose that they might fight and kill one another on the stage, for the mere entertainment of the spectators, as some people now bait bulls and set dogs to fighting. “These poor wretches were made to swear that they would fight unto death; and if they failed of this, they were put to death by fire or sword, clubs, whips, or the like.”†‡

Those who have not attended to history, are apt to imagine, that the exhibition of gladiators was a rare thing, and that when it happened, a few pairs only were engaged. But it was far otherwise. Under the Roman emperors this inhuman entertainment cost innumerable lives. Cesar when edile, gave three hundred and twenty gladiators. Gordian in the time of his edileship, exhibited twelve entertainments, that is, one in each month. In some of these were five hundred champions, and in none of them less than one hundred and fifty. Taking it at a medium, he must have exhibited at the very least, three thousand. Titus exhibited these cruel shows for an hundred days together. The good and moderate Trajan continued these spectacles for an hundred and twenty three days; and in that time gave ten thousand. When we consider how many different ranks of people gave these entertainments, ediles, pretors, questors, consuls, emperors and priests, besides private persons at funerals (which become so common a practice, that it was an article in a last will) we must be convinced, that the numbers were vast. What adds to the inhumanity of this custom, is, that it was designed for a gay entertainment and was attended as such. This horrible custom grew to such an extravagance, that it was found necessary to moderate it by law, in the time of the heathen emperors. Constantine first prohibited it altogether. But so violent was the taste for it, that it crept in again. The emperor Honorius entirely suppressed it.\*

I shall take notice of only one more vice of the antient heathens, that is suicide. This was recommended by many philosophers, as an heroic act of virtue, and was practised by some of the highest fame, as by Zeno the founder of the sect of the Stoics, by Cato of Utica, and by Brutus. No wonder if under such instructors and such examples, suicide was very common among the antients. Beside the wickedness of this in the sight of God, the ruinous tendency of it in a political view is manifest on the slightest reflection. By this one vice not only any man may deprive the state of his aid and throw his family and dependents on the public; but the most important citizens, by throwing away their own lives in the most important and critical moment, may greatly endanger and entirely overthrow the commonwealth. What if our Washington, or the most wise and influential members of our congress, had destroyed themselves in the most critical periods of the late war?

From this brief survey of the vices of the antient heathens, I leave my hearers to judge how well founded the objection against christianity is, that it has depraved the morals of mankind.

I have now finished the observations which I intended, on the subject proposed, which was, the necessity of a belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, in order to our public and political prosperity. In subserviency to this general design I have endeavoured to show, that some religion is necessary to our political prosperity; that no other religion than the christian, can be generally received and established in this country; and that if some other religion could be established among us, it would by no means be so useful in a political view, as the christian. I have endeavoured to illustrate the last observation by a comparison of christianity with the philosophical religion of infidelity and with antient paganism. I now beg leave to make two or three inferences from what has been said.

1. If christianity be more useful than any other religion, even for political purposes, we may presume that it is still more useful for the other purposes, which are indeed its immediate objects, piety and true virtue, and peace and comfort in them. The great foundations of religion and virtue are, the moral perfections of God, his moral government, the rule of our duty, a future state of retribution, the possibility of pardon and the end of our creation. Let us in these several particulars compare christianity with the philosophical religion, which is the only rival of christianity with any among us.

1. As to the moral perfections of God, christianity certainly teaches them more clearly than they can be learnt from any light afforded by the philosophical religion. The scriptures assure us, that holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; that he is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he; that he is the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. Yea, they assure us, that God is love. They clear up the difficulty arising from the evil in the world, by informing us of the end of all things, and that all things shall finally be overruled for good. But the philosophical religion gives no clear evidence at all of the moral perfections of God. This is acknowledged by some of the principal writers on that system. Hume, the most acute of all infidels, says we ought to infer from the works of God, intermixed as they are with good and evil, that God is of a mixed character, partly good and partly evil. Also Lord Bolingbroke, another principal deistical writer, holds, that there is no evidence of the moral perfections of God.

2. The like advantage have we by the scriptures as to the evidence of the reality and nature of the moral government of God. On the pretence that we are under the influence of a necessity of coercion, it is denied by some infidels that we are moral agents, and that we are capable of either virtue or vice. Now not only is this matter cleared up by revelation, but it is to be observed, that to be consistent, such infidels ought also to deny, that we are capable of any crime in civil society.

If we be not moral agents, we are no more capable of murder, than a stock or a stone; and a man who from malice prepense kills another, no more deserves punishment, than the stone or the tree, which falls on a man and crushes him to death; and the man who from a wish to introduce and establish arbitrary government in his country, now a free and happy republic, betrays its ships and fortresses, no more deserves punishment, than the tempests which sink the former, or the fire which consumes the latter.

Some deny, that God at all concerns himself with human affairs or actions. But this is not only not reconcileable with the scriptures, but not with the moral perfections of God. If we be capable of virtue, and yet he neglect us, so as not to set before us proper motives to it, and not to show by proper rewards and punishments his approbation of the virtuous, and disapprobation of the vicious; this cannot be reconciled with his moral perfection.

It is further urged, that we are not in any case punishable, as all things are right, or as the poet expresses it, *whatever is, is right*. If by this observation be meant, that things are by the all-wise and all-governing providence of God, overruled to answer a good purpose, though in many instances directly contrary to their natural tendency; this is granted. But if it be meant, that all things in their own nature tend to good, this is not true. Malice has no natural tendency to good but a natural tendency to evil. On the other hand, benevolence has a natural tendency to good. Nor will it be pretended, that if malice reigned through the universe, the universe would be as happy, as if benevolence universally reigned. It is the natural tendency of a rational action, which determines its moral quality, and not the consequence produced by Almighty God, contrary to its natural tendency.

If all human actions were in a moral view indifferent, we should no more deserve punishment for murder, than we should for saving our country from ruin.

This scheme shuts all moral good out of the universe, as well as all moral evil. For if all the tempers and actions of men, are as to morality alike, it must be because there is no morality in any of them. If there be moral good in any of those tempers or actions, there must be moral evil in the directly opposite; and if there be no moral evil in the latter, there is no moral good in the former: as if there were no natural evil in pain there would be no natural good in pleasure.

But while infidels confound themselves and the principles of reason, in their discourses concerning the moral government of God; the scriptures assure us of the reality of that government, and of our accountableness to God.

3. The scriptures give us a plain and excellent rule of duty, pointing out our duty not only in general, but in all the most important particulars. How extremely deficient in this instance also, is the philosophical religion? It is indeed said, that the rule of our duty is right reason and the law of nature, and that virtue is a conformity to them. But this is saying no more than virtue is virtue, and that the rule of our duty is the rule of our duty. For right reason in this case means what is reasonable and right in a moral sense; and duty and what is right in a moral sense are the same thing: and it is just as difficult to find out the law of reason and of nature, as to find out our duty.

4. The scriptures give us the most positive assurance of a future state. But the philosophical religion can never assure us of this, because it cannot assure us of the moral perfections of God, by which alone he is disposed to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Therefore infidels are greatly divided among themselves on this subject. Some as was before observed believe a future state, some disbelieve it. Those who believe such a state, believe that God made all men for their own personal happiness, and that therefore he will make them all happy in the future world. But all this depends on the moral perfections of God, of which they, as their principal writers confess, have no evidence. And if there be no evidence of God's moral perfections, there is no evidence, that he designs the happiness of his creatures either here or hereafter: nor is there any evidence but that he designs the final misery of all his creatures. Or if infidels had evidence of the moral perfections of God, they would not have evidence, that God made every man for the end of his personal happiness. The

perfect goodness of God doubtless implies, that he made all things with a design to promote good on the whole or on the large scale. So that taking the system of intelligent creatures together, there shall be the greatest possible happiness in it. But this does not imply, that every individual creature shall be completely happy. There is no accounting for the calamities and sufferings of this life on any other supposition, than that they will all finally issue in the greatest happiness of the system: and to suppose that they conduce to the good of the system, by making the persons themselves who suffer them here, more happy hereafter, is a mere conjecture unsupported by any argument. Therefore to indulge it and to build upon it, is altogether unreasonable and unphilosophical.

On the whole, there is no evidence but that the good of the general system may be promoted by the exemplary punishment of the wicked in the future world. And if it would be promoted by such a punishment, infinite goodness not only admits of it, but requires and demands it.

5. The scriptures assure us of a way of pardon and acceptance with God; but the philosophical religion gives no such assurance. Infidels do indeed expect to be pardoned on their bare repentance. But the expectation of pardon on repentance, implies an acknowledgment, that they deserve punishment even though they repent, and that such punishment would be just: otherwise there could be no pardon in the case. To pardon is to exempt from punishment not an innocent man, but a guilty one: and to pardon a penitent implies that he deserves punishment, and that his punishment would be just. But if the punishment of the penitent would be just, the interest of the kingdom of God, the great community against which he has sinned, requires his punishment. The very idea of a just punishment is of one which, (there being no atonement or substitution), is due to the community or to the public good of the community, against which the crime punished was committed. But if the public good of God's kingdom, which is the universe, require the punishment of the sinner, it is not consistent with divine goodness to pardon him. What ground then has the infidel to expect pardon, when both justice and goodness require his punishment?

6. Christianity informs us of the end of our creation. It is generally holden by infidels, as was before observed, that we were made for our own personal happiness. But if this were true, it would prove, that God does concern himself with human actions, and that he aims to prevent those which tend to our destruction. It would also prove, that those rational actions which tend to destroy our happiness, are morally evil, and that all actions are not in the same sense right. The evidence that God created us for our own happiness, must depend on the evidence of God's moral perfections. But as has been observed, the infidel has no evidence of these. Besides, if God really created us all for the end of our own personal happiness, it seems that he has in this world obtained his end, in a very imperfect degree only; and on the plan of infidelity there is no evidence of a future state. Therefore on that plan there is no evidence, that God will ever obtain his end in our creation.

Or if infidels should grant, that we were made for the general good of the system of intelligences, this would be to give up the chief object of infidelity; because the

general good may admit of our misery in the future world, as it does of our misery in this.

But christianity clearly informs us, that God made all things for his glory, implying the greatest happiness and perfection of the creation as a system; or for the glorious exercise and display of his power, wisdom and goodness in raising his kingdom, which is the creation, as a system, to the highest degree of perfection and happiness.

Thus we see in what darkness, as to the most essential principles of religion, we should have been involved, had we not been favoured with the light of divine revelation, and in what darkness they are involved, who embrace the philosophical religion of infidelity. And thus we have further proof how happy that people is, whose God is the Lord, not only as this circumstance lays a foundation for their political good, but especially as it lays a foundation for true virtue and piety, for peace and comfort here and eternal happiness in the favour of God hereafter.

2. A second inference from this subject is, that since christianity appears to be necessary to the public good of the state, it ought to be encouraged by magistrates and rulers of every description. They are appointed to be the guardians of the public good; of course it is their duty to protect and promote every thing tending to it, and especially every thing necessary to it. Therefore as christianity is necessary to the public good, they are bound to encourage, promote and inculcate that, by their example and profession, by speaking and acting in favour of it both in public and private, by supporting christian ordinances and worship, and by promoting to places of trust and profit those who profess it and live agreeably, and who are otherwise properly qualified. Magistrates are called to do all this on the ground of the soundest policy.

3. For the same reasons the citizens in general are obligated to encourage and promote christianity, by being themselves christians and that not only in profession, but in heart and life, and by giving their suffrages for those who are of the same character. It is indeed to be confessed, that not all professed christians are good men or real christians; yet among professed christians are many men, who possess good abilities and a proper share of information, who are strictly moral and upright, and who expect to give an account of their conduct to God. Such are the men to be promoted in the state; and the citizens by promoting such men, will encourage and promote christianity, and at the same time promote the good of the state.

I beg the further patience of the auditory, while I close the discourse, with the addresses usual on this occasion.

In the first place I beg leave to address myself to his Excellency the Governor.

May It Please Your Excellency,

In obedience to your command I appear in the desk this day; and I could think of no subject more important and at the same time more suitable to the present occasion, than the happiness of that people whose God is the Lord. I have therefore



endeavoured to illustrate the necessity of the christian faith and practice, to the prosperity of the state. I may appeal to your Excellency how far this faith and practice have hitherto contributed to our political prosperity. Had not our ancestors been firm and exemplary in this faith and practice; had they not taken pains to hand them down to us; had they not in all their towns and settlements instituted schools, in which the principles of christianity, as well as other things were taught; had they not provided for the support of public worship, for the due observance of the Lord's day and for the public teaching of christianity on that day; had they not provided for the support of a studious and learned ministry, who being themselves men of knowledge, should be able to instruct others; I appeal to your Excellency, whether our political affairs would not at present have worn a very different aspect. And if our supreme magistrates had not been, both by profession and apparent practice, christians, it would doubtless have had a very baleful influence on the christian and moral character of the people at large, and consequently on our political prosperity. But we are happy in that we have had from the beginning, even to the present day, a series of governors, who have been not only an honour to the state, but ornaments to our churches. May such a series be still kept up without interruption. This, as it will be a proof of our christian character, will also be a proof of our public prosperity in every successive period, and a pledge of our subsequent prosperity. May God grant, that your Excellency shall effectually contribute to this prosperity in every way, in which your eminent situation affords opportunity. And when earthly states and empires shall be no more, may your Excellency, in that series of excellent men and excellent governors, and among all real christians, "shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father."

2. The discourse addresses itself to his Honour the Lieutenant Governour, to the legislative council of the state, and to the representatives of the towns in general assembly.

Honourable legislators,

Since the belief and practice of christianity are so necessary to the political good of our state, and since you are appointed to be the guardians of our political good, I thought it not impertinent to suggest to you some important means, by which you may obtain the end for which you are appointed. Opposition to christianity both in faith and practice was never, at least in our country, so great and so increasing, as at the present day. It lies with you, gentlemen, by a steady belief, profession and practice of christianity; by your conversation and weight; by the appointments which you shall make to the various offices, civil and military, and by all your public proceedings, to withstand this opposition, and to guard against the danger to the public good, arising from the depravity of manners which opposition to christianity naturally induces. It is your province, in conjunction with his Excellency the Governour, to appoint all our executive civil authority and to confer the higher military honours. When men of licentious principles and practice are promoted either in the civil or military line, it gives a dignity and an influence to vice and irreligion. And "one sinner destroys much good," especially when exalted to a high station of honour and authority. Now, if you give this advantage to vice, you will thereby injure the state; but more immediately you will injure religion and the kingdom of Christ. And let me beseech you to remember, that you also have a master in heaven, to whom you, as well as the rest of

men, must give an account. The only way to gain his approbation is, to keep a conscience void of offence, and in your political transactions not to act from party attachments and private connections, not to practice intrigue to serve your own interests or those of your friends; but to endeavour to serve the public in the best manner according to your capacity and opportunity. In so doing you will appoint to the several executive offices, men of knowledge and discretion; men that fear God and hate covetousness; men who will be just and rule in the fear of God. By the promotion of such men, virtue will be encouraged and vice will be restrained; by their official proceedings, law and justice will be executed, and “judgment will run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream,” even that righteousness which exalteth a nation. Then shall our political interests be in a prosperous state; then shall we be that happy people whose God is the Lord.

3. The reverend pastors of the churches, who are present, will suffer the word of exhortation.

## My Fathers And Brethren,

We who are employed in the work of the ministry, are deeply interested in this subject. We are interested in the prosperity of the state, and are peculiarly interested in this mean of prosperity on which I have been insisting. It is our business to study and teach christianity, and thus to promote the political good of the state, as well as the spiritual good of the souls of our hearers. This is a noble employment, to fidelity and zeal in which, not only the motives of religion call us, but even those of patriotism. Therefore if we have any love to religion and the souls of men; nay if we have any public spirit and love to our country, let us diligently study the evidences, the nature, the doctrines and duties of christianity, and inculcate them with all plainness, assiduity and perseverance, giving line upon line and precept upon precept. This is to be done,

1. By instruction. Without communicating instruction and information concerning the truth, we can expect to do nothing in our work to any good purpose. Knowledge and not ignorance is the mother of real devotion. The rational mind is to be led by the exhibition of the truth only.

2. By every motive to persuade, drawn from reason and revelation, from time and eternity; and among others this motive of the public good of the state and our general happiness, liberty and prosperity as a people, is not to be omitted.

3. By a christian life and conversation. If we do these things; if we thus instruct, persuade and live, we shall at last stand in our lot, and shall be owned as his, when Christ our Lord and judge “shall make up his jewels.”

4. I shall, in the last place, address myself in a very few words to this numerous auditory collectively. Men and brethren, this subject nearly concerns you all. How happy would you be, if the Lord were indeed your God? Nor can you be truly happy on any other condition. However prosperous you may be in your private concerns, in your property, your business and your reputation; yet unless you are the objects of the

favour of God and the heirs of eternal life, you are truly in a miserable situation. You have not only the motive of eternal happiness to choose the Lord for your God; but the motives of the peace, good order, and happiness of the people as a body politic, and the general prosperity of the state. You all feel a firm attachment to your liberties and to the privileges of a republican government. Of all forms of government a republic most essentially requires virtue and good morals in the great body of the people, in order to its prosperity and even its existence. But the way to virtue and good morals is to choose the Lord for your God. Nor is this all; you not only have to choose and serve the Lord yourselves, but by the same reasons by which you are obligated to choose the Lord for your God, you are obligated to seek out and by your suffrages to promote to legislative authority, such as are of the same character. In a republic all authority is derived from the people: and such as they generally are, we may expect their representatives, legislators and all their civil authority will be. If you have the Lord for your God, you will elect those of the same character with yourselves, to be your legislators; you will encourage and support them and other faithful rulers in the thorough discharge of their duties of civil government, and you will withhold your suffrages from those who acknowledge not the Lord as their God and regard not his law. Nor can you consistently and innocently give your suffrages to men of this last description: for thus you would give a sanction and influence to sin and vice, would be partakers of their wickedness and would do an injury to the state.

But if you and the good people of the state in general shall unite to practise virtue and christianity, and to promote the wisest and best men among us, we shall doubtless be that happy people described in the text, and as so many instances of our happiness “judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”

the end

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

43

## THE WONDERFUL WORKS OF GOD ARE TO BE REMEMBERED

David Osgood

BOSTON

1794

David Osgood (1747-1822). Osgood left the fields of his father's farm at the age of nineteen, mastered a Latin grammar, and sixteen months later was admitted to Harvard, where he was graduated in the class of 1771. The Arminians complained that he was a Calvinist, and the Calvinists that he was Arminian. Eventually, on a controversial vote, he became the third minister of the First Congregational Parish of Medford, Massachusetts, and he remained there the rest of his life. A rough-cut man, short on the social amenities, he was a moderate patriot during the Revolution. He socialized little, catechized once a year, and never visited parishioners except on such formal church occasions as weddings and funerals. In later years he took to memorizing his sermons and repeating them now and again, a process restricted by one retentive congregation member who would raise his hand during a sermon to indicate with a number of fingers how many times he had heard it.

Osgood was an incandescent orator, however, sufficiently so to impress Daniel Webster, who commented on one sermon that "it was the most impressive eloquence it had ever been his fortune to hear" (*Sibley's Harvard Graduates*, 17:574). Osgood was preeminently a political preacher: Of twenty-two published sermons, several of them widely reprinted, eleven were on political subjects. This Thanksgiving Day sermon brought Osgood instant celebrity for its attack on Governor Samuel Adams for failing to mention the federal government, whose 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation (by President Washington) was being observed. Osgood detected a Republican conspiracy—he even suspected secession—in this, and the hand of the Jacobins at work. The sermon went through six pamphlet reprintings (the second edition is given here), as well as newspaper reprintings, and it engendered a response covering the entire front page of a Republican newspaper, the *Independent Chronicle* (April 3, 1795), along with a number of other replies. A Federalist newspaper commented that Reverend Osgood knew "by the roaring of the Jacobins, that he [had] bitten them in a sore place" (*Ibid.*, p. 575).

When asked about his practice of reading the text, closing the Bible, then removing his glasses and discoursing from memory, Osgood gave two reasons for this: "One, that he believed he could give his discourse greater effect by looking his auditors in the face—the other, that he wished to shew the Methodists and Baptists (of whom it seems he has a number in his own parish) either that preaching without notes was no

proof of inspiration, or, that he was as much inspired as themselves” (Ibid., p. 577). An unknown commentator wrote:

There were passages in some of the sermons that we heard from the “old man eloquent,” that thrilled through our frames, and such as could not easily be resisted or forgotten. And when in the midst of what seemed commonplace he laid aside his spectacles and turned away from his manuscripts, we were sure that it would be followed by a burst of fiery eloquence, and we were not mistaken. He held the audience for some minutes in rapt attention, and we hardly knew whether we were in the body or out of the body, so completely were we entranced and caught up, as it were, into the third heaven (Ibid., p. 578).

Osgood died of angina pectoris on December 12, 1822. A 469-page volume of his sermons was published in 1824.

*He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.*

Psalm CXI. 4.

The works of God are usually distinguished into those of creation, and those of providence. By the former, we understand the stretching forth and garnishing of the heavens, the forming and replenishing of the earth, and the originating of the present order and course of nature. By the latter, are meant the continued preservation, the upholding and governing of all these things; and the superintending of all events, both in the natural and moral world. All these are great and wonderful works, worthy to be had in constant remembrance by every rational spectator. They make God to be remembered; nay, they are so many memorials of him, witnessing his eternal power and godhead, his overflowing benignity, and his care of, and kindness towards, his creatures.

They who have any taste for intellectual and moral pleasures, who are capable of relishing what is grand and sublime, will delight in prying into, and contemplating these great and wonderful works of creation and providence. To this purpose it is observed in the context, that the works of the Lord being great, honourable and glorious, they will be *sought out* or investigated *by all them who have pleasure therein*. By these works the Psalmist has special reference to the more signal dispensations of Providence in his dealings with his covenant people, the descendants of Abraham his friend. In these dispensations he set before them the most striking illustrations of his character and glorious perfections. They often saw him, on one occasion and another, triumphing over the false gods of the heathen around them, executing judgment upon their vain idols, and confounding their stupid worshippers. They saw his infinite power displayed in an almost continued series of miraculous operations; his justice in the exemplary punishment of cruel oppressors; his mercy in numberless affecting instances towards themselves; and his truth and faithfulness in the exact fulfilment of his promises and predictions. These things were intended to make lasting impressions on their minds—such as might not be easily or speedily effaced. The wonderful works of Providence are wrought for this very purpose, that,

by beholding them, men may be so affected, as to have God continually in their thoughts, and thereby be led to fear and serve him.

The text may teach us, that the more signal mercies of heaven towards us, and those more remarkable deliverances which, at any time, have been wrought in our favour, ought to be gratefully remembered, and thankfully acknowledged by us. These things are some of the chief beauties and most brilliant pages in that book of Providence, which it highly concerns us daily to read and study. This book indeed contains the whole history of God's dealings with mankind, from age to age; in which he displays his moral perfections to the view of his rational offspring. The clear light of eternity will show every part of this volume to be full of meaning; and such an explanation will then be given to those passages, which are now esteemed dark and mysterious, as will induce enraptured saints, with astonishment, to exclaim, *O the depth of the wisdom and knowledge of God!* But while we dwell in this land of shadows and obscurity, we see only a small proportion of what God does; and having such limited views of his dispensations, it is no wonder if we be unable to comprehend the meaning of particular events.

There are many, however, which contain such striking illustrations of the divine attributes, especially of the divine mercy and goodness, that we can be at no loss about them. Not a few of these have fallen within our own observation; and many others our ears have heard, and our fathers have told us. God expects and requires, that we gather them up as a treasure, and carefully preserve them in our memories. They are in themselves memorable; and he hath done them, that they might be remembered by us. Of course, he is highly offended when men *forget his works and the wonders which he hath shewed them*. Such behaviour reflects upon the Divine Majesty, as though his method of governing the world, and his dealings with his creatures, were not worthy of our attention. The misery and destruction of men are, in some instances, attributed to their not *regarding the work of the Lord, nor considering the operation of his hands*. And it is certain, that the frequent review of the more striking dispensations of Providence is of excellent use to confirm us in the belief, and to excite us to the practice, of true religion. Through the weakness and darkness of their minds, and the strength of their corruptions, mankind are prone to unbelief. Some, under every advantage for light and conviction, do, notwithstanding, indulge to sceptical opinions: And they would generally, perhaps, be in danger of such opinions, and of calling in question the first principles and fundamental articles even of natural religion, the being, perfections, and moral government of the Deity; were it not for those less common appearances of his Providence, by which they are awakened to consider the manifold proofs of a Supreme Almighty Ruler working in the midst of them, and sitting as Governor and Judge among the nations.

At certain periods of time, through the several ages and among the different nations of the world, God breaks forth in signal and remarkable dispensations for the relief of the righteous, or for the punishment of the wicked. His providence is seen justifying its own procedure in vindicating and delivering oppressed innocence, or in precipitating prosperous guilt from its lofty seat. On these occasions, God is known by the glory that surrounds him. Beholding these extraordinary proofs of his presence

and power, men are constrained to say, *Verily there is a reward for the righteous: verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth.*

And when we are once established in the belief of such a great and glorious Being, this faith will naturally prompt us to fear and serve him. Convinced of his power and justice by the awful manifestations of them in his works, we shall be led to stand in awe of him, and heedfully to shun whatever we apprehend to be offensive in his sight. Struck with the more signal displays of his mercy and goodness, and excited by them to the more fixed contemplation of his unbounded beneficence; we shall be satisfied, that our happiness must consist in the enjoyment of his favour. This persuasion will render us anxious to know *what the Lord our God requires of us*; and solicitous to approve ourselves to him, by a patient continuance in well-doing.

Our present trust in the divine mercy is also encouraged by the remembrance of former favours and deliverances. For this purpose, among others, the Israelites were enjoined to teach “their children the praises of the Lord, his strength, and his wonderful works—that the generation to come might know them—even the children which should be born: who should arise and declare them to their children; that they might set their hope in God.”

The honour of God, the interests of religion, and the comfort and consolation of good men, being all promoted by the memory of the divine dispensations; it is highly agreeable to reason, and consonant to scripture, that public days should be set apart, on which a whole people may unite in celebrating the goodness of God; recollecting the instances of his providential care of, and kindness towards, them; and talking of his wonderful works in their favour. Such institutions serve as *pillars of remembrance*, to revive and perpetuate a sense of our obligations to heaven. The thoughts of the great body of the people are so taken up about their own private affairs, that they are prone to pay but little attention to the concerns of the public. After the first impression is worn off, they soon forget, at least practically, national mercies and deliverances, as well as national judgments. They need to have their minds stirred up by way of remembrance. And when God, by a long and continued series of remarkable interpositions, has multiplied, blessed, and prospered any people—has, on one occasion and another, repeatedly rescued them from great and threatening dangers—put them in full possession of their rights and liberties, laws and religion; and from year to year continues them in the quiet enjoyment of these privileges, together with the usual bounties of his munificent providence; they cannot too frequently recollect, nor too fervently and gratefully acknowledge, these signal instances of the divine benignity. It surely becomes christian magistrates, and is a duty they owe to God, to call upon their subjects to unite in commemorating these wonderful works of heaven in their favour.

Our forefathers, from the first settlement of the country, esteemed certain seasons of the year as highly proper for special acts of devotion. At the opening of the spring, they judged it fit and suitable, to set apart a day for humiliation and prayer; that they might implore the divine blessing on the affairs of the ensuing season—that it might be rendered fruitful, healthy and prosperous. And after the reception of these mercies, at the close of the season, another day was set apart for public thanksgiving. To this

custom of our pious and renowned ancestors the proclamation for the observance of this day expressly refers. To the friends of religion among us it must be highly agreeable, to join in making this day a grateful memorial of God's providential kindness towards us; and especially, in recording the more signal mercies of the last revolving season.

*He hath*, says the proclamation, *been pleased to favour us with a good measure of health, while others, whom we ought to pity and pray for, have been visited with contagious and mortal sickness.* In the West-India Islands, in some of the southern states, and even in the neighbouring state of Connecticut, we have heard of an unusual mortality. But among ourselves, the instances of it have, as yet, fallen considerably short of the average number for the last twenty years. It is rare, indeed, that a year passes over us in which health is more generally enjoyed. Life is the basis of all our enjoyments in this world; and health is the balm of life. It sweetens and enhances all the comforts of life. It enables us to bear our part in the affairs of the world, and to partake of that rich profusion of good which a bountiful Providence sets before us. When therefore we see, or hear of, others from whom this blessing is withdrawn, it ought to excite our gratitude afresh, that to us it is still continued. On this day it becomes us, with increased love and thankfulness, to pay our vows to that Being who is the health of our countenance and the God of our lives; whose kind visitations uphold us in the land of the living, while many others, cut off by pining sickness, are continually sinking into the grave.

Next to the blessing of health, the proclamation mentions those of harvest: *He hath smiled on our agricultural labours, and caused the earth to yield her increase.* For the space of some weeks, at the opening of the spring, our prospect was melancholy. An early drought and a late frost, unusually severe, alarmed our apprehensions. But, from that period, we have rarely known, in this vicinity, a more fruitful season. Refreshing showers succeeding each other at short intervals, preceded and followed with a warm sun, have furnished a continued supply of grass for the cattle, and rendered the latter harvest, and the various productions of autumn, plentiful and abundant. In this respect also we record the rich bounty of Providence, and are constrained gratefully to acknowledge, that still "he leaveth not himself without witness, in that he continueth to do us good, to give us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

With the blessings already recounted the proclamation goes on to inform us, that *He hath prospered our fishery, and in a great measure our merchandise, notwithstanding the depredations of unreasonable despoilers.* The attack of these despoilers upon our commerce has undoubtedly been infamous, and such as ought to be execrated by all civilized nations. And were we to judge of the extent of the mischief which they have done us, from the representations in some of the public papers, and in the resolves of certain self-created societies, we might be led to conclude, that the trade of the country was annihilated, and all its merchants bankrupts. It is therefore, after such continued alarms through the season, some consolation to hear, from so high an authority, that, notwithstanding all our losses, disappointments and vexations, a great measure of commercial prosperity has been enjoyed. Of this, indeed, we have yet further evidence even ocular demonstration, in the splendid and princely appearance



of many of our mercantile citizens, and in the high price of our country produce, enhanced to a degree, which (though oppressive and ruinous to a few individuals whose sole dependence is upon a fixed stipend) is yet exceedingly gainful to the great body of the community. Such prodigious exportations would not, and could not, be continued, did not the merchant, notwithstanding every risk, find his account in them.

What a claim upon our gratitude then is this, that, through the mercy of heaven, we are allowed to increase in wealth, in numbers and strength, at a time, when the nations of Europe are madly wasting, impoverishing and destroying each other. There the awakened jealousy of tyrants, tenacious of their usurped powers, and the ferocious zeal, the desperate fury of a mighty, though long oppressed nation, have set the world in a flame. These lusts consume the abundance of the seas and the treasures of the dry land, the productions both of nature and art: They lay waste the works and improvements of ages, and, so far as their power extends, render all the elements subservient to misery and ruin. What a blast do the follies and vices of men bring upon the rich blessings of heaven? For our continued exemption from these scenes of devastation and ruin, how fervent should be our gratitude to the supreme Disposer: In times past we have experienced them; and may heaven grant, that we may know them no more! As yet we hail each of the contending nations as our friends; and while they are mutually suffering such complicated evils from one another, these states present a common asylum for the distressed of all parties, who are almost daily arriving on our peaceful shores.

The enumeration of blessings in the proclamation concludes with adding, *He hath continued to us the inestimable blessing of the Gospel, and our religious, as well as civil rights and liberties.* For the former of these—the rich blessings of the gospel and our religious privileges—as they are primarily a supernatural grant from heaven, and comprise all our hopes and prospects for eternity; so no period, short of that endless duration, will be sufficient for adequate returns of adoration and praise. For the latter, our civil rights and liberties, we are, under Providence, and as the mean by which heaven has granted and continues them to us, indebted to a cause or source which, I am sorry to observe, is not mentioned, nor even referred to, in the proclamation—I mean the general or federal government. This omission is strange and singular, beyond any thing of the kind that I recollect to have seen since the first union of the states in the memorable year 1775. It has, to say the least, a strong appearance of disconnection with the general government, and an air of separate sovereignty and independence, as though we enjoyed not our civil rights in union with the other states under one common head.

Here then, I think it my duty, to remind you, that of all our political blessings for which we ought, on this day, to make our grateful acknowledgments to the divine goodness, our federal government is the greatest, the chief, and, in fact, the basis of the whole. Its form and constitution are by wise men universally admired. The wisdom, integrity, ability and success of its administration have commanded the respect and applause of the world. Its happy effects and consequences to ourselves, which we have known and experienced, have been great and estimable, beyond any other political good which we have ever enjoyed. By guarantying to each of the states a republican form of government, and the enjoyment of every right consistent with the

rights of the whole, it becomes to them all their greatest security against the attempts both of internal faction and external invasion. In this view, it is their main pillar of support and bulwark of defence.

Previous to the adoption of this most excellent form of government—under the old confederation, these states presented to the world a many-headed monster, frightful and alarming to all the lovers of peace and good order. Each state claimed a negative on the resolves of the whole in Congress assembled; and the regulations of the several states respectively were continually interfering and clashing with each other. From this foundation for discord, parties and divisions were inevitable. In almost every state, many were disaffected towards their own immediate government. In some of the states, open rebellions existed. Things went on from bad to worse, till the administration of justice was suspended, the laws silenced—all public and private faith left without a support, and the obligation of promises and contracts set aside. Men could neither confide in the public, nor in one another. Industry wanted encouragement—trade languished—a general uneasiness prevailed; and we tottered on the brink of the most dreadful convulsions.

The federal government was no sooner organized, than it speedily rescued us from this eminently hazardous situation. It gave fresh vigor to each of the state governments; awed into submission the factious through all the states; restored the course of justice, and thereby established peace and good order among the citizens at large. It recovered the sinking credit of the nation, together with that of the respective states; and gave such a spring to commerce, agriculture, manufactures, and all those useful arts which supply the necessaries and conveniencies of life, that they have flourished to a degree incomparably beyond what had ever been known in this country before. In promoting these important ends of every good government, it exceeded the most sanguine expectations of its friends and patrons. So striking and manifest were its beneficial effects, that even its restless enemies were compelled to silence. This tide of public prosperity continued rising even after the commencement of the present troubles in Europe: The current of our trade flowed for a while with but little interruption, and with accumulated profit to our merchants and farmers.

In this prosperous situation of our affairs, a foreign incendiary appeared among us; the object of whose mission was, at all events, to draw us in for a share in the war of Europe. By fair negotiation with the existing government, he had no hope of success. It was therefore necessary, that the government should be overthrown; or, at least, that the wise and good men entrusted with its administration, should be driven from the helm. Materials for either or both of these purposes were ready to his hand.

In every country there are some who envy the abilities of their superiours, and covet their stations; some constitutionally turbulent and uneasy, who can have pleasure in nothing but scenes of tumult and confusion; some who can make themselves conspicuous on no other occasions; and some in desperate circumstances, whose only hope of bettering them is in revolutions of government. Besides a proportion of all these, there has been in this country a large party, from the beginning, ill affected toward the federal government; and with these may be reckoned numbers of ignorant, though honest, people, who think the period arrived when the debt of gratitude ought

to be paid to our allies. The passions, prejudices and opinions of these several classes of people prepared their minds to receive the impressions of an insidious minister.

He immediately put in practice the arts which had proved so dreadfully efficacious in his own country. His intrigues were suddenly and surprisingly extended. His very breath seemed to kindle the smothered embers of sedition from Georgia to Newhampshire. Presses through the states were engaged to forward his designs, by conveying torrents of slander and abuse against the great officers of government. Popular societies, unknown to the laws, were recommended and actually formed under the influence of demagogues well skilled in the business of faction. The British councils, as though in league to aid the attempts of Genet, perfidiously seized upon our trade, and thereby furnished (what as yet had been wanting) a plausible occasion for clamour to those who were seeking it, and a just ground of resentment and indignation to the most peaceable and well disposed. The passions of men were worked up to a degree of fury. Rash and violent measures were proposed and strenuously urged. Favoured by these circumstances of embarrassment to the government, the western counties in Pennsylvania embraced the opportunity to rise in rebellion.

Such, my hearers, have been the trials and dangers to which our peace, liberty, and all our political happiness, have been exposed. That the consequences have not, as yet, been more pernicious, we have abundant reason, this day, to thank and praise the Supreme Disposer. Our general government, with all our rights and privileges embarked, has been steering between Scylla and Charybdis: That we have not been dashed upon either, is owing to the good hand of God, influencing and directing the pilots.

The prospect is now more favourable. Through the wise and good conduct of the president, his ministers, and the men of sober judgment in Congress, we seem to have escaped many rocks and quicksands. With dignity and firmness they resisted the intrigues and machinations of an unworthy ambassador, till, at length, they obtained his removal. With respect to the nation from whom we have received unprovoked injuries, while they have been preparing for the dernier resort, by putting the country into a state of defence; they have sent forward to them the remonstrance of reason, truth and justice, that (if possible) they might prevent the dreadful calamity of war. A degree of success has already attended the negociation. The offending power now appears half ashamed of the wrongs which it hath committed against us; and is constrained to promise restitution. They have also, the present year, been successful against the hostile tribes of savages: And to suppress rebellion, have sent forth an army so numerous and powerful as affords the hopeful prospect of effecting the purpose without the effusion of blood. To the several democratic societies through the states, who have incessantly censured, misrepresented and calumniated all these measures of our federal rulers, they have opposed a dignified patience and moderation, worthy of their high stations and great abilities.

But as those societies, and the spirit of faction which they engender, nourish and spread among the people, are, in my view, the greatest danger which, at present,

threatens the peace and liberties of our country, I shall close this discourse with a few strictures upon them.

In every country the men of ambition, who covet the chief seats in government, exert all their abilities to ingratiate themselves with the source of power. Under a monarchy they are the most servile courtiers at the levee of the prince. In a republic, the same men appear in the character of flaming patriots, profess the warmest zeal for liberty, and call themselves the friends of the people. In monarchies, their intrigues and factions are endless. But as the monarch himself is the main object of all their attempts, over whom they endeavour to extend their influence; their factions are usually limited to the precincts of the court, and rarely occasion any general convulsion in the empire. In a republic, the case is widely different: thousands and millions are the object whom they would influence. Of course, the more popular any government is, the more liable it is to be agitated and rent by parties and factions. Our's is not the first republic which the world has seen. Some centuries before the christian era, the states of ancient Greece and Rome were so many republics. But through the intrigues of ambitious and designing men, influencing each one his party, they became so many hot beds of faction and dissention. Their worthiest and best characters, when such chanced to hold the reins of government, were soon hunted down; and the vilest of men took their places, and this in continual rotation. Civil wars frequently occurred; and as either party prevailed, proscriptions, banishments and massacres ensued. Precisely the same scenes are now exhibited in France. We all rejoiced at the downfall of despotism in that country: We considered it as the dawn of liberty to the world. But how soon was the fair morning overcast? They had no sooner adopted a popular government, than all the violence of faction broke out. A constitution, which the collected wisdom of the nation had been two years in framing, was, in a day or an hour, upset and demolished. From that time to this, their civil government has been nothing but a contest of parties, carried on with all the ferocity of barbarians. Previous to the revolution, it was said of the French, that so refined was their sensibility, so abhorrent of every appearance of cruelty, that they would not suffer tragedy to be acted at their theatres. Is it not astonishing, how so great a change in the morals and manners of a nation could be so suddenly effected? Faction alone accounts for it. Had the representatives of the nation been left to act their own judgment, uncontrolled by the leaders of faction, they would never have been guilty of those excesses and cruelties which chill all humane minds with horror. But how came those factious leaders by such a controlling power over the convention? Solely by means of those popular societies in which they presided, or over which they first gained an influence. These gave to faction its whole force.

On the same principles with those in France are founded the democratic societies in this country; and should they become numerous here, as they are there, they will infallibly have a similar effect. Their pretence is, to watch government—they mean the federal government. But this, like each of the state governments, is chosen by the nation at large; and, of course, every man in his individual capacity has an equal right and an equal interest in watching its measures. What presumption then is it, and what an usurpation of the rights of their brethren, for private associations, unauthorized by the laws, to arrogate this charge to themselves? Admitting the propriety of setting a watch upon Congress and the president; are not the state legislatures fully competent

to the business? Is not their interest at stake, and their jealousy always awake, ready to notice any fault or error in the general government? What then is there for these private associations to do? Good they cannot do; and if they do any thing, it must be evil. And that they have done evil already, and are, in fact, the support of a pernicious and inveterate faction against the general government, among many other unquestionable proofs, the omission of our chief magistrate, just mentioned, is, to my mind, not an improbable one. For unless we suppose him to have fallen under the baneful influence of those societies, we know not how to account for his having hazarded a proclamation in which we are directed, neither to give thanks for any advantages enjoyed by means of that government, nor even to ask the blessing of heaven upon it.\* As though its destruction were already decreed, it is treated as no longer the subject of prayer.

Should so melancholy an event as its overthrow ultimately take place, no cause at present appears so probable, as those ill-judged associations. To pull down and destroy good governments as well as bad, is their only tendency. In the nature of things they can have no other effect. In such a country as this, therefore, where, through the distinguishing mercy of heaven, we have obtained a government so admirably adapted to promote the general happiness, these irregular and unwarrantable associations ought to be guarded against and suppressed with a vigilance like that with which we extinguish a fire when it is kindling in a great city. Their meetings are so many collections of combustibles; and should they be generally extended, the whole country will be in a flame. The members of those societies, by virtue of this relation, necessarily become the mere tools and dupes of their artful leaders, who have their own ends to serve by all their professions of patriotism.

The moment a man is attached to a club, his mind is not free: He receives a bias from the opinions of the party: A question indifferent to him, is no longer indifferent, when it materially affects a brother of the society. He is not left to act for himself; he is bound in honour to take part with the society—his pride and his prejudices, if at war with his opinion, will commonly obtain the victory; and rather than incur the ridicule or censure of his associates, he will countenance their measures, at all hazards; and thus an independent freeman is converted into a mere walking machine, a convenient engine of party leaders.

In this way a few ambitious individuals are enabled to extend their influence; and as they rise in power and consequence, to infringe upon the liberty of the public.

Each individual member of the state should have an equal voice in elections; but the individuals of a club have more than an equal voice, because they have the benefit of another influence; that of extensive private attachments, which come in aid of each man's political opinion. And just in proportion as the members of a club have an undue share of influence, in that proportion they abridge the rights of their fellow citizens. Every club therefore, formed for political purposes, is an aristocracy established over their brethren. It has all the properties of an aristocracy, and all the effects of tyranny. It is a literal truth, that the democratic clubs in the United States, while running mad with the abhorrence of aristocratic influence, are attempting to establish precisely the same influence under a different name. And if any thing will

rescue this country from the jaws of faction, it must be either the good sense of a great majority of Americans, which will discourage private political associations, and render them contemptible; or the controlling power of the laws of the country, which, in an early stage, shall demolish all such institutions, and secure to each individual, in the great political family, equal rights and an equal share of influence in his individual capacity.

But let us admit that no fatal consequences to government, and equal rights, will ensue from these institutions, still their effects on social harmony are very pernicious, and already begin to appear. A party spirit is hostile to all friendly intercourse; it inflames the passions; it sours the mind; it destroys good neighbourhood: it warps the judgment in judicial determinations: it banishes candor and substitutes prejudice; it restrains the exercise of benevolent affections; and in proportion as it chills the warm affections of the soul, it undermines the whole system of moral virtue. Were the councils of hell united to invent expedients for depriving men of the little portion of good they are destined to enjoy on this earth, the only measure they need adopt for this purpose, would be, to introduce factions into the bosom of the country. Faction begets disorder, force, rancorous passions, anarchy, tyranny, blood and slaughter.\*

May the God of order and peace preserve us from such dreadful calamities! and to him shall be the glory forever.

amen

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

44

## THE REVOLUTION IN FRANCE

Noah Webster

NEW-YORK

1794

Noah Webster (1758–1843). Son of the Congregational deacon Noah Webster, Sr., the author of this discourse on the French Revolution was the great lexicographer who gave birth to *An American Dictionary of the English Language*. The younger Noah received his preparatory training for college from Reverend Nathan Perkins in West Hartford, Connecticut. He entered Yale but then briefly served in the Revolutionary War; he resumed his studies at Yale and was graduated in 1778. Intent upon a legal career, he was in due course admitted to the bar in Hartford, only to give up law practice in 1793. From 1782 onward, he had been increasingly drawn to his true career, the study and teaching of the English language in its distinctive and patriotic modes. His grammars, readers, and spellers began to be published in 1784 and were issued and reissued well into this century. Webster estimated that fifteen million copies of *The American Spelling Book* had been printed by 1837 and, in all, a hundred million (running through four hundred editions) of the blue-backed speller had been printed by the twentieth century.

Webster agitated throughout the country for a copyright law to protect his publications and eventually saw one passed. A strong Federalist, he campaigned for the adoption of the Constitution. He also lectured far and wide on the English language and collaborated with Benjamin Franklin in devising a phonetic alphabet. Though Franklin's version proved too radical for full adoption, his and Webster's efforts helped shape the American language.

In New York, Webster edited magazines and newspapers off and on over a ten-year period. By 1803—having moved to New Haven, Connecticut, in 1798—he had abandoned that line of work and turned to his chief concern, the study of language. Beginning with the publication of a preparatory lexicon in 1806, he brought forth the *Dictionary* in two quarto volumes in 1828. The most ambitious publishing project in America up to that time, this work demonstrated a great advance in the field of lexicography.

Webster spent most of his later years in Amherst, Massachusetts, and in New Haven, and in that period he published five revisions of the *Dictionary*, a revised translation of the King James Version of the Bible, and many essays and addresses. Captured by the inspirations of the Second Awakening, he became a strong Calvinist and Congregationalist, especially after 1808.

In *The Revolution in France*, Webster brilliantly reflects on the religious and philosophic implications of the upheaval. Always concerned to find a balance between virtue and liberty, this piece marked Webster's departure (in the words of William F. Vartorella) "from his tenets espousing the rights of man to self-enhancement. The indiscriminate use of the guillotine made him shudder; his philosophical foundation crumbled under the strain and man, a sullen being, emerged as depraved" (*American Writers Before 1800*, p. 1534).

## Preface

In the progress of the French Revolution, candid men find much to praise, and much to censure. It is a novel event in the history of nations, and furnishes new subjects of reflection. The end in view is noble; but whether the spirit of party and faction, which divided the National Assembly, sacrificed one part, and gave to the other the sovereign power over the nation, will not deprive the present generation of the blessings of freedom and good government, the objects contended for, is a very interesting question. Equally interesting is it to enquire what will be the effects of the revolution on the agriculture, commerce, and moral character of the French nation. The field of speculation is new, and the subject curious.

The writer of the following remarks came into society, during the late war with Great-Britain; his heart was very early warmed with a love of liberty; his pen has often advocated her cause. When the revolution in France was announced in America, his heart exulted with joy; he felt nearly the same interest in its success, as he did in the establishment of American independence. This joy has been much allayed by the sanguinary proceedings of the Jacobins, their atheistical attacks on christianity, and their despicable attention to trifles. He is however candid enough to believe much of the violence of their measures may be attributed to the combination of powers, formed for the most unwarrantable purpose of dictating to an independent nation its form of government. Perhaps other circumstances, not known in this country, may serve to palliate the apparent cruelty of the ruling faction. But there are some proceedings of the present convention, which admit of no excuse but a political insanity; a wild enthusiasm, violent and irregular, which magnifies a mole-hill into a mountain; and mistakes a shadow for a giant.

A just estimate of things, their causes and effects, is always desireable; and it is of infinite consequence to this country, to ascertain the point where our admiration of the French measures should end, and our censure, begin; the point, beyond which an introduction of their principles and practice into this country, will prove dangerous to government, religion and morals.

With this view, the following strictures are offered to the American public. Freedom of discussion is a privilege enjoyed by every citizen; and it is presumed that some degree of severity will be pardoned, when it has truth for its support, and public utility for its object.



## Introduction

Men of all descriptions are frequently asking the questions, what will be the fate of France? What will be the consequences of the revolution in France? Will France be conquered? and others of a like nature.

These questions are extremely interesting, as they respect every thing which concerns the happiness of men in the great societies of Europe and America; government, liberty, arts, science, agriculture, commerce, morality, religion.

It would be an evidence of daring presumption to attempt to open the volume of divine determinations on these momentous questions. But it is highly proper, at all times, to exercise our reason, in examining the connection between causes and their effects; and in predicting, with modesty, the probable consequences of known events.

It is conceived to be the duty of the historian and the statesman, not merely to collect accounts of battles, the slaughter of the human race, the sacking of cities, the seizure and confiscation of shipping, and other bloody and barbarous deeds, the work of savage man towards his fellowmen; but to discover, if possible, the causes of great changes in the affairs of men; the springs of those important movements, which vary the aspect of government, the features of nations, and the very character of man.

The present efforts of the French nation, in resisting the forces of the combined powers, astonish even reflecting men. They far exceed every thing exhibited during the energetic reigns of Francis Ist. and Louis XIVth. To ascertain the true principles from which have sprung the union and the vigor which have marked this amazing revolution, is a work of no small labor, and may be of great public utility.

## Jacobin Society

It is conceived the first principle of combination in France, was the establishment of the Jacobin Society. The members of this association might not originally have foreseen the extent of the revolution, or the full effect of their own institution. At the time it was formed, there might have been many persons in it, who were friends to the monarchy of France, under the control of a constitution, and an elective legislative assembly. But the interest of the ancient court, the nobility and clergy was then considerable, not only in Paris, but in every department of France. It was necessary, in the view of the leaders of the republican party, to circumscribe or destroy the court-influence by direct legislative acts; or to raise throughout France, a combination of republicans, who, by union and concert, might oppose it with success. The public mind was not ripe for the first expedient, the direct invasion of the privileged orders; the republicans therefore, with a discernment that marks great talents, resorted to the last expedient, the institution of popular societies in every department of that extensive country. These societies are all moved by the mainspring of the machine, the Jacobin Society in Paris; and by the perfect concert observed in all their proceedings, they have been able to crush every other influence, and establish over France a government as singular in its kind, as it is absolute in its exercise.

## Commissioners

In pursuance of the same principle of combination, tho not cotemporary in its adoption, was the plan of conducting both civil and military operations in all parts of the republic, by commissioners from the National Convention. It was found that, altho the Jacobin societies had a very extensive influence in seconding the views of the republican party; yet this was the influence of opinion, and private exertion merely; an influence too small and indirect, to answer every purpose. These societies were voluntary associations, unclothed with any legal authority. To conduct the intended revolution, it was necessary there should be persons, in all parts of the country, vested with full powers to execute the decrees of the convention, a majority of whom were Jacobins; and whose measures were only the resolutions of the Jacobin Society in Paris, clothed with the sanction of a constitutional form. To supply the defect of legal authority in the several popular societies, commissioners were deputed from the convention, invested with the most absolute powers to watch over the civil and military officers employed in responsible stations, to detect conspiracies, to arrest suspected persons, and in short to control all the operations of that extensive country. These commissioners, being usually taken from the Jacobin Society at Paris, and having a constant communication with the convention, which was ruled by them, were enabled to carry all their measures into full effect. A single club, by this curious artifice, gave law to France. An immense machine, by the most extraordinary contexture of its parts, was and is still, moved by a single spring.

To unclog this machine from all its incumbrances, and give vigor to its active operations, it was necessary to displace all its enemies. For this purpose, all suspected and disaffected persons were to be removed. Under pretence of guarding the public safety, and delivering the republic from traitors, insiduously plotting its destruction, a court was established, called the Revolutionary Tribunal, consisting of men devoted to the views of the Jacobins, and clothed with powers that made their enemies tremble. The summary jurisdiction, assumed or exercised by this tribunal, together with its executive instrument, the guilotine, have filled France with human blood, and swept away opposition.

The commissioners in the several departments and municipalities have renewed the tyranny of the decemvirs of Rome. The writer is informed that while they affect the pomp and the manners of Roman consuls, they exercise the powers of a dictator. The two commissioners at Bourdeaux, imitating as far as possible the Roman habit, ride in a car or carriage drawn by eight horses, attended by a body of guards, resembling the pretorian bands, and preceded by lictors with their battle-axes.

The authority of all the commissioners is nearly dictatorial. They arrest, try and condemn, in a most summary manner. Not only difference of opinion, but moderation and especially the possession of money, are unpardonable crimes, punishable with death, in the view of these delegates of dictatorial power.

By this principle of combination, has a party, originally small, been enabled to triumph over all opposition.

In the mean time, a numerous and ignorant populace were to be amused, united, won to their party, and fired with enthusiasm for liberty. These people, who little understand the principles of government, were to be rendered subservient to the views of the republican party; and as their reason could be little affected by arguments, their passions were to be roused by the objects of sense. As the most of them cannot read, particular persons were employed in the towns and villages to read to them, the inflammatory writings which flowed from the Parisian presses. These readers collected the people in crowds, read to them such pieces against the king, queen, nobility and clergy, as were calculated to irritate their passions and inspire them with implacable hatred against these orders. They were taught to believe them all tyrants, traitors and oppressors. These public readers would also harrangue extemporaneously on the same subjects: such artifices had a prodigious effect in changing the attachment of the people for their king and their priesthood, to the most violent aversion. This hatred soon discovered itself in the destruction of a great number of noblemen's chateaus; the busts of ancient kings, pictures and other ensigns of the royal government. At the same time a number of patriotic songs were composed as *Ca ira*, *Carmagnole*, and the *Marseillais Hymn*; which were soon spread over France, and have had a more extensive influence over the soldiers, seamen, and the peasantry of that country, in reconciling them to the hardships of war, and firing them with an enthusiasm for what they call liberty, than the world in general will believe; an influence perhaps as powerful as that of all other causes combined.

Interrupted as our intercourse is with France, and agitated as the public mind must be with passing scenes, it cannot be expected that we should obtain from that country a dispassionate and minute detail of causes and their consequences; but I believe the facts I have mentioned will go far to account for the unprecedented union of the people of France, notwithstanding the operation of the usual causes of discord, and the influence of foreign gold very liberally exerted to disunite them, and perplex their measures. It has however been necessary for the convention to resort to the terrors of the guillotine, and of death and the destruction of whole cities, to awe the spirit of opposition to their system. Very numerous and most terrible examples of punishment have had a powerful temporary effect, in subduing their internal dissensions. How far the people will bear oppression, is a point on which we cannot decide.

## National Treasury

The measures taken by the convention to prolong the resistance of France, are no less singular, bold and decisive. It was found that immense sums of money would be necessary to maintain the vast body of men and military apparatus, requisite to oppose the combined forces of more than one half of Europe. To furnish the funds necessary for this purpose, the convention very early adopted the plan of issuing *assignats* or bills of credit, an expedient practised with great success in America, during her late revolution. This paper however was issued on safer ground than the American paper; as confiscated property to a vast amount was pledged for its redemption.

It was found however that this paper would depreciate; as the funds pledged for its redemption were exhausted, or proved inadequate to the enormous demands made upon the nation, in consequence of a great augmentation of their military

establishment, after opening the last campaign. To supply the deficiency, and to put it out of the power of chance or enmity to drain the republic of its specie, the convention adopted the following desperate expedients. They exacted from moneyed men whatever specie they possessed, by way of loan. This is called *emprunt force*; a forced loan. And to make sure of this specie they contracted with certain bankers in Paris to advance 12 millions sterling of the money, paying them a large commission for the risk and forbearance. The amount of the specie to be thus bro't into the national treasury, may be 20 millions sterling. This measure, together with the proceeds of confiscations, has accumulated a great proportion of the current specie of the country, in the treasury.

Not satisfied with these measures, the convention have taken possession of all the plate of the churches, which, in all Roman Catholic countries, must be very considerable, but in France, amounts to an immense value. It is estimated by gentlemen well acquainted with this subject, that this public plate, which is carried to the mint, will amount to 25 millions sterling; a sum nearly equal to the whole current specie of that rich commercial country, England.

It was estimated by Mr. Neckar and others, just as the revolution commenced, that the current coin of France was at least 80 millions sterling; a sum equal to one third, perhaps one half, of all the specie of Europe. Allowing large sums to have been carried out of the country by emigrants, and some to be buried for safety, but taking into the account the accession of 25 millions coined from plate; and we may estimate the amount of specie in possession of the convention, to be from 60 to 70 millions sterling.

Having thus collected all the precious metals in that country, the convention, instead of using specie freely to furnish supplies for the army, expend it with great œconomy. They hold it in reserve, for times and exigencies when all other expedients fail. At present they compel every person whatever to take assignats for provision, clothing and other articles, at a certain price fixed by a valuation. They sieze whatever grain or other articles a man has, beyond an estimated supply for his own family, and pay him in paper at the stated price. In this manner they seem determined to make their paper answer every purpose as long as possible, and when this fails, they will still have specie enough at command, with the aid of some taxes, to prosecute the war for three or four years.

## Probable Event Of The War

It may be doubtful whether the body of people will long sit easy, under such severe regulations. An enthusiasm for liberty will do much; the guillotine, and an irresistible army will do more, towards preserving peace and order. But there is nothing dearer to a man than the liberty of making his own bargains; and whether the forcible means employed to procure from people their produce or manufactures, will not at least check industry and limit the exertions of laborers to a bare supply of their own wants, is a point very problematical. But whatever may be the wants of France, there is little danger, while her specie is at the command of government, that her provisions will

fail. Her rich soil will furnish the principal mass of food; and should distress call for foreign supplies, her own shipping will supply her from abroad.

If these ideas are well founded, France is able to sustain a war of many years. She can supply men enough to resist the combined powers forever. Her natural population will forever repair her annual loss of men; and the longer a war lasts, the more soldiers will she possess. The whole country will become an immense camp of disciplined veterans.

While policy, aided by the strong arm of absolute power, is thus furnishing France with the means of defence, what prospect have the combined powers of effecting their purposes? France may defend herself until England is a bankrupt, and Austria is beggared. Possibly England and Holland may sustain the war another campaign; and more than this, they unquestionably will not. The states of Italy, which have been compelled to renounce their neutrality, will yield a cold, reluctant, feeble assistance, and embrace the first favorable moment to renounce the confederacy. Portugal is nothing in the contest. Spain, it is an equal chance, will be overrun and plundered by a French army; will itself be disabled and its riches only furnish the French with additional means of defence. Prussia has gained her principal object in obtaining a large division of Poland; she now demands a considerable debt of the empire, which the diet is not well able to discharge. The empress of Russia is encouraging the controversy, while she laughs at the combination, and is adding to her dominions. Austria is powerful, but she is exhausting her resources; and by reason of the distance which great part of her supplies are to be transported, her means must fail, before those of France. Already the emperor calls for voluntary aids from his subjects in Flanders. In this situation where is the hope of conquering France!

It is more probable that France will not only resist all this force, but will retain strength sufficient to commence an offensive war, when the confederacy of her enemies shall be dissolved, and the resources of each exhausted. Her enemies will waste their strength in making France a garrison of disciplined soldiers, impregnable within, and terrible to surrounding nations. The moment the combination is broken, and the army now investing France, disabled, half a million of hardy exasperated French warriors, inured to service, and fired with victory, will be let loose upon defenceless Europe; and in their mad enthusiasm to destroy, not despotism merely, but all the works of elegance and art, they may renew the desolations of the 6th and 7th centuries. Already has France experienced a revolution in property, in manners, in opinions, in law, in government, that has not been equalled in the world since the conquests of Attila and Genseric. The ravages of Genghis Khan, of Tamerlane and the Saracens were extensive, they were attended with slaughter and devastation. But the conquered nations only changed masters and remained unchanged themselves. The revolution in France is attended with a change of manners, opinions and institutions, infinitely more singular and important, than a change of masters or of government.

Of the two possible events, a conquest of France, and a total ultimate defeat of the combination against the republic, I am free in declaring my opinion, that the *former is less probable* than the latter. And should victory finally declare for France, her armies

may prove formidable to Europe. Italy and the Netherlands must inevitably fall under her dominion, unless prevented by a timely pacification.

Such being the origin and progress of this astonishing revolution, let us examine its probable effects.

## Debts

The effects of war upon the hostile nations are always to exhaust their strength and resources and incur heavy debts. Should France succeed in baffling her foes, an immense debt will be contracted, which must be paid, funded or expunged. An immediate payment is not to be expected; it will be impracticable. It may be justly questioned, whether the best administration of her finances will, for many years, discharge the interest. Such a general war, which involves in it a diversion of laborers from their usual occupations, a destruction of manufacturing towns and villages, a limitation of commercial intercourse, and especially a loss of capital among all descriptions of citizens, must dry up the sources of revenue, and occasion a deficiency that will materially affect the credit of the nation. If therefore the government should be disposed to fund the national debt, its inability to pay the interest, must, for some years, cause a depreciation in the value of the receipts or evidences of that debt. This depreciation will renew the speculations of John Law's administration—or rather the scenes exhibited in America in 1790, 1791 and 1792. Should this be the case, immense fortunes will be made; a new species of aristocrats, as they will be called, will arise out of the equality of *sans-culottism*, and unless a change of sentiment shall take place in the people, these new-fledged nabobs will be considered as noxious weeds in society, that are to be mown down with that political scythe, the all-levelling guillotine.

But the funding of debts is at present not an article in the national French creed. On the other hand, the revolutionists execrate the system that entails on posterity the debts of the present generation, and fills a country with negociators and stock-jobbers. If then the nation cannot pay the principal, and will not pay the interest, the remaining alternative is to expunge the whole debt.

We cannot however suppose that the same administration of the government will continue for a long period. The probability is that when danger of external foes shall be removed, the nation will elect a new convention of a very different complexion. Too many good citizens will be public creditors, to suffer the debts of the nation to be wiped away with a sponge. It is more probable that efforts will be made to discharge them; and as the proceeds of confiscations will be soon exhausted, and there are no wild lands in France, the government must resort to the usual modes of raising money, by customs, and taxes, with loans or anticipations of revenue. So that after all the fine philosophy of France, she will probably be obliged to submit to some of the old schemes of finance, which her wise legislators now execrate. We have therefore no great reason to apprehend that her government will be able to expunge her debts, nor can we suppose that absolute freedom from debt will constitute a part of her promised millenium of reason and philosophy.

## Agriculture

The important changes in the tenure of lands in France will produce the most distinguishable effects. The feudal system was calculated for no good purpose, except for defence among a barbarous people. It was every way formed to check the exertions of the great mass of people, whose labor, in all countries, is the principal source of wealth. That must always be a bad system of tenures which deprives the laboring man of the great stimulus to industry, the prospect of enjoying the reward of his labor. Such was the feudal system throughout Europe, and it is observable that agriculture and manufactures have made slow progress in every part of Europe where that system has been suffered to prevail in its ancient vigor. The principal cities of Italy and Germany first regained their freedom and revived industry. The abolition of military tenures in England may be considered as the epoch of her wealth and prosperity. Under the old government of France, the feudal system had lost much of its severity. There were many laboring men who enjoyed small freeholds; too small however for the purpose of improving in cultivation. But two thirds of the lands were leased to the peasantry, the landlord furnishing the stock of the farm, and receiving half the produce. This mode has ever been found less beneficial to a country, than leases on fixed rents in money.

But by the late revolution, a vast proportion of the lands will change hands; and much of them become freehold estate, subject to no rent or none that shall be oppressive. The laboring people, becoming proprietors and cultivating for their own benefit, will feel all the motives to labor that can influence the human heart in that particular. The mind, unfettered and prompted to action, will exert its faculties in various kinds of improvement and when the distresses of war shall cease, the French nation will push improvements in agriculture to a length hitherto unknown in that country. Previous to this however, property must be placed under the protection of law; and the laws must receive an energy from a well-constituted executive power, that shall ensure a due execution.

## Manufactures

The same circumstances which will invigorate industry in one branch of business, will extend their influence to every other. For some years indeed the desolating effects of war will be visible. The destruction of some manufacturing towns, the loss of capital, and the diversion of laborers from their employment, will be severely felt for many years. But the active genius of the French nation, unfettered from the imposing prejudices of former times, when it was held degrading to engage in manual occupations, will surmount these difficulties; and the immense wealth of the emigrant nobles, the national domains, or other property which had been monopolized and sequestered from employment, under ancient institutions, will be brot into action in every branch of business. After the ravages of war shall be repaired, a greater mass of capital will be employed in useful arts, and rendered productive. All the plate of the churches, now converted into coin, and immense sums formerly squandered by a profligate nobility, or withheld from employment by cloistered monks, will be brought into circulation, and become the means of encouraging industry. Add to these

circumstances, the amazing increase of enterprize, which must follow a revolution, that has awakened a nation from the slumbers of ignorance and inaction, and roused into life the dormant faculties of its citizens.

## Commerce

Similar circumstances will forward the growth and extension of commerce. France has long been respectable for its commerce and its navy. But the increase of agriculture and manufactures, which will necessarily follow the downfall of the feudal distinctions, and the more general diffusion of property, will produce also a correspondent increase of commerce. This commerce will require the use of shipping, and the late navigation law of France, will recal to her some of the advantages of the carrying trade, heretofore enjoyed by the English and the Dutch, and be the means of augmenting her navy.

## Arts And Science

Free governments are the soil best fitted to produce improvements in the arts and sciences. All history testifies this. France indeed, under her old government, had been distinguished for a cultivation of the sciences, and many of the most useful and elegant arts. In many respects, the lover of philosophy was free, and full scope was given to human genius. In other respects, freedom of writing was restrained by the hand of power, and the bold writers of that nation were compelled to retire beyond the reach of it.

The universal freedom of writing, which we may expect to prevail, when the present storm subsides, will be among the most conspicuous blessings of that nation. The arts will receive new encouragement, and the sciences new luster, from the active genius of renovated France.

## Religion

The progress of the revolution in France, with respect to morals and the religion of the nation, affords a most interesting spectacle to reflecting men. The hierarchy of Rome had established, over the minds of its votaries, a system of errors and superstition, that enslaved their opinions and plundered their purses. Long had nations been the victims of papal domination, and spiritual impositions. Accustomed from childhood to count their beads, to bow to the host, and chant *te deum*, men supposed that ceremony was devotion; while an artful priesthood availed themselves of their weakness and errors, to sponge from the deluded multitude, a great portion of the fruits of their honest labor.

For three centuries past, the reason of man has been removing the veil of error from his mind. In some countries, the veil has been rent asunder: and human reason, aided and directed by revelation, has assumed its native dignity. But in France, science and education, while they had illuminated a portion of its inhabitants, had not dissipated the gloom that was spread over the mass of the nation. Inquisitive men had searched



for truth, and astonished at the monstrous absurdities of the national religion, their minds, starting from the extreme of superstition, vibrated to the extreme of scepticism. Because they found religion, clothed with a garb of fantastical human artifices, they rejected her as a creature of human invention, pronounced her ceremonies a farce, and derided her votaries. Hence sprung a race of literary men, denominated philosophers, who, under their illustrious champions, Voltaire, and Rousseau, attempted, by secret undermining or open assault, to demolish the whole fabric of the national religion, and to erect upon its ruins, the throne of reason.

Before the present revolution commenced, this philosophy had spread among the literati of France; and Paris exhibited then, what Italy does now, the two most irreconcilable extremes, of atheism and profound superstition; the most scandalous vices mingled with the most scrupulous observance of religious rites; the same persons retiring immediately from their mock-devotions at Notre Dame, to the revels of prostitution.

In this situation of the moral and religious character of the French nation, began the revolution of 1789. The philosophical researches of Voltaire, Rousseau and the Abbe Raynal, had long before unchained the minds of that part of the French nation who read; a respectable class of men. These men understood the errors of their government and the nature of liberty. They were prepared to second the operation of those political causes, which hastened the crisis of a revolution. The first attentions of the reformers were occupied with the correction of political evils, rather than those of religion. But when the first national assembly came to examine the system of their government with minute inspection, they found it a complicated machine, in which the ecclesiastical state was so interwoven with the political, that it would be impossible to retrench the corruptions of the one, without deranging the whole fabric. It became necessary therefore (and the philosopher rejoiced at the necessity) to take down the whole machine of despotism, involving all the privileged orders in the proposed renovation.

The first assembly proceeded as far as they durst, in laying their hands upon the immense possessions of the clergy, and abolishing the monastic institutions; making provision, at the same time, for maintaining the clergy by granting them annual salaries, suited to their former ranks in the church. This step was bold, and gave umbrage to many of the higher dignitaries. But as the assembly had the policy to augment the salaries of most of the inferior clergy, the curates or vicars, who were the most numerous body, and had most influence over the people, this measure insted of endangering, rather strengthened the cause of the revolution.

Upon the election of the second assembly, a new scene was to be presented. A party of violent republicans, not satisfied with the constitution of 1791, and resolved to exterminate monarchy, and with it all the privileged orders, after a violent contest with their adversaries, the Fuillans, in which the latter were defeated, assumed the government of France; and from the full establishment of the Jacobins, with a decided majority in the convention, we date many important changes in the customs and institutions of that country. The progress of these changes in detail is left for the historian: my limits confining me to sketches only of these great events. In general,

however, I may observe, that the ruling party in France, have waged an inveterate war with christianity; and have endeavored to efface all the monuments by which it has been perpetuated. They have abolished not only the sabbath, by substituting one day in ten as a day of rest and amusement in lieu of one day in seven; but they have changed the mode of reckoning time, substituting the foundation of the republic as the vulgar era, instead of the christian era. They have not indeed prohibited any man from believing what religion he pleases: but as far as their decrees can reach, they have established, not deism only, but atheism and materialism. For these assertions I have their own decrees. In their decree respecting burials, they say, they “acknowledge no other doctrine, except that of national sovereignty and omnipotence.” If I understand this, it denies the being of a God. They ordain, that deceased persons shall be carried to the place of burial, covered with a pall, on which shall be depicted sleep, under the shade of the trees in the field, a statue shall be erected, representing sleep—and on the gate of the field, this inscription—“death is an everlasting sleep.” This is an explicit denial of the immortality of the soul, and in effect the establishment of materialism by law.

The church of Notre Dame is converted into the temple of reason; a colossal monument is erected in honor of the day, when reason triumphed over what they call fanaticism; and festivals are ordained to celebrate the memorable epoches of important changes in the government and religion of France. A great number of the clergy have publicly renounced their profession declaring their belief that their ancient religion was superstition and error, and that the only true religion is the practice of justice and moral virtue.

This account of the proceedings in France exhibits, in a luminous point of view, the singular contexture of the human mind; now depressed with chimerical horrors; demons, ghosts, and a God in terrors, armed with vengeance, and hurling nine tenths of mankind to the bottomless pit; now, elevated on the pinions of a subtle philosophy, men soar above all these bug-bears; revelation, piety, immortality, and all the christians hopes are rejected as phantoms; the Supreme Jehovah is reasoned or ridiculed out of existence, and in his place is substituted the *omnipotence of national sovereignty*.

Vain men! idle philosophy! I will not attempt to expatiate on the pernicious effects of such mistaken and misdirected reason. A sorrowful prediction of woes that must fall upon the nation, thus set afloat on the wide ocean of doubt, and tossed between the ancient hopes of immortality, and the modern legislative assurance of everlasting sleep in annihilation, would be derided as the cant of bigotry; the whining lamentations of interested priest-craft. But I will meet your philosophy upon your own ground; and demonstrate, by the very decrees which demolish the ancient superstition, that you yourselves are the most bigotted men in existence.

It is the remark of a great philosopher, whose opinions I am sure you will respect, that the mind of man is subject to certain unaccountable terrors and apprehensions, proceeding from an unhappy situation of affairs, from ill health, or a melancholy disposition. This is the origin of superstition and priestcraft. The mind of man is also susceptible of an unaccountable elevation and presumption, arising from success,

luxuriant health, strong spirits, or a bold confident disposition. This is the source of enthusiasm. Hume's Essays, Vol. I. 75.

I will not controvert this explanation of the two most remarkable principles in the mind. Nor will I wholly deny the conclusion he draws, that superstition is most favorable to slavery, and enthusiasm, to liberty. But I will go farther in this question than he did, and farther than you will at first admit to be just—but it is a position warranted by all history and perpetual observation, that if superstition and enthusiasm are not essentially the same thing, they at least produce effects, in many respects, exactly similar. They always lead men into error.

Superstition and enthusiasm operate by different means and direct the mind to different objects; but they agree in this respect, they imply or produce an excessive improper attachment to certain objects, usually objects of little real consequence. They are equally the humble votaries of some deity, tho each has a different one and worships him in her own peculiar mode. From the only regular body of deists in the universe, as Mr. Hume calls the disciples of Confucius; from the exalted philosophers of Greece and Rome, Plato, Pythagoras and Cicero: or from the still more refined philosophers, the noble disciples of reason, the members of the National Convention of France, down to the lowest bigot that drones out a lifeless existence over his beads and his crucifix in some dark monastic cell, there is one single principle of the human mind operating steadily to produce these different characters: this principle is a strong, universal and irresistable disposition to attach itself to some object or some system of belief which shall be a kind of idol to be worshipped in preference to all others. The object only is varied; the principle eternally the same. The principle springs from the passions of the mind, and cannot be annihilated without extinguishing the passions; which is impossible. When a gloomy mind clings to its priest or its altars, it is called superstition. When a bold mind, and ardent spirits rise above grovelling objects, and embrace spiritual delights, with raptures and transports, it is called enthusiasm or fanaticism. When a long series of reflection and reasoning has cooled or moderated the passions, the mind is governed less by feeling and more by argument; the errors of superstition and enthusiasm are perceived and despised; the mind fixes itself upon a theory of imaginary truth, between the extremes of error; and this is pronounced reason and philosophy. That this reason is not truth itself nor an infallible standard of truth, is obvious: for no two men agree what it is, what its nature, extent or limits. No matter; superstition and enthusiasm are beat down; reason is exalted upon a throne, temples are erected to the goddess, and festivals instituted to celebrate her coronation. Then begins the reign of passion; the moment reason is seated upon her throne; the passions are called in to support her. Pride says[:] I have trampled down superstition, that foe to truth and happiness—I have exalted reason to the throne; I am right—every thing else is wrong. Obey the goddess reason, is the great command: and woe to the man that rejects her authority. Reason is indeed the nominal prince, but the passions are her ministers, and dictate her decrees. Thus what begins in calm philosophy, ends in a most superstitious attachment to a particular object of its own creation. The goddess *reason* is at last maintained by pride, obstinacy, bigotry and to use a correct phrase, a blind superstitious enthusiasm.

The history of men is one tissue of facts, confirmatory of their observations. The Egyptians adored certain animals; and to injure a cat in Egypt, was a crime no less enormous than to pull down a liberty cap, to use the christian era, or wear abroad the robes of a priest in France; it was sacrilege. When we are told by credible historians that the Egyptians, when a house was on fire took more pains to save the cats, than the house, we stare and wonder how men could ever be so weak and stupid as to regard a cat, as a sacred animal. But is not the cap of liberty now regarded with a similar veneration? Would not an insult offered to it be resented and call down the vengeance of its votaries? How is this? Why the answer is easy—the Egyptians venerated a cat and a cow, and our modern idolaters venerate a liberty cap. The passion of the Egyptians will be called superstition perhaps; the passion of our people, enthusiasm. But it is the object that is changed, and not the principle. Our people are perpetually exclaiming “*Liberty is the goddess we adore,*” and a cap is the emblem of this goddess. Yet in fact there is no more connection between liberty and a cap, than between the Egyptian deity Isis, and just notions of God; nor is it less an act of superstition to dance round a cap or a pole in honor of liberty, than it was in Egypt to sacrifice a bullock to Isis.

The Greeks were a learned nation: but they had their Delphic oracles, whose responses were regarded as inspiration. The Romans, were more superstitious, and were governed in public and private affairs, by the appearances of the entrails of beasts, the flight of birds, and other omens. Both these nations were superstitious; that is, they believed their fate to be connected with certain religious rites; they placed confidence in certain supposed deities or events; when in fact there was no connection at all between the cause and effect, but what existed in opinion. The Pythian god in Greece knew nothing of future events; the auspices in Rome had no connection with the fate of those who consulted them, but the people believed in these consultations, and according to the result, were inspired with confidence or depressed with apprehensions. There were philosophers indeed in those enlightened nations who rejected the authority of their divinities. Cicero says, in his days, the Delphic oracle had become contemptible. Demosthenes declared publicly, the oracle had been gained over to the interest of Philip. These and many others were the deists of Greece and Rome; the Humes and Voltaires of antiquity. But they never had the courage or the inclination to abolish the religion of their countrymen—they treated the fabled divinities of their country with more respect than the Jacobin club has paid to the founder of christianity. At the same time, while they indulged their fellow citizens in their own worship, they wrought out of their own imagination, some airy deity; some fine subtle theory of philosophy, which they adored with the superstition of bigots. It is idle, it is false that these philosophers had refined their ideas above all error and fanaticism—they soared above the absurdities of material deities, the lares and penates of the vulgar; but they framed ethereal divinities, and spent their lives in paying homage to these fictions of imaginations.

In short the only advantage they had over vulgar minds was, that common people were content to worship the gods of the country, already framed to their hands; while the pride of each philosopher was busy in creating deities suited to his particular fancy.

When christianity became the religion of Rome, many of the pagan rites were incorporated, and some of the temples and deities, brot into use in the christian religion. The use of incense or perfumes, holy water, lamps, and votive offerings in churches, are pagan ceremonies retained in the Romish church. In lieu of the images of heathen deities Jupiter, Hercules or Bacchus, the christians substituted the statues of saints, martyrs and heroes; or else preserved the old images, giving them only a different dress. The pantheon of ancient Rome was re-consecrated by Boniface IVth, to the Virgin Mary, and all the saints.

What is all this? the christians pretended to abolish and exterminate pagan superstition—they only changed the name, and the objects to which veneration was to be paid. Instead of worshipping and sacrificing to Bacchus, the new converts adored the figure of a saint.

The Romans had a celebrated festival, called Saturnalia in honor of Saturn; this festival found its way into antient Scandinavia, among our pagan ancestors, by whom it was new-modelled or corrupted, being kept at the winter solstice. The night on which it was kept was called mother-night, as that which produced all the rest; and the festival was called Iuule or Yule. The christians, not being able to abolish the feast, changed its object, gave it the name of Christmas, and kept it in honor of Jesus Christ, altho the ancient name yule was retained in some parts of Scotland, till within a century. Mallet North Antiq. Vol. I. 130, Cowel. voc. Yule. What is the deduction from these facts? This certainly, that men have uniformly had a high veneration for some person or deity real or imaginary: the Romans for Saturn: the Goths for the mother-night of the year; and the christians for the founder of their religion. The christians have the advantage over the pagans in appropriating the feast to a nobler object; but the passion is the same, and the joy, the feasting, and the presents that have marked the festival are nearly the same among pagans and christians.

Let us then see whether the national convention of France have succeeded in exterminating superstition and fanaticism; and with them, their offspring, persecution.

They have indeed abolished the christian sabbath, because it was one of the institutions of superstition and the support of error, bigotry and priestcraft. But with the absurdity and inconsistency that ever accompanies fanaticism, they have established a similar institution, under a different name; instead of a christian sabbath once in seven days, they have ordained a political sabbath once in ten days. The object only is changed, while the uses of such a day are acknowledged by the convention themselves: and in spite of their omnipotence, the nation will appropriate that or some other day to nearly the same purposes.

They have abolished the christian era, and substituted the epoch of the abolition of monarchy, or what is the same thing, the *foundation of the republic*. And what do they gain by this change? Merely the trouble of introducing confusion and perplexity into their own mode of reckoning time, during the present generation, and into their negociations with other powers, forever. The era itself is a thing of no kind of consequence; it is not of the value of a straw; but when this indifferent thing is established, as a common point of reckoning time, among a great number of

surrounding nations, it becomes of great moment, and the change of it marks a contempt of common utility and a superstitious regard to the period of the revolution, or rather the era of their own triumph over their opposers, that is equal to the ancient respect for the Delphic oracle, or the modern veneration for a papal bull. The object only is changed; the passion is the same.

They have also annihilated the national worship, and of course a great number of holidays. But they have decreed a most magnificent and splendid festival, to be celebrated once in four years, in honor of the republic. What is this but a superstitious veneration for a new era, instead of the old ones? But what is singular in this institution is, that it is professedly copied from the celebration of the Olympic games in Greece. What then is become of the convention's reason and philosophy, which was to buoy them above vulgar prejudices? Do they, in this instance, exhibit proofs of exalted reason? Is it less a prejudice to venerate the Greek Olympiads, than the christian sabbath, or christian era? Let Danton and Robespierre answer this question, or blush for their philosophy.

The convention have also rejected the national faith, and sanctioned, with a decree, the doctrines of deism and materialism. This is another sublime effort of their Grecian philosophy to annihilate superstition and bigotry. But in the moment they are shunning Scylla, they are shipwrecked on Charybdis. It was not sufficient to destroy one faith; but they proceeded to establish another. They erect a statue to sleep, and on the gates of their burying fields, ordain this inscription, "Death is an everlasting sleep." Laugh not, ye refined sages, at the poor ignorant Greeks, who, lost and bewildered in the mazes of doubt, with more honesty than yourselves, acknowledged their ignorance, and erected an altar to the unknown god. St. Paul informed that venerable body of sages, the Athenian Areopagus, that this was superstition; yet the inscription on the altar at Athens, and that on the gates of the burying places in France, proceeded from equal ignorance, and the devotion paid to the statue of sleep will be as blind, as head-strong, and as marked with superstition, as the worship of the unknown god in Athens.

The convention, in their zeal for equalizing men, have with all their exalted reason, condescended to the puerility of legislating even upon names. That they should abolish titles of distinction, together with the privileges of the nobility and clergy, was natural; but that the common titles of mere civility and respect should be attacked was astonishing to indifferent spectators, who had expected their proceedings to be marked with dignity. The vulgar titles of address, *monsieur* and *madame*, whatever might have been their original sense, had become mere names of civility, implying no distinction, and applied equally to all classes of people. They were literally terms of equality; for when *A* addressed *B* with the appellation, *Monsieur*, *B* answered him with the same address; denoting an equality of standing and a mutuality of respect.

Yet these harmless titles, which had no more connection with government, than the chattering of birds, became the subject of grave legislative discussion, and the use of them was formally abolished. And what did the convention substitute in their place? Why the awkward term *citizen*, which is in fact a title of distinction, denoting a man who is free of a city, and enjoys rights distinct from his fellow inhabitants; or at least

one that has a legal residence in a country, and in consequence of it, enjoys some rights or privileges, that are not common to all its people. In proof of this I need only suggest, that in the United States and I believe in all other countries, certainly in France, legal provision is made for acquiring the rights of citizenship.\* Reflect, ye philosophic legislators, and be ashamed of your contradictions.

The convention have also abolished the insignia of rank, civil and ecclesiastical. Even a priest cannot wear his robes, except in the temples. But it was not sufficient to reduce all ancient orders; they established another distinction, which was represented by the cockade of liberty. Enthusiasm had only taken down one order, to put up another; and no sooner was the order of liberty instituted, than its members assumed an arrogant imperious behavior: they esteemed themselves better than their fellow-citizens; the cockade became a badge of despotism; every one who would not join the order, and go to every excess in their measures, was denounced as a traitor, and a man must wear the national cockade, or be massacred. Yet there is not the smallest connection between a cockade and liberty, except what exists in the fanaticism of the order. It is superstition of the rankest kind; and precisely of the same nature as that which fired millions of bigots to rally under the banners of the cross, in the 12th and 13th centuries, and march, under Peter the hermit, to recover the holy land from infidels. The cross in one case had the same effect in inspiring enthusiasm, that a cockade has in the other. Peter the hermit, and the Jacobins of France equally acknowledged the principles and the passions of the human heart. To accomplish their purposes they made use of the same means; they addressed themselves to the passions of the multitude, and wrought them up into enthusiasm.

To complete the system of reason which is to prevail in France, in lieu of ancient errors and absurdities, all the statues of kings and queens, together with busts, medalions, and every ensign of royalty, nobility or priesthood, are ordered to be annihilated. Even the statue of Henry IVth on the new bridge; a monument erected to the most patriotic prince that ever graced the royal diadem; who had projected a plan of universal peace in Europe, and who, had he not fallen prematurely by the hand of an assassin, would perhaps have done more for the happiness of society, than all the philosophers France ever produced; even his statue could not escape the philosophic rage for innovation. The statue is annihilated, and in its place, at the motion of David the painter, a colossal monument is decreed to be raised on the bridge, to transmit to posterity the victory of nations over kings, and of reason over fanaticism. Yes, philosophers, a noble victory this! But you forget that this very decree is the height of political fanaticism. The monument is changed with the object of fanaticism; and this is all the difference between you and the admirers of Henry IVth who erected the statue which you have demolished.

Marat also has a monument erected to his memory, in the pantheon! And who was Marat? A Prussian by birth; by profession, a journalist, who lived by publishing libels on the moderate men who opposed the Jacobin Club: by nature, a bloodthirsty wretch, the instigator of massacres, whose cruelty and baseness inspired a woman with courage to assassinate him. To such a pitch has the fanaticism of these philosophers carried them in this instance, that they have actually dispensed with the decree which

denies the honors of the pantheon to patriots, until they have been dead ten years, and in favor of his extraordinary merits, Marat was deified a few months after his death.

The refined imitators of the Greek philosophers have gone beyond their predecessors, in a stupid veneration for departed heroes; and if the present fanaticism should continue a few years, they will fill their new pantheon, with canonized Jacobins.

The same blind devotion to every thing ancient has led these superstitious reformers into the most ridiculous changes of names. Church is a relic of christian bigotry—the name therefore is rejected and in its place, the Latin word *temple* is substituted. This in France is philosophical! But what is more extraordinary, is, that in the moment when the modern calendar was abolished, and new divisions of time instituted, and even the harmless names of the months changed because the old calendar was the work of a pope and a relict of priestcraft: nay, at the time these wise and sublime reformers were abolishing, not only superstition, but even a belief in any superior being; they themselves sequestered a building for the express purpose of immortalizing men, and even gave it the Grecian name, *Pantheon*, which signifies the *habitation of all the Gods*. Such perpetual contradictions, such a series of puerile innovations, are without a parallel in the history of revolutions: and while these regenerators of a great nation believe themselves the devotees of reason and philosophy and exult in their supereminent attainments, they appear to the surrounding world of indifferent spectators, as weak, as blind and as fanatical, as a caravan of Mahometan pilgrims, wading thro immense deserts of suffocating sands, to pay their respects to the tomb of the Prophet.

It is remarkable also, that with professions of the most boundless liberality of sentiment, and with an utter abhorrence of bigotry and tyranny, these philosophers have become the most implacable persecutors of opinion. They despise all religious opinions; they are indifferent what worship is adopted by individuals; at the same time, they are establishing atheism by law. They reject one system to enforce another. This is not all; they pursue with unrelenting cruelty, all who differ from them on political subjects. The friends of a limited monarchy, to the constitution of 1791, to a federal government, however honest, fair and candid, all fall before the Jacobins. The Marquis La Fayette, that unimpeachable hero and patriot, fell a sacrifice to his integrity. He had sworn to maintain the constitution of 1791—he respected his oath—and was driven into exile and a dungeon. The Jacobins also swore to maintain that constitution—they perjured themselves—and now rule triumphant. Dumourier, the ablest general that has figured in France this century, after a series of unexampled victories, fell a sacrifice to Jacobin jealousy. The moment the Jacobin club felt their superiority, they commenced tyrants and persecutors; and from the execution of Mr. Delassart, the first victim of their vengeance, to that of Mr. Brissot and his adherents, a series of persecution for mere difference of opinion has been exhibited in France, that has never before been equalled. The Jacobins differ from the clergy of the dark ages in this—the clergy persecuted for heresy in religion—the Jacobins, for heresy in politics. The ruling faction is always orthodox—the minority always heterodox. Totally immaterial is it, what is the subject of controversy; or in what age or country the parties live. The object may change, but the imperious spirit of triumphant faction is always the same. It is only to revive the stale plea of necessity; the state or the



church is in danger from opinions; then the rack, the stake or the guillotine must crush the heresy—the heretics must be exterminated.

It was the language of the pagan emperors who persecuted the christians; “these sectaries must be destroyed—their doctrines are fatal to our power.” It was the language of the popes and cardinals, who instigated the persecution of the Hussites, Wickliffites, Lutherans and Calvinists; “these reformers are heretics who are dangerous to the true church, they must be destroyed; their doctrines must be exterminated; it is the cause of God.” It is the same language, which the barbarous followers of Mahomet employed and still employ to justify the enslaving of christians. The same is the language of the British acts of Parliament which lay all dissenters from the established church, under severe restraints and disabilities. It is the present language of the court of inquisition in Spain and Portugal—it is the language of the Jacobin faction in France, with the change only of the word *liberty* for *church*. The mountain exclaim, “liberty is in danger from traitors.” But when we examin the proofs, nothing appears to warrant the charge, but the single circumstance that these dangerous men *belonged to another party*; they were acknowledged republicans, but differed in opinion, as to the precise form of government, best calculated to secure liberty. Yet being Girondists, another party, they are wrong; they are dangerous; they must be exterminated. This is merely the result of faction; for it is now, and probably will forever remain a mere speculative point, whether Danton or Brissot was right; that is, whether a federal or an indivisible republic is the best form of government for France. But power and not argument or experience, has decided the question for the present. It is the precise mode in which the Roman emperors decided christianity to be dangerous—the precise mode in which the Chinese emperors reasoned to justify the expulsion of christians from their dominions; and a mode which a violent ruling faction always employs to silence opposition. As a temporary measure, it is always effectual: But I will venture to affirm, that such vindictive remedies for political and religious contentions are, in every instance, unwarrantable. In religious affairs, they proceed from bigotry, or a blind zeal for a particular creed. In political contests, an indiscriminate denunciation of opposers, and the infliction of death upon slight evidence, or mere suspicion can proceed only from savage hearts, or the mad rancor of party and faction.

## Morality

However necessary might be the revolution in France, and however noble the object, such great changes and a long war will have an effect on the moral character of the nation, which is deeply to be deplored. All wars have, if I may use a new but emphatic word, a demoralizing tendency; but the revolution in France, in addition to the usual influence of war, is attended with a total change in the minds of the people. They are released, not only from the ordinary restraints of law, but from all their former habits of thinking. From the fetters of a debasing religious system, the people are let loose in the wide field of mental licentiousness; and as men naturally run from one extreme to another, the French will probably rush into the wildest vagaries of opinion, both in their political and moral creeds. The decree of the convention authorizing divorces, upon the application of either party, alleging only unsuitableness of temper, hereby offering allurements to infidelity and domestic broils, is a singular proof of the little

regard in which the morals of the nation are held by the ruling party. The efforts made by the convention to exterminate every thing that looks like imposing restraint upon the passions, by the fear of a supreme being and future punishments, are a most extraordinary experiment in government, to ascertain whether nations can exist in peace, order and harmony, without any such restraints. It is an experiment to prove that impressions of a supreme being and a divine providence, which men have hitherto considered as natural, are all the illusions of imagination; the effect of a wrong education. It is an experiment to try whether atheism and materialism, as articles of national creed, will not render men more happy in society than a belief in a God, a Providence and the Immortality of the soul. The experiment is new; it is bold; it is astonishing.

In respect to manners also the effects of the war in France must be deplorable. War, carried on between foreign nations, on the most humane principles, has a powerful tendency to decivilize those who are immediately concerned in it. It lets loose the malignant passions of hatred and revenge, which in time of peace, are laid under the restraints of law and good breeding. But in addition to the ordinary decivilizing tendency of war, the present contest in France is carried on with the implacable fury of domestic rage, and the barbarity of assassination. Hostilities have raged in almost every part of that extensive republic, and have been inflamed by faction, insurrection and treason. The Parisians, aided by the Marsellois, massacred thousands on the 10th of August, and 2d and 3d September 1792; and great part of the victims of popular fury fell, merely because they were suspected, without the slightest proof of guilt. The like scenes were exhibited on a smaller scale, at Lyons, and in some other parts of the country. The summary vengeance taken on the insurgents in various parts, and especially on the rebels at Lyons and Toulon, must have accustomed great bodies of people to scenes of cruelty, and rendered them unfeeling towards their enemies. But the sanguinary executions of persons condemned by the revolutionary tribunals, at Paris, and in various cities of France, must have rendered the populace extremely ferocious. In many of the calamitous proceedings of the triumphant party in France, there has been displayed a rancor of malice and cruelty, that reminds us of savages: and we can scarcely believe these things done by a nation unquestionably the most polite in the world. The facts however cannot be denied; and they illustrate my remarks, as to the effects of war on the moral character of men.

If these remarks then are just, it is to be supposed that the French nation, will for a few years, be so ferocious and licentious, as to render it extremely difficult to reduce them to a subordination to law. The virulence of party we know in America; but in France, the spirits of men are still more exasperated against each other; and party-rage will not, for a long time, be repressed, without frequent bloodshed. If the odious distinction of whig and tory, still exists in America, and frequently calls forth abuse; how much more will party spirit prevail in France, during the present generation!

It then naturally occurs as a question, what will be the consequences of the abolition of christianity, or the national worship of France?

The general answer appears to me not difficult—atheism and the most detestable principles will be the fashion of the present age; but peace, education, and returning

reason will at length prevail over the wild ideas of the present race of philosophers, and the nation will embrace a rational religion.

The nation is now so totally demoralized by the current philosophy of the age, and the ferocious spirit of war and faction, that atheism is a creed perhaps most adapted to the blind and headstrong genius of the present generation. But I am yet one of the old fashioned philosophers, who believe that, however particular men under particular circumstances may reject all ideas of God and religion, yet that some impressions of a Supreme Being are as natural to men, as their passions and their appetites, and that nations will have some God to adore and some mode of worship. I believe some future legislature of France will be obliged to tread back some of the steps of the present convention, with respect to the establishment of a chimerical reason in lieu of religion.

## Government

I am of the same opinion respecting their constitution of government. France cannot enjoy peace or liberty, without a government, much more energetic than the present constitution would be, without the aid of danger without and a guillotine within. The moment France is freed from external foes, and is left to itself, it will feel the imbecillity of its government. France now resembles a man under the operation of spasms, who is capable of exerting an astonishing degree of unnatural muscular force; but when the paroxism subsides, languor and debility will succeed. This observation applies to its political force; and when the war shall cease, the military will be strong, while the civil power is weak. The consequences of disbanding half a million of soldiers at once, I will not attempt to predict. Should any dissatisfaction prevail in the army at the moment of peace, on account of pay, provisions, or any other cause, the nation will have to contend with more formidable foes, than the military machines of Austria and Prussia. Great caution and policy will be necessary in dispersing such a number of soldiers and bringing them back to habits of industry and order.

The seeds of faction, that enemy of government and freedom, are sown thick in the present constitution of France. The Executive Council, to be composed of twenty-four members, will be a hot-bed of party; and party spirit is violent, malignant and tyrannical. The French could not have fallen upon a more effectual expedient to create and perpetuate faction, with its train of fatal evils, than to commit the execution of the laws to a number of hands; for *faction is death to liberty*.

The Republic of France is to keep an army in pay, in time of peace as well as war. This army will always be at the command of the executive. When the minister at war is a man of talents and a wicked heart, he may make use of the army for the purposes of crushing his competitors. A standing army in America is considered as an engine of despotism; and however necessary it may be in the present state of Europe, it will or may prove dangerous to the freedom of France.

## Remarks

Let it not be thought that the writer of these sheets is an enemy to liberty or a republican government. Such an opinion is wholly unfounded. The writer is a native American; born in an independant republic. He imbibed a love of liberty with his first ideas of government; he fought for the independance of his country; he wishes to see republican governments established over the earth, upon the ruins of despotism. He has not however imbibed the modern philosophy, that rejects all ancient institutions, civil, social and religious, as the impositions of fraud; the tyranny of cunning over ignorance, and of power over weakness. He is not yet convinced that men are capable of such perfection on earth, as to regulate all their actions by moral rectitude, without the restraints of religion and law. He does not believe with the French atheist, that the universe is composed solely of matter and motion, without a Supreme Intelligence; nor that man is solely the creature of education. He believes that God, and not education, gives man his passions; and that the business of education is to restrain and direct the passions to the purposes of social happiness. He believes that man will always have passions—that these passions will frequently urge him into vices—that religion has an excellent effect in repressing vices, in softening the manners of men, and consoling them under the pressure of calamities. He believes in short that, notwithstanding all the fine philosophy of the modern reformers, that a great part of mankind, necessitated to labor, and unaccustomed to read, or to the civilities of refined life, will have rough passions, that will always require the corrective force of law, to prevent them from violating the rights of others; of course, he believes government is necessary in society: and that to render every man free, there must be energy enough in the executive, to restrain any man and any body of men from injuring the person or property of any individual in the society. But as many of the preceding remarks appear to be a severe reprehension of the ruling party in France, it is necessary to explain myself more freely on this subject.

The cause of the French nation is the noblest ever undertaken by men. It was necessary; it was just. The feudal and the papal systems were tyrannical in the extreme; they fettered and debased the mind; they enslaved a great portion of Europe. While the legislators of France confined themselves to a correction of real evils, they were the most respectable of reformers: they commanded the attention, the applause and the admiration of surrounding nations. But when they descended to legislate upon names, opinions and customs, that could have no influence upon liberty or social rights, they became contemptible; and when faction took the lead, when a difference of opinion on the form of government proper for France, or a mere adherence to a solemn oath, became high treason punishable with death, the triumphant faction inspired even the friends of the revolution, with disgust and horror. Liberty is the cry of these men, while with the grimace of a Cromwell, they deprive every man who will not go all the lengths of their rash measures, of both liberty and life. A free republic, is their perpetual cant; yet to establish their own ideas of this free government, they have formed and now exercise throughout France a military aristocracy, the most bloody and despotic recorded in history.

But, say the friends of the Jacobins, “this severity is absolutely necessary to accomplish the revolution.” No this is not the truth. It is necessary to accomplish the

views of the Jacobins; but a revolution was effected before the Jacobins had formed themselves into a consistent body, and assumed the sovereign sway. This first revolution did not proceed far enough in changes of old institutions to satisfy the atheistical part of the new convention. The first constitution had abolished the distinction of orders—it had stripped the nobles and clergy of their titles and rank—it had stripped the church of her possessions—it had taken almost all power from the king—but it had left untouched the two relics of monarchy most odious to little minds, the name of king and his hereditary descent. This furnished the violent members of the convention with a pretext for a further reform, in which, not royalty alone, for this is a matter of little consequence, but even the customary modes of speech, and the sublime truths of christianity, have fallen equally a prey to the regenerating enthusiasm of these profound philosophers.

What had *liberty and the rights of men* to do with this second revolution? If, on experiment, it had been found that the limited monarchy of the first constitution, which except its civil list, had scarcely the powers of the executive of the United States, was productive of real evils and real danger to the freedom of the government, the nation would have seen the danger, and by general consent, in a peaceable manner, and without the violence of party rage, monarchy would have been abolished. The progress of reason, information and just notions of government was ripening the nation fast for an event of this kind.

But admit what the Jacobins will say, that there was a necessity for removing the king; that he was a traitor, and a plot was forming to replace the monarchy with all its prerogatives; and that there is a foundation for a suspicion of this kind, no man can doubt; yet what shall we say to the trial and condemnation of the Brissotines? Brissot, Le Brun and their followers were the more moderate party, but unquestionably republicans. So far as evidence against them has appeared in the trials published, there is not an iota of proof to warrant the charge of treason. Their great crime was, they were federalists—they believed so extensive a country as France, would be best governed by a constitution similar to that of America, each department\* having a local legislature to regulate the interior police of the department, and all the departments confederated under a general government for the purpose of regulating the great concerns of the nation. Whether right or wrong, this was a mere question of speculation; and Brissot had precisely the same right to plan, to urge, and if possible, to establish his system, as Danton and Robespierre had to establish theirs. Each had the same rights, the same freedom of debate (or ought to have had) the same privilege of proposing forms of government, and the inviolability of the legislative character ought to have afforded to each the same protection. The outrages committed upon this inviolability are the work of detestable faction, that scourge of almost every free government, and the disgrace of the French Revolution. The Brissotines were charged with “conspiring against the unity and indivisibility of the republic”; that is, against a theoretical form of government; and all the other charges appear to be invented by the malice of party, as they are not supported by any credible proof whatever. But let us go farther and admit, what is probably not true, that all these sacrifices were necessary; what shall we say to the impious attempts to exterminate every part of the christian religion, and substitute Grecian philosophy and atheism as a nation creed? Is this also necessary to maintain liberty and a free government? What shall we say to

the legislature of a great nation, waging a serious war with mere names, pictures, dress and statues? Is this also necessary to the support of liberty? There is something in this part of their legislative proceedings that unites the littleness of boys, with the barbarity of Goths.

Let us then separate the men from the cause; and while we detest the instrument, let us admire and applaud the end to be accomplished. We see roses growing among thorns, and we know a Judas, in betraying his Lord, was a vile instrument of man's redemption. I am an old fashioned believer in a divine intelligence, that superintends the affairs of this world, always producing order out of confusion. So far as the experience of three thousand years, and the present knowledge of men, will furnish data for reasoning on political subjects, we may safely conclude that the affairs of France are in a state of vacillation, moving from extreme to extreme by the impulse of violent causes: and that in a few years those causes will be removed, the vibration will cease, and the legislature, tracing back some of the steps of their predecessors, will take the middle path in government, religion and morals which has ever been found practicable and safe. *In medio tutissimus ibis*, is a maxim that never yet deceived the man, the legislator or the philosopher. Monarchy can never be restored in France, until the people are exterminated. A republican government in some shape or other, will maintain its ground; and I trust and hope, the defeat of the combined powers will teach them the observance of the law of nations, "that one power has no right to interfere with the government of its neighbor."

I would only suggest further that the present war is weakening the feudal system in Europe, and the whole fabric must soon tumble to the ground. Austria and Prussia are exhausting themselves, and Russia is gaining strength. It is not impossible that the Russian power may swallow up the residue of Poland; Prussia and Austria may share the same fate; and the republicans of France may hereafter prove the only barrier that can successfully resist the arms of those modern Scythians. The ancient balance of power in Europe is evidently suffering a material change; when that is destroyed, a general convulsion must succeed, which may shake every throne, and give a new aspect to the political horizon of Europe.

## Application

The revolution of France, like that of Rome, is fruitful in lessons of instruction, of which all enlightened nations should avail themselves, and which may be of great use to the United States of America.

The most important truth suggested by the foregoing remarks is, that party spirit is the source of faction and *faction is death to the existing* government. The history of the Jacobins is the most remarkable illustration of this truth. I will not undertake to say that there did not exist in France a necessity for a combination of private societies, because I do not know whether it was not necessary to exterminate the remains of royalty and nobility, before a free government could be established and rendered secure and permanent. On this point I am not qualified to determine. But that it was this league of Jacobins, combining the individuals of a party scattered over a vast extent of country, into a consistent body, moved by a single soul, that produced the

second revolution in France, is a point of which there can be no question. Their opposers, the moderate party impliedly acknowledged this truth, when they attempted to resist their force by the same means; and formed themselves into a society, called, from their place of meeting, *Fuillans*. But it was too late. The Jacobins were organized; they had already gained over the populace of Paris to their interest, and had, by caresses, and alarming their fears by the cry of despotism, won over a great part of the peasantry of the country. The Rubicon was passed; party had become faction; the Jacobins and the *Fuillans* were the Cesar and the Pompey of France; one or the other must fall; the Jacobins were the most powerful; they employed a body of armed men to disperse their opposers; the *Fuillans* were crushed; and the Jacobins, like Cesar, were seated on the throne. Admit the necessity of such a confederacy in France, or in any country where it is expedient and proper to overthrow the existing government; yet it becomes a most serious question, what is the use of such a combination of societies in the United States. When government is radically bad, it is meritorious to reform it; when there is no other expedient to rid a people of oppression, it is necessary to change the government; but when a people have freely and voluntarily chosen and instituted a constitution of government, which guarantees all their rights, and no corruption appears in the administration, there can be no necessity for a change; and if in any particular, it is thought to require amendment, a constitutional mode is provided, and there is no necessity for recurring to extraordinary expedients. In America therefore there can exist no necessity for private societies to watch over the government. Indeed to pretend that a government that has been in operation but five or six years, and which has hitherto produced nothing but public prosperity and private happiness, has need of associations in all parts of the country to guard its purity, is like a jealous husband who should deem it necessary, the day after his nuptials, to set a centinel over his wife to secure her fidelity.

If the government of America wants a reform, the best mode of effecting this, is the constitutional mode. If it is become absolutely necessary to overthrow it, the most direct mode of doing it, is to organize a party for the purpose, by condensing its scattered forces into union and system. But if the point is admitted, that the government does not require any essential alteration, which cannot be effected in a legal way, it follows of course that the establishment of private societies is not necessary. For the same reason that such societies were found useful in France, they ought to be avoided like a pestilence in America; because a total renovation was judged necessary in that country; and such a total renovation is judged not necessary in America—because a republican government was to be established in that country; and in this, it is already established on principles of liberty and equal rights.

As the tendency of such associations is probably not fully understood by most of the persons composing them in this country, and many of whom are doubtless well-meaning citizens; it may be useful to trace the progress of party-spirit to faction first, and then of course to tyranny.

My first remark is, that contentions usually spring out of points which are trifling, speculative, or of doubtful tendency. Among trifling causes I rank personal injuries. It has frequently happened that an affront offered by one leading man in a state to another, has disquieted the whole state, and even caused a revolution. The real interest

of the people has nothing to do with private resentments, and ought never to be affected by them, yet nothing is more common. And republics are more liable to suffer changes and convulsions, on account of personal quarrels, than any other species of government; because the individuals, who have acquired the confidence of the people, can always fabricate some reasons for rousing their passions—some pretext of public good may be invented, when the man has his own passions to gratify—the minds of the populace are easily enflamed—and strong parties may be raised on the most frivolous occasions. I have known an instance in America of a man's intriguing for and obtaining an election to an important trust; which he immediately resigned, and confessed he had done it solely to gratify his own will and mortify his enemies. Yet had the man been disposed, he might have used his influence to strengthen a party, and given trouble to the state.

Another cause of violent parties is frequently a difference of opinion on speculative questions, or those, whose real tendency to secure public happiness is equivocal. When measures are obviously good, and clearly tend to advance public weal, there will seldom be much division of opinion on the propriety of adopting them. All parties unite in pursuing the public interest, when it is clearly visible. But when it is doubtful what will be the ultimate effect of a measure, men will differ in opinion, and probably the parties will be nearly equal. It is on points of private local utility, or on those of doubtful tendency, that men split into parties.

My second remark is, that a contention between parties is usually violent in proportion to the trifling nature of the point in question; or to the uncertainty of its tendency to promote public happiness. When an object of great magnitude is in question, and its utility obvious, a great majority is usually found in its favor, and vice versa; and a large majority usually quiets all opposition. But when a point is of less magnitude or less visible utility, the parties may be and often are nearly equal. Then it becomes a trial of strength—each party acquires confidence from the very circumstance of equality—both become assured they are right—confidence inspires boldness and expectation of success—pride comes in aid of argument—the passions are inflamed—the merits of the cause become a subordinate consideration—victory is the object and not public good; at length the question is decided by a small majority—success inspires one party with pride, and they assume the airs of conquerors; disappointment sours the minds of the other—and thus the contest ends in creating violent passions which are always ready to enlist into every other cause. Such is the progress of party-spirit; and a single question will often give rise to a party, that will continue for generations; and the same men or their adherents will continue to divide on other questions, that have not the remotest connection with the first point of contention.

This observation gives rise to my third remark; that nothing is more dangerous to the cause of truth and liberty than a party-spirit. When men are once united, in whatever form, or upon whatever occasion, the union creates a partiality or friendship for each member of the party or society. A coalition for any purpose creates an attachment, and inspires a confidence in the individuals of the party, which does not die with the cause which united them; but continues, and extends to every other object of social intercourse.



Thus we see men first united in some system of religious faith, generally agree in their political opinions. Natives of the same country, even in a foreign country, unite and form a separate private society. The Masons feel attached to each other, tho in distant parts of the world.

The same may be said of Episcopalians, Quakers, Presbyterians, Roman Catholics, federalists, and antifederalists, mechanic societies, chambers of commerce, Jacobin and democratic societies. It is altogether immaterial what circumstance first unites a number of men into a society; whether they first rally round the church, a square and compass, a cross, or a cap; the general effect is always the same; while the union continues, the members of the association feel a particular confidence in each other, which leads them to believe each others opinions, to catch each others passions, and to act in concert on every question in which they are interested.

Hence arises what is called bigotry or illiberality. Persons who are united on any occasion, are more apt to believe the prevailing opinions of their society, than the prevailing opinions of another society. They examin their own creeds more fully (and perhaps with a mind predisposed to believe them), than they do the creeds of other societies. Hence the full persuasion in every society that theirs is right; and if right, others of course are wrong. Perhaps therefore I am warranted in saying, there is a species of bigotry in every society on earth—and indeed in every man's own particular faith. While each man and each society is freely indulged in his own opinion, and that opinion is mere speculation, there is peace, harmony, and good understanding. But the moment a man or a society attempts to oppose the prevailing opinions of another man or society, even his arguments rouse passion; it being difficult for two men of opposite creeds to dispute for any time, without getting angry. And when one party attempts in practice to interfere with the opinions of another party, violence most generally succeeds.

These remarks are so consonant to experience and common observation, that I presume no man can deny them; and if true, they deserve the serious attention of every good citizen of America.

The citizens of this extensive republic constitute a nation. As a nation, we feel all the prejudices of a society. These national prejudices are probably necessary, in the present state of the world, to strengthen our government. They form a species of political bigotry, common to all nations, from which springs a real allegiance, never expressed, but always firm and unwavering. This passion, when corrected by candor, benevolence and love of mankind, softens down into a steady principle, which forms the soul of a nation, true patriotism. Each nation of the world is then a party in the great society of the human race. When at peace, party spirit subsides, and mutual intercourse unites the parties. But when the interest of either is attacked, a war succeeds, and all the malignant and barbarous passions are called into exercise.

Admit national prejudices to be in a degree, necessary; let us see what other prejudices exist in the United States, which may prove pernicious to ourselves. The American nation is composed of fifteen subordinate states. I say subordinate; for they are so in all national concerns. They are sovereign only in their internal police.

The states were erected out of British colonies; and it was the policy of Great Britain, rather to foment, than to allay or eradicate, colonial prejudices. She knew that such prejudices weakened the strength of the colonies, and kept them in subjection to the mother-empire. Even the manners, the language and the food of the people in one colony were made the subjects of ridicule by the inhabitants of another. Ridicule is accompanied or followed by a degree of contempt; and hence sprung a dissocial turn of mind among the people of different colonies, which common interest and common danger have not yet converted into perfect harmony.

Since the revolution, a jealousy between the states has sprung from the superior wealth, magnitude or advantages of some, which the small states apprehended would enable the large ones to swallow them up in some future time. This jealousy is mostly removed by the present constitution of the United States; which guarantees to each state, its independence and a republican form of government. This guarranty is the best security of each.

Another source of apprehension has been and still is, the danger of what is called consolidation. The states are constantly asserting their sovereignty, and publishing their fears that the national government will gradually absorb the state governments. Their jealousy on this head is alive, and alarmed at every breeze of air. I am clearly of opinion, that if peace and harmony can be preserved between the general and particular governments, the purity of our national government will depend much on the legislatures of the several states. They are the political guardians, whose interest is constantly impelling them to watch the progress of corruption in the general government. And they will always be the more attentive to their duty, as they entertain not only a jealousy of the general government, but a jealousy of each other.

But I differ from many people who fear a consolidation. So far as my knowledge of history and men will enable me to judge on this subject, I must think our danger mostly lies in the jealousy of the several states. Instead of a probable annihilation of the state governments, I apprehend great danger from the disuniting tendency of state jealousy, which may dismember the present confederacy. That the states have the power to do this, I have no doubt; and I consider our union, and consequently our strength and prosperity as depending more on mutual interest, and mutual concession, than on the force of the national constitution. Consolidation is with me a bug-bear, a chimera, as idle and insignificant, as the medallion of a king. But from the disorganizing tendency of state jealousy, there appears to be a well founded apprehension of danger.

But the principal danger to which our government is exposed will probably arise from another quarter; the spirit of party, which is now taking the form of system. While a jealousy and opposition to the national constitution exist only in the legislatures of the several states, they will be restrained and moderated by the public dignity of those bodies, and by legal or constitutional forms of proceeding. Opposition thus tempered loses its terrors.

But opposition that is raised in private societies of men, who are self-created, unknown to the laws of the country, private in their proceedings, and perhaps violent

in their passions, the moment it ceases to be insignificant, becomes formidable to government and freedom. The very people who compose these societies, are not aware of the possible consequences that may flow from their associations. They are few of them persons of extensive historical knowlege; and they do not perceive, that under pretence of securing their rights and liberties, they are laying the foundation of factions which will probably end in the destruction of liberty and a free government. They do not consider, that when men become members of a political club, they lose their individual independence of mind; that they lose their impartiality of thinking and acting; and become the dupes of other men. The moment a man is attached to a club, his mind is not free: He receives a bias from the opinions of the party: A question indifferent to him, is no longer indifferent, when it materially effects a brother of the society. He is not left to act for himself; he is bound in honor to take part with the society—his pride and his prejudices, if at war with his opinion, will commonly obtain the victory; and rather than incur the ridicule or censure of his associates, he will countenance their measures, at all hazards; and thus an independant freeman is converted into a mere walking machine, a convenient *engine of party leaders*.

It is thus that private associations may always influence public measures; and if they are formed for the express purpose of discussing political measures, they may prove pernicious to the existing government.

The Society of Jesuits, formed at first without any intention of influencing government, became at last formidable to the civil power, wherever they were established and the society was finally dissolved by the arm of power, on account of the danger of its intrigues. The society was at first small and insignificant; but its influence was increased and strengthened by such means as I have described, till a small part of the inhabitants of a country, became dangerous to its government!

The masonic societies do not often intermeddle with politics; tho I have known an instance or two, in a different state, in which their influence was exerted for the brethren, and to a very bad effect. But were the masons in this or any European country, to unite their efforts for the purpose of governing the politics of the country, they might insensibly assume a great share of influence. To the honor of the craft be it mentioned, they have generally avoided any abuse of their power in this respect. But should that society or any other make it a business to unite their opinions and influence the measures of government, the society would establish an aristocracy in the country, and it would be necessary that the institution should share the fate of the Jesuits.

Private associations of men for the purposes of promoting arts, sciences, benevolence or charity are very laudable, and have been found beneficial in all countries. But whenever such societies attempt to convert the private attachment of their members into an instrument of political warfare, they are, in all cases, hostile to government. They are useful in pulling down bad governments; but they are dangerous to good government, and necessarily destroy liberty and equality of rights in a free country. I say necessarily; for it must occur to any man of common reflection, that in a free country, each citizen, in his private capacity, has an equal right to a share of influence in directing public measures; but a society, combined for the purpose of augmenting

and extending its influence, acquires an undue proportion of that general influence which is to direct the will of the state. Each individual member of the state should have an equal voice in elections; but the individuals of a club have more than an equal voice, because they have the benefit of another influence; that of extensive private attachments which come in aid of each man's political opinion. And just in proportion as the members of a club have an undue share of influence, in that proportion they abridge the rights of their fellow citizens. Every club therefore formed for political purposes, is an aristocracy established over their brethren. It has all the properties of an aristocracy, and all the effects of tyranny. It is only substituting the influence of private attachments, in lieu of the influence of birth and property among the nobility of Europe; and the certain effect of private intrigue in lieu of the usurped power and rights of feudal lords; the effects are the same. It is a literal truth, which cannot be denied, evaded, or modified, that the democratic clubs in the United States, while running mad with the abhorrence of aristocratic influence, are attempting to establish precisely the same influence under a different name. And if any thing will rescue this country from the jaws of faction, and prevent our free government from falling a prey, first to civil dissensions, and finally to some future Sylla and Marius, it must be either the good sense of a great majority of Americans, which will discourage private political associations, and render them contemptible; or the controlling power of the laws of the country, which in an early stage, shall demolish all such institutions, and secure to each individual in the great political family, *equal rights and an equal share of influence* in his individual capacity.

But let us admit that no fatal consequences to government, and equal rights will ensue from these institutions, still their effects on social harmony are very pernicious, and already begin to appear. A party-spirit is hostile to all friendly intercourse: it inflames the passions; it sours the mind; it destroys good neighborhood: it warps the judgment in judicial determinations: it banishes candor and substitutes prejudice; it restrains the exercise of benevolent affections; and in proportion as it chills the warm affections of the soul, it undermines the whole system of moral virtue. Were the councils of hell united to invent expedients for depriving men of the little portion of good they are destined to enjoy on this earth, the only measure they need adopt for this purpose, would be, to introduce factions into the bosom of the country. It was faction that kept the states of Greece and Rome in perpetual perturbation; it was faction which was an incessant scourge of merit; it was faction which produced endless dissension and frequent civil wars; it was faction which converted a polite people, into barbarous persecutors, as it has done in France; and which finally compelled the brave republicans of Rome to suffer a voluntary death, or to shelter themselves from the fury of contending parties, beneath the scepter of an emperor.

## APPENDIX

### On Faction

The following short account of the disputes between Sylla and Marius in Rome, is too applicable to my purpose to be omitted.

Sylla and Marius were competitors for the command of the army destined to act against Mithridates in Asia. Sylla obtained the appointment. Marius, to revenge himself, and if possible, displace his rival, had recourse to P. Sulpicius, a popular tribune, of considerable talents, but daring and vicious. This man made interest with the people, sold the freedom of the city to strangers and freemen, with a view to strengthen his party, and proposed a number of popular laws, in direct violation of the Roman constitution—some of which artifices are exactly similar to those employed by the Jacobins in France and their disciples.

The consuls attempted to defeat these projects; but the tribune, collected a multitude of the people, went to the senate house, and commanded the consuls to comply with their wishes. This is precisely the mode of proceeding adopted by the Jacobins in Paris.

The consuls refused; the populace drew their daggers; the son of the consul, Pompeius, was killed, but Sylla escaped. This answers to the manner in which the Jacobins destroyed their enemies, the Fuillans, by employing an armed body of ruffians.

Sylla however was brought back and compelled to comply with the demands of the tribune. He was therefore left in possession of the consulship, and soon after joined the army. His colleague, Pompeius, was degraded, and Sulpicius obtained the laws he had proposed. Sylla was displaced and Marius appointed to the command of the army. Just so the Jacobins proceeded, till they had filled all public offices with their own partizans.

Now the factions were ripe, and they ended as other factions end, in *repelling force with force*. Sylla would not resign his command to a faction. (La Fayette and Demourier had the spirit of Sylla, in like circumstances, but their troops would not support them.) He marched his army of 35,000 men towards Rome. The city was in confusion. The senate, by order of Sulpicius and Marius, the Marat and Barrere of Rome, sent a deputation, forbidding the approach of the army. The deputies were insulted by the soldiers. Other ambassadors were dispatched by the senate, requesting Sylla not to proceed. He answered he would stay where he was; but he detached a body of men to take possession of one of the gates of the city. The people drove them back, but Sylla arrived in time to support them; and he set fire to the adjacent houses. Marius resisted, and promised freedom to the slaves that would join him. But he was forced to flee and Sylla, assembling the senate, proposed the banishment of Sulpicius, Marius, and ten of their principal adherents. The edict was passed, and Sylla set a price upon their head, and confiscated their estates. Sulpicius was taken by the treachery of a slave and put to death. To reward the slave, Sylla gave him his freedom, and then ordered him, for the treachery, to be thrown from the Tarpeian rock (the method of rewarding and punishing modern traitors is much similar—giving them a round sum of money and consigning them to infamy).

Sylla convened the people, annulled the new laws of Sulpicius, created three hundred senators to strengthen his interest, and soon set out for Asia, with his army. I cannot detail the whole history of this business—suffice it to say, this pitiful question, which

of two able generals (either of them fit for the purpose, and not of a straw's value to the public which gained the appointment), should command the army in the Mithridatic war, gave rise to two parties or factions, which pursued each other with implacable enmity, till they brot their forces into the field, and an action was fought, which cost the lives of ten thousand men.

Marius, the conqueror of the Cimbri, and savior of Rome, an exile, took shipping, was cast away, taken by his foes, escaped, suffering incredible hardships; finally arrived in Asia, where he was maltreated—at last recalled by Cinna the consul, he returned to Italy, and embodying a number of slaves, he entered Rome, and filled it with slaughter; his party putting to death every man, whose salutation Marius did not return.\* Marius grew daily more blood-thirsty, and at last put to death every person of whom he had the least suspicion. Who does not see the guillotine in ancient Rome?

Marius soon after died: but his son headed an army and supported his faction. Sylla, having defeated Mithridates and reduced him to terms of peace, returned to Italy; fought the Marian party, and in two actions, it is said, twenty thousand men were slain in each. Finally Sylla crushed his rival's party, and put to death the leaders, filling Rome with slaughter, as Marius had done before him. Sylla's cruel proscriptions fill the reader with horror. Nearly five thousand of the best citizens of Rome were proscribed and massacred. Sylla's assassins roamed thro Italy to find the adherents of Marius, and put them to indiscriminate slaughter. When the senators appeared alarmed at such outrages, Sylla answered them coolly, "Conscript fathers, it is only a few seditious men, whom I have ordered to be punished" precisely the language of the ruling faction in France, and precisely the language of party in all countries.

It is remarkable also that the pretext for these violences is always the same "to rescue the state from tyranny—to destroy despotism—to exterminate traitors." This was the perpetual cant of Sylla and Marius, while they were butchering each other's adherents with merciless cruelty. This was the pretence of Cromwell in England—and it is the present language of the ruling men in France. The state must be saved, and to save it, our party must prevail; liberty must be secured; but to secure it, we must be absolute in power, and of course liberty is crushed. A republic must be established; but to do this, a few commissioners, with dictatorial power, seconded by an irresistible military force, must govern the country. Our government shall be a *republic, one and indivisible*; and to effect this, it is necessary to put to death the representatives of one half the republic, that the whole may be governed by the other half. Freedom of debate is a constitutional right; but we must have a Paris mob to hiss down our enemies.

Sylla crushed his enemies, with the blood of nearly one hundred thousand citizens and soldiers; and after he had thus delivered Rome from tyrants, as he pretended, he ordered the people to elect him perpetual dictator. He treated the people just as all popular leaders treat them; first courting them, with the cry of liberty; making them the instruments of their own elevation; then trampling on them as slaves. Just so in England, Cromwell destroyed the tyranny, of Charles I, by the cant of liberty and religion, then saddled the English with his own despotic power. Just so Danton, and

Barrere are now dictators in France; without the name, but with all the powers; and who will succeed them, God only knows.

I beg the reader to consider these facts, as intended solely to set in a strong point of light the danger of faction. I will not say that the tyranny and corruptions of the old governments in Europe will not warrant men in hazarding all possible temporary evils, to effect a renovation. I would, with candor, believe such violences, in some degree, unavoidable. But nothing short of most palpable corruption, the most unequivocal proof of necessity, can warrant men in resorting to irregular bodies of the people, for a redress of evils. While law and constitution are adhered to, the remedy will always be safe. But when tumultuous meetings of people, unknown to the laws, and unrestrained by legal modes of procedure, undertake to direct the public will, faction succeeds; and faction begets disorder, force, rancorous passions, anarchy, tyranny, blood and slaughter.

## Jacobin Club

At the beginning of the late revolution in America, the people of this country had recourse to a similar mode of combining all parts of the continent into a system of opposition to the existing government. In most of the colonies, the British crown, by its officers, had considerable influence. To resist this influence, the leaders found it necessary to call in the aid of the great body of the people; to rouse their passions, inflammatory publications were circulated with great industry; and to unite, condense and direct the opinions and passions of an immense people, scattered over a great extent of territory, associations were formed, under the denomination of Committees of Safety, which had a correspondence with each other, and moulded the proceedings of the people into uniformity and system. The first Congress grew out of the same system; and then followed union, concert and energy in prosecuting the revolution.

It has been an inexplicable mystery to many very judicious men, how the Americans should have been brot to unite in opposing the usurped claims of Great-Britain, when the evils of slavery were not in reality felt, but only expected by the people. In short, why such a number of illiterate men should be prevailed upon to resist tyranny in principle, and risk the evils of war, when the effects of the British claims were but slightly felt by the mass of people. All parties however agree in ascribing this amazing union, to the good sense of the Americans.

The truth is, discernment and talents were necessary to form and direct the system; but the multitude were managed more by their passions than by their reason. The committees of safety were the instruments of union; and the passions of the populace the instruments of action. The presses teemed with publications addressed to the passions; the horrors of slavery were presented to the imagination in striking colors: and the men who wrote intended, when they wrote, to exaggerate real facts for the purpose of rousing the passions of resentment and dread of evils, which reason told them, were not to be expected. These matters are now known. And it appears very clear from history and observation, that in a popular government, it is not difficult to inflame the passions of a people with imaginary as well as real evils. In Europe, the people have real evils to extirpate. The passions of Americans are inlisting on one

side or the other of the present contest in France. We feel no loss of personal liberty as yet, in consequence of the combination against France; but artful men address the passions of our citizens; they teach them to fear, that if France should be reduced, the combined powers will attack liberty in America. Cool men who reflect upon the difficulties of such an attempt, consider all such apprehensions as groundless and idle. But two or three hundred men collected, might have their passions so wrought upon by an artful or noisy declaimer, as to believe the danger real. They then grow violent, and denounce as enemies, all who are cool or moderate enough to entertain no such fears. Thus two parties are formed on a mere imaginary evil, and when the parties are formed, some badge of distinction, a button or a cockade is assumed, to widen the breach, and create disaffection, suspicion and hostile passions. All this is very visible in America; and because some men are too rational to be alarmed at chimeras, too temperate to commit themselves hastily, or too respectable not to despise little badges of distinction, the livery of faction, they are insulted as enemies to the rights of the people: And whenever opportunities offer, they fall a prey to the fury of popular passion. This is the triumph of passion over reason; of violence, over moderation. Should the present controversy in Europe continue two or three years longer, I should not be surprized to see party spirit in America, which grew originally out of a mere speculative question, proceed to open hostility and bloodshed. People are easily made to believe their government is bad, or not so good as they might expect from change; they may be made to fear corruption, which they do not see, and which does not exist: and to risk real evils at the present moment, to guard against possible evils, a century hence. All this may be done, if restless daring men will take pains to manage popular passions.

### [Fuillans]

It may seem strange that moderation should be deemed a crime; but it is a literal truth. In the sittings of the Jacobin Club Dec. 26th. 1793, Robespierre was under the necessity of vindicating himself from the charge of being a moderate, a Fuillant.

Nor is it less singular that some of the charges against their opposers should consist of mere trifles or suspicion, or were so indefinite as not to be capable of proof. One of the charges against Le Brun, was, that he christened a daughter by the name of "Victoire Demourier Jamappe." This was done while Demourier was in full career of glory; yet his enemies, from this circumstance, deduced proof of Le Brun's conspiracy with Demourier. He was convicted of conspiring against the unity and indivisibility of the republic; that is, of attempting to form a federal government in France, like that of America.

### [The Temple Of Reason]

There is no instance of idolatrous worship recorded in history, that displays more blind superstition, than the celebration of the Festival of Reason. The idol adored, is not the same as those worshipped by the ancient Druids, or modern Hindoos; but it is still an idol, and the pagan world cannot furnish a more striking instance to prove that men will forever worship something, whether a cat, a bird, an oak, the sun, the moon,



fire, or the Temple of Reason. Totally immaterial is it, what the idol is; the deity of the day has no connection with men's happiness, otherwise than as he is visible; he strikes the senses; he rouses the passions of the multitude, and they believe he is propitious to them—how or in what manner they never know or enquire. The oak of the Druids was just as good and powerful a deity, as the temple or altar of reason. The oak inspired its votaries with superstition and enthusiasm; and that is precisely the effect of the French festival of reason; for of all fanatics that ever existed, the French appear, in all that respects what they call philosophy, to be the least rational. The following is the account of the festival.

Paris,

Nov. 12.

A grand festival dedicated to reason and truth was yesterday celebrated in the cattedrale of Paris. In the middle of this church was erected a mount, and on it a very plain temple, the facade of which bore the following inscription; *A la Philosophie*. Before the gate of this temple was placed the Torch of Truth in the summit of the mount on the Altar of Reason spreading light. The convention and all the constituted authorities assisted at the ceremony.

Two rows of young girls dressed in white, each wearing a crown of oak leaves, crossed before the Altar of Reason, at the sound of republican music; each of the girls inclined before the torch, and ascend[ed] the summit of the mountain. Liberty then came out of the Temple of Philosophy towards a throne made of grass, to receive the homage of the republicans of both sexes, who sung a hymn in her praise, extending their arms at the same time towards her. Liberty descended afterwards to return to the temple, and on re-entering it, she turned about, casting a look of benevolence on her friends. When she got in, every one expressed with enthusiasm the sensations which the goddess excited in them, by songs of joy, and they swore never to cease to be faithful to her.

How little men see their own errors. All this ceremony and parade about reason and liberty; at a time when the governing faction were wading to the altar thro rivers of innocent blood; at a time when the tyranny, imprisonments, and massacres of a century are crowd[ed] into a single year.

One absurdity more must be noticed. The Jacobins have displayed an implacable hatred of royalty and every thing that belongs to it. Even devices of kingly origin on coins and rings have not escaped their vengeance, yet these same people have borrowed the principal emblem of royalty themselves; to adorn this festival: and two rows of young girls are furnished with crowns of oak leaves.

## Of Aristocracy

There is not a word in the English or French language so much bandied about by disigning men, and so little understood by their echoing agents, as the word aristocrat. A few days ago an honest man, by no means the least informed, was asked if he knew

the meaning of it; he replied very ingenuously, “he did not understand it, but he supposed it some French word.” Yet this word is used with great effect to excite party prejudices.

Aristocracy in Europe denotes a distinction of men, by birth, titles, property, or office. In America this distinction does not exist with respect to hereditary titles or office; nor with respect to birth and property, any farther than the minds of men, from nature or habit, are inclined to pay more than ordinary respect to persons who are born of parents that have been distinguished for something eminent, and to persons who have large estates. This propensity, whether natural or habitual, exists—no man can deny it; and this is all Mr. Adams, in his defence, means by the words well-born; an expression that has rung a thousand changes from New-Hampshire to Georgia. Yet the very declaimers who fill our ears with a perpetual din on this subject, are exemplifying the truth of this natural aristocracy, in almost every negotiation of their lives. The most noisy democrat in this country, who feasts upon the words liberty and equality, cannot put a son apprentice to business, without searching for a respectable family to take him; nor marry a son or daughter, without enquiring particularly into the family, connections and fortune of the proposed partner. It may be said, this propensity to pay respect to such things is wrong and vitious—be it so—the propensity exists—these things are true—they cannot be contradicted. And Mr. Adams, instead of advocating aristocracy and its exclusive privileges, makes it a main point in his defence, to explain the nature and tendency of this principle in men, and to point out cautions and expedients for guarding against its pernicious effects in government. His labors to check this spirit of aristocracy in America, entitle him to the character of a firm intelligent republican.

If the word aristocracy is applicable to any thing in America, it is to that personal influence which men derive from offices, the merit of eminent services, age, talents, wealth, education, virtue, or whatever other circumstance attracts the attention of people. The distinguishing circumstances of nobility in Europe, are hereditary titles, estates and offices, which give the possessor some claims or rights above others. In this country, most of the circumstances which command particular respect, are personal, accidental or acquired, and none of them give the possessor any claims or rights over his fellow citizens. Yet the circumstances which do actually give this personal influence, which forms a kind of natural or customary aristocracy, exist universally among men, savage or civilized, in every country and under every form of government. The circumstances are either natural, or arise necessarily out of the state of society. Helvetius and other profound philosophers may write as much as they please, to prove man to be wholly the *creature of his own making*, the work of education; but facts occur every hour to common observation, to prove the theory false. The difference of intellectual faculties in man is visible almost as soon as he is born, and is more early and more distinctly marked than the difference of his features. And this natural difference of capacity originates a multitude of other differences in after-life, which create distinctions; that is, they give rise to those circumstances of talents, wit, address, property, and office to which men invariably pay a kind of respect. This respect gives personal influence to the possessor, in some circle, either small or great, and this personal influence is the natural aristocracy of men, in all countries and in all governments. It exists among the native Indians; it has existed in

every republic on earth: From the president of the United States, to the humble apple-dealer at the corner of Fly-market, every person enjoys a portion of this personal influence among his particular acquaintance. It exists in government, in churches, in towns, in parishes, in private societies and in families.

It is this insensible aristocracy of opinion and respect that now forms the firmest band of union between the states. The long and eminent services of our worthy President have filled all hearts with gratitude and respect; and by means of this gratitude and respect, and the confidence they inspire in his talents and integrity, he has a greater influence in America than any nobleman, perhaps than any prince, in Europe. This respect has hitherto restrained the violence of parties: whatever be the difference of opinion on subjects of government, all parties agree to confide in the president. This is the effect of his personal influence; and not a respect for the laws or constitution of the United States. Americans rally round the man, rather than round the executive authority of the union. And it is a problem to be solved, after his leaving the office, what energy, or force really exists in the executive authority itself.

If my ideas of natural aristocracy are just, the president of the United States, is a most influential, and most useful aristocrat: and long may America enjoy the blessings of such aristocracy!

A similar personal influence is observable in other men. In every state, in every town, there are some, who, by their talents, wealth, address or old age and wisdom, acquire and preserve a superior share of influence in their districts. This influence may do good or hurt, as it is coupled with good or bad intentions. But that when confined to small districts, as towns and parishes, it has most generally a good effect, there is no doubt. An old respected citizen has a thousand opportunities of correcting the opinions, settling the quarrels, and restraining the passions of his neighbors. This personal influence in small districts is most remarkable in some parts of New-England; wherever it exists, peace and concord distinguish the neighborhood; and where by any accident, it does not exist, society is distracted with quarrels and parties, which produce an uncommon depravity of morals.

One remark further. The people who contend most for liberty and equality, and who are most alarmed at aristocracy, are, in America, the greatest dupes of this aristocracy of personal influence. Federal men not only respect the president, but they make the constitution and laws of the United States, their standard; at least they aim to do it. On the other hand, their opposers rally round the standard of particular men. There are certain leading men in the antifederal interest, who have more absolute authority over the opinions of that party, than is possessed by any man in America, except the president of the United States. As the aristocracy of America consists in this personal influence, the men, who in private associations, have the most of this influence, are, in their sphere, the most complete aristocrats. And at this time, certain influential men in the democratic clubs, are the most influential aristocrats there are in America among private citizens.

While this personal influence is governed by good motives, or limited to small districts, it is not dangerous and may be useful. When it extends far, it may be useful

or dangerous, according as it is directed by good or vitious men. It is always to be watched—in public affairs, it is controled by the laws; in clubs and private citizens, it has no restraint but the consciences of men; and it is to be watched with double vigilance, as its danger is in proportion to its extent.

### [Contempt For Religion]

It is remarked that the Estates General, on their first assembling May 5, 1789, commenced their important labors with a solemn act of devotion. Preceded by the clergy and followed by the king, the representatives of the nation repaired to the temple of God, accompanied with an immense croud, and offered up vows and prayers for success.

Contrast this with the late severe laws respecting the clergy, and the abolition of christianity. Some of the convention pretend to entertain a respect for morality; yet as early as 1791, before they had proceeded to publish atheism as a national creed, one of the members in debate declared it “impossible for a society to exist without an immutable and eternal system of morality”; and this declaration was followed with *repeated and loud busts of laughter*. This is an instance selected from thousands to show their contempt of every thing that looks like the obligations of religion and morality. *Moniteur* 15 November, 1791.

### [On Jacobin Subversion]

The following remarks of Mr. Neckar, who was in France and observed all the arts invented by the Jacobins to get command of the people, are [too] much in point to be omitted.

It was an artful contrivance, the success of which was certain, to involve the constitution in two words, liberty and equality. Men of sense would perceive that between these ideas, and a just conception of a political institution there was a vast distance. But the people are to be acted upon only by reducing things to a small compass; it is by restricting their ideas to the narrow circle of their feelings, and absorbing their passions in a phrase, that we become their masters. This object accomplished, a watchword, or in its stead, an outward token, a mark of distinction, the color or fold of a ribbon, has greater effect than the wisdom of a Solon or the eloquence of a Demosthenes. Such are the multitude—such the description of the empire that may be obtained over them; and criminal indeed are those who take advantage of their weakness, and practice arts to deceive them, rather than to render them happy by the sole authority of reason and morality.

Neckar on Exec. Power Vol. 2. 269.

The emissaries of the Jacobins are attempting to make themselves masters of the people in America by the same means—by clubs and a button, or other badge of distinction. Detestable is the artifice, and may confusion be the portion of the Jesuitical incendiaries, who are thus secretly planting enmity and sedition in our peaceful country!

## [On Factional Savagery]

Of the ferociousness of civil war, history furnishes innumerable proofs; and the people of France are daily presenting new examples of the sanguinary spirit of all parties in that distracted country. The following official letter offers a specimen.

### Letter From The President And Members Composing The Military Committee With The Army Of The West, To The Commonalty Of Paris, Dated Saumur, 6 Nivose, (Dec. 25.)

We have to communicate to you the interesting news of the total destruction of the banditti on the right banks of the Loire. There are here and there yet some small remains of these monsters in the interior part of La Vendee, but as our armies are no longer obliged to divide themselves, they will undoubtedly soon clear the whole country. Those who solicit the convention to prevent the great measures of public welfare, and try to inspire them with a false compassion, are either traitors or egotists. If you had seen like me, what this fanatic herd is capable of! Patriots thrown into the fire alive, others cut and chopped to pieces. Two days before the siege of Angers, in a country which was supposed to be all sacred to liberty, three hundred soldiers were assassinated by these monsters, in the neighborhood of Chemeville, and nevertheless the evening before they had cried *Vive la Republique!* and declared that they sincerely repented of their errors: and in different parts of this unhappy country similar events have taken place.

(Signed) Felix & Millie.

It is surprizing that men will be guilty of the most direct and palpable contradictions, and yet they will not see them—they cannot be convinced of them. The military committee call the insurgents a banditti, a fanatic herd: accuse them of throwing patriots into the fire alive, and chopping them to pieces. Yet with the same breath, they declare the news of their total extirpation by shooting, drowning, and beheading them in cool blood. Besides[,] who began these scenes of carnage? The patriots, so called; the Jacobins and their adherents. The massacre of the 10th of August and 2d and 3d of Sept. were the first scenes of the bloody drama that has been exhibiting for two years in that populous country. In the first scenes of the tragedy several thousand men fell victims—many of them not even suspected of disaffection to the cause of liberty. Who does not see the massacre of St. Bartholomew revived in all its horrors? Change but the names of Catholics and Protestants, to Jacobins and Royalists, and the same scene is presented. The apparent motives are different, but analagous. The catholics put to death the protestants in 1572, because they opposed the power of the Catholics. They opposed Catherine of Medicis, and the Duke of Guise; and the latter, thinking them troublesome, pronounced them traitors and heretics, a scheme of universal assassination was formed, and the King Charles IXth, gave his assent to it. On that dreadful night, the sound of a bell was the signal for rallying, and the assassins were let loose upon the unsuspecting protestants. Five thousand in Paris, and twenty-five or thirty thousand in France, fell victims to the savage fury of the dogs of faction. All this was to *serve God and religion*.

Draw a parallel between this scene and the massacre of August and September 1792. The popular party suspected treason in their opposers. Without trial or proof they must be exterminated. A banditti is prepared, from Paris and Marseilles. At midnight the bell gives the signal for rallying; the populace collect and the bloody work is begun—the Swiss guards, all suspected persons, priests and prisoners fall a sacrifice, in the indiscriminate slaughter. In these massacres, six or seven thousand persons are murdered—and for what? Why the old stale plea of necessity is called in to justify it—and liberty in this case, as religion in the massacre of St. Bartholomew is made the stalking horse to drive the trade of butchering their fellow men. The truth is, religion in one case and liberty in the other directly forbid all such outrages. It is faction. Men are always the same ferocious animals, when guided by passion and loosed from the restraints of law. Let parties grow warm—let their passions be inflamed—let them believe one man is the enemy of another—let opposition exasperate them—and it is only for some daring demagogue to cry, your religion, or your liberty is in danger—your enemies are heretics or traitors—they must be exterminated—and the murderous work begins, and seldom ends till one party crushes the other. In all cases of this kind, without one solitary exception on record, faction ends in tyranny—the victorious party, even with the word liberty incessantly on their tongues, never failing to exercise over the defeated party, the most cruel vengeful acts of domination.

This is a most interesting subject to Americans; as the seeds of faction, that bane of republics, seem to be sown by an industrious party in America, and God only knows what will be the fruit of these things. So strong is the impression on my mind, that the present situation of Europe, and our attachment to the French cause require all the caution and vigilance of government and good sense, to save this country from running mad in theories of popular constitutions, and plunging itself into the evils of faction and anarchy, that I beg leave to subjoin the following facts and remarks on this subject.

The manner in which the reports to the National Convention, mention the destruction of the rebels at La Vendee, many of them honest deluded country people, fills the reader with horror. “Our soldiers, hand to hand, cut them down in front of their cannon. Streets, roads, plains and marshes were encumbered with the dead; we marched over heaps of the slain.” “This banditti, these monsters—this army of robbers is destroyed.” “This war of rogues and peasants.” “It would have done your heart good to see these soldiers of Jesus and Louis XVII, throwing themselves into the marshes, or obliged to surrender.” “Five hundred rebels were brot in; they implored pardon, which was refused—they were all put to death.” “Six hundred were brot to Acenis; 800 to Angers and a great number to Saumer—the representatives of the people would rid the earth of them by ordering them to be thrown into the Loire.” “The late actions on the Vendee have cost the lives of 40,000 persons.” “The civil war the last summer is supposed to have cost France two hundred thousand lives.” These are the accounts we have received from France. “The rebels have been nearly all killed—the royalists have been all massacred—the prisoners are so numerous that the guillotine is not sufficient—I have taken the method, says Garrier, of having them all shot to death.” These are the words of the triumphant republicans. Nay, two brothers finding a third brother among the rebels, demanded he should be tried by the military committee.

But what exceeds all the descriptions of barbarity hitherto known in America, is the speech of Collot D'Herbois in the National Convention. "Jacobins! Some persons wish to moderate the revolutionary moment; take care of it; never forget what Robespierre told you on this subject. Some persons wish to make you establish a committee of clemency—No clemency!—be always Jacobins and mountaneers, and liberty shall be saved."

Such are the terrible effects of civil war, the offspring of faction. Foreign wars are conducted with more humanity: it is in civil wars only that men turn savages, and exult over the mangled carcasses of their fathers, brethren and fellow citizens.

### [On Treason]

It is said that Brissot and his party went farther than I have admitted in the text; and actually attempted to excite the people to arms in support of their proposed federal government. The charge on trial was, that "they had conspired against the unity and indivisibility of the republic," and this was held treason. Admit this to be proved; yet it is also admitted that they were republicans; they were all enemies of monarchy. The only circumstance then that fixes the charge of criminality on this party, is, that they were less numerous than the Jacobins: for the Jacobins had recourse to the same means to destroy their opposers, the Fuillans—they employed an armed populace and actually dispersed them by force. This is a public fact. Had the Fuillans, the moderate party, been more numerous (and a few additional members would have turned the scale), they would have crushed the Jacobins, and their ideas of a republican government would have been right—the Jacobinic system of an indivisible republic would have been wrong; and the Jacobins would have been traitors for attempting to maintain it by force. This is a fair statement of the question between the parties.

When the public will of a nation has instituted a government, and that government is in exercise, the constitution is the standard of right; the men who adhere to it are *faithful to their country*; they are good citizens. When during a revolution, the old government is, by the representatives of the nation, abolished in legal form, and a new one is not yet established, there is a kind of interregnum, a period when the representatives are at liberty to propose any form of government they please. No peaceable act of any representative, to establish his own system, can be called treason. There is no constitution against which an act of treason can be committed—no law, no standard by which it can be defined or proved. If any man attempts to use force and compel his countrymen to receive his system, in preference to others, it is an unwarrantable act—a high misdemeanor—an invasion of liberty—perhaps it may be treason: tho it would be difficult to punish it in a course of legal justice, for there is no law by which it can be determined.

This was nearly the situation of France, when the controversy between the parties in the second convention originated. The constitution of 1791 was abolished with great unanimity, on the first day, if I mistake not, of the session. No new constitution was digested. The members of the convention divided upon the form of government most proper for France. The Jacobins were the first to employ force. They established their power by violence. This cannot be denied. If the employment of force then, was

treason, the Jacobins were first guilty. They were the aggressors. The dispersion of the Fuillans, and the horrid massacres of August 10th and Sept 2d and 3d were occasioned by a banditti of the populace of Paris and Marseilles, instigated by some of that party. The party succeeded, and success has decided their cause to be just. It is this success alone, which has given the name of patriotism to the violences of the Jacobins—it is defeat alone which has given the epithet of treason to the efforts of the Brissotines. The mere question, “whose proposed system of government is best for France” is a mere speculative point, on which people will have different opinions; and to entertain this or that opinion, can never be justly denominated treason.

I go farther, and declare my own private opinion, that in the course of a few years, a change will take place in France; and it is an equal chance that the Jacobins will be denounced as traitors, by a majority of the nation; and the statute of La Fayette or Brissot will be erected on the ruins of the statue of Marat. Factions are playing the same game that Sylla and Marius played at Rome—the same game that York and Lancaster played in England—the man who is exiled to day as a traitor, will tomorrow be recalled, and hailed as the protector of liberty. When party spirit subsides and factions lose their violence, then and not before, will tyranny give way to freedom, and the capricious sway of men, to the mild steady dominion of law.

## Conclusion

Those who suppose France now in possession of a free government are most egregiously mistaken. At no period has France experienced a despotism so severe and bloody, as the present authority of the convention, backed by a full treasury and more than a million of disciplined troops. This severe tyranny has imprisoned and executed more French citizens in 18 months past, than had been thrown into the Bastille for three centuries, preceding its demolition.

Nor are the French now fighting for internal liberty; they are fighting against external foes; a vile league of tyrants that have unwarrantably attempted to control the internal affairs of France. God grant that they may be defeated, and severely chastized for their insolence!

It is this unprecedented league of princes that now gives union and energy to the French nation. It is perhaps the sole principle of union. When this combination shall be dissolved, and France left to *act only upon herself*, more than half the revolution will still remain to be effected. France will then have to conquer the *errors of her legislators* and the *passions of a turbulent populace*. She will find a defective constitution and feeble laws—she will find violent parties, strong prejudices, unbridled licentiousness to be subdued. Instead of one tyrant or a convention of tyrants, she will find a multitude of little tyrants in each of her forty-five thousand towns and villages. Anarchy, disorder, and proscriptions will afflict her for some years; and probably the present convention and their successors will be buried in the ruins of the present paper constitution of government.

But society cannot exist without government. Experience and severe calamities will ultimately teach the French nation, that government immediately in the hands of the



people, of citizens collected without law, and proceeding without order, is the most violent, irregular, capricious and dangerous species of despotism—a despotism, infinitely more terrible than the fixed steady tyranny of a monarch, as it may spring up in a moment, and unexpectedly spread devastation and ruin, at any time, in any place, and among any class of citizens. The tyranny of a monarch is the steady gale, which gives time to prepare for its ravages; it enables the seamen to clear his decks and hand his sails—the farmer to leave his field, to shut his doors and shelter himself and his herds from the impending storm. But popular despotism is a whirlwind, a tornado of passions; it collects in a moment; a calm clear sky is instantly darkened, and furious winds, bursting on their affrightened victims while helpless and unguarded, sweep away the fruits of their labor, and bury them in the ruins.

The French will learn this important truth, that the assembly of representatives, who are to govern twenty-six millions of people, is not to be a company of stage-players, whose speeches are to be regulated by the hisses and acclamations of a promiscuous collection of men in the galleries. They will learn that a Paris mob is not to govern France, and that the galleries of the convention must be silenced, or France will be enslaved. In short the French people must learn that an enthusiasm, necessary to animate her citizens in time of war, will be a source of infinite disorder in time of peace; that passions, essential to them when engaging a foreign enemy, will be fatal to their own government: that in lieu of private wills, the laws must govern; and that parties must bend their stubborn opinions to some conciliatory plan of government on which a great majority of citizens can coalesce and harmonize. When all this is done, they must learn that the executive power must be vested in a single hand, call him monarch, doge, president, governor, or what they please; and to secure liberty, the executive must have force and energy. They must also learn a truth, sanctioned by numerous experiments, that legislative power, vested in two houses, is exercised with more safety and effect, than when vested in a single assembly. The conclusion of the whole business will be, that civil war and the blood of half a million of citizens, will compel the nation to renounce the idle theories of upstart philosophers, and return to the plain substantial maxims of wisdom and experience. Then, and not before, will France enjoy liberty.

Americans! be not deluded. In seeking liberty, France has gone beyond her. You, my countrymen, if you love liberty, adhere to your constitution of government. The moment you quit that sheet-anchor, you are afloat among the surges of passion and the rocks of error; threatened every moment with ship-wreck. Heaven grant that while Europe is agitated with a violent tempest, in which palaces are shaken, and thrones tottering to their base, the republican government of America, in which liberty and the rights of man are embarked, fortunately anchored at an immense distance, on the margin of the gale, may be enabled to ride out the storm, and land us safely on the shores of peace and political tranquillity.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

## Chronology: 1795–1805

- 1795 **MANIFESTATIONS OF THE BENEFICENCE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE TOWARDS AMERICA**, Bishop James Madison  
Jay's Treaty with Great Britain is narrowly ratified by the Senate (June 24). Bitter opposition has consolidated Jefferson's Democratic-Republican Party as a political power and alienated the French First Republic. The two countries are on the brink of war by the following spring.  
Timothy Pickering succeeds Edmund Randolph as Secretary of State after the latter, accused of corruption, resigns (Dec. 10). A completely reorganized cabinet now includes only Federalists, with Hamilton out but still a potent influence; John Adams will retain this cabinet when he becomes second president.  
Pinckney's Treaty with Spain opens up the entire Mississippi River, including New Orleans at its mouth, to American trade.  
Oliver Evans, a prolific and successful inventor, publishes the first textbook of mechanical engineering, *The Young Mill-Wright's and Miller's Guide*.
- 1796 Tennessee is admitted as the sixteenth state (slave-holding), with John Sevier as Governor (June 1).  
British forces evacuate Detroit and other Great Lakes strongholds, as agreed in Jay's Treaty (July–Aug.).  
France refuses to receive Charles C. Pinckney as James Monroe's replacement as American minister until "grievances have been redressed" (Aug. 22).  
Washington's Farewell Address, never delivered orally, is published in the Philadelphia *Daily American Advertiser* (Sept. 17).  
The United States signs a treaty with Tripoli to pay annual tribute, commissions, and ransom for the release of American seamen captured by Barbary pirates and for the security of U.S. vessels (Nov. 4).  
Andrew Jackson is chosen by Tennessee as the state's first Congressional Representative (Nov.).  
John Adams is elected President (71 electoral votes) and Thomas Jefferson Vice President (68 electoral votes) (Dec. 7).  
Thomas Paine publishes *The Age of Reason*, the most influential publication of a number that attack religion as superstition.
- 1797 **SERMON BEFORE THE GENERAL COURT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE AT THE GENERAL ELECTION**, Stephen Peabody  
President John Adams and Vice President Thomas Jefferson are inaugurated (Mar. 4).  
The first special session of Congress is called by President Adams after the French expulsion of Pinckney, the U.S. minister (May 15).  
A treaty with Tunis is signed, similar to that signed with Tripoli, with even higher sums being paid to protect American ships and seamen from Barbary pirates (Aug. 28; not ratified until Jan. 10, 1801).  
In the "XYZ Affair" Talleyrand in Paris seeks a forced loan of \$240,000 to France and a personal bribe to smooth things between his country and the United States. He detains the diplomat Elbridge Gerry when American commissioners refuse (Oct. 18). Undeclared naval war results, lasting until 1800.

*The U.S.S. Constitution (“Old Ironsides”)*, a 44-gun frigate, is launched and put into highly effective service by the U.S. Navy against the French and Barbary pirates (Oct. 21).

1798 A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BOSTON, John Thayer

THE DUTY OF AMERICANS, AT THE PRESENT CRISIS, Timothy Dwight  
War fears produce a variety of measures aimed at strengthening the federal government, including four laws known as the Alien and Sedition Acts outlawing political opposition (June–July); these are applied against Democratic-Republican spokesmen, editors, and printers.

The Marine Corps is established (July 11).

The Kentucky Resolutions, drafted by Jefferson, assert the power of sovereign states to determine the constitutionality or nullity of the Alien and Sedition Acts (Sept. 12). The Virginia Resolutions, composed by Madison, are similarly enacted to oppose the unconstitutional exercise of federal power in Virginia (Dec. 24).

Eli Whitney invents the basic techniques for mass production and builds an assembly line for the production of army muskets on a government contract.

1799 A new peace commission is sent to Paris by Adams upon Talleyrand’s assurance that they will be respectfully received (Feb. 25).

A new Kentucky Resolution, also drafted by Jefferson, is enacted against the rebuttal that only the federal judiciary can decide on the constitutionality of laws. The resolution insists that states may nullify congressional enactments (Nov. 22).

The Sixth Congress meets, the last to have a Federalist majority (Dec. 2).

Washington suddenly dies (Dec. 14). Napoleon Bonaparte proclaims a week of mourning in France, and honors are paid him in England (Dec. 14).

1800 A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON, Henry Holcombe

ON THE EVILS OF A WEAK GOVERNMENT, John Smalley

THE VOICE OF WARNING TO CHRISTIANS, John Mitchell Mason

A SOLEMN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIANS AND PATRIOTS, Tunis Wortman

The Second Great Awakening begins.

The federal government moves from Philadelphia to Washington, D.C. (June).

With the Treaty of Morfontaine (“Convention of 1800”), naval war between the United States and France is ended (Sept. 30).

Congress convenes in Washington and John and Abigail Adams occupy the new presidential residence, the White House (Nov. 17).

1801 OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD, Stanley Griswold

John Marshall, appointed by Adams and confirmed by the Senate, takes the oath of office as Chief Justice of the United States (Jan. 20–Feb. 4).

Electoral ballots from the 1800 election are finally counted and, after an all-night session and 36 rounds of voting to break a deadlock, Jefferson (with Hamilton’s help) is elected President, Aaron Burr Vice President (Feb. 11).

War against Barbary pirates results as the Pasha of Tripoli declares war on the United States (May 14). The struggle lasts until 1805.

The Great Revival of the West, part of the second Great Awakening, begins at a Presbyterian camp meeting in Cane Ridge, Kentucky (Aug. 6).

1802 AN ORATION IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE, William Emerson

1803 The Supreme Court *Marbury v. Madison* decision establishes judicial review by declaring an act of Congress null and void (Feb. 24).

Ohio becomes the seventeenth state, the first in the Union in which slavery is illegal from the beginning (Mar. 1).

The Louisiana Purchase treaty with France for \$15 million doubles the nation's land area, from which thirteen new states will be created (May 2).

The three-year Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific coast begins (Aug. 31).

New England Federalists (including some clergy) secretly connive with New Yorkers and Vice President Burr to secede and form a Northern or Northeastern Confederacy. In the New York gubernatorial race, Hamilton opposes Burr, who intends to become president of the confederacy.

1804 Democratic-Republican Party leaders set out to impeach and remove Federalist judges, such as Federal District Judge John Pickering of New Hampshire and Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase (Jan.–Mar.).

Aaron Burr kills Alexander Hamilton in a duel at Weehawken, New Jersey (July 11).

Jefferson is re-elected for a second term (162 electoral votes), with George Clinton of New York elected as Vice President (Dec. 5).

1805 A SERMON, ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST, John Hargrove

Jefferson is inaugurated for a second term, with Vice President Clinton (Mar. 4); Madison continues as Secretary of State, Albert Gallatin as Secretary of the Treasury.

A treaty is signed ending the Tripolitanian War (June 4).

The Lewis and Clark expedition arrives at the mouth of the Columbia River (Nov. 7) and builds Fort Clatsop (near present-day Astoria, Oregon) for winter quarters.

The Ninth Congress convenes with decisive Democratic-Republican majorities in both House and Senate (Dec. 9).

The University of South Carolina is opened.

Mercy Otis Warren publishes the three-volume *The Rise, Progress and Termination of the American Revolution*.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

45

## MANIFESTATIONS OF THE BENEFICENCE OF DIVINE PROVIDENCE TOWARDS AMERICA

Bishop James Madison

RICHMOND

1795

Bishop James Madison (1749–1812). A cousin of President James Madison, Madison was educated as a lawyer under George Wythe after graduation with high honors from the College of William and Mary in 1771. He became a professor of philosophy and mathematics at the college but soon decided upon the ministry. He was ordained in England in 1775 as an Anglican priest. Two years later he became president of William and Mary and held that position until his death. A strong advocate of independence, he went so far, we are told, as to speak of the republic—rather than kingdom—of heaven. He served as the captain of a militia company of his students and saw considerable action during the Revolution. After the war, Madison devoted himself to reviving the College of William and Mary; in 1784 he taught political economy using Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* as a textbook. As a surveyor and cartographer, he established the boundary between Virginia and Pennsylvania and later drew the map of Virginia commonly called Madison's Map (issued first in 1807 and corrected in 1818). He was a leading scientist of the day and corresponded with Thomas Jefferson about scientific matters.

Madison also devoted himself to the reorganization of the Episcopal Church in Virginia after the war. Consecrated the first Bishop of Virginia (in Canterbury in 1790), he was the third of three American bishops through whom the episcopate came to the United States. Disestablished and with its properties under attack, the church faced formidable problems that, rather than being solved during Madison's tenure, further deepened.

The sermon reprinted here was preached on February 19, 1795, proclaimed a day of national thanksgiving and prayer by President Washington.

*Only fear the Lord, and serve him; for consider how great things he hath done for you.*

[I] Samuel XII. 2[4].

## Brethren,

There are few situations more interesting to the human race, than that which the people of America this day presents. The temples of the living God are every where, throughout this rising empire, this day, crowded, I trust, with worshippers, whose hearts, impressed with a just and lively sense of the great things, which he hath done for them, pour forth, in unison, the grateful tribute of praise and thanksgiving. Yes, this day, brethren, “the voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous”; and with reason, for the history of nations doth not exhibit a people who ever had more cause to offer up to the great author of every good the most fervent expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving. Let, my brethren, the sons of irreligion, wrapped in their dark and gloomy system of fatality, refuse to open their eyes to the great luminous proofs of providential government, which America displays; let them turn from a light, which their weak vision cannot bear; but let the righteous, let those who trust in God, who can trace in that good and glorious being, the relations of father, friend and governor, let them, with eagle eyes look up to that full blaze of salvation, which he hath vouchsafed to this new world. Permit me then, upon this occasion, to turn your attention to those great things, which the Lord hath done for us, to those manifold displays of divine providence, which the history of America exhibits; and let the subject afford an opportunity to revive within us sentiments of lively gratitude, and excite sincere resolutions to fear the Lord, and to serve him; in a word, to increase daily in piety, and in all those noble affections of the soul which dignify the christian and the patriot.

I. Who can tell how many ages had been swallowed up in the all-absorbing gulph of time, before the bold navigator first essayed to visit these distant regions of the earth? Who can tell, how long this western world had been the habitation of the listless savage, or the wild beasts of the forest? At these questions chronology drops her epochs, as incapable of conducting her to periods so remote, and which have escaped her grasp. The ways of heaven must oft appear to us, weak mortals, dark and intricate. But the first suggestion, which here presents itself, is, that providence seems to have thrown a veil over this portion of the globe, in order to conceal it from the eyes of the nations of the east, until the destined period had arrived for the regeneration of mankind, in this new world, after those various other means, which the wisdom of the Almighty had permitted to operate, in the old, had proved ineffectual. In vain had reason, the hand-maid of pure religion, long attempted to convince men of the reciprocal duties, which equality and fraternity impose. Still there would arise some one,

“of proud ambitious heart, who, not content  
with fair equality, fraternal state,  
would arrogate dominion undeserved  
over his brethren, and quite dispossess  
concord and law of nature from the earth.”\*

In vain had even thy dispensation of love and peace, blessed Jesus! long essayed to disarm ambition of the ensanguined sword, and to diffuse benevolence, equality and fraternity among the human race. Millions still groaned under the heavy pressure,



which tyranny imposed. Yes, even thy gospel of love, of universal fraternity, had been, too often, perverted into the most formidable system of oppression; and mankind, instead of seeing it diffuse the heavenly rays of philanthropy, too frequently beheld it as imposing a yoke, to degrade and enslave them. The princes of the earth sought not for the sacred duties, which it enjoined; but they sought to render it the sanction of their exterminating vengeance, or their deep laid systems of usurpation. Is not the history of almost all Europe pregnant with proofs of this calamitous truth? If you can point to some small portion, where the religion of the blessed Jesus, untrammelled with political usurpations, was left to operate its happy effects upon the passions and the conduct of men; or where toleration extended wide her arms of mercy to embrace the whole family of Christ, the spot appears like a solitary star, which in the midst of night, beams forth alone, whilst clouds and thick darkness obscure the rest of the innumerable host of heaven. Alas! what avails the voice of reason or religion, when the lust of domination has usurped the soul! At the shrine of this fell demon, the human race was sacrificed by thousands. Nay, too many of the sons of Europe are still bound with cords to the altars of ambition, and there immolated, not only by thousands, but by tens of thousands. Do you doubt the assertion, afflictive as it seems to our brethren of the old world? The last four years have, in their flight, scarcely wanted a moment to testify the melancholy truth. I will not add the long catalogue of those innumerable scourges, which, from time to time, have visited Europe; I will not speak of those various tempests, which, by divine command, have so often shaken the guilty nations of the east, but which seem in vain to have uttered the voice of warning and reproof: Domination still rivetted her iron chains; the fangs of governments; avaricious, arbitrary and vindictive, entered even into the souls of the suffering people. The heritage of the Lord were only as sheep destined to be shorn or slaughtered, whilst the unfeeling despot exacted in return, not obsequious obedience only, but even professions of gratitude for the innumerable blessings, which flowed from his hallowed protection. How were these chains to be burst asunder? How was the human race to be restored to their inherent rights, rights, which the God of nature consecrated at the birth of every individual? How was the dignity of man to be vindicated? How were those sentiments of equality, benevolence and fraternity, which reason, and religion, and nature enjoin, to reassume their sovereignty over the human soul, and to dash against the heads of usurpers the chains, the burthens, the oppressions, which had so long brought down the grey hairs of the multitude with sorrow to the grave? How could the principles of a revolution so important, so essential for the happiness of the human species, be generated, but by raising up, as it were, a new race of men, in some remote, some blessed clime, where, from their infancy, unfettered by those errors, which time appears to sanctify, they should be trained not only to a knowledge, but to a just sense of the duty of asserting and maintaining their rights; and above all, where the love of equality, the basis of all rights and all social happiness, should be congenial to man? This favoured region, favoured indeed of heaven, is America. It is here, a knowledge of those political truths, which the immortal Sydneys and the Lockes of former years investigated with philosophic eye, bursts spontaneous forth. It is here, that men, led by the hand of nature, their minds unawed and unobscured by opinions and customs as barbarous and unfriendly to social rights as the dark chaotic ages, which gave them birth, see and acknowledge as axioms, what philosophers have toiled to establish by deductions, long and intricate. It is in America, that the germs of the universal redemption of the

human race from domination and oppression have already begun to be developed; it is in America, that we see a redintegration of divine love for man, and that the voice of heaven itself seems to call to her sons, go ye forth and disciple all nations, and spread among them the gospel of equality and fraternity.\*

II. These considerations present to our minds the first traces of the beneficent designs of providence in the history of this new world. Nor ought it, in the 2d place, to be here forgotten, that the current, or general tendency of providence is also to be traced back to the source, whence the present free and enlightened race of America sprung. For surely, our fore-fathers, amidst the wreck of human rights, and the convulsive tempests with which ambition had so often overwhelmed the nations of the east, still evinced, at times, no small portion of that ethereal spirit, that ardent love of liberty, which glows in the American breast. It was this indomitable spirit, this attachment to the inherent rights of man, stronger infinitely than the fear of those storms, which agitate the immense atlantic, or of the fierce and cruel tenants of the howling wilderness, or the ravages of disease, and famine and death itself, which urged our fore-fathers to these distant shores. Yes, brethren, it was this noble principle, this love of liberty, which defying all dangers, conducted our fore-fathers to America; but who doth not see, that this principle, whilst it only could prompt to the bold enterprize, was no where to be found so pure, so energetic as in Britain? Who doth not see, that thus to have transported it to America, thus to have incorporated it with the primary social institutions of this country, may be justly deemed an event most fortunate for mankind, nay, most worthy of providence itself? Had this principle been equally transported to the fertile plains of Mexico, or Peru, instead of the *Auri sacra fames*, they also would have had their apostles, nay, their martyrs to liberty. Yes, even Mexico, and Peru, e're this distant period, would have had their Washington, would have unfurled the banners of liberty, and would have fought, and bled, and conquered. If then we dare attempt with mortal eye to trace those causes, by which the Almighty operates, it will not be thought presumptuous, I trust, not only to ascribe to his directive wisdom the introduction of a principle, which here fostered, will redeem the captive nations of the earth; but also, the introduction of it, at a time, when its active, but daily increasing energy should accelerate the great and glorious revolution, which it has already effected in America, which it has commenced in Europe, and which will not be arrested in its progress, until the complete restoration of the human race to their inherent rights be accomplished, throughout the globe. Let the tyrants of the earth set themselves in array against this principle; "they shall be chased as the chaff of the mountain before the wind, and like the down of the thistle before the whirlwind."\*

III. But these reflections, pleasing as they are to the friends of piety, of reason and of liberty, give way to others, excited by more obvious dispensations of providence. Suppose, my brethren, when our forefathers here first rested the soles of their feet, delivered from those waters, which seemed almost to cover the face of the whole earth, the guardian angel of America withdrawing the curtain of time, had opened to their view the prospect, which this day presents; had shewn to them, America, free, independent, and holding an eminent rank among the nations of the earth; had shewn to them her sons and her daughters, numerous as the stars of heaven, assembled in the houses of their God, and with one voice, offering up the grateful incense of adoration, praise and thanks-giving, "for the great things that he hath done for them"; had shewn

to them the first instance, which the world has ever exhibited, of written social compacts, together with her plans of government, founded on the eternal basis of wisdom, equality and justice; had shewn to them, the thousand blessings, which peace, from her horn of plenty, scatters round, with the arts and sciences gradually advancing in her train; had shewn to them, her navies, loaded not with the desolating weapons of war, but with the fruits of the earth, vexing with their prows the most distant seas; had shewn to them the bright portrait of that heroic citizen, whose prudence, whose fortitude, and whose wisdom shine equally refulgent in war as in peace; and lastly, had shewn to them, the fairest portion of the old world, by the example of America, by the influence of that energetic principle, which she had nurtured and matured, awaking as from a dream, “putting on strength as in the antient days, in the generations of old,” uprooting the deep founded systems of usurpation, and gathering the oppressed under the wings of liberty and fraternity: And whilst he presented the glorious, the animating prospect, should say to them, all these events, my sons, great and astonishing as they are, shall come to pass within the short period, of a patriarchal life; would they not have fallen down upon their faces, and worshipping the God of their fathers, exclaimed[,] “This is the Lords doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes”? We, brethren, fortunate as we are, have lived to see this triumphal day. And is there a soul here present, is there one throughout this rising empire, who doth not trace, in the eventful history of America, the conspicuous displays of the hand of providence? Is there one, who is not ready also to exclaim, “it is the Lords doing”? Where, in what records of mankind, will he discover a progress from infancy to manhood, so accelerated, so astonishing in all its stages, so superior to all those ordinary means, by which empires are matured? I will not call your attention to that heroic contest, which so lately distinguished this country, and which, unequal, bold and hazardous as it appeared in its commencement, soon terminated in the establishment of liberty and independence, soon held aloft to the nations of the earth, the sublime example, which called, and still calls aloud, “awake, awake, put on strength, O nations of the earth; awake as in the antient days, in the generations of old.”\* I will not retrace those scenes of blood, of horror and desolation, through which the patriot sons of America once triumphant passed. Ministers of the gospel! be it yours to bind up and to heal the wounds, which contentions and wars inflict. But ah! who does not remember, when the fate of this rising empire, nay of mankind, hung trembling between the fury of the oppressor, and the weakness of the oppressed? how many were our prayers to the God of battles! how often did we look forwards upon the mightiness of the adversary; how often backwards upon our own imbecility, upon our wives and our tender infants? In that awful crisis, who does not remember, that in God alone was our trust? Yes, “O people, saved by the Lord, it was his right hand and his holy arm,” which rescued thee from the strength of the lion and the bear; it was the same wise and gracious providence, which delivered the youthful unarmed David from the hands of Goliath, accoutred as he was, “with a sword, and with a spear, and with a Shield,” which also delivered thee, from the hands of the mightiest of nations.

Do these our conclusions appear to some to savour of presumptive arrogance, or do we discover to the philosophic mind an enthusiastic imbecility in ascribing these events, so peculiar to the annals of America, to the particular direction of providence? Let such bethink themselves, if such there be, that it is a just reliance upon the superintending providence of God, a reliance dictated by the concurrent voice of

reason, of philosophy and religion, which compels the humble, the grateful and the wise to consider all those dispositions or events, which so remarkably coincide with the general plan of the moral government of the world, as indications of the design and direction of omnipotence. Causes and effects are, doubtless, in the hands of him who willed their connexion. But his will is the general happiness. They who indulge this idea, so consolatory to man, will therefore consider it as the homage which is due to the creator, regenerator and preserver of the universe, to ascribe to his superior direction, effects so concordant with his goodness, and which so greatly transcend all human means. Yes, brethren, if the effects, which we have, in your hearing, thus slightly traced; if the period of time when America was discovered, the necessity and the consequent production of other means for the restoration of human rights, than those, which had hitherto operated; if her origin, and the consequent possession of a principle, which, nurtured and matured, is now pervading, and will animate and excite the whole family of mankind to vindicate their lost rights; if her astonishing progress from infancy to the station, which she now possesses, a progress, which the opposition of a ten-fold force served only to accelerate: if, become free and independent, having accomplished the most unparalleled revolution, a revolution unstained by fratricide, or the blood of the innocent, she hath given to nations the first lesson by which their rights may be preserved, and men reassume their native dignity, by realizing that sacred compact, which before existed only in idea, and by accurately delineating the boundary beyond which, her servants, whether legislators or magistrates, dare not pass; if she hath established upon a rock, the empire of laws, and not of men; if America, as a tender and affectionate daughter, is ready, from her exuberant breasts, to afford the milk of regeneration to her aged and oppressed relatives; if, in short, from a beginning the most inauspicious, she hath thus outstript all political calculation, thus risen to this day of glory, thus ascended on high, thus triumphed over every obstacle, and if all these be effects worthy of the divine interposition, then we will still cherish the fond idea, we will cling to the full persuasion, that our God hath been, “our strength, our refuge, and our fortress,” a God, who, at the birth of creation, destined man for liberty, for virtue and for happiness, not for oppression, vice and misery.

IV. But, my brethren, to rest contented with merely viewing the hand of providence, or in acknowledging the plan of divine wisdom, which is here operating for the general felicity, would be to halt at the threshold of the temple of God. Gratitude, warm and fervent, united to a sincere resolution “to fear and to serve him,” is the return, which the Almighty beneficence claims from every worshipper. It is the first sacrifice of a heart capable of being touched by acts of unbounded love, by deeds of mercy and kindness so eminently extended not to us only, but, through our agency, to the whole human race. I confess to you, brethren, who detest ingratitude even to man, as the sure but melancholy symptom of a heart, dark, gloomy, and void of every virtuous sensibility, when I recall to mind the past, contemplate the present, and pursuing the confederacy of causes, look forward to those blessings of peace, of order, of justice and of liberty, which are daily advancing with an accelerated progress, my soul becomes sublimed with the grand idea of the undeviating love of God to man; I trace in the moral, as well as in the physical world, the evident vestiges of a Providence, all wise, all merciful, and all gracious: my hopes, temporal as well as eternal, instead of fluctuating in the uncertain ocean of those degrading sentiments,

which overwhelm the soul with fear and despondency, are anchored even at the footstool of the throne of God. Yes, brethren, struck with the awful image of a goodness so generous and so extended, my heart overflows with gratitude, I form new resolutions to fear and to serve him, I exclaim with the Psalmist—"Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy; for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."

But, brethren, important considerations still demand our attention. Has heaven been thus propitious; are we possessed of all those blessings which flow from governments founded in wisdom, justice and equality; doth the morning of America break forth refulgent with unclouded glory? Then it behoves us, above all things, to inquire, how are these blessings to be preserved? how shall we ensure to her a meridian splendor, worthy of such a morning? This inquiry immediately resolves itself into another. What is there in this sublunary state, that can attract the smiles of heaven, or ensure political happiness, but virtue? Never was there a mortal so depraved, never was there a conscience so deaf to that internal voice, which always whispers truth, but must acknowledge, that virtue only gives a title to hope for the favour of that high and lofty one, who inhabiteth eternity. Fellow-citizens, let virtue then, I entreat you, be the ruling principle, the polar star, which should influence every sentiment, and guide every action, since it alone will conduct us into the haven of felicity. But will you trust, for the diffusion of virtue, to that political morality, which a vain philosophy would substitute in the room of those lessons, which the heavenly teacher delivered? Shall virtue trickle from the oozy bed of political catechisms, or shall it gush, pure and in full stream, from the rock of our salvation? Ah! brethren, the moment that we drop the idea of a God, the remunerator of virtue, but the avenger of iniquity; the moment we abandon that divine system of equality, fraternity, and universal benevolence, which the blessed Jesus taught and exemplified; the moment that religion, the pure and undefiled religion, which heaven, in compassion to the infirmity of human reason, vouchsafed to mortals, loses its influence over their hearts, from that fatal moment, farewell to public and private happiness, farewell, a long farewell to virtue, to patriotism, to liberty! Virtue, such as republics and heaven require, must have its foundation in the heart; it must penetrate the whole man; it must derive its obligations and its sanctions, not from the changeable ideas of the political moralist, or the caprice of the wisest of human legislators, but from the unchangeable father of the universe, the God of love, whose laws, and whose will we are incited to obey by motives, the most powerful that can actuate the human soul. Men must see and feel, that it is God himself, their maker and their judge, who demands obedience to duties, which constitute their individual, their social, their eternal happiness. Then, and not till then, will virtue reign triumphant in the hearts of citizens; then will she have her sacrifices in the midst of the deepest obscurity, as well as in the open day, in the most private and secret retirements, as well as upon the house tops.

There is, we will grant, a sublime philosophy, which may form her sages, and even her virtuous and heroic sages. But, will her abstract doctrines concerning moral obligation, stript of those awful sanctions, which religion annexes, touch the hearts of an entire nation, the poor, the simple, the unlettered, as well as the learned and the wise? No, brethren, these sages of philosophy will appear, once perhaps, in a century; her lessons of wisdom, admitting them to possess the efficacy contended for, can be

extended but to a few; whilst religion diffuses her soul-saving leaven thro' the whole political mass. It is not for the learned and wise only, that she reserves the knowledge of her heavenly precepts; they are addressed to the whole family of mankind; the whole universe is her school. She has, moreover, this distinguishing advantage; she lays her divine hands upon the infant, and whilst she embraces him with the arms of mercy, stamps upon his tender, susceptible mind, the indelible, but just and awful idea of a God, the judge as well as the creator of the universe, a God, whose all-seeing eye delights only in virtue, a God, who has promised thro' Jesus Christ, a glorious and ever blessed immortality as the reward of well-doing, whilst the torturing hour of shame, remorse and misery is shewn to await the impious and the wicked. Thus taught by religion, man becomes acquainted with his real character; instead of being amenable only to human laws, whose utmost vigilance he may and often does elude, he sees himself accountable to a being, as just as merciful, as omnipotent as omniscient. He finds himself destined, not to the narrow range of the beasts that perish, but to immortal life. The bright prospect invigorates his soul; sentiments of conscious dignity elevate him above what is low or mean; his views are fixed upon what is truly great and good, patriotic and brave; no tears appal him, but confident in his God, he evinces himself, whether in adversity or prosperity, the inflexible friend of justice and humanity.

And yet, great God! how many are there among the sons of men, urged, we hope, rather by the delusive phantoms of their imaginations, than by the lust of wicked passions, who would tear from the human heart, prostrate in the dust, nay obliterate from the face of the earth every vestige of that divine, that beneficent system of justice, fraternity and equality, which Jesus Christ delivered! rash, unthinking mortals! listen, at least, to the prayer which that divine system, ever breathing charity and compassion, still offers up for its vindictive enemies; "Father! forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Fellow-citizens, it is an easy task for those who may have the honour of addressing an American audience this day, to point out the excellencies of our civil governments, to shew their superior aptitude for the promotion of political happiness, to evince that obedience to laws, constitutionally enacted, is the only means of preserving liberty, and that every expression of the public will is obligatory upon every citizen; to prove, that representative republics, instead of being the prolific parents of anarchy and confusion, are, on the contrary, of all the forms of government, under which men have yet associated, either thro' compulsion or choice, the most promotive of private and public happiness, the most susceptible of that energy, which is equally capable of curbing the licentiousness of the multitude, or of frustrating the wicked designs of the ambitious; it is easy for them to shew, that virtue is the vital principle of a republic, that unless a magnanimous spirit of patriotism animates every breast, unless a sincere and ardent love for justice, for temperance, for prudence, for fortitude, in short, for all those qualities, which dignify human nature, pervades, enlivens, invigorates the whole mass of citizens, these fair superstructures of political wisdom must soon crumble into dust. Certainly, my brethren, it is a fundamental maxim, that virtue is the soul of a republic. But, zealous for the prosperity of my country, I will repeat, and in these days, it is of infinite moment to insist, that without religion, I mean *rational religion*, the religion which our Saviour himself delivered, not that of fanatics or inquisitors,

chimæras and shadows are substantial things compared with that virtue, which those who reject the authority of religion would recommend to our practice. Ye then who love your country[,] if you expect or wish, that real virtue and social happiness should be preserved among us, or, that genuine patriotism and a dignified obedience to law, instead of that spirit of disorganizing anarchy, and those false and hollow pretences to patriotism, which are so pregnant with contentions, insurrections and misery, should be the distinguishing characteristics of Americans; or, that, the same Almighty arm which hath hitherto protected your country, and conducted her to this day of glory, should still continue to shield and defend her, remember, that your first and last duty is “to fear the Lord and to serve him”; remember, that in the same proportion as irreligion advances, virtue retires; remember, that in her stead, will succeed factions, ever ready to prostitute public good to the most nefarious private ends, whilst unbounded licentiousness, and a total disregard to the sacred names of liberty and of patriotism will here once more, realize that fatal catastrophe, which so many free states have already experienced. Remember, the law of the Almighty is, they shall expire, with their expiring virtue. God of all nature! Father of the human spirit, preserve these prosperous, these happy republics from so dreadful a calamity. May thy gracious providence, which hath hitherto nurtured, protected, and conducted them to this day of praise and thanksgiving, ever be the supreme object of their regard? May the blessings already received, inspire every heart with just sentiments of gratitude, and with the inflexible resolution to perform those duties which become us as christians, and as citizens. May peace and happiness, truth and justice, order and freedom, religion and piety ever proclaim thy praises, thy providential goodness, thy love to man, not only in this land of liberty, but wherever the human race is found. Amen.

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

46

## SERMON BEFORE THE GENERAL COURT OF NEW HAMPSHIRE AT THE ANNUAL ELECTION

Stephen Peabody

CONCORD

1797

Stephen Peabody (1741–1819). A native of Andover, Massachusetts, Peabody was a Harvard graduate in the class of 1769. As the oldest member of his class, entering at twenty-two, he was nicknamed *Pater Omnium* by classmates. Peabody was a ringleader and cut-up in college, and his diary for 1767 is regarded by Clifford K. Shipton as “the most revealing document relating to colonial education which has come down to us” (*Sibley’s Harvard Graduates*, 17:207n). Peabody’s extensive diaries, his principal writings, provide a detailed portrait of himself as parson and of his times in New England.

Peabody settled in Atkinson, New Hampshire, in 1772 and remained there as pastor for the rest of his life. He was an orthodox Calvinist who measured his orthodoxy by agreement with the Bible at every point, and he avoided any hint of being a member of this or that theological faction. He was especially critical of emotional preachers (meaning Baptists and Methodists) but was himself an emotional preacher “who wept at his own pathos, or in sympathy with his bereaved hearers” (*ibid.*, p. 212). He served as a chaplain during the Revolution with Colonel Poor’s regiment on Winter Hill. Dartmouth College awarded him an honorary A.M. in 1792. Peabody loved to play the fiddle and sing, often serving in the pulpit as a one-man choir, though he was sometimes joined by his household pet, Little Dog. (Little Dog’s death received more attention in his diary than that of any human being.) Peabody’s swift conquest of the heart of his second wife, the widow Elizabeth Smith Shaw, in 1795, became a classic of New England folklore. His stepson, William Smith Shaw, became secretary to President John Adams, and Reverend Peabody and his wife were frequent visitors to the Adams household in Quincy. In addition to preaching and catechizing, Peabody farmed, and he and Elizabeth kept the Atkinson Academy, admitting girls to it after 1794, to the shock of the community.

This election sermon, preached in Concord, New Hampshire, on June 11, 1797, celebrates republican government as the rule of law in the United States and as a unique improvement over monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy as practiced through the ages.



*Moreover, thou shalt provide out of all the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them, to be rulers of thousands, and rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.*

Exodus XVIII. 21.

In the great scale of beings, mankind hold a dignified station. The human mind, capable of improvement, under advantageous cultivation, progresses in knowledge and refinements, honourary in their nature, and ornamental in their consequences. Individuals, with privileges of this kind, shine as lights in the world. Societies, composed of characters improved in science and virtue, have every advantage in their social connection.

By long experience, the jarring passions and interests of men, shew the necessity of government. Various have been the forms, by which mankind have enjoyed distinguished privileges. A particular discussion of all the principles of government, will not be expected upon this occasion, as many of this respectable audience are better acquainted with them, than the speaker. An attempt of this, would be a departure from duty.

That ecclesiastical constitution, exhibited in the sacred scriptures, is the foundation upon which the ministers of religion are placed: It contains those rules and regulations which we are called to vindicate, and by it we are furnished with a code of laws and precepts, admirably suited to governors, and governed—rules designed to promote general happiness here, and to prepare for a far more exalted state in the regions of immortality. These are peculiar excellencies in the oracles of truth.

In the early ages of time, government was confined to private families; but when men multiplied, it was consistent with infinite wisdom to point out methods by which there should be a government upon a more extensive scale. This took place with the people of Israel, while in the land of Egypt. The Egyptians, under a pretence that Israel would increase in numbers and power, treated them in a manner incompatible with humanity. Whereupon the Lord was pleased to provide for them a deliverer—to raise up Moses, remarkably to preserve him in his infancy, to appear unto him in a burning bush, to appoint him a ruler, and to accompany him with such proofs of his divine mission, as were convincing to a mind not clouded with ignorance, or blinded with prejudice.

The good man, with reluctance, modestly accepted the appointment, with Aaron his brother, his assistant in the arduous task. Mutually supporting each other, the Lord was with them. Happy for them, and thrice happy for the people, they were united by the most endearing ties, when placed, the one a political, the other an ecclesiastical leader. Aiming at the same great object, under the particular direction of heaven, they went on, hand in hand, through a series of unexampled trials, conducting and protecting their charge, as faithful shepherds guide their flocks. Connected with an ingrateful people, those worthies met with singular difficulties in their way, were censured when performing the will of God, and exerting every power to advance the best interest of society.

Jethro, the priest of Midian, father-in-law to Moses, anxious for his son's welfare, and sensible that his task was insupportable, proposed some alterations, that a part of the burden might be removed from him, and placed upon others. These we have in the theme under consideration—the manner of executing their several trusts specified—the extent of their power defined—and, in cases of intricacy, an appeal open to the chief magistrate, their last resort. Here the privileges of the people were in a great measure to be secured by the amiable characters of their rulers, and especially by his who was their supreme judge, and under the immediate influence of the king of kings.

This was the form of government then established: It was a theocracy; and its permanency shews it was suited to the genius of the people in that period of the world, as it continued in the days of Moses, Joshua, and till Samuel's time, sanctioned with the approbation of heaven. They were governed by wise judges, given them by a God who was their guardian and friend, till his favour was forfeited by a revolt from him, casting off his authority, and determining to have a king of their own, in imitation of the heathen nations. This conduct proceeding from a factious disposition, was displeasing to God: Yet he granted their request, gave them a king—but a king in judgment.

The oracles of truth are not decisive, respecting any particular, permanent form of civil polity. We are left at liberty to adopt rules and laws agreeable to our inclinations. In a state of ignorance and barbarism, a despotic power may be necessary; but where knowledge is diffused, and reason enlightened, the bastille bars are seen—the shackles eluded.

A republican government, as defined by an eminent writer, “in which all men, rich and poor, magistrates and subjects, officers and people, masters and servants, the first citizen and the last, are equally subject to the laws,” is doubtless the most unexceptionable. This is the general principle which supports the government of united America, happily removed from that monarchy, aristocracy, or democracy, which have injured mankind. This form has the public good for its principal object: It rests primarily in the hands of the people; and when delegated, is exercised a limited period, and returns to its origin. A people with a good constitution, judicious laws, in the hands of an executive authority influenced by the maxims of wisdom and goodness, attentive to their true interest, will acquire strength and stability, as they improve in knowledge and virtue.

The directions given in my text, are adapted to any people, under whatever form of government, when wisdom and probity are their guide. And in this view, we trust they are peculiarly applicable to the people of America, and demand attention in all our elections to fill the offices of state, supreme and subordinate. Though under dissimilar forms, electors may be different, yet the characters of the elected should be the same.

The subject before us exhibits the duty of a people in the choice of their rulers, and delineates the leading traits essential to those in public office.

I shall attempt to make some observations upon the several particulars here specified, to form good rulers—speak of the duties of their station—then draw some inferences—and conclude with addresses suited to the present occasion.

The first particular in the choice of rulers, should be natural abilities. Able men, are such as have been distinguished by the God of nature. As in the ecclesiastical department, a novice is excluded; so in the civil, men of sense and judgment are to be preferred: Men of fortitude, of resolution, who fear not the faces of the unprincipled; but when occasion requires, can oppose them with firmness: Men of clear heads, and determined hearts. But it is not enough that men should have natural endowments; more is necessary: The gifts of nature should be improved by study and close application, and truth investigated in the paths of science. There should be a general knowledge of the principles of natural and political law: And without this, men are exposed; they are easily deceived, and led into errors, disgraceful to themselves, and injurious to their constituents. Designing individuals have every advantage of the illiterate, to influence their conduct to the accomplishment of sinister purposes. A good natural understanding, therefore, and decent and liberal acquirements, are necessary ingredients in the able statesman.

Another qualification in an accomplished ruler here recommended, is the fear of God. This being granted, an atheist can have no part or lot in this matter. A being who is believed not to exist, cannot be feared. But besides these, there are those in an enlightened age of the world, who acknowledge the being of God, and yet are not afraid to offend him by trampling on his authority. Such are poorly qualified for eminent stations in government. An important trait in the character of a good ruler is wanting.

The fear of God is the best guard against temptations to a deviation from the rules of right. By this, human passions are regulated, and men are influenced to “run the ways of God’s commandments, rendering to all their dues—tribute to whom tribute is due, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.” A consciousness of his omnipresence to whom we are all accountable, fixes a lasting impression upon the heart, fans every spark of moral rectitude, and calls forth patriotic exertions. The belief of an entire dependance on him, is an impenetrable mound against an inundation of immoralities: It is the best constructed fortress against the savage artillery of the prince of darkness. Shielded with a helmet from the God of armies, the intrepid ruler marches at the head of his battalions, with prudence, fortitude, and perseverance, which insure protection, and lead on to victory. Examples of wisdom and virtue, originating from the fear of God, have a commanding influence upon the human mind; and in all our elections, such qualifications should invariably direct our choice.

We pass on to a third particular essential in Jethro’s rulers. They were to be men of truth.

Possessed of a principle opposed to falsehood and deceit, they were to be eminent for their integrity. This was a qualification necessary in the law-givers of Israel. To a man of this description, “his yea, and nay, are Amen.” His tongue is a faithful index of his

mind. He strictly observes the words of inspiration, “Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.” Sensible that he is always in the presence of the God of truth, he never allowedly deviates from its laws. Such a character, the more it is examined, the more illustrious it will appear: It will be “like the path of the just,” portrayed by the wise king Solomon, “which as the rising light, shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

One thing more, necessary for accomplished rulers. They should hate covetousness.

However contemptible a covetous disposition may be, in the sight of God and man, we are constrained to acknowledge it is too prevalent to give full liberty for any one class of men to cast a stone at others. Rigid parsimony should not be indulged in a ruler; and it certainly is not in one who fears God, and has a sacred regard to truth. A principle of virtue is discovered, in a generous disregard to personal wealth, when it comes in competition with the interest of the public. When a good ruler is engaged in his office, his duty to the station arrests his first attention; self, has only a secondary place in his mind. When called to act in public, he leaves his private concerns behind him; they drop, till he has faithfully performed his higher engagements. Presuming that the electors in this state for the present year, so far as they have proceeded, have been actuated by the foregoing principles; that they have provided able men, fearers of God, men of truth, haters of covetousness, to compose the present legislative assembly—let us proceed to offer a few thoughts upon the duties annexed to the trust reposed in them.

It was the advice of Jethro to Moses, that the proposed characters should be placed over the people, to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. With great propriety this may be applied to the several officers of a republic, in a succession, from the first magistrate. The federal and state governments in America, have furnished us with constitutions and laws, by which the duties peculiar to each office are ascertained. Our laws, however, are not like those of the Medes and Persians, which cannot be altered: The people have always a right to the exercise of their power, as the public interest may require. And may we not affirm, that in theory there is no government so rational as where elections are frequent, the elected under the public eye, and to continue during the people’s pleasure? This is a privilege we enjoy. Our annual elections give us an opportunity to select our best citizens to transact our public and most important business, to enact new laws, and make appointments according to the exigencies of the state.

A general assembly to a republic, in many respects stands in the place of a Moses to Israel; the refulgence of whose virtues should resemble the face of Moses, after he had received the law of the Lord on Mount Sinai. The authority of a state is to provide men duly qualified to act in the necessary departments. The reins of government are to be given into their hands for those purposes. Their trust is important, and when they are under the solemnity of an oath, they are bound by the strongest ties! By them, the duties of every office should be contemplated previous to a choice. And any station had better remain vacant, than be improperly filled. Those passages of inspiration will always remain true, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when

the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn.” “He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.”

A conscientious regard to the principles of rectitude in general, and a strict adherence to the duties annexed to each office, either in the legislative or executive, whether relative to the civil, military, or ecclesiastical departments, instamp upon it a dignity, by which the vicious are restrained, and the virtuous encouraged. In short, the duties incumbent upon mankind, relative to their God and each other, obligatory upon all, and those peculiarly adapted to the various offices in a well regulated government, will be regarded with undiverted attention by every man deserving public confidence.

Permit me to enumerate some of the objects which naturally present themselves to the mind of the wise guardians of a country. The most perfect body of human laws ever framed, have their defects; and these are made obvious by practice. In their operations, they in all respects do not answer the designs proposed. Wise legislators, upon a discovery of imperfections, by which the citizens are embarrassed or wronged, by which any class of men are injured, will exert themselves for a reformation, and not give over the pursuit till it be accomplished. As they are the guardians of the people, fidelity to their trust demands their attention. Laws should be founded upon the principles of reason and justice—should be few in number, perspicuous, and punctually executed. Those which have been made, and are now in force, ought they not to be made plain and intelligible? Might not perplexities, expences, and great injustice, be prevented, and society highly favoured? Explicit laws, binding mankind to the rules of justice, are an admirable security to all branches of society. Under them, contracts are valid, peaceable members of the community are protected in the enjoyment of their interests, the profligate restrained and punished, and in a sense the “wrath of man is made to praise God.”

A frequent revision of the laws and constitutions of a country, with such alterations as good policy may suggest, promotes that general utility which cements the various parts of society, and forms a complete harmonious whole.

Again—An important object in the minds of good rulers, is, the increase of useful knowledge.

A foundation placed in the minds of youth, is like “good seed sown in good ground,” in its proper season; and gives the fairest prospects of a happy increase to the well being of society. The principles of virtue and knowledge early implanted, naturally take root, and produce a luxuriant harvest. Those who are thus favoured, are “trained up in the way they should go,” the best prompter on life’s devious journey. Hence the propriety of having able instructors, whose morals and language are worthy of imitation: And hence the necessity of giving ample encouragement, in a business so important and laborious. Though honourable donations have been made for the promotion of literature, yet the fostering hand of our civil fathers may be required for bringing to maturity. May it not then be expected, that every aid and encouragement will be given to education? The views of such as are young, are hereby extended; they are raised above the grovelling vulgarisms too common to that age, which will have a

happy influence upon society, in preparing the rising generation to fill with honour the most dignified stations, when they may be called to act upon the theatre of life.

Is there not a third and an important object in the mind of rulers, viz. the increase of virtue and religion?

The ideas which have by some been adopted, that the civil authority should never interpose in matters of religion, are erroneous. It is granted by the most learned politicians, that the religious forms which have been established and supported, have had a powerful tendency to promote civility, to restrain vicious men, to protect the innocent, to countenance worthy pursuits, and to discountenance the immoralities which have contaminated mankind! Sentiments of this nature have flowed from knowledge and experience: And if they be well founded, is it not a truth, that establishments of this kind invite the attention of that civil policy which is the support of government? If, therefore, virtue and religion form the principal pillar which upholds the civil fabrick, it is evidently a duty for wise rulers to contribute something for its support. Upon this principle, many professed deists contribute with cheerfulness and liberality to public teachers of morality; they are patrons to the worship of God in gospel order: They have considered it as a measure wisely adapted to uphold government—and in this they deserve an encomium.

Such as fully believe the Christian religion, and receive the scriptures as the word of God, have additional motives for their utmost exertions that sobriety and goodness may be promoted. It is indisputable, that the more a society live in the practice of virtue, the greater prosperity they enjoy: The more they are under the influence of vicious principles, the more unhappiness they will experience. The sacred oracles give us the best directions: In them, no unreasonable restraints are imposed, no rational enjoyments are forbidden: Excess alone is transgression. So far as the scriptures are strictly regarded, so far every member of the community conducts with propriety: The various propensities and passions peculiar to human nature, are directed to right objects: And there, Christ, a most faithful and compassionate legislator, stands, giving law to his subjects. In those records, his character is exhibited, his maxims are registered, his example left for our imitation; and the whole perfectly reconcilable to virtue, religion, and the best policy: Thence may be extracted wisdom and instruction to guide us into the paths of rectitude; to save us from destructive courses of error and delusion: Here is a constitution worthy the particular notice of every man who holds an office in government; that under the influence of its rules, he may be instrumental in diffusing virtuous and benevolent principles: Directed by this, he will give his public testimony in favour of those who are engaged professionally to prepare mankind for blessings in this life, and a glorious future reward.

One farther essential in good rulers, is, that they are themselves exemplary.

There can be no greater burlesque upon the character of rulers, than when, under binding obligations to God, and their constituents, they are making laws which they are the first in violating! But how agreeable are the prospects, when judicious laws are made, are esteemed sacred; and are punctually observed by the enactors! A sanction is hereby placed upon them, which impresses every mind. And societies having their eye

upon their rulers, observing their consistency, are led to follow their example, which naturally tends to rectify the vices and to reform the manners of the community. When precept and example are harmonious in rulers, every observer is charmed with the character; when they are at variance, they cannot fail to produce contempt. Of great importance then it must appear, for those who are clothed with authority, to have the qualifications described in my text, to be themselves exemplary, and let their light shine before men, who, aiming at one great object, the best interest of the public, are filled with present animation; and their views, not confined to this life, are extended, and terminate in immortality.

The discourse shall be closed with an improvement—and with addresses suited to the present occasion.

The suggestions which have been given, exhibit the necessity of a government established upon the principles of reason, and guarded by the maxims of justice and virtue. The passions natural to men, indicate that we were formed for society—and they powerfully excite us to enter into social connections. From a state of natural equality, communities are formed. The infirmities of men require protection—their vices, restraints and punishment. A free government, therefore, under which the virtuous are encouraged, and the vicious punished, is the palladium of the rational mind. How important, then, that it should be supported; that every aid should be given to those who are entrusted with authority, so long as they perform their duty. Vigilance respecting rulers, a check to prevent an undue exercise of power, are requisite, to preserve inviolate the liberties and privileges of a people. An unrestrained authority is dangerous; witness Hazael, Haman, and the unfortunate Charles. Extremes are always attended with consequences most unfavourable: Tyranny and anarchy, equally pernicious! An opposition to good government is inexcusable, as it “resists an ordinance of God.” A tame submission to an unjust authority, discovers a pusillanimity derogatory to the human mind. Wherever a just government is wanting, as an “hidden treasure” it should be sought and established: Where it hath been enjoyed, and is become deficient, it should be carefully amended, as was before hinted. Too great efforts cannot be made to uphold and perpetuate a well-founded government—and continued exertions will facilitate its rising in respectability.

From the ideas which have been brought into view, may not the people of America felicitate themselves under our present forms of government, and in the general characters of our rulers, especially those in exalted stations? Though we may not be favoured with supreme magistrates who have an immediate intercourse with heaven, as had Moses the law-giver of Israel; yet we may presume that they have been, and are, favoured with the approving presence of God.

Our constitutions of government, though they may be imperfect, stand high in the estimation of the enlightened and impartial among the nations of the earth: And under them, we have reason to rejoice in a general prosperity. If virtue and attention are not with us dormant, little can be wanting to complete the system.

When we take a retrospect of the scenes through which we have passed, since the commencement of our late contest, our minds upon the recollection are impressed

with a trembling, grateful pleasure. In consequence of injuries and insults, with but little more than a sling and stone we encountered the giant, and foiled Britain!

A propitious Providence, like the “pillar of a cloud and of fire to Israel,” led the American armies. And not less apparent hath been the hand of God, in our civil operations. The organization of our governments, hath been attended with salutary effects in the increase of property and respectability. After our thankful acknowledgments to God, the great Superintendent, we should not neglect to express gratitude to a Washington, a Franklin, an Adams, a Jay, and to other heroes who have been instrumental in accomplishing those great purposes, so much for the honour and interest of the American states, and for the happiness of future generations.

Shall we not spend a moment in contrasting our present circumstances in a state of peace, with what we experienced when involved in the horrors of war? in contrasting our situation, with many of the European nations whose garments are now stained with human blood? Let us read the history of the French revolution, and we shall have additional reason to rejoice in God for his favours, and in the language of inspiration must say, “hitherto hath the Lord helped us.”

Again—from the reflections we have been making, we learn the advantages of a virtuous government. If we look into the sacred history, we find the prosperity of Israel ebbing and flowing with the morality of their sovereigns. When they had good kings, heavy judgments were averted; but when their rulers were vicious, they forsook the Lord, ran into idolatry, exposed themselves, and judgments came upon them like a flood! They became so abandoned, that God said of them by his prophet, “Though Moses and Samuel stood before me, my heart could not be towards this people; cast them out of my sight, and let them go forth.”

And hath it not been generally true, that ignorance, a neglect of God and his worship, idleness, luxury, dissolute manners, and factions, have been certain preludes to the destruction of states and empires? Is not this abundantly proved by the histories of ancient times? Was not this verified in the destruction of Sparta, Athens, Rome? And if we may reason from past events, we may safely presume, that like causes will produce similar effects, however we may be involved in the issue.

Though it pleases God not to reward or punish individuals in this life, according to their merit or demerit, as appears by the histories of the prophets and apostles, by the parable of Dives and Lazarus, by the prosperity of Nero, and the misfortunes of Louis; yet heaven hath balanced national virtue by affluence, and vice by a counterpoise of adversity. Nothing, then, can be a greater stimulus to a virtuous government, to adopt the most energetic measures, that religion and every species of virtue may be encouraged: On the other hand, that vice, with its baneful retinue, and whatever may be derogatory to the citizen, the statesman, or the christian, may be discountenanced, and meet with an exemplary punishment! The officers of government have a price put into their hands, to promote the interest of their brethren, and the common cause of virtue. And when they are repeatedly, by the suffrages of their country, called into office, it is an evidence in their favour, and a public declaration, that their past conduct hath been approved.



Many of our civil fathers, upon the present anniversary, have frequently been selected to act as guardians to the people of this state. Their past fidelity hath been a sufficient recommendation to their present promotion; and we trust, the transactions of the ensuing year will, with resplendency, evidence the wisdom and judgment of the people in their choice.

His excellency the governor, the honourable council, senate and house of representatives, will please to accept my cordial congratulations upon the present joyful occasion. Regularly introduced into your several offices, clothed with authority, we cheerfully anticipate the salutary effects of your deliberations, in the advancement of the general prosperity, the safety and interest of every class of citizens. May wisdom, integrity, and unanimity, attend your councils, and concentre in all your decisions. May that spirit which directed Moses in the government of Israel, preside in all your pursuits; that under your administration, order and regularity may be conspicuous, knowledge and undissembled religion may spread their benign influences, illuminating every part of the system.

The present anniversary, which has collected the guardians of our civil rights from the several parts of the state, has brought together numbers in the ecclesiastical department, who wish to be considered as fellow-helpers in the cause of our country. May I be permitted to address my brethren, upon this auspicious day, and rejoice with them under a government, where harmony pervades the various departments, and so happily unites, in one common centre, the civil and ecclesiastical influence?

### My Brethren And Friends,

Every effort of ours, to promote virtue, and to oppose the prevalence of vice, contributes something to strengthen the hands of our civil rulers: Their exertions for the accomplishment of the same purposes, encourage our hearts. With satisfaction we attend upon our annual convention, to unite our best endeavours that religion may be promoted at the season and place of our public elections: And our pleasure is heightened by that generous friendship which has ever appeared in the guardians of the state, to our order, and by that reciprocity of affection which has glowed in every countenance. Ardently wishing the present harmony may be perpetuated, and to unite our efforts in aiding the civil magistrate, we have great confidence in having that assistance and support from the same government, which may terminate in a general increase of mutual happiness.

Something by way of address to this respectable audience, shall finish the present discourse.

### My Friends And Fellow Citizens,

After a series of signal interpositions, the inhabitants of this land are placed upon the shores of freedom, with the olive branch flourishing in their hands. Heroes in the field, wise men at the head of the civil polity, with a prevailing intercourse with heaven, have brought on the present æra. For years past, no nation ever experienced

greater prosperity. “The voice of joy and health have been heard in our habitations”; the earth hath teemed with a profusion of rich treasures; “the little hills have rejoiced on every side.”

Arts and sciences have flourished; and a spirit of enterprize, before unknown in the annals of our country, hath been displayed, not in opening deep waters, that travellers may go through dry shod, but in providing safe passages over them; and also to divert the watery element into different channels, to facilitate the labours of men. Perhaps no period was ever so favourable for the general increase of property, as what we are now experiencing.

This life is a changing scene. Prosperity and adversity await mankind, under the superintendency of unerring wisdom. Though we have been a highly privileged people, this may not continue. Prosperity too often produces luxury, which leads to a decay of virtue, to irreligion, and ruin. May heaven divert our feet from paths so dangerous, and lead us on in the way of truth and safety. This is the course to preferments—it is the high way to honour and happiness, and a prologue to immortal joys.

Let us then cultivate virtue in ourselves—carefully avoid shading the light of reason, counteracting remonstrances of conscience, and what is recorded in God’s word. In the steady practice of every duty to God, to society, and ourselves—under the influence of caution, candour, and generosity—we may expect the divine approbation.

When we act as electors, our eyes should ever be upon the “faithful of the land.” We shall, no doubt, have frequent calls for elections to the most important offices. This is verified by late experience—by the retirement of our worthy chief magistrate, at a critical period; and the choice of a successor, whose past eminent services have given him the best title to public confidence. Calls of this nature should be improved to awaken our vigilance, that we may obtain a true knowledge of the most deserving, and of those of a contrary description; that our future proceedings may be consonant to the principles of reason and sound policy.

May the great Superintendent give wisdom to our supreme government at their present session, in transactions of the highest moment to the states of America—that prudence, fortitude, and unanimity, may mark every movement, and instamp a dignity upon our national character. With a rational confidence in that authority, under God, we rest our political safety: We rely upon their wisdom and integrity.

Presuming that we shall not be deceived, we shall ever be ready to support government, to reward all who are faithfully discharging the duties of their stations, from those who are rulers of thousands, to such as are only rulers of tens.

Upon a reflection, that we have all a part to act in the drama of life, our minds cannot but be impressed, that our several stations require various exercises! “That though on earth the powers that be are ordained of God,” and cannot be disregarded but by incurring the divine displeasure; yet we are accountable to higher powers, and ere long must assemble at the bar of the great Judge of the earth!

Keeping that solemn period ever in view, let us perform our parts in life with a cheerful seriousness, as in the presence of an omniscient God. With lives regulated by the maxims of truth, by the illuminations of the divine spirit, let us “run the ways of God’s commandments,” disseminating light and knowledge, till we are prepared to enter into a world of glory, where virtue alone will dignify and exalt every immortal spirit, in the immediate presence of God, of the Redeemer, in the society of angelic hosts and innumerable glorified saints—where one chorus of praise shall commence, progress in ceaseless ages, and subordinate power be absorbed in heaven’s Sovereign.

amen

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

47

## A DISCOURSE, DELIVERED AT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN BOSTON

John Thayer

BOSTON

1798

John Thayer (1758–1815). Born in Boston and graduated from Yale, Thayer became a Congregational minister and served in the Revolution under John Hancock at Castle William (1780–81). He was the first American divine to convert to Roman Catholicism; while studying in Europe he was ordained a priest by the archbishop of Paris (1787). He returned to America intent upon converting the Puritans to Catholicism and spent the period from 1790 to 1803 in missionary endeavors in New England, Virginia, and on the frontier in Kentucky. He was derided by the American ecclesiastics as “John Turncoat.” While the public responded to him well, the usually tolerant Ezra Stiles harshly commented: “Commenced his life in impudence, ingratitude, lying & hypocrisy, irregularly took up preaching among Congregationalists, went to France & Italy, became a proselyte to the Romish church, & is returned to convert America to that [church] . . . of haughty insolence & insidious talents” (*Literary Digest of Ezra Stiles*, 3:416). An estimated 600 Catholics lived in New England by 1785, most of them “improper Bostonians” originally from Ireland (the first Catholic church in New England was founded in Boston in 1788).

Stiles’s remarks notwithstanding, Thayer proved an effective missionary while in America, and he continued that work in his retirement in Limerick, Ireland, beginning in 1803. He conceived a plan to organize a convent in Boston, but finding little cooperation and no volunteers, he proceeded to train his own postulants. These became the nucleus of the famous Ursuline Convent in Charlestown (Boston), established in 1819 after Thayer’s death. The convent was burned down by a nativist mob in 1834.

This powerful sermon, one of Thayer’s finest, was preached in the Boston Catholic Church on May 9, 1798, designated by President John Adams as a day of humiliation and prayer. This observance was proclaimed amidst the furor in the country over the humiliating rebuff of American emissaries in Paris, Elbridge Gerry, John Marshall, and Charles C. Pinckney, by the French Republic, now under radical government by the Directory—the famous “X, Y, Z Affair.” Thayer’s tenor and his recitation of French atrocities during the Terror is indicative of the climate of opinion. Washington had been recalled as nominal commander-in-chief of the American army, which was being mobilized by Alexander Hamilton at President Adams’s direction. The fitting out of the navy was accelerated, naval war ensued, and the possibility of full-scale

warfare against France loomed. So divided was the country, and so strong was the fear of Jacobin influence, that Washington himself insisted that Republicans be excluded from the army as potentially disloyal. The enactment of the repressive Alien and Sedition Acts, whereby political opposition became a crime, occurred during June and July; it was thus within weeks of Thayer's sermon on May 9, and provides an index of the feverish temper of the times.

*Pray without ceasing—give thanks.*

I Thessalonians, v. 17, 18.

In the words just read, the inspired apostle inculcates on us the two important duties of prayer and thanksgiving, which the President of the United States invites us all to perform on this day. We have need to pray for the pardon of our sins, as a nation, and as individuals, and to humble ourselves profoundly before God on account of them; and we have need to pray for the continuation of the mercies, both spiritual and temporal, which we have hitherto enjoyed. To the proclamation of our Supreme Magistrate, our Right Rev. Bishop has been pleased to add his strong recommendation, in which, in addition to the objects of humiliation and prayer common to all our fellow-citizens, he urges us to beseech the Lord to put a stop to the dreadful persecution which is now ravaging his own church, and to comfort and strengthen its visible head. But, though the duty of humiliation and prayer be incumbent on us at all times, and *more specifically at the present*, still, seeing the astonishing change that has lately taken place in the public mind, I consider the duty of thanksgiving as yet more pressing—I shall, therefore, at this time, mention to you some of the motives which should excite us all to gratitude and thanksgiving to the great bestower of all good; and, as I proceed, I shall, from time to time, make such reflections as are proper to incline our hearts to prayer and humiliation.

During the whole course of my ministry among you, my brethren, I have never before entered into any details concerning political affairs; nor should I do it now, were it not to teach you to appreciate duly the government under which you live, and to point out your duties towards it.

1. The first blessing which demands our cordial thanks to God is, that we live under the freest and most easy government in the world. The constitution of the United States unites a proper degree of energy with all the liberty which any reasonable person can desire. It is well-balanced, our executive, legislative and judicial authorities being independent of, and mutually checked by, each other. They all emanate from the people at large; who have always the power to put an end to any real abuses which may take place, by displacing their present representatives and appointing others that have their confidence—and as long as the great body of the people do not see the necessity of a change of men and measures, we may rest assured, that the abuses, however they may be magnified by party-scribblers and declaimers, are not of a very alarming nature. Under such a government as this, every insurrection against the constituted authorities, or opposition to them, is a revolt of a part against the general will, by which those authorities exist, and is highly criminal. Praised be God, that this happy constitution, under which persons of all

denominations enjoy entire security for their lives, property, and liberty, whether spiritual or political, is still unimpaired and in full operation; and that all the attempts to overturn, or to weaken it, by concentrating all its powers in the single house of representatives, have only served to throw light upon its principles, and to give it additional strength.

2. Another cause of thanksgiving to God is, that the administration of this most excellent constitution, ever since its first establishment, has been committed to men eminent for their wisdom, firmness, and patriotic services. I need only mention a Washington, that guardian genius, that saviour of his country, that ornament of the human race, to excite in all your hearts the warmest feelings of esteem, gratitude and love. Long may he enjoy the charms of that retirement in which he has chosen to spend the evening of his life: may the blessings of this country and of the universe be yet many years his reward; and at length, enriched with every christian as well as moral virtue, may he enter the realms of everlasting felicity.

We have great reason to be thankful, that, when that approved warrior and admired statesman resigned the helm of state, and sought the repose which his age and health required, God did not permit the intrigues of a foreign, insidious nation to succeed in raising the man of their choice to the presidential chair; but inspired us with sufficient courage to place at our head a statesman and patriot, whose ability and integrity, proved in the most trying times, eminently entitle him to our confidence and affection. Such is the illustrious John Adams, the present president of these states. This great man can have nothing in view but the happiness and prosperity of his fellow-citizens, with whose fortunes his own, and those of his family, are evidently and inseparably connected.

He wishes for no power unwarranted by the constitution, and for no support incompatible with the generous spirit of freedom. Since the publication of his instructions to our messengers of peace, we have learned, better than ever, to appreciate his worth. We are now assured of his moderate and conciliatory temper, as well as of his decisive firmness. Under such a leader we have nothing to fear: never will he sacrifice the honor of his country; never will he relinquish any part of that independence which has long been the object of all his toils and labors, and for the obtaining of which so many of our brave countrymen have spilt their blood and lost their lives. Let us offer up our fervent prayers to heaven, on this day, that his invaluable life may be preserved, and his health continued; that God would give him wisdom to discern what are the best measures to be adopted for the good of his country, and the fortitude to put them into execution, in spite of every obstacle and opposition; and that all those who assist him in council may be men of ability and integrity, so that the public may receive no detriment from incapacity or dishonesty. Let us all resolve to give him a generous and cordial support, and openly avow this resolution by setting our names to the manly and spirited addresses which are now proposed for the signature of all citizens. Let us tell him, that we feel, as we ought, the value of that liberty which we enjoy, and that we pledge our fortunes and sacred honour to defend it with loyalty and fidelity, under the banners of the government which we have chosen. Let us express our indignation at the repeated insults offered to this government, which has sought peace by every possible mean compatible with

the dignity and honour of an independent nation. Let us declare, with the firmness and self-respect of freemen, our readiness to unite in every effort, which shall be made, to prevent our being subjected to the degrading conditions which a foreign nation seeks to impose upon us, as preliminary to all negotiation for peace, and that we consider war, with all its attendant calamities, as by far the least of the two evils. Let us show, that we love the government which protects us, and that we are not divided from it, either in interest or affection. In fine, let us express our warm and unequivocal approbation of the wise and temperate system which has hitherto been pursued with regard to foreign nations, and our increasing confidence in him who presides over us with so much wisdom and prudence.

3. A third motive, which we have, of the sincerest thanks to heaven is, that, while a spirit of disorganization and disorder has produced such baleful effects in other countries, America, in spite of the effervescence produced among us by the extraordinary exertions of foreign and domestic intriguers, yet remains in a happy state of tranquillity. France appears to have been raised up by God for the chastisement of an impious world. I speak not of France governed by the descendants of St. Louis; it was then the guardian of religion and good morals, and the asylum of the unfortunate. Happy land! where I received the most valuable part of my education, and where I passed my happiest years among esteemed friends and beloved associates! Alas! to me no more! They are all either cruelly butchered, banished, or reduced to wretchedness at home. If I forget thee, O dear, charming abode, *may my right hand forget her cunning; may my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth*. But now; how changed! My heart sinks within me, my spirits die away, when I recal the fate of some of my dearest inmates. But soon the painful recollection is swallowed up in the consideration of the complicated distresses of that once highly favoured empire.

France revolutionized is more truly the scourge of God, than was ever Attila, or any other barbarous conqueror recorded in history. Its tyrants, like Satan, their father, may be literally said *to go about, seeking whom they may devour*. If we cast an eye over the map of the world, we shall find, in almost every part, most dreadful traces of their destructive plans. The miseries which they have spread throughout the globe are beyond all the powers of calculation; miseries so universal as to have excited the horror of all who have the feelings, or merit the name, of human beings—miseries which will never be effaced from the memory of mankind, and which entire ages of peace and tranquillity will be scarcely able to repair. What unparalleled calamities have they not inflicted on their own wretched country! what wanton cruelties and atrocities have they not committed there! Their own writers confess, that, by the different modes of destruction, the guillotine, shooting, drowning, and the like, upwards of 30,000 persons were killed at Lyons, and that that once magnificent city was in great part levelled to the ground, that, at Nantz, according to the lowest estimate, 27,000 (some say, 40,000) were murdered, chiefly by drowning,\* so that the water of the Loire, on which it stands, became putrid, and was forbidden to be drunk, that at Paris, 150,000, and in la Vendee 300,000 were destroyed. They own themselves, that, since the beginning of their execrable revolution, two millions of their nation have been sacrificed, of which 250,000 were women, and 30,000 children: and in this immense carnage are not included the soldiers who have perished in camp and fallen in battle, nor the unborn infants who were destroyed together with

their mothers. Look into that country, and examine its present state. Though, by plunder, forced loans, contributions, and other iniquitous means, its lordly rulers have made a very great part of the riches of Europe to centre there; still, by their narrow policy, by the ruin of all manufactures, commerce, and every other regular source of wealth and revenue, and by the entire subversion of all public confidence, they have reduced the wretched inhabitants to a state little short of actual beggary and starvation. No slavery can be equal to their's: their condition is the most degraded that can be conceived. Every thing they possess, and even their very persons, are in a constant state of requisition; that is, they must be given up at the call of their rapacious masters, under pain of death, if they refuse. No man there dares write, print, speak, or even indicate, by the smallest sign, any disapprobation of whatever measures may chance to be dictated by the faction actually in power. Every press is seized that sends forth the least word in opposition to the mandates of the haughty directors, and the editors are put to death, imprisoned or banished. The people have no stable, fixed laws, by which to regulate their conduct: one edict is scarcely rendered public before it is annulled by another directly contrary; so that what is considered as lawful, and even patriotic, to-day, may to-morrow be accounted a crime worthy of death and confiscation.

Under these accumulated calamities, the wretched slaves might find their yoke less galling, their burdens less insupportable, if they could enjoy, *as it were by stealth*, the consolations of religion, for which they hunger and thirst. But no; their tyrants have nearly dried up this source of comfort. And here, my friends, what horrid scenes present themselves to our recollection! Many years before the revolution burst forth, the self-styled philosophers, a tribe composed of deists, atheists and materialists, had, by their secret clubs, by impious and obscene publications, and by various other means, suggested by the infernal spirit, attempted, and in part succeeded, to corrupt the different classes of society in France. But never could their system of impiety take effect upon the great mass of the citizens, who found, and ever will find, their happiness in the belief of religion. They had long plotted the utter extirpation of all religion, but, in the first place, of that which, by its greater extension and superior attachment to order and good government, stood more immediately in the way of their nefarious projects: this religion was the Roman Catholic: its overthrow was, therefore, resolved on; and the moment they had trampled down the ancient authorities of the kingdom, they employed every artifice, and made every effort, to effect their purpose. They began their impious attack on the church, by degrading her ministers in the eyes of the populace, by stripping them of those distinctive garments of their order, which, for ages, had rendered them respectable to the faithful. They then deprived them of their livings and other possessions, and represented them as inimical to the true interests of the country, because they would not take oaths which tended to nothing less, than the renunciation of the authority of the sovereign pontiff and of the bishops; in a word, of the catholic religion, which had been transmitted to them through several succeeding centuries. Upon their noble and almost unanimous refusal to apostatize from their faith, one of the most horrible persecutions (and perhaps the most so), that was ever levelled against the ministers of the altar, commenced, and has continued, with almost unabating fury, until the present moment: according to the very last authentic accounts, the priests are still hunted down, and very great rewards are offered for delivering them up. Thousands of these holy men, of these generous



confessors of Jesus Christ, have been put to death, by drowning, shooting, and guillotining, or have perished through want and ill treatment. Thousands and tens of thousands of them have been banished from their homes, destitute of all means of subsistence, by the bloody edicts of the monsters of France; or have gone into voluntary exile, and are now wandering in foreign climes, where they either suffer all the horrors of indigence, or prolong their existence by the precarious charities of strangers. I need not inform you, my brethren, that the two excellent priests, who govern this flock with so much profit, and who are so deservedly dear\* to you all, are here only in consequence of the terrible vexations in their own country.

But the cruelty of the persecutors was not confined to the different orders of the clergy; it extended even to the poor, innocent, defenceless nuns, who, by almost entire exclusion from exterior conversation, and a consecration to the tranquil exercises of devotion, were become far more timid than the weakest of their sex who live in the world. Bands of armed ruffians were sent into their sacred asylums, who used every species of violence to force them to take the sacrilegious oath to give up their religion. Many of those unoffending virgins expired under the murderous lash, to preserve inviolate fidelity to their vows. Very few of them indeed were terrified, or even seduced, into a compliance with the orders of their tyrants. At length, when all means of perversion had been essayed in vain, a barbarous edict strips them of all their property at one stroke; their convents are declared to belong to the nation; and, in one day, all those helpless victims, to the number of 30,000, are turned out by force to all the miseries attendant on a state of poverty and want. Many of them had grown old in the cloister; many of them were sick and infirm; all of them had given up, under the sanction of former laws, whatever they possessed in the world, and of course found themselves in the utmost distress. No consideration of this kind was capable of touching the more than adamant hearts of their enemies, who, to aggravate their wretched and forlorn situation, forbade all persons, under the severest penalties, to harbour more than two of them together. All the eloquence that ever fell to the lot of a mortal would be totally inadequate to point out, in their real turpitude, only a small part of those deeds of horror which have taken place in France within these few years past. The many traits of savage barbarity related in the history of the world, all collected and united together, appear tender mercies, when compared with the refined cruelties of the sanguinary factions of that country; cruelties not committed by a few unlicensed individuals, amid the disorders of a revolution, but by commission from the men in power, and under their immediate eye. Were I to enter into a few details, such as are given by the writers of their own party, the hairs of your heads would stand erect; an involuntary tremor would seize every joint and limb of your bodies; loving husbands and wives, you could not resist the shock; tender mothers, you would faint at the recital; and your modesty, my virgin hearers, would be indeed most sensibly wounded. I, therefore, turn from these abominable scenes.

To all their inhuman deeds, they have added the most horrid impieties and profanations. They have stripped the churches of the holy vessels, vestments and other things consecrated to the worship of God, and have converted them all to common uses. Some of these venerable temples they have turned into play-houses, stores, rope-walks, stables, and the like; and others they have devoted to the worship of impious men and prostituted women, to whom they have paid the most extravagant honours.

They have respected nothing that has the least relation to religion. They have commanded all bibles, prayer-books, sacred images, &c. to be brought forth, and have consumed them in one common mass. Nor, in this respect, has one religious profession been more favoured than another; for the dissenting meeting-houses, and even the Jewish synagogues, were emptied also, and their contents committed to the flames. They have spared no one of the sacred institutions of Christianity; and, in order to obliterate it entirely from the memory of mankind, they have made it a crime to pass the first day of the week in exercises of religious worship (a practice co-eval with the existence of the Christian religion), and have introduced, in its stead, the decade, a day wholly devoted to profane amusements.

But the funest effects of the revolution in France have not been limited to that country—it has also proved a sweeping deluge to their West-India colonies: it has carried devastation and ruin into those once flourishing islands, under the pretext of spreading among them the blessings of freedom: the slaves have been let loose upon the whites; the richest towns have been given up to plunder, and burnt; and a war of extermination has been declared, and still furiously rages.

If we look into the European world, and consider the countries which the French have either conquered, or seduced to fraternize with them (as they term it), we shall see every where, that, notwithstanding their most solemn promises of liberty of conscience, of security of life and property, they have uniformly robbed the churches, taken away the lives and estates of those who would not join in all their atrocities, deprived the people of the freedom of religion, plundered them by their armies, levied upon them the most grievous contributions, forced them to give up their strong-holds, and to maintain their conquerors among them for the purpose of keeping themselves in subjection. Holland\* was an hive of bees; her sons flew on the wings of the wind to every corner of the globe; and returned laden with the sweets of every climate. Belgium was a garden of herbs, the oxen were strong to labour, the fields were thickly covered with the abundance of the harvest. Unhappy Dutchmen! they still toil, but not for their own comfort; they still collect honey, but not for themselves! France seizes the hive as often as their industry has filled it. Ill-judging Belgians! they no longer eat in security the fruits of their own grounds; France, all-grasping France (whose never-ceasing cry is, “give, give”), finds occasion, or makes occasion, to participate largely in their riches; it is more truly said of themselves than of their oxen, they plough the fields, but not for their own profit.

It would take up far more time than could be possibly given to one discourse, to follow their murdering bands to all the places through which, like destroying angels, they have spread terror and desolation. Wherever they have met with the least resistance, especially if an individual Frenchman was killed in the conflict, whole bodies of respectable magistrates have been made to expiate, with their lives, the pretended rebellion; entire cities have been threatned with extermination for the same offence, and nothing but enormous sums of money have been able to save them from the impending ruin. Like impetuous torrents, in the rapidity of their course, they have borne down every thing before them; and, without distinction of friends and enemies, they have effaced, from the list of independent nations, Geneva, Genoa, Venice, and the papal territory.

The pope had been for ages, by the liberality of Christian princes, a very considerable temporal sovereign. His dominions had been secured to him by the same solemn treaties, which had hitherto bound kingdoms and states to each other. Yet, in spite of those treaties, no sooner was the National Assembly formed, than it forcibly wrested from him a valuable part\* of his possessions, under a pretext, which would sanction every robbery, viz. that it would be a very convenient addition to the French empire. From that first aggression they have never desisted, one moment, from their project of destroying the temporal sovereignty of the Roman pontiff, and, if possible, of putting an end to his spiritual supremacy in the church. And, though our Holy Father has constantly shown himself the most pacific of men, a true disciple of the meek and humble Jesus; though this his disposition has been evident before the eyes of all Europe, as Buonaparte† is obliged to acknowledge; though his unfeigned piety, his firmness and moderation amidst the greatest difficulties, his spirit of sacrifice and concession wherever his conscience and duty were not implicated, have drawn on him the veneration and love of all good men, the admiration and esteem of his enemies, and have created a lively solicitude, among the most judicious dissenters from our faith, for the preservation of his person and temporalities; notwithstanding all this, the terrible and all-devouring republic has, at length, made an occasion to rob him of all his states; and, in order to secure the co-operation of his own subjects, in the iniquitous work, she has flattered their ears with the syren sound of freedom, which will very soon terminate in the most wretched slavery.

Let me here fix your attention, for a few moments, on the common father of all the faithful. Perhaps, while I am now speaking, he is exposed to the most ignominious treatment, is insulted and reviled, as was the Redeemer of the world, whom he represents on earth; perhaps he is now confined to a horrid dungeon, loaded with chains, as was St. Peter, to whom he is a most worthy successor; or, perhaps, he has fallen a victim to the fury of the enemies of God and man, and has thus become a glorious martyr for the holy catholic faith. Children are obliged to pray for their parents; the church is bound to pray for her head: thus did the primitive Christians for St. Peter, who, on account of their prayers, was delivered from prison by the miraculous interposition of an angel. Our reverend bishop has ordered every priest to pray for the sovereign pontiff, in an especial manner, during six successive months. It is a duty which we most cheerfully undertake. We hope, that each one of you, who has the smallest love for his religion, will unite his prayers to those which are ascending, from every part of the catholic church, for the same important object. But, while we urge you earnestly to pray, we, at the same time, exhort you not to be discouraged at the present gloomy aspect of affairs in the church. Though some fanatics, in the *jacobinic* vehicles of slander and abuse, have lately very much exulted over the misfortunes of the pope, as if the fall of anti-christ\* were near at hand; we catholics despise such ranting stuff, knowing, as we do, with the certitude of divine faith, that all their silly forebodings will prove vain; and that the church will stand and triumph, in spite of earth and hell combined against her. God has declared, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against her*; and his word will be fulfilled. She has past through far more grievous trials: all the powers of the world were leagued against her from her very infancy; and for three hundred years together the greatest part of her chief pastors spilt their blood in her defence. Her past preservation is a pledge of future protection. All her sufferings were foretold by her Divine Founder, who took

care to build her upon so solid a rock, that she will ever stand immoveable amidst all the floods and storms of persecution and impiety which may beat against her. Pope Pius the VIth is the successor of St. Peter, the prince of the apostles; he is the vicar of Jesus Christ on earth, and the visible head of his church; and, therefore, whatever may be his fate, yet, as sure as God is true, so sure he will have a successor, even until the end of ages. Mighty revolutions shall take place throughout the globe: kingdoms shall be changed into republics, and republics into kingdoms: civilization shall succeed to barbarism, and barbarism to civilization: Amid all these vicissitudes, still the bark of St. Peter, with his successors at the helm, shall sail triumphantly down the stream of time; and never will the pilot appear more venerable, than when he guides the vessel amidst the howling tempest and raging billows. We ought, indeed, to be deeply humbled, that iniquity is permitted to go to such lengths against God's holy church; we ought, each one, to consider our sins as, in part, the causes of this terrible calamity; we ought, therefore, to resolve on a reformation of life, especially at this time, when the charity of very many catholics is become cold, when the enemies of the church are her own favoured children, whom she has brought up with the tenderest care and affection, and fed with the word of God and the sacraments. But, I repeat it; we must not be dismayed, as if all were lost. God's promise will have its full and perfect effect: he is still the strong and Almighty Lord: his arm is not shortened; he will yet protect his church, which he has purchased with his own precious blood: her enemies will all be defeated and confounded; and she, like gold tried in the fire, will be purified from all her dross\* in the crucible of tribulation, and will shine more bright and glorious than ever. Let these reflections be your consolation.†

All the miseries which the French have occasioned, and are now occasioning, are but the beginnings of what they meditate. Their object now clearly appears to be universal domination; and, without a miraculous interference of divine providence, we have much reason to fear that they will obtain it, at least on the continent of Europe. Spain, Portugal and Switzerland seem just ready to fall within the fraternal embrace of those ministers of divine vengeance. What will be the fate of England, against which their hatred and malice appear principally levelled, or, rather, for whose immense riches they have the most voracious desire, a period, not far distant, must disclose. In the mean time, we ought to wish ardently and pray fervently for the preservation of that magnanimous kingdom, the only remaining bulwark, in Europe, against the inroads of barbarism.

Let us now consider what has been the baseness and injustice of that great nation (as they insultingly call themselves), towards America. At a very early period of their revolution we acknowledged their existence as a republic, and formally received their ambassador; for which act we hazarded the displeasure of the principal powers of Europe then leagued against them, and war with the most formidable of them all. We sent them our bread when their ports were blockaded, and they were in a starving condition. We even went so far as to pay into their hands, and long before it became due, the debt which we had contracted with their good king, whom they had most inhumanly murdered. Our merchants were seduced to carry them the rich produce of our soil; and, to the eternal infamy of that swindling republic, they yet remain entirely unpaid, or else have been obliged to receive depreciated paper. Our vessels have been embargoed in their ports, to the very great damage of their owners; our merchants

have been plundered, for years together, to the amount of millions; the stipulations of our solemn treaty with them have been continually violated; and all this injurious treatment was given us under the frivolous pretext of imperious necessity; the sense of which phrase is more intelligibly expressed in the high-wayman's words; *your purse or your life*. The despots of France have continually interfered in the concerns of our government, from which they have endeavoured, by their spies, their bribes, and their nefarious and artful intrigues, to divide the body of the people. They have treated our chief magistrates with the utmost indignity and contempt: they have persuaded the people to despise and vilify their rulers, to controul the authorities constituted by themselves to act in their behalf, and to establish a system of disorganization and a wild, unprincipled, democracy, in place of our present rational liberty, which is supported by law and order. All these aggravated wrongs, all this accumulation of unmerited injury and abuse, we have forborne to resent, still hoping for redress from that generosity and justice which are innate in the human heart. We have used every mean of conciliation compatible with the dignity and honour of an independent, sovereign, people. Our government first sent over to them a gentleman of the highest respectability, with full powers to adjust all existing differences; but he was spurned from their presence, and treated with the most marked contempt. But, duly appreciating the great blessing of peace, our president still persisted in his conciliatory conduct; and, to the gentleman, whom they had already refused, he joined two others of our most distinguished citizens, fondly flattering himself, that this mark of condescension and deference would produce its proper effect. But no sooner do they arrive, than they are treated with the most sovereign indignity. Still they wait with patience: they supplicate: they suffer every degradation to effect a reconciliation,\* or even an interview, with the insolent usurpers of despotic power. And what is the answer which their agents return to all these humiliations? It is this, my friends:

You must first put into our hands thirty-three millions of dollars, as a free gift and as a loan; that is, more silver than can be carried in a hundred waggons, each loaded with a ton weight: and all this enormous sum only to be admitted into our sublime presence, in order to be told, whether, and on what terms, we will make peace with you; for which peace, if we condescend to make it, you must give us as many millions of dollars as we shall be graciously pleased to demand; and our demand shall not be regulated by the justice of your claims which we acknowledge and laugh at, but by our power to exact and by your ability to pay—and if you refuse these conditions; if you do not give us, as long as you have any thing to give; we will ravage your coasts; we will treat you as we have treated Holland, Geneva, Genoa, and the other republics; nay, we will destroy you as a nation, and parcel you out to whomsoever we please, as we have done with the most ancient republic in the world, Venice, which we had but just before declared free and independent.

Such is the substance of the answer given to our envoys by the haughty sultans of France—and is there a single freeman in America, whether a native or a foreigner, whose blood does not boil within him at the bare mention of so much insolence, and who does not reply to it, in the language of our envoys; *we will make one manly struggle before we comply?*

Though many may have been misled, in time past, from want of proper information, and from an opinion that France was fighting in the cause of liberty, no one now, since their iniquitous and oppressive conduct towards this country has come to light, unless he be a hired villain, or naturally delight in confusion, bloodshed and rapine, can find the least apology for them. The charm of the word *liberty*, with which they have so long fascinated the ignorant and unwary, is now dissolved. Honest men can now openly and freely express their sentiments, without any dread of that impudent, hectoring faction, which has so long terrified peaceable people into silence, and, in some measure, over-awed our government.

From a review of what has been said, we see great cause of humiliation, before God, for the extreme depravity of the human heart. In the conduct of the usurpers and people of France, we discover what men are capable of, when they renounce their God and religion, and give themselves up to their passions. We should also be humbled, in the divine presence, on considering, that we are, at least, the partial causes of the awful judgments which are abroad in the world: nor must we flatter ourselves with being less guilty than others, because we are less severely chastised. Our situation hitherto has been truly enviable. While we bewail the crimes by which we have merited God's anger, and deprecate his wrath, we ought to give him unfeigned thanks for all our blessings. While a notable part of the civilized, christian, world has, for several successive years, heard nothing but the din of arms and the confusion of war; we have enjoyed the happy effects of tranquillity and peace. While Jacobinism, by which I mean the principles of anarchy, disorganization, plunder and murder, has spread its baleful influence throughout the fairest portions of the universe, it has evidently made but small progress in America, notwithstanding the unwearied efforts which have been made for its propagation. That this is the case, is now very visible from the unanimous determination, which has burst forth, from one end of the Union to the other, to support our happy government, and to sacrifice every thing rather than to submit to national degradation: an unanimity, in my view, far greater than that which prevailed during our revolutionary war. In that war, many of our most respectable and virtuous citizens were on the side of Great-Britain from real motives of loyalty and of conscience; but no American can plead loyalty, religion, conscience, or any other honourable motive, for dissenting, from the body of his countrymen, in the noble stand they are now making against the most unjust, imperious, insulting and impious nation that inhabits the globe. None but the basest and most treasonable of motives can influence such a wretch. I hope, my brethren, there is not an individual among you all, who does not feel the same patriotic enthusiasm which animates the breasts of native citizens. Besides the motives for indignation, which the generality of them have, against the vile miscreants of France who wish to lord it over the world, you, as Catholics, have a motive yet more powerful; which is, that they have profaned and destroyed your churches, barbarously oppressed, banished, and murdered, your bishops, priests, monks and nuns; and have carried their audacity so far, as to lay their sacrilegious, polluted, hands on the Lord's anointed, the visible head of the church, the common father of all the faithful. May we, then, never again hear from the mouth of any Irish Catholic, that he rejoices at every victory, and applauds every action, of the French, because they are the enemies of his English oppressors. Granting the reality of the oppression of which you complain, and that you have suffered it all purely on account of your attachment to the catholic faith, which has been the glory of

your nation from St. Patrick to the present day: yet what has this in common with the defence of the constitution, the government and laws of united America? This country has received you into her bosom with the greatest affection: she makes you partakers of the same privileges and\* immunities which her native sons enjoy: she takes under her protection your lives, property and religion. The most of you are probably settled here for life: many of you have wives and children, to whom you are tenderly attached, and whose welfare, as well as your own, is intimately connected with the welfare of the country. It is, therefore, evidently your interest, that America remain free and independent, in order that the blessings of liberty and good government may be transmitted to your posterity. It would be the height of baseness and ingratitude not to join heart and hand in defending the land where you earn your bread, and enjoy all the happy advantages which result from social life. England, which you deem your enemy and oppressor, it is true, is grappling with the nation which is now plundering and insulting us. It is not, for that reason, the cause of England that we are called to defend. I know, that, to engage the ignorant and unwary on the side of France, it has been said by her partisans, that she is defending the cause of all the oppressed, throughout the world, against their tyrants, and the cause of republicanism against monarchy: but this language is too stale to pass current, at this time, even with the most uninformed; especially since she has swallowed up all the republics of the old world. France is the great oppressor of the universe; and, therefore, opposition to her is the *common cause of the human race* against their tyrants, plunderers and murderers: it is the *cause of every regular government, and of all civilized society* against disorganization, anarchy and terror: it is *the cause of all religion and virtue* against deism, atheism and every species of immorality: it is your cause; it is my cause; it is every honest man's cause: it is a cause, in which are deeply interested our lives, our property, our liberty, our conscience, our every thing that is dear to us for time and eternity. Fly, then, to the standard of this country; and oppose, by every mean in your power, all the open or insidious attacks of the enemy. Cheerfully subscribe your names to the address of this town to the president of the Union, in which an offer of life and fortune is made to him for the efficient defence of the country. No neutrality, my brethren: "*he that is not with me, is against me,*" is as true with respect to the land that feeds you, as with respect to God himself. Avoid all those men who seek to inflame your passions against England, in order to range you on the side of France. Read none of those seditious, lying, papers, in which our own rulers, the men of our choice, and all their measures, are perpetually villified, calumniated, and misrepresented, and in which every thing that is done by the French, however absurd, inconsistent and infamous, is forever extolled, and held up as the model of perfection; papers which, with truth and liberty for their motto, are always replete with falsehood and with the sentiments of slaves.

If you wish to escape the horrors which jacobinism has produced in France, and wherever else its pestilential maxims have gained ground, you must strive to destroy it in the bud; that is, you must suppress all insubordination, disobedience, or even disrespect, towards your civil rulers, as well as towards your ecclesiastical superiors. You have heard much of *the rights of man*, it is high time now to attend to *the duties of man*. Remember, that no one can ever have a *right to do wrong*, and that obedience and respect to your lawfully established rulers are among your strictest duties. The contrary conduct is extremely wrong and sinful. A spirit of disobedience and revolt is

strangely prevalent among children and servants. This is, at present, a very general complaint;\* and it is an abundant source of jacobinism in the state. Attend, therefore, to family discipline; keep your dependents in proper subjection, and they will contract those habits of obedience and submission which will render them good citizens, and which will effectually counteract all the attempts of disorganizers to introduce anarchy and confusion into this now peaceful and happy land.

amen



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

48

## THE DUTY OF AMERICANS, AT THE PRESENT CRISIS

Timothy Dwight

NEW-HAVEN

1798

Timothy Dwight (1752–1817). A native of Northampton, Massachusetts, and a Congregational minister, Dwight was regarded in his mature years as the dominant figure in Connecticut's established order. A prodigy as a boy, he is said to have learned the alphabet in one lesson, to have been reading the Bible at four, and to have become familiar with Latin by six. He entered Yale at thirteen, was graduated in 1769, and returned as a tutor in 1771, a position he kept for six years. He left in 1777 to serve for two years as chaplain in General S. H. Parson's Connecticut brigade. Politically active, Dwight continued in the ministry and in 1783 was ordained pastor of the Greenfield Hill Congregational Church, where he remained for twelve years. He wrote patriotic songs and poems, including a lumbering epic of eleven books in rhymed pentameters, *The Conquest of Canaan* (1785), which was calculated to give America something comparable to Greece's *Iliad* and Rome's *Aeneid*.

Dwight's fame, however, came as Ezra Stiles's successor as president of Yale, a position he held from 1795 to his death. Yale dates its modern history from Dwight's administration. Stiles disliked Dwight extremely, and his later detractors dubbed him Pope Dwight—while his admirers ranked him just behind St. Paul. A rigid Calvinist and a staunch Federalist, he battled with all his considerable energy against the rising tides of infidelity in religion and democracy in politics.

About all that the modern reader will know of Dwight's poetry is the hymn "I Love Thy Kingdom, Lord." The prose exhibited here reflects a far-from-serene Fourth of July in 1798, when the Jacobins were seen as threatening the country from all quarters, not least in the form of Jeffersonian Republicans and their atheistic allies.

*Behold I come as a thief: Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.*

Revelation XVI. xv.

This passage is inserted as a parenthesis in the account of the sixth vial. To feel its whole force it will be necessary to recur to that account, and to examine it with some attention. It is given in these words.

V. 12. "And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the king of the east might be prepared."

13. “And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.[”]

14. “For they are the spirits of\* devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.”

15. “Behold I come as a thief: Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame.”

16. “And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon.”

To this account is subjoined that of the seventh vial; at the effusion of which is accomplished a wonderful and most affecting convulsion of this guilty world, and the final ruin of the Antichristian empire. The circumstances of this amazing event are exhibited at large in the remainder of this, and in the three succeeding chapters.

Instead of employing the time, allowed by the present occasion, in stating the several opinions of commentators concerning this remarkable prophecy, opinions which you can examine at your leisure, I shall, as briefly as may be, state to you that, which appears to me to be its true meaning. This is necessary to be done, to prepare you for the use of it, which is now intended to be made.

In the 12th verse, under a natural allusion to the manner in which the ancient Babylon was destroyed, a description is given us of the measures, used by the Most High to prepare the way for the destruction of the spiritual Babylon. The river Euphrates surrounded the walls, and ran through the middle, of the ancient Babylon, and thus became the means of its wealth, strength and safety. When Cyrus and Cyaxares,\* the kings of Persia and Media, or, in the Jewish phraseology, of the east, took this celebrated city, they dried up, or emptied, the waters of the Euphrates, out of its proper channel, by turning them into a lake, or more probably a sunken region of the country, above the city. They then entered by the channel which passed through the city, made themselves masters of it, and overturned the empire. The emptying, or drying up, of the waters of the real Euphrates thus prepared the way of the real kings of the east for the destruction of the city and empire of the real Babylon. The drying up of the waters of the figurative Euphrates in the like manner prepares the way of the figurative kings of the east for the destruction of the city and empire of the figurative Babylon. The terms *waters*, *Euphrates*, *kings*, *east*, *Babylon*, are all figurative or symbolical; and are not to be understood as denoting real kings, or a real east, any more than a real Euphrates, or a real Babylon. The whole meaning of the prophet is, I apprehend, that God will, under this vial, so diminish the wealth, strength, and safety, of the spiritual or figurative Babylon, as effectually to prepare the way for its destroyers.

In the remaining verses an event is predicted, of a totally different kind; which is also to take place in the same period. Three unclean spirits, like frogs, are exhibited as proceeding out of the mouth of the dragon or Devil, of the beast or Romish

government, and of the false prophet, or, as I apprehend, of the regular clergy of that hierarchy. These spirits are represented as working miracles, as going forth to the kings, of the whole world, to gather them; and as actually gathering them together to the battle of that great day of God Almighty, described in the remainder of this chapter, and in the three succeeding ones. Of this vast enterprise the miserable end is strongly marked, in the name of the place, into which they are said to be gathered—Armageddon—the mountain of destruction and mourning.

The writer of this book will himself explain to us what he intended by the word *spirits* in this passage. In his 1st Epistle, ch. iv. v. 1. he says, “Beloved, believe not every spirit; but try the spirits, whether they be of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”\*

i.e. Believe not every teacher, or doctrine, professing to come from God; but examine all carefully, that ye may know whether they come from God, or not; for many false prophets, or teachers passing themselves upon the church for teachers of truth, but in reality teachers of false doctrines, are gone out into the world.

In the same sense, if I am not deceived, is the word used in the passage under consideration. One great characteristic and calamity of this period is, therefore, that unclean teachers, or teachers of unclean doctrines, will spread through the world, to unite mankind against God. They are said to be three; i.e. several; a definite number being used here, as in many other passages of this book, for an indefinite one; to *come out of the mouths* of the three evil agents abovementioned; i.e. to originate in those countries, where they have principally co-operated against the kingdom of God; to be *unclean*; to *resemble frogs*; i.e. to be lothesome, clamorous, impudent, and pertinacious; to be *the spirits of demons*, i.e. to be impious, malicious, proud, deceitful, and cruel; to *work miracles*, or wonders; and to *gather great multitudes of men to battle*, i.e. to embark them in an open, professed enterprise, against God Almighty.

Having thus summarily explained my views of this prophecy, I shall now for the purpose of presenting it in a more distinct and comprehensive view, draw together the several parts of it in a paraphrase.

In the sixth great division of the period of providence, denoted by the vials filled with divine judgments and emptied on the world, the wealth, strength and safety of the Antichristian empire will be greatly lessened, and thus effectual preparation will be made for its final overthrow.

In the meantime several teachers of false and immoral doctrines will arise in those countries, where the powers of the Antichristian empire have especially distinguished themselves, by corrupting the truth, and persecuting the followers, of Christ; the character of which teachers and their doctrines will be impure, lothesome, impudent, pertinacious, proud, deceitful, impious, malicious, and cruel.

These teachers will, by their doctrines and labours, openly, professedly, and in an unusual manner, contend against God, and against his kingdom in this world, and will strive to unite mankind in this opposition.

Nor will they fail of astonishing success; for they will actually unite a large part of the human race, particularly in Christendom, in this impious undertaking.

But they will only unite them to their destruction; a destruction most awfully accomplished at the effusion of the seventh vial.

From this explanation it is manifest, that the prediction consists of two great and distinct parts; *the preparation for the overthrow of the Antichristian empire; and the embarkation of men in a professed and unusual opposition to God, and to his kingdom, accomplished by means of false doctrines, and impious teachers.*

By the ablest commentators the fifth vial is considered as having been poured out at the time of the Reformation. The first is supposed, and with almost absolute certainty, to have begun to operate not long after the year 800. If we calculate from that period to the year 1517, the year in which the Reformation began in Germany, the four first vials will be found to have occupied about four times 180 years. 180 years may therefore be estimated as the greatest, and 170 years as the least, duration of a single vial. From the year 1517 to the year 1798 there are 281 years. If the fifth vial be supposed to have continued 180 years, its termination was in the year 1697; if 170, in 1687. Of course the sixth vial may be viewed as having been in operation more than 100 years.

You will now naturally ask, What events in the Providence of God, found in this period, verify the prediction?

To this question I answer, generally, that the whole complexion of things appears to me to have, in a manner surprisingly exact, corresponded with the prediction. The following particulars will evince with what propriety this answer is returned.

Within this period the Jesuits, who constituted the strongest branch, and the most formidable internal support, of the Romish hierarchy, have been suppressed.

Within this period various other orders of the regular Romish clergy have in some countries been suppressed, and in others greatly reduced. Their permanent possessions have been confiscated, and their wealth and power greatly lessened.

Within this period the Antichristian secular powers have been in most instances exceedingly weakened. Poland as a body politic is nearly annihilated. Austria has deeply suffered. Venice and the popish part of Switzerland as bodies politic have vanished. The Sardinian monarchy is on the eve of dissolution. Spain, Naples, Tuscany, and Genoa, are sorely wounded; and Portugal totters to its fall. By the treaty, now on the tapis in Germany, the Romish archbishoprics and bishoprics, in that empire, are proposed to be secularized, and as distinct governments to be destroyed. As the strength of these powers was the foundation, on which the hierarchy rested; so their destruction, or diminution, is a final preparation for its ruin.

In France, Belgium, the Italian, and Cis-rhenane republics, a new form of government has been instituted, the effect of which, whether it shall prove permanent, or not, must be greatly and finally to diminish the strength of the hierarchy.

In France, and in Belgium, the whole power and influence of the clergy of all descriptions have, in a sense, been destroyed; and their immense wealth has been diverted into new channels. In France, also, an open, violent, and inveterate war has been made upon the hierarchy, and carried on with unexampled bitterness and cruelty.\*

Within this period, also, the revenues of the pope have been greatly curtailed; the territory of Avignon has been taken out of his hands; and his general weight and authority have exceedingly declined.

Within the present year his person has been seized, his secular government overturned, a republic formed out of his dominions, and an apparent and at least temporary end put to his dominion.

To all these mighty preparations for the ruin of the Antichristian empire may be added, as of the highest efficacy, that great change of character, of views, feelings, and habits, throughout many Antichristian countries, which assures us completely, that its former strength can never return.

Thus has the first part of this remarkable prophecy been accomplished. Not less remarkable has been the fulfilment of the second.

About the year 1728, Voltaire, so celebrated for his wit and brilliancy, and not less distinguished for his hatred of christianity and his abandonment of principle, formed a systematical design to destroy christianity, and to introduce in its stead a general diffusion of irreligion and atheism. For this purpose he associated with himself Frederic the II, king of Prussia, and Mess. D'Alembert and Diderot, the principal compilers of the Encyclopedie; all men of talents, atheists, and in the like manner abandoned. The principal parts of this system were, 1st. The compilation of the Encyclopedie;\* in which with great art and insidiousness the doctrines of natural as well as Christian theology were rendered absurd and ridiculous; and the mind of the reader was insensibly steeled against conviction and duty. 2. The overthrow of the religious orders in Catholic countries; a step essentially necessary to the destruction of the religion professed in those countries. 3. The establishment of a sect of philosophists to serve, it is presumed, as a conclave, a rallying point, for all their followers. 4. The appropriation to themselves, and their disciples, of the places and honours of members of the French Academy, the most respectable literary society in France, and always considered as containing none but men of prime learning and talents. In this way they designed to hold out themselves, and their friends, as the only persons of great literary and intellectual distinction in that country, and to dictate all literary opinions to the nation.†5. The fabrication of books of all kinds against christianity, especially such as excite doubt, and generate contempt and derision. Of these they issued, by themselves and their friends, who early became numerous, an immense number; so printed, as to be purchased for little or nothing, and so written,

as to catch the feelings, and steal upon the approbation, of every class of men. 6. The formation of a secret academy, of which Voltaire was the standing president, and in which books were formed, altered, forged, imputed as posthumous to deceased writers of reputation, and sent abroad with the weight of their names. These were printed and circulated, at the lowest price, through all classes of men, in an uninterrupted succession, and through every part of the kingdom.

Nor were the labours of this academy confined to religion. They attacked also morality and government, unhinged gradually the minds of men, and destroyed their reverence for every thing heretofore esteemed sacred.

In the mean time, the Masonic societies, which had been originally instituted for convivial and friendly purposes only, were, especially in France and Germany, made the professed scenes of debate concerning religion, morality, and government, by these philosophists\*, who had in great numbers become Masons. For such debate the legalized existence of Masonry, its profound secresy, its solemn and mystic rites and symbols, its mutual correspondence, and its extension through most civilized countries, furnished the greatest advantages. All here was free, safe, and calculated to encourage the boldest excursions of restless opinion and impatient ardour, and to make and fix the deepest impressions. Here, and in no other place, under such arbitrary governments, could every innovator in these important subjects utter every sentiment, however daring, and attack every doctrine and institution, however guarded by law or sanctity. In the secure and unrestrained debates of the lodge, every novel, licentious, and alarming opinion was resolutely advanced. Minds, already tinged with philosophism, were here speedily blackened with a deep and deadly die; and those, which came fresh and innocent to the scene of contamination, became early and irremediably corrupted. A stubborn incapacity of conviction, and a flinty insensibility to every moral and natural tie, grew of course out of this combination of causes; and men were surely prepared, before themselves were aware, for every plot and perpetration. In these hot beds were sown the seeds of that astonishing Revolution, and all its dreadful appendages, which now spreads dismay and horror throughout half the globe.

While these measures were advancing the great design with a regular and rapid progress, Doctor Adam Weishaupt, professor of the canon law in the University of Ingolstadt, a city of Bavaria (in Germany) formed, about the year 1777, the order of Illuminati. This order is professedly a higher order of Masons, originated by himself, and grafted on ancient Masonic institutions. The secresy, solemnity, mysticism, and correspondence of Masonry, were in this new order preserved and enhanced; while the ardour of innovation, the impatience of civil and moral restraints, and the aims against government, morals, and religion, were elevated, expanded, and rendered more systematical, malignant, and daring.

In the societies of Illuminati doctrines were taught, which strike at the root of all human happiness and virtue; and every such doctrine was either expressly or implicitly involved in their system.

The being of God was denied and ridiculed.

Government was asserted to be a curse, and authority a mere usurpation.

Civil society was declared to be the only apostasy of man.

The possession of property was pronounced to be robbery.

Chastity and natural affection were declared to be nothing more than groundless prejudices.

Adultery, assassination, poisoning, and other crimes of the like infernal nature, were taught as lawful, and even as virtuous actions.

To crown such a system of falshood and horror all means were declared to be lawful, provided the end was good.

In this last doctrine men are not only loosed from every bond, and from every duty; but from every inducement to perform any thing which is good, and, abstain from any thing which is evil; and are set upon each other, like a company of hellhounds to worry, rend, and destroy. Of the goodness of the end every man is to judge for himself; and most men, and all men who resemble the Illuminati, will pronounce every end to be good, which will gratify their inclinations. The great and good ends proposed by the Illuminati, as the ultimate objects of their union, are the overthrow of religion, government, and human society civil and domestic. These they pronounce to be so good, that murder, butchery, and war, however extended and dreadful, are declared by them to be completely justifiable, if necessary for these great purposes. With such an example in view, it will be in vain to hunt for ends, which can be evil.

Correspondent with this summary was the whole system. No villainy, no impiety, no cruelty, can be named, which was not vindicated; and no virtue, which was not covered with contempt.

The names by which this society was enlarged, and its doctrines spread, were of every promising kind. With unremitted ardour and diligence the members insinuated themselves into every place of power and trust, and into every literary, political and friendly society; engrossed as much as possible the education of youth, especially of distinction; became licensers of the press, and directors of every literary journal; waylaid every foolish prince, every unprincipled civil officer, and every abandoned clergyman; entered boldly into the desk, and with unhallowed hands, and satanic lips, polluted the pages of God; inlisted in their service almost all the booksellers, and of course the printers, of Germany; inundated the country with books, replete with infidelity, irreligion, immorality, and obscenity; prohibited the printing, and prevented the sale, of books of the contrary character; decried and ridiculed them when published in spite of their efforts; panegyricized and trumpeted those of themselves and their coadjutors; and in a word made more numerous, more diversified, and more strenuous exertions, than an active imagination would have preconceived.

To these exertions their success has been proportioned. Multitudes of the Germans, notwithstanding the gravity, steadiness, and sobriety of their national character, have become either partial or entire converts to these wretched doctrines; numerous

societies have been established among them; the public faith and morals have been unhinged; and the political and religious affairs of that empire have assumed an aspect, which forebodes its total ruin. In France, also, Illuminatism has been eagerly and extensively adopted; and those men, who have had, successively, the chief direction of the public affairs of that country, have been members of this society. Societies have also been erected in Switzerland and Italy, and have contributed probably to the success of the French, and to the overthrow of religion and government, in those countries. Mentz was delivered up to Custine by the Illuminati; and that general appears to have been guillotined, because he declined to encourage the same treachery with respect to Manheim.

Nor have England and Scotland escaped the contagion. Several societies have been erected in both of those countries. Nay in the private papers, seized in the custody of the leading members in Germany, several such societies are recorded as having been erected in America, before the year 1786.\*

It is a remarkable fact, that a large proportion of the sentiments, here stated, have been publicly avowed and applauded in the French legislature. The being and providence of God have been repeatedly denied and ridiculed. Christ has been mocked with the grossest insult. Death, by a solemn legislative decree has been declared to be an eternal sleep. Marriage has been degraded to a farce, and the community, by the law of divorce, invited to universal prostitution. In the school of public instruction atheism is professedly taught; and at an audience before the legislature, Nov. 30, 1793, the head scholar declared, that he and his schoolfellows detested a God; a declaration received by the members with unbounded applause, and rewarded with the fraternal kiss of the president, and with the honors of the sitting.†

I presume I have sufficiently proved the fulfilment of the second part of this remarkable prophesy; and shewn, that doctrines and teachers, answering to the description, have arisen in the very countries specified, and that they are rapidly spreading through the world, to engage mankind in an open and professed war against God. I shall only add, that the titles of these philosophical books have, in various instances, been too obscene to admit of a translation by a virtuous man, and in a decent state of society. So fully are these teachers entitled to the epithet unclean.

Assuming now as just, for the purposes of this discourse, the explanation, which has been given, I shall proceed to consider the import of the text.

The text is an affectionate address of the Redeemer to his children, teaching them that conduct, which he wills them especially to pursue in this alarming season. It is the great practical remark, drawn by infinite wisdom and goodness from a most solemn sermon, and cannot fail therefore to merit our highest attention. Had he not, while recounting the extensive and dreadful convulsion, described in the context, made a declaration of this nature, there would have been little room for the exercise of any emotions, beside those of terror and despair. The gloom would have been universal and entire; a blank midnight without a star to cheer the solitary darkness. But here a hope, a promise, is furnished to such as obey the injunction, by which it is followed; a



luminary like that, which shone to the wise men of the east, is lighted up to guide our steps to the Author of peace and salvation.

Blessed, even in this calamitous season, saith the Saviour of men, *is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame.*

Sin is the nakedness and shame of the scriptures, and righteousness the garment which covers it. To watch and keep the garments is, of course, so to observe the heart and the life, so carefully to resist temptation and abstain from sin, and so faithfully to cultivate holiness and perform duty, that the heart and the life shall be adorned with the white robes of evangelical virtue, the unspotted attire of spiritual beauty.

The cautionary precept given to us by our Lord is, therefore,

*That we should be eminently watchful to perform our duty faithfully, in the trying period, in which our lot is cast.*

To those, who obey, a certain blessing is secured by the promise of the Redeemer.

[I.] The great and general object, aimed at by this command, and by every other, is private, personal obedience and reformation of life; personal piety, righteousness, and temperance.

To every man is by his Creator especially committed the care of himself; of his time, his talents, and his soul. He knows, or may know, better than any other man, his wants, his sins, and his dangers, and of course the means of relief, reformation, and escape. No one, so well as he, can watch the approach of temptation, so feelingly pray for divine assistance, or so profitably resolve on future obedience. In truth no resolutions, no prayers, no watchfulness of others, will profit him at all, unless seconded by his own. No other person can make any useful impressions on our hearts, or our lives, unless by rousing in us the necessary exertions. All extraneous labours terminate in this single point: it is the end of every doctrine, exhortation, and reproof, of every moral and religious institution.

The manner, in which such obedience is to be performed, and such reformation accomplished, is described to you weekly in the desk, and daily in the scriptures. A detail of it, therefore, will not be necessary, nor expected, on the present occasion. You already know what is to be done, and the manner in which it is to be done. You need not be told, that you are to use all efforts of your own, and to look humbly and continually to God to render those efforts successful; that you are to resist carefully and faithfully every approaching temptation, and every rising sin; that you are to resolve on newness of life, and to seize every occasion, as it presents itself, to honour God, and to bless your fellow men; that you are strenuously to contend against evil habits, and watchfully to cherish good ones; and that you are constantly to aim at uniformity and eminency in a holy life, and to “adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”

But it may be necessary to remind you, that personal obedience and reformation is the foundation, and the sum, of all national worth and prosperity. If each man conducts

himself aright, the community cannot be conducted wrong. If the private life be unblamable, the public state must be commendable and happy.

*Individuals* are often apt to consider their own private conduct as of small importance to the public welfare. This opinion is wholly erroneous and highly mischievous. No man can adopt it, who believes, and remembers, the declarations of God. If “one sinner destroyeth much good,” if “the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,” if ten righteous persons, found in the polluted cities of the vale of Siddim, would have saved them from destruction, the personal conduct of no individual can be insignificant to the safety and happiness of a nation. On the contrary, the advantages to the public of private virtue, faithful prayer and edifying example, cannot be calculated. No one can conjecture how many will be made better, safer, and happier, by the virtue of one.

Wherever wealth, politeness, talents, and office, lend their aid to the inherent efficacy of virtue, its influence is proportionally greater. In this case the example is seen by greater numbers, is regarded with more respectful attention, and felt with greater force. The piety of Hezekiah reformed and saved a nation. Men far inferior in station to kings, and possessed of far humbler means of doing good, may still easily circulate through multitudes both virtue and happiness. The beggar on the dunghill may become a public blessing. Every parent, if a faithful one, is a public blessing of course. How delightful a path of patriotism is this?

It is also to be remembered, that this is the way, in which the chief good, ever placed in the power of most persons, is to be done. If this opportunity of serving God, and befriending mankind, be lost, no other will by the great body of men ever be found. Few persons can be concerned in settling systems of faith, moulding forms of government, regulating nations, or establishing empires. But almost all can train up a family for God, instil piety, justice, kindness and truth, distribute peace and comfort around a neighbourhood, receive the poor and the outcast into their houses, tend the bed of sickness, pour balm into the wounds of pain, and awaken a smile in the aspect of sorrow. In the secret and lowly vale of life, virtue in its most lovely attire delights to dwell. There God, with peculiar complacency, most frequently finds the inestimable ornament of a meek and quiet spirit; and there the morning and the evening incense ascends with peculiar fragrance to heaven. When angels became the visitors, and the guests, of Abraham, he was a simple husbandman.

Besides, this is the great mean of personal safety and happiness. No good man was ever forgotten, or neglected, of God. To him duty is always safety. Around the tabernacle of every one, that feareth God, the angel of protection will encamp, and save him from the impending evil.

II. Among the particular duties required by this precept, and at the present time, none holds a higher place than the observation of the Sabbath.

The Sabbath and its ordinances have ever been the great means of all moral good to mankind. The faithful observation of the sabbath is, therefore, one of the chief duties and interests of men; but the present time furnishes reasons, peculiar, at least in

degree, for exemplary regard to this divine institution. The enemies of God have by private argument, ridicule, and influence, and by public decrees, pointed their especial malignity against the Sabbath; and have expected, and not without reason, that, if they could annihilate it, they should overthrow christianity. From them we cannot but learn its importance. Enemies usually discern, with more sagacity, the most promising point of attack, than those who are to be attacked. In this point are they to be peculiarly opposed. Here, peculiarly, are their designs to be baffled. If they fail here, they will finally fail. Christianity cannot fall, but by the neglect of the Sabbath.

I have been credibly informed, that, some years before the Revolution, an eminent philosopher of this country, now deceased, declared to David Hume, that Christianity would be exterminated from the American colonies within a century from that time. The opinion has doubtless been often declared and extensively imbibed; and has probably furnished our enemies their chief hopes of success. Where religion prevails, their system cannot succeed. Where religion prevails, Illuminatism cannot make disciples, a French directory cannot govern, a nation cannot be made slaves, nor villains, nor atheists, nor beasts. To destroy us, therefore, in this dreadful sense, our enemies must first destroy our Sabbath, and seduce us from the house of God.

Religion and Liberty are the two great objects of defensive war. Conjoined, they unite all the feelings, and call forth all the energies, of man. In defense of them, nations contend with the spirit of the Maccabees; "one will chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight." The Dutch, in defense of them, few and feeble as they were in their infancy, assumed a gigantic courage, and grew like the fabled sons of Alous to an instantaneous and gigantic strength, broke the arms of the Spanish empire, swept its fleets from the ocean, pulled down its pride, plundered its treasures, captivated its dependencies, and forced its haughty monarch to a peace on their own terms. Religion and liberty are the meat and the drink of the body politic. Withdraw one of them, and it languishes, consumes, and dies. If indifference to either at any time becomes the prevailing character of a people, one half of their motives to vigorous defense is lost, and the hopes of their enemies are proportionally increased. Here, eminently, they are inseparable. Without religion we may possibly retain the freedom of savages, bears, and wolves; but not the freedom of New-England. If our religion were gone, our state of society would perish with it; and nothing would be left, which would be worth defending. Our children of course, if not ourselves, would be prepared, as the ox for the slaughter, to become the victims of conquest, tyranny, and atheism.

The Sabbath, with its ordinances, constitutes the bond of union to christians; the badge by which they know each other; their rallying point; the standard of their host. Beside public worship they have no means of effectual discrimination. To preserve this is to us a prime interest and duty. In no way can we so preserve, or so announce to others, our character as christians; or to effectually prevent our nakedness and shame from being seen by our enemies. Now, more than ever, we are "not to be ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Now, more than ever, are we to stand forth to the eye of our enemies, and of the world, as open, determined christians; as the followers of Christ; as the friends of God. Every man, therefore, who loves his country, or his religion, ought to feel, that he serves, or injures, both, as he celebrates, or neglects, the Sabbath. By the devout observation of this holy day he will reform himself, increase

his piety, heighten his love to his country, and confirm his determination to defend all that merits his regard. He will become a better man, and a better citizen.

The house of God is also the house of social prayer. Here nations meet with God to ask, and to receive, national blessings. On the Sabbath, and in the sanctuary, the children of the Redeemer will, to the end of the world, assemble for this glorious end. Here he is ever present to give more than they can ask. If we faithfully unite, here, in seeking his protection, “no weapon formed against us will prosper.”

3. Another duty, to which we are also eminently called, is an entire separation from our enemies. Among the moral duties of man none hold a higher rank than political ones, and among our own political duties none is more plain, or more absolute, than that which I have now mentioned.

In the eighteenth chapter of this prophecy, in which the dreadful effects of the seventh vial are particularly described, this duty is expressly enjoined on christians by a voice from heaven. “And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.” Under the evils and dangers of the sixth vial, the command in the text was given; under those of the seventh, the command which we are now considering. The world is already far advanced in the period of the sixth. In the text we are informed, that the Redeemer will hasten the progress of his vengeance on the enemies of his church, during the effusion of the two last vials. If, therefore, the judgments of the seventh are not already begun, a fact of which I am doubtful, they certainly cannot be distant. The present time is, of course, the very period for which this command was given.

The two great reasons for the command are subjoined to it by the Saviour—“that ye be not partakers of her sins; and that ye receive not of her plagues”; and each is a reason of incomprehensible magnitude.

The sins of these enemies of Christ, and Christians, are of numbers and degrees, which mock account and description. All that the malice and atheism of the dragon, the cruelty and rapacity of the beast, and the fraud and deceit of the false prophet, can generate, or accomplish, swell the list. No personal, or national, interest of man has been uninvaded; no impious sentiment, or action, against God has been spared; no malignant hostility against Christ, and his religion, has been unattempted. Justice, truth, kindness, piety, and moral obligation universally, have been not merely trodden under foot; this might have resulted from vehemence and passion; but ridiculed, spurned, and insulted, as the childish bugbears of drivelling idiocy. Chastity and decency have been alike turned out of doors; and shame and pollution called out of their dens to the hall of distinction, and the chair of state. Nor has any art, violence, or means, been unemployed to accomplish these evils.

For what end shall we be connected with men, of whom this is the character and conduct? Is it that we may assume the same character, and pursue the same conduct? Is it, that our churches may become temples of reason, our Sabbath a decade, and our psalms of praise Marseillois hymns? Is it, that we may change our holy worship into a dance of Jacobin phrenzy, and that we may behold a strumpet personating a goddess

on the altars of Jehovah? Is it that we may see the Bible cast into a bonfire, the vessels of the sacramental supper borne by an ass in public procession, and our children, either wheedled or terrified, uniting in the mob, chanting mockeries against God, and hailing in the sounds of *Ca ira* the ruin of their religion, and the loss of their souls? Is it, that we may see our wives and daughters the victims of legal prostitution; soberly dishonoured; speciously polluted; the outcasts of delicacy and virtue, and the lothing of God and man? Is it, that we may see, in our public papers, a solemn comparison drawn by an American Mother club between the Lord Jesus Christ and a new Marat; and the fiend of malice and fraud exalted above the glorious Redeemer?

Shall we, my brethren, become partakers of these sins? Shall we introduce them into our government, our schools, our families? Shall our sons become the disciples of Voltaire, and the dragoons of Marat;\* or our daughters the concubines of the Illuminati?

Some of my audience may perhaps say, “We do not believe such crimes to have existed.” The people of Jerusalem did not believe, that they were in danger, until the Chaldeans surrounded their walls. The people of Laish were secure, when the children of Dan lay in ambush around their city. There are in every place, and in every age, persons “who are settled upon their lees,” who take pride in disbelief, and “who say in their heart, the Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.” Some persons disbelieve through ignorance; some choose not to be informed; and some determine not to be convinced. The two last classes cannot be persuaded. The first may, perhaps, be at least alarmed, when they are told, that the evidence of all this, and much more, is complete, that it has been produced to the public, and may with a little pains-taking be known by themselves.

There are others, who, admitting the fact, deny the danger. “If others,” say they, “are ever so abandoned, we need not adopt either their principles, or their practices.” Common sense has however declared, two thousand years ago, and God has sanctioned the declaration, that “Evil communications corrupt good manners.” Of this truth all human experience is one continued and melancholy proof. I need only add, that these persons are prepared to become the first victims of the corruption by this very selfconfidence and security.

Should we, however, in a forbidden connection with these enemies of God, escape, against all hope, from moral ruin, we shall still receive our share of their plagues. This is the certain dictate of the prophetic injunction; and our own experience, and that of nations more intimately connected with them, has already proved its truth.

Look for conviction to Belgium; sunk into the dust of insignificance and meanness, plundered, insulted, forgotten, never to rise more. See Batavia wallowing in the same dust; the butt of fraud, rapacity, and derision, struggling in the last stages of life, and searching anxiously to find a quiet grave. See Venice sold in the shambles, and made the small change of a political bargain. Turn your eyes to Switzerland, and behold its happiness, and its hopes, cut off at a single stroke: happiness, erected with the labour and the wisdom of three centuries; hopes, that not long since hailed the blessings of

centuries yet to come. What have they spread, but crimes and miseries; Where have they trodden, but to waste, to pollute, and to destroy?

All connection with them has been pestilential. Among ourselves it has generated nothing but infidelity, irreligion, faction, rebellion, the ruin of peace, and the loss of property. In Spain, in the Sardinian monarchy, in Genoa, it has sunk the national character, blasted national independence, rooted out confidence, and forerun destruction.

But France itself has been the chief seat of the evils, wrought by these men. The unhappy and ever to be pitied inhabitants of that country, a great part of whom are doubtless of a character similar to that of the peaceable citizens of other countries, and have probably no voluntary concern in accomplishing these evils, have themselves suffered far more from the hands of philosophists, and their followers, than the inhabitants of any other country. General Danican, a French officer, asserts in his memoirs, lately published, that three millions of Frenchmen have perished in the Revolution. Of this amazing destruction the causes by which it was produced, the principles on which it was founded, and the modes in which it was conducted, are an aggravation, that admits no bound. The butchery of the stall, and the slaughter of the stye, are scenes of deeper remorse, and softened with more sensibility. The siege of Lyons, and the judicial massacres at Nantes, stand, since the crucifixion, alone in the volume of human crimes. The misery of man never before reached the extreme of agony, nor the infamy of man its consummation. Collot D. Herbois and his satellites, Carrier and his associates, would claim eminence in a world of fiends, and will be marked with distinction in the future hissings of the universe. No guilt so deeply died in blood, since the phrenzied malice of Calvary, will probably so amaze the assembly of the final day; and Nantes and Lyons may, without a hyperbole, obtain a literal immortality in a remembrance revived beyond the grave.

In which of these plagues, my brethren, are you willing to share? Which of them will you transmit as a legacy to your children?

Would you escape, you must separate yourselves. Would you wholly escape, you must be wholly separated. I do not intend, that you must not buy and sell, or exhibit the common offices of justice and good will; but you are bound by the voice of reason, of duty, of safety, and of God, to shun all such connection with them, as will interweave your sentiments or your friendship, your religion or your policy, with theirs. You cannot otherwise fail of partaking in their guilt, and receiving of their plagues.

4thly. Another duty, to which we are no less forcibly called, is union among ourselves.

The same divine Person, who spoke in the text, hath also said, "A house, a kingdom, divided against itself cannot stand." A divided family will destroy itself. A divided nation will anticipate ruin, prepared by its enemies. Switzerland, Geneva, Genoa, Venice, the Sardinian territories, Belgium, and Batavia, are melancholy examples of

the truth of this declaration of our Saviour; beacons, which warn, with a gloomy and dreadful light, the nations who survive their ruin.

The great bond of union to every people is its government. This destroyed, or distrusted, there is no center left of intelligence, counsel, or action; no system of purposes, or measures; no point of rallying, or confidence. When a nation is ready to say, "What part have we in David, or what inheritance in the son of Jesse?" it will naturally subjoin, "Every man to his tent, O Israel!"

The candour and uprightness, with which our own government has acted in the progress of the present controversy, have forced encomiums even from its most bitter opposers, and excited the warmest approbation and applause of all its friends. Few objects could be more important, auspicious, or gratifying to christians, than to see the conduct of their rulers such, as they can, with boldness of access, bring before their God, and fearlessly commend to his favour and protection.

In men, possessed of similar candour, adherence to our government, in the present crisis, may be regarded as a thing of course. They need not be informed, that the existing rulers must be the directors of our public affairs, and the only directors; that their views and measures will not and cannot always accord with the judgment of individuals, as the opinions of individuals accord no better with each other; that the officers of government are possessed of better information than private persons can be; that, if they had the same information, they would probably coincide with the opinions of their rulers; that confidence must be placed in men, imperfect as they are, in all human affairs, or no important business can be done; and that men of known and tried probity are fully deserving of that confidence.

At the present time this adherence ought to be unequivocally manifested. In a land of universal suffrage, where every individual is possessed of much personal consequence as in ours, the government ought, especially in great measures, to be as secure, as may be, of the harmonious and cheerful co-operation of the citizens. All success, here, depends on the hearty concurrence of the community; and no occasion ever called for it more.

But there are, even in this state, persons, who are opposed to the government. To them I observe, That the government of France has destroyed the independence of every nation, which has confided in it.

That every such nation has been ruined by its internal divisions, especially by the separation of the people from their government.

That they have attempted to accomplish our ruin by the same means, and will certainly accomplish it, if they can;

That the miseries suffered by the subjugated nations have been numberless and extreme, involving the loss of national honour, the immense plunder of public and private property, the conflagration of churches and dwellings, the total ruin of

families, the butchery of great multitudes of fathers and sons, and the most deplorable dishonour of wives and daughters;

That the same miseries will be repeated here, if in their power.

That there is, under God, no mean of escaping this ruin, but union among ourselves, and unshaken adherence to the existing government;

That themselves have an infinitely higher interest in preserving the independence of their country, than in any thing, which *can* exist, should it be conquered;

That they must stand, or fall, with their country; since the French, like all other conquerors, though they may for a little time regard them, as aids and friends, with a seeming partiality, will soon lose that partiality in a general contempt and hatred for them, as Americans. That should they, contrary to all experience, escape these evils, their children will suffer them as extensively as those of their neighbours; and

That to oppose, or neglect, the defence of their country, is to stab the breast, from which they have drawn their life.

I know not that even these considerations will prevail: if they do not, nothing can be suggested by me, which will have efficacy. I must leave them, therefore, to their consciences, and their God.

In the mean time, since the great facts, of which this controversy has consisted, have not, during the preceding periods, been thoroughly known, or believed, by all; and since all questions of expediency will be viewed differently by different eyes; I cannot but urge a general spirit of conciliation. To men labouring under mere mistakes, and prejudices void of malignity, hard names are in most cases unhappily applied, and unkindness is unwisely exhibited. Multitudes, heretofore attached to France with great ardour, have, from full conviction of the necessity of changing their sentiments and their conduct, come forth in the most decisive language, and determined conduct, of defenders of their country. More are daily exhibiting the same spirit and measures. Almost all native Americans will, I doubt not, speedily appear in the same ranks; and none should, in my opinion, be discouraged by useless obloquy.

5. Another duty, enjoined in the text, and highly incumbent on us at this time, is unshaken firmness in our opposition.

A steady and invincible firmness is the chief instrument of great achievements. It is the prime mean of great wealth, learning, wisdom, power and virtue; and without it nothing noble or useful is usually accomplished. Without it our separation from our enemies, and our union among ourselves, will avail to no end. The cause is too complex, the object too important, to be determined by a single effort. It is infinitely too important to be given up, let the consequence be what it may. No evils, which can flow from resistance, can be so great as those, which must flow from submission. Great sacrifices of property, of peace, and of life, we may be called to make, but they will fall short of complete ruin. If they should not, it will be more desirable, beyond computation, to fall in the honourable and faithful defence of our families, our



country, and our religion, than to survive, the melancholy, debased, and guilty spectators of the ruin of all. We contend for all that is, or ought to be, dear to man. Our cause is eminently that, in which “he who seeketh to save his life shall lose it, and he who loseth it,” in obedience to the command of his Master, “shall find it” beyond the grave. To our enemies we have done no wrong. Unspotted justice looks down on all our public measures with a smile. We fight for that, for which we can pray. We fight for the lives, the honor, the safety, of our wives and children, for the religion of our fathers, and for the liberty, “with which Christ hath made us free.” “We jeopard our lives,” that our children may inherit these glorious blessings, be rescued from the grinding insolence of foreign despotism, and saved from the corruption and perdition of foreign atheism. I am a father. I feel the usual parental tenderness for my children. I have long soothed the approach of declining years with the fond hope of seeing my sons serving God and their generation around me. But from cool conviction I declare in this solemn place, I would far rather follow them one by one to an untimely grave, than to behold them, however prosperous, the victims of philosophism. What could I then believe, but that they were “nigh unto cursing, and that their end was to be burned.”

From two sources only are we in danger of irresolution; *avarice, and a reliance on those fair professions*, which our enemies have begun to make, and which they will doubtless continue to make, in degrees, and with insidiousness, still greater.

On the first of these sources I observe, that, if we grudge a part of our property in the defence of our country, we lose the whole; and not only the whole of our property, but all our comforts, and all our hopes. Every enjoyment of life, every solace of sorrow, will be offered up in one vast hecatomb at the shrine of pride, plunder, impurity, and atheism. Those “who fear not God, regard not man.” All interests, beside their own, are in the view of such men the sport of wantonness, of insolence, and of a heart of millstone. They and their engines will soon tell you, if you do not put it out of their power, as one of the same engines told the miserable inhabitants of Neuwied (in Germany) unhappily placing confidence in their professions. Hear the story, in the words of Professor Robison,

If ever there was a spot upon earth, where men may be happy in a state of cultivated society, it was the little principality of Neuwied. I saw it in 1770. The town was neat, and the palace handsome and in good state. But the country was beyond conception delightful; not a cottage that was out of repair; not a hedge out of order. It had been the hobby of the prince (pardon me the word) who made it his daily employment to go through his principality, and assist every housholder, of whatever condition, with his advice and with his purse; and when a freeholder could not of himself put things into a thriving condition, the prince sent his workmen and did it for him. He endowed schools for the common people and two academies for the gentry and the people of business. He gave little portions to the daughters, and prizes to the well-behaving sons of the labouring people. His own household was a pattern of elegance and œconomy; his sons were sent to Paris, to learn elegance, and to England, to learn science and agriculture. In short the whole was like a romance, and was indeed romantic. I heard it spoken of with a smile at the table of the bishop of Treves, and was induced to see it the next day as a curiosity. Yet even here the fanaticism of Knigge (one of the

founders of the Illuminati) would distribute his poison, and tell the blinded people that they were in a state of sin and misery, that their prince was a despot, and that they would never be happy 'till he was made to fly, and 'till they were made all equal.

They got their wish. The swarm of French locusts sat down at Neuwied's beautiful fields, in 1793, and intrenched themselves; and in three months prince's and farmers' houses, and cottages, and schools, and academies, all vanished. When they complained of their miseries to the French general, René le Grand, he replied, with a contemptuous and cutting laugh, "All is ours. We have left you your eyes to cry."

Will you trust such professions? Have not your enemies made them to every country, which they have subjugated? Have they fulfilled them to one? Will they prove more sincere to you? Have they not deceived you in every expectation hitherto? On what grounds can you rely on them hereafter?

Will you grudge your property for the defence of itself, of your families, of yourselves. Will you preserve it to pay the price of a Dutch loan? to have it put in requisition by the French Directory? to label it on your doors, that they may, without trouble and without a tax bill, send their soldiers and take it for the use of the Republic? Will you keep it to assist them to pay their fleets and armies for subduing you? and to maintain their forts and garrisons for keeping you in subjection? Shall it become the purchase of a French fete, holden to commemorate the massacres of the 10th of August, the butcheries of the 3d of September, or the murder of Louis the 16th, your former benefactor? Shall it furnish the means for *representatives of the people* to roll through your streets on the wheels of splendour, to imprison your sons and fathers; to seize on all the comforts, which you have earned with toil, and laid up with care; and to gather your wives, sisters, and daughters, into their brutal seraglios? Shall it become the price of the guillotine, and pay the expense of cleansing your streets from brooks of human blood?

Will you rely on men whose *principles justify falshood, injustice, and cruelty*? Will you trust philosophists? men who set truth at nought, who make justice a butt of mockery, who deny the being and providence of God, and laugh at the interests and sufferings of men? Think not that such men can change. They can scarcely be worse. There is not a hope that they will become better.

But perhaps you may be alarmed by the power, and the successes, of your enemies. I am warranted to declare, that the ablest judge of this subject in America has said, that, if we are united, firm, and faithful to ourselves, neither France, nor all Europe, can subdue these states. Against other nations they contended with great and decisive advantages. Those nations were near to them, were divided, feeble, corrupted, seduced by philosophists, slaves of despotism, and separated from their government. None of these characters can be applied to us, unless we voluntarily retain those, which depend on ourselves. Three thousand miles of ocean spread between us and our enemies, to enfeeble and disappoint their efforts. They will not here contend with silken Italians, with divided Swissers, nor with self-surrendered Belgians and Batavians. They will find a hardy race of freemen, uncorrupted by luxury, unbroken by despotism; enlightened to understand their privileges, glowing with independence,

and determined to be free, or to die: men who love, and who will defend, their families, their country, and their religion: men fresh from triumph, and strong in a recent and victorious Revolution. Doubled, since that Revolution began, in their numbers, and quadrupled in their resources and advantages, at home, in a country formed to disappoint invasion, and to prosper defence, under leaders skilled in all the arts and duties of war, and trained in the path of success, they have, if united, firm, and faithful, every thing to hope, and, beside the common evils of war, nothing to fear.

Think not that I trust in chariots and in horses. My own reliance is, I hope, I ardently hope yours is, also, on the Lord our God. All these are his most merciful blessings, and, as such, most supporting consolations to us. They are the very means, which he has provided for our safety, and our hope. Stupidity, sloth, and ingratitude, can alone be blind to them as tokens for good. We are not, my brethren, to look for miracles, nor to expect God to accomplish them. We are to trust in him for the blessings of a regular and merciful providence. Such a providence is over us for good. I have recited abundant proofs, and could easily recite many more. All these are means, with which we are to plant, and to water, and in answer to our prayers God will certainly give the increase.

But I am peculiarly confident in the promised blessing of the text. Our contention is a plain duty to God. The same glorious Person, who has commanded it, has promised to crown our obedience with his blessing; and has thus illumined this gloomy prediction, and shed the dawn of hope and comfort over this melancholy period.

To you the promise is eminently supporting. He has won your faith by the great things he has already done for your fathers, and for you. The same Almighty Hand, which destroyed the fleet of Chebucto by the storm, and whelmed it in the deep; which conducted into the arms of Manly, and of Mugford, those means of war, which for the time saved your country; which raised up your Washington to guide your armies and your councils; which united you with your brethren against every expectation and hope; which disappointed the devices of enemies without, and traitors within; which bade the winds and the waves fight for you at Yorktown; which has, in later periods, repeatedly disclosed the machinations of your enemies, and which has now roused a noble spirit of resistance to intrigue and to terror; will accomplish for you a final deliverance from the hand of those, "who seek your hurt." He has been your fathers' God, and he will be yours.

Look through the history of your country. You will find scarcely less glorious and wonderful proofs of divine protection and deliverance, uniformly administered through every period of our existence as a people, than shone to the people of Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan. Can it be believed, can it be, that Christianity has been so planted here, the church of God so established, so happy a government constituted, and so desirable a state of society begun, merely to shew them to the world, and then destroy them? No instance can be found in the providence of God, in which a nation so wonderfully established, and preserved, has been overthrown, until it had progressed farther in corruption. We may be cast down; but experience only will prove to me, that we shall be destroyed.

But the consideration, which ought of itself to decide your opinions and your conduct, and which adds immense weight to all the others, is that the alternative, as exhibited in the prediction, and in providence, is beyond measure dreadful, and is at hand. “Behold,” saith the Saviour, “I come as a thief”—suddenly, unexpectedly, alarmingly—as that wasting enemy, the burglar, breaks up the house in the hour of darkness, when all the inhabitants are lost in sleep and security. How strongly do the great events of the present day shew this awful advent of the King of Kings to be at the doors?

Turn your eyes, for a moment, to the face of providence, and mark its new and surprising appearance. The Jews, for the first time since the destruction of Jerusalem by Adrian, have, in these states, been admitted to the rights of citizenship; and have since been admitted to the same rights in Prussia. They have also, as we are informed, appointed a solemn delegation to examine the evidences of Christianity. In the Austrian dominions, it is asserted, they have agreed to observe the Christian Sabbath; and in England, have in considerable numbers embraced the Christian religion. New and unprecedented efforts have been made, and are fast increasing, in England, Scotland, Germany, and the United States, for the conversion of the heathen. Measures have, in Europe, and in America, been adopted, and are still enlarging, for putting an end to the African slavery, which will within a moderate period bring it to an end. Mohammedism is nearly extinct in Persia, one of the chief supports of that imposture. In Turkey, its other great support, the throne totters to its fall. The great calamities of the present period have fallen, also, almost exclusively upon the Antichristian empire; and almost every part of that empire has drunk deeply of the cup. France, Belgium, Spain, Ireland, the Sardinian monarchy, the Austrian dominions, Venice, Genoa, popish Switzerland, the Ecclesiastical State, popish Germany, Poland, and the French West-Indies, have all been visited with judgments wonderful and terrible; and in exact accordance with prophecy have furthered their own ruin. The kings, or states, of this empire are now plainly “hating the whore, eating her flesh, and burning her with fire.” Batavia, protestant Switzerland, some parts of protestant Germany, and Geneva, have most unwisely, not to say wickedly, refused “to come out” and have therefore “partaken of the sins, and received of the plagues,” of their enemies. To the same unhappy cause our own smartings may all be traced; but blessed be God, there is reason to hope, that “we are escaping from the snare of the fowler.”

So sudden, so unexpected, so alarming a state of things has not existed since the deluge. Every mouth proclaims, every eye looks its astonishment. Wonders daily succeed wonders, and are beginning to be regarded as the standing course of things. As they are of so many kinds, exist in so many places, and respect so many objects; kinds, places and objects, all marked out in prophecy, exhibited as parts of one closely united system, and to be expected at the present time; they shew that this affecting declaration is even now fulfilling in a surprising manner, and that the advent of Christ is at least at our doors. Think how awful this period is. Think what convulsions, what calamities, are portended by that great Voice out of the temple of heaven from the Throne—“It is done!” by the voices and thunderings and lightnings, by the unprecedented shaking of the earth, the unexampled plague of hailstones, the fleeing of the islands, the vanishing of the mountains, the rending asunder of the Antichristian

empire, the united ascent of all its sins before God, the falling of the cities of the nations, the general embattling of mankind against their Maker, and their final overthrow, in such immense numbers, that “all the fowls shall be filled with their flesh.”

“God is jealous, and the Lord revengeth; the Lord revengeth and is furious; the Lord will take vengeance on his adversaries, he reserveth wrath for his enemies. The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked. The Lord hath his way in the whirlwind, and in the storm, and the clouds are the dust of his feet. The mountains quake at him, and the hills melt; and the earth is burnt at his presence, yea the world, and all that dwell therein. Who can stand before his indignation? Who can abide in the fierceness of his anger?”

In this amazing conflict, amidst this stupendous and immeasurable ruin, how transporting the thought, that safety and peace may be certainly found. O thou God of our fathers! our own God! and the God of our children! enable us so to watch, and keep our garments, in this solemn day, that our shame appear not, and that both we and our posterity may be entitled to the blessing which thou hast promised.

amen

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

49

## A SERMON OCCASIONED BY THE DEATH OF WASHINGTON

Henry Holcombe

SAVANNAH

1800

Henry Holcombe (1762–1824). Born in South Carolina, Holcombe received no formal education after the age of eleven. He enlisted in the Revolutionary army early in the war and became an officer by the age of twenty-one. He converted to the Baptist faith about this time and was rebaptized (having been raised as a Presbyterian), and he achieved some fame for delivering fiery sermons to his troops from horseback. He became pastor of the Pine Creek Church in 1785, married the following year, and soon thereafter baptized his wife, her mother and brother, and his own father. In 1795 he became a pastor in Savannah, Georgia, and five years later he received a D.D. from the College of Rhode Island (Brown).

While Holcombe vigorously opposed deism and the theater, he generally mingled his religious and civic concerns by founding an orphanage in Savannah, working to improve the state's penal code, establishing and supporting the Mount Enon Academy near Augusta, and publishing a literary and religious magazine called the *Georgia Analytical Repository*. He became ill in 1810 and moved to Philadelphia, hoping for better health in a different climate, and accepted a pastorate there. He tended toward isolationism of the kind recommended in Washington's famous phrase "no entangling alliances," which to Holcombe translated into a rejection of foreign missions. In his later years he preached against war as contrary to God's revelation.

The sermon reprinted here is one of Holcombe's most famous and one of hundreds preached all over America to mark the passing of "the father of his country," George Washington. It was preached in Savannah on January 19, 1800, and repeated several times elsewhere.

*Know ye not that there is a great man fallen?*

2d of Samuel, 3d Chap. and part of the 38th Verse.

In these words David refers to Abner, a distinguished officer of his day, who fell an unsuspecting victim to the well-known traitorous scheme, and by the bloody hand of Joab, whose brother Asahel, to save his own life, Abner had reluctantly slain in a battle at Gibeon. To awaken a correspondent sense of their great loss in the afflicted tribes, David addressed to them the pathetic inquiry adopted on this melancholy

occasion, as applying with the most forcible propriety to the late Lieutenant General George Washington. Know ye not that in him a great man, a much greater than Abner, is fallen? The sufficiently visible effects of this penetrating conviction render a comparison of these great men unnecessary, would the dignity of my subject, and the solemnity which reigns over this unexampled and overflowing concourse admit it. Their coincidence in point of greatness, established by the highest authorities, whatever disparity as to the degrees of it, may exist, is all that is requisite to my purpose. In reliance therefore, on the plenitude of candor to which I am already greatly in arrears, however inadequate to the important service which has unexpectedly devolved on me, and with all the unaffected diffidence which overwhelms me, I shall make immediate advances towards the awful ground on which our greatest orators sink unnerved, and giants in literature stand and tremble! And though I am not about to deliver an oration, nor to pronounce an eulogium; but to preach a sermon, and briefly touch on one of the greatest merely human characters, I am fully apprised of the delicacy of my situation, and too sensibly feel the pressure of difficulties.

My feeble soul take courage! A Demosthenes or a Cicero might fail here without dishonor; and though the famed Cæsars, Alexanders, Pompies and Marlboroughs, must resign their inferior laurels to the more famous American general, he was but a man; all his greatness was derived from his and thy Creator, and thou wilt be assisted in the execution of thy arduous design by the prayers, candid allowances and liberal constructions of thine audience, who will deem it very pardonable on thy theme to be defective. The first doctrinal observation which our text, and the occasion of our assembling, unitedly suggest, is seriously important: Great as Abner was, he fell; and Washington is fallen; it, therefore, undeniably follows *that great men, as well as others, must fall*. Though it would be absurd to attempt a formal proof of this doctrine and have the appearance of an insult on dying man, there is nothing that merits more frequent, or more serious consideration; and a few explanatory remarks on it are so far from being amiss, that they are indispensable. The heathens and deists, of all descriptions, believing the immortality of the human soul, consider their bodies as falling by death into corruption and dust, never to rise; and their notions of the state, exercises, and enjoyments of the soul after death are so vague, indistinct, and unimpressive, that they have little or no visible effect on their practice. Atheists, and such deists as believe the soul of man to be mortal, consider all who are fallen, and our immortal Washington among the rest, as plunged into undistinguished and irretrievable ruin! as consigned to their original nonentity!! Happily for our various interests, few, if any, of these gloomy monsters disgrace, or infest the United States: They are chiefly, if not altogether, confined to the smoke and flame in which they have involved miserable Europe. Let Americans never suffer their nature and its author to be insulted and degraded by the influence, or existence of such detestable sentiments;

Scorned be the man who thinks himself a brute;  
Affronts his species, and his God blasphemes.

But gladly I turn your attention from the cold, lifeless principles, and painful uncertainty of the better sort of heathens and the deists, and especially from the

insupportable horrors of annihilation, to what we are to understand by the fall of men in death; and, in a word, it is their fall from this world; from its honors, pleasures, profits; and from the exercise of their mortal powers. By a figure of speech, which puts a part for the whole, or the contrary, and common with inspired, and other writers, in saying that a great man is fallen, David means no more than that his mortal part is dead; but he was better informed than to suppose that even this was dead or fallen, to revive, to rise no more. We not only know from divine revelation, but from an important and well attested fact, gloriously demonstrated at this time by its numerous and happy consequences, that our bodies are not only capable of a resurrection, but shall actually rise! Were the horrible reverse of these exhilarating representations true, inconsiderable indeed would be our cause of triumph in existence, or reason to boast of human excellence! "*Verily every man, at his best state,*" considered merely in his relation to this transitory scene, "*is altogether vanity.*" And the inevitable fall of the greatest, as well as all other men, when viewed in a true light, and considered in its eternal consequences, must fill the enlightened considerate mind with the most serious reflections. It is said,

Xerxis surveyed his mighty host with tears,  
To think they'd die within an hundred years:

But judging from past events, what enormous devastations among the inhabitants of the earth must be spread in less than half that time! "Your fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever?" Where are all preceding generations, and the great men who illuminated and adorned them? Alas! the mighty ruins of mortality! With a few illustrious exemptions, recorded in the oracles of God, the silent, and almost imperceptibly slow, but steady and irresistibly strong current of time, has borne them into the boundless ocean of eternity! And yet Philip of Macedon was far from being alone, in needing daily to be told that he was a mortal man.

That all men must fall, is universally acknowledged; but too few apply this serious truth to their own cases; Doctor Young had reasons for his bold assertion, "All men think all men mortal but themselves." And great men, from a variety of circumstances, are more than others, addicted to this waking dream, this sometimes fatal delusion; and strange as fatal! "*Know ye not that there is a great man fallen?*" and that consequently *great men must fall!* Riches, power, titles, universal applause, to which may be added even virtue and piety, avail nothing in this warfare, "Death enters, and there's no defence." Acknowledge this all do, they must, however inconsiderate and profane, for who can deny it? "*But O, that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end!*" How natural, reasonable, and interesting is this? And one would think it might be added, how difficult to avoid it!

As man perhaps the moment of his breath,  
Receives the lurking principle of death;  
The young disease that must subdue at length,  
Grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength.



And when these latent seeds of dissolution produce their ultimate effect, our text directs us in what regards our duty to the memories of the just. By fair and obvious implication, it says, *the fall of a great man merits respectful and public attention.*

Know ye not that there is a great man fallen?

This question was not asked for information, and it not only forcibly affirms the fall of a great man; but evidently excites to mourning on account of it, and proper expressions of respect for his memory. *Know ye not*, that is, are ye not apprised, or disposed to consider, as ye should be, and to practically declare, *that* in your judgment, *there is a great man*, a man of worth, and entitled to high and public regard, *fallen?*

And accordingly we find that David said to the people to whom he addressed the words of our text, “Rent your clothes, and gird you with sackcloth, and mourn before Abner.” The sacred historian adds, “And king David himself followed the bier. And they buried Abner in Hebron: And the king lifted up his voice, and wept at the grave of Abner; and all the people wept.”

The solemnity concludes with an oration by the king, which produced the highest effects of oratory, and closes with an acknowledgment, that he was rendered weak though anointed king, by the loss of that great man. Parellel passages, in great variety, might be recited in confirmation of this doctrine. Instances are numerous in the patriarchal age, of burying persons of eminent piety and worth, with every mark of respect and solemnity.

The venerable founders of the Jewish church and nation, had the tribute of high encomiums, and genuine mourning for many days, paid to their memories and their merits. A beautiful specimen of ancient eulogy, is David’s lamentation over Saul and Jonathan. With an ardor and elevation peculiar to himself, he exclaims, “The beauty of Israel is slain in thy high places; how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings; for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul, as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, and the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their deaths they were not divided: They were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel weep over Saul, who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights, who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel. How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle!”

This natural and laudable, as well as ancient and universal custom of honoring the pious and eminent dead, may be further justified by quotations from the new testament. At the grave of Lazarus, “Jesus wept”; devout men buried Stephen, who had the honor to be the first martyr in the christian cause, with great lamentation; and Paul mentions a number of the illustrious characters of antiquity, with the highest respect, and warmly recommends their noble and heroic conduct to the imitation of

posterity. After bestowing on many the encomiums proper to their respective merits, he adds, "And what shall I more say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barack, and of Sampson, and of Jephthae, of David also, and of Samuel, and of the prophets; who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valient in fight, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens." So warm a panegyrist of these great men was the Apostle, that he avers, "*Of them the world was not worthy.*" And though many of these failed of obtaining the attention due to their merits in, and immediately after their respective generations, by having their names and worthy deeds enrolled in the volume of inspiration, God has plainly shewn us that the fall of a great good man should excite respectful and public attention. Encouraged, therefore, and in some degree assisted by such precedents, I will proceed to what is finally incumbent on me; and that is, *to evince the applicability of my text to the illustrious deceased.*

It must be acknowledged that the scriptural and consequently rational and becoming custom of praising departed persons, has been shamefully abused. The great among the heathens have, in many instances, been exalted to celestial honors, and idolized to distant generations. And by persons of better information, funeral panegyric has been so indiscriminately bestowed, that it has blended all distinctions of character and become proverbially false. But it is not on these or any other accounts, to be refused on proper occasions, this would be falling into the opposite extreme. And perhaps a more proper occasion than the present for commendation and applause never occurred, or one on which higher might be bestowed, consistently with truth and moderation. Never I believe could it be said of any with more propriety than of General Washington, that what his acquaintances would condemn as below his merit, strangers would consider as the most fulsome adulation, or exaggerated applause. But to proceed: Most obviously does my text apply to this great man, considered as enriched with merely natural endowments. His features, actions, and whole deportment, before he was refined by learning, clothed with power, or known to fame, attracted every eye, fixed attention, and commanded respect. As the immediate effect of divine bounty he possessed the seeds whose blossoms and fruits ultimately rendered him the boast of his country, and the glory of the age. The rich furniture of his mind could receive no assistance from the common rules of art, because by innate strength it rose nobly superior to them, comprehending the true principles, and proper standard of criticism.\* His perceptions were prompt, intuitive, clear; and were displayed from earliest youth in the facility and rapidity with which he acquired knowledge, and in the exact order, method and propriety conspicuous in the management of all his affairs. And to the fatal day which put a period to the most valuable of mortal lives, his conduct and achievements, proclaimed his genius entirely original, superlatively bright, the offspring of the Father of Lights. In his vast mind centered that shining aggregate of excellencies which beamed with such effulgence in his dignified and manly countenance, and were so eminently ornamental, I will not say of his country, nor of this generation, but of human nature. When we consider that all effects must have an adequate cause, we are led to trace the wonders which have appeared in Washington's life, to, at least, an equally wonderful source: This we find in a soul calm and serene as the most delightful summer-evening, more expansive than the ocean, more resplendent than yonder sun, and

steady as the poles! These intellectual, and consequently immortal treasures rendered him uncommonly great as the child of nature; and our text applies to him very forcibly as enlarged and enobled by mental acquisitions.

Divine Providence gave him opportunities and dispositions to add great acquired, to the greatest natural abilities. If his education were not classical, it was profound: If he had not the comparatively superficial knowledge of all names, he possessed an universal knowledge of things: And tho' no great proportion of his precious time was spent in the study of dead languages, it was because the beautiful objects of all kinds of useful and ornamental knowledge invited his attention and pursuit, in all the copious elegance of English attire.

His great mind was occupied with correspondent objects. He had well arranged and distinct ideas of all essentially interesting, and truly important facts, domestic and foreign, ancient and modern, temporal and spiritual. Among the subjects which Washington investigated, and the objects which he regarded with an assiduity and seriousness becoming their importance, were science, morality and religion; civil and religious liberty; agriculture commerce and navigation; tactics, and the different forms of civil government; the rise of revolutions, and falls of empires, in connection with their causes and consequences; and the religions, laws, customs, characters and origin of nations.

With a singular felicity of perception, he comprehended the subjects of his knowledge in all their extensions and relations; and we well know, that in his conversation, public speeches, and admirable writings, ease and strength were united with all the beauty and simplicity of precision. But as it would require talents brilliant as his own to do justice to a subject of such extent and sublimity, I shall conclude these imperfect remarks on his great literary merit, by observing that the honor of conferring on him the degree of L.L.D. was reserved for Rhode-Island College: \* From the œconomy observable in all the variety and profusion, if I may so express myself of heaven's bounties, we are led to conclude that such mental strength and excellence as Washington possessed, must have been properly deposited, furnished with suitable organs, and intended for appropriate and important purposes: And our expectations are fully answered when we view him as entitled to the application of our text, *by the disposals of an all superintending Providence.*

Born and raised under a free government, he early imbibed, and always cherished, and retained the sacred principles of liberty, his birth right, inviolable. Though of respectable descent, ancestry need not be mentioned, where personal and intrinsic worth is so eminent and conspicuous. Nor does he derive any of his greatness from the large possessions with which his many and distinguished virtues, and services, were to as great a degree as he would permit, but by no means adequately rewarded: he conferred honor on affluence. The complicated organ of his vast and noble mind, a glorious specimen of divine ingenuity, was moderately large, elegantly proportioned, and amply endowed with agility and strength, gracefulness and dignity. In early youth his superior parts and abilities attracted public attention; and by traversing a trackless desert, obtaining the intelligence so interesting to his beloved country, and saving Braddock's army on the Monongahela, from the jaws of a cruel death by merciless

savages, he proved himself capable of the most difficult, arduous and perilous services. The sagacity and prowess, promptitude and decision, which he displayed, about this time, on several trying occasions, were strongly indicative of his future elevation. And from the universal rectitude of his conduct in private and public, civil and religious life, as well as from the proofs he had furnished of his great military capacity, President Davis, long before there existed a thought of the late revolutionary war, said from the pulpit, "I may point out to the public that heroic youth, Col. Washington, whom I cannot but hope, providence has hitherto preserved for some important service to his country." And this has since assumed the appearance of a divine prediction: For we feel, and the world knows what an *important service he has rendered his country*. When the unhappy controversy between Great-Britain and her thirteen American provinces, rose so high, and produced such effects, that the dreadful appeal to the sword was no longer dispensable, Washington, whose name can receive no additional lustre from epithets, was unanimously appointed by the representatives of the American people, to head their undisciplined troops, almost without money or arms against British, well armed and well disciplined veterans. The bloody conflicts which ensued, the prodigies of address, valor and perserverance of the commander in chief, and the glorious result are well known and need not now be repeated. His superiority to difficulties, to all other men embarrassing and insuperable, unconquerable fortitude, well-timed, and well-planned attacks on a superior foe, and splendid victories, are clothed in all the elegance and pomp of language by historians and poets of the first eminence. Uninfluenced by ambition, when he had conducted us seven long years, through fields of blood and carnage, to sovereignty, independance and peace, like another Cincinnatus, he returned to his agricultural employments, and sought repose in the shades of retirement. Through his influence, an army angry and distressed from painful, important, and yet uncompensated services, sheathed their swords, and followed the example of their illustrious chief!

But his well-trying, and sterling merit, united to the splendor of his talents, and the unbounded confidence of his fellow-citizens, soon rendered it necessary, from the inefficacy of our governmental arrangements, that he should again embark on the stormy sea of politics. Summoned by his country, to whom he could deny nothing, to assist in forming, and adopting our present energetic, yet free and happy constitution, he readily obeyed; and after the accomplishment of these important objects, he was called by the unanimous voice, of, at least, three millions of people to preside over these sovereign and independent states. To the presidential chair he continued a noble ornament, by the united wish of his grateful country, who delighted to honor him, eight years, and discharged the important duties of this high station with his usual wisdom and firmness, integrity and rectitude. And after retiring the second time, in full possession of the affections and confidence of the people, to the solitude which he was as capable of enjoying, as of adorning public life, he was prevailed on, tho' hoary with years, and covered with glory, to accept the command of our armies, when the political hemisphere wore a most menacing and wrathful aspect. Behold the greatest general in the world, tho' on the borders of three score and ten, in obedience to his much indebted country, ready, again, to take the field against her insulting foes!

And so obvious was the policy of this appointment, that it was anticipated, as well as ardently wished by every intelligent citizen. His martial and august appearance, the sound of his name and voice, the glance of his experienced eye, and the lightning of his sword at the head of our armies, rendered them gloriously enthusiastic, and absolutely invincible! But great as he was by nature, a liberal education, and the display and perfection of his superior powers, natural and acquired, in spheres of action the most conspicuous, elevated and important, he was still greater by the invaluable *gifts of the God of grace*. Considered as aggrandized by these, our text applies to him with the utmost propriety and force!

*Know ye not that a great man, the greatest of men, is fallen?*

He would have been equalled by several if he had not shone in the mild majesty of morals and religion. This lustre, when other things are equal, gives a decided superiority. Before, and an essential part of his honor was humility. He had as little of that tumid pride, which in its plentitude goes before destruction, as any man on earth. He always felt his dependance as man; and trusting in the living God, whom he served, his boldness and magnanimity, could be equalled by nothing but his modesty and humility. By these radical advantages, he displayed an equanimity through the most trying extremes of fortune, which does the highest honor to the human character. He was the same whether struggling to keep the fragments of a naked army together in the dismal depths of winter, against a greatly superior foe, or presiding under the laurel wreath over four millions of free men!

He was too great to be depressed or elated by any thing that ceases with this life.

'Tis moral grandeur makes the mighty man.  
How little they who think ought great below!

Washington's as all true wisdom ever did, and always must, began with the fear, which was the only fear he ever knew, the *fear of the Lord of Hosts*: And this was truly filial, for its transcendently glorious object, was equally the object of his supreme affection.

These divine and immortal principles preserved his tongue from every species of profanity, and not only his actions but his heart from pollution. Alexander conquered the world; but far from ruling his spirit, or being in any respect his own master, he fell an early and loathsome sacrifice to intemperance. Far greater than Alexander the great, was Washington: He ruled his appetites and passions in scenes of the greatest trial and temptation; and will remain forever a bright example, to all men, of temperance and moderation in all things, as well as a striking contrast to all, "*The rational foul kennels of excess.*"

His piety, though like his other shining excellencies unaustentatious, was genuine and exalted. Through the veil of all his modest reserve, it was discoverable in the whole tenor of his conduct, and especially in his admirable and appropriate answers to the numerous addresses of his almost adoring fellow-citizens where he uniformly, and with glowing gratitude ascribes all the glory of his unparallded successes to God.

How high christianity stood in his estimation, and how near its interests lay to his heart, every one may see, who has read his excellent answers to the congratulatory addresses of various religious bodies, on his first election to the chief magistracy of these United States. And his opinion of religion in a political view, I will do myself the honor to give you in his own words; so that though alas! he is dead, he still to his weeping country thus speaketh: "Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality, are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism, who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. The mere politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and cherish them. A volume could not trace all their connections with private and public felicity. Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in courts of justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion. Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure, reason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principles. 'Tis substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government. The rule indeed extends with more or less force to every species of free government. Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabrick! Promote then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge; in proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened."

Ye winds, wait these sentiments on your swift pinions; and ye sunbeams record them in more than golden characters, throughout the political world!

American, English, French, and all other politicians, hear him who was as famous in the cabinet, as formidable in the tented field! In proportion as he is regarded, will be prevented the effusion of blood; hostilities will cease, and order and confidence between rulers and the ruled, individuals and nations, will ensue.

The essential advantages of religion, in a political light, were discovered clearly, and felt impressively by the American sage, whose eagle eye distinguished plainly betwixt vain pretenders to religion, and its real possessors; and whose cool deliberative sagacity, discerned the difference between genuine religion, as delineated in the holy scriptures, and the empty forms, gross adulterations, and shameful abuses of it. And it is difficult to determine, whether he were most correct and eminent in religious theory or practice. But one thing, and that of vast importance, is evident: Bright as this sun of human glory shone, with the sweetly blended rays of morality and religion, through every stage, and in every condition of life, like the cloudless star of day, gently and with increasing majesty, sinking beneath the western horizon, his mild effulgence was greatest in death!

His mind was tranquil and serene,  
No terrors in his looks were seen;  
A Saviour's smile dispell'd the gloom,

And smooth'd his passage to the tomb.

O Death! never hadst thou, but in one astonishing instance, such a prisoner before!

A victory, which enraged Britain's cannon, sword and gold, though well tried, could never effect, is thine! But monster! spare thy ghastly smile! Momentary will be thy triumph! As the declining sun, by divine energy, soon ascends with renewed splendors, Washington shall ere long burst thy bands asunder, all immortal! A while venerable shade! we must leave thy precious remains enshrined by trembling hands, with solemn pomp, and thy deathless part under the sublime character, of the spirit of a just man made perfect, in lively and well-founded hope of their re-union, and of the consummation of *thy glory and felicity!* And is a great man fallen? Is Washington no more? Alas is he gone! gone forever! The conqueror of royal armies and their mighty generals, the late president of the United States, and later commander in chief of the American armies, is fallen! The father, friend, benefactor and bulwark of his country, is fallen! Washington is fallen! A scene of action the most brilliant; a life with virtuous and heroic deeds, the most luminous, is now the subject of eulogy! All the respectful, affectionate, and aggrandizing epithets, contained in our language, are employed in vain, to set his exalted merit in an adequately conspicuous point of light: And we anticipate the elaborate productions of rival pens of the first distinction, now moving with celerity and ardor, to give an admiring world the life of Washington: But to draw his true portrait is more than mortal hands can do; "*It merits a divine.*" "When he went out to the gate, through the city, when he prepared his seat in the street, the young men saw him and hid themselves; and the aged arose and stood up; the princes refrained talking, and laid their hand on their mouth; the nobles held their peace and their tongues cleaved to the roof of their mouth. When the ear heard him, then it blessed him; and when the eye saw him, it gave witness to him; because he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish, came upon him; and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. He put on righteousness, and it clothed him; his judgment was a robe and a diadem. He was eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame; he was a father to the poor, and the cause that he knew not he searched out. And he brake the jaws of the wicked and pluckt the spoil out of his teeth." To this inimitable sketch by the pencil of inspiration, let us add, in silent grief for our irreparable loss, badges of deep mourning, melting eyes and bleeding hearts, which will more emphatically express his worth than the sublimest imagery, and the most glowing encomium in the hands of erudition and art.

And permit me to observe, that the greatest honor of all that we can do to his memory, and the best improvement that we can make of his life and death is to imitate his virtuous and pious examples: And this may be done by those of the tenderest capacities, and in the lowest ranks of society.

Honor and fame from no condition rise,  
Act well your part there all the honor lies.

My fair hearers, may I not hope that you will do more than weep? This is natural, it is becoming, it is unavoidable. Many of you could not refrain from tears when, some

years ago, you saw the face of the hero who had, for you, endured so many painful years of fatigue, and hardships of all kinds, amidst dangers in all forms: Much more abundantly must your tears flow, now you hear your great friend and benefactor, is no more. Mourn with his venerable relict, sinking under stupendous grief, for him who has slain your enemies, saved your country, “and put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel”: But I am persuaded you will do more; you will, like the great and virtuous Washington, in your measure, increase the dignity and happiness of human nature; you will adorn by your solid, though private virtues, social life, of which you were intended to be the brightest ornaments.

*War-worn veterans! venerable fathers!* you must feel the most pungent grief for him who led you in battle and to victory: And having enjoyed the advantages of his glorious examples, both in the peaceful cabinet, and on the hostile plains, you need not be reminded of your special obligations to patriotic virtue, and genuine piety.

He has taught you how to live and how to die.

Painfully tender, on this solemn occasion, must be the feelings of you, my fellow citizens, who lately, at the appearance of danger stepped forward, with an honorable zeal, in your country’s defence. Your great commander in chief, is fallen! I see you feel the shock, and you need not wish to conceal it.

Masculine cheeks bedew’d with tears,  
Become the august occasion;  
Nor need they blush, should heaving sighs  
Escape the manly breast, to day.

We have sustained, our country, and the world have sustained no common loss. Nations should mourn. *Our nation does mourn.* Our venerable and much beloved chief magistrate, the supreme council of the land, our bereaved armies, rising navy, cities, towns and villages, exhibit a widely-extended, endlessly-diversified, and most melancholy scene of deep mourning! All christian and masonic societies with an honest pride and exultation claiming Washington as their brother, are laudably ambitious of making the most emphatical expressions of their fraternal regard and affection. The Cincinnati, after these, in particular, and all other societies in general; and in fine all descriptions of the American people, have variously, and yet as with one voice, testified their high respect, and most cordial affection, for the dear and illustrious object of their common attachment. “*Know ye not that there is a great man fallen?*” Methinks I hear the honorable city council, and the rest of the worthy magistrates present, the officers of all grades, the reverend clergy, the congregation who stately meet here, and the respectable residue of this vast mourning concourse, reply—Alas! too well we know it! The most callous heart feels it! Washington is indeed fallen! The awful report is propagated in thunder along the North American coast and reverberates in tremendous accents from the distant hills! The shock of Mount Vernon, trembling from the summit to its affrighted centre, shakes the continent from New-Hampshire to Georgia! O fatal, and solitary Mount Vernon is an appellation that no longer becomes thee, and may thine appearance correspond with thy situation! No more let cheerful green array thee!\*



Thine august inhabitant is fallen! But words are vain! Come more expressive silence,  
we resign the unutterable theme to thee!

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

50

## ON THE EVILS OF A WEAK GOVERNMENT

John Smalley

HARTFORD

1800

John Smalley (1734–1820). A Yale graduate in 1756, Smalley studied at first with Eleazar Wheelock and after graduation with Joseph Bellamy, both New Light ministers. Ezra Stiles (later president of Yale) was his tutor. Smalley held a pastorate for fifty years at Farmington (New Britain), Connecticut. Though regarded as a mediocre preacher, he was of first importance as a theologian of his generation, and he possessed a keen mind and a vigorous writing style. These traits are displayed in a number of publications, including forty-eight sermons published in two volumes in 1803 and 1814. He was awarded a D.D. by the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in 1800.

Smalley was at first lukewarm to the cause of independence and came under attack by those who fervently desired it, including the local Committee of the Sons of Liberty. Ezra Stiles attributed Smalley's stance to theological rather than political reasoning, for Smalley firmly believed that the tradition of passive obedience and nonresistance in civil matters was the true biblical teaching.

The piece reprinted here was preached as the Connecticut election sermon in 1800.

*And I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them. And the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour: the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable.*

Isaiah iii. 4, 5.

When we read and hear such threatening predictions as this; and see our judges as at the first, and our counsellors and governors as at the beginning—equally wise and good; we are ready to bless ourselves, and to say in our hearts, These things shall not come upon us. That the whole of what is here foretold, has not yet come upon us, we have certainly great reason to bless God, and to congratulate one another. But it should be remembered, that neither past mercies, nor present happy circumstances, are any security against evils to come. Surprising changes in this fallen world, have ever been frequent, and are still to be expected. Prosperity and adversity, like sunshine and storms, are wont to follow each other, almost in constant rotation. Communities, as well as individuals, that have been remarkably raised up, are often as wonderfully cast down, in the providence of God, when most exalted. “He blesseth them also,” it

is said,\* “so that they are multiplied greatly, and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again they are minished, and brought low, through oppression, affliction and sorrow.”

Of such vicissitudes, the chosen people threatened in our text, was a striking and an instructive example. This nation had long been favored, in regard to government, as well as religion, far beyond any other then on the earth. From its earliest infancy, it had been under the peculiar guardianship of heaven. “When Israel was a child,” says the most High in Hosea,† “then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt: I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms: I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love; and I was to them as they that take off the yoke.”

They had been liberated from powerful oppressors, and cruel task-masters, by the outstretched arm of the Almighty. They had been led like a flock, through the Red Sea, and forty years in a most perilous, howling wilderness, by the hand of Moses and Aaron. Under Joshua, their great and beloved general, they had vanquished mighty armies; and had obtained a peaceful settlement as a free and an independent people, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

Here, when they forgot God their saviour, who had done such great things for them, and so many wonderous works before their eyes, he sometimes left them to have no guide, overseer or ruler; and suffered the heathen around them, to make terrible inroads on their borders. Nevertheless, as often as they cried unto the Lord in their distresses, he raised them up judges—valiant, righteous men, to deliver them out of the hand of their enemies, and to administer justice among them. Afterwards, because of their uneasiness, and the hardness of their hearts, God gave them kings; and these, several of them, were very eminent for wisdom and virtue. Nor was their happiness, in this respect, yet at an end; for Isaiah prophesied no later than the reign of Hezekiah; one of the most amiable and best of princes.

But, from the days of their fathers, they had gone away from God’s ordinances; and now, it seems, the measure of their iniquities was almost full. A very awful decree of the holy one of Israel against them is therefore here announced. See the preceding context.

For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, doth take away from Jerusalem, and from Judah, the stay and the staff; the whole stay of bread, and the whole stay of water; the mighty man, and the man of war; the judge, and the prophet, and the prudent, and the ancient; the captain of fifty, and the honorable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. *And I will give children to be their princes, &c.*

From my text, thus connected, the doctrine deducible, which will be our present subject, is this:

*That to be under a weak government, is one of the greatest calamities, ever sent upon a people.*

This, you observe, is here threatened together with drouth and famine in the extreme—a total want of bread and of water; as well as being bereaved of the most eminent men, in every necessary employment: and it is mentioned last, and most enlarged upon, as the consummation of misery.

But, after explaining the calamity designed, and some of the principal causes of it, I shall attend, more particularly, to the proof and illustration of this doctrine.

There are two senses, in which government is said to be weak: when it is unwise; and when it wants energy. The latter is the more extensive signification of the phrase; and it comprehends the former: this, therefore, is the sense now to be considered. By a weak government will be meant, one that wants energy; whether through the weakness of those by whom it is administered, or by any other means.

To mention, with a little enlargement, some of the most common causes of so great an evil, will not be foreign to the design of this anniversary.

1. That the government of a nation or state has not proper energy, may be the fault of its constitution. A form of government may be such, that, unless the administration of it be arbitrary, it will necessarily be weak.

To give rulers all that power, and reserve to the subjects all that liberty, which is best for the people, is a nice point; very difficult, I imagine, to be exactly hit, by the wisest of men, and men the most disinterested. There is danger of erring, undoubtedly, on either hand; of abridging freedom, as well as of limiting authority, more than is for the greatest general good—of adopting a constitution too despotic, as well as one too feeble. But when it is left to the people at large, what government they will be under, the error most to be apprehended, I believe, is on the side of the inefficiency.

The love of liberty is natural to all mankind; and even to birds, and four-footed animals, and creeping things. Of this celebrated virtue, we lost nothing by the fall of our first parents. Every one, however depraved in other respects, wishes to be free—unboundedly free; to have none above him; to be his own subject, his own governor, his own judge. And when, for obtaining the advantages of social union, individuals give up to the community, or to any constituted authorities, a power over their words and actions, their property and lives; they do it with great reluctance, and as sparingly as possible.

To observe the extreme reluctance of some, on such occasions—to see how strenuously they will dispute every inch of power, vested any where, which might possibly be abused, or turned against themselves; is apt to remind one of the cautious policy of certain ancient pagans, described by Jeremiah, in regard to their gods. Not only would they have gods of their own making, and made of such materials that they must needs be born, because they could not go; but, as wooden gods could fall and might happen to fall upon the makers of them, or on their children, or valuable furniture; for full security, they *fastened them with nails and with hammers*. “Be not afraid of them,” says the prophet; “for they cannot do evil; neither also is it in them to do good.”

Checks, unquestionably, there ought to be, on every department of a free government: But if such checks be laid upon rulers, that the ruled are under no check at all, harmless, indeed, will such rulers be; but altogether insignificant. These *servants of the people*, must have more power than the child, and the base, who proudly so call them; unless we would have them miserable gods, or *ministers of God to us for good*—their scripture titles. They must have authority to punish treasonable lies against themselves, as well as slanders against the meanest of their subjects; otherwise, who will be afraid of them? Or what protection can they afford?

2. That the government of a people is too weak, may be the fault of those entrusted with its administration. It may be owing to their weakness; or to their indolence, or slowness in doing business; or to their excessive lenity; or to their not being of a virtuous character, or not paying a due attention to the strict regularity of their own lives. These particulars, suffer me cursorily to go over.

When the rulers of a land are children; whether in understanding, or in firmness and stability of mind, we are not certainly to expect that the reins of government will be guided with discretion, and held with sufficient force. To govern well, at least in the higher and more difficult offices, considerable theoretic knowledge, some experience, and more than common natural powers, are altogether necessary. And so is that degree of courage and inflexibility, which will enable a man to maintain his post, and to persevere in what appears to him the plain path of duty; unmoved by noisy opposition—undaunted by popular clamor—undismayed by imminent danger.

To support an efficient government, rulers must likewise be men of vigilance and activity. “He that ruleth,” says an apostle,\* “with diligence.” And of Jeroboam it was said,\* “Solomon, seeing the young man that he was industrious, he made him ruler over all the charge of the house of Joseph.” A commonwealth, under the superintendency of indolent men, will resemble the field of the slothful which we read of, that was “all grown over with thorns; the face of it covered with nettles, and the stone wall thereof broken down.” Or, though rulers be not “slothful in business”; they may be so slow in transacting it, and in bringing any thing to a termination, as very much to lower the tone, and defeat the salutary designs, of civil government. When courts of justice are so dilatory in their decisions, and such endless evasions, and reviews, are admitted; that a man had better lose almost any debt or damage, than commence a legal process for a recovery, the protection of law must be lamentably weak.

Excessive lenity, will have a similar effect. Mercy, is indeed an amiable attribute; to pass over a transgression, is said to be the glory of a man; and being ready to forgive, is a duty much inculcated in the word of God: But in one who sustains any place of authority, whether that of a parent, or master, or civil magistrate; lenity and indulgence may be carried farther than is the glory or duty of a man; unless it be his duty and glory to have no government. Should rulers remit crimes, or pass them over without condemnation, when the public good, or righting an injured individual, requires their punishment; merciful they might be, but not as our Father in heaven is merciful.

Liberality to the poor, out of one's own proper goods, is a capital christian virtue; but of the property of other people, judges and law-givers, may possibly be over liberal. The persons even of the poor, are not to be respected in judgment. Making provision by law, for supporting such as are unable to support themselves, is doubtless very commendable; but why those who happen to be the creditors of the poor; who have helped them much already, and suffered much by their slackness and breach of promise, should be still obliged to lose ten times more for their relief, or for the relief of their families, than others equally able, it is not easy to conceive. And should courts of law, or courts of equity, cancel the debts of men, whenever they plead a present incapacity to pay them, whether such clemency might not too much weaken government, as a security to every one in his rightful claims, may be a question. Indeed, in any case, to give an insolvent debtor a final discharge from all he owes, without the consent of his creditors, looks like giving him a licence to be an unrighteous man. For can it ever be right, or can any court under heaven make it right, for a man not to pay his promised debts, for value received, when now he has money enough, because once, the payment of them was not in the power of his hands.

Thus to exonerate of a heavy load of old debts, one deeply insolvent, is necessary, it will be said; as without this he could have no courage to commence business anew. And, no doubt, such expected exoneration, will be a mighty encouragement to extravagant adventurers, who have nothing to lose, since, by running the greatest hazards, with the slenderest chance of immense gain, they risk only the property of others. If successful, the profit is their own; if unsuccessful, the loss is their neighbour's. But if the tendency of being thus merciful, were much better than it is; or the urgency for it far greater; would it not be doing evil that good may come. "He that ruleth over men must be just."\* The laws of truth and righteousness, are not noses of wax; to be bent any way, as will suit present convenience. It is dangerous to break down, or break over, the fixed barrier of eternal justice, on any pretence of temporary necessity.

One way more was hinted, in which those who govern, may weaken government; and that is, by being men of a vicious character; or by not paying a due attention to the strict regularity of their own lives. Indeed, "a wicked ruler" is often strong, and fierce, and active, as "a roaring lion and a ranging bear"; but rarely for the benefit of "the poor people." He will not be eager to pluck the spoil out of the mouth of the fraudulent villain, or the violent oppressor; unless that he may get it into his own. Nor will authority, in the hands of libertine men, however it may terrify, be much revered. When the makers or judges of laws, are themselves notorious breakers of them, or of the laws of heaven, government will necessarily fall into contempt. It is also to be observed, that advancing to posts of honor, men of loose principles and morals, gives reputation to licentiousness, and stamps it as the current fashion. Their example will encourage evil doers, more than all the punishments they are likely to inflict, will be a terror to them. "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted."\*

But rulers may be far from being the vilest men, they may be very good men; and yet, by an incautious conformity to common practices, supposed to be innocent, they may too much countenance some things which are of very hurtful tendency. Permit me to instance in one particular. "It is not for kings," we read, "to drink wine, nor for

princes strong drink.”<sup>†</sup> And certainly, it is not for the lower classes to drink so much of these as many of them do, if they regard their health, or competence, or peace. I select this instance, because it is directly pertinent to the main subject in hand. Nothing is a greater weakener of government—nothing makes the multitude more heady and high-minded—nothing raises oftener or louder, the cry of liberty and equality—nothing more emboldens and inflames that little member, which boasteth great things, and setteth on fire the whole course of nature—nothing, in a word, makes men more incapable of governing themselves, or of being governed, than strong drink. Now, if rulers drink, though not to drunkenness; not so as quite to “forget the law,” or greatly to “pervert the judgment of any”; if they only drink as much as is very universally customary, in polite circles, on great occasions; though they do not hurt themselves, they may too much sanction that which will hurt their inferiors. That divine injunction, “Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil,”<sup>‡</sup> lies with peculiar weight on civil rulers, as well as religious teachers. They, more than others, are under obligation to lead the multitude, in whatsoever things are sober, wise and good. They, of all men, are bound in duty to abstain from all appearance of any thing, which, improved upon by bungling eager imitators, might grow into a practice pernicious to society. Nor should it be forgotten, that every deviation from rectitude of conduct, lessens the dignity, and lowers the authority of great men. “Dead flies cause the ointment of the apothecary to send forth a stinking savor: so doth a little folly, him that is in reputation for wisdom and honor.”<sup>§</sup> But,

3. That weakness of government which is a calamity to any people, is often principally the fault of the people themselves. It may be owing to their negligence, or to their caprice and folly, in the choice of their rulers; or it may be owing to their ill-treatment of them when chosen. A government most excellent in its constitution, and most wise, just and firm, in its administration, may be enervated, or rendered inadequate, by the ungovernableness of the people: By their revilings and slanders—their haughtiness and insolence—their factions and tumults. David once said, “I am this day weak, though anointed king; and these men, the sons of Zeruiah, are too hard for me.”<sup>\*</sup>

Nor must it be omitted, that, besides the immediate natural causes of a weak government, the irreligion, or general wickedness of a people, may be its procuring cause, as a judgment of heaven. “The most High ruleth in the” nations of men; “and giveth” the dominion over them, “to whomsoever he will.”<sup>†</sup> “For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south; but God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another.”<sup>‡</sup> When the ways of a people please the Lord—when they fear him, and work righteousness; among other blessings, he gives them good governors, under whose able and equitable administration, they lead quiet and peaceable lives. On the contrary, when they forget him, neglect his worship, and disregard his word; among other modes of punishment, he takes away their wise and faithful magistrates, and gives them weak or wicked ones in their stead; or leaves them to trample all authority under foot. This was the cause of the calamities threatened in our text and context. See the eighth verse, which concludes the paragraph. “For Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory.”

Let us now attend, as was proposed, to the proof and illustration of the doctrine laid down: That, of all the calamities ever sent upon a people, being under a weak government, is one of the most deplorable.

It is said, § “Woe to thee, O land, when thy king is a child.” It is also asked, \* “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” And if we consider the matter, it may easily be seen, that the people of all characters, and not merely the righteous among them, must be in a very wretched condition, should government be overturned, or have no coercive force.

First; an exposedness to all manner of mutual injuries, without redress, is one obvious evil thence arising. *The people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbour.*

“Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad,” is an observation of the royal preacher. † And many are the accounts in history, of oppression’s having had this effect on a multitude of men, the wise among the foolish. How often have whole nations raved and raged, like the fiercest of animals, under the operation of the hydrophobia, at only a distant apprehension of this terrible evil?

I am sensible, it is the dread of oppression from government, and not of being oppressed one by another, through the want or weakness of it, that usually occasions this rage, and these ravings. The people are ten times more apt to be afraid of having heavy burdens and grievous restraints laid upon them, by the best men in power, than of any thing they might be in danger of suffering from their equals, however wicked, and however unrestrained. But what can be the reason of this? Is it because there is not really as much mischief to be feared, from individual, as from public oppression? From the oppressions of the many, as of the few? From the unrighteousness of millions, let loose, as from that of one man, or a small number of men?

This, certainly, is not the case; this cannot be the reason. When there is no law, and every one does what he thinks fit, without fear of punishment, the people, I believe, have ever been, and are ever likely to be, much more unhappy than even under a very despotic and oppressive government.

What then *is* the reason? Why are the people, whose voice is said to be the voice of God, so much more ready to sound and take an alarm, when threatened with the latter, than with the former of these evils? Why are they so loud and tumultuous, when their liberties are thought to be in any danger; and so quiet and easy, when government is rudely attacked, and ready to be overthrown? Why is the shock of terror so much greater and more universal, at the remotest prospect of tyranny, than at the nearest, and most evident approximation to total anarchy? There may be several reasons.

One, probably, is; when the people are oppressed by each other, their sufferings are separately felt: Whereas, oppression from the higher powers falls upon all in a body. In the former case, every one bears his own different burdens; and divided complaints, though bitter, make but a confused and feeble murmur: in the latter case, all feel or fear the same; all voices, therefore, are united in one tremendous cry.



Another reason may be; under oppression from government, often no other way of relief is seen, than popular combinations and insurrections; but when injuries are done us by individuals, because there is no government to restrain them, a remedy is always near and obvious. If every one is oppressed, every one can be an oppressor. If a man's neighbours all bite and devour him, he can bite and devour all his neighbours. Hence, a dissolution of government, instead of being universally deprecated, appears to many, "A consummation devoutly to be wished."

But there is another cause of the wonderful phenomenon I am accounting for, more influential perhaps with the most, than both the forementioned. It is owing to charity. A kind of charity, not the exclusive glory of modern times; but entirely peculiar to fallen creatures. A kind of charity, which covers a multitude of our own sins, from our own sight. A kind of charity which always begins, and ends, at home; though often extensive in its circuits. From this boasted charity, we are ever inclined to hope all things, and believe all things, in favour of any number, or class, or order of beings, in which we ourselves are included. Thus men, naturally think of mankind, more highly than they ought to think. Frenchmen, of the French: Britons, of the British: Americans, of the people of America: Those of every state and town, of their own state's men and town's men; and men of every calling, of their brethren of the same occupation, collectively considered. In like manner, the common people, think the common people exceedingly honest, harmless, and virtuous; while of those in power, though of their own choosing, and just chosen out of all the people, they have not near so favorable an opinion. That the people should have too much liberty, therefore, they are not at all afraid: that rulers will not have checks enough upon them, is all their fear.

This beam, of selfish liberality of sentiment, it may be impossible for us to cast wholly out of our eye: But that, round the edges of it, we may get some glimpse of real human nature; I know of no better way than to look upon mankind one by one; or in circles not including ourselves. Let us then think of other nations; other states; other towns, and neighbourhoods; or of particular persons among our nearest neighbours. In this separate view, let us search and look; let us impartially examine characters. Where do we find a great predominance of the innocent inoffensive people? Where do we find a nation, or state, or town, or society, except our own, so very virtuous? Where do we find many individuals, besides ourselves, so just and true, temperate and chaste, meek and merciful; so free from covetousness, pride, envy, revenge, and every unfriendly passion, that we could live safely among them, were they at full liberty from all the restraints of law and government?

Indeed, how great an alteration this would make, in the apparent characters of most men, it is difficult to conceive, without the trial. A very partial trial of it, for a short time, some of us have once seen; when it was made lawful to discharge pecuniary obligations, at the rate of a tenth, a twentieth, and even a fiftieth, of the real value justly due. We then had a convincing evidence, that the external justice of our common honest people, is owing to the expected compulsion of civil law, much more than to uprightness of heart, or feelings of conscience, or any dread of a higher tribunal. From this specimen, and from the sacred story of the behaviour of the men of Benjamin, relative to the Levite from mount Ephraim, when "there was no king in

Israel; and every one did that which was right in his own eyes”; we may have some faint idea of the horrid scenes of unrighteousness, lewdness and cruelty, that would every where be acted, were it not for the fear of temporal punishment. From all that we have read of the destruction of mankind by one another, when ever they are at liberty; and from recent indisputable information of the shocking state of things, where government has been overturned; we may well believe that the scripture accounts of the depravity of men, are no exaggeration. Not even the following: “Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; their feet are swift to shed blood. Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known.”\*

But if this be a true portrait of fallen men, when left to themselves, how much are we indebted to the restraint laid upon them, for the little peace we enjoy? And may we not well be convinced, that all the terror of the civil sword, in the most faithful and skilful hands, will not be more than enough to restrain from iniquity, such a race of beings, so that they may dwell together, not in unity, as brethren, but with any tolerable safety? Especially if, as is added to finish the above picture, “There is no fear of God before their eyes”? And that this last trait, is still a part of the character of many, is abundantly evident, both from their avowed principles and open practices. Now this being the case, that while the hearts of men are fully set in them to do evil, they have no fear of the God of heaven to restrain them; were it not for the dread of gods on earth, our civil rulers, what security should we have, for our names, or property, or lives? If we had no other evil to apprehend, from weakness of government, than only this, of lying open to all manner of mutual oppressions, slander, frauds and violences; it would, even then, be evidently one of the greatest calamities that could befall a people.

But a second evil, some what distinct, and worthy of some notice, is suggested in our text: No one in a subordinate station would keep his proper place, or treat his superiors with suitable respect. *The child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable.*

Solomon says, “There is an evil which I have seen under the sun, as an error that proceedeth from the ruler: Folly is set in great dignity, and the rich in low place. I have seen servants riding upon horses, and princes walking as servants upon the earth.”† When authority fails, or is obstructed, at the fountain head, its remotest streams must, in a little time, run low. If parents will not obey magistrates, children will be disobedient to parents; if masters refuse subjection to the higher powers, their servants and apprentices will soon pay as little regard to their injunctions. Thus this evil proceedeth from the ruler; or from his not being able to rule. And a serious evil it certainly is. By superiors, in every degree, it will soon be very sensibly felt. They will have none to fear them, none to honor them, none over whom they can have any command. Inferiors, of the very lowest grade, may exult, for a while, in such æras of freedom; and think them glorious times. But even to these—to the child and the base, this turning of things upside down, generally proves fatal in the end. Being under no control, they spend their time in idleness; waste their substance, if they have any, in riotous living; have recourse to pilfering, gambling, and every hazardous expedient, to

support their extravagances, and by various foolish and hurtful practices, soon plunge themselves into irrecoverable wretchedness and ruin.

There is yet a third capital evil, arising from too weak a government, which, though not mentioned in our text, should be briefly noticed, when treating of this subject at large. A community in such a situation, will be able to make little defence against a foreign enemy. Like the people of Laish, who had no magistrate in the land to put them to shame in any thing; they will be an easy prey to any handful of enterprising invaders. No resources can be drawn forth—no navies furnished—no armies raised and supplied—no fortifications erected and garrisoned, without energy in government. What Solomon says of a man that has no rule over his own spirit, holds equally true of an ungoverned nation: it “is as a city that is broken down, and without walls.”

The doctrine, I conceive, needs no farther illustration or proof. It only remains, that I endeavor to point out some useful inferences from it, applicable to our own times, and to the present occasion.

1. The holy scriptures may hence be vindicated, in their being so much on the side of government; and no more favorable to the insurrection of inferiors.

On these topics, it must be acknowledged, the spirit of the gospel, as well as of the old testament, is somewhat different from the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience, among whom we have all had our conversation. Our Saviour “went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil”; but under the political oppressions of the Jews, his countrymen, he seemed not much to sympathize with them. When it hurt their consciences to pay tribute to a foreign power, and they asked him whether it were lawful; his answer was, “Render to Caesar, the things that are Caesar’s, and to God, the things that are God’s.” He constantly preached peace, meekness, humility and submission. His apostles in like manner, taught children to obey and honor their parents: and servants to be “subject to their own masters, with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.” And, instead of animating their numerous proselytes, at Crete, at Rome, and all over the world, to rise in arms against these rulers of the earth who were their unrighteous and unmerciful persecutors; they would have them “put in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates”:<sup>\*</sup> they exhorted them to “submit themselves to every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake”;<sup>†</sup> and told them, “Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.”<sup>‡</sup>

At this distance of time, and after so many revolutions, such passages as these may seem hard sayings, to some good soldiers, even of Jesus Christ. No wonder that the inculcators of so much poverty of spirit, should be rejected with scorn, and treated with scurrility, in this “age of reason.” We are not to wonder, were there no other cause, that infidelity should exceedingly increase, in these times of “illumination.”

To the spiritually minded Christian, however, it will readily occur, in favour of the author and finisher of our faith, and his first ministers, that the great object they had in

view, was to save the souls of men; and that, teaching them to be meek and lowly in heart, poor in spirit, and contented in whatsoever state they were, was better adapted to this design; than filling the heads of inferiors with exalted notions of the equal “rights of man”; inflaming their hearts with pride and angry passions; and throwing families into envying and strife, and nations into the convulsions of civil war; till every one can be as free as the freest, and as high as the highest.

But, leaving things eternal out of the question; according to the subject to which we have now been attending, if the preachers and penmen of the New-Testament had aimed only to promote the temporal happiness, of only the lower classes of mankind, they would have done wisely in writing and preaching, on the duties of subordination, exactly as they did. Never can there be peace on earth, or any safety among men, while children are allowed to rise up against their parents, servants against their masters, and subjects against their civil rulers, whenever they think differently from them, or dislike their government. Thus to make the child, the governor of his governors, and the base, the judge of his judges, is the certain way to endless confusion, in all human societies.

2. If the doctrine insisted on be true, it follows, that a ready submission to all those burdens which are necessary for the support of good government, and for national defence, is the wisdom, as well as duty of any people.

The apostle to the Romans, having said, “The powers that be are ordained of God”; having observed that the benevolent end of their ordination was the good of the people; and, on these grounds, having enjoined subjection to them, he adds; “For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.”

Public expenses are apt to appear to many, excessively high: but, perhaps, they do not well consider the real occasion there is for great expenditures, in a nation or state of any magnitude.

In order to the support of good government, many rulers, of high and low degree, are absolutely necessary. And it is necessary that those who occupy the higher offices, should be men of superior knowledge, and uncommon natural abilities: such knowledge as is not easily acquired, and such abilities as might procure them a plentiful income in other occupations. If the bramble, or the shrub oak, were adequate to rule over the trees, a cheap government might be expected; but if the vine, the fig-tree, and the olive-tree, must be promoted; we are not to think that these will leave their rich fruits; their sweetness, and fatness, without a suitable compensation. Besides, rulers of high rank, must be at no inconsiderable expense, to support the proper dignity of their stations. It is also to be taken into the account, that the duties of those who rule well, and attend continually upon this very thing, are not only exceedingly laborious, but that some parts of the essential services they have to render must be very disagreeable; if they have any compassionate sensibility. The execution of deserved vengeance, is said to be God’s strange work; as being, in itself, most opposite to one whose nature is love, and who delighteth in mercy. And, doubtless, that punishment of evil doers, for which earthly rulers are appointed, and which the

public good requires, must be really painful to the feelings of humanity; more painful, in many cases, than the amputation of limbs, and other high operations in surgery, for which, on that account, as well as because of the superior skill and great care requisite, an ample fee to the operator is thought reasonable. Moreover; those who stand in elevated stations, are the marks of obloquy, and exposed to many dangers, much more than men on the level ground of private life. All these things well weighed, the equitable reward of governors, and the necessary cost of supporting good government, must be no inconsiderable burden on the people.

In order to national defence, against hostilities from abroad, still heavier expenses are often indispensable. In perilous times, there must be armies and fleets, forts and garrisons. At the first out set, more especially, when all these things are to be new-created, to a people unused to such vast expenditures, they will naturally appear enormous; and very easily may a popular clamor be raised against them. It is possible, indeed, that more may be laid out in these ways, many times, than the public exigences require; but of this, few of the complainers are competent to judge. A nation that has an extended coast, and an extensive commerce to defend, had better be at immense charges for the security of these, than lie open to those spoliations and invasions, to which, without arming, when all the world is at war, they might inevitably be exposed.

To provide both for the internal and external safety of a numerous people, the burdens laid upon them must often be heavy. These are evils to be lamented; but in the present state of mankind, they are necessary for the prevention of far greater evils; and should therefore be submitted to, without murmuring.

3. The preceding observations may suggest to us, some peculiar advantages of a republican form of government.\*

Under every form, there must be orders and degrees; some must bear rule, and others be subject to tribute. Under every form, there will be duties, imposts, excises, and perhaps direct taxation. All forms of government, however, are not equal. Much advantage hath the republican, many ways.

One advantage is, that the people may always have good rulers, unless it be their own fault. Under a monarchy, or an aristocracy, let the body of the people be ever so virtuous, and ever so vigilant, they may have children for their princes, and babes to rule over them. When power is hereditary, in kings or nobles, not only is there a risk of having the highest seats of government filled by minors; but, if this should not happen, the hazard is great, that those who inherit the first offices of government, will frequently be men of not much knowledge, or of not much virtue. But in elective governments, where the people at large are the electors, and especially where the elections are frequent, they may always have wise and faithful men in all places of authority; if such are to be found, and if such they choose.

It may next be observed; that in republican governments, there is the least occasion for illegal associations, or popular tumults, to obtain a redress of grievances. If there

be any mal-administration, or any fault in the constitution, a remedy is provided, without disturbing the public peace.

Another advantage must not be forgotten, which is very great: under this free form of government, the interests of rulers and subjects are so blended—so the same, that the former cannot oppress the latter, without equally oppressing themselves. In an absolute monarchy, the king; and in an aristocracy, the nobles, may “bind heavy burdens, and lay them on men’s shoulders,” without being obliged to “touch them themselves with one of their fingers”: but in democracies, the highest magistrates are subject to the same laws, the same duties, the same taxes, which they impose upon others. At least, those who this year bear rule, the next election may be under law, under tribute. This is a great security against their decreeing unrighteous decrees, and writing grievous things.

Lastly; representative rulers feel themselves so dependent on the people, for their continuance in office, that they are not likely to grow haughty and unreasonably overbearing, as those naturally will, who have no such dependence.

These are some of the peculiar advantages of a republican government. But then, it is to be well remembered, that the best things may become the worst for us, by being abused. To render democratic governments stable and happy, it is highly necessary that the people should be wise, virtuous, peaceable, and easily governed. For want of these requisites, republics have often been, like “man that is born of a woman, of few days, and full of trouble.”

4. In the more particular application of our subject, we are naturally led to a view and conviction, of our own mercies, and privileges, and prospects, and duties.

That the past mercies of heaven towards this country, have been singularly great, every pious observer will be ready devoutly to acknowledge. I have reference, chiefly, to political mercies; or those which relate to civil liberty and government. Hardly another instance can be found, I believe, in all history, of a people’s enjoying both these blessings jointly, in so high a degree, for so great a length of time, as they have been enjoyed by several of these united states; and by this state, in particular. The people of Connecticut, from the beginning, have invariably chosen their chief magistrates, and general assembly; and they have had a succession of good governors far beyond the common lot of mankind. Our “officers have been peace, and our exactors righteousness,” with as few exceptions, perhaps, as ever were known in any part of the world.

Or, if we confine the retrospect, within the compass of the last five and twenty years; and extend it to the whole union, how wonderful have been the salvations granted us! In this period, we have passed through the Red Sea of a revolutionary war; in which our then friends and coadjutors, assaying to follow us, as most who ever attempted it before us, have been drowned. Here, quite contrary to what usually happens, on such occasions, we had guides eminent for prudence, stability, coolness, and unconquerable perseverance. And one, super-eminent for all those; by the integrity of whose heart, and the skilfulness of whose hands, we were led like a flock, in safety,

far surpassing all rational expectation. We have also passed, afterwards, thro the howling wilderness of an almost national anarchy: where were pits, and scorpions, and fiery flying serpents. Here again, our great men, with *the greatest of all* at their head, in a general convention, formed and recommended our present admirable constitution. And our wisest counsellors and most eloquent orators, in every state, straining every nerve, procured its adoption; whereby we were saved, when on the brink of dissolution. That such men were raised up, and put forward, in these times of need; and their way made prosperous; was certainly “the Lord’s doing, and ought to be marvellous in our eyes.” In either of these perils, “it was of the Lord’s mercies that we were not consumed.”

And as past mercies, so our present privileges, are singular, and such as deserve a very grateful acknowledgment. While many other nations are suffering the ravages of a most furious war, still likely to be carried on with redoubled rage; we enjoy the inestimable blessings of peace. While most other nations are under the dominion of hereditary kings and nobles, such as they happen to be born and educated, whether virtuous or vicious, wise men or fools; we have rulers from the highest to the lowest, of our own election. While one other nation, great and highly civilized, after swimming in seas of blood for eight years, and after nearly as many revolutions, in a violent contest for liberty and equality, has at last, nothing more of either than the empty name, we possess the reality of both, as far as is consistent with any order or safety.

Our national expenses are necessarily great: but the burden of them is laid, as much as possible, on those most able to bear it; among whom, the imposers, being of the richer class, have taken a large proportion on themselves. In the nation, and in this state, the policy of government, certainly, is not to “grind the face of the poor.” The mildness and gentleness of our administration, it appears to me, is generally very great; and, in regard to its wisdom and firmness, considering the times, I think it deserving of much applause. Respecting rulers, certainly our condition, hitherto, is far different from that described and threatened in our text.

Such have been our mercies; such are our privileges. What then are our prospects? Not altogether fair and promising, after all. As in the blessings of heaven, and the abuse of these blessings, there is a striking resemblance between us, and the land of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, at the time of this prophecy, to which we have been attending; so, in the sequel, it is possible there may be a similitude. Our mountain is not yet so strong, that we have reason, from any quarter, to say in our prosperity, we shall never be moved.

Some may flatter themselves, that, although other republics have frequently been tumultuous, and of short continuance; ours will be peaceful and permanent, because of the greater knowledge and virtue of the people.

It is true, in this part of the union at least, “We know that we all have knowledge.” But, I doubt, we have more of the “knowledge which puffeth up,” than of that knowledge which promises “stability of times.” It is true, we have the light of the gospel; and were we disposed to be guided by this light, we need not fear the fate of

ancient republics, that were bewildered in pagan darkness. But, in matters relative to government and subordination; too many choose to take their instructions from heathen philosophy, rather than from the oracles of God. And as the knowledge, so the virtue, of even this happy country, exceedingly wants to be Christianized. It is true, our “charity aboundeth”: but I am afraid we have not much of that charity which is “the bond of perfectness, or the bond of peace.”

Perhaps some good people are ready to think, we may safely “trust in God; who hath delivered, and doth deliver, that he will yet deliver us.” And had we rendered according to the benefits done us, indeed, we might thus securely trust. But has this been the case? On the contrary, have we not sinned more and more, since the almost miraculous deliverances granted us? Has not the worship of God been neglected; his day and name been prophaned, his laws transgressed, and his gospel despised and rejected, of late years, more than ever? Have not infidelity, and all manner of loose principles, and immoral practices, abounded in all parts of the land, since the revolution, and our happy independence, more than at any former period? Shall we then “lean upon the Lord, and say, Is not the Lord among us? no evil can come upon us”?\* Or shall we think, “Because we are innocent, surely his anger shall turn from us”? His ancient covenant people thus leaned, and thus said, in times of their greatest degeneracy; but what were the answers of God to them?† “You only have I known, of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.” And, “shall I not visit for these things? shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?”

When we read such solemn divine admonitions as these, and consider our own ways and doings, can we confidently expect the continued smiles and protection of the holy governor of the world? Instead of this, may not our flesh well tremble for fear of him? Have we not reason to be afraid of his avenging judgments?

And has he not already begun to testify his righteous displeasure against us, in some terrible instances? For several years past, our capital towns and cities have been sorely visited with a wasting pestilence; little, if at all known before, in these parts. And now, very lately, a most awful breach has been made upon us; and of the very same kind threatened in our context to Jerusalem and Judah. *For, behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, hath taken away from America, the stay and the staff: the mighty man, and the man of war. The judge, and the prudent, and the ancient: The captain of all our armies, and our most honorable man.* All these, in one; by a sudden and surprising stroke, hath the Lord taken away. The man who “fought for us, and adventured his life for, and delivered us.” The man who gave system to our distracted affairs; united our broken confederacy; and long guided our difficult course, between the whirlpools of European wars. The man, but for whom, very possibly, we should now have been wretched, conquered, rebel colonies; instead of triumphant, free, independent states; and but for whom, afterwards, we might have been as a roap of sand, instead of a strong united nation: The man to whom we are thus indebted—on whom we were thus dependent, is no more.

What farther public calamities the sudden decease of this great Saviour of his country may portend, God only knows. We have reason to apprehend, that as he was ever



prosperous in life, so his death, for him, was favorably timed; that he was taken out of the way of evils to come; great evils coming on a land most dear to him; which he could only have seen, to his inexpressible sorrow of heart, without being able to prevent. This lesson, however, we are plainly and most impressively taught, by a providence which has clothed a continent in mourning; that Gods on earth must die like men.\* That “no man hath power over the spirit, to retain the spirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no discharge in that war.” We have many great and good men, yet spared to us; nor are we without one, at the head of our national government, who, I presume, has the high veneration of the best judges, and their cordial prayers that he may long live; and long fill the important station which he now possesses. But his breath is in his nostrils; and so is the breath of every other man, most accounted of; in the nation, or in the state. Nor is natural death, the only way whereby our remaining firm pillars, may be removed.

And if we consider the spirit that now worketh, well may we be apprehensive of unhappy changes; and of all the evils threatened in our text. Some of these, we already experience. Though God hath not given children to be our princes, nor many bad men, we hope, to rule over us; yet the people are oppressed one by another, in a degree, I believe, beyond what has been usual heretofore. And certainly it is a remarkable day, for the child’s behaving himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable. Nor is this to be wondered at. Of such scenes as we have lately passed through, it is the natural consequence. In revolutionary times, all expressions of respect are wont to be laid aside, or the application of them reversed. The great lessons inculcated on youth, instead of modesty, dutifulness and subordination; are boldness, self-sufficiency, and self-importance. Children, too young to read the bible, or to be taught their catechism, are mounted on the stage, to act the orator, the patriot and politician: while the parents, the aged and the wise, sit or stand around in low place, wonder and applaud. Brutus and Cassius (not Jesus nor Paul, Peter nor John), are the great models and instructors, of the rising generation of Christians. Such things as these, we have seen; and the effects of them, we still sadly feel. Habits of subordination, always painful to human pride; when once effaced, or much weakened, are not easily restored. On the other hand, habits of haughtiness and disobedience, always congenial to the human heart; when once imbibed, naturally increase to more ungovernableness. One point of freedom gained, another is struggled for with the greater ardor. Licentiousness, like the grave, never says, “It is enough.”

In this state, though not near so free as some, great liberties are enjoyed. We have liberty to do every thing that we ought; and a great many things that we ought not. In matters of religion, our liberties are almost unbounded. We may sell, buy and read, what books we please: the best, or the most atheistical and blasphemous. We may worship what god we choose: a just God, or one who has no justice for men to fear. Every creature, has equal liberty to preach the gospel: and to preach what gospel he thinks proper. Those who persuade men by the terrors of the Lord, to stand in awe, and not sin; and those who embolden men in all manner of iniquity, by assurances of no wrath to come, have equal encouragement. Any people may make the firmest legal contract for the support of what minister they will; and any number, or all of them, may break it when they will. In civil matters, our liberty is a little more circumscribed; yet, in these, we have a good deal of elbow-room, to do wrong, as well

as right. We may honor all men, or defame the most dignified and worthy characters. We may speak the truth, or assert and propagate falsehoods. Men may fulfil their promises, or not fulfil them; pay their debts, or never pay them, without any restraint, or much danger of compulsion. All these liberties, and a thousand others, if not explicitly by law allowed; are taken, very freely by many, in their worst latitude; and taken with impunity, in a multitude of instances.

Yet, with all this, numbers among ourselves, and much greater numbers in the freer states, it is said, are not satisfied; but are striving, by calumnies, and by intrigues, for new revolutions still further to weaken government. That some men might wish to have their own hands and tongues at greater liberty, provided their neighbours and enemies could be kept fast bound, may easily be conceived: but how any man, on the least sober reflection, should be willing that all others should be under less restraint than they now are, appears almost inconceivable. One would have thought, that the tragedy so long exhibited on the great European theatre of confusion, and especially the last scene; must have opened the eyes of the most blind; and obliged them to see, that overturning and overturning, with a view to break all bonds of society asunder, is not the way to public happiness, or personal safety. Nevertheless, this seems not to have been the case. A majority of the people, however, it may be presumed, are convinced, that our greatest immediate danger, is of having too little government, not too little liberty.

Nor are our duties, if we have this conviction, hard to be understood. Were we in earnest disposed, to stand in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way? And would we walk therein, rest might be found; and the threatened evils now spoken of, be prevented.

If we would not have the child behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honorable, greater attention should be paid to the schooling and government of the rising generation. Some attempt towards a reform in this matter has already been made, under the auspices of the general assembly: and, as far as I have had opportunity to observe, it has been attended with encouraging effects. It is necessary that those just weaned from the breast, should have line upon line, and precept upon precept; and it is of importance what those lines and precepts are. Little ones should be learnt their letters, at least; if not a few lines of the New-Testament, before they are learnt to be Grecian and Roman orators and patriots. They should be learnt a little modesty, and a little manners, before they are learnt to govern the nation. They should be made good children, before we attempt to make them great men.

If our legislators would prevent our being oppressed every one by another, the old and good way is, to have a code of laws, as short and plain as possible, and suitably enforced. Obsolete laws; and laws the only tendency of which is to evade, or needlessly delay, the operation of justice; I should think, ought to be repealed. And certainly great care should be taken, by the appointment of capable and faithful judiciary and informing officers, that the laws unrepealed be duly executed.

If our judges of courts, would keep us from oppressing, or being oppressed, they should cause "judgment to run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty

stream.” They should see that the old complaint in Isaiah;<sup>\*</sup> “Judgment is turned away backward, and justice standeth afar off; truth is fallen in the street, and equity cannot enter,” be not applicable to ourselves. They should see, if possible, that their judgment seats be not environed with so high piles of voluminous fortifications, and such numerous garrisons, armed at all points, and able to defend any thing, that right can hardly be obtained, in the plainest cause, without a siege, as long, and as costly, as the siege of Troy.

If the freemen—the fountain of power, would strengthen government, or guard against its being farther weakened; they should be very punctual in attending their legal meetings, and very careful for whom they give in their suffrages, as members of Assembly, or of Congress. They should see that they do not vote for weak men, however honest; nor for vicious men, however capable; nor for intriguing men, who are crowding themselves forward, by every popular artifice: who understand perfectly all the duties and faults of their superiors, but see no beam in their own eye, and never mind their own business. Men of real abilities, are generally unassuming and self-diffident. Men sensible of the difficulties and responsibility of important posts of trust, are generally backward to undertake them. Men restless where they are, and troublesome to those above them, are generally haughty and overbearing, if advanced to higher stations. Nor should the freemen be too much given to change; unless they mean to weaken government. Bad men, if in office, cannot be too soon turned out; but those who have ruled well, ought not to be dropped, merely that every man may have his turn; nor merely to show the great power of the people, and to keep their servants, who govern them, more in fear of them.

The ministers of the gospel, are thought to have no concern with the temporal happiness of mankind: doubtless, the good way for them, whether the old way or not, is to confine themselves very much to their spiritual vocation. Doubtless their principal business is, to save the souls of those who hear them. But in order to [do] this, they must warn all, of that “wrath of God which is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.” They must “convert sinners from the error of their ways,” or they cannot “save their souls from death.” They must teach their converts to “observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded,” by himself or his apostles; or they cannot make them “meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” And among these instructions, teaching them to “obey those who have the rule over them, and to be cautious how they speak evil of dignities, must not be omitted. Ministers must not “shun to declare all the counsel of God,” both to rulers and subjects, if they would be “pure from the blood of all men.” In a word, they must do what in them lies to make all their hearers good Christians; for without this they can never get them to heaven; and they need do no more, to make them peaceable and orderly members of society on earth. Thus far, and in this manner, Aaron may still support the hand of Moses, in ministering to the temporal good of men, even in a consistency with the modern line of separation drawn between them.

Lastly; all, of every order, if they would do their part to prevent all the evils threatened in our text and context, from coming upon us, as the righteous judgments of heaven, must see that their tongues and their doings are not against the Lord. Never can we rationally hope that God will be at peace with us, unless we treat his laws and

ordinances with greater attention and respect. Unless we cease to do evil, and learn to do well; unless some check be put to those loose principles, and licentious practices, which have over-flowed all our cities, and towns, and villages.

The old paths, then, and the good way, to which we must return, and in which we must walk, would we find rest, are plain before us.

But, it is to be feared, the voice of a majority may now be, as it was in the days of Jeremiah: *We will not walk therein*. Both from the signs of the times, and from several predictions of scripture, I think the probability is, that things are not about to alter for the better, but for the worse. Mankind seem yet combining, and “taking counsel together, against the Lord, and against his annointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us”; and God seems remarkably leaving them to strong delusions, to believe strange lies. He seems determined to let them go on, and try the boasted experiment of liberty and revolutions, to the uttermost: designing, it may be supposed, to have a more convictive discovery exhibited, than has ever yet been given, of the madness in the heart of the sons of men, before the general regeneration of the world. The unclean spirits, predicted to come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet, as represented in the vision of John; appear evidently to have gone forth over all the earth, and to have been exceedingly busy and successful, in raising and training up their forces for the battle of that great day of God Almighty;\* which, according to the common calculation of expositors, is now only commencing. Whether we turn our eyes to the word of prophecy, or to the aspects of providence, we have reason to be very apprehensive, that “this darkness” is yet for a while, to “cover the earth, and gross darkness the people,”† in a greater and greater degree, before the expected reign of light and truth, righteousness and peace.

Nevertheless, let not good men despond: not let them relax their exertions to repel, as long and as extensively as they can, the prevalence of error, irreligion and wretchedness. Mightier is he that is with them, than all that are against them. When it is asked in the eleventh psalm: “If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” the answer is short, but very emphatical and abundantly sufficient: *“The Lord is in his holy temple; the Lord’s throne is in heaven*. Elsewhere, the psalmist, adoring the power and wisdom of the most High, says, “Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of the wrath shalt thou restrain.”\* It is often said, “Christ is able to support his own church and ministers, without the aid of human laws.” This is doubtless true, it is also true, that Christ is able to take care of his church, and to bring the many sons given him to glory, without any ministers at all. And equally true is it, that God is able to govern the nations, without the help of earthly rulers. But, from these premises, the consequence will not follow, without hard drawing, that men may innocently and safely neglect exerting the power they have, for the support, either of good government, or of uncorrupted Christianity. “Those that walk in pride, God is able to abase”; but is there therefore nothing hazardous, nor wrong, in thus walking? A curse was once denounced, on them who “came not to the help of the Lord, against the mighty[”]; though the Lord helped himself, without their assistance. But the foregoing truths, however they may have been perverted to the countenancing of human negligence in the cause of God or

Christ, are matter of just consolation to the pious and good, when they walk in darkness and have no light: when they see little probability that their utmost efforts for the support of order, or of undefiled religion, will have any effect.

There will always be some, and some that ought to be leaders and teachers, whose policy it is, to turn with the times; to swim with the tide, and swing with the vibrating pendulum of popular opinion. Who will trim their way to seek love; and “become all things to all men, if by all means they may save” themselves. But a steadfast adherence to truth and duty, however great the apparent danger, is the only way of real safety. He who thus “loses his life, shall save it”; and he shall lose his life who would save it, by deserting his post, or hiding himself under refuges of falsehood, when evil is foreseen. “The fearful and unbelieving, shall have their part” at last, in the same lake with bolder transgressors. “The fear of man bringeth a snare; but whoso putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe.”\* For the encouragement of good men, in perilous times, and particularly of good rulers, it is written: “He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood, and shutteth his eyes from seeing evil; he shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.”† On these grounds is the exhortation in Isaiah, a few chapters after our text,‡ with which I shall conclude. “Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy: neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let Him be your dread.”

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

51

## THE VOICE OF WARNING TO CHRISTIANS

John Mitchell Mason

NEW-YORK

1800

John Mitchell Mason (1770–1829). Born in New York City and educated both at Columbia College (1789) and, theologically, at the University of Edinburgh (1792), Mason became the pastor of the Scotch Presbyterian Church on Cedar Street, New York City, after the death of his father (Reverend John Mason), who was a longtime pastor there. He later resigned this pulpit for a new congregation at Murray Street Church, his denomination being the Reformed Church of North America. He founded a theological seminary in 1804, which later became Union Theological Seminary, and subscribed support for it while gathering its library in Great Britain. He founded *The Christian's Magazine* in 1806 and wrote much of its content. He served as trustee of Columbia College for two periods totaling twenty-six years, and he was elected first provost of the college in 1811. When his health failed, he decided that a new climate might help him, so he moved to Carlisle, Pennsylvania, where he was president of Dickinson College for three years. In 1822 he left the Associate Reformed Church and became a member of the Presbyterian Presbytery of New York. He returned to New York in 1824 and remained there until his death.

Mason was one of the greatest pulpit orators of his age and had no superior as a preacher during his best years (C. F. Himes, *A Sketch of Dickinson College* [1789], p. 52; John DeWitt, "The Intellectual Life of Samuel Miller," *Princeton Theological Review*, April 1906, p. 175). This sermon of 1800, published anonymously, reflects Mason's view that Thomas Jefferson was a "confirmed infidel" whose "rejection of the Christian religion and open profession of atheism" had disqualified him from being chosen President of the United States.

Regarded as "one of the most noted clerical pamphlets against Jefferson" (Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time*, III:522), the sermon continues the ruinous attack on Jefferson's religion made in an anonymous tract by William Linn, with Mason's assistance (and mentioned herein on the second page of Mason's text, as well as later on), entitled *Serious Considerations on the Election of a President: Addressed to the Citizens of the United States* (Evans No. 37835), also published in 1800.

If a manly attempt to avert national ruin, by exposing a favorite error, should excite no resentment, nor draw any obloquy upon its author, there would certainly be a new thing under the sun. Men can seldom bear contradiction. They bear it least when they are most demonstrably wrong; because, having surrendered their judgment to

prejudice, or their conscience to design, they must take refuge in obstinacy from the attacks of reason. The bad, dreading nothing so much as the prevalence of pure principle and virtuous habit, will ever be industrious in counteracting it; and the more candid, rational and convincing the means employed in its behalf, the louder will be their clamor, and the fiercer their opposition. On the other hand, good men are often led insensibly astray, and their very honesty becomes the guarantee of their delusion. Unaware, at first, of their inconsistency, they afterwards shrink from the test of their own profession. Startled by remonstrance, but unprepared to recede; checked by the misgivings of their own minds, yet urged on by their previous purpose and connection, the conflict renders them irritable, and they mark as their enemy whoever tells them the truth. From the coincidence of such a bias with the views of the profligate and daring, results incalculable mischief. The sympathy of a common cause unites the persons engaged in it; the shades of exterior character gradually disappear; virtue sinks from her glory; vice emerges from her infamy; the best and the basest appear nearly on a level; while the most atrocious principles either lose their horror, or have a veil thrown over them: and the man who endeavors to arrest their course, is singled out as a victim to revenge and madness. Such, from the beginning, has been the course of the world. None of its benefactors have escaped its calumnies and persecutions: not prophets, not apostles, not the Son of God himself. To this treatment, therefore, must every one be reconciled, who labors to promote the best interests of his country. He must stake his popularity against his integrity; he must encounter a policy which will be contented with nothing short of his ruin; and if it may not spill his blood, will strive to overwhelm him with public execration. That this is the spirit which has pursued a writer, the purity of whose views is equalled only by their importance—I mean the author of *Serious Considerations on the Election of a President*, I need not inform any who inspect the gazettes. To lay before the people of the United States, proofs that a candidate for the office of their first magistrate, is an unbeliever in the scriptures; and that to confer such a distinction upon an open enemy to their religion, their Redeemer, and their hope, would be mischief to themselves and sin against God, is a crime never to be forgiven by a class of men too numerous for our peace or prosperity. The infidels have risen *en masse*, and it is not through their moderation that he retains any portion of his respectability or his usefulness. But in their wrath there is nothing to deprecate; nor does he deserve the name of a Christian, who, in order to avoid it, would deviate an hair's breadth from his duty. For them I write not. Impenetrable by serious principle, they are not objects of expostulation, but of compassion; nor shall I stoop to any solicitude about their censure or applause.

But do I represent as infidels all who befriend Mr. Jefferson's election? God forbid that I should so "lie against the truth." If I thought so, I should mourn in silence: my pen should slumber forever. That a majority of them profess, and that multitudes of them really love, the religion of Jesus, while it is my terror, is also my hope. Terror, because I believe them to be under a fatal mistake; hope, because they, if any, are within the reach of conviction. I address myself to them. The latter, especially, are my brothers, my dearer ties and higher interests than can be created or destroyed by any political connection. And if it be asked, Why mingle religion with questions of policy? Why irritate by opposition? Why risk the excitement of passions which may disserve, but cannot aid, the common Christianity? Why not maintain a prudent reserve, and permit matters of state to take their own course? I answer, Because

Christians are deeply engaged already: Because the principles of the gospel are to regulate their political, as well as their other, conduct: Because their Christian character, profession and prosperity are involved in the issue. This is no hour to temporize. I abhor that coward spirit which vaunts when gliding down the tide of opinion, but shrinks from the returning current, and calls the treason prudence. It is the voice of God's providence not less than of his word, "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." With Christians, therefore, I must expostulate; and may not refrain. However they may be displeased, or threaten, I will say, with the Athenian chief, "*Strike, but hear me.*"

## Fellow Christians,

A crisis of no common magnitude awaits our country. The approaching election of a president is to decide a question not merely of preference to an eminent individual, or particular views of policy, but, what is infinitely more, of national regard or disregard to the religion of Jesus Christ. Had the choice been between two infidels or two professed Christians, the point of politics would be untouched by me. Nor, though opposed to Mr. Jefferson, am I to be regarded as a partizan; since the principles which I am about to develop, will be equally unacceptable to many on both sides of the question. I dread the election of Mr. Jefferson, because I believe him to be a confirmed infidel: you desire it, because, while he is politically acceptable, you either doubt this fact, or do not consider it essential. Let us, like brethren, reason this matter.

The general opinion rarely, if ever, mistakes a character which private pursuits and public functions have placed in different attitudes; yet it is frequently formed upon circumstances which elude the grasp of argument even while they make a powerful and just impression. Notwithstanding, therefore, the belief of Mr. Jefferson's infidelity, which has for years been uniform and strong, wherever his character has been a subject of speculation—although that infidelity has been boasted by some, lamented by many, and undisputed by all, yet as it is now denied by his friends, the charge, unsupported by other proof, could hardly be pursued to conviction. Happily for truth and for us, Mr. Jefferson has written; he has printed. While I shall not decline auxiliary testimony, I appeal to what he never retracted, and will not deny, his *Notes on Virginia*.\*

In their war upon revelation, infidels have levelled their batteries against the miraculous facts of the scripture: well knowing that if its historical truth can be overturned, there is an end of its claim to inspiration. But God has protected his word. Particularly the universal deluge, the most stupendous miracle of the old testament, is fortified with impregnable evidence. The globe teems with demonstrations of it. Every mountain and hill and valley lifts up its voice to confirm the narrative of Moses. The very researches and discoveries of infidels themselves, contrary to their intentions, their wishes and their hopes, are here compelled to range behind the banner of the bible. To attack, therefore, the scriptural account of the deluge, belongs only to the most desperate infidelity. Now, what will you think of Mr. Jefferson's Christianity, if he has advanced positions which strike directly at the truth of God's word concerning that wonderful event? Let him speak for himself:



It is said that shells are found in the Andes, in South America, fifteen thousand feet above the level of the ocean. This is considered by many, both of the learned and unlearned, *as a proof of an universal deluge*. But to the *many considerations opposing this opinion*, the following may be added: The atmosphere and all its contents, whether of water, air, or other matters, gravitate to the earth; that is to say, they have weight. Experience tells us, that the weight of all these columns together, never exceeds that of a column of mercury of 31 inches high. If the whole contents of the atmosphere then were water, instead of what they are, it would cover the *globe but 35 feet deep*: but, as these waters as they fell, would run into the seas, the superficial measure of which is to that of the dry parts of the globe, as two to one, the seas would be raised only 52 1/2 feet above their present level, and of course would *overflow the land to that height only*. In Virginia this would be a very small proportion even of the champaign country, the banks of our tide-waters being frequently, if not generally, of a greater height. Deluges beyond this extent then, as for instance, to the North mountain or to Kentucky, seem out of the laws of nature. But within it they may have taken place to a greater or less degree, in proportion to the combination of natural causes which may be supposed to have produced them. But such deluges as these, will not account for the shells found in the higher lands. A second opinion has been entertained, which is, that in times anterior to the records either of history or tradition, the bed of the ocean, the principal residence of the shelled tribe, has, by some great convulsion of nature, been heaved to the heights at which we now find shells and other remains of marine animals. *The favorers of this opinion do well to suppose the great events on which it rests to have taken place beyond all the æras of history; for within these certainly none such can be found*; and we may venture to say further, that no fact has taken place either in our own days, or in the thousands of years recorded in history, which proves the existence of any natural agents within or without the bowels of the earth, of force sufficient to heave to the height of 15,000 feet, such masses as the Andes.\*

After mentioning another opinion proposed by Voltaire, Mr. J. proceeds, “There is a wonder somewhere. Is it greatest on this branch of the dilemma; on that which supposes the existence of a power of which we have no evidence in any other case; or on the first which requires us to believe the creation of a body of water and ‘its subsequent annihilation?’ ” Rejecting the whim of Voltaire, he concludes, that “*the three hypotheses are equally unsatisfactory, and we must be contented to acknowledge, that this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved.*” †

On these extracts, I cannot suppress the following reflections.

1. Mr. Jefferson disbelieves the existence of an universal deluge. “*There are many considerations,*” says he, “*opposing this opinion.*” The bible says expressly, “*The waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth, and all the high hills that were under the whole heaven were covered.*” † Mr. Jefferson enters into a philosophical argument to prove the fact impossible; that is, he argues in the very face of God’s word, and, as far as his reasoning goes, endeavors to convict it of falsehood.

2. Mr. Jefferson’s concession of the probability of deluges within certain limits, does not rank him with those great men who have supposed the deluge to be partial,

because his argument concludes directly against the scriptural narrative, even upon that supposition. He will not admit his partial deluges to rise above 52 1/2 feet above the level of the ocean. Whereas the scripture, circumscribe its deluge as you will, asserts that *the waters were fifteen cubits (27 1/2 feet nearly) above the mountains.* §

3. Not satisfied with his argument, Mr. Jefferson sneers at the scripture itself, and at the credulity of those who, relying upon its testimony, believe “that the bed of the ocean has by some great convulsion of nature, been heaved to the heights at which we now find shells and other remains of marine animals.” “*They do well,*” says he, “*to suppose the great events on which it rests to have taken place beyond all the æras of history; for within these none such are to be found.*” Indeed! And so our faith in God’s word is to dwindle, at the touch of a profane philosopher, into an “opinion,” unsupported by either “history or tradition!” *All the fountains of the great deep, saith the scripture, were broken up.\** Was this no “great convulsion of nature?” Could not this “heave the bed of the ocean to the height at which we now find shells?” But the favorers of this opinion *suppose the great events on which it rests to have taken place beyond all the æras of history.* And they do well, says Mr. Jefferson: the plain meaning of which is, that their error would certainly be detected if they did not retreat into the darkness of fable. Malignant sarcasm! And who are “the favorers of this opinion?” At least all who embrace the holy scriptures. These do declare most unequivocally, that there was such a “great convulsion of nature” as produced a deluge infinitely more formidable than Mr. Jefferson’s philosophy can digest. But he will not so much as allow them to be history: he degrades them even below tradition. We talk of times for our flood, he tells us, “anterior to the records either of history or tradition.” Nor will it mend the matter, to urge that he alludes only to profane history. The fact could not be more dubious or less deserving a place in the systems of philosophy, from the attestation of infallible truth. And is this truth to be spurned as no history; as not even tradition? It is thus, Christians, that a man whom you are expected to elevate to the chief magistracy, insults yourselves and your bible. †

4. Mr. Jefferson’s argument against the flood is, in substance, the very argument by which infidels have attacked the credibility of the Mosaic history. They have always objected the insufficiency of water to effect such a deluge as that describes. Mr. J. knew this. Yet he adopts and repeats it. He does not deign so much as to mention Moses: while through the sides of one of his hypotheses, he strikes at the scriptural history, he winds up with pronouncing all the three to be “equally unsatisfactory.” Thus reducing the holy volume to a level with the dreams of Voltaire! Let me now ask any Christian, Would you dare to express yourself in a similar manner upon a subject which has received the decision of the living God? Would you patiently hear one of your neighbors speak so irreverently of his oracles? Could you venture to speculate on the deluge without resorting to them? Would you not shudder at the thought of using, in support of a philosophical opinion, the arguments which infidels bring against that Word which is the source of all your consolation; much more to use them without a lisp of respect for it, or of caution against mistake? Can he believe the bible who does all this? Can an infidel do more without directly assailing it? What then must you think of Mr. Jefferson?

But it was not enough for this gentleman to discredit the story of the deluge. He has advanced a step farther, and has indicated, too plainly, his disbelief in the common origin of mankind. The scriptures teach that all nations are the offspring of the first and single pair, Adam and Eve, whom God created and placed in paradise. This fact, interwoven with all the relations and all the doctrines of the bible, is alike essential to its historical and religious truth. Now what says the candidate for the chair of your president? After an ingenious, lengthy, and elaborate argument to prove that the blacks are naturally and morally inferior both to white and red men; and that “their inferiority is not the effect merely of their condition of life,”\* he observes, “I advance it therefore as a suspicion only, that the blacks, whether *originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances*, are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.”† He had before asserted, that “besides those of color, figure, and hair, there are *other physical distinctions, proving a difference of race.*”\* He does, indeed, discover some compunction in reflecting on the consequences of his philosophy. For to several reasons why his opinion “must be hazarded with great diffidence,” he adds “as a circumstance of great tenderness,” that the “conclusion” to which his observations lead, “would *degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them.*”† Much pains have been taken to persuade the public that Mr. Jefferson by “distinct race” and “difference of race,” means nothing more than that the negroes are only a branch of the great family of man, without impeaching the identity of their origin. This construction, though it may satisfy many, is unfounded, absurd, and contradicted by Mr. Jefferson himself. Unfounded: For when philosophers treat of man as a “subject of natural history,” they use the term “race,” to express the stock from which the particular families spring, and not, as in the popular sense, the families themselves, without regard to their original. A single example, embracing the opinions of two philosophers, of whom the one, M. de Buffon, maintained, and the other, Lord Kames, denied the common origin of mankind, will prove my assertion.

“M. Buffon, from the rule, that animals which can procreate together, and whose progeny can also procreate, are of one species, concludes, that all men are of one race or species.”† Mr. Jefferson, writing on the same subject with these authors, and arguing on the same side with one of them, undoubtedly uses the term “race” in the same sense. And as the other construction is unfounded, it is also absurd. For it represents him as laboring through nearly a dozen pages to prove what no man ever thought of doubting, and what a glance of the eye sufficiently ascertains, viz. that the blacks and whites are different branches of a common family. Mr. Jefferson is not such a trifler; he fills his pages with more important matter, and with deeper sense. And by expressions which cut off evasion, contradicts the meaning which his friends have invented for him. He enumerates a variety of “distinctions which prove a difference of race.” These distinctions he alledges are not accidental, but “physical,” i.e. founded in nature. True, alarmed at the boldness of his own doctrine, he retreats a little. His proofs evaporate into a suspicion; but that suspicion is at a loss to suspect, whether the inferiority of the blacks (Mark it well, reader!) is owing to their being “*originally a distinct race, or made distinct by time and circumstances.*” Branches of the same stock originally distinct, is a contradiction. Mr. Jefferson therefore means, by different races, men descended from different stocks. His very “tenderness” is tinged with an infidel hue. A conclusion corresponding with his speculations,

affects him, because it “*would degrade a whole race of men from the rank in the scale of beings which their Creator may perhaps have given them.*” So then; the secret is out! What *rank in the scale of beings* have we, obeying the scripture, been accustomed to assign to the injured blacks? The very same with ourselves, viz. that of children of one common father. But if Mr. Jefferson’s notions be just, he says they will be degraded from that rank; i.e. will appear not to be children of the same father with us, but of another and inferior stock. But though he will not speak peremptorily, he strongly insinuates that he does not adopt, as an article of his philosophy, the descent of the blacks as well as the whites from that pair which came immediately from the hands of God. He is not sure. At best it is a doubt with him—“the rank which their Creator may perhaps have given them!” Now how will all this accord with revealed truth? God, says the Apostle Paul, “*Hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.*” \* Perhaps it may be so, replies Mr. Jefferson; but there are, notwithstanding, *physical distinctions proving a difference of race.* I cannot repress my indignation! That a miserable, sinful worm, like myself, should proudly set up his “proofs” against the truth of my God and your God, and scout his veracity with a sceptical perhaps! I intreat Christians to consider the sweeping extent of this infidel doctrine of “different races.” If it be true, the history of the bible, which knows of but one, is a string of falsehoods from the book of Genesis to that of the Revelation; and the whole system of redemption, predicated on the unity of the human race, is a cruel fiction. I ask Christians again, whether they would dare to speak and write on this subject in the stile of Mr. Jefferson? Whether any believer in the word of the Lord Jesus, who is their hope, could entertain such doubts? Whether a writer, acute, cautious, and profound, like Mr. Jefferson, could, as he had before done in the case of the deluge, pursue a train of argument, which he knew infidels before him had used to discredit revelation, and on which they still have great reliance—Whether, instead of vindicating the honor of the scripture, he could, in such circumstances, be as mute as death on this point; countenancing infidels by enforcing their sentiments; and yet be a Christian? The thing is impossible! And were any other than Mr. Jefferson to be guilty of the same disrespect to God’s word, you would not hesitate one moment in pronouncing him an infidel.

It is not only with his philosophical disquisitions that Mr. Jefferson mingles opinions irreconcilable with the scriptures. He even goes out of his way for the sake of a fling at them. “Those,” says he, “who labor in the earth, are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people, whose breasts he has made his peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue.”\*

How does a Christian ear relish this “profane babbling?” In the first place, Mr. Jefferson doubts if ever God had a chosen people. In the second place, if he had, he insists they are no other than those who labor in the earth. At any rate, he denies this privilege to the seed of Abraham; and equally denies your being his people, unless you follow the scythe and the plow. Now, whether this be not the lie direct to the whole testimony of the bible from the beginning to the end, judge ye.†

After these affronts to the oracles of God, you have no right to be surprized if Mr. Jefferson should preach the innocence of error, or even of atheism. What do I say! He does preach it. “The legitimate powers of government,” they are his own words,

“extend to such acts only as are injurious to others. *But it does me no injury for my neighbors to say there are twenty Gods or no God.* It neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.”\*

Ponder well this paragraph. Ten thousand impieties and mischiefs lurk in its womb. Mr. Jefferson maintains not only the inviolability of opinion, but of opinion propagated. And that no class or character of abomination might be excluded from the sanctuary of such laws as he wishes to see established, he pleads for the impunity of published error in its most dangerous and execrable form. Polytheism or atheism, “twenty gods or no god,” is perfectly indifferent in Mr. Jefferson’s good citizen. A wretch may trumpet atheism from New Hampshire to Georgia; may laugh at all the realities of futurity; may scoff and teach others to scoff at their accountability; it is no matter, says Mr. Jefferson, “it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg.” This is nothing less than representing civil society as founded in atheism. For there can be no religion without God. And if it does me or my neighbor no injury, to subvert the very foundation of religion by denying the being of God, then religion is not one of the constituent principles of society, and consequently society is perfect without it; that is, is perfect in atheism. Christians! what think you of this doctrine? Have you so learned Christ or truth? Is atheism indeed no injury to society? Is it no injury to untie all the cords which bind you to the God of heaven, and your deeds to his throne of judgment; which form the strength of personal virtue, give energy to the duties, and infuse sweetness into the charities, of human life? Is it indeed no injury to you, or to those around you, that your neighbor buries his conscience and all his sense of moral obligation in the gulph of atheism? Is it no injury to you, that the oath ceases to be sacred? That the eye of the Omniscent no more pervades the abode of crime? That you have no hold on your dearest friend, farther than the law is able to reach his person? Have you yet to learn that the peace and happiness of society depend upon things which the laws of men can never embrace? And whence, I pray you, are righteous laws to emanate, if rulers, by adopting atheism, be freed from the coercion of future retribution? Would you not rather be scourged with sword and famine and pestilence, than see your country converted into a den of atheism? Yet, says Mr. Jefferson, it is a harmless thing. “It does me no injury; it neither picks my pocket, nor breaks my leg.” This is perfectly of a piece with his favorite wish to see a government administered without any religious principle among either rulers or ruled. Pardon me, Christian: this is the morality of devils, which would break in an instant every link in the chain of human friendship, and transform the globe into one equal scene of desolation and horror, where fiend would prowl with fiend for plunder and blood—yet atheism “neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.” I will not abuse you by asking, whether the author of such an opinion can be a Christian? or whether he has any regard for the scriptures which confines all wisdom and blessedness and glory, both personal and social, to the fear and the favor of God?

The reader will observe, that in his sentiments on these four points, the deluge; the origin of nations; the chosen people of God; and atheism, Mr. Jefferson has comprized the radical principles of infidelity in its utmost latitude. Accede to his positions on these, and he will compel you to grant the rest. There is hardly a single truth of revelation which would not fall before one or other of them. If the deluge be abandoned, you can defend neither the miracles, nor inspiration of the scripture. If

men are not descendants of one common stock, the doctrine of salvation is convicted of essential error. If God never had any chosen people but the cultivators of the soil, the fabric of the New Testament falls to the ground; for its foundation in the choice of Israel to be his peculiar people, is swept away. And if the atheism of one man be not injurious to another, society could easily dispense not only with his word but with his worship.

Conformable with the infidelity of his book, is an expression of Mr. Jefferson contained in a paragraph which I transcribe from the pamphlet entitled *Serious Considerations, &c.*

When the late Rev. Dr. John B. Smith resided in Virginia, the famous Mazzei happened one night to be his guest. Dr. Smith having, as usual, assembled his family for their evening devotions, the circumstance occasioned some discourse on religion, in which the Italian made no secret of his infidel principles. In the course of conversation, he remarked to Dr. Smith, “Why your great philosopher and statesman, Mr. Jefferson, is rather farther gone in infidelity than I am”; and related, in confirmation, the following anecdote: That as he was once riding with Mr. Jefferson, he expressed his “surprise that the people of this country take no better care of their public buildings.” “What buildings?” exclaimed Mr. Jefferson. “Is not that a church?” replied he, pointing to a decayed edifice. “Yes,” answered Mr. Jefferson. “I am astonished,” said the other, “that they permit it to be in so ruinous a condition.” “*It is good enough,*” rejoined Mr. Jefferson, [*]for him that was born in a manger!!*” Such a contemptuous fling at the blessed Jesus, could issue from the lips of no other than a deadly foe to his name and his cause.\*

Some of Mr. Jefferson’s friends have been desperate enough to challenge this anecdote as a calumny fabricated for electioneering purposes. But whatever they pretend, it is incontestibly true, that the story was told, as here repeated, by Dr. Smith. I, as well as the author of “*Serious Considerations,*” and several others, heard it from the lips of Dr. Smith years ago, and more than once. The calumny, if any, lies either with those who impeach the veracity of a number of respectable witnesses, or with Mazzei himself. And there are not wanting, among the followers of Mr. Jefferson, advocates for this latter opinion. He must have been a wretch indeed, to blacken his brother-philosopher, by trumping up a deliberate lie in order to excuse his own impiety in the presence of a minister of Christ! If such was Mazzei, the philosopher, it is our wisdom to think, and think again, before we heap our largest honors upon the head of his bosom-friend.

Christian reader, the facts and reasonings which I have laid before you, produce in my mind an irresistible conviction, that Mr. Jefferson is a confirmed infidel; and I cannot see how they should have a less effect on your’s. But when to these you add his solicitude for wresting the bible from the hands of your children—his notoriously unchristian character—his disregard to all the ordinances of divine worship—his utter and open contempt of the Lord’s day, insomuch as to receive on it a public entertainment;† every trace of doubt must vanish. What is a man who writes against the truths of God’s word? who makes not even a profession of Christianity? who is without Sabbaths; without the sanctuary; without so much as a decent external respect

for the faith and the worship of Christians? What is he, what can he be, but a decided, a hardened infidel?

Several feeble and fruitless attempts have been made to fritter down and dissipate this mass of evidence. In vain are we told that Mr. Jefferson's conduct is modest, moral, exemplary. I ask no odious questions. A man must be an adept in the higher orders of profligacy, if neither literary occupation, nor the influence of the surrounding gospel, can form or controul his habits. Though infidelity and licentiousness are twin sisters, they are not compelled to be always in company; that I am not a debauchee, will therefore be hardly admitted as proof that I am not an infidel. In vain are we reminded, that the "Notes on Virginia" contain familiar mention, and respectful acknowledgment, of the being and attributes of God. Though infidelity leads to atheism, a man may be an infidel without being an atheist. Some have even pretended, that anxiety for the honor of God, prompted them to fix the brand of imposture upon the scripture! But where has Mr. Jefferson, when stating his private opinions, betrayed the least regard for the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ? In vain is it proclaimed, that he maintains a Christian minister at his own expence. I shall not enquire whether that maintenance does or does not arise from the product of glebe lands attached to many southern estates. Taking the fact to be simply as related, I will enquire whether prudent and political men never contribute to the support of Christianity from other motives than a belief of its truth? Mr. Jefferson may do all this and yet be an infidel. Voltaire, the vile, the blasphemous Voltaire, was building churches, and assisting at the mass, while he was writing to his philosophical confidants, concerning your divine Saviour, *Crush the wretch!* In vain is the "*Act for establishing religious freedom,*" which flowed from the pen of Mr. Jefferson, and passed in the Assembly of Virginia, in 1786, paraded as the triumph of his Christian creed. I protest against the credibility of the witness! That act, I know, recognizes "the Holy Author of our religion," as "Lord both of body and mind," and possessing "almighty power"; and by censuring "fallible and uninspired men," tacitly acknowledges both the inspiration and infallibility of the sacred writers. But Mr. Jefferson is not here declaring his private opinions: for these we must look to his Notes, which were published a year after, and abound with ideas which contradict the authority of the scriptures. He speaks, in that act, as the organ of an assembly professing Christianity; and it would not only have been a monstrous absurdity, but more than his credit and the Assembly's too, was worth, to have been disrespectful, *in an official deed*, to that Redeemer whose name they owned, and who was precious to many of their constituents. Such Christianity is common with the bitterest enemies of Christ. Herbert, Hobbes, Blount, Toland, Tindal, Bolingbroke, Hume, Voltaire, Gibbon, at the very moment when they were laboring to argue or to laugh the gospel out of the world, affected great regard for our "holy religion" and its divine author. There is an edict of Frederic the II. of Prussia, on the subject of religious toleration, couched in terms of the utmost reverence for the Christian religion, and yet this same Frederic was one of the knot of conspirators, who, with Voltaire at their head, plotted the extermination of Christianity: and whenever they spoke of its "Holy Author," echoed to each other, *Crush the wretch!* This act, therefore, proves nothing but that, at the time of its passing (and we hope it is so still) there was religion enough in Virginia, to curb the proud spirit of infidelity.

Christians! Lay these things together: compare them; examine them separately, and collectively: ponder; pause; lay your hands upon your hearts; lift up your hearts to heaven, and pronounce on Mr. Jefferson's Christianity. You cannot stifle your emotions; nor forbear uttering your indignant sentence—*infidel!!*

This point being settled, one would think that you could have no difficulty about the rest, and would instantly and firmly conclude, "Such a man ought not, and as far as depends on me, shall not, be President of the United States!" But I calculate too confidently. I have the humiliation to hear this inference controverted even by those whose "good confession" was a pledge that they are feelingly alive to the honor of their Redeemer. No, I am not deceived: they are Christian lips which plead that "*Religion has nothing to do with politics*"—that to refuse our suffrages on account of religious principles, would be an interference with the rights of conscience—that there is little hope of procuring a real believer, and we had better choose an infidel than a hypocrite.

That religion has, in fact, nothing to do with the politics of many who profess it, is a melancholy truth. But that it has, of right, no concern with political transactions, is quite a new discovery. If such opinions, however, prevail, there is no longer any mystery in the character of those whose conduct, in political matters, violates every precept, and slanders every principle, of the religion of Christ. But what is politics? Is it not the science and the exercise of civil rights and civil duties? And what is religion? Is it not an obligation to the service of God, founded on his authority, and extending to all our relations personal and social? Yet *religion has nothing to do with politics!* Where did you learn this maxim? The bible is full of directions for your behaviour as citizens. It is plain, pointed, awful in its injunctions on rulers and ruled as such: yet *religion has nothing to do with politics*. You are commanded "*in all your ways to acknowledge him.*"\* *In every thing, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, to let your requests be made known unto God,*"† "*And whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*"‡ Yet *religion has nothing to do with politics!* Most astonishing! And is there any part of your conduct in which you are, or wish to be, *without law to God*, and not *under the law of Christ*? Can you persuade yourselves that political men and measures are to undergo no review in the judgment to come? That all the passion and violence, the fraud and falsehood, and corruption which pervade the systems of party, and burst out like a flood at the public elections, are to be blotted from the catalogue of unchristian deeds, because they are politics? Or that a minister of the gospel may see his people, in their political career, bid defiance to their God in breaking through every moral restraint, and keep a guiltless silence because *religion has nothing to do with politics*? I forbear to press the argument farther; observing only, that many of our difficulties and sins may be traced to this pernicious notion. Yes, if our religion had had more to do with our politics; if, in the pride of our citizenship, we had not forgotten our Christianity: if we had prayed more and wrangled less about the affairs of our country, it would have been infinitely better for us at this day.

But you are afraid that to refuse a man your suffrages because he is an infidel, would *interfere with the rights of conscience*. This is a most singular scruple, and proves how wild are the opinions of men on the subject of liberty. Conscience is God's



officer in the human breast, and its rights are defined by his law. The right of conscience to trample on his authority is the right of a rebel, which entitles him to nothing but condign punishment. You are afraid of being unkind to the conscience of an infidel. Dismiss your fears. It is the last grievance of which he will complain. How far do you suppose Mr. Jefferson consulted his conscience when he was vilifying the divine word, and preaching insurrection against God, by preaching the harmlessness of atheism? But supposing Mr. Jefferson to be conscientiously impious, this would only be a stronger reason for our opposition. For the more conscientious a man is, the more persevering will he be in his views, and the more anxious for their propagation. If he be fixed, then, in dangerous error, faithfulness to God and truth requires us to resist him and his conscience too; and to keep from him the means of doing mischief. If a man thought himself bound in conscience, whenever he should be able, to banish God's sabbath, burn his churches, and hang his worshippers, would you entrust him with power out of respect to conscience? I trow not. And why you should judge differently in the case of an infidel who spurns at what is dearer to you than life, I cannot conceive. But in your solicitude for the conscience of Mr. Jefferson, have you considered, in the mean time, what becomes of your own conscience? Has it no rights? no voice? no influence? Are you not to keep it void of offence towards God? Can you do this in elevating his open enemies to the highest dignity of your country? Beware, therefore, lest an ill-directed care for the conscience of another, bring your own under the lashes of remorse. Keep this clear, by the word of God, and there is little hazard of injuring your neighbor's. But how can you interfere with any man's conscience by refusing him a political office? You do not invade the sanctuary of his bosom: you impose on him no creed: you simply tell him you do not like him, or that you prefer another to him. Do you injure him by this? Do you not merely exercise the right of a citizen and a Christian? It belongs essentially to the freedom of election, to refuse my vote to any candidate for reasons of conscience, of state, of predilection, or for no reason at all but my own choice. The rights of conscience, on his part, are out of the question. He proposes himself for my approbation. If I approve, I give him my support. If not, I withhold it. His conscience has nothing to do with my motives; but to my own conscience they are serious things. If he be an infidel, I will not compel him to profess Christianity. Let him retain his infidelity, enjoy all its comforts, and meet all its consequences. But I have an unquestionable right to say, "I cannot trust a man of such principles: on what grounds he has adopted them is not my concern; nor will his personal sincerity alter their tendency. While he is an infidel, he shall never have my countenance. Let him stay where he is: and let his conscience be its own reward." I could not blame another for such conduct to me; for he only makes an independent use of his privilege, which does me no injury: nor am I to be blamed for such conduct to another, for I only make the same use of my privilege, which is no injury to him. Mr. Jefferson's conscience cannot, therefore, be wronged if you exclude him from the presidency because he is an infidel; and your own, by an act of such Christian magnanimity, may escape hereafter many a bitter pang. For if you elect Mr. Jefferson, though an infidel, from a regard to what you consider the rights of conscience, you must, in order to be consistent, *carry your principle through*. If infidelity is not a valid objection to a candidate for the presidency, it cannot be so to a candidate for any other office. You must never again say, "We will not vote for such a man because he is an infidel." The evil brotherhood will turn upon you with your own doctrine of the "rights of conscience." You must then either retract, or be content to

see every office filled with infidels. How horrible, in such an event, would be the situation of your country! How deep your agony under the torments of self-reproach!

But there is no prospect, you say, of obtaining a real Christian, and we had *better choose an infidel than a hypocrite*. By no means. Supposing that a man professes Christianity, and evinces in his general deportment a regard for its doctrines, its worship, and its laws; though he be rotten at heart, he is infinitely preferable to a known infidel. His hypocrisy is before God. It may ruin his own soul; but, while it is without detection, can do no hurt to men. We have a hold of him which it is impossible to get of an infidel. His reputation, his habits, his interests, depending upon the belief of his Christianity, are sureties for his behaviour to which we vainly look for a counterbalance in an infidel; and they are, next to religion itself, the strongest sureties of man to man. His very hypocrisy is an homage to the gospel. The whole weight of his example is on the side of Christianity, while that of an open infidel lies wholly against it. It is well known that the attendance of your Washington, and of President Adams upon public worship, gave the ordinances of the gospel a respectability in the eyes of many which otherwise they would not have had: brought a train of thoughtless people within the reach of the means of salvation: and thus strengthened the opposition of Christians to the progress of infidelity. You can never forget the honorable testimony which Mr. Adams bore, in one of his proclamations, to a number of the most precious truths of Revelation; nor how he was abused and ridiculed for it, by not a few of those very persons who now strive to persuade you that Mr. Jefferson is a Christian. In short, your president, if an open infidel, will be a centre of contagion to the whole continent: If a professed Christian, he will honor the institutions of God; and though his hypocrisy, should he prove a hypocrite, may be a fire to consume his own vitals, it cannot become a wide-spreading conflagration.

Can you still hesitate? Perhaps you may. I therefore bespeak your attention to a few plain and cogent reasons, why you cannot, without violating your plighted faith, and trampling on your most sacred duties, place an infidel at the head of your government.

1. The civil magistrate is *God's officer*. *He is the minister of God*, saith Paul, *to thee for good*.<sup>\*</sup> Consequently his first and highest obligation, is to cherish in his mind, and express in his conduct, his sense of obedience to the Governor of the Universe. *He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*.<sup>†</sup> The scriptures have left you this and similar declarations, to direct you in the choice of your magistrates. And you are bound, upon your allegiance to the God of the scriptures, to look out for such men as answer the description; and if, unhappily, they are not to be had, for such as come nearest to it. The good man, he who shall "dwell in God's holy hill," is one "in whose eyes *a vile person is contemned*; but he *honoreth them that fear the Lord*."<sup>‡</sup> But can you pretend to regard this principle, when you desire to raise an infidel to the most important post in your country? Do you call this *honoring them that fear God*? Nay, it is honoring them who do not fear God: that is, according to the scriptural contrast, honoring a vile person, whom, as Christians, you ought to contemn. And have you the smallest expectation that one who despises the word and worship of God; who has openly taught the harmlessness of rebellion against his government and being, by teaching that atheism is no injury to society, will, nevertheless, *rule in his fear*? Will it shew any reverence or love to your Father in heaven, to put a

distinguishing mark of your confidence upon his sworn foe? Or will it be an affront to his majesty?

2. The civil magistrate is, by divine appointment, *the guardian of the sabbath. In it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, &c. nor the stranger that is within thy gates.*\* “Gates,” is a scriptural term for public authority; and that it is so to be understood in this commandment, is evident from its connection with “stranger.” God says that even the stranger shall not be allowed to profane his sabbath. But the stranger can be controlled only by the civil magistrate who “sitteth in the gate.”† It therefore belongs to his office, to enforce, by lawful means, the sanctification of the sabbath, as the fundamental institute of religion and morals, and the social expression of homage to that God under whom he acts. The least which can be accepted from him, is to recommend it by personal observance. How do you suppose Mr. Jefferson will perform this part of his duty? or how can you deposit in his hands a trust, which you cannot but think he will betray; and in betraying which, he will not only sacrifice some of your most invaluable interests, but as your organ and in your name, lift up his heel against the God of heaven? In different states, you have made, not long since, spirited exertions to hinder the profanation of your Lord’s day. For this purpose many of you endeavored to procure religious magistrates for this city, and religious representatives in the councils of the state. You well remember how you were mocked, traduced, execrated, especially by the infidel tribe. But what is now become of your zeal and your consistency? I can read in the list of delegates to the legislature, the names of men who have been an ornament to the gospel, and acquitted themselves like Christians in that noble struggle, and yet are expected to ballot for electors, whose votes shall be given to an infidel president. Who hath bewitched you, Christians? or, what do you mean by siding with the infidels to lift into the chair of state, a man more eminent for nothing than for his scorn of the day, the ordinances, and the worship of your Redeemer; and who did not blush to make it, in the face of the sun, a season of frolic and revel?‡ Is this your kindness to your friend?

3. The *church of God has ever accounted it a great mercy to have civil rulers professing his name.* Rather than yield it, thousands of your fathers have poured out their blood. This privilege is now in your hands: and it is the chief circumstance which makes the freedom of election worth a Christian’s care. Will you, dare you, abuse it by prostituting it to the aggrandizement of an enemy to your Lord and to his Christ? If you do, will it not be a righteous thing with God to take the privilege from you altogether; and, in his wrath, to subject you, and your children, and your children’s children, to such rulers as you have, by your own deed, preferred?

4. You are commanded to *pray for your rulers:* it is your custom to pray, that they may be men *fearing God and hating covetousness.* You intreat him to fulfil his promise, that kings shall be to his church *nursing-fathers, and queens her nursing-mothers.*‡ With what conscience can you lift up your hands in such a supplication, when you are exerting yourselves to procure a president, who you know does not fear God; i.e. one exactly the reverse of the man whom you ask him to bestow? And when, by this act, you do all in your power to defeat the promise of which you affect to wish the fulfilment? Do you think that the church of Christ is to be nurtured by the

dragon's milk of infidelity? Or that the contradiction between your prayers and your practice does not mock the holy God?

5. There are circumstances in the state of your country which impart to these reflections, applicable in their spirit to all Christians, a double emphasis in their application to you.

The federal Constitution *makes no acknowledgement of that God* who gave us our national existence, and saved us from anarchy and internal war. This neglect has excited in many of its best friends, more alarm than all other difficulties. The only way to wipe off the reproach of irreligion, and to avert the descending vengeance, is to prove, by our national acts, that the Constitution has not, in this instance, done justice to the public sentiment. But if you appoint an infidel for your president, and such an infidel as Mr. Jefferson, you will sanction that neglect, you will declare, by a solemn national act, that there is no more religion in your collective character, than in your written constitution: you will put a national indignity upon the God of your mercies; and provoke him, it may be, to send over your land that deluge of judgments which his forbearance has hitherto suspended.

Add to this the consideration, that *infidelity has awfully increased*. The time was, and that within your own recollection, when the term infidelity was almost a stranger to our ears, and an open infidel an object of abhorrence. But now the term has become familiar, and infidels hardly disgust. Our youth, our hope and our pride, are poisoned with the accursed leaven. The vain title of "philosopher," has turned their giddy heads, and, what is worse, corrupted their untutored hearts. It is now a mark of sense, the proof of an enlarged and liberal mind, to scoff at all the truths of inspiration, and to cover with ridicule the hope of a Christian; those truths and that hope which are the richest boon of divine benignity; which calm the perturbed conscience, and heal the wounded spirit; which sweeten every comfort, and soothe every sorrow; which give strong consolation in the arrest of death, and shed the light of immortality on the gloom of the grave. All, all are become the sneer of the buffoon, and the song of the drunkard. These things, Christians, you deplore. You feel indignant, as well as discouraged, at the inroads of infidel principle and profligate manners. You declaim against them. You caution your children against their infection. And yet, with such facts before your eyes, and such lessons in your mouths, you are on the point of undoing whatever you have done; and annihilating, at one blow, the effect of all your profession, instruction, and example. By giving your support to Mr. Jefferson, you are about to strip infidelity of its ignominy; array it in honors; and hold it up with eclat to the view of the rising generation. By this act, you will proclaim to the whole world that it is not so detestable a thing as you pretended; that you do not believe it subversive of moral obligation and social purity: that a man may revile your religion and blaspheme your Saviour; and yet command your highest confidence. This amounts to nothing less than a deliberate surrender of the cause of Jesus Christ into the hands of his enemies. By this single act—my flesh trembles, my blood chills at the thought! by this single act you will do more to destroy a regard for the gospel of Jesus, than the whole fraternity of infidels with all their arts, their industry and their intrigues. You will stamp credit upon principles, the native tendency of which is to ruin your children in this world, and damn them in the world to come. O God! "the ox

knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but thy people doth not know, and Israel doth not consider."\*

With these serious reflections, let me connect a fact equally serious: *The whole strength of open and active infidelity is on the side of Mr. Jefferson.* You may well start! But the observation and experience of the continent is one long and loud attestation to the truth of my assertion. I say open and active infidelity. You can scarcely find one exception among all who preach infidel tenets among the people. Did it never occur to you, that such men would not be so zealous for Mr. Jefferson if they were not well assured of his being one of themselves—that they would cordially hate him if they supposed him to be a Christian—or that they have the most sanguine hope that his election to the presidency will promote their cause? I know, that to serve the purpose of the moment, those very presses which teemed with abuse of your Redeemer, are now affecting to offer incense to his religion; and that deists themselves are laboring to convince you that Mr. Jefferson is a Christian; and yet have the effrontery to talk of other men's hypocrisy! Can you be the dupes of such an artifice? Do you not see in it a proof that there is no reliance to be placed on an infidel conscience? Do you need to be reminded that these infidels who now court you, are the very men who, four years ago, insulted your faith and your Lord with every expression of ridicule and contempt? That these very men circulated, with unremitting assiduity, that execrable book of Boulanger, entitled *Christianity Unveiled*; and that equally execrable abortion of Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*? That, in order to get them (especially the latter) into the hands of the common people, they sold them at a very low rate; gave them away where they could not sell them; and slipped them into the pockets of numbers who refused to accept them? Do you know that some of these infidels were at the trouble of translating from the French, and printing, for the benefit of Americans, a work of downright, undisguised atheism, with the imposing title of *Common Sense*? That it was openly advertised, and extracts, or an extract, published to help the sale? Do you know that some of the same brotherhood are secretly handing about, I need not say where, a book, written by Charles Pigott, an Englishman, entitled *A Political Dictionary*? Take the following sample of its impiety (my hair stiffens while I transcribe it): "Religion—a superstition invented by the archbishop of hell, and propagated by his faithful diocesans the clergy, to keep the people in ignorance and darkness, that they may not see the work of iniquity that is going on," &c.†

Such are the men with whom professors of the name of our Lord Jesus Christ are concerting the election of an infidel to the presidency of the United States of America. Hear the word of the Lord. "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? And what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"‡ Yet Christians are uniting with infidels in exalting an infidel to the chief magistracy! If he succeed, Christians must bear the blame. Numerous as the infidels are, they are not yet able, adored be God, to seize upon our "high places." Christians must help them, or they set not their feet on the threshold of power. If, therefore, an infidel preside over our country, it will be your fault, Christians; and your act; and you shall answer it? And for aiding and abetting such a design, I charge upon your consciences the sin of striking hands in a covenant of friendship with the enemies of your master's glory.

Ah, what will be your compunction, when these same infidels, victorious, through your assistance, will “tread you down as the mire in the streets,” and exult in their triumph over bigots and bigotry.

Sit down, now, and interrogate your own hearts, whether you can, with a “pure-conscience,” befriend Mr. Jefferson’s election? Whether you can do it *in the name of the Lord Jesus*? Whether you can lift up your heads and tell him that the choice of this infidel is for his honor, and that you promote it in the faith of his approbation? Whether, in the event of success, you have a right to look for his blessing in the enjoyment of your president? Whether, having preferred the talents of a man before the religion of Jesus, you ought not to fear that God will blast these talents; abandon your president to infatuated counsels; and yourselves to the plague of your own folly? Whether it would not be just to remove the restraints of his good providence, and scourge you with that very infidelity which you did not scruple to countenance? Whether you can, without some guilty misgivings, pray for the spirit of Christ upon a president whom you choose in spite of every demonstration of his hatred to Christ? Those who, to keep their consciences clean, oppose Mr. Jefferson, may pray for him, in this manner, with a full and fervent heart. But to you, God may administer this dread rebuke: “You chose an infidel: keep him as ye chose him: walk in the sparks that ye have kindled.” Whether the threatnings of God are not pointed against such a magistrate and such a people? “Be wise, O ye kings,” is his commandment; “be instructed ye judges of the earth: serve the Lord with fear and rejoice with trembling: *Kiss the son*, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way when his anger is kindled but a little.”\* What then is in store for a magistrate who is so far from “kissing the son,” that he hates and opposes him? “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.”† And who forget him, if not a nation which, tho’ called by his name, nevertheless caresses, honors, rewards his enemies? The Lord hath sworn to strike *through Kings in the day of his wrath*.‡ Woe, then, to those governments which are wielded by infidels, when he arises to judgment; and woe to those who have contributed to establish them! To whatever influence they owe their determinations and their measures, it is not to the “spirit of understanding and of the fear of the Lord.” Do I speak these things as a man; or saith not the scripture the same also?

Woe to the rebellious children, saith the Lord, that *take counsel, but not of me*, and that cover with a covering, *but not of my Spirit*, that they may add sin to sin. That walk to go down into Egypt (*and have not asked at my mouth*) to strengthen themselves in the strength of Pharaoh, and to trust in the shadow of Egypt. Therefore the strength of Egypt shall be your shame, and the *trust in the shadow of Egypt your confusion*.\*

This is the light in which God considers your confidence in his enemies. And the issue for which you ought to be prepared.

I have done; and do not flatter myself that I shall escape the censure of many professed, and of some real, Christians. The stile of this pamphlet is calculated to conciliate nothing but conscience. I desire to conciliate nothing else. “If I pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.” I do not expect, nor wish, to fare better than the apostle of the gentiles, who became the enemy of not a few professors,

because he *told them the truth*.† But the bible speaks of “children that will not hear the law of the Lord—which say to the seers, See not: and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things: speak unto us smooth things: prophesy deceits.”‡ Here is the truth, “Whether you will hear, or whether you will forbear.” If you are resolved to persevere in elevating an infidel to the chair of your president, I pray God not to “choose your delusions”—but cannot dissemble that “my flesh trembleth for fear of his judgments.” It is my consolation that my feeble voice has been lifted up for his name. I have addressed you as one who believes, and I beseech you to act as those who believe, “That we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ.” Whatever be the result, you shall not plead that you were not warned. If, notwithstanding, you call to govern you an enemy to my Lord and your Lord; in the face of earth and heaven, and in the audience of your own consciences, I record my protest, and wash my hands of your guilt.

*Arise, O Lord, and let not man prevail!*

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

52

## A SOLEMN ADDRESS TO CHRISTIANS AND PATRIOTS

Tunis Wortman

NEW-YORK

1800

Tunis Wortman (d. 1822). Wortman's background and activities before the 1790s are unknown. He appears first as a New York City lawyer and man of the Enlightenment, a French-style partisan of liberty, and an apostle of the millennial republic. He viewed the French Revolution as the continuation of the American Revolution and as the European phase of history's progress toward universal peace. By 1801 disillusionment had set in, and Napoleon had shattered the dream. Wortman moved in the intellectual circle that included physician and author Elihu Hubbard Smith, law professor James Kent, and novelist Charles Brockden Brown. He served as the clerk of the city and county of New York from 1801 to 1807. Active in public affairs and in demand as an orator, he was the first secretary of the New-York Democratic Society and a member of both the Manumission Society and the Tammany Society; the latter he turned into a wing of the Jeffersonian Republican Party. Wortman viewed the Federalists as "antirepublican Anglophiles," and he fought the Federalist opposition to the War of 1812 by starting a newspaper, *The Standard of Union*, in New York City; this was an effective organ of his support for President James Madison's policies.

Aside from newspaper editorials, only four specimens of Wortman's authorship survive, but they are ample displays of a fine writer with a powerful, well-educated mind. All were published between 1796 and 1801. In them we find him quoting a range of classical and modern writers including Plato, Cicero, Horace, Shakespeare (of whom he seems particularly fond), Gibbon, Locke, Montesquieu, Priestly, and Reid. The most substantial work is a 300-page book on political and constitutional theory entitled *A Treatise Concerning Political Enquiry and the Liberty of the Press* (New York, 1800; repr. Da Capo Press, 1970 [ed. Leonard W. Levy]). It was published with the help of Albert Gallatin, who sought subscriptions for it among Republican members of Congress. Leonard Levy calls it "Wortman's great book" and "the book that Jefferson did not write but should have." He compares it with Milton's *Areopagitica* and Mill's *On Liberty* and summarizes: "Wortman's treatise is surely the preeminent American classic, because of its scope, fullness, philosophical approach, masterful marshalling of all the libertarian arguments, and uncompromisingly radical view" (Levy, *Emergence of a Free Press* [Oxford, 1985], pp. 328, 331–32).

*A Solemn Address*, his fourth piece, Wortman signed "Timoleon," who is emblematic of saintly opposition to tyranny in Plutarch's portrayal. It is a response to *Serious*



*Considerations* (1800), written by Reverend William Linn, with the assistance of Dr. John M. Mason, and contains, according to Joseph Sabin, “stories calculated to ruin Jefferson among all pious people” (*A Dictionary of Books Relating to America* [29 vols., 1868–1936], 10:373; see the note to the preceding sermon by Mason, number 51). Wortman intends to counter the “false, scandalous, and malicious” attack of Jefferson launched by Linn, whom he compares to Judas Iscariot. He begins by quoting the Ninth Commandment: “Thou shalt not bear false-witness against thy neighbor.”

## Dedication

To The Reverend Dr. L——

“Thou shalt not bear false-witness against thy neighbour.”

—The ninth commandment.

I am not an admirer of dedications, nor will you, sir, be flattered by the following. Your present situation, and the nature of the subject upon which I am about to remark, have rendered it proper that the ensuing observations should be particularly inscribed to yourself.

You are not only a divine, but also a party politician. For my own part, I think these two characters absolutely incompatible. From the minister of religion, we have a right [to] expect exemplary purity and sincerity. In the statesman, we constantly discover cunning, intrigue and duplicity: It remains for you to reconcile these opposite characters to each other.

You are a partizan of Mr. Pinckney; in the presence of your maker, I would tell you so. I allow you the rights of opinion as a man, but I cannot permit you, with impunity, to abuse the influence you possess with your congregation.

I am an advocate for religion, in its purity and truth; if I am an unworthy, yet I am, nevertheless, a sincere son of the church: I cannot tamely see that church and its heavenly doctrines prophaned to party purposes; my bosom burns with indignation at the attempts to render christianity the instrument of tyrants.

A pamphlet has lately made its appearance, entitled, “*Serious Considerations.*” I hesitate not, in the language of lawyers, to call it false, scandalous and malicious; it has the clerical mark upon it: Yet, I say not that you are the author, but I firmly declare that, by adopting its sentiments and declarations, you have rendered it your own.\*

You are the author of a handbill, which you intended for a prayer; it recommends the pamphlet to which I have alluded: This handbill, or this prayer you gave to Mr. Van Hook, to be circulated among the consistory. There is a want of openness, in such procedure, unworthy of the upright mind; yet it evinces a sense of shame which I wish you to retain. There was a Judas Iscariot among the apostles; and history has

furnished examples of priests who have betrayed their country; yet still there have been many famous pastors, who have maintained the dignity of the church, with zeal and fidelity. Alas! it has been left for you to demonstrate, that every minister is not, necessarily, a patriot and a gentleman.

For the present, sir, adieu! Weak men have believed that this country contains a Cæsar. Thanks to heaven they are deceived. I will not insult the ashes of the noble Julius, by comparing him with the ring-leader of a modern party: Be assured, that Cæsar is no more; his mighty spirit sleepeth in the dust. Hope not for the messiah of royalty. The diadem, and mitre, and tiara, cannot be restored, even by the worst man in America.

The following ideas cannot be new to you, at least they ought to be familiar; pardon me if I inform you, that many of your friends have regretted that those ideas have ceased to influence your conduct. From your interest, then, from your prudence, if not from your candor, let me expect an attentive perusal of my sentiments.

Timoleon

## To My Readers

In the ensuing observations, I shall consider your duties as christians and as patriots. I shall make it my task to establish the following propositions.

1st. That it is your duty, as christians, to maintain the purity and independence of the church, to keep religion separate from politics, to prevent an union between the church and the state, and to preserve your clergy from temptation, corruption and reproach.

2d. That as christians and patriots, it is equally your duty to defend the liberty and constitution of your country.

3d. Although I am a sincere and decided opponent of infidelity, yet as it respects a president of the United States, an enmity to the constitution is the most dangerous evil; inasmuch as christianity is secure by the force of its own evidence, and coming from God, cannot be destroyed by human power; but, on the contrary, the constitution, is vulnerable to the attacks of an ambitious and unprincipled executive.

4th. That Mr. Jefferson is in reality a republican, sincerely attached to the constitution of his country, amiable and irreproachable in his conduct as a man, and that we have every reason to believe him, in sincerity, a christian.

5th. That the charge of deism, contained in such pamphlet, is false, scandalous and malicious—that there is not a single passage in the Notes on Virginia, or any of Mr. Jefferson's writings, repugnant to christianity; but on the contrary, in every respect, favourable to it—and further, that there is every reason to believe the story of Mazzei a base and ridiculous falsehood.

6th. That Mr. Adams is not a republican, agreeably to the true intent and meaning of the constitution of the United States.

7th. That a party has long existed, and still exists, hostile to the constitution, and with reason, suspected of favouring the interests of a foreign power—that Mr. Pinckney is the candidate of that party, and therefore cannot be a republican.

And lastly—that the interest of the people; the preservation of public liberty, and the safety of our present constitution, irresistibly demand that Mr. Jefferson should be elected president of the United States.

Timoleon

Christianity sprung from heaven. Hypocrisy is the offspring of hell. The former is productive of peace, & virtue, and life eternal; but the latter is an abomination in the sight of Almighty God, and has filled the world with crimes and blood, and misery, and desolation.

I address you upon the most solemn and momentous subjects which can interest the mind—religion and liberty. I consider you in the capacity of believers and patriots, as equally anxious to maintain every inestimable right which appertains to christians & to men. You have a religion which deserves your pious solicitude; but need I to remind you that you likewise have a country! Are you to be told that your duty, as christians, is irreconcilable with the sacred obligations which bind you to the state? Are you at this day to be solemnly and seriously called upon to sacrifice your freedom upon the altars of your God? No, my countrymen, your religion is inestimable and worthy of your care. Your civil constitution is also invaluable. It is the palladium of all your social blessings, & the peculiar gift of providence. Your obligations to your children, to your country, and to heaven, command you to defend that constitution. With a voice too powerful to be resisted, they conjure you to cling to, and fasten upon it, “with the last strong hold which grapples into life.”

I wish to impress your minds with a solemnity equal to the magnitude of the subject—to inspire you with a resolution to defend both your liberty and your faith. I intreat you to reflect, with equal seriousness, upon the duties which you owe to religion, and those which you owe to your country. In the course of these pages, I shall consider each of these sources of obligation. I shall equally investigate the duties which, as christians, you owe to religion, and those which, as citizens, are to be performed to the state.

First then, what are your principal duties, as christians, with respect to religion?

It is a primary duty to preserve that religion, pure, holy & unadulterated, unmixed with temporal pride and worldly ambition. The great author of christianity most expressly assured his ministers, that his kingdom is not of this world, and that it was impossible for them, at the same time, to serve God and Mammon: his divine wisdom foresaw that if they were led astray by the enticing riches and alluring objects of this world, they would prove but faithless pastors to his people. With the example of the

pagan priests before his eyes, he dreaded the pollution of his celestial system, from the connection which he too evidently foresaw, would take place between his own ministers and the secular establishments; such is the obvious import of many of the most impressive precepts of the Saviour. The event has proved that his apprehensions have been too fatally verified.

It was not by precept alone; it was likewise by his illustrious example, that the founder of our religion enforced that salutary lesson. Carefully abstaining from all active agency in political affairs, and exclusively confining himself to the duties of his station, as priest of the most high God, he rendered unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God, the things which are God's. Meek and unassuming in his deportment, he intended by his life, to afford a standing example of conduct to be pursued by christian divines—disavowing all concerns with the affairs of state, he evidently considered an active agency in politics to be inconsistent with that purity and sanctity of character, which should appertain to ministers of the gospel.

It is essential to the interests of religion, that its teachers should be set apart, to the performance of their sacred duties. I have said it, and I earnestly repeat it; “they cannot serve God and Mammon.” The charge of their flocks requires all their pastoral care; their attention should always be directed heavenward; if they mingle too deeply in the affairs of this world, they are apt to become unmindful of the prospects of the next. If they look to temporal rewards, and to the riches of this globe, their minds become poisoned and perverted, and they are immediately reduced to the level of common men. We are in the habit of connecting the character of religion with that of the individuals who profess to be its teachers; however pure or excellent his doctrines, a clergyman, without practical piety, is a stumbling block to the people.

I have always attached the highest respectability to the character of a christian divine. I see and I feel that there is not an order of men in the community capable of rendering such signal services, or of inflicting such extensive injuries. If it is the duty of the clergy to watch over the conduct of their congregations, it is equally incumbent upon congregations, to be mindful of the conduct of their pastors—they should confine their ministers to the duties of their sacred calling, and above all things, beware how they permit them to acquire a political ascendancy.\*

Clergymen are but men, in common with ourselves; they partake of every human infirmity and every human passion. If ambition is suffered to insinuate itself into the pulpit, it is more dangerous in proportion, as it has greater powers and opportunities of mischief. Let me ask any pious divine, if he is not sensible of possessing an undue ascendancy over the minds of his hearers, if he should be so abandoned as to exercise it?

Let me not be told, that religion is in danger, and that we should therefore increase the powers and influence of the clergy. I say, and am ready to maintain, that religion is in greater danger, by permitting them to intermeddle with political concerns, than by confining them, with the utmost rigour, to the duties of their profession; as men and as citizens, they have an equal right to express their opinions and give their suffrages;

but they should never be permitted to carry their politics into the sacred desk, and more especially, they should not be suffered to make religion an engine of politics.

I have ever been convinced, that a political divine is a dangerous character.† The more I read, and the more I reflect, the more thoroughly am I convinced of the truth of that position. There never will be wanting men, who by caresses and flattery & inflaming their passions, will make them the instruments of every crime, and the shameless tools of the greatest ambition; by this means religion becomes a solemn farce, and an impious mockery of God—and liberty, and government, & every thing valuable upon earth prostituted under the pretended mask of piety.

I am writing to sincere professors, and not to those who make religion a cloak for base and selfish purposes. Men of the latter description, are not to be moved by expostulation or argument; such men will court the “rocking of the battlements” if they could gain by the event; they would sit as unmoved spectators, and with steady eyes behold the destruction of law, and order, and liberty, and of the peace and constitution of their country, or rather they would assist in lighting the firebrand of death and desolation; but such men are not christians, they deserve not that honourable appellation: wherever they exist they are capable of every crime, no reasoning of mine can divert them from their purposes.

If you are real christians, anxious for the honor and purity and interest of the christian church, you will feel a steady determination, to preserve it free from corruption. Unless you maintain the pure and primitive spirit of christianity, and prevent the cunning and intrigue of statesmen from mingling with its institutions; you will become exposed to a renewal of the same dreadful and enormous scenes which have not only disgraced the annals of the church, but destroyed the peace, and sacrificed the lives of millions. It is by such scenes and by such dreadful crimes, that christianity has suffered; by such fatal and destructive enormities which, since the days of Constantine, have been perpetrated without intermission, that the church has become debased and polluted; in language similar to that of Joshua, we have reason to exclaim there is an accursed thing within the tabernacle. The blood of many an innocent Abel has stained the ephod, the vestments and the altar. Religion has suffered more from the restless ambition and impiety of the church of Rome, than from all the writings of a Voltaire, a Tindal, a Volney, or even the wretched blasphemies of Paine.\*

We have years and volumes—we have a world of experience before us, in the sufferings and the miseries of ages—we read a lesson too impressive to be resisted: both as christians and as men, we are powerfully conjured to reject all attempts to promote an union between the church and the state—the very idea of such a union is insupportable. Neither directly or indirectly should we suffer it to be effected.

Religion and government are equally necessary, but their interests should be kept separate and distinct. No legitimate connection can ever subsist between them. Upon no plan, no system, can they become united, without endangering the purity and usefulness of both—the church will corrupt the state, and the state pollute the church. Christianity becomes no longer the religion of God—it becomes the religion of temporal craft and expediency and policy. Instead of being the sacred guide to lead

mankind to heaven, it becomes the prostituted instrument of private cupidity and personal ambition. I am not to be told there is no longer danger in such an alliance; the danger has always existed, and as long as men retain their passions and vices, will exist in all its force. The church of Rome arose from the smallest beginnings. She commenced her career with professions of mildness, clemency and moderation, displaying at first the innocence and the harmlessness of the dove: she afterwards discovered the horrid fangs of the serpent, and exercised the unrelenting barbarity of a crocodile. The successors of St. Peter, no longer spiritual bishops, became a race of tyrants, more ferocious than Nero, a Domitian, and more pampered than Eliogabalus himself. They extended the arms of their authority into every European kingdom, and into every christian church. I need not revive the memory of the inquisition, or usurp the province of the historian, in painting the sufferings of the wretched Hugonots. It is for a moment only that I point to the fires of Smithfield, and to the massacre of St. Bartholomews—did this proceed from religion—from the mild and benevolent spirit of christianity? God of heaven, forbid the rash surmise! rescue thy ministers and thy altars from the odious imputation, and preserve thy church from the pollution and abomination which accompanies a connection with the state.

With the sincerity of a christian, I feel for the honour of religion. I feel for the pious character of christian divines.\* I dread lest that character should be tarnished and debased, and deprived of its usefulness, by the unworthy conduct of some of its professors; the present moment is dangerous. Attempts have been made to unite the interests of religion, with the crimes and abuses, and corruptions of governments. There is reason to apprehend the consequences.

Men of weak minds, men of limited researches are apt to be misguided, they are prone to confound the abuses of the most excellent establishment with the establishment itself. The sincere friend of christianity, should be vigilant and guarded; he should be zealous in vindicating his religion, from the charge of participation in the intrigues and oppression of statesmen; the christian divine should be cautioned to pursue a prudent and temperate conduct, to keep aloof from the coalition of parties, and maintain a steady seat in the sanctuary unmoved and unruffled by the whirlwind and the tempest.

Whatever interested men may tell you, religion is not in danger. It is founded on a rock which has often been assailed, but cannot be shaken. It is a melancholy truth, that christianity has suffered more from the blind zeal and wicked perfidy of pretended friends, than from the open attack of its most inveterate foes. Why should religion have enemies? Let me ask what interest, or what motive mankind can have in opposing a system founded on truth and benevolence? It is no answer to say that such opposition springs entirely from the pride of philosophy, or from the corruption and perversity of our nature!

Experience suggests a more satisfactory but a more fatal reason; the crimes and abuses which have been committed in its name, cruelty and persecution, and intolerance have raised up an host of enemies, and accounts for the zeal, the bitterness and the vehemence of their opposition. It is the departure from the original purity of the system; the alliance with courts; the impurities and prophanity of spurious,

amphibious, hermophredite priests, the innumerable atrocities and persecutions, which have been perpetrated in the name of the most high, that has produced or encouraged the school of infidelity, and occasioned many an honest mind to believe that the establishment of christianity, is incompatible with civil freedom. Let me conjure you, then, to purify the altar, to keep things sacred from intermingling with things prophane, to maintain religion separate and apart from the powers of this world; and then, to use an expression similar to that of the infidel Rousseau, you will hasten the æra when all mankind shall bow at the feet of Jesus.

If I write with warmth, it is because I am interested in the subject, and feel its importance. I am not an unconcerned spectator of the events which distract and agitate the earth; equally a friend to religion and to civil freedom, I cannot endure the attempts which are making to oppose them in hostile array to each other; and to connect the existence of christianity with the safety of corrupt and oppressive establishments of government. I think, that the preservation of religion is separate and independent from all human establishments; its existence depends upon the energy & validity of its own evidence, its testimony both external & inherent speaks powerfully, & pleads irresistibly to the understanding & the heart. Our hopes, & fears, & interests, and reflections, are a sufficient pledge for the continuance of our faith; the moment you place the subject upon a different footing, you lessen its importance and prostitute its dignity, you open a door for every species of corruption, you expose your pastors to temptations incompatible with the integrity and purity of their character, you render religion an engine in the hands of any government for the time being; no matter what, you interpose an insurmountable gulph between piety and patriotism, and reduce the conscientious patriot to the dilemma of chusing between his country and his faith.

It is because I am the friend, and not the enemy of christianity, that I am the advocate of liberality and toleration. I have examined the evidences on both sides of the question, and know that the system is not in danger; it comes from heaven and cannot be shaken, it is proof against all the artillery of infidels, but alas! it is not proof against the mistaken zeal, and persecution, and prejudices of its friends. There was a time when discordant sectaries & churches were hurling their anathemas against each other with invincible jealousy and indignation, but now they are happily united against a common enemy; but still, I see, and deplore the same impolitic spirit, which committed the hapless heretic to the faggot, and plunged the sword of intolerance into the bosom of its unoffending victim. I have said it, and I ever will maintain, that this spirit never has been, and never will be of service to christianity; persecution may generate and multiply hypocrites, but will never produce a single convert; it steels, and irritates, and hardens the heart. It is the power of repulsion which disorganizes and splits asunder, it has not a single charm or attraction.

Mistake me not my readers, these observations are not levelled against any particular individual, or any particular church. Christians are all brethren, fellow labourers in one vineyard, and it is sincerely trusted joint inheritors of one glorious inheritance. I am pleading a great cause, that of civil and religious liberty; my earnestness proceeds not from passion, but from the sincerity of conviction; there may be possibly a mixture of enthusiasm in the manner, but upon such a subject, the want of enthusiasm would be coldness. I charge no one church with intolerance, but I say, that intolerance

will creep into every church that becomes vested with temporal power; and, I say further, that almost every clergyman will become intolerant, who is either directly or indirectly connected with the state. I know not how it is, but there is something in the nature of zeal which poisons the mind, and produces the most bitter weeds, unless it is sown in a soil of uncommon urbanity; we need not open the volumes of ecclesiastical history, to prove this position, our own experience and observation of living men, and manners are abundantly sufficient; only observe the conduct of the great Athanasius, how greatly did his inflammatory disposition serve to foment the flares of animosity, which had been kindled in the church; look at the still greater Calvin, even this illustrious reformer, in the exuberance of his zeal, was contented with nothing less than the painful death of the miserable Servetus. If understandings so enlightened, so vast, I will add so sublime, are susceptible of intolerance and persecution, what shall we say of the common race of modern clergymen?

I respect the church of England, as it exists in America, it is my duty to respect it; I have no objections to the harmless title of bishop, disunited from exclusive privileges and baneful powers. But, how has that church persecuted every other denomination, that refused to conform with her religious rites and ceremonies. In America she is mild, and peaceable, and benevolent, because she is not a component part of the state, because she is unarmed with the destructive weapons of secular power. In England she had totally disfranchised the whole body of dissenters; before the revolution she pursued them to this, their last best refuge; armed with equal authority the demon of spiritual hierarchy, like a gigantic Colossus would have strode across the atlantic; but let such injuries for ever be buried in oblivion, or the recollection of them only revived for instructive and prudential purposes.

Would to God, that my feeble pen could inspire christians with that spirit of forbearance and moderation, which forms so amiable and essential a part of their system. Imbued with that clemency, and moderation, and charity, and love of man, which so eminently characterises the sacred pages of the gospel, religion would be seated upon an adamant rock, and all mankind irresistibly attracted by her simplicity, her sincerity and her truth. Such is christianity when cloathed in the robes of righteousness, such her lovely, and pure, and dignified character, when arrayed with the smiles, and charms, and glory, and freshness of the morning; she comes blooming from the bosom of her heavenly author. But I cannot disguise my indignation, when I see her altars polluted and disgraced, when I see the sacred religion of truth and heaven, prostituted into a cloak to cover every indecency, every enormity & every crime; when I see men whose worldly ambition should have prevented their approaching even the vestibule of the temple, assuming the character, and officiating in the functions of priests of the most high, descend into the forum or comitia, and engage as political engines to influence the elections of the people; are such men serving the God of heaven, a sacrificing to the carnal and impious mammon? are they promoting the holy cause of religion, or pampering their own ambitious lusts? If I had the spear of Ithuriel, I would transfix them in their hypocrisy, and expose them as spectacles of deformity and guilt.

Believe me, this is not to promote the interests of christianity, nor to defend it against the dangers to which it may be exposed. I have asserted, and I repeat with energy, that



the true source of apprehension, is from the corruptions which proceed from an intermingling connection with the states and not from the reasoning, the sophistry, or the ridicule of infidels. I cannot, I will not endure the idea that religion is to be defended by any weapon but argument alone. It is an insult to truth to deny the energy of its powers, or to insinuate a doubt that it is not invincible. This is the work of scepticism—it is the most dangerous species of infidelity. When I hear a man distrust the force of the evidences of christianity, I doubt the sincerity of his profession—I feel persuaded that he is not a christian from conviction. I have heard and examined the argument of infidels. I pity their delusion, but I will not compliment them with the persuasion that they are capable of overthrowing the citadel of the Catholic faith. In my turn, I have perused with no little attention, the writings of their principal champions—The delicate irony of Gibbon—the sarcastic asperity of Voltaire—the flowing eloquence of Rosseau—the arguments and specious subtilty of Hume, and Hobbes, and Tindal—the contemptible philosophy of Volney. Gracious heaven! is it possible that a learned christian can apprehend danger from the attacks of such feeble artillery? Will he dread the assertions of philosophers who have the ignorance and the impudence to declare “that christianity consists in the allegorical worship of the sun, under the cabalistical names of Chrisen, or Yesus, or Jesus”? Such a man will expose a want of magnanimity, and exhibit distrust more prejudicial to the truth and dignity of his cause, than all the feeble efforts of its enemies. An antidote may be found in thousands of invaluable volumes. Even Dr. Linn has asked, “whether that christianity which has withstood the roaring of the lion, shall now be afraid of the brayings of the ass.” I could mention only five writers who have refuted every argument which has ever been, or ever will or can be offered against christianity; and, perhaps, I need not inform the reader of research, that I refer to Grotius, Paley and Hartley, to West on the Resurrection, and Littleton on the conversion of St. Paul.

Let me then ask the sincere, the pious christian, whether he thinks his religion stands in need of additional support? and whether he will consent to prop his church, which from its nature, is permanent and eternal, with the transitory things of this world, which pass away like the empty shadow, and vanish like the morning clouds and evening dew? Whether he will corrupt the purity of christianity by a dangerous connection with the affairs of state? Whether he will subject the ministers of his congregation to temptation and reproach, by permitting them to intermeddle with political concerns, and to become the directors of his temporal affairs, as well as his spiritual guides? And lastly, whether he will consent to revive that spirit of intolerance and persecution, which has been the reproach of religion, so long disgraced the church, and occasioned such complicated desolation, misery and imposture?

And thou, O minister of the gospel! consecrated guardian of the honour and purity of the church! canst thou, with hands unclean, officiate in the sacred temple; and with mind unholy, approach the altars of thy God? The external appearance of sanctity—the lifeless image of religion, may deceive the world, but thou shalt tremble before the omniscient eye of the Almighty. Let not then the cross of thy Saviour be prostituted to the works of darkness and ambition, and to the ruin of thy country! weak and wretched mortal, the reward of thy iniquity will avail thee not: for in a few fleeting years, thou shalt be numbered with the dead. O, keep the leaven of

unrighteousness from mingling with the Eucharist, and the bitter waters of Mara from poisoning the sacred cup!

I feel already that I am trespassing upon your attention; yet before I leave this part of my address, let me conjure you in the name of your country—in the name of liberty & the constitution—in the name of religion, & every principle that is sacred on earth or in heaven—I conjure you to beware how you permit your faith and attachment as christians, from interfering with your duties as citizens. The inevitable consequence of an union of the church with the state, will be the mutual destruction of both. Religion, instead of remaining an active and efficient director of faith and conduct, will be converted into an engine to promote the ruin of the constitution. Ambitious and aspiring men, who wish to subvert the liberties of the people, will represent their political opponents as atheists and infidels, and fasten upon your honest prejudices to render you the instruments of your own undoing. This is not the language of speculation. I see with indignation, that it has already been done. The pulpit and the press are at this moment engaged to effect the base designs of a political party. Is this the way to promote the interests of the church, by connecting it with party views and party operations? to unite its prosperity with the election of Jefferson, or Adams, or Pinckney? To render it obnoxious to those, who, from honest and patriotic views, espouse the part of the former candidate? Will you tell the patriot whose understanding convinces him that the liberty of the people, and the very existence of the constitution, depends upon the election of Mr. Jefferson, that he is placed in a dilemma in which he must either abjure his country or his religion? Yet all this and more, he has been told in a pamphlet, which, I am sorry to say, bears every inherent mark of having been written by a clergyman. It is a disgrace to the author, and a scandal to the church; and unless such practices are prevented for the future, the cause of christianity will suffer more from such mischievous attempts to connect it with politics, than from all the evils which the writer of it pretends to apprehend from the election of Mr. Jefferson.

Hitherto, then, I have only considered you in the character of christians, and endeavoured to discuss some of your principal duties, as it respects the preservation of religion; arguments and examples without number might be multiplied to prove to you the danger which would arise from the connection of the church\* with the state; those which have been adduced, are sufficient to weigh with candid and unprejudiced minds, and I have already said that readers of another description are above the reach of either argument or example.

Such then, Americans, are some of your principal duties with respect to the church—but as christians, it is equally your duty to guard the state, to watch as well as to pray. I maintain it to be the sacred and imperious duty of every religious man, to preserve the rights, and liberties, and constitution of his country. *If your civil privileges are once gone, my countrymen, what shall protect your religious ones?* What shall prevent one domineering church from becoming the favourite, & like the rod of Aaron, devouring all the others? Such things have been, and nothing but the wisdom and virtue of the people can prevent them from happening again. I do not believe that Mr. Jefferson is a deist—there is nothing in the wretched pamphlet of ———, to convince me of that fact. It is a groundless calumny. If it was truth, it

could be supported by better evidence. I shall presently bestow a few observations upon that contemptible production; but let us barely, for the sake of argument, imagine a case. Suppose, for a moment, that there are three candidates for the presidency—Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Pinckney—that Mr. Jefferson was in reality a deist, but a decided friend to the republican constitution of his country—that the two others were very pious & sincere christians, but secretly friends to aristocracy or monarchy, & hostile to the spirit of the present constitution, *which of the three would be the most dangerous man?* Mr. Jefferson, in such case, even if he had the intentions, could not be of the smallest disservice to religion: thanks to heaven, christianity has taken too deep a root to be capable of being shaken by the opinions, or even the enmity of any president. I know of no other method by which religion can be injured by any government in this country, except by its setting one powerful church above the heads of the rest. But this Mr. Jefferson is incapable of doing; for according to such position; he would be equally indifferent to all; in this sense, strange as it may appear, christianity would have much more to apprehend from a bigot than an infidel. But let us imagine for a moment, that an enemy to the constitution should be elected president of the United States. Gracious heaven! I shudder when I contemplate the picture! Our liberties prostituted—our religion at the mercy of one intolerant church—for every tyranny must & will have its establishment. Our civil constitution abandoned, or what is worse, mutilated, and distorted, and deformed into every protean shape; and the fruits of our glorious revolution—of the blood of our fathers, of the miseries of our families and our children—of the burning and ravaging of our towns, and of the desolation of our villages gone—gone forever!! These are serious—these are impressive considerations. Tell me christian! which of these alternatives is the most pregnant with calamity?

I am not a friend to the empty fripperies, and badinage, and extravagancies of modern philosophy, nor am I an advocate of the excesses and abuses of that revolution which now convulses France, and astonishes the civilized world. I declare to God, that I have no confidence in a nation which can change its government and its religion in a moment, and see the wear and tear of consciences and constitutions with the same apathy and unconcern as if they were suits of cloathes. I love my own government, because I see in it a liberal, rational and practicable form, not springing up by accident, like a mushroom in the night, but growing out of the habits, manners and ancient institutions of the people. I see in it a system of regular political architecture, modelled in the best order, proportioned in perfect symmetry, containing unity of design, and divested of every species of false ornament. It is the workmanship of a master in the art. It is the property of a people who are deserving of its blessings, because they know how to use and appreciate them. Such a people should not, and they will not be trifled with—they reverence their magistrates and pastors—they yield a generous, and noble, and willing obedience to the laws—they are conscious of the masterly beauties of their civil constitution, and determined to preserve them. Such a people uniformly acting from the bias of the judgment and understanding, with a wise, discretionate and sagacious subordination, can readily distinguish between the legitimate exercise, and the unwarrantable abuse of authority. I speak not only of the temporal, but also of the spiritual powers. My observations are equally applicable to statesmen and divines.

I know, and I feel, that there is a powerful conflict between old and new governments, and old and new philosophy, and that religion has been pressed and dragged into the warfare. I wish that the conflict may be confined to Europe, where it has originated. As it regards the collision between governments, I have very little predilection either for the ancient or the new. To me they appear almost equally abominable. My blood should never be wasted in behalf of the Bourbons or the consuls. I know not how it happens that French and American liberty have been confounded: they have scarcely a common attribute. There is just as much analogy between an hospitable winters fire and the destructive flames and lava of Etna and Vesuvius. The liberty and religion of Washington is not the liberty and religion of Marat and Robespierre, and Anarchalis Cloots, that flaming “orator of the human race.” I make these observations, because some admirers of the Corinthian columns and capitals of the British constitution have endeavoured to trace a resemblance between French and American liberty. I abjure and renounce and anathematize all affiliation with the bacchanalian liberty of the great republic. Let it resist the ancient monarchies of Europe, and monster encounter monster, until they mutually perish. I love and admire that sober and rational liberty which exists in America, defined and established in an organized and regular constitution. It is the duty of religion to protect that liberty and that constitution. In the character of Christians, I solemnly call upon you to remember the obligations which bind you to your country.

Thus far I have addressed you in your religious characters, not because I suppose the duties of a christian and a patriot are incompatible with each other, but because the author of the pamphlet to which I allude, affects to consider a political subject exclusively in a theological view. Only attentive to the fancied interests of his church, he seems to have forgotten the existence of truth, of conscience, of country, and of God. To the attainment of his favourite object, and in the presence of heaven, I tell him, that the election of Mr. Pinckney is that object. He is willing to sacrifice every consideration, for the smiles of that great man, or for the mess of pottage from his table, this inglorious Esau is willing to barter his birthright, his freedom, and his country. But I am too proud to dwell upon personal restrictions. Let me in future consider you in the united relation of patriots and friends of religion. I call your serious attention to the situation of your country.

There are three candidates for the presidential chair—Mr. Jefferson, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Pinckney. Originally the two former were usually considered as the only candidates; the last was viewed as a candidate for the office of vice-president, and for that only. But there was always a schism among the federalists upon that subject. The leaders most devoted to British politics intended from the beginning to take advantage of the principal defect in our constitution, which confers the presidency upon the candidate having the greatest number of votes, without designating the office for which they were intended, and by their intrigues to give their favourite the ascendancy. Mr. Pinckney must therefore be considered as the third candidate, and as the candidate of the British party.

We are now to consider the character and opinions of each of those candidates; let us execute our task with impartiality, and confer the palm upon him to whom it is justly due.

As a learned and experienced statesman, Mr. Jefferson rises superior to the level of his rivals; he is the author of the declaration of independence, which in point of energy, as a composition, is equal at least to the Philippics of Demosthenes; as a negociator, his abilities are universally acknowledged. His letters to Genet and Hammond, when secretary of state, are master-pieces, & elegant models of diplomatic correspondence. In those letters he vindicates the rights of his country, with the firmness of a patriot, the acuteness of a profound logician, & the extensive research of a scholar deeply read in the history and in the laws of nations, and possessing an intimate knowledge of the interests of his country; his talents, as a statesman are equal to any emergency; as a proficient in general science, the name of Jefferson would reflect a lustre upon any age or country. Such is the sage of Monticelli.

But, Mr. Jefferson is an invincible patriot, equally attached to the constitution of his country, and to the liberties of the people. In every situation of life, he has evinced the most unshaken fidelity. Mr. Jefferson is an American republican, and a federalist in the true and unadulterated sense of the term. Faithful to the original principles of our revolution, his conduct has been steady, uniform and consistent. Times and circumstances have changed, but he has ever remained, and still remains the same; he has not the versatility of little minds, which like the lightest feather are driven before the gentlest breeze; it is his political virtue and his unshaken attachment to the liberty and happiness of his country, which constitutes the principal glory of his character, and which has deservedly rendered him the favorite of the people.

When the little butterflies of party, have ceased to flutter, and the noisy puppies of the day, are choaked with rage and disappointment, to the honor of Mr. Jefferson, it will be remembered, that in this licentious age, when morality hath almost become an empty sound, the bitter and vigilant malevolence of his enemies, has not dared to cast a stigma upon the purity of his character. Believe me, my countrymen, their only sincere objection is, that he is a republican and a patriot; if he would only forsake his country, and enter into their plans of government, he might be a deist or an adulterer\* or any thing else, with perfect impunity.

I have seen nothing to convince me that Mr. Jefferson is a deist. On the contrary from information, at least, as respectable as that of the author of the pitiful pamphlet, which I shall presently condescend to notice, my information is that he is a sincere professor of christianity—though not a noisy one. But, I will candidly confess to you, that if I had ever so sincere a conviction of his infidelity; my prejudices, if you will permit me to call them so, are not so strong as to sacrifice my country to their operation; believing as I do, that public liberty and the constitution, will not be safe under the administration of Mr. Adams or Mr. Pinckney; I cannot see that the christianity of either of them will atone for the loss of my political freedom. There may be some merit in sacrificing every thing to the sign or external symbol of the cross; but it is a merit to which I do not aspire. If the other candidates were republicans, and Mr. Jefferson a deist, then the religion of the former would turn the scale of opinion in their favor; but, I never will be duped by the christianity of any man that meditates the ruin of the constitution. I am not prepared to surrender my liberty civil and religious, the future happiness of my children, the prosperity of my country, the welfare of millions of human beings yet unborn, and every possession and enjoyment that is

valuable to men, and patriots, and christians. I know, that my God requires not such a sacrifice; he that would not permit Abraham to give his son Isaac as a burnt offering, demands not that my country should be prostrated on the altars of his religion; the infernal rites of Moloch required human victims, and a priest of Moloch would delight in the sacrifice of hecatombs. But christianity is the religion of grace, & mercy, and justice, and liberty.

I shall now proceed to enter into a more critical examination, of the pamphlet entitled “Serious Considerations, &c.” and I request to be accompanied with a careful and patient attention. Be assured my readers, that politics and not religion is the object of the writer of that pamphlet, he writes as a partizan of Mr. Pinckney, and not as the advocate of evangelical purity and truth; he is not animated by a fervent love of religion, but excited and propelled by a deadly hatred to Mr. Jefferson. Such is the man, and such the character of his production.

Quiequid Græcia mendax,  
Audet in historia.

Is surpassed by this *caput mortuum* of stupidity, frivolity and malice.

The professed intention of the pamphlet, is to prove Mr. Jefferson a deist; its real object, to ensure the election of Mr. Pinckney; assurances to the contrary are only evidences of depravity and falsehood; are you seriously to be told, that, if Mr. Jefferson is rejected, any other man except Mr. Adams or Mr. Pinckney, can possibly be appointed?

If Mr. Jefferson is a deist, and his rivals are enemies to the constitution, most unfortunate is our alternative; our views are confined, and our choice is limited. At this election, no other individual in existence can by the remotest possibility become your president; you would be driven to elect between an infidel and an enemy to the constitution. Has this writer dared to assure you, that Mr. Adams & Mr. Pinckney are republicans? Has he even attempted to prove that they are attached to public liberty, and determined to support our present happy and excellent constitution? Has he told you, that Mr. Adams has never expressed and written sentiments strongly favouring aristocratical orders, and distinctions in the state? Has he had the presumption to state, that Mr. Pinckney is not the candidate of the Anglo-federal, or, if you please, the British party in America? These are facts, which like the ghost of Banquo, have terror in their aspect; you cannot look upon them with a steady eye, unmoved. One of these men must be elected, one of them inevitably is destined to be your president; you have no other choice, no other alternative. If Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney are not republicans, then cease your songs to liberty, hang your harps upon the willows, and mourn the loss of departed freedom, gone for ever; professions of religion will avail you not; neither Moses, nor the prophets, nor the fathers, will protect your civil constitution.

But, what reason have we to believe that Mr. Jefferson is a deist? Nothing but the misrepresentation of his avowed and interested enemies. Remember that

Trifles light as air  
Are to the jealous confirmation strong,  
As proof of holy writ.

Let us examine the subject with candor.

In order to establish the infidelity of this enlightened statesman and patriot, the author of the pamphlet relies upon certain inutilated passages of the “notes on Virginia,” and a pretended conversation, or rather a particular expression used in conversation with Mr. Mazzei.

Several passages in the notes upon Virginia, have been the subjects of animadversion; the first respecting the deluge, the second concerning the origin of the aborigenes of this country, the third relating to the Africans, or negroes, and the last, supposed to contain sentiments disrespectful to divine revelation. I shall proceed to examine those subjects in their order.

In the first place, Mr. Jefferson is supposed to deny the existence of an universal flood, such as Moses describes, and jews and christians equally believe. This is not the fact.

I do aver, that there is not a sentence in the notes upon Virginia, which either expressly, or even by implication denies the existence of such flood. By a recurrence to that work, we will readily perceive that the deluge is a topic collateral to the principal subject of discussion. In answer to questions either actually made, or supposed to have been asked by a learned foreigner, Mr. Jefferson is proceeding to describe the principal productions of his native state; while employed in this task; a remarkable and an interesting phenomenon arrests his attention, that is, the existence of petrified shells, or calcareous substances on the tops, or near the surfaces of the highest mountains. That circumstance “is considered by many both of the learned and the unlearned as proof of an universal deluge.” Mr. Jefferson, on the contrary, is inclined to believe that such fact alone, unsupported by higher authority, would not amount to proof of a deluge.

He then proceeds to state a reason, why the ordinary laws or common operations of nature are insufficient to produce an universal flood, that if the whole contents of the atmosphere were water, “it would cover the globe but 35 feet deep, but as these waters as they fell would naturally run into the seas, the superficial measure of which, is to that of the dry parts of the globe as two to one, the seas would be raised only 52 $\frac{1}{2}$  feet above their present level, and of course would overflow the lands to that height only.” He supposes that deluges beyond such extent, are out of the ordinary laws of nature, and he supposes right.

This is the only passage in the work of Mr. Jefferson relating to the Deluge—he concludes, “there is a wonder somewhere, and that it requires us to believe the creation of a body of water and its subsequent annihilation.”

Mr. Jefferson is writing in the character of a philosopher, and endeavouring, as a collateral point to his principal subject, to ascertain whether an universal deluge can be accounted for by the ordinary laws of nature? finding it impossible, how does he conclude? by denying it, by even insinuating a doubt? No—by terming it a “wonder,” or, in other words, a miracle.

The reasoning of Mr. Jefferson so far from being repugnant to the holy scriptures, or from expressing a disbelief of the fact which is there related, strongly demands an opposite interpretation. Philosophy, who is blind to many of the common occurrences in nature, can never account for the extraordinary or miraculous interpositions of Almighty power. It is for this reason that Mr. Jefferson, after attempting to investigate the subject wisely, abandons every hypothesis and confesses his own ignorance—in this sense he exclaims, that “Ignorance is preferable to error; and that he is less remote from the truth who believes nothing, than he who believes what is wrong.”

No sentiment can be more correct or prudent than that which I have last quoted; but even this sentiment has been distorted into a proof of infidelity. Mr. Jefferson confines the sentiment to philosophical subjects—he by no means extends it to the truth of revelation—he does not assert that it is best to disbelieve the existence of the Deluge; but that it is better to disbelieve every human hypothesis which would presumptuously endeavour to account for it, than to believe what is wrong.\*

Yet, the Deluge is a wonder! a miraculous, a stupendous exertion of sovereign power! Who can account for it? Can man, weak man, conceive the manner in which it was effected? It would seem to require the creation of oceans of water and their subsequent annihilation! In the sense of Mr. Jefferson I make the exclamation, “*Ignorance is better than error,*” and with respect to every hypothesis which philosophy would introduce, “He is less remote from the truth who believes nothing, than he who believes what is wrong.” But God, who created the heavens and the earth, can create an universe of water and destroy it at his pleasure.

I do therefore confidently aver, that there is not a single expression in that passage which furnishes a fair implication of “disrespect for divine revelation.” The position to be gathered from it is, that an universal flood cannot be accounted for from general laws. Had Mr. Jefferson on the contrary attempted to account for it from the ordinary operations of nature, and in the pride of philosophy exclaimed, “*There is no wonder,*” then there would have been reason to suspect his sentiments—but no, it was a wonder, it was an extraordinary miracle. It was one of those stupendous acts of power which the Deity upon peculiar occasions performs for the wisest purposes. Had it been an ordinary event it would have ceased to be a miracle. Could it have been accounted for from universal laws, it would no longer have been miraculous; and, unless we consider it in the light of a miracle, then I assert that we oppose the true intent and meaning of the holy scriptures. Mr. Jefferson therefore very wisely rejects every philosophical hypothesis upon the subject, and rests it upon its proper basis of testimony, to wit, the authority of the sacred writings. That such is the correct interpretation of the passage of Mr. Jefferson, I appeal to the decision of the learned and unprejudiced reader; and I earnestly request that the notes upon Virginia may be



perused with the most critical attention. The text is before us—let us decide for ourselves—we have no manner of necessity for a commentary.

Secondly—with respect to the question—from whence did the first inhabitants of America originate? The sentiments of Mr. Jefferson have been most criminally misrepresented. The author of the pamphlet has omitted every passage in which a positive opinion is given, and states the sentiments of Mr. Jefferson to be diametrically opposite from what he himself has declared them. At this moment that wretched author shall stand convicted of the *suppressio veri* with the criminal intention of deceiving the people. Let the culprit be exposed. Mr. Jefferson shall speak for himself. In the name of truth I demand that he may be heard.

Great question (says Mr. Jefferson) has arisen from whence came those original inhabitants of America? Discoveries long ago made were sufficient to shew that a passage from Europe to America was always practicable, even to the imperfect navigation of ancient times. In going from Norway to Iceland—from Iceland to Greenland—from Greenland to Labrador—the first traject is the widest; and this having been practised from the earliest times, of which we have any account of that part of the earth. It is not difficult to suppose that the subsequent trajects may have been sometimes passed. Again—the late discoveries of Captain Cook coasting from Kamschatka to California have proved, that if the two continents of Asia and Africa be seperated at all, it is only by a narrow streight, so that from this side also inhabitants may have passed into America; and the resemblance between the Indians of America and the eastern inhabitants of Asia would induce us to conjecture that the former are the descendants of the latter, or the latter of the former, excepting indeed the Eskimaux, who from the same circumstance of resemblance and from identity of language, must be derived from the Greenlanders, and those probably from some of the northern parts of the old continent. (Notes on Virginia p.106 & 107—Phil. edition.)

Such are Mr. Jefferson's own words upon the subject, it is the only passage in which he expressly declares his sentiments with respect to that important question. It is therefore evident that his opinion is diametrically opposite to what is attributed to him by that disingenuous and designing writer. From the decisive circumstances of resemblance, from the proximity, if not the junction of the two continents, and from similarity of language, he concludes, that the inhabitants of each continent proceeded from a common origin—why was this remarkable passage so carefully concealed? Most evidently for the purpose of imposing upon the reader. A writer who is capable of such unworthy subterfuges, possesses a weak head as well as a bad heart—he becomes entitled to no credit. No honest man would betray such fraud and insincerity, or voluntarily expose himself to degradation.

It is true that the great question, whether all mankind have proceeded from one common origin? has divided the learned world. The human species exhibit so great a variety in intellect, complexion and form, that it has often been doubted whether climate and education, or any moral or physical laws could have produced that diversity. Philosophers have considered the subject as open to discussion, and that they might safely venture to advocate either position without a violation or

impeachment of theological faith—thus one side of the proposition has been maintained by Dr. Smith, and an opposite by Lord Kame: but we find that Mr. Jefferson, in supposing that the inhabitants of America and those of the old continent have proceeded from a common origin, has, in reality, adopted the opinion most accordant with the scriptures.

It is also true, that when viewing the subject entirely upon philosophical grounds, Mr. Jefferson supposes that similarity of language is the best human test from which we can trace the affinity of nations; for this reason he laments that the languages of so many Indian tribes have been suffered to expire—but we must remember that Mr. Jefferson had already expressed his sentiments in favour of a common origin in the most decisive terms—we cannot readily imagine that an author of his reputation would palpably contradict himself in the very next passage. What he afterwards advances is entirely a matter of speculation, and not the declaration of any contrary opinion; for even if we were to believe that a greater number of radical languages was an infallible test of antiquity, and that the Americans possessed a greater number and variety of such radical languages than the Asiatics, that postulate could only give rise to a contest for superior antiquity, and by no means decide the principal question of identity of origin.

It might further be remarked, that neither of those positions can be considered as an infallible *indicium* of the faith or infidelity of its advocates; divines themselves have differed with respect to their sense of inspiration, or rather as to the extent in which it is to be taken; thus some have been the advocates of plenary inspiration, others of partial inspiration only, & others again consider certain parts of scripture as entirely historical. I mention this circumstance, not as disbelieving the doctrine of plenary inspiration, not as questioning the decisive authority of Moses, but to shew that the subject has not been placed upon fair ground. If the writers assertions were true instead of false, still they would prove nothing; instead of believing that the Americans and Asiatics have proceeded from a common stock, Mr. Jefferson might have advocated a different opinion, and still have been a christian.

“Gallileo was sent to the inquisition, for affirming that the earth was a sphere”; there was a time, when Sir Isaac Newton would have provoked the horrors of an *auto da fe*, for believing that the sun is stationary. In the book of Joshua (chapt. 10, verses 12, 13 & 14), it is written that the Israelitish captain commanded the sun to stand still on a particular day, that is to suppose it moves on every other occasion, otherwise the passage would have no meaning; yet all the learned world coincide in opinion with Gallileo and Sir Isaac notwithstanding the apparent authority of the scriptures to the contrary. Galileo and Sir Isaac Newton were both christians, still they pursued their philosophical speculations; if the adversary of Mr. Jefferson, believes the sun to be stationary, by adopting his own mode of reasoning, he is proved to be an infidel.

So far then Mr. Jefferson stands completely exculpated from the charge of infidelity; but a third passage occurs, upon which peculiar stress appears to have been laid—it is that which respects the distinction which nature or circumstances have interposed between black and white men: an expression as correct as it is innocent, has given rise to the accusation; but it vanishes at the first approach of liberal investigation.

The existence of negro slavery has long been considered as one of our greatest political evils; like all other crimes by the righteous dispensations of providence it has been inseparably accompanied by its own calamities. The day of retribution is rapidly approaching—slavery must have an end—but what is to become of the slaves? When I consider the situation of the southern states—when I perceive how numerous a proportion of their population is composed by black men—my mind misgives me—the most terrifying reflections rush upon my understanding: The evil exists within our bosom—how shall it be removed?

Shall slavery be continued for ever? that idea is equally debasing to the master and the slave—justice, humanity, and even policy forbid it—besides, the population of the negroes is nearly equal to that of the whites; and notwithstanding the hardships under which they labour, the former multiply as fast as the latter—what then shall secure the perpetual submission of the slave? But suppose that they are restored to freedom, what shall be their destiny? Shall they be banished to foreign climes? Whither shall they become transported? Will they quietly submit? In what region of the globe will they be received without resistance? Send them to Africa, from whence their fathers have been dragged, and you render them completely wretched. You impose upon them a sentence, if possible, more severe than slavery itself; you have changed their language, manners and religion; in Africa they would meet with beings similar indeed in complexion, but radically different in every other respect. Will you surrender to them a portion of your own territory separated by metes and bounds, and establish an independent empire in the neighbourhood of your republic? Or lastly, when they are free shall they continue among us; shall they be placed upon an equality with their former masters, and admitted to partake of all our privileges? More than all, shall they marry and co-habit, and intermingle with our sons and daughters, and the inhabitants of America become a motley and degenerate race of mulattoes?

It is against this last idea that Mr. Jefferson reasons with energy and sensibility. Incorporate the blacks into the state, and you incorporate eternal misery and degradation. “Deep rooted\* prejudices entertained by the whites; ten thousand recollections by the blacks of the injuries they have sustained; new provocations; the real distinctions which nature has made; and many other circumstances, will divide us into parties, and produce convulsions which will probably never end, but in the extermination of the one or the other race.” (Notes on Virginia.)

Reason, justice and religion require that negroes should be free. But they require not that we should expose ourselves to degeneracy: We may sincerely advocate the freedom of black men, and yet assert their moral and physical inferiority. It is our duty to assert their liberties, but it is not our duty to blend our form and colour and existence with theirs. Education and habit, nay, nature herself recoils at the idea. It is against this shocking idea that Mr. Jefferson reasons with all his powers; he calls them a different race of men, and with justice he terms them so. It is in the same sense that we are in the daily habit of terming the Eskimaux, the Hottentots, and the Arabs a different race from the inhabitants of Europe.

But does Mr. Jefferson deny that negroes are men? does he deny them the sacred privileges of humanity? He says with truth, that there is now a physical difference

which interposes an insuperable barrier between us; my own feelings powerfully dictate that such is the case. The idea of intermingling is insupportable. We cannot intermingle without injury—I may add, without prostitution. Mr. Jefferson says, that there is a difference at present, but he has pretended to account for it by denying that they sprang from a common origin with ourselves? Does he introduce any hypothesis upon the subject hostile to divine revelation? Does he pretend to deny that the force of climate and cultivation through the lapse of centuries is insufficient to account for the dissimilarity? No, he does not—I defy all the tergiversation of his adversaries to fix the stigma upon him.

In justice to Mr. Jefferson, it must be mentioned, that though he contends for the inferiority of the blacks, he only argues against their cohabiting with us, and not against their freedom—his position, evident as it is, is advanced with exemplary diffidence and tenderness. In a subsequent passage he exclaims, with generous warmth,

Can the liberties of a nation be thought secure when we have removed their only firm basis, a conviction in the minds of the people, that these liberties are of the gift of God? That they are not to be violated but with his wrath? Indeed I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just, that his justice cannot sleep for ever!\*

Is this the language of an infidel! this the zealous exclamation of an enemy to God? O fye sir, shame upon your head! How dare you attempt to deceive your congregation! Mr. Jefferson has reasoned against the universal prostitution of his countrymen—and would you, sir, with all your meekness and piety, and humility, mingle your blood with that of the blacks?

Black spirits and white;  
Blue spirits and grey,  
Mingle, mingle, mingle,  
You that mingle may.

O doctor, doctor, what a hopeful progeny would you produce!

It is upon the expression “difference of race” that the “baseless fabrick” of sophistry has been erected, by confounding the term “race” with the word “genus,” or even “species.” Mr. Jefferson is represented to have stated the negroes as originally a distinct order of beings; but the expression “race” *ex vi termini* by no means conveys that idea; still less so, when its sense is regulated by the general intentions of Mr. Jefferson, the manner in which it is used, and the other parts of the passage into which it is incorporated.\* The term in strictness signifies “a family, a generation, or a particular breed”; and in common parlance it is frequently used, if possible, in a more restricted sense. Thus every family may be correctly denominated a distinct race. The house of York and that of Lancaster formed a different race or dynasty of princes. The whole censure upon Mr. Jefferson is built upon an idle cavil with respect to this word. I appeal to the judicious reader, and refer to the work itself, whether the term race is not applied in the correct and limited sense in which I consider it, not as implying an original difference of ancestry, but as referring to the present difference of situation.

Nothing is either more common or more proper, than to consider separate nations, even of white men, as forming a distinct race. Thus the Romans and the Goths are termed a separate race of men; and thus, from the three sons of Noah, Shem, and Ham, and Japhet, proceeded distinct races. Yet we do not deny their common origin, though time and circumstances have occasioned a total forgetfulness of consanguinity.

I feel that it is unnecessary to dwell any longer upon this passage—instead of impeaching Mr. Jefferson, the writer of the pamphlet has only succeeded in rendering himself ridiculous: there is yet one remaining passage to be discussed before I enter upon the consideration of it—permit me to offer a few remarks upon the base and idle story said to have been communicated by Mr. Mazzei.

It must already have been evident to the discerning reader, that the author of the pamphlet writes with a certain object in view, and that in the pursuit of such object he is regardless of truth or sincerity; he has fastened upon every opportunity to defame his political antagonist, not only by misrepresenting his sentiments, but by concealing the truth; by the manner in which he has conducted his work, he has forfeited all pretensions to credit.

The practice of that writer is not singular. The party to whom he is attached, has been in the constant habit of publishing assertions equally impudent and extravagant; the character of a patriot is so odious in their sight, that every calumny has been invented to blacken and defame it—ten thousand monstrous stories have been circulated and detected—the arrows have as often recoiled upon their masters—and yet they have the hardihood to continue the practice. Thus Mr. Gallatin, who is known to have descended from the most respectable parentage at Geneva, has been represented by turns as an itinerant vagabond, as a strolling fidler, and a shoe-black; such ridiculous tales never answer a good purpose, they disgust every sensible and liberal mind.

If the greatest liar in existence utters the most ridiculous falsehood against the most innocent man, you cannot resist him by reasoning, or refute his assertion by any syllogistical deduction; his tale is a matter of credit and not a matter of argument. The belief of such an allegation must entirely depend upon the general reputation of the parties, and the views and integrity of the relator. If the crime of adultery or seduction, for instance, was laid to the charge of Mr. H———, such a report would be readily believed; but if propagated concerning General Washington, would be absolutely incredible. Again, if a story is circulated by a man whose veracity is not impeachable, and who has no sinister object in view, his relation will be entitled to our confidence; but where a tale is propagated by a man who has already deceived us, and who appears to have a design & an interest in so doing, our credulity must be abject indeed if we suffer ourselves to be imposed upon.

After these preliminary observations, let us attend to this most ridiculous tale. Upon the supposed authority of a Dr. John B. Smith, a Virginia clergyman, it is asserted, that Mr. Mazzei, of whom so much mention has been lately made, related to this Dr. Smith the following anecdote; “That as he (Mazzei) was once riding with Mr. Jefferson, he expressed his surprize that the people of this country take no better care

of their public buildings—What buildings? exclaimed Mr. Jefferson—is not that a church? replied he, pointing to a decayed edifice—Yes, answered Mr. Jefferson. I am astonished, said the other, that they permit it to be in so ruinous a condition! It is good enough, says Mr. Jefferson, for him that was born in a manger.” Thus far.

Upon this extraordinary relation, let us make the following remarks:

In the first place, you have the story from the third or fourth hand. Jefferson is supposed to have used an expression to Mazzei—Mazzei to Smith—Smith to the writer of the pamphlet—and he to you; a story never loses by travelling: an expression of the most innocent nature may have been misconceived by Mazzei; Dr. Smith may have misunderstood him; as for the writer, his words and intentions are too evident to be mistaken.

Secondly, the story is too particular to be credited; if the conversation did ever take place, it must have happened many years ago. It was never heard by the writer of the pamphlet, or even by Dr. Smith himself. In relating the story, it is next to impossible that Mazzei and Smith and the writer should give the connected chain and particular expressions of the conversation in the order and connection used by the parties. In attempting to do this, like all other inventors, the writer has overshot his mark. It is impossible that he should have heard the particulars of an antiquated conversation with such accuracy and minuteness, as to give it in the form of a dialogue. It is therefore evident, that this dialogue is a recent fabrication of his own. He has all the merit of invention, but no claim to fidelity.\*

Thirdly, the character of Mr. Jefferson renders the tale incredible, placing his morality and religion entirely out of sight; it is not probable that as a man of common prudence he would have used so obnoxious an expression.

Fourthly, the tale proceeds from a most suspicious fountain. We should be careful how we receive the character of any man from the mouth of his enemies. Justice requires that we should not judge rashly. It is evident that the author of the pamphlet is the bitter enemy of Mr. Jefferson; it is evident that he writes with the express view of rendering him an injury; it is evident that he is not guided by religious incentives, but by political and party views: And lastly, it is evident that he is generally regardless of truth and sincerity. Conscious that the criticism upon the notes on Virginia was untenable, his only resource was to invent this ridiculous story. When he pretends to reason, his pen trembles in his hand. In the paroxism of despair, he supplies the weakness of his logic by the boldness of assertion. But even this desperate sally has baffled his purpose; for, how is it possible that we can believe a story so improbable in itself; so incredible when applied to a man whose manners are confessedly mild and amiable, and who has ever been distinguished by consummate virtue and prudence: When that story, coming from the third or fourth hand, and in every stage of its passage liable to misconstruction, as well as exposed to misrepresentation, is related by a bitter enemy to serve an interested purpose, and when the relator has, upon every other occasion, been convicted of the base design to injure and deceive us?\*

I enter into the examination of the remaining head of accusations which this disingenuous writer has exhibited against Mr. Jefferson. It cannot have escaped the observation of the reader, that the author of the pamphlet has endeavoured to give the sense of Mr. Jefferson from detached and mutilated passages of his work, and, by the suppression of the rest, endeavoured to distort and misrepresent his real sentiments. We have seen, that in the most material instance he has endeavoured, by implication, to represent him as favouring one opinion; when, in the most express and positive language, he has in reality advanced a doctrine diametrically opposite. When a writer will descend to such base and villainous† arts, he becomes altogether unworthy of credit; he exposes the wickedness of his own designs, and can no longer be believed. The author, who can wilfully misrepresent the sentiments of another by an easy transition of baseness, can fabricate a story or propagate a groundless tale. It is as criminal to pervert the sentiments of Mr. Jefferson, with a view to render him an injury, as to invent the story of Mazzei from the same unworthy motive; the object is, in both cases, identical, and the instruments not essentially different. If the author should be a clergyman, his offence becomes encreased; from that order of men we have a right to expect examples of fidelity.

The passage to which I now allude, is that which more particularly respects religion. The only object of Mr. Jefferson, is to discountenance political establishments in theology; upon this subject, his adversaries must confess that he reasons with perspicuity, energy & truth. I refer the reader neither to these pages nor to the pamphlet entitled “Serious reflections” but entreat him to peruse the work itself; I aver that upon this subject Mr. Jefferson reasons with the conciseness and nervous energy of Tacitus—he writes with the pen of a master; in no instance does he speak a language, upon no occasion does he betray a sentiment disrespectful to Christianity; he states that by the common law of England heresy was a capital offence punishable by burning, and that until the statute of Elizabeth, its definition was submitted to the ecclesiastical judges—that the execution was by the cruel and infamous writ *de hæretico comburendo*, that by the statute of Virginia antecedent to the revolution, heresy was punishable by the incapacity of holding any office civil, ecclesiastical or military, and on a repetition by disability to sue; to take any gift or legacy, to be guardian, executor or administrator, and by three years imprisonment without bail. I should despair of rendering justice to the sentiments of this excellent writer, without permission to transcribe them in his own forcible language, “This (continues Mr. Jefferson) is a summary view of that religious slavery, under which a people have been willing to remain, who have lavished their lives and fortunes for the establishment of their civil freedom. The error seems not sufficiently eradicated, that the operations of the mind as well as the acts of the body, are subject to the coercion of the laws, but our rulers can have authority over such natural rights, only as we have submitted to them; the rights of conscience we never submitted, we could not submit *we are answerable for them to our God*. The legitimate powers of government, extends to such acts only as are injurious to others; but it does me no injury for my neighbour to say, there are twenty Gods or no God, it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg; if it be said, his testimony in a court of justice cannot be relied on, reject it then, and be the stigma on him. Constraint may make him worse by making him a hypocrite, but it will never make him a truer man: it may fix him obstinately in his errors, but will not cure them. Reason and free enquiry are the only effectual

agents against error—give a loose to them, they will support the true religion, by bringing every false one to their tribunal, to the test of their investigation; they are the natural enemies of error, and of error only. Had not the Roman government permitted free inquiry, Christianity could never have been introduced. Had not free inquiry been indulged at the æra of the reformation, the corruptions of Christianity could not have been purged away.”

Such then are the sentiments inculcated by this invaluable performance, and do these imply a spirit of infidelity? is liberality, and forbearance, and toleration incompatible with the gospel? God forbid, that Christians should believe so. How is Christianity to be infused? by the mild light of reasoning—by the force of conviction, or by the burning fire of persecution? Then abandon preaching, ministers of the Most High, descend from the pulpit—forsake the altar—seize the torch—the firebrand and faggot—grasp the murderers steel—destroy and exterminate—establish the empire of panic—the universal dominion of fear—spare them not—be the ministers not of grace and mercy, and benevolence, but of vengeance—perpetrate dark deeds “without a name,” where then will be your converts? in the language of Mr. Jefferson, you will make hypocrites but not true men.

I am bold to say, that those sentiments of Mr. Jefferson are in perfect conformity to the genuine precepts of our religion, as well as the principles of our civil constitution, we have had enough of the kingdom of Anti-christ; hecatombs of human victims have bled and perished, their blood has stained the earth, and their mouldering bones unburied, bleaching by the rain and scorching sun, have called aloud to heaven. Our ancestors also were persecuted—here they fought for and obtained repose; Oh let not their children unmindful of their miseries and wrongs, in their turn become persecutors!

Such then, is the interesting subject which engrossed the attention of our virtuous and learned countryman, impressed with its importance, his language glows with animation; it is upon a single expression used in the warmth of sensibility, and in the ardour of argument, that peculiar reliance has been placed “it does me no injury for my neighbour to say, there are twenty Gods, or no God, it neither picks my pocket nor breaks my leg.” The expression is a strong one, but it is strictly true in the sense in which it was applied. Belief indeed may, nay will influence our conduct; the errors of my neighbour may be dangerous, I would distrust the man who would palliate adultery, or endeavour to excuse a theft; but the manner in which Mr. Jefferson applies the sentiment renders it perfectly correct, he distinguishes between our *actions* and our *opinions*, for the former we are amenable to the civil magistrate, for the latter he expressly tells us we “*are answerable to our God.*” Speaking of the rights of conscience, he says, that—“we never submitted them to our civil rulers, we could not submit them, the legitimate powers of government extend to such *acts*, only as are injurious to others”; it is therefore demonstrable that Mr. Jefferson exclusively contemplates civil injuries: that is to say, injuries visible and palpable, and for which human laws afford redress; in this legal sense, the sentiments of my neighbour are no injury to me, his opinions should not be subjected to the coercion of the civil magistrate. For our conduct we are responsible to man; for our opinions only to our God. I sustain no civil injury by the vicinage of an atheist, if it is a *damnum* in the



language of lawyers, it is *damnum absque injuric*. Government has no right to interfere, it cannot interpose without danger, and without a manifest violation of the social compact.

Government is an human institution, introduced for temporal purposes—it was never intended to be the sovereign arbiter of religion, conscience, and opinion. Fearful of committing himself upon the subject, the author of the pamphlet is driven to express the very same sentiment, tho' in language far inferior. Mark his inconsistency! note his palpable contradiction! “It is true (he acknowledges) that a mere opinion of my neighbor will do me no injury, government cannot regulate or punish it, the right of private opinion is inalienable.” Mr. Jefferson has contended for no more. If the sentiment is an evidence of infidelity on the part of the one; it is equally so with respect to the other.\*

Throughout the passage in question, Mr. Jefferson has only advocated those doctrines which, with a feebler pen I have attempted to enforce. I wish Christianity to become extended into every region of the globe, but I wish it to prevail by the energy of reason, and not by the terror of persecution, or the power of the sword. I am jealous of the interference of government; I know that it never interposes from a pious zeal towards religion, but from corrupt, ambitious, and interested views. I am conscious that belief is involuntary, that it must flow spontaneously from the dictates of the understanding, and can never be enforced by the engines of tyranny.

The rights of conscience rise superior to the controul of the civil magistrate; why should we be solicitous to multiply hypocrites? let believers be sincere in their professions, or let men continue infidels. I also most cordially unite with Mr. Jefferson in a wish to see, and I do actually perceive “a government in which no religious opinions (whatever) are (officially) held, and where the security for property and social order rests entirely upon the force of law.” In the expression of this sentiment I am not apprehensive of being misunderstood; I sincerely wish that every individual concerned in the administration, in every department and in every station principal or subordinate, from the president to the constable, should be a Christian in earnest, not boasting a nominal, but possessing a zealous, lively and active faith; but as a government, as a body corporate and politic, as an organized artificial systematized corps, it should not have, it cannot have any religion; it should allow to each of its citizens an unlimited exercise of conscience; it should never interfere, unless social law, and order, and morals become invaded—if a contrary doctrine should ever prevail, every fibre of my heart would bleed for the misery of my country. Such as I wish it, is our present constitution, and so may it ever continue; to the people under God I intrust its preservation; unless you my countrymen, are vigilant and circumspect, the time may come when freedom religious and civil, shall be no more, and hope itself expire; and then, O then the solemn warning of that Jefferson, who has been so unworthily traduced will only furnish occasion for unavailing regret! Hear him before it is too late. “The spirit of the times (he almost prophetically exclaims) may alter—will alter; our rulers will become corrupt, our people careless, a single zealot may commence persecutor, and better men be his victims. It can never therefore be too often repeated, that the time for fixing every essential right on a legal basis, is while our rulers are honest and ourselves united. From the conclusion of this

war, we shall be going down hill, it will not then be necessary to resort every moment to the people for support, they will be forgotten therefore, and their rights disregarded; they will forget themselves, but in the sole faculty of making money, and will never think of uniting to effect a due respect for their rights; the shackles therefore which shall not be knocked off at the conclusion of this war, will remain on us long; will be made heavier and heavier till our rights shall revive or expire in a convulsion.”

But, why should I proceed? with every liberal mind, Mr. Jefferson must stand acquitted from the charge of infidelity; for him I feel not—he enjoys “the eternal sunshine of the spotless mind,” for religion I feel not—it stands secure in the sacred majesty of truth—it is for my country that I feel, and for the safety of its constitution that I tremble. I shall offer a few observations with respect to Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney, and attempt to explore the prospect which lies before us.

I hold it to be a maxim essential to our safety, that the government of the United States should only be administered by a republican. Whatever may be the virtues or religion,\* whatever the talents of Mr. Adams, his principles are not republican, his sentiments are not congenial with the spirit of the constitution, he has published and proclaimed his opinions, they stand as an everlasting record and monument against him; his religion and his piety may possibly be sincere, but they cannot atone for the destruction of the constitution, and the slavery of the people; Mr. Adams is the advocate of privileged orders and distinctions in society, he would willingly engraft the armorial trappings and insignia of aristocracy upon the simple majesty of republican institutions. Mr. Adams would destroy the essential nature and character of a republic; his principles would wrest the government from the hands of the people, and vest its dominion and prerogatives in the distinguished and “well born few”—Mr. Adams is the advocate of hereditary power, and hereditary privileges—has he not told you “that republican government may be interpreted to mean any thing! that the British government is in the strictest sense a republic! that an hereditary president and senate for life, can alone secure your happiness! that in the conflict of political opinions which prevail in our country, it is admissible for one faction to seize the persons of their opponents, and banish them within the lines of an invading enemy!”

Immortal heaven! can we listen to such sentiments with coldness? Let it not be imagined that such opinions are purely speculative, and therefore not dangerous. Speculation always pants and struggles for an opportunity to become ripened into action. Mr. Adams cannot hold such heretical doctrines without being a dangerous president; if he does not admire the constitution in its present shape, depend upon it his influence will be exerted to render it more palatable to himself. If no other evil happens, the temper and opinions of the man will give a tone and character to his administration; he will warp, and twist, and torture the features of your infant government, and prostrate your constitution upon the fatal bed of Procrustes, until it loses its original symmetry, proportion and character. Whenever an opportunity arises, by a latitude of construction, by a wanton licentiousness of interpretation, he will multiply and intrench the prerogatives of the executive, and establish his favorite theory upon the ruins of the constitution. Every violation will increase the appetite for power; it will augment the danger by the force of habit and the pretext of example. Encroachments always proceed with an accelerated momentum, “One precedent

creates another; they soon accumulate and constitute law; what yesterday was fact to-day is doctrine: Examples are supposed to justify the most dangerous measures, and where they do not suit exactly, the defect is supplied by analogy.”\* He who maintains the principles and the doctrines of slavery, is “totally unfit to be the ruler of a free people.”

The interest of the nation demands that we should have an administration of liberty and justice and œconomy. Our future executive should not be the president of a party but the president of the United States; to speak emphatically, he should be the president of public liberty, the *president of the constitution*. We have seen an alien bill, vesting the executive in certain cases with almost unlimited powers. We have witnessed a sedition law triumphant over the liberty of the press. We have beheld an incessant and restless spirit of persecution multiplying fines, and penalties, and imprisonment. We have seen an itinerant judge not content with exercising his powers unbiassed on the bench of justice, industriously travelling in pursuit of victims. We have seen those records and muniments which were necessary for the vindication of a defendant, sternly denied to him in defiance of that law which has idly stated, that the truth of an allegation shall be a compleat defence in cases of libel. We have heard the judges of the United States prejudge a question, in which the life of a prisoner was concerned, by refusing to listen to the arguments of counsel in a trial for treason. In the case of Robins, we have viewed an attempt to destroy the independence of the judiciary by subjecting them to the controul and directions of the president—we have seen authorities, which the constitution has denied to the government, claimed and exercised under the dangerous idea that they are given by the common law of England. In the expences of a small army composed of many officers and few soldiers, and never in actual service, we can readily perceive the enormous cost of a permanent military establishment—we have seen an ambassador sent to England for the purpose of procuring satisfaction for the depredations upon our trade, at this moment under the operation of his treaty, recognizing the British debts: We are astonished with the liquidation of a balance of millions against us—we have a national debt increasing and likely to increase, until its annual interest shall exhaust the fruits of laborious industry and taxation, like the leaves of autumn gather and multiply around us. Such, Americans, is the picture of our present prosperity. I shall proceed no farther, volumes would not exhaust the subject. Let us be true to ourselves—let us rally before the genius of liberty and the spirit of the constitution, and let no consideration divert us from the determined resolution of preserving the rights and freedom of our country.

Enough of Mr. Adams. I am impressed with the conviction that he is destined to revisit the shades of retirement, enjoying literary leisure, he may establish a Tusculum at Braintree, or, like Plato, soothe his imagination by visionary theories; from the Republicans he cannot expect a single suffrage, and it would be folly to rely upon the attachment or fidelity of the Federalists—the wounds of Timothy—insulted honor—disappointed hopes—unsatisfied revenge—powerful incentives, and irresistible passions, have united to give the ascendancy to Mr. Pinckney. It is not to be imagined that the quondam secretary will be idle, a single southern vote or a single eastern elector will prevent the re-election of Mr. Adams; and upon the failure of Mr. Jefferson, confer the empire upon his anglo-federal rival. Like Simeon of old, Mr.

Adams may repeat the *Nunc dimittis*, and if Mr. Jefferson should be elected, he may justly exclaim "*Quia viderunt oculi mei Salutare tuum.*"

I know not Mr. Pinckney, politically speaking, he is a man whom no-body knows,\* but it is perfectly understood that he is contemplated as a second† Bibulus who permitted Cæsar to govern. We can judge of the individual from the character of the party by whom he is supported, and the views by which such party is uniformly actuated. It is well known, that at the last election Mr. T. Pinckney was supported by Mr. Hamilton\*, in preference to Mr. Adams; and that C. C. Pinckney is now the candidate of the exiled members of the present administration. It is a matter of notoriety, that an explosion has taken place in the cabinet, and that a violent schism has ensued between the leaders of the Federal party. The dismissal, or rather the expulsion, of Mr. Pickering, evinces that a convulsion had taken place in our councils, which may probably form a distinguished æra in our history. The president has not thought proper officially to furnish us with his reasons for the dismissal of the secretary, but it is perfectly understood, that his obstinate opposition to the negociation with France, and his manifest partiality for Mr. Pinckney, were the principal occasions of the variance. Since that period at least, the Federalists have become divided into two parties, actuated by different views, and governed by different leaders. The party of Messieurs Pinckney, Hamilton, and Pickering, is the most desperate and violent; its principal characteristics have been a hatred to France; predilection for England; an inflexible determination for war, and an invincible enmity to freedom and the constitution.

When Tracy proclaimed his war of extermination, it was usually considered as an unmeaning ebullition of the passions; for my own part, I was not disposed to view it as the momentary paroxism of a distempered brain; there was a degree of method and consistency in those ravings which indicated system and design. I saw an earnestness and sincerity in this madness which was the evidence of deliberation—war had been agreed upon in cool and serious moments, and that war was designed for the attainment of no common object.

The enmity to Mr. Adams, and the abuse which has been showered upon his head—the undisguised disappointment of the federal leaders, and the division which has taken place in that party proves much—the Sybilline volumes are opened—we have the key to secrets more mysterious than the grave—the laurels of the general are blasted—for the present ambition has become defeated—but the constitution is saved.

Why should the negociation with France have occasioned so much clamour if nothing but the public prosperity had been in question? What benefit could have been produced by war that will be denied us by negociation? Could the national dignity or the substantial interests of America require more than an honorable satisfaction? Even the spirit of Cato would have been satisfied with an ample concession, if the rivalry of his favorite Rome had not extorted the dreadful sentence "*delendum est Carthago.*" Between us and France there is no such rivalry. It was not the motive of Cato which produced such invincible aversion to peace; an ambitious general at the head of an army, would have been the master of the liberties of his country—this consideration is the clue which enables us to explore the labyrinth, as we enter into its recesses the

plot thickens around us—when we unfathom its mysteries we become encompassed with horrors.

Every day and every event furnishes new conviction that the advocates of Mr. Pinckney are not the friends of the constitution: should they ever acquire the ascendancy, I would tremble for its fate. There is abundance of testimony to prove that this party is not contented with our present limited government, but that it is their steady and uniform object to introduce a system essentially and radically different. The constitution proposed by Mr. Hamilton in the late general convention, was every thing but federal; it went to the establishment of a permanent executive, and to the total subversion of the states. The governors were to have been appointed by that herculean executive, and united America, ruined by the perfidy of one man, was again to have been prostrated before the throne of a powerful and almost absolute monarch!

That project is far from being abandoned—it has again been revived in another form—the pamphlet of young Fenno, contemptible as it is, in every respect, betrays the object and purpose of his party. This boy, nurtured in the air of a court, and conversant with the designs and opinions of his patrons, has presumed to offer a system of government to the United States. It is true that this system does not possess originality, but is the servile counterpart of the project of Mr. Hamilton; it exhibits the same features and betrays the same views. An alliance offensive and defensive with Great Britain—perpetual war with France and Spain—foreign conquests—permanent naval and military establishments—an eternal, unextinguishable debt—a perpetual system of funding and speculation—the compleat annihilation of states—a division of the country into districts or provinces, to destroy even the memory of their existence—a president with unlimited powers—governors, or prefects of his appointment—a house of lords composed of such prefects—a permanent aristocracy—an enslaved, impoverished and miserable people—such are the detestable propositions with which millions of freemen have been insulted. My bosom burns with indignation—my pen almost drops from my hand—O! America! my country! may heaven preserve thy freedom—may it preserve thee from the designs of thy treacherous sons. Such is the party of Mr. Pinckney—I feel that my powers are inadequate to pourtray the amplitude of their baseness.\*

I have assigned to you sufficient reasons why neither Mr. Adams nor Mr. Pinckney should be your president—God, who knows my heart, knows that I address you from pure and patriotic motives. I am wholly unconnected with any political character either in or out of office. My sentiments are not secret. I profess and will maintain them candidly and openly, in public and in private—yet it is not probable that as the writer of this pamphlet, I shall ever be known to the world. Let the sentiments it contains be appreciated as they merit, their truth and propriety cannot become affected by any personal considerations; for my own part I delight in obscurity, in the shades of retirement, unknown and unnoticed by the great, accompanied with the solaces of private friendship, let me securely tread the paths of liberty and virtue. I belong not to the school of the Jacobins, or the Federalists. I have no blind respect for names alone, claiming the privilege of thinking for myself, I shall always enquire *Quid sit pulchrum, quid turpe, quid utile, quid non*. I am the partizan of Mr. Jefferson, in no other sense than I am the partizan of truth, and freedom, and my country.

Christianity I have advocated, and will ever advocate, upon true, sincere and liberal grounds; but I never will tamely permit it to be converted into an engine for the destruction of every privilege and enjoyment, and prospect, which is valuable upon earth. I reverence our civil constitution, because, from the serious dictates of the understanding, I am convinced it is the best and most perfect in the world—to preserve it therefore, I shall ever exercise my limited talents, and, if necessary, sacrifice my life.

At this moment you are called upon to take a stand upon the principles of your constitution; while the world is agitated to its centre, and alarms are heard from every quarter, it would be madness to loosen the anchor of your safety, this is not a time for speculation, it is not a season for changing your system of government. Scylla lies on the one side, and Charybdis on the other, why should you hazard your security? why should you entrust your political constitution in the hands of men whose fidelity, and whose principles are more than suspected? Jefferson is known, his sentiments—his character—his probity are established; he is not the man of France or of England—but the man of public liberty—the man of the people—the man of the constitution.

I wish not to foment the rage of parties; on the contrary my most ardent desire would be to allay the fervency of their resentments; but in a time like the present, good men cannot remain inactive, neutrality would amount to a criminal abandonment of principles; I have ceased to discriminate parties, by the idle jargon of the day, jacobins and democrats, and old, and new federalists, let them be buried, and upon their prostrated ruins, let us erect the universal party of liberty, and virtue, and the constitution; such men as Mr. Pinckney and Mr. Adams, will never establish harmony, the people cannot, nor should they extend their confidence towards them, they never will believe their liberties secure, in the hands of men deservedly rendered obnoxious. If there is a man in America who at the present crisis, can restore harmony to the empire, and give stability to the constitution—it is Mr. Jefferson.

I have no idea of sacrificing the liberties of my country, to mistaken compliance towards divines; when Philip meditated the destruction of Greece, he commenced his career by corrupting the oracles—such was the insidious policy of the tyrant, who triumphed at Cheronæ; it reads a powerful lesson to the people, and with resistless energy, forbids them to render religion the fatal instrument of ambition. God forbid! that the British party—the sycophants of Liston, and the supporters of the infamous Cobbett\* should give as a president. People of America, patriots and electors, be assured that it is not religion, but the state which is in jeopardy—Jefferson, who has been the object of so much unmanly but unavailing calumny, is one of the strongest bulwarks of its safety; remember that at this moment, your liberty, your constitution, your families, your children, the fate of the empire, depend upon the rectitude of your decision. May the God of heaven, infuse a portion of his grace and wisdom into your hearts, and understandings, and direct you to the final resolution, most conducive to his glory, and to the prosperity of our beloved country.

Timoleon

## Postscript

Now, Americans, after what you have seen and heard, can you doubt the existence of a British party hostile to your constitution? Only compare facts and circumstances together; if you suffer yourselves to be imposed upon you will deserve the consequences. First, you have seen Mr. Adams openly write in favour of aristocratical principles. Secondly, you have seen Mr. Hamilton propose a real monarchical constitution. Thirdly, the proceedings of that convention have been kept a profound secret. What could have been the reason of that extraordinary measure, except to shut out the light of inquiry? Do you think the dungeons of the Inquisition would have been barred and bolted, if its proceedings had been favourable to the public good? Fourthly, you have seen the British printer, Peter Porcupine, openly countenanced and protected at the seat of government. Fifthly, you have seen his successor, Mr. Fenno, tread in his very footsteps. Sixthly, you have seen this very Fenno, who is privy to the whole secret, openly recommend a British alliance, and a monarchy in substance. Seventhly, you have witnessed the very extraordinary disappointment occasioned by the negotiation with France. Can you possibly account for this circumstance, without believing that the British interests are preferred to those of America? Eighthly, you have seen the infamous Cobbett, immediately afterwards, abuse your president and your government, and take his flight. Ninthly, you have seen Fenno join in his abuse, and openly ridicule your independence and your revolution. Mr. Liston goes home, finding that he can be of no service at present. Eleventhly, this very Peter Porcupine was recommended by Lord Auckland as a clerk to Mr. Jefferson, who was at that time secretary of state. Could this have been for any other reason than to give that wretch an opportunity of betraying the secrets of the office to his friends and employers the British; and, Twelfthly, you have the evidence of Mr. Adams himself, that there is a British party in this country, and that the Pinckney's are attached to that party. He tells you expressly, that he had long known the British intrigue, and even inspected it in the diplomatic appointment of Pinckney. Yet Mr. Adams, knowing all these things, remained connected with those men, until there is every reason to believe that they endeavoured to shake him off, to make room for a person upon whom they could place more dependence. But this is not all the evidence, there is more behind the curtain. I recommend the perusal of Fenno's pamphlet, as a correct index to the designs of the British faction. After all this evidence, is it possible that any American whig, should withhold his suffrages from Mr. Jefferson?

[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

53

## OVERCOMING EVIL WITH GOOD

Stanley Griswold

HARTFORD

1801

Stanley Griswold (1763–1815). A Yale graduate in 1786 and Congregational clergyman at New Milford, Connecticut, Griswold led a checkered life and died of a fever at Shawneetown, Illinois Territory. He was expelled from the pulpit in 1797, allegedly because of his disbelief in human depravity and for preaching universal salvation. But his political views were more likely the cause, since he favored democracy and Thomas Jefferson and was even said to support the French Revolution—all of which made him odious to the Connecticut clergy.

Griswold retreated to Walpole, New Hampshire, to edit one of the new Republican papers there, the *Political Observatory*. After two years he was appointed secretary of the Michigan Territory, and he disappeared into the Western wilderness. Later he moved to Ohio, where he served as an appointed United States senator for six months in 1809–1810. The final five years of his life were spent riding a judicial circuit in the Ohio and Wabash valleys, although it is uncertain whether or how he had learned the law.

The sermon reprinted here—which is at once eloquent, profound, and conciliatory—was part of the Wallingford, Connecticut, celebration of the election of Jefferson to the presidency in 1801; it was one of the events that sent Griswold packing out of the ministry and out of Connecticut. The acrimonious flavor of the political religion of the time can be surmised from this and the previous two sermons of John M. Mason and Tunis Wortman. Governor John Reynolds described Griswold as “a correct, honest man—a good lawyer—paid his debts, and sang David’s Psalms” (Reynolds, *The Pioneer History of Illinois* [1852], p. 337).

### My Respectable Audience,

I came not hither to preach a system of party-politics, nor to excite nor indulge ravings of faction. I came in obedience to what I conceived to be the duty of a Christian and a patriot, to contribute my most earnest endeavors toward healing the unhappy divisions of our country.

Unfortunately some individuals are to be expected to be beyond cure, especially from such remedies as I shall apply, having drank down the poisonous virulence of party too copiously to admit of an easy recovery. But the citizens at large I cannot consider



by any means in this predicament. They have ever been honest, are still honest, and desire nothing but to be honest.

If unhappily any individuals be past cure, the lenient remedies of the gospel, which I purpose to apply on this occasion, upon such will be thrown away. And for such nothing seems to remain but the severer applications of reproof and rebuke, which our Saviour occasionally exhibited to some in his day, while he spake to the multitudes with the greatest mildness and affection.

The method I have judged most proper to attain the object suggested, is to address a few considerations more particularly to the injured—those of every denomination and description of sentiment in our country, who may have suffered wrongfully—who have received wounds, and whose wounds have not yet forgotten to smart.

On such the peace and tranquility of our country, I conceive, very greatly depend. Their conduct and the course they adopt are to have no inconsiderable share in determining, whether this country is to settle down in quietness, and harmony to be restored to its citizens—or whether it is yet to be agitated and shaken to its centre by the outrages of party.

Far would I be from impeaching the prudence, the patriotism or the christianity of any who hear me. But it must be confessed, that we are all men, and men of like passions. Hence the necessity of repeatedly calling to remembrance the maxims of sound wisdom and the wholesome precepts of religion. If by suggesting any of these I might contribute in some small degree to the felicity of my country, I could easily forego the ambition of appearing a political preacher on this occasion, and should consider myself well rewarded for any calumnies which are past, or for any which are yet to come.

For pursuing the object proposed, the gospel of the benevolent Jesus affords themes in abundance. I have chosen that cluster of directions recorded[:]

*Bless them who persecute you; bless and curse not. Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil; but overcome evil with good.*

Romans xii. 14–21.

You will at once recognize these precepts as being peculiar to our holy religion. However different they may be from the suggestions of flesh and blood, however contrary to the habits of unholy men or to the temper and practice of the world, on

candid examination they will be found perfectly to consist with reason and sound philosophy, and they bear excellently the test of experience.

If any thing like policy and art may be conceived of the religion of Jesus Christ, the sentiment which runs through the passage we have read and is summed up in the concluding words, has an eminent claim to such a character—*overcome evil with good*. A harmless policy indeed! yet the most effectual to accomplish the purpose designed. If the expression may be used, it is to revenge one's self by benevolence, it is to take vengeance by shewing kindness. Would you melt the obdurate heart of your foe, would you conquer him and lay him completely at your feet, the surest and most effectual way to accomplish it, is to do him good. Heaping upon him acts of kindness will have a similar effect as the smith's *heaping coals of fire* upon a crucible whose obstinate contents he wishes to resolve; they will soften the injurious passions, they will melt down the heart of iniquity and enmity: the first effect will be shame, the next, reconciliation and love.

If this be not the directest way to conquer and get recompense for evil, it is certainly the most noble way. If it is not the most effectual, it is certainly the most godlike. This is the policy which God Almighty pursues toward our wicked race. This is the policy by which he conquers evil. We behold it in every morning's sun which he raises upon our world. We behold it in every shower of rain which he sends upon our earth. We behold it more gloriously still in the face of Jesus Christ, the Saviour. It shines in the redemption he wrought out for sinners. It is conspicuous in the example he set for mankind. It distinguishes the system of morals which he taught. It is the glory of the gospel. Much did he urge it upon men as what alone could make them truly *the children of their Father who is in heaven*, and in pursuing of which only, they could be accounted genuine Christians and be said to *do more than others*.

This divine, this peaceful policy, my hearers, is what I wish now to urge upon you and upon myself; and could my voice extend through my country, it should be urged upon every citizen of America. Would to God! an angel from heaven might descend at this important epoch, that he might fly through our land, and in trains of celestial eloquence impress upon all the injured in it, the glory of *rendering blessing for cursing*, of *overcoming evil with good*. But I hope such have no need of miraculous means to convince them of the excellence of this gospel-policy and of the propriety and urgent necessity of putting it into eminent practice at the present time.

How desirable—what an epoch to be remembered indeed would this be, if the wounds of our country might now be healed!—if henceforth she might bleed no more through intestine divisions, party-virulence, the ravings of faction and the mad acts of blind infatuation! How happy, if mutual good will, heavenly charity and justice might once more be revived among us! How glorious, if the *new order of things*, as it is called (I care not whose order nor what order it is called), might prove but the abolition of hatred, calumny, detraction, rigid discrimination, personal depression and injustice, and instead thereof restore the old order of social felicity, mutual confidence, benevolent and candid treatment which once distinguished the citizens of this country! If one sincere desire is cherished by my soul, it is, that this happy old order of things might be restored, that we might see an eternal end to the little, detestable

maxims of party, and that the generous principles of the country might come forward and reign. O genius of America! arise; come in all the majesty of thine ancient simplicity, moderation, justice; re-commence thine equal empire; drive the demon, party, from our land: From henceforth let the order among us be thy order.

To insure such a glorious and most desirable order of things, my hearers, it is absolutely necessary that the injured among us, of whatever sentiment or character, should not think of revenging, should not think of retaining prejudices and a grudge against their fellow-citizens; but if they revenge at all, let it be by benevolence. The only strife should now be, who can shew the most liberality and kindness, who can do an enemy the most good. Let those who have been the most wronged, be the first to come forward and forgive. Let them bury in magnanimous amnesty, all that is past; and let them exhibit an example of what it is to be truly great—great like a Christian—great like God.

In this sublime policy of the gospel it is by no means implied, that we should be stoics, indifferent to good and evil, or that we should be reconciled to abuse, or that we should not rejoice and be thankful to heaven when we are delivered from it. Christianity was never designed to impair the noble sensibilities of our nature.

I profess no great skill as a politician; nor does it belong to me to say, whether the sufferings which have arisen in our country from political causes, be now certainly at an end. But this I say, if there be well-founded reason to think they are at an end, if the present epoch in American affairs may really be considered as a deliverance on all hands from that unparalleled injustice, those overbearing torrents of abuse and accumulations of injuries; which for some time past have been heaped upon worthy and innocent men, and stained, I fear, the annals of our country beyond the power of time to obliterate—if, I say, this be really the case and may be relied on as fact, then I declare the present occasion an occasion of great joy, deserving our most fervent gratitude to God. And if it be an epoch to prevent still greater abuses from coming on, if it is to set back the tide of party rage from reaching any farther, if it is to say to that boisterous deluge, which was rolling on in such terrible floods and already swept away much that is dear to us, *hitherto hast thou come, but no farther, and here shall thy proud waves be staid*—if it is to prevent a relentless civil war from existing among us, whose flames, alas! lately appeared to be fast kindling, and in the apprehension of many, threatened by this time to have exhibited the awful scene of brother armed against brother—and garments rolled in blood through our land—if henceforth nothing more is to be feared for personal character, liberty, life, the safety of our Constitution and government, the peace of our country and our social happiness, then I declare it an epoch deserving eternal remembrance and the most heart-felt exultation before the God of heaven. God grant, it may prove such an æra, and that our dear country may once more be happy.

But it requires no great political skill to see that all this in a measure depends on conditions: and one principal condition unquestionably is, that the injured forget their wrongs and be above revenge.

This leads me to suggest a few considerations to recommend the precepts in the text, or the gospel-policy of *overcoming evil with good*.

No one can doubt, that this is an eminent and very distinguishing part of the system taught by the author of our religion. Forgiveness of injuries, love to enemies, charity, a mild, inoffensive behavior, and even literally *the rendering of good for evil*, were themes much upon his tongue, continually urged and enforced by him. By the authority of our Lord, then, we are bound to practise these virtues.

And his example was strictly conformable to these his precepts. Never man *endured so much contradiction of sinners against himself*, so much enormous outrage, such monstrous abuse, as Jesus Christ endured. Yet never man behaved so perfectly inoffensive, or so unremittingly persevered in doing good. He was reproached as a glutton and a drunkard, *a friend and associate of publicans and sinners, a petulant fellow in community, an enemy to Cesar and all government, a low-bred carpenter's son, a turner of the world upside down, a foe to religion, a vile heretic, a perverter of the good old traditions of the elders and the commands and institutions of the fathers, a despiser of the sabbath, a blasphemer, a deceiver of the people, an agent of Beelzebub*—but the time would fail me to tell of all the reproaches and all the hard names with which he was reviled.

Nor did his sufferings rest only in what pertained to reputation. His whole walk on earth was amid snares and plots craftily laid to take, not only his liberty, but his life. And every thing was favorable to render those snares successful: they were laid by a powerful hierarchy, seconded by the rulers of the day, and the Evil One must come and render his aid. Much did he suffer: but never did he manifest a single wish to injure them. The people generally were more friendly to him: they frequently flocked in multitudes around him, and often did they form a defence for his life which his foes dared not provoke. But sometimes means were found to inflame them also, and set them against him. In these cases he was left alone to sustain the vengeance of an enraged world. He could not live long. He was too honest and too good for this earth. At an early period of life he fell a victim to the powers combined against him.

But what was his conduct under these sufferings? what was his conduct even in that last trying hour, that hour of darkness, when perfect innocence was about to suffer indignities which should belong only to the foulest guilt? Now we should expect revenge, if ever. Now, that the measure of his injuries was full, might we not look for some capital blow to retaliate for the whole at once? Why did he not shake the earth out of its place and crumble his enemies to dust? Why did he not bid his waiting legions of angels empty the realms of heaven—fly and smite his abusive foes to destruction? Good God! what do we see!—*he goes as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth!* His dying breath wafts a tender prayer to the throne of mercy for his murderers, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!*

Shall such an example shine before us, and not ravish us with its glories? Shall we boast such an Author of our religion, and not be ambitious to imitate him? How do all the injuries which we endure and all our sufferings dwindle into nothing compared

with those of our Master? And oh! how should all dispositions of vengeance melt away from our souls before the burning lustre of his example?

But let us look at the intrinsic merits of this conduct, thus exemplified by Jesus, and so eminently required by his precepts. This conduct may be justified both on the ground of good policy and of moral obligation.

First, on the ground of policy. The apostle evidently suggests the idea of policy in these words, *for, in so doing, thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head*. We have already explained this figure. It alludes to a smith's heaping coals of fire upon a crucible, or any hard substance which he wishes to soften or solve. A very happy allusion to set forth the power of kind actions upon the hearts of our abusive enemies. If we wish to conquer them most effectually, this is the way to do it. We all, I presume, have witnessed somewhat of this in our intercourse with mankind. If we ourselves have ever unjustly abused another, for him to return us obliging and good actions upon it, makes us ashamed, and we soon desire to forget what we have done. This kind of conduct, well-timed and properly directed, is absolutely irresistible. It puts upon man the appearance of a superior being, and compels regard. To repulse evil with evil, tends only to sharpen the hostile passions and to fix the parties in everlasting hatred. This is not conquest, it is only continuing the battle without ever deciding the victory.

I suppose it likely, that it was on account of this peculiar feature in the character of Christ and his religion, that so many of his crucifiers were afterwards *pricked in the heart* and turned to be his followers, as we are told three thousand did at one sermon of Peter's, on the subject of the crucifixion. And on the same account the religion of Christ made rapid progress in the world, so long as its supporters exhibited this its peculiar feature. But when they assumed the power of the state and the power of armies to assist the power of Christianity, and its advocates became fierce, revengeful, intolerant, then its spread was retarded, and even Mahometanism outstripped it in progress.

But secondly, the gospel-conduct in question, may be justified upon the ground of moral obligation. Our enemies and abusers, be they who they may, have something in them or pertaining to them which deserves our regard, and I will say, our love, notwithstanding the malice and depravity which they may also possess.

In the first place they have existence. And is not existence valuable? Think of annihilation: See how anxious all are to preserve their lives, not excepting the very brutes. What is thus demonstrated to be valuable by every testimony around us, and by our own irresistible feelings, ought surely to be prized at some rate and to be treated accordingly.

They have also rational faculties. And are not these valuable? Look at the idiot or at the delirious wretch! what an afflicting sight is the absence of mental faculties? They are to be regarded, then, where they exist.

Our enemies possess immortal natures. This confers inestimable worth. The fly, that lives and sports a summer, is a being of small value. The brute, that protracts his life to a few years, is more valuable. But man, who is destined to live when the sun and the stars are no more, who is to travel onward and grow in excellence through eternal ages, possesses a value beyond all computation, beyond all conception. Our Saviour estimates a soul above the whole world. Is such an object to be dealt lightly with? Is he rashly to be consigned over to utter hatred, and shall every sentiment be expunged from our hearts which should excite us to consult his welfare?

They also have a *capacity for virtue and happiness*. However depraved at present, yet they are not beyond recovery. If malice now rankles in their hearts, yet their hearts are capable of being receptacles of benevolence. They are salvable creatures, restorable to virtue and felicity. Shall they be thrown away as good for nothing, and all regard be withdrawn from them, when this capacity is in them and they may yet be ranked with ourselves in dignity and bliss? Ought they not rather to be considered as a valuable machine, disordered truly, but capable of repair? Do we throw away our gold and silver utensils, because for the present they may have gotten out of order? Moral evil is but a disorder of the mind, and is removable. The evil should be hated; but the unhappy subject of it is still to be regarded. Our desire and endeavor should be to rectify, not destroy.

The dignified nature of man, and his capability of being restored to virtue and felicity, were what rendered him in his sins an object of regard to his Maker, and procured for him the merciful provision of the gospel. What if God had treated our sinful race according to the dictates of enmity and hatred? Who would ever have found mercy? No, he loved us notwithstanding *we were enemies in our minds by wicked works*. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son to die. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* From the example of our Maker, then, as well as by looking directly at the subject, we see there is something in enemies and wicked men, which is a proper foundation for love, and demands benevolent treatment.

Another consideration which should commend our enemies to our affectionate regards is, they are our brethren, children with us of one great Parent, members together of one great family. Their blood is a branch of the same fountain which flows in our veins. They are “bone of our bone and kindred souls to our’s.” “Pierce my vein,” says a poet,

Take of the crimson stream meandering there  
And catechise it well: apply thy glass,  
Search it, and see now if it be not blood  
Congenial with thine own.

They exercise all the functions which we exercise. They weep as we weep. They feel as we feel. They suffer as we suffer. If some of the family are proud, selfish, disposed to be injurious and trample on the rights of the rest, let them be brought to know their places—but let them still be beloved. What is here suggested is the foundation of

philanthropy, or universal benevolence, which unquestionably is the benevolence of the gospel, and what we all ought to entertain.

Thus on the solid basis of moral obligation rests the duty of loving and treating well our enemies.

I shall now mention a few considerations of another kind, which should make us extremely cautious how we indulge revengeful feelings toward those who may have abused us.

First of all, we ourselves are frail, fallible beings, and therefore may mistake the intentions of our fellow-creatures, misapprehend their motives, or may see their actions in a distorted form. Perhaps they are not so guilty as we imagine. Or it may be, through frailty we have offered unwarrantable provocation. In either of these cases revenge would be unjust.

We are further to consider, that our enemies and abusers are also subject to frailties. Great allowances are to be made on this account. The God of nature seems to have created some souls on an extremely little scale. Such are they who, capable only of being actuated by party-spirit, do nothing, think nothing, feel nothing, but just as party-spirit dictates. Some of this description have been known not to be able to hold common good neighborhood, nor Christian fellowship, nor to celebrate an anniversary festival, nor to communicate with their God, no, not even to hear a prayer, with one not of their particular party, be [h]is character as bright as an angel's. Shall we be disposed to revenge upon such little creatures?—pity, pity, nothing but pity is called for.

Others may become enemies and abusers merely because they mistake the intentions, the principles, the views of each other. They may see you through a false medium. Their enmity may be founded on some false report. They may be acted upon by an influence which they do not perceive; may be led by the interested and crafty; may be deluded, deceived, excited by groundless alarm and cajoled in a thousand ways, which they themselves would despise, had they better information. I verily believe, that more than one half of the feuds, animosities and enmities which afflict mankind, flow from these sources, rather than from any real ground of difference, or from downright malice of heart. I am certain this is the case in times of general party, when the people are roused up to oppress and abuse one another. Oh! it is piteous to see the fatal fruits of this frailty, to see honest and well-meaning people made to drink down potions of poisonous prejudice against their brethren for no cause, to see them excited to baleful rage, made to vent reproaches, and ready to whet the sword of destruction, as against cannibals and monsters, when the principles of both are identically the same, and all are seeking the same object, only perhaps some party-name, devised and applied by knaves, with a plenty of misrepresentation, is the whole difference between them! I am bold to say it, this of late years has been afflictingly the case in this country. People, whose real principles differ not one jot nor tittle, have been made most cordially to hate one another. The most genuine patriots have been anathematized by the most genuine patriots, the truest whigs by the truest whigs, the best republicans by the best republicans! It was a pitiable scene. But ought we to be

disposed to revenge? Whoever thou art, of whatever party, that hast suffered in this way, if you hate these good people, you hate your best friends, you hate your compatriots and real brethren. Moreover, they never hated you; they hated only a phantom in your stead, a shade, an empty shade, which has been artfully raised up before them and called by your name. The people at large are honest, and all the sin lies at the door of their deceivers. These may be rebuked sharply: they may be spoken to as the mild Jesus spake to the deceivers of the people in his day, *Ye serpents! ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?* But to the people we should never speak in this manner. They were never spoken to thus by their friend Jesus. He always addressed the multitudes with respect and tenderness. And even their deceivers should not be devoted to hatred and ill offices. Like our Lord the genuine Christian will pray for them, if he can do no more.

When people are drawn by the designing into deep delusion and high party-rage, it is not to be expected that they all will come out together, that every one so soon as another will have the scales fall from his eyes to see clearly what has been the matter. This depends very much upon accident. The schemes of the crafty are often so deeply laid and so closely hedged about, that it requires years for them to come fairly out and be seen by the greater part of honest people. Often it is true of such schemes, "*Longa est injuria, longæ ambages.*" Many of the honest and unsuspecting will not be undeceived but by the unfolding of the scheme in serious and alarming facts. But to some it may by accident be leaked out beforehand, perhaps from the very mouths of its authors. Or circumstances of a local and particular nature may conspire to convince some long before others. When this is the case, the first who are convinced will be thought hard of, and perhaps be calumniated and abused by their own brethren whose conviction is to come later. The schemers will endeavor to make this the case as much as possible, and will foment it by every means in their power. What is here observed may furnish an answer to those who sometimes ask one who differs from them, "How comes it that you know so much more than every body else?" The true answer is, it comes by accident and various local circumstances, more than from any superiority of understanding or better principles of patriotism. But it will be acknowledged, I think, that in these cases patience ought to be used, a very mild and gentle conduct ought to be observed. To revenge would be to revenge upon honest men.

We may vary a little the statement of this matter. The difference between honest people at the present day (and such I conceive the great body on both sides to be) is merely a difference of belief. Some individuals, to be sure may be most wicked and designing. But, it is idle to say, that the great body of people on either hand are not honest. They are honest, and most sincerely friendly to the Constitution and their country. But one of one party believes there is a design on foot to overturn the Constitution and deprive the country of its liberties. Another of another party believes no such thing. Whereas the latter would equally detest such a design and its authors, could he believe it were so. Now shall men go to revenging upon one another merely for differences of faith, or belief? It would be reviving the worst doctrine of the dark ages.

Another consideration which should make us cautious not to indulge revenge is, that by so doing we pollute and injure our own souls. Revenge is a foul passion. To be



overcome with it, is to be overcome with evil. Be it never so justly provoked, it hurts the temper; and if allowed to continue, will stop little short of entirely ruining it. Revenge is very properly pictured as a chief characteristic of the infernals. And the perfection of God is to be ever serene, good and forgiving. When we can sincerely forgive our enemies, bless them and do them good, it is a token of great advancement in grace: for our Saviour considers this as the badge of Christian perfection, who in view of it says, *Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.*

As a further recommendation of this heavenly conduct, let me observe, that whoever finds himself truly disposed to practise it, may have the consolation to think, that most probably he is in the right with respect to those things for which he is abused, and that his oppressors are wrong. The sure signs of error are a rigid, illiberal conduct, persecution and abuse, a disposition to discriminate, depress and keep down by violence whatever is opposed, and to repay tenfold when we have it in our power. This kind of conduct from of old has always distinguished the advocates of error, and is a certain badge of it. Whereas truth never feels a necessity for these things, but is always mild, meek, liberal, generous, friendly to moderation and the utmost fairness, asks only an equal chance to be heard, disdaining violence, sure to conquer by her own charms. The Pharisees and chief-priests on the one hand, and Jesus on the other, were perfect examples of the conduct which error and truth respectively inspire.

When parties exist, perhaps there is no better rule to determine which is nearest the truth, than to recur to the manner of their treating each other, and mark the quantity of abuse offered on either side. And among all the species of abuse, perhaps that of epithet is as sure a standard as any. Whichever party invents and applies odious epithets in the greatest abundance and of the most unfounded and scandalous import, may be presumed to be most out of the way.

The peaceful conduct under consideration may be recommended from the excellent effect which will ultimately attend it, although for the present moment it may be unsuccessful. When men are outrageously abused, they are wont to think, there was never any thing like it before. And if their abusers prosper over them, they are apt to despair, and imagine all to be lost unless they resort to desperate efforts and oppose violence to violence. But this is the short-sighted wisdom of the flesh. We at this late age of the world have reason to know better. Have not worthy men, the just, friends of truth, of righteousness, of liberty, of every the most laudable cause, suffered in every age? To omit the mention of others, did not the immaculate Jesus and his first followers suffer, as men never suffered? Yet, what was the effect? Did not the gospel rise, shake itself from ignominy and run triumphantly through the world; while their outrageous foes soon sank out of repute and out of remembrance? There is something in mankind which favors suffering merit, and will assist it in spite of all opposition, something which approves of moderation and reasonable conduct, and condemns overbearing things. This is a laudable disposition in mankind, and where there is nothing special to repress the public will, it is certain to give eventual triumph to those who under abuse, conduct according to the maxims of Christ; it will in the end bring them, with their cause, out of all their troubles.

Finally, my hearers, if any of you (and I would address those of every description, sentiment and party) if, I say, any of you have experienced the odious effects of a system of conduct the opposite of the one we are considering, if you have experienced those effects in your reputation, business, profession, property or individual freedom, if your indignation has been roused, or your contempt excited at any little, narrow, malevolent acts of men by which you have been attempted to be injured—will you not still continue to detest, and forbear to adopt such a despicable system of conduct for your own? I beg to be considered as addressing all of every sentiment and character, who have been abused by any conduct opposite to the liberal precepts of Jesus. Will you not abominate such conduct as you have been taught to do by your own hard experience? and will you not cleave to the generous, the manly, the godlike deportment prescribed in the gospel? Let me call upon your own sufferings; let me appeal to your own past feelings—your sorrow, your pity, your indignation, your scorn—let me bring them all to your remembrance and conjure you by them; never, never to fall into a line of conduct which you so much disapprove. Never lose sight of those noble sentiments which you so much wished might have been shewn toward you. While they are fresh in your recollection, consecrate them, sanctify them, let them be eternally held sacred. Repay nothing of what you have received: nobly forbear. *All things whatsoever ye would, that men should have done to you, do ye even so to them.*

As it respects the public welfare and peace of the country, let me ask, Has not the monster, party, raged long enough? Has he not marched like a bloody cannibal through our land and glutted sufficiently his abominable maw? Has he not devoured enough of reputation, enough of honest merit, enough of our social peace and happiness? Has not brother hated brother, neighbor neighbor, citizen citizen, long enough? Is it not time to put an end to the wounds of society and to heal our bleeding country?

I feel the more earnest on this occasion as I consider the present juncture of affairs most important. And I view myself addressing an audience composed in some considerable degree of a description of men through this country on whose prudent and wise conduct, much, very much depends to restore tranquility and happiness to our land.

Let me, then, bring to your view our bleeding country. Let me place her before you in all her deplorable plight, torn and mangled with faction, poisoned with the venom of party, wrecked with intestine hatred, strife, division, discord, and threatened with complete dissolution. Before you she stands. To you she turns her eyes: she implores your consideration: she begs to be restored to her wonted dignity and happiness. “Will you,” she cries, “introduce a system of party, personal depression and abuse, and tear my vitals asunder? Oh! remember Jesus, the friend of the world! His precepts will heal me. If you have been *persecuted*, I beseech you to *bless*: if you have been *despitefully used*, *pray for* your abusers: if you have been *reviled*, *revile not again*. *Render to no man evil for evil, but contrariwise, blessing. Overcome evil with good.* Thus shall my reproach be wiped away: thus shall my wounds be healed: thus shall you and all my children be restored to happiness.”

Agreeably to these importunate cries of our country, suffer me to conclude with offering a few particular directions for the observance of all on whom any thing depends relative to our country's peace.

First of all, dropping on all hands every term and epithet of party—I mean such terms and epithets particularly as originated in rancor, and have no foundation in reality—carefully consult the ancient spirit of the country, see what its maxims were formerly, and what now are its genuine principles and wishes. Whatever you find these to be, with them go forward and do the public will. Be not a faction within the country; but be the country itself. Let not your spirit be the passion of party; but let it be the public spirit. Let the genius of America reign.

Give me leave to say, you will not mistake the ancient maxims of this country nor its present wishes if you be steadfast, genuine *republicans*. If we recur to our forefathers we shall find them republican from the beginning. The spirit of freedom drove them from their native land and brought them to this then howling wilderness. Genuine principles of liberty were conspicuous in all their early proceedings. No greater liberty-men were ever seen in America, than Winthrop, Davenport, Hooker, Haynes, and all that band of worthies who, under God, were the means of our being planted here. Much has been said about the forefathers of New-England. The truth is, the leading, most distinguishing traits in their character were these two, *liberty* and *religion*. In both they were sincere, and prized them above all price. With beams extracted from these sources, their souls were illuminated and warmed. They did not set up an outcry about liberty with an insidious view to root out religion and overturn its institutions: neither on the other hand did they make an out-cry about religion and its institutions with a view to cover over an insidious design of departing from the principles of civil liberty. These principles they carefully handed down to their sons, and in every period of the country's progress they have been conspicuous. They broke out in full splendor in 1775 and '76, of which the *Declaration of Independence* is an illustrious proof. Again they shone forth with effulgent lustre in 1787 and '88, and the unparalleled *Constitution of the United States* was their fruit. These ancient, deep-rooted, republican principles of the country must be most sacredly regarded; for, be assured every variation from them will be resisted and bring on convulsions.

To have said thus much in favor of republican principles I hope will not be deemed to favor of party-spirit. For, I am designating the acknowledged principles of my country. And I beg leave to add, that they are principles of eternal rectitude and equity. Republicanism can no more be considered a party, than immutable truth and righteousness can be considered a party. And republicans can no more be called a faction, than nature, reason and scripture with their Author, can be called a faction. For, these principles rest on the solid basis of nature, are clear as the sun to the eye of reason, and the bible is full of them from beginning to end. Nothing ever appeared to me more preposterous than to say the bible favors of monarchy. What did God say to his people, Israel, when they first asked for a king to rule over them? Read the eighth chapter of 1 Sam. and you will see how he resisted their request and set before them all the evils of monarchy.\* But when the people were deaf, and said (because they could say nothing better), *Nay, but we will have a king*, then God gave them a king in his wrath. And wrath indeed it was! If the public mind at any time become so

depraved as that they will have a king, why then there is no help for it; and it becomes the duty of good men to make the best of the evil. Thus did the prophets and good men in Israel. But because they wished to make the best of an evil, shall it be argued that they were in favor of the evil and were its zealous abettors?

When Jesus Christ came, every maxim and every precept he gave, so far as an application can be made, was purely republican. If we had no other saying of his than this, it would be sufficient to determine the matter. *Ye know*, says he, *that the princes of the nations exercise lordship over them, and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be chiefest among you let him be servant of all.* True he did not come to intermeddle with human governments. But it is plain to see what his real sentiments were. It was not without ground that he was suspected of not being very friendly to Cesar. If he paid him his tribute-money, it was on this principle, *lest we should offend them.* He was a friend to order, but he was in favor of righteous order. *Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate.*

If there be a privileged order of men known in the bible, it is the poor and the oppressed. Such are in scripture taken to God's peculiar favor, he appears their special protector and avenger, and denounces terrible woes upon the head of their oppressors.

Is not iniquity condemned in the bible? But what is iniquity? The word is from *in* and *æquus*, unequal: not unequal as to property or any other accidental circumstance, or appendage; but unequal as to rights. Thus the thief claims a right to trample on the rights of his neighbor, with respect to property, the slanderer with respect to character, the murderer with respect to life. These will not be subject to laws which subject the rest of community; but must claim privileges above them and peculiar to themselves. The noble lord, who trespasses with impunity upon the inclosures of his neighbors, differs nothing from the thief, except that the iniquitous laws of unequal government protect the one and hang the other. Iniquity surely is hateful to God. He repeatedly appeals to mankind in his word, *Are not my ways equal? are not your ways unequal?*

Thus republican principles are no party-principles, inasmuch as they are founded in nature, reason and the word of God. At any rate, they are the principles of our country; and in exhorting you to abide by them, I am sure I speak the mind of the country, and what she herself would urge with pathetic importunity, were she to rise in my place and address you.

Permit me further to say, you would not mistake the old and genuine maxims of the country, if you should set an inestimable value upon that instrument, called *The Declaration of American Independence*. There her principles are displayed. There they are graven as in adamant, never to be effaced. That was the banner she unfurled when she arose to assert her rights. Under that banner she marched to victory and glory. On that were inscribed the insignia of all she contended for.

Cherish then, that immortal document of what once were declared in the face of the world to be the principles of this country. I firmly believe they are still its principles.

Give me leave to say further, you will not mistake the will and pleasure of the country, if you give all your friendship, all your best wishes, and all the support in your power to the incomparable *Constitution of the United States*. This Constitution was adopted by a fair expression of the public will. It is the government of the country and the ordinance of God. When we examine its merits, we find it but another edition of the genuine principles of republicanism, equal rights its foundation, and the welfare of the people its object. The precious maxims of the Declaration of Independence are transplanted into the Constitution. And as under the former the country marched to victory, so under the latter she may advance to prosperity.

Let the Constitution then, be esteemed the palladium of all that we hold dear. Let it be venerated as the sanctuary of our liberties and all our best interests. Let it be kept as the ark of God. Obey the laws of government. Be genuine friends of order. Take that reproach from the mouths of monarchs, that republicans are prone to rebellion. Dissipate that stigma, if it has been fastened upon any of you, that you are disorganizers, Jacobins, monsters. Let your love of order consist not in profession, but in reality. Let it be manifested, like true religion, in practice. *Love not in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.*

*Be not devoted to men.* Let *principles* ever guide your attachments. To be blindly devoted to names and men's person's, is at once a token of a slavish spirit, and a sure way to throw the country into virulent parties. Be ready to sacrifice a Jefferson as freely as any man, should he become elated with power, exalt himself above the Constitution and depart from republican principles. Our Constitution contemplated independent freemen, men having a mind of their own, when it provided the right of suffrage. If we are to follow a man blindly wherever he leads, and if his coming once into office is to secure him there forever, whatever his conduct be, in the name of common sense let so idle a thing as suffrage be expunged from our Constitution, and save the people the trouble of meeting so often for election. So long as a man in power behaves well and cleaves to your own principles, give him your support and your applause. But the instant he departs from the line prescribed for him by your social compact, peaceably resort to your right of suffrage, and hurl him from his eminence, be he who he may. In the mean time, always be in subjection to *the powers that be*. By thus devoting yourselves to the principles of our excellent constitution and to the existing laws of government, you will be sure to do the pleasure of the country.

Let me say further, the pleasure of our country is to be free from foreign attachments. To be devoted to England or France or any one nation in preference to another, is unjust in itself, and a sure method to convulse the country with parties. We ought to wish well to all nations, desiring their deliverance from evil, and that they may enjoy their rights and happiness, without connecting ourselves intimately with the fortunes of any. One principal purpose for which we should look at other nations is to learn from their miserable experience how to preserve our own liberties, how to secure our own happiness.

Lastly, to be genuinely and truly religious, would not be mistaking the ancient maxims of our nation. As I have endeavored in this discourse to hold up before you one of the chief and most peculiar features of the gospel, and have urged it by various

considerations, I shall not now be lengthy. Give me leave to say, the genuine spirit of the gospel is the very perfection of man. Possessing that spirit, *nation would no more rise against nation, nor kingdom against kingdom, the lion would lie down with the lamb, and there would be nothing to hurt or destroy throughout the earth; each one might sit under his vine and fig tree, having none to make him afraid.* Genuine Christianity is a system of complete benevolence. Where it enters with its spirit and power, every relation is rendered kind, and every duty is cheerfully discharged. In no relation would its effects be more excellent than between ruler and people. Not that church and state should be blended in the manner which has so much afflicted the world. Far from it. *Christ's kingdom*, in such a sense, *is not of this world.* But it would be no matter how much the spirit of Christianity were blended with the spirit of rulers, or with the spirit of the ruled. The more the better. If the spirit of rulers were to be perfectly Christian, tyranny would never more be known. And if the spirit of the citizens were perfectly Christian, there would be little or no need of government.

This peaceful religion is the nominal religion of our country. How would she rejoice if it might be the real religion? Then indeed *would she be glad and rejoice and blossom as the rose. She would blossom abundantly, and rejoice with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon would be given her, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon.* Imbibe, then, into your souls the spirit of this most excellent religion, and bring forth its fruits in your lives.

On the whole, my hearers, take the particulars we have mentioned, and blending them into one character, put that character on; and proceed with it in all its dignity and amiableness, along the course before you. Uniting the principles of liberty with order, and crowning the whole with genuine religion, be *clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.* Amaze once more the tyrants of the earth when they look toward this land: let them see that men can be free without licentiousness, orderly without needing the shackles of despotism, religious without the impositions of bigotry. By assuming this character, be invulnerable to your foes; baulk the hopes of the envious.

Let this character be invariably maintained. On no occasion and on no account let it sink into the low regions of party. Ah! stoop not—stoop not to the extreme littleness—I was going to mention instances, but the dignity of the pulpit checks me. Far, far from such despicable things be your conduct. Let the American character be borne aloft. Let it soar like the eagle of heaven, its emblem, bearing the scroll of our liberties through fields of azure light, unclouded by the low-bred vapors of faction; and let it not be degraded into a detestable owl of night, to dabble in the pools of intrigue and party and delight itself in the filthy operations of darkness.

Where are our Fathers? where are our former men of dignity, our Huntingtons, Shermans, Johnsons, Stiles's, who in their day appeared like men, gave exaltation to our character, and never descended to a mean thing? It appears to me, in every department we are dwindled, and more disposed to act like children than men.

Let the spirit of our fathers come upon us. Be men: rise: let another race of patriots appear: bring forward another band of sages. Let America once more be the admiration of the world.

Think not that the dignity of a nation can be commuted. Think not that it can be transferred from its only genuine seat, the *mind of its citizens*, and be made to consist in any thing else.

Ou lithoi, oude xula, oude  
Technee tektoonoon ai poleis eisen:  
All' opou pot' an oosin andres,  
Autous soozein eidotes,  
Entautha [kai] teichee kai poleis.

Alceus.

What constitutes a state?  
Not high-raised battlements and lofty towers;  
Not cities proud, nor spangled courts.  
No—*men*—high-minded *men*;  
Men, who their duties know;  
But know their rights, and knowing, dare maintain.

Yes, the true and everlasting dignity of a state spurns all commutation. It never can be made to consist in ornamented stone and wood. You must be men, high-minded men, else the national character will unavoidably sink, prop it how you may. What was Greece, what was Rome, when their men disappeared, their high-minded men? Splendor, pomp, luxury indeed, enough of it; but no glory. And soon their pomp was brought down to the grave. What was Egypt after its people became a race of slaves? did their pyramids prop the falling character of the nation? O Americans! be *men*: let the glory of the nation rest in the dignity of *mind*. Be like the pillars which formerly stood under and bore up your honor. It was a goodly range of plain, hardy, independent, republican sages. These are your best props. Put them under again. Many indeed are fallen. And chiefly thee we lament, O Washington, who wast thyself half our glory! What a pillar wast thou in the fabric of our commonwealth? When shall another such arise? But we hope we have others somewhat resembling. Let us all, my friends, endeavor to be such. The way is open before us; and we have the best of models. Be great then, like Washington, be inflexible like Adams, be intelligent and good like Jefferson.

Give me leave on this occasion particularly to point you to Thomas Jefferson as a laudable example of that magnanimous and peaceable conduct which I have recommended to you in this discourse, and which is so peculiarly necessary to be put in practice at the present juncture. That he has been abused, I suppose will be acknowledged on all hands. But have you heard of his complaining? Have you heard him talk of vengeance and retaliation? Do his writings heretofore betray a little soul? Does his late letter to his friend in Berkley, does his answer to the committee of the house of Representatives, does his farewell address to the Senate\* breathe the

meanness of a spirit bent on revenge? Placid on his mount he seems to have sat, as Washington on his, and beheld the storm of passion among his fellow-citizens with no other sensations than those of extreme pity and deep concern for his country. Like Washington he seems to have looked with an equal eye to the north and to the south, to the east and to the west of the union, and wished them all happiness. Should it come to pass, that he can be so little as to discriminate one half of his fellow-citizens from the other half, and withhold from them all confidence and all respect, brand them for enemies and traitors, deprive them of all offices and honors, and depress and afflict them all in his power—give me leave to say, I shall be one to execrate his conduct most sincerely. What! shall the country be thrown into convulsion and wretchedness, and the conduct which does it, not be abominated?

But at present we are persuaded of better things. At least, every thing which as yet has transpired from him is directly the reverse. And it is for this reason that I point you to him for an example of what ought to be the conduct of all in the present posture of affairs. O my countrymen! those who have any regard for the peace and honor of America!—if you *have been reviled, revile not again*—if you *have been persecuted, bless*; if you *have had all manner of evil spoken against you falsely, recompense to no man evil for evil*. In a word, *be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good*. Come, and in this holy sanctuary of God bring all your grievances, all your resentments, and laying them upon the altar of sacrifice, consume and purge them all away. Turning to the golden altar of incense, inhale largely the sweet perfumes of patriotism, charity and every heavenly grace. Let your breasts henceforth glow with nothing but these peaceful, exalted sentiments.

Then shall your dear country rejoice over you as her genuine sons—her tears shall be dried, her reproach shall be wiped away, peace shall be restored to her afflicted bosom; you shall be blessed with your own reflections, and generations to come shall rise up and call you blessed. Amen.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

54

## AN ORATION IN COMMEMORATION OF THE ANNIVERSARY OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

William Emerson

BOSTON

1802

William Emerson (1769–1811). The son of William Emerson—a Congregational pastor at Concord Church who was present at the Battle of Concord—and the father of Ralph Waldo Emerson (the fourth of eight children), Emerson was a Unitarian clergyman and pastor of the First Church in Boston after 1799. A decade earlier he was graduated from Harvard, where he had been ordained as a Unitarian pastor. Interested in the social, literary, and musical life of Boston, as well as its religious affairs, he was criticized for worldliness. Theologically liberal and an eloquent, if formal, preacher, he served as chaplain of the Massachusetts Senate and an overseer of Harvard College. Emerson participated in the Massachusetts Historical Society, edited the *Monthly Anthology* literary magazine, and founded the Anthology Club, from whose library the Boston Athenaeum Library developed. He died at the age of forty-one, leaving as his most substantial work *An Historical Sketch of the First Church in Boston*, published posthumously in 1812.

It is the glory of nations, as it is of individuals, to increase in wisdom, as they advance in age, and to guide their concerns, not so much by the result of abstract reasonings, as by the dictates of experience. But this glory is no more the uniform felicity of ancient states, than of their ancient citizens. In the eighteenth century, the British nation had existed thirteen hundred years; seen ages roll away with wrecks of empires; marked thousands of experiments in the science and the art of civil government; and had risen to a lofty height of improvement, of freedom, and of happiness. It was yet the misfortune and the disgrace of this kingdom, so famous in the annals of modern Europe, to war with the principles of her own constitution, and to tread, with presumptuous step, the dangerous path of innovation and unrighteousness.

This sentiment will be vindicated by considering, as on this occasion we are bound “to consider, the feelings, manners, and principles, which led to the declaration of American independence, as well as the important and happy effects, whether general, or domestick, which have already flowed, or will forever flow, from the auspicious epoch of its date.”

In assisting your performance of this annual duty, my fellow-citizens, I claim the privilege, granted to your former orators, of holding forth the language of truth; and I

humbly solicit a favour, of which they had no need, the most liberal exercise of your ingenuousness and benevolence.

The *feelings* of Americans were always the feelings of freemen. Those venerable men, from whom you boast your descent, brought with them to these shores an unconquerable sense of liberty. They felt, that mankind were universally entitled to be free; that this freedom, though modified by the restrictions of social compact, could yet never be annulled; and that slavery, in any of its forms, is an execrable monster, whose breath is poison, and whose grasp is death.

Concerning this liberty, however, they entertained no romantick notions. They neither sought nor wished the freedom of an irrational, but that of a rational being; not the freedom of savages, not the freedom of anchorites, but that of civilized and social man. Their doctrine of equality was admitted by sober understandings. It was an equality not of wisdom, but of right; not a parity of power, but of obligation. They felt and advocated a right to personal security; to the fruits of their ingenuity and toil; to reputation; to choice of mode in the worship of God; and to such a liberty of action, as consists with the safety of others, and the integrity of the laws.

Of rights like these, your ancestors cherished a love bordering on reverence. They had inhaled it with their natal air: it formed the bias and the boast of their minds, and indelibly stamped the features of their character. In their eyes honour had no allurements, wealth no value, and existence itself no charms, unless liberty crowned the possession of these blessings. It was for the enjoyment of this ecclesiastick and political liberty, that they encountered the greatest dangers, and suffered the sharpest calamities. For this they had rived the enchanting bonds, which unite the heart to its native country; braved the terrour of unknown seas; exchanged the sympathies and intercourse of fondest friendships, for the hatred and wiles of the barbarian; and all the elegancies and joys of polished life, for a miserable sustenance in an horrible desert.

It was impossible for descendants of such men not to inherit an abhorrence of arbitrary power. Numerous circumstances strengthened the emotion. They had ever been taught, that property acquires title by labour; and they were conscious of having expended much of the one for little of the other. They were thence naturally tenacious of what they possessed, and conceived, that no human power might legally diminish it without their consent. They had also sprung from a commercial people; and they inhabited a country, which opened to commerce the most luxuriant prospects. Of course, property with them was an object of unusual importance. Inhabitants of other regions might place their liberty in the election of their governours; but Americans placed it in the control of their wealth: and to them it was a matter of even less consequence, who wore the robes of office, or held the sword of justice, than who had the power of filling the treasury, and appropriating its contents.

The resolves and attempts, therefore, of the British government to raise an American revenue, they viewed as a thrust at their liberties. By these measures, they felt themselves wronged, vilified, and insulted. If they acknowledged the pretended *right of parliament to bind them in all cases whatever*, it cleft, like a ball of lightning, the

tree of colonial liberty, giving its foliage to the winds, and its fruit to the dust. There was no joy, which it did not wither; no hope, which it did not blight. An angry cloud of adversity hung over every department of social life. Demands of business, offices of love, and rites of religion, were, in some sort, suspended, and the earliest apprehensions of the American infant were those of servitude and wretchedness.

Such were the feelings, which impelled resistance to Great-Britain, and the rejection of her authority. They were the feelings of men, who were vigilant of the rights of human nature, of freemen, whose liberties had been out-raged, of patriots, determined never to survive the honour of their country.

American independence was also induced by American *manners*. The planters of this western world, especially of New-England, were eminent for the purity and lustre of their morals. They were industrious from choice, necessity, and habit. Their mode of living rendered them abstinent from enervating pleasures, and patient of toil. The difficulties of subduing a rough wilderness, the severities of their climate, and the rigour of paternal discipline, were almost alone sufficient to preserve in their offspring this simplicity of life. It had, however, a yet stronger guard in their military and civil, literary and religious institutions.

Exposed continually to the incursion of hostile and insidious neighbours, they trained their youth to the exercise of arms, to courage in danger, and to constancy in suffering.

The forms of their government were popular. They exercised the right of choosing their rulers; and they chose them from the wisest and best of the people. Virtue and talents were indispensable qualifications for office, and bribery and corruption were unknown and unsuspected.

A deep foresight and an expanded generosity directed their plans of education. Colleges were founded in the midst of deserts; and the means of knowledge and goodness were within the reach of all ranks of the community. Every householder was the chaplain of his family; every village had its instructor of children; every parish its minister of the gospel; every town its magistrate; and every county its court of justice. The study of the law, which is ever conservative of liberty, had a due proportion of followers, among whom it numbered as eminent civilians, as any age or country has produced. The colonists, in short, enjoyed all those advantages, which conduce to intelligence, sobriety, hardihood, and freedom in a people.

Such were the manners, which distinguished Americans for a century and a half. They were the manners of men, who, though poor, were too rich to be venal; though humble in pretension, too proud for servility; and though overlooked in the mass of mankind, as possessing no national character, yet convinced the proudest monarchy in the world, that an attempt to oppress them was dangerous, and to conquer them, impossible.

The impossibility of subjugating America consisted not in the feelings and manners only, but likewise in the political *principles* of her sons. They honestly believed, what

they boldly avowed, that the assumption of parliament was a violation of law, equity, and ancient usage.

These colonies originally were composed of men, who were rather ejected from Britain, as nuisances of the state, than fostered as her dutiful children. If, when their increasing population and riches became an object of attention, they owed any thing to the parent country, it was to the king, who gave them their charters, and not to the parliament, which had expended neither cost nor concern in their settlement, and taken no part in the management of their internal affairs. Whilst the governor represented the royal authority, the provincial assembly was to each province what parliament was to Britain. It framed laws, levied taxes, and made every provision for the publick exigence. In regard to the single article of commerce, parliament did, indeed, exercise an unquestioned power of monopoly. In all respects else, it was unknown to the colonies. When, therefore, this body, in which the colonists were not represented, asserted the right of colonial taxation, its claim was unjust; and with the same right in reality, if not in appearance, might the colonial assemblies have gravely maintained the identical supremacy over the people of Britain, which parliament assumed over the people of America.

Was it, then, right in the colonies to resist the parliament, and wrong to resist the king? No. For the king had joined the latter to oppress the former, and thus became, instead of the righteous ruler, the tyrant, of this country, to whom allegiance was no longer due.

Americans called themselves free, because they were governed by laws originating in fixed principles, and not in the caprice of arbitrary will. They held, that the ruler was equally obliged to construct his laws in consonance with the spirit of the constitution, as were the people to obey them when enacted; and that a departure from duty on his part virtually absolved them from allegiance.

Let not this be deemed a licentious doctrine. Who is the rebel against law and order, the legislator ordaining, or the citizen resisting, unconstitutional measures? It is the unprincipled minister, who artfully innovates on the custom of governing; the ambitious senator, whose self is his god; the faithless magistrate, who tramples on rights, which he has sworn to protect; these are the men, who, by perverting the purposes of government, destroy its foundations, bring back society into a state of war, and are answerable for its mischievous effects. Not those who defend, but those who attack, the liberties of mankind, are disturbers of the publick peace; and not on you, my countrymen, but on thee, O Britain, who killedst thy people with the rod of oppression, be the guilt of all that blood, which was spilt in the revolutionary war!

Here, then, you find the principles, which produced the event, we this day commemorate. They were the principles of common law and of eternal justice. They were the principles of men, who sought not to subvert the government, under which they lived, but to save it from degeneracy; not to create new rights, but to preserve inviolate such, as they had ever possessed, rights of the same sort, by which George III then sat, and still sits, on the throne of England, the rights of prescription.

Hence, through the progress of our revolution, these principles continued their operation. Armed in the uprightness of your cause, you disdained an appeal to those ferocious passions, which commonly desolate society in times of commotion. No man lost his life for resisting the general opinion. Instruction maintained its influence, law its terrors, and religion its divine and powerful authority. Property was secure, and character sacred; and the condition of the country was as remote from a savage democracy, as from a sullen despotism.

Such was the American revolution. It arose not on a sudden, but from the unsuccessful petitions and remonstrance of ten long years. It was a revolution, not of choice, but of necessity. It grew out of the sorrows and unacknowledged importance of the country; and having to obtain a definite object by definite means, that object being obtained, was gloriously terminated.

As evidence, that I have not misrepresented the “feelings, manners, and principles,” which gave birth to your independence, recollect the early, regular, and effectual methods adopted by the United States, to form a national constitution of civil government.

That continental patriotism, which, in a time of war, was able to bend individual interest to the common benefit, proved sluggish, precarious, and totally inadequate to the purposes of union and order in the season of peace. There lacked a principle of cohesion, springing from the certain tendencies of human passion, which should compel the knowledge, industry, and emulation of every citizen to promote the opulence and power of the country.

Such a cement was recognized in the federal constitution. Its healthful operations, guided by its celebrated framers and friends, revived the languishing spirit of Columbia. Our consequent rapid population had scarcely a parallel in history. Individuals suddenly multiplied into families, families into towns, and towns into populous and flourishing states. What liberty was to the people of Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, government was now to this country. It patronized genius and learning, gave stimulus to enterprise, and reward to labour. It encouraged agriculture and manufactures; unfurled the sails of commerce; lifted public credit out of the mire of contempt; and placed America on a dignified eminence among the nations of the earth.

These are among *the important and happy effects of a domestick nature, which have already flowed* from our national independence.

There is, moreover, a *general effect, which will forever flow from the auspicious epoch of July 4, 1776*. As often, as the sun shall enlighten this day, in each successive revolution of our orb, it will admonish the rulers of mankind of the folly and danger of innovations in government.

Sound politics is ever conversant with expedience and the temper of the age. It is not a science, which may be learned in the closet, and forced into practice against nature and circumstances. An endeavour, therefore, to engraft untried theories, however

plausible, upon the usual mode of administering affairs of state, is always an hazardous undertaking. The man, who would rashly change even a government confessedly corrupt, betrays pitiable ignorance and presumption. What then shall be thought of English ministers, who impinged on rights and usages, which, for generations, had strengthened and adorned the ancient empire, and were imparting nourishment to this infant realm; and who expended thousands of lives and millions of money in a fruitless effort to legalize their wrongs?

Although, then, the American revolution must be considered, in regard to this country, the most honourable and felicitous, and in the view of the historian, the most splendid, event the world ever saw, yet to legislators in all climes and periods, it conveys this solemn instruction; it teaches them in a voice, louder than the thunders of heaven, to be just and wise: just in not abridging the freedom and invading the properties of their fellow-men, and wise in not abandoning the measures of a temperate policy for the gairish projects of innovation.

If, however, this revolution contains a monition to rulers against political speculations, a revolution of later date affords similar warning to every description of men. The vicissitudes of France, during the twelve past years, defy the pen of description, and deter the writer, who values his credit with posterity, from essaying the record of truth. See there, ye vaunting innovators, your wild and dreadful desolations! Whatever was visionary in metaphysick, or violent in practice, you greedily adopted; and as hastily destroyed whatever bore the semblance of order, rectitude, and antiquity. You fixed no bounds to either your ambition or cupidity. Not content with banishing faith, and law, and decency from the gallick dominion, your ever changeful and unhinging policy assumed the forms of hostility to other governments, and threatened to bring upon the whole civilized world the decades of disorder and rapine.

Yet what have Frenchmen gained by all this revolutionary error and phrenzy? After warring with science, they now encourage it; after abolishing christianity, they have restored it; and after murdering the mildest of despots, their present republick is a mere mixture of military despotism and of popular slavery.

In thus animadverting on the conduct and character of a foreign government, I fulfil a painful, but necessary duty. It is a necessary part of this day's solemnity, because the American, has sometimes been confounded with the French, revolution,\* when that bears no more resemblance to this, than the movement of a regular and beneficent planet is like the wanderings of a comet, which "from his horrid hair shakes pestilence and war,"† "importing change to times and states."‡ It is necessary, because along with the political innovation, which was ravaging Europe, there came abroad an infidel philosophy, equally subversive of freedom, as of morals. For how shall the liberty of individuals be preserved in a state of universal licentiousness? And after the prostration of religious principle, how can you hope for purity of manners? What shall support the superstructure, when the foundation is removed? Who ever put faith in the national convention of France, after it had denied the existence of God? Or what was ever more farcical, than a report on morals from the mouth of Robespierre, whilst that monster of faction was wading to empire in the blood of his country? It is, finally,

necessary, because this unholy spirit of atheism has already deteriorated the political and moral condition of this country, and still menaces our hopes, privileges, and possessions.

Should it be the fate of America to drink still deeper of the inebriating bowl, its government, whose existence depends on the publick sentiment, must fall a victim to the draught. Should the rulers of our country, especially, ever become intoxicated with the poison; should they deviate from the course prescribed by their wise predecessors, incautiously pulling down what had been carefully built; should they mutilate the form, or impair the strength of our most excellent constitution; should they amuse themselves with ephemeral experiments, instead of adhering to principles of certain utility; and should they despise the religion and customs of our progenitors, setting an example of impiety and dissipation, deplorable will be the consequences. From an head so sick, and an heart so faint, disease will extend to the utmost extremities of the political body. As well may you arrest the flight of time, or entice the moon from her orbit, as preserve your freedom under atheistical rulers, and amidst general profligacy of habit. Libertinism and lethargy, anarchy and misrule will deform our once happy republic; and its liberties will receive an incurable wound. The soil of America will remain; but the name and glory of the United States will have perished forever. This lovely peninsula will continue inhabited; but “the feelings, manners, and principles” of those Bostonians, who nobly resisted the various acts of British aggression, will be utterly changed. The streams of Concord will flow as formerly, and the hills of Charlestown grow verdant with each return of spring; but the character of the men, who mingled their blood with those waters, and who eternized those heights, will be sought for, but shall not be found.

What execrations shall we merit from posterity, if, with the instruction and example of preceding ages, and our present advantages, we shall tamely suffer this havock from the besom of innovation! Compared with ours, the memory of those Goths who overwhelmed in their conquests the arts and literature of Greece and Rome, will be glorious and amiable. They destroyed the improvements of their enemies; but we shall have abolished the customs of our forefathers, and the worthiest labour of our own hands: they pleaded the necessity of wasting the refinements of civilization to prevent luxury and vice; but the annihilation of our institutions will annihilate all our virtue and all our liberty.

Are we willing, then, to bid farewell to our independence and freedom? Shall we relinquish the bright visions of republican bliss, which, twenty-six years, have feasted our imagination? Upon the trial of only half that period, will we decry a constitution, which is the wonder of the universe? Or, on account of supposed or real injuries, which it may have sustained, will we desert the noble fabric?

Be such national perverseness and instability far from Americans! The dust of Zion was precious to the exiled Jew, and in her very stones and ruins he contemplated the resurrection of her walls, and the augmented magnificence of her towers. A new glory, too, shall yet overspread our beloved constitution. The guardian God of America, he, who heard the groans of her oppression, and led her hosts to victory and peace, has still an ear for her complaints, and an arm for her salvation. That

confidence in his care, which consists in steadfastness to his eternal statutes, will dispel the clouds, which darken her hemisphere.

Ye, therefore, to whom the welfare of your country is dear, unite in the preservation of the christian, scientific, political, and military institutions of your fathers. This high tribute is due to those venerable sages, who established this Columbian festival, to the surviving officers and soldiers of that army, which secured your rights with the sword, and to the memory of their departed brethren. You owe it to the ashes of him, who, whether considered as a man among men, an hero among heroes, or a statesman among statesmen, will command the love and admiration of every future age. Yes, immortal Washington, amidst all the rancour of party, and war of opinions, we will remember thy dying voice, which was raised against the madness of innovation! “We will cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment to our national union; accustoming ourselves to think and speak of it, as of the palladium of our political safety and prosperity.” You owe it to his great successor, who has now carried into retirement the sublime and delightful consciousness of having been an everlasting benefactor to his country. Enjoy, illustrious man, both here and hereafter, the recompense of the wise and good! And may the principles of free government, which you have developed, and the constitutions which you have defended, continue the pride of America, until the earth, palsied with age, shall shake her mountains from their bases, and empty her oceans into the immensity of space! You owe it to the civil fathers of this commonwealth, and in particular to him, who, thrice raised to its highest dignity, watches over its immunities with painful diligence, and governs it with unrivalled wisdom, moderation, and clemency. You owe it, in fine, Americans, to yourselves, to your posterity, and to mankind.

With daily and obstinate perseverance perform this momentous duty. Preserve unchanged the same correct feelings of liberty, the same purity of manners, the same principles of wisdom and piety, of experience and prescription, the same seminaries of learning, temples of worship, and castles of defence, which immortalize the memory of your ancestors. You will thus render yourselves worthy of their names and fortunes, of the soil which they watered with the sweat of their brows, and of the freedom, for which their blood was the sacrifice. You will thus give consistence, vigour, beauty, and duration to the government of your country; and, rich reward of your fidelity! you will witness a reign of such enlightened policy, firmness of administration, and unvaried justice, as shall recal and prolong to your enraptured eyes *the age of Washington and of Adams*.



[\[Back to Table of Contents\]](#)

55

## A SERMON, ON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST

John Hargrove

BALTIMORE

1805

John Hargrove (1750–1839). The practice of delivering sermons in the Capitol in Washington began in Thomas Jefferson's administration and continued for decades until after the Civil War (see Anson Stokes, *Church and State in the United States*, 1:499–507). All denominations were included in the invitations to preach, and the President, cabinet members, senators, representatives, and the general public attended. The sermon reprinted here, *A Sermon, on the Second Coming of Christ and on the Last Judgment*, delivered on Christmas Day, 1804, was at least the third sermon preached by John Hargrove in the Capitol. He had preached on the day after Christmas in 1802, with President Jefferson and about forty senators and representatives and sixty other people in attendance. Interest was such that he was invited to preach again the following evening. The mystical and eschatological teachings of the Church of the New Jerusalem, a denomination sprung from the writings of Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–1772), were of evident interest to Hargrove's audience. The Baltimore church where he was pastor was the first of the denomination founded in the country (1792). Dr. Joseph Priestly, Jefferson's mentor in things religious, was attracted to the Swedenborgian doctrines of final things, and the matter of Christ's divinity and resurrection were points of debate between him and Jefferson. (See Robert Hindmarsh, *Letters to Dr. Priestly* [1792]; and D. W. Adams, ed., *Jefferson's Extracts from the Gospels* [1983], pp. 14–25, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, Second Series.) In general, all this was in line with the newly aroused interest in the relationship between republicanism and religion.

John Hargrove was born in Ireland and came to America in 1769. He worked as a land surveyor and as a master weaver, and he published *The Weavers Draft Book and Clothiers Assistant* (1792; repr. 1979), the first book of its kind published in America. He was ordained a minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church in 1776 and became a member of the first faculty of Cokesbury College in Abington, Maryland, in 1788. While few details of his life are known, it appears that he converted to the Swedenborgian sect after going to Baltimore to study these teachings with the intention of refuting them. In any event, in 1799 he became the first Swedenborgian minister ordained in the United States and was the pastor of the Church of the New Jerusalem in Baltimore until 1830. He died there in 1839.

## Preface

The numerous and valuable improvements in all the arts and sciences, which have so rapidly succeeded each other during the last half century, contribute to convince the men of the Lord's New Church that a *new order of things* has taken place in the spiritual world, and is thence daily manifesting its happy effects in the natural world; for the natural world is only a world of effects; but the spiritual world is a world of causes.

It is likewise a pleasing and sure presage of increasing knowledge and liberality, that on all such occasions, it is seldom enquired whether these improvements were first suggested by a Whig or a Tory, a Jew or a gentile: To which we may also add, that the bloody and infernal swords of religious intolerance and persecution, are now, probably, for ever sheathed, through the mild, but extensive climates of these United States; for here we have no Inquisition—no Bastile.

And yet it is a fact, that whenever any theological idea or system which is apparently new is announced, or submitted to the consideration of the christian world, "*a hue and cry*" of heretic, and blasphemer is immediately resounded and reverberated; and the most hostile and illiberal opposition manifested against all such annunciations, even by many who positively refuse to examine the premisses!

Such ignorant and bigoted opposers to the growing state of gospel knowledge, should reflect, however, that there is a sure promise left unto the church of God, that "*The path of the just shall be as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day*"; or as it is elsewhere expressed, that in the latter days "*The light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be seven fold, even as the light of seven days.*" Hence, when he who was the "*Light of the World*" appeared on earth "*in the likeness of sinful flesh,*" he plainly and positively declared that (over and above what he then had revealed) he had "*many more things*" to announce, which, at that period they were "*not able to bear*"; but that nevertheless, the time should come, when a brighter dispensation of gospel truths should be afforded us, particularly respecting the true nature of the holy trinity, or object of Christian worship. (See St. John's Gospel xxi. chapter, 12th and [25]th verses.)

Now this blessed period the men of the New Jerusalem Church are fully persuaded hath already taken place: A period which in its future progress will effect the happy downfall of mystic Babylon; and a full and final judgment and rejection of those principles of superstition and infidelity which have brought the church to the consummation of its first period.

Whatever effect the following discourse may have, towards hastening the progress of the period alluded unto, is not for *me* to determine; but this I can say, that it would not have made its appearance so soon from the press, had I not received the following letter, from a member of congress a few days ago; which on this occasion I have respectfully solicited and also obtained leave to insert, without any alteration.

Washington,

30th January, 1805.

Sir,

I have to lament that when you was lately in Washington, I was unable to procure an introduction to you; and consequently had not the pleasure of a conversation, which might have superceded the necessity of this application: I attended at the Capitol when you preached the last sermon at that place, when I was ravished and delighted with your expositions of the doctrines of the gospel; but being as novel as reasonable, I was unable to impress them on my mind in such a way as to be able to systematize them; I have therefore to request (if it can be done without inconvenience to yourself), that you would furnish me with a copy of the sermon. I shall leave this place about the 4th of March for the southward, previous to which, I should be gratified to hear from you. Meanwhile I beg leave to subscribe myself, with sentiments of high consideration your obedient humble servant,

J. B. Earle

The receipt of this letter, I say, produced in my mind, not only a desire to comply with the request of my honorable though unknown correspondent; but impressed me also, with a presumption, that were I to print off and circulate an ample edition of the discourse alluded to, it would probably prove equally pleasing to many other sincere inquirers after religious knowledge. Such as it is, therefore, it is now presented before a candid and enlightened people; not to court contention however, God is my witness; but with the fond hope that I may contribute, in some small degree, to arrest infidelity, and dissipate superstition; and that it may have this happy influence, is, and ever shall be, the fervent and sincere prayer of

Baltimore,

14th Feb. 1805.

The Author

*For he cometh, for he cometh, to judge the earth:—He shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth.*

Psalms XCVI. 13

Various and voluminous are the treatises, with which the christian world has been burdened for ages past, respecting the two grand and interesting doctrines evidently involved in the text before us: I say burdened, because it is an acknowledged fact that after all which has been said, or written on the subject, “clouds and darkness” still rest upon it.

And yet, there are few articles, I presume, within the ample and sacred circle of Christian theology, which appear to have a more solemn and irresistible claim to our pious attention than the doctrines here alluded to—viz.

I. The Lord's second advent into the world; and

II. The general or last Judgment.

Feeling, therefore, as I do at present, far more anxious to satisfy the sincere enquirer after truth, than to display any singular talents for extempore oratory, I have concluded to deviate from my usual mode of public speaking, and avail myself of some prepared notes on this occasion, in order to aid a declining memory, and thereby do the more justice to my subject.

The aggregate number of all who are justly entitled to the appellation of believers in divine revelation, may, with considerable propriety, be arranged under three distinct classes: To wit, the Jewish church, the past or former Christian church, and the New Jerusalem church; which latter church, is now forming, by the Lord, in various parts of the earth, through the medium of the theological writings of that profound philosopher and heaven-taught-seer, Baron Emanuel Swedenborg. And, notwithstanding each of these churches, equally and cordially subscribe to the divine authority and inspiration of the book of Psalms; yet it is equally certain that each of them has adopted some leading sentiments upon the subject, now before us, peculiar to themselves and distinct from each other.

The Jews still contend that the Messiah (promised by the antient prophets) has never yet made his appearance in this world; but, at the same time admit, that he will come, at some future period, in all the grandeur of an earthly prince, and prowess of a mighty conqueror: when he will establish the antient city of Jerusalem, as the centre of his future kingdom and glory.

The former Christian church, has always, to the present period, taught, that the promised Messiah did come into the world, in the days of Augustus Cæsar, and, that Jesus Christ, who was crucified on Mount Calvary, near Jerusalem, was that Messiah; who, though now exalted unto the right hand of God in the heavens, will, nevertheless, make his personal appearance again on earth, at some future period—in order to judge all mankind who have ever lived in the world, and assign to each his eternal abode in heaven or in hell according to the deeds done in the body: Immediately after which, the visible universe will be destroyed, and the procreation of the human race cease forever; but that nevertheless, God will afterwards create *a new heaven, and a new earth*, which shall abide to eternity.

The men of the New Jerusalem church, however, differ very considerably, from each of the former churches, in their ideas of the true meaning of the subject now before us—affirming, that the Messiah, not only came into the world, “in the flesh,” in the days of Augustus Cæsar, but also, that he has actually effected his second general advent, “in the spirit,” not many years ago—by a gracious revelation of the spiritual sense of his holy word, in which, he may be said to have his more immediate residence; and, that he has thereby effected an exploration, and judgment unto condemnation, upon all those evil and false principles, which have too long obtained, and reigned in the world, and have brought the first period of the Christian church to its consummation; and that this is what is signified in the sacred pages, by the

destruction of the former heavens, and the former earth, and the creation of new heavens and a new earth in their place.

The Jews have never ceased to express their astonishment and offence, at the former Christian church, for their weakness, or madness (as they call it) in believing that the Messiah ever yet made his appearance in the world, “in the flesh,” and that Jesus of Nazareth was he; while on the other hand, the former Christian church, now seem equally astonished and offended at the men of the Lord’s new church, for believing that this promised Messiah, or Jesus Christ, hath already effected his second general advent, “in the spirit.”

The New Jerusalem church, however, can perceive no good reasons to be astonished or offended, either at the Jews, or former Christians, for not having as yet, adopted the peculiar faith of the new church, on the subject before us—confident, that a great degree of our religious differences on this and other profound passages of the scriptures, originate in the imperfection, and depravity of our nature, in its present lapsed and fallen state; while at the same time they also think it not improbable that part of these differences may be traced up to the order of divine Providence, whose general design seems to be, that every created thing, but especially the human mind, should gradually advance from lesser states of perfection to greater; thus causing “*the path of the just to shine brighter, and brighter unto the perfect day.*”

The progress of gospel knowledge in the world, has long since been predicted by its blessed author, under the familiar representation of “*a grain of wheat,*” which after it is sown in the earth, makes its first productive appearance “in the blade,”—next “in the ear”—and afterwards, “*the full corn in the ear*”: But notwithstanding we are inclined to view this spiritual grain of wheat (which was cast into the spiritual earth, or church, at our Lord’s first advent) as having already progressed on from the tender blade, to the full corn in the ear; yet we must be permitted to view it, as still inclosed within its chaff, from whence we doubt not, it will soon be well threshed out, by the skillful labors of the men of the Lord’s new church; so that when “*He whose fan is in his hand,*” shall more evidently appear, he may gather the pure wheat into his garner, there to be reserved for the daily bread of his future church on earth forever.

The acquisition of genuine truth, particularly if it be of a religious nature, is certainly “*more to be desired than gold, even much fine gold.*” Yea, “*its price is far above rubies*”: It restores the image of God unto the human soul, and is the Christian’s best shield in all his spiritual conflicts. Hence it is written, “*It is a tree of life to all that lay hold on it, and happy is every one that retaineth it.*”

“*Buy the truth, and sell it not,*” was the advice of the sage and inspired king of Israel; but alas! how few are now willing to purchase it at its stated price, or to seek for it “*as forbidden treasure*”; for it is to be feared, that oft times it lies buried deep, beneath some stupendous and venerable pile of superstition.

Picture to yourselves my respected hearers, Abraham, upon mount Moriah, just about to offer up his son, his beloved son Isaac at the command of God; or Jephtha, in the very act of sacrificing his beautiful and only daughter, in order to accomplish a rash

religious vow! How exquisite, how indescribable must then have been their paternal feelings! Yet what if I say, that feelings still more painful, must probably be experienced by many of us, before ever we become possessed of the genuine truths of the everlasting gospel.

Do you ask, "Is it our very lives then that we must first part with?" I answer, Yes—the very life of all our beloved lusts, and of all our darling prejudices, will God first require at our hands—all—all must be relinquished—perish—die!

Had the many pious and learned commentators who have preceded us upon the present subject, paid more attention to the sacred and peculiar phraseology of the text, and less unto human creeds and systems, we should not have such an enormous heap of mere fallacies (not to say superstitious rubbish) to remove out of the way to day, in order that you might perceive the goodly foundations of "*the holy city, the New Jerusalem,*" now descending from God out of heaven; but, as the case now stands, the sooner it is done the better, though probably, while we are engaged in the work, superstition may groan out an "anathema," and infidelity "*laugh us to scorn*": But through the divine mercy of the Lord, these things shall not move or deter us; being prompted by a clear conviction of duty, and viewing it as our peculiar and appointed cross.

And, may I hope my respected hearers, that during our present investigation, and elucidation of the passage now before us, you will not be so much concerned to learn whether what remarks I advance be new or old, as whether they be true or false? In order to this, however, it may be necessary, perhaps, to forget if possible, all our former creeds and catechisms, upon the subject; and while we reject, with manly boldness, all the jargon and learned nonsense of the schools, let us thankfully avail ourselves of the friendly aids of reason and science, which the Almighty hath now so liberally bestowed upon us, as the willing and useful handmaids to true Christian theology; so shall we be enabled to draw such conclusions upon the subject, as shall be worthy of Christian philosophers, and of American freemen.

As Christians, we dare not suppose that there is any unmeaning expression, or needless tautology in the sacred pages of divine inspiration, as this would be no less than an acknowledgment that their divine dictator did not inspire his own chosen scribes, the prophets and apostles, with so correct and happy a phraseology as some of his more enlightened creatures could have suggested, than which no idea that can possibly enter the mind of a Christian can be more impious and preposterous.

Now if the justice of this last remark be granted, its application to our present subject will be found considerably useful, not only in obtaining just perceptions of the nature and number of our Lord's general advents into the world, but also respecting the nature of those respective and general judgments which are evidently declared in the text to be the inseparable and awful effects of each of the aforesaid advents.

For thus it is written, in the text before us—"*For he cometh, for he cometh, to judge the earth, He shall judge the world in righteousness, and the people with his truth.*"

Here then, we may perceive, as in the pure light of heaven, that (unless we admit there is useless tautology or unmeaning expressions in the sacred pages of inspiration) we have three distinct articles laid before us, most worthy of all our serious consideration.

1st. That there were two grand and distinct advents of the Lord-God into this world, plainly announced, even under the Jewish dispensation.

2dly. That each of these general advents was to be accompanied with a grand or general judgment. And

3dly. That each of these grand or general judgments was to be effected by similar means, to wit, "*By righteousness and truth.*"

Previous however, to our particular and singular observations, upon the true nature of these advents and judgments, it may be proper to remark, that it was no less a person than Jehovah-God, whose advents into this world were announced in the text.

This will appear irresistibly evident from the whole tenor of the sacred scriptures, particularly the 50th psalm (which indeed seems a literal extract from the 16th chapter of the first book of Chronicles)—but then, it should be known, that in the Deity, whom we call Jehovah-God, there exists a divine Trinity; not of persons however, but of essential principles, which principles, when rightly apprehended, we have no objection to call Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; or, to speak more intelligibly, the *Divine Love*, the *Divine Wisdom*, and the *Divine proceeding Power*, which trinity also, corresponds unto that, in every individual man, to wit, his will, his understanding, and their proceeding affections and perceptions; hence therefore, it is written that "*God created man in his own image and in his own likeness.*"

Neither should we forget, that the holy scriptures, in various places, declare and testify, that all the aforesaid principles of Deity; or "*fullness of the Godhead bodily,*" dwelleth in Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour; hence Isaiah assures us, that the "holy child" should be called, "The Everlasting Father" (though it is an established fact, that the men of the New Jerusalem church alone, are yet willing to recognize him as such). And hence also, it was, that when Philip formerly required Jesus Christ (whom he willingly recognized as the Son of God) to shew him the Father, he received this very remarkable answer from our Lord—"Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; how sayest thou then, shew us the Father?"

Indeed it would appear, that soon after this (when the disciples were more powerfully illuminated) the sole and supreme divinity of Jesus Christ was cordially recognized by them all; insomuch that St. Jude stiles him, "*The only wise God, our Saviour*"; St. John calls him, "*The true God, and Eternal Life*"; and St. Paul declares him to be, "*The Lord of Glory.*"

And I may add, that even Thomas—the honest but unbelieving Thomas, was at last so overpowered with this divine conviction, that he cried out in a holy extacy, "*My Lord and my God!*"

To the mere natural man who has never elevated his ideas of the Deity above matter and space, it is probable that this doctrine, of God's descending into this world, and ascending to heaven again, may appear altogether paradoxical, if not futile; such persons, however, with all their boasted attainments in science, and the knowledge of nature, stand in need of still further instruction respecting the God of nature; both as to his divine essence, as well as his divine existence.

For, how silly and absurd would it be, to imagine that the Almighty and Omnipresent Creator of all worlds, is "*such a being as ourselves,*" having a fixed residence, or local abode in any one part of the universe which he has made? seeing, that if it be the work of his hands, and the effect of infinite love, wisdom and power, the Creator himself must have existed before *nature, space and time*; consequently, must be altogether distinct from nature and space, as to his divine essence, and from time, as to his divine existence.

And yet, illuminated reason may perceive, that the Deity, at the same time, must exist in, and through all matter, and in and through all space, though distinct from both; even as the human soul exists in, and through flesh and blood, and yet is distinct from both; the latter being composed of material particles, the former of spiritual principles.

The essential principles of the divine nature, are *the divine love*, and *the divine wisdom*; from whence, *the divine power* and all other attributes of the Deity originate and flow. The essential or constituent principles of human creatures, are the will and the understanding, from whence not only all their actions, but also all affections and perceptions originate and flow; so that the essential principles of man correspond to the essential principles of God, and are designed by the Creator to be the recipients thereof: The will of man being the designed recipient of the love of God; and the understanding of man being the designed recipient of the wisdom of God.

From this brief view of the nature of the Deity, as well as of the human soul, as not being composed of material particles; but of spiritual principles; and consequently not limited by space, we may obtain some leading and useful ideas, respecting the true nature of the Lord's advents into this world, more accurate perhaps than have obtained for many ages past.

How common it is to hear pious christians say, that at such and such a time, the Lord God graciously drew near, and visited them? By which, they certainly mean nothing more, than that they then experienced a gracious approach and influx of the divine love and wisdom of the Lord into their souls—illuminating their dark understandings, and purifying their corrupt wills; and, whereby also, a judgment was effected, unto condemnation, in the spiritual world of their own mind, upon all those evil and false principles, which had previously reigned there, terminating in their rejection.

Can it be considered unreasonable then, or antichristian, in the men of the New Jerusalem church, to believe, that the general advents of the Lord, alluded to in the text, certainly signify some operations of the divine love and wisdom of the Lord, analogous to those just now alluded to, though carried on upon a more extensive or



general scale, in order to effect a more extensive though similar judgment, or blessing unto his church?

For my own part, I freely confess, as a sincere believer in divine revelation, that this opinion has obtained the entire possession of my mind for some years past—as being more consonant to all the adorable attributes of the Deity and the pure principles of uncorrupted reason than, that the second advent of the Lord, should be attended with a total destruction of the visible universe, in order to judge the inhabitants of this little world, and to punish the wicked.

For, I would ask the impartial and scientific Christian, what necessity can there be, in such a case, for all “*this wreck of matter, and this crush of worlds*”? What affinity can there possibly be, between the guilt and punishment of the men of this world, and the destruction of all other worlds in the universe? Or, by what law are all these stupendous worlds which are scattered through the immensity of space, to gravitate towards this? Can the Deity now make better worlds than he has done? No my beloved, the works of creation are all pronounced “very good”; and we have sufficient reason to believe, that they have always answered every purpose which infinite love, wisdom and power, could possibly have in view, in their creation.

One thing is very certain from the text, that each advent of the Lord was to be attended with similar effects, to wit, “*To judge the earth*”—and this by similar means—“*By righteousness and truth.*”

Now we all know that when the Lord God was graciously pleased to make his first grand advent into the world, “in the flesh,” through that medium or body which he then assumed, it was not to destroy the world, but that “*the world, through him, might be saved,*” in consequence of that powerful and general influx of divine love and wisdom, which was thereby manifested in the world (or the church); so likewise, it is more than probable, it will be at the Lord’s second general advent; not to destroy, but again to save; except it be to destroy our superstitious prejudices, and our sectarian and anti-christian divisions, through the medium of righteousness and truth; or a more powerful opening and revelation of his holy word, in its genuine or spiritual sense.

It is likewise evident, from the phraseology of the text before us, that as certain as the Lord’s second advent will be attended with a grand or general judgment; so sure also, was his first advent attended with a similar one.

This is a point highly worthy our most profound attention; as it will doubtless lead to, or enable us to form a correspondent or just idea of the true nature of the grand or general judgment which is also to attend the Lord’s second advent.

That a grand or general judgment took place at our Lord’s first advent, will appear, if we only attend to his own declarations in the Gospel of St. John (ix. chapter, 39th verse) where he thus expresses himself, “*For judgment am I come into this world*”; and lest we should have too limited an idea of the nature and extent of this judgment, hear him again in the xii. chapter and 31st verse of the same gospel, adding, “*Now is the judgment of this world!*” Many passages might also be adduced here, from the

prophets, to prove that the first as well as the second advent of the Lord, was to be attended with a grand, or general judgment, but perhaps they might be deemed superfluous.

Yes, my Christian brethren, a grand and general judgment did indeed, and in truth take place at our Lord's first advent and that through the very means predicted in the holy scriptures—“*By righteousness and truth*”; or by the superior light and grace of the blessed gospel; whereby the long established errors of heathenism, with all the vain traditions of the Jews, were explored and detected as fallacious; and a judgment, a general and final judgment of condemnation and rejection, was then passed upon them forever.

And, if the Lord God be still mindful of his church on earth: If he hath not “*forgotten to be gracious*”]; and if similar causes will produce similar effects; there is good ground for believing that his second grand or general advent hath already taken place; whereby the true and genuine sense of the holy scriptures, in which the Lord hath his more immediate residence, is now revealed from heaven, in “*power and great glory*”; dissipating the mere fallacies of the letter, and effecting another general and final judgment, even upon the principles of superstition and infidelity for ever more.

O! My beloved, already “*The judgment is set, and the books are opened!*” Now, therefore, *every man's works* (or creeds) *shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare them*—for now, behold!—“*He cometh,*” making “*the clouds his chariot, and riding upon the wings of the wind*”: that is, approaching the intellectual faculties of the members of his true spiritual church, by and through the medium of the literal sense of the holy scriptures, rightly explained by rational doctrine.

I am well aware, however, that many plausible objections against the doctrines of the New Jerusalem church, on the subject in question, can be urged from the mere letter of the sacred pages; for it may be asked, do not the holy scriptures plainly and positively declare, that previous to the Lord's second coming, or concomitant therewith, “*The sun shall be darkened, and the moon turned into blood; and all the stars of heaven fall unto the earth?*” And further, that then also “*The heavens shall pass away with a great noise—the elements melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up?*”

To this I answer, that all these things are certainly recorded in the holy scriptures; and all these things, I verily believe have already taken place in the world (or rather in the Christian church)—not in the literal sense, however, but in the spiritual, as every truly illuminated or spiritual Christian may clearly perceive, soon as he looses sight of the mere letter, in the splendor and transcendent glory of its spiritual sense.

I have then to request, upon this particular and solemn occasion, that every impartial and enlightened christian now present, will continue to lend me his entire and most profound attention, while I endeavor to reply to all the most formidable objections that can be urged against us, from the mere surface of the scriptures; after which, I wish no other conclusions to be drawn, than those which your rational faculties, aided by the good spirit of God, may prefer.

In the ii. chapter of the book of Joel we have a very memorable prophecy respecting the first advent of the Lord, and its effects. "*Behold*" (saith the prophet), "*the day of the Lord cometh, it is near at hand: a day of darkness and gloominess, of clouds and thick darkness,*" &c. "*Then*" (says he) "*the earth shall quake, and the heavens shall tremble, the sun and the moon shall be dark, and the stars shall withdraw their shining,*" &c.

Now let us look into the ii. chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, which relates the singular transactions of the day of pentecost; when the Holy Ghost, or divine influence of the Lord's love and wisdom, flowed down upon, or into the apostles, to the astonishment of the multitude, insomuch that some of them cried out, "*These men are drunken with wine.*" But Peter standing up with the eleven lifted up his voice and said unto them, "*Ye men of Judea and all ye who dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken unto my words; for these are not drunken as ye suppose, seeing it is yet but the third hour of the day; but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel, (saying) and it shall come to pass in the last days (saith God) I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh, &c. And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath, blood, and fire and vapor of smoke; the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.*"

Here, then, my attentive hearers, you may perceive St. Peter plainly and positively declares that a fulfilment of all the wonderful antecedents and concomitants of the Lord's first advent into the world, as announced by the prophet Joel, actually took place in the true sense of the words, on the day of pentecost: To wit, That in the last days (that is, doubtless, of the Jewish church), "*The sun should be darkened and the moon turned into blood,*" &c. But, I would ask, did these things actually take place then, in the literal sense? No, my beloved, they did not; they certainly did then in the spiritual sense, or the word of the Lord is not true. Yes, my Christian hearers, they did take place then in the spiritual sense, upon those principles of the church which correspond to these bright luminaries of heaven. The love of God, in that church, was then darkened indeed, by self-love, and the love of the world; and there was no true faith then existing, but what was injured and wounded by their foolish and vain traditions; and hence it was, that the divine mercy of the Lord, constrained him to descend at that time into the world, by a powerful influx of his divine love and wisdom (through the medium he was pleased to assume), in order to redeem mankind, and establish a new church.

When, therefore, we are told in another place, by the same apostle, that at the second coming of the Lord, "*The elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth and all the works that are therein shall be burnt up*["]; we are not to understand the words in their mere literal sense (for this is forbidden both by the dictates of illuminated reason, and the known principles of science); we can, therefore, only correctly view them in the same sense in which St. Peter understood Joel; to wit, in a spiritual sense.

For, with respect to the natural elements, he could not possibly allude to these; as he must have known, that three out of four, usually called elements, have always been in a fluid state; consequently, there would be no propriety in announcing that air, fire or

water should be made to “*melt with fervent heat,*” at the second coming of the Lord; no my beloved, the elements that shall then melt, or pass away, must certainly mean those erroneous elements of theology which have too long obtained in the Christian church, and brought it to its consummation: These shall melt away, I verily believe; yea, they are even now melting fast away, before the increasing influence of the sun of righteousness, which, I am happy to believe, is rising with heavenly rapidity, to the meridian of the human mind—and gradually dissipating, in its blessed progress, those dense clouds of superstition and infidelity, which have too long obscured its sacred beams from the spiritual earth, or church of Christ.

As to the natural earth, on which we live, I am far from believing that it is to be burnt up, or destroyed at the second advent of the Lord; this certainly was not the opinion of the royal and inspired Psalmist, or his wise and learned son Solomon. The last observes, that though “*One generation passeth away, and another cometh, yet the earth abideth forever*”; and the former declares, in the 78th psalm, and 69th verse, that “*The Lord hath built his sanctuary (or church) like the earth which he hath established for ever*”]: And again, in the 93d psalm and 1st verse, he assures us, that “*the earth is established, so, that it cannot be moved.*”

Again, what occasion for the heavens “*to pass away with a great noise,*” in consequence of the inhabitants of *this* little world having sinned? Or by what medium will the “*great noise*” which will accompany their dissolution reach us here? And further, if it be the abode of angels that we are to understand by the heavens, it may be asked, where are they to abide when their place of residence is destroyed?

If however, on the other hand, these heavens signify the erroneous principles which have obtained in the Christian church, for many ages past, and from which many fanatics have formed to themselves an imaginary heaven, we may perceive the propriety of the apostle’s expression, when he tells us, that they shall pass away “*with a great noise*”; for this great noise will doubtless take place among the different denominations and sects of Christians, while each will endeavor with loud clamor, to contend unto death, for their favorite but superstitious creeds.

It is true, it is also written, that at the second coming of our Lord, “*all the stars of heaven shall fall to the earth*”; but if any christian understands these words in the mere literal sense, he betrays his great ignorance of the vast magnitude and indefinite number of those mighty worlds, and systems of worlds, which the Almighty Creator hath exhibited to our wondering view, as well as of the universal and immutable laws of gravity and attraction.

By the “*stars of heaven*” then, which are to “*fall unto the earth,*” previous to the second advent of the Lord, I understand, that at that period, all illumination, respecting the word of the Lord, will fall into its lowest state, so that the sacred pages of divine inspiration, may be said to cease yielding their heavenly light, and be, as it were, extinct in the firmament of the church.

That the above, is actually the true sense of “*the stars of heaven falling unto the earth,*” will, I presume, appear sufficiently evident to the candid and pious christian, who is conversant with the sacred pages of divine inspiration.

The prophet Daniel in his viii. chapter tells us that he once saw (in the spiritual world no doubt, and not in the natural world) a “*He-goat, which waxed great, even unto the host of heaven, and cast down some of the host, and of the stars, and stamped on them!!*”]

Again. In the xii. chapter of the Revelations, St. John informs us, that when he was let into the spirit (or spiritual world) he there saw “*A great red dragon, having seven heads and ten horns*”; and that “*his tail drew down the third part of the stars of heaven and did cast them to the earth.*”

Now my christian hearers, what are we to think of this “he-goat,” and this “dragon”? Or rather what are we to think of these stars, which they were permitted to draw down from heaven unto the earth, and stamp upon? What can we think, or believe them to be, but divine illumination, or the knowledge of the truths of the word of God? which the antichristian principles of error and of evil—of superstition and of infidelity (signified by this he-goat and this dragon) have been long endeavoring (with too much success I fear) to draw down into contempt, and to extinguish—which is here represented by stamping on them.

Yes, my respected audience, this must be the meaning of these passages, and now, even now, are they fulfilled in a very powerful and painful degree; so that, as a certain poet expresses it,

The Sun (of Love) no longer shines,  
The Moon withdraws its light,  
The Stars (or heavenly truths), decline,  
The Church is sunk in night.

Yet I trust it may now also be added with equal truth,

But lo! the mighty God appears,  
On clouds behold him ride,  
He comes to dry his Zion’s tears  
And cheer his mourning bride.

Still however, I view the objector to my remarks, advancing with another famous passage from the writings of St. Paul; and which may be considered as his last or dernier resort.

The Apostle, when writing to the Thessalonians, expresses himself as follows.

For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of *God*; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive

and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Now, says the objector to the doctrines of the New Jerusalem church—We have not, as yet, heard this shout, or trump of God alluded to, neither have any christians been “*caught up in the air*”; therefore it is impossible for us to believe that the Lord’s second advent has already taken place in the world, or been effected.

In reply to this, apparently formidable objection, I would beg leave to make the following remarks.

1st. I find that the same Apostle whispers in our ear, in another place, that the mere “*natural man receiveth not the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, because they are spiritually discerned*”]; and I am confident, that every intelligent christian in the world, who can divest himself of the honest prejudices of his former creed, upon this subject, must soon perceive that it is impossible to understand this famous passage of St. Paul to the Thessalonians in its mere natural or literal sense, without first declaring open war against his rational faculty, as well as against the known and acknowledged principles of science.

2dly. As to the trumpet which is to sound an alarm, at the second coming of the Lord, the same Apostle expressly calls it the last trumpet in the 15th chapter of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians; which evidently implies; that a former or first trumpet had likewise been blown, and also, heard in the world.

But it may be asked, who ever heard this first trumpet, or when was it blown?

The only satisfactory answer that can be given, is, that this first trumpet was not a natural but a spiritual one; which was blown indeed, and in truth, by the first preachers of the everblessed gospel; and heard by thousands, and tens of thousands of pious men and women, who rendered a chearful and humble obedience to its “joyful sound.”

Similar to this first trumpet, therefore, do I believe the sound of the last trumpet will be, even a gracious and soul illuminating revelation of the word of God, as to all its profound and holy mysteries, and prophecies; which revelation the Almighty, for wise and gracious purposes, hath hitherto withheld “*from ages and generations*”; but hath now, in mercy revealed, for the salvation of his future church on earth, from infidelity and superstition, forevermore.

3dly. As to our being “*caught up in the air*,” in order “*to meet the Lord at his coming*,” we all well know that up and down are mere relative terms; and, that the point of the visible heavens, or universe, which is this moment above our heads, will in twelve hours more be beneath our feet; consequently, with respect to space, no part of the heavens or universe can be said, with propriety, to be any more above us, than beneath us.

By a moderate knowledge, however, of the peculiar style of the holy scriptures; or of the science of correspondency, by which they were written, we can easily reconcile

this passage of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, with all the principles of reason, analogy and known science.

The ancients, were frequently wont to compare the internal and spiritual principles in man, to the external and material universe, calling man, a microcosm, or world in miniature; hence they called the sensual or lowest principle in man, the earth; his rational faculty, the air, and his most internal or spiritual faculty they called heaven.

Agreeably to this peculiar style (which we dare not deny, obtains through all the holy scriptures) by being "*caught up in the air, to meet the Lord at his coming,*" we are to understand that at that happy and long-wished for period of the church, the impartial and scientific christian, whose devout and humble mind is diligently engaged in the study of the sacred pages, shall feel, and experience a blessed elevation of all his ideas respecting the Lord and his holy word, from sensual to rational perceptions, whereby he shall be more intimately conjoined unto his God, above the clouds and mists of superstition and infidelity forever.

Lastly. One thing is certain, that if there be no hidden or spiritual meaning involved in that famous passage to the Thessalonians, St. Paul must have been extremely ignorant indeed, respecting the true figure and diurnal motion of the earth—as well as the omnipresence of that Divine Person whose advent he then predicted, and of whom he writes in another place, that "*In him, dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*" But for my own part, I have no such mean opinion of the Apostle's knowledge; for, even admitting that his former preceptor Gamaliel suffered him to leave college so very ignorant, I dare not suppose that this ignorance still prevailed after he had received the finishing stroke to his ministerial accomplishments, in the third heavens, which was previous to this.

There, indeed, he informs us that he heard some things, which "*it was not lawful for him to utter*" (that is, to the then infant church of God). May we not presume then, that if Moses, after he was favored with an extraordinary intercourse with God upon Mount-Sinai, was obliged to put "*a vail over his face,*" while he rehearsed the particulars of what he heard upon the mount, which vail, the Apostle tells us is "*still untaken away (from the Jews) in the reading of the Old Testament*" (and which, doubtless, signifies the literal sense of the holy scriptures, which veils the lustre and glory of the spiritual sense, from mere sensual or natural men)—may we not, I say, presume, that the Apostle also, when writing to the infant church of Thessalonica, was constrained to use a similar vail, which vail, I fully believe is yet as much "*untaken away*" from the generality of Christians, while reading Paul's Epistles, as Moses' vail is to the Jews while reading the Old Testament.

I trust, however, that there will soon be a blessed and general "*turning unto the Lord,*" when this vail of the letter will be taken away, from both Jews and Christians, and when the heaven-inspired pages will again be esteemed "*precious,*" as they were in the days of Samuel.

Yes my beloved, let us indulge the pleasing hope, that God hath at length “*avenged his own elect that cry unto him night and day*”; and that the long expected, and long predicted time, “*even the set time to favor Israel is now come.*”

But, I fear I have intruded too much upon the patient attention of my respected audience; and yet my subject is far—very far from being exhausted; I will, however, close it for the present, after having made a few brief remarks by way of application.

As Christians, we are all happily agreed in believing that the first advent of the Lord has actually taken place in the world, even eighteen hundred years ago, though the Jewish church refuse to join us in this article.

Now my beloved, it is worthy your recollection, that at that period, the Jews were the only visible church of God then upon the earth, and the only people who expected and prayed that the Messiah would come: Indeed his coming was particularly described, as to the very time, in the book of Daniel (though in a style peculiar to the prophet). The place of his birth also, together with all the grand or leading circumstances of his life and death; and even of his resurrection are to be found plainly noted down by various prophets; and yet, strange to tell, yet not more strange than true, the Jews were the primary and most powerful rejectors of his first coming!

The reason, (or rather the cause) of this strange conduct in the Jews, is not difficult to point out; for, having then as a church grievously receded and apostatized from the precepts and ordinances of God’s holy law; and thereby sunk themselves into the most sensual state, both of affection and perception; they were neither capacitated nor inclined to search out the “*wonders of God’s holy law*”: Hence, they only dwelt on the mere surface, and rested in the letter; vainly expecting an earthly prince, and mighty general in the person of their Messiah; being far more anxious to be delivered from the Roman yoke, than from the yoke of sin.

When, therefore, he came, even “*the desire of nations,*” they could perceive “*no form or comeliness in him that they should desire him,*” but rejected all his gracious councils against their own souls.

I cannot now take notice of the wicked conduct of the Jews, on this occasion; suffice it to say, in the language of an Apostle, they ceased not to persecute and defame him, until, at last, “*They crucified the Lord of Glory.*”

O! Horrid impiety, do you say? O! miserable, unhappy, infatuated people!

But, I have another word to add, and I trust you will consider it until you pardon me for declaring it; to me, it now appears not improbable that the Christian world at the Lord’s second coming will exhibit the second act of the same tragedy.

When this takes place (and as a man of the New Jerusalem church I verily believe it already has), the scenery, and the performers, will be doubtless new, but the grand plot will be the same.



It is true, we can no more crucify him “in the flesh,” but we may “in the spirit”; and, whatever Christian rejects the spiritual sense of the word of God, may be truly said to reject that holy spirit which dictated it, and dwells therein.

As to the different sects and denominations of the former Christian church, I bear them witness that “*they have a zeal for God*”; but (I must be permitted to add) “*not according to knowledge*.” For, if it was idle and vain in the Jews, to expect, and look for an earthly prince and conqueror; it is no less so for the Christian world to look for, and expect an exterior and personal appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ, in a circumscribed form, or in any particular part of outward creation; in the room of looking for his spiritual and glorious appearance in his church, and the man of his church, by a gracious and powerful descent of his divine principles of love and wisdom therein.

To conclude. Should the honest, but fallacious prejudices of former creeds and teachings, prevent any of my enlightened audience from instantaneously subscribing to the doctrines of the new church upon the present subject, I can assure them they will not thereby offend me; neither shall I the less esteem them on that account. God forbid. The grand point, in my opinion, is, to be obedient and faithful to our best perceptions of God’s holy word; the inhabitants of heaven can do no more.

But in order to be faithful, and give every one here “*his portion in due season*,” I must be permitted to add one word more: Should there be now before me, any Christian, high or low, rich or poor, whose enlightened and scientific mind compels his interior assent to the doctrines just delivered, and yet—will be such a wretch as to affect to reject or not to believe them, because they are yet unpopular; or, that they fear their candid avowal of them may subject them to some persecution or censure, and perhaps block up their way to some future contemplated and desired perferment; what shall I say to such a character?

I could say much, but I trust that conscience can, and will say much more. O! then conscience, thou agent of the Most High and monitor of man, I adjure thee to do thine office faithfully and impartially in every breast that is before me! That superstition and infidelity, the love of self, and of the world may no more assume the reins of government; but that God may be glorified, in the rational reception *of the spiritual sense of his holy word*, and that precious and immortal souls may be saved, with an everlasting salvation!

“*Now unto the King eternal, immortal and invisible, the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and dominion forever and ever.*” Amen!

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Anton Janson, a typesetter practicing in Leipzig, Germany, cut this book type which bears his name sometime between 1660 and 1687. In recutting this fine old typeface, Linotype punchcutters have been fortunate in retaining its sharpness and sparkle, which make this one of the finest types now available. Definite information concerning Anton Janson is difficult to obtain. Whether or not he was of Dutch

ancestry is not clear. Wolfgang Dietrich Ehrhardt bought the Janson matrices from the heirs of Edling in Holland. Edling, also a Leipzig typefounder, was Janson's successor and may have been his son-in-law. Whether or not his heirs brought the Janson punches or matrices to Holland is not known, yet the acquisition of these matrices in Holland by Ehrhardt may explain why the Janson type has been known as a Dutch type.

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[\*] It has been unfortunate for the Dissenters that, in their late applications for a repeal of the Test Laws, they have been opposed by Mr. Pitt. He has contended that, on account of their not believing and worshipping as the Church of England does, they ought to be excluded from that eligibility to public offices which is the right of other citizens, and consequently denied a *complete* toleration; acknowledging, however, their integrity and respectability, but reckoning it only the more necessary on that account to defend the national church against them. Such sentiments in these times can do no honour to any man, much less to a son of the late Lord Chatham, whose opinion of toleration and Protestant Dissenters may be learnt from the following account.

In 1769 and 1772, the ministers among the Dissenters applied to Parliament for relief from the obligation they were then under to subscribe the doctrinal articles of the Church of England in order to be entitled to a toleration, and both times succeeded in the House of Commons, in consequence of Lord North's neutrality, but were defeated in the House of Lords, in consequence of an opposition from the Episcopal bench. They persevered, however; the bishops repented; and a third application proved successful in both houses. In the debate occasioned in the House of Lords by the second application, Dr. Drummond, the archbishop of York, having called the dissenting ministers "men of close ambition," Lord Chatham said, that this was judging uncharitably; and that whoever brought such a charge against them, without proof, defamed. Here he paused; and then went on—

The dissenting ministers are represented as men of close ambition. They are so, my

lords; and their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals, and to the doctrine of inspired apostles, not to the decrees of interested and aspiring bishops. They contend for a spiritual creed, and scriptural worship. We have a Calvinistic creed, a popish liturgy, and an Arminian clergy. The Reformation has laid open the scriptures to all. Let not the bishops shut them again. Laws in support of ecclesiastical power are pleaded for, which it would shock humanity to execute. It is said, that religious sects have done great mischief, when they were not kept under restraint: but history affords no proof that sects have ever been mischievous, when they were not oppressed and persecuted by the ruling church. See the Parliamentary Debates, 1772.

In one of his letters to me, not long after this debate, dated Burton-Pynsent, January 16, 1773, he expresses himself in the following words: In writing to you, it is impossible the mind should not go of itself to that most interesting of all objects to fallible men—toleration. Be assured, that on this sacred and unalienable right of mankind, and bulwark of truth, my warm wishes will always keep pace with your own. Happy, if the times had allowed us to add hopes to our wishes.

[\*] Plantation of colonies, part I. sect. 26.

[†] It is observable, that the island which first received slaves from Africa, suffers at this time (October 1791) the most exemplary and threatenng vengeance from them. How perilous such property!

[†] Brazil was discovered A. D. 1500, by Cabral's fleet, fitted out by John II. king of Portugal.

[\*] Postlethwait, vol. I, tit. Brazil.

[†] Ibid. vol. II. p. 521–524.

[†] Beawes saith (*Lex mercatoria*), that the trade for slaves at Senegal “amounts to 15,000 in a common year.” (p. 726.) At Sierra Leona “the trade in slaves is not a little.” (p. 728.) At Des Trois Pointes the Dutch trade for “many slaves.” In the kingdom of Ardres, &c. between three and four thousand are annually purchased. (p. 729.) On the coast of the kingdom of Benin, at Sabe, the English, French, Dutch and Portuguese “export annually above 20,000.” (p. 730.) “The number sent from Congo by the Portuguese is surprizingly great.” (Ibid.) “Of all the African coasts, Angola furnisheth the Europeans with the best negroes, and commonly in the greatest quantities. Though the Portuguese are extremely powerful in the interior parts of this kingdom, yet the negro trade on the coast is free to other nations. The English, French and Dutch send yearly a great number of vessels, who carry off many thousands for their American settlements, and for sale in those of the Spaniards. There is hardly any year that the Portuguese do not ship off 15,000 for Brazil. The villages of Cambambe, Embaco and Missingomo furnish most slaves to the Portuguese merchants”—the negro trade at Longo, Malindo, and Cabindo, on the Angolian coast, is not one of the least considerable that the English and Dutch are concerned in, whether for the number, strength or goodness of the slaves—the inhabitants of the American colonies

always give for them an higher price, as more able to sustain the labours and fatigues of the culture and manufacturing of sugar, tobacco, indigo, and other painful works.” (p. 731.)

[\*] Anderson’s commerce, vol. V. p. 120.

[†] Postlethwait, *asiento*.

[‡] Anderson’s commerce, vol. II, p. 156.

[§] Postlethwait, vol. II. p. 766.

[\*]

St. Domingo	240,000
Martinico	75,000
Guadaloupe	64,000
St. Lucia	4,000
Cayenne	3,500
Total	386,500

[†] The account published 1791 stands thus:

Jamaica	256,000	St. Vincent	14,353
Barbadoes	62,100	Montserrat	10,000
Antigua	37,808	Nevis	8,420
Grenada	23,926	Virgin Islands	6,500
St. Christophers	20,435	Bermuda	4,919
Dominico	14,967	Bahamas	2,241
		Total	461,669

[‡] Vol. IV. p. 98.

[§] Vol. I. p. 709, 710. The names of the masters, and number of slaves in each ship are inserted, 296 on an average.

[\*]

British islands	461,669
French islands	386,000
Other islands	83,000
Total	930,669

[†] In this estimate 80,000 slaves are set to South-Carolina, which hath made no return.

[¶]

Years	Ships	Imports	Exports	Years	Ships	Imports	Exports
1702	5	843	327	1741	19	4255	562
1703	14	2740	481	1742	22	5067	792
1704	16	4120	221	1743	38	8926	1368
1705	16	3503	1661	1744	38	8755	1331
1706	14	3804	1086	1745	18	3843	1344
1707	15	3358	897	1746	16	4703	1502
1708	23	6627	1379	1747	33	10898	3378
1709	10	2234	1275	1748	39	10430	2426
1710	15	3662	1191	1749	25	6858	2128
1711	26	6724	1532	1750	16	3587	721
1712	15	4128	1903	1751	21	4840	713
1713	19	4378	2712	1752	27	6117	1038
1714	24	5789	3507	1753	39	7661	902
1715	10	2372	1089	1754	47	9551	1592
1716	24	6361	2872	1755	64	12723	598
1717	29	7551	3153	1756	46	11166	1902
1718	27	6253	2247	1757	32	7935	943
1719	25	5120	3161	1758	11	3405	411
1720	23	5064	2815	1759	18	5212	681
1721	17	3715	1637	1760	23	7573	2368
1722	41	8469	3263	1761	29	6480	642
1723	30	6824	4674	1762	24	6279	232
1724	25	6852	3449	1763	33	10079	1582
1725	41	10297	3588	1764	41	10213	2639
1726	50	11703	4112	1765	41	8931	2006
1727	17	3876	1555	1766	43	10208	672
1728	20	5350	986	1767	19	3248	375
1729	40	10499	4820	1768	27	5950	485
1730	43	10104	5222	1769	19	3575	420
1731	45	10079	5708	1770	25	6824	836
1732	57	13552	5288	1771	17	4183	671
1733	37	7413	5176	1772	22	5278	923
1734	20	4570	1666	1773	49	9676	800
1735	20	4851	2260	1774	456	18448	2511
1736	15	3943	1647	1775	456	16945	5272
1737	35	8995	2240	1776	456	19231	1343
1738	32	7695	2070	1777	456	5255	492
1739	29	6787	598	1778	456	5674	734
1740	27	5362	495				

On an average 220 slaves in each ship 2436 535,549 132,115

[\*]

Districts	Free white males of 16 years and upwards, including heads of families	Free white males under 16 years	Free white females, including heads of families	All other free persons	Slaves	Total
Maine	24,384	24,748	46,870	538	None.	96,540
N. Hampshire	36,086	34,851	70,160	630	158	141,885
Massachusetts	95,453	87,289	190,582	5463	None.	378,787
Rhode-Island	16,019	15,799	32,652	3407	948	68,825
Connecticut	60,523	54,403	117,448	2808	2764	237,940
Vermont	22,435	22,328	40,505	252	16	85,539
New-York	83,700	78,122	152,320	4654	21,324	340,120
New-Jersey	45,251	41,416	82,287	2762	11,453	184,139
Pennsylvania	110,788	106,948	206,363	6537	3737	434,373
Delaware	11,783	12,143	22,384	3899	8887	59,094

Districts	Free white males of 16 years and upwards, including heads of families	Free white males under 16 years	Free white females, including heads of families	All other free persons	Slaves	Total
Maryland	55,915	51,339	101,395	8043	103,036	319,728
Virginia	110,936	116,135	215,046	12,868	292,627	747,610
N. Carolina	69,988	77,506	140,710	4975	100,572	393,751
S. Carolina			80,000	240,000		
Georgia	13,103	14,044	25,739	398	29,264	82,548
Kentucky	15,154	17,057	28,922	114	12,430	73,677
S.W. Territory	6,271	10,277	15,365	361	3417	35,691
N.W. Ditto,						5,000
Total	781,769	764,405	1,488,748	57,709	670,633	3,925,247

[\*] Mr. Ramsay.

[\*] The committee of the society in London, instituted in 1787, for the purpose of effecting the abolition of the slave trade, reported to the society, January 15, 1788, "that sundry specimens evince that a trade of great national importance might be opened by once establishing the confidence of the natives." The sentiments and reasoning of a great commercial writer on this subject are just and forcible.

"If once a turn for industry and the arts was introduced [into Africa], a greater quantity of the European produce and manufactures might be exported thither, than to any other country in the whole world. No country is richer in gold and silver. Here is a prodigious number of elephants, which would not only facilitate the inland

intercourses of commerce, but also, in the teeth of these notable animals, afford a very beneficial branch of commerce. The fruitful rich lands, every where to be found upon the coasts and within the country, upon the banks of the rivers near the gold-coast and the slave-coast, would produce all the richest articles of the East and West-India commerce. It is melancholy to observe, that a country which has 10,000 miles sea-coast, and noble, large, deep rivers, should yet have no navigation; streams penetrating into the very centre of the country, but of no benefit to it; innumerable people, without knowledge of each other, correspondence, or commerce—Africa, stored with an inexhaustible treasure, and capable, under proper improvements, of producing so many things delightful as well as convenient, seems utterly neglected by those who are civilized themselves, and its own inhabitants quite unsolicitous of reaping the benefits which nature has provided for them. What it affords in its present rude, unimproved state, is solely given up to the gain of others, as if not the people only were to be sold for slaves to their fellow-creatures, but the whole country was captive, and produced its treasures merely for the use and benefit of the rest of the world, and not at all for their own. Instead of making slaves of these people, would it not rather become nations, who assume the name and character of Christians, to give them a relish for the blessings of life, by extending traffic into their country in the largest extent it will admit of, and introducing among them the more civilized arts and customs? While the slaving trade continues to be the great object of” other nations, and these “promote the spirit of butchery and making slaves of each other among the negro princes and chiefs, their civilization, and the extension of trade into the bowels of the country, will be obstructed.”

(Postlethwait, vol. I. p. 686; 727.)

[\*]Cowper.

[\*]Some men, who are best informed in the laws of Rhode Island, say, that if ever there was such an act in that state there is nothing like it in existence at this day; and perhaps it is only cast upon them as a stigma because they have ever been friends to religious liberty. However, as the principle is supposable I have treated it as a real fact; and this I have done the more willingly because nine tenths of the people believe it is a fact.

[\*]The phrase of *blind guides*, is not intended to cast contempt upon any order of religious preachers; for, let a preacher be orthodox or heterodox, virtuous or vicious, he is always a blind guide to those who differ from him in opinion.

[\*]Pool's Synopsis

[\*]Here it will, perhaps, be objected, that however just these remarks may appear in theory, yet their force is not a little weakened, by adverting to the numerous persecutions and wars, to which Christianity has given rise. But let it be remembered, that Christianity has been more frequently the mere pretext, than the true motive, of those multiplied acts of cruelty and intolerance, which sully the pages of history. Generally have the offspring of ambition, revenge, or some equally corrupt principle, been attributed to religion, and supposed to have nothing else for their origin. But

admitting for a moment, that Christianity has in reality, been the cause of much mischief of this kind; yet it was Christianity shamefully misunderstood, and impiously perverted. It was not the pure and benevolent system of the gospel, but blind zeal and mad fanaticism.

[\*] To relate the enormities of despotism, and the consequent degradation and wretchedness to which human nature has been reduced, in many parts of the globe, would be equally shocking and incredible to an American ear. How must the lives and fortunes of men have been trampled upon, among the Mexicans, when, at the dedication of their great temple, we are told they had 60 or 70,000 human sacrifices; and that the usual amount of them, annually, was about 20,000! See Clavigero's History of Mexico, vol. I, page 281.

[†] The republics of Greece and Rome must be acknowledged, in some degree, exceptions to this general remark. But even among them, numerous were the instances in which the aspect of their political affairs bore testimony to their sad want of Christian knowledge.

[\*] "Christianity, says Baron Montesquieu, has prevented despotism from being established in Ethiopia, notwithstanding the heat of the climate, the largeness of the empire, and its situation in the midst of African despotic states."

[†] One of the bitterest enemies of Christianity, Mr. Hume, observes, that "the precious sparks of liberty were kindled and preserved by the Puritans in England; and that, to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous, and whose habits so ridiculous, the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution." The unfounded and malicious reflection which this passage contains, deserves no comment. The concession is worthy of notice, as it is the concession of an adversary.

It may also be mentioned, in this place, that out of the 17 provinces of the Low Countries, which groaned under the tyranny of Philip II, only the 7, now called the United Provinces, which admitted and established the principles of the reformation, succeeded in their attempts to throw off the Spanish yoke. The rest, indeed, made a faint effort to gain their liberty, but failed; and are not, to this day, a free people. A remarkable testimony, that Christianity can only be expected to exert her native influence, and produce the happiest effects, when she appears in her beautiful simplicity, stripped of that gaudy and deforming attire, with which corrupt and ambitious men have ever been disposed to clothe her.

[\*] When Pope Gregory the great, who flourished toward the end of the 6th century, gave liberty to some of his slaves, he offered this reason for it—"Cum Redemptor noster, totius Conditor naturæ, ad hoc propitiatus, humanam carnem volueret assumere, ut divinitatis suæ gratia, dirempto (quo tenebamur captivi) vinculo, pristinae nos restitueret libertati: salubriter agitur, si homines, quos ab initio liberos natura protulit, et jus gentium jugo substituit servitutis, in eá, quá nati fuerant, manumittentis leneficio, libertati reddantur." Gregor : Magn : ap. Potgiess : lib. iv. c. I. sect. 3. What a triumph is here exhibited, of Christian principles, over the sordid dictates of pride



and selfishness! Would to God we could more frequently hear this language, and see corresponding practice, in Christians of the present day!

[\*] The author is well aware, that, in offering his sentiments, thus freely, on the French Revolution, he stands upon controverted ground. It would, therefore, ill become his inexperience, and more particularly his profession, to enter into the details, or the warmth of this argument. He cannot help thinking, however, that the great pillars of this Revolution rest upon those natural rights of men, which are assumed by the best writers on government; and upon those fundamental principles of religion which the Author of our natures has revealed.

It is objected to this revolution, that it has been stained by violence and inhumanity of the most atrocious and unnecessary kind. Wherever a life has been wantonly destroyed, or other severities unnecessarily inflicted, no one should withhold his censure. But shall we make no distinction between the crimes of an enraged multitude, and the decisions of constituted authorities? or, between the precipitancy of a popular assembly, at the crisis of a struggle, and the deliberations of settled government? When a nation, so long distressed, lifts her avenging arm, and breaks her chains on the heads of her oppressors; when a people make a violent effort, to overturn the mountains of despotism under which they are buried, can we expect perfect wisdom, prudence, and moderation to guide all their exertions? While man remains such a creature as he is, this would be a miracle indeed!

But it will be further asked—Why, since the great object of this discourse is to establish a natural connection between christianity and political liberty; why, in France, amidst the prevalence of the latter, does the former appear to be so little respected and acknowledged, especially among the principal friends and promoters of the revolution? Why do we not see a remarkable attention to real religion, amidst so many exertions to secure the rights of men? The answer is, that Christianity, considered as a system of principles, in theory, may produce extensive effects, where its special and saving influence is extremely small. Nay, every attentive observer of human affairs, has doubtless discovered a secret but important operation of these principles, on minds actually despising and rejecting them. The one half of that light, in which infidels boast, as the splendid result of reason alone, is, in fact, the light of revelation; and while they contemn its grand Source, they adopt and use it, in all their religious creeds, and in many of their daily actions. A small extension of this thought, will, perhaps, when applied to the French nation, and to all similar cases, go far toward solving the difficulty in question—that people may be acting in the light of christian principles, though they know it not, neither regard them. A deliverance from the darkness of superstition, may have led them, at once, to cast off the chains of tyranny, and to renounce even the just restraints of real Christianity.

But, after all; is there not reason to hope, that many of the accounts which have been circulated in America, respecting the disorder, vice, and contempt of all sacred things, prevalent in France, are totally groundless? Is it not possible, that there is much more regularity, decorum, and real religion, in that struggling Republic, than her neighboring enemies, so fond of misrepresentation and calumny, are willing to allow? That many shameful instances of exaggeration have been detected is well known.

[\*] *At a town-meeting of the freemen of the town of Providence, held on the seventh day of April, A. D. 1793.*

Resolved, that his excellency the governor, Messrs. Joseph Nightingale, Ephraim Bowen, jun., Jeremiah Olney, and Welcome Arnold, be a committee to make choice of a person to deliver a suitable oration on the fourth day of July next, to commence at twelve o'clock at noon, in commemoration of the independence of the United States: that said committee provide a place for the delivery of such oration; and that an oration on said memorable event be continued annually.

A true copy:

Witness, Daniel Cooke, town-clerk

[\*] Mr. John Brown, merchant, of this town, has already gone far, since March last, towards removing a hill of about 400 feet in length, 180 in breadth, and 60 in height—amounting to 150,000 tons of earth; which, when completed, will raise useless flats into 6 acres of useful building-ground, which will be connected with the Massachusetts by an elegant bridge, now building by the same gentleman.

The author hopes Mr. Brown will pardon this liberty, as reference was evidently had to it.

[\*] Extract from an address presented President Washington by the Jews at Newport, when on his tour through the eastern states, August 1790.

[\*] See Blount and Tyndal.

[\*] Every woman among some nations was obliged, at least once in her life, to prostitute herself to any person, even the greatest stranger, who would accept her favour. This done in honour to Venus.

[\*] Prideaux's connection.

[†] Neal's Hist. New-England.

[\*] Priestley's Institutes.

[†] "None of the philosophers ever represented simple fornication, especially on the part of the man, as any vice at all. Cato commended a young man for frequenting the public stews; and Cicero expressly speaks of it, as a thing that was never found fault with." *Priestley's Institutes*. All that was enjoined by Epictetus, who of all the philosophers, is perhaps the most celebrated for his strict maxims of morality, was, "that people should abstain from fornication before marriage as far as they could; and that if they did not abstain, they should use it lawfully, and not be severe in reprehending those who did not abstain." *Enchiridion*, Chap. 47.

[†] "At Sparta, young women appeared naked in the public exercises; and when married women had no children, their husbands were encouraged to consent to a free

intercourse between them and other men; a custom which Plutarch vindicates. This was also agreeable to the doctrine of the Stoics; and it is well known, that that rigid Stoic, Cato of Utica, consented to such an intercourse between his own wife and his friend Hortensius. Plato in his book of laws, recommends a community of women; and he advises, that soldiers be not restrained with respect to any kind of sinful indulgence, even the most unnatural species of it, when they are on an expedition.”  
*Priestley.*

[\*] Does not the forementioned deistic maxim of following nature directly lead to the same abominable practices?

[†] Priestley.

[\*] Priestley’s letters on general policy.

[\*] Priestley.

[\*] Blackstone.

[\*] Encyclopedia.

[†] Chambers Dictionary.

[\*] Doct. Leachman’s Sermon I. Cor. i. 21.

[\*] This must appear the more extraordinary when we reflect, that at the time of issuing the proclamation, war with the savages raged on our frontiers, rebellion in the bosom of the country, and our situation, with respect to the powers of Europe, had become so critical, that we were actually fortifying and forming a numerous army.

[\*] *The Revolution in France, by an American*: a judicious and instructive pamphlet.

[\*] By the present constitution of France, citizenship is lost by naturalization in a foreign country. If Danton himself should come to America and be naturalized, he would no longer be a French citizen. Mr. is a mere title of civility, applicable to all men, in all places, and under all circumstances; the most equalizing title in the French or English language.

[\*] I say, each department; but I do not know the extent of the subdivisions contemplated by the federalists.

[\*] Who does not see the same tragedy acted in France, where a picture of a king is a signal for rallying, and a cockade or other signal of party is necessary to secure a man’s life? And who does not see the beginnings of a similar tragedy, in the infamous practice of setting the marks of party upon the peaceable citizens of America? The people who make this attempt may be well meaning—they may not foresee to what lengths faction will carry men, when opportunities favor; but peace and happiness forbid all such odious distinctions.

[\*] Milton—*Par. lost*.

[\*] Terms have their days of fashion, like many other things. The term, equality, seems to be in the wane; it has its enemies even in America. But whoever will read Dr. Brown's excellent essay upon the natural equality of men, will there find this grand principle justly appreciated; he will find, that it is the only basis on which universal justice, order and freedom, can be firmly built; or permanently secured. The view, says the writer, exhibited in this essay, so far from loosening the bands of society, or weakening that subordination, without which no government can subsist, will draw more closely every social tie, and more strongly confirm the obligations of legal obedience, and the rights of legal authority. Certainly this principle is one of the hinges upon which the christian system turns.

[\*] Isaiah

[\*] Jeremiah

[\*] This mode of putting people to death they blasphemously called the national baptism.

[\*] The Rev. Messrs. Matignon and Chevrus, who now superintend the catholic congregation in Boston.

We can assert with truth, supported by the whole current of ecclesiastical history, that, in no age or country, have the clergy, as a body, ever conducted themselves with so much prudence, dignity and heroic firmness, as the gallican clergy have done, through a nine years' insidious, violent and bloody persecution.

[\*] Bishop Watson.

[\*] Avignon.

[†] See his letter to the pope.

[\*] There are many persons who fancy, and boldly assert, that all the impieties and disorders of the French revolution are so many steps to bring about, what they term, the millenium, a mere chimerical state, which will never have an existence except in their imagination. If such be the prelude, how glorious must be the millenium itself! Strange, that they do not clearly see, that all these things, instead of being signs of the overthrow of anti-christ already established, are the predicted forerunners of his approaching reign!

[\*] By dross I mean bad members of the church, whether they be clergymen or laymen. These are separated from her by the fire of persecution. By dross I likewise intend all deviations, in practice, from the holy doctrine and morality of the Catholic church, which we hold to be always infallible and invariable. We believe also, that the church is infallible in her general discipline, that is, that her rules of government for all the societies in her communion, however varied according to circumstances, are always infallibly best, every thing considered—and this triple infallibility, of *doctrine*,

*morality and general discipline*, we suppose to be fully implied in Christ's promises, that *he will be always with his church, that the gates of hell shall never prevail against her, and that the Holy Ghost shall teach her all truth and abide with her forever.*

[†] What is here said, it is hoped, is a sufficient answer to Dr. Belknap's remarks on popery, in his fast-sermon. After "*about twenty years of attentive contemplation, with the best helps,*" he has at length made the ludicrous discovery, that the English and French governments are "*rotten toes of Nebuchadnezzar's image,*" and that *the pope is doubtless a beast and a whore.* Wonderful proficiency in study! Quere. How happens it, that the word *whore*, which the lowest of the vulgar can scarcely utter without a blush, can be employed so freely before the most respectable congregations, consisting in great part of modest ladies? I should have thought, Doctor, that, after the observations which I addressed, some years since, to you and to your brother Lathrop, and which, to this day, remain unanswered, mere shame would have prevented your repetition of the same insipid ditty.

Dr. Morse has certainly deserved well of his country for his interesting abridgement of the infernal conspiracy of the Illuminati. From the peculiar hatred which these miscreants bear to the Roman Catholic religion, as directly opposed to their projects of immorality and disorder (of which L'abbe Baruel furnishes abundant proof in his memoirs of illuminatism), he might be led to a better opinion of its High-Priest—notwithstanding which, this respectable personage is so great a bugbear in his eyes, that even he cannot conclude his fast-sermon without twice attacking him. It is curious, that the ministers must be always seeking some occasion of venting their spleen upon the poor pope. If he is falling, in God's name, let him go off the stage in peace. At this moment, when our church is opposing deism, atheism, and every other system of impiety; when our clergy, with the pope at their head, are victims for the common cause of christian morality and good government, as well as for their attachment to their particular dogmas of faith; and when even dissenting ministers, whom I could name, own that they should be incapable of the same courage; is it not carrying insult and outrage to the extreme, to persist in calling anti-christian the church which performs such wonders against all anti-christian doctrines? I really flattered myself, that this canting style was out of date, at least among the ministers of Boston and its vicinity.

[\*] While this discourse was preparing for the press, the memorial of our envoys made its appearance. Their humble and adulatory language to the tyrants of France can scarcely be excused by the ardent desire of peace which dictated it. In every thing else it must be gratifying to the honest pride of true Americans.

[\*] I speak here of the federal government; for, in several of the states, as in Massachusetts, Roman Catholics are subjected to certain disqualifications.

[\*] Without being a prophet or the son of a prophet, I venture to predict, that proper subordination, among the youth of this town, can never be re-established, until the mode and degree of correction be again placed in the hands of the school-masters. Their situation, at present, is too servile and dependent.

[\*] Gr. Demons

[\*] The Darius of Daniel

[\*] See also v. 2, 3, 6.

[\*] In the mention of all these evils brought on the Romish hierarchy, I beg it may be remembered, that I am far from justifying the iniquitous conduct of their persecutors. I know not that any person holds it, and all other persecution, more in abhorrence. Neither have I a doubt of the integrity and piety of multitudes of the unhappy sufferers. In my view they claim, and I trust will receive, the commiseration, and, as occasion offers, the kind offices of all men possessed even of common humanity.

[\*] The celebrated French Dictionary of Arts and Sciences, in which articles of theology were speciously and decently written, but, by references artfully made to other articles, all the truth of the former was entirely and insidiously overthrown to most readers, by the sophistry of the latter.

[†] So far was this carried, that a Mr. Beauzet, a layman, but a sincere christian, who was one of the forty members, once asked D'Alembert how they came to admit him among them? D'Alembert answered, without hesitation, "I am sensible, this must seem astonishing to you; but we wanted a skilful grammarian, and among our party, not one had acquired a reputation in this line. We know that you believe in God, but, being a good sort of man, we cast our eyes upon you, for want of a philosopher to supply your place." Brit. Crit. Art. Barruel's Memoirs of the History of Jacobinism. August 1797.

[\*] The words *philosophism* and *philosophists* may in our opinion, be happily adapted, from this work, to designate the doctrines of the deistical sect; and thus to rescue the honourable terms of philosophy and philosopher from the abuse, into which they have fallen. Philosophism is the love of sophisms and thus completely describes the sect of Voltaire: A philosophist is a lover of sophists. Brit. Crit. Ibid.

[\*] See Robison's Conspiracy and the Abbe Barruel's Memoirs of the history of Jacobinism.

[†] See Gifford's Letter to Erskine.

[\*] See a four years Residence in France, lately published by Mr. Cornelius Davis of New-York. This is a most valuable and interesting work, and exhibits the French Revolution in a far more perfect light than any book I have seen. *It ought to be read by every American.*

[\*] True criticism is the application of taste and of good sense to the several fine arts. Blair.

[\*] "Sept. 1st, 1790, the degree of Doctor of Laws, was conferred on George Washington, president of the United States of America." Soon afterwards, it appears from the Baptist annual register for 1791, of which Doctor Rippon of London is the

editor, that “In a conversation between several friendly gentlemen, which turned chiefly on the confinement of Lewis the little, who, like an absolute sovereign, had said to five and twenty million of people, I will be obeyed; contrasted with the popularity of Washington the Great—it was mentioned, that the Baptist College, in Rhode-Island, had conferred the degree of Doctor of Laws, on the president of the United States; while it seemed to be the general mind that this distinguished character in the history of man, would prefer the laurels of a college to a crown of despotism, one of the company, it is said, quite impromptu, gave vent to the feelings of his heart, in the following effusion:

When kings are mere sovereigns, or tyrants, or tools,  
No wonder the people should treat them as fools;  
But Washington therefore presides with applause,  
Because he well merits the Doctor of Laws.  
I’ll ne’er be a ruler till I’m L.L.D.  
Nor England, nor Scotland shall send it to me,  
I’ll have my diploma from Providence Hall,  
For Washington had, or I’ll have none at all.”

[\*]As several of the author’s friends politely hinted that when the following imprecations on Mount Vernon were delivered from the pulpit, in imitation of David’s lamentation over Saul and Jonathan, some thought them liable to an unfavorable construction, he has excluded them from the sermon, but to prevent any mistake as to their matter, amongst the numbers who heard them, they are retained in this place:

When vernal suns return, let vernal showers and dews withhold their wonted influence, and perpetuate thy melancholy hue! Let germinating sap no more ascend thy variegated shrubs and trees! Odoriferous breezes wake there no more! Barren as Gilboa, fatal to Jonathan and Saul, let blasting winds henceforward howl through the desolated mansion of that pale mount!

[\*]Psalm cvii. 38, 39.

[†]Chap. xi. 1–4.

[\*]Rom. xii. 8.

[\*]1 Kings XI, 28.

[\*]2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

[\*]Psalm xii. 8.

[†]Prov. xxxi. 4.

[†]Exod. xxiii. 2.

[§]Eccl. x. 1.

[\*]2 Sam. iii. 39.

[†]Dan. iv. 32.

[‡]Psal. lxxv. 6, 7.

[§]Eccl. x. 16.

[\*]Psal. xi. 3.

[†]Eccl. vii. 7.

[\*]Rom. iii. 13–17.

[†]Ecc. x. 5, 6, 7.

[\*]Tit. iii. 1.

[†]1 Pet, ii, 13.

[‡]Rom. xiii. 2.

[\*]This inference was passed over in the delivery.

[\*]Micah iii. 11. Jer. ii. 35.

[†]Amos iii. 2. Jer. v. 9.

[\*]Psal. lxxxii. 6, 7. Eccl. viii. 8.

[\*]Chap. lix. 14.

[\*]Rev. xvi. 13, 14.

[†]Isa. lx. 2.

[\*]Psal. lxxvi. 10.

[\*]Prov. xxix. 25.

[†]Isa. xxxiii. 15, 16.

[‡]Chap. viii. 12, 13.

[\*]The edition which I use is the second American edition, published at Philadelphia, by Matthew Carey, 1794.

[\*]Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, p. 39–41.

[†]Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, p. 42.



[†] Gen. vii. 19.

[§] ib. v. 20.

[\*] Gen. vii. 11.

[†] Nay, as it is only the scripture which authenticates the popular belief of an universal deluge, Mr. Jefferson's insinuation can hardly have any meaning, if it be not an oblique stroke at the bible itself. Nothing can be more silly than the pretext that he shews the insufficiency of natural causes to effect the deluge, with a view of supporting the credit of the miracle. His difficulty is not to account for the deluge: he denies that; but for *the shells on the top of the Andes*. If he believed in the deluge, natural or miraculous, the difficulty would cease: he would say at once, *The flood threw them there*. But as he tells us, "*this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved,*" it is clear that he does not believe in the deluge at all; for this "solves" his "phenomenon" most effectually. And for whom does Mr. J. write? For Christians? None of them ever dreamed that the deluge was caused by any thing else than a miracle. For infidels? Why then does he not tell them that the scripture alone gives the true solution of this "great phenomenon?" The plain matter of fact is, that he writes like all other infidels, who admit nothing for which they cannot find adequate "natural agents"; and when these fail them, instead of resorting to the divine word, which would often satisfy a modest enquirer, by revealing the "arm of Jehovah," they shrug up their shoulders, and cry, "Ignorance is preferable to error."†

[\*] Notes on Virginia, p. 205.

[†] ib. 209.

[\*] ib. 201.

[†] ib. 203.

[†] Kames's Sketches, vol. i p. 24.

[\*] Acts xvii. 26.

[\*] Notes on Virginia, p. 240.

[†] Some have been vain enough to suppose that they destroy this proof of Mr. J's infidelity, by representing the expression "the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people," as synonymous with the following: "A. B. is an honest man, if ever there was an honest man," which so far from doubting the existence of honest men, that it founds, in the certainty of this fact, the assertion of A. B.'s honesty. On this wretched sophism, unworthy of good sense, and more unworthy of candor, I remark,

1. That the expressions are by no means similar. The whole world admits that there are honest men, which makes the proposition, "A. B. is an honest man, if ever there was one," a strong assertion of A. B.'s honesty. But the hundredth part of the world does not admit that God had a chosen people, and therefore the proposition that "those

who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever he had a chosen people,” is, upon this construction, no assertion at all that the cultivators of the soil are his people, because there are millions who do not believe the fact on which it must be founded: viz. that he had a chosen people.

2. That if the expressions were parallel, Mr. J. would still be left in the lurch, because the first asserts A. B. to be as much an honest man as any man that ever lived; and so Mr. J. asserts “those who labor in the earth” to be as much the “chosen people of God,” as any people that ever lived. This is still the lie direct to the whole bible, and the inventors of this lucky shift, must set their wits at work to invent another.

[\*]Notes on Virginia, p. 231.

[\*]Serious Considerations, p. 16, 17.

[†]At Fredericksburgh, in Virginia, in 1798.

[\*]Prov. iii. 3.

[†]Phil. iv. 6.

[†]Col. iii. 17.

[\*]Rom, xiii. 4.

[†]Ps. xv. 4.

[†]2 Sam. xxiii. 3.

[\*]Ex. xx. 10.

[†]Dan. ii. 49.

[\*]The Fredericksb. feast, given on the Sabbath, to Mr. J. 1798.

[†]Is. xlix. 23.

[\*]Is. i. 3.

[\*]The title is a trick, designed to entrap the unwary, by palming it on them through the popularity of Paine’s tracts under the same name. The title in the original, is *Le bon Sens, Good Sense*. It was printed, I believe, in Philadelphia; but the printer was ashamed or afraid to own it.

[†]Pigott’s Political Dictionary, p. 132. This work was originally printed in England; but having been suppressed there, the whole or, nearly the whole, impression was sent over to America, and distributed among the people. But in what manner, and by what means, there are some who can tell better than the writer of this pamphlet. It was thought, however, to be so useful, as to merit the American press—for the copy which

I possess, is one of an edition printed at New-York, for Thomas Greenleaf, late editor of the Argus: 1796.

[†] 2. Cor. v. 14, 15.

[\*] Ps. ii. 10–12.

[†] Ps. ix. 17.

[†] Ps. cx. 5.

[\*] Is. xxx. 1–3.

[†] Gal. iv. 16.

[†] Is. xxx. 9, 10.

[\*] Mr. M——, if he pleases, may father the *Sickly Child*.

[\*] Why should we read history without profiting by it? Ambition and tyranny have always been fond of assuming the masque of religion and making instruments of judges and divines. Cromwell the usurper was a detestible hypocrite. We have already one judge who rivals Jefferies or Tresilian. We have more than one minister to match a Wolsey or a Laud.

[†] Dr. D. and Dr. S. and Dr. L. and Mr. M. *cum multis aliis*, will please to attend to this sentiment; indeed I could wish it were possible for them to peruse the whole of my pamphlet with candour.

[\*] The reader is only referred to Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, he will find that no imagination is capable of pourtraying the picture in colours too high or glowing.

[\*] Would to God they would feel for themselves with equal sincerity!

[\*] When a church becomes directly or indirectly connected with a state, it may still retain its external form and appearance, but Christianity no longer remains, the heavenly virtues become extinct, and the pure spirit of piety disgusted by its avarice, ambition and impiety takes wings and flies to heaven. Nothing, nothing is left but a state without liberty and a church without religion.

[\*] What are we to think of the religion of those divines, who are the advocates of Mr. H—— of the man who had the cruelty publicly to wound and insult the feelings of his family, and to publish and glory in his shame? The confessions of J. J. Rosseau, the philosopher and citizen of Geneva, are nothing to those of our American youth. Our hero's apology for adultery stands unrivaled in ancient or modern language. Nathan the prophet had the courage to rebuke the Lord's anointed for a similar offence; but some of our clergymen generously excuse the frailties of their favourite party ringleader. There are some books which should never get out of print: The pamphlet detailing the love of Alexander and the fair Maria should stand as an eternal

monument of the licentious manners of the age. Remember reader, that Alexander is a husband and a father and some people say a Christian. *Sed quere debit*. Nothing can prove the insincerity of such reverend defenders of religion more demonstrably than their advocating this man.

[\*] To shew that this is his meaning, let us take his own words, together with the other parts of the sentence connected with them, “The establishment of the instance cited by M. de Voltaire (says Mr. Jefferson) of the growth of shells unattached to animal bodies, would have been that of his theory. But he has not established it. He has not left it on ground so respectable as to have rendered it an object of enquiry to the literati of his own country. Abandoning the fact therefore, the three hypotheses are equally unsatisfactory; and we must be contented to acknowledge that this great phenomenon is as yet unsolved, ignorance is preferable to error, and he is less remote from the truth who believes nothing, than he who believes what is wrong.” Now to what does such observation relate? To philosophical theories and hypotheses, and not to the deluge or any other truth of revelation. By the same mode of juggling I could extract deistical sentiments from the writings of the apostles.

[\*] I would tell Mr. Jefferson they are not “prejudices.”

[\*] Notes on Virginia, p. 173.

[\*] Dr. Johnson.

[\*] If Dr. L——— should be the author of the pamphlet, I admire his invention, but cannot commend his sagacity. The next time he writes the tales of ancient times, I would advise him to be less particular as to the minutiae. His story would have been told better if it had been confined to generals; at present it has not the appearance of plausibility. The colloquial form was rather unfortunate. Such a dialogue could only have been manufactured in the doctors closet—it favours strongly of romance. Man of sin, Belial hath sent unto thee his lying spirit.

[\*] The more I reflect upon the subject, the more I am convinced the story is incredible; and yet it is possible, that in the course of conversation, an expression somewhat similar may have been used in the most innocent and laudable point of view. Those who recollect the intolerable avarice of the clergy, and particularly in Italy, of which Mazzei was a native; those who remember the millions and millions which were torn from the wretched people, to purchase baubles to decorate the church of “our Lady at Lorenzo,” would not be surprized, if in a conversation between the Italian and the patriot, that the latter should, by an easy association, with honest warmth, and yet without irreverence, have adverted to the circumstance of our Saviour’s being laid in a manger. Expressions equally innocent have been tortured into guilt, when laid upon the rack of an enemy.

It was a part of the eternal dispensations of Providence—it was the choice of our blessed Lord to be seen in a manger—it was intended as an everlasting monument of his humility. *Christus habet multos ministros sed paucos imitatores*. The cross of Christ, the stumbling block of the Jews, and foolishness to the Greeks is the

Christians glory. What, shall a minister of the gospel be ashamed of the cross, or offended at the mention of the manger!

[†] Shakespeare says, a man may smile and smile and be a villain; so men may preach and pray and still be liars.

[\*] Dr. L—— or whoever is the author of the pamphlet, is determined that Mr. Jefferson shall be a deist or atheist at all events. After exhausting his whole budget with respect to Mr. Jefferson, he asserts, that Mr. Nobody, a pupil of Mr. Jefferson, once upon a time, used an atheistical expression, and sagaciously concludes that Mr. Jefferson is therefore an atheist! Now who is this Mr. Nobody? Mr. Jefferson keeps no school or academy, how can he have pupils? The good doctor is a wonderful logician; admitting that his premises are true, by what singular process does he derive his conclusion?

If any man affronts or opposes the doctor, to be sure he must be a deist. His reverence must find this practice of calling hard names very convenient, as it may stand in the place of argument. Let the following anecdote serve as a specimen of his peculiarity. The doctor, like many other men, being willing to earn his money as cheap as possible, was in the habit of preaching the same sermon very frequently; some of the congregation, wishing to hear something new, petitioned the consistory upon the subject; the doctor, instead of meeting the application openly, endeavoured to parry it, by observing upon the character of the applicants. Such a man was such a thing, and such a man was a deist. One of the proscribed meeting the doctor in the street told him he did not take it kind; the doctor with a very good countenance turned it off by saying, he, good soul, did not mean any harm, and inviting the injured person to his house, assured him they should be very good friends again!!!

[\*] Hypocrisy has become a fashionable vice. God alone can separate the sheep from the wolves. Who would have believed that an eminent judge would have become a preacher, or Gouverneur M—— a sincere convert to Christianity. It is said, that a very illustrious personage, when at Philadelphia, was for some time in the habit of hearing Dr. Priestly, until his friends admonished him that he would sacrifice his popularity—there was certainly more policy than sincerity in the discontinuance of that habit.

[\*] Junius.

[\*] We have the character of the two Mr. Pinckney's from no less a man than President Adams himself—This illustrious personage has written as follows:

“The Duke of Leeds once enquired of me very kindly, after his classmates in Westminster school, the two Mr. Pinckney's, which induces me to believe, that our new ambassador has many powerful old friends in England.

Again, “*Knowing, as I do, the long intrigue, and suspecting, as I do, much British influence in the appointment, were I in any executive department, I should take the liberty to keep a vigilant eye upon them,*” &c.

Two things are plainly observable in this letter, first, that there is actually a British party in this country, and secondly, that the Pinckney's belong to that party. When this appears from the testimony of Mr. Adams himself, whose information must be correct, who can shut his eyes against conviction? And yet one of these men is a candidate for the presidency!

[†] Most of my readers will recollect the consulship of Julius Cæsar and Bibulus, which was emphatically termed, the consulship of Julius and Cæsar. Buonaparte, or his friend the Abbé, who had so many constitutions, of all shapes, in his pigeon holes, appears to have copied from that period in the Roman history, with the addition of a single cypher. Thus in Rome it stood 01, in France it stands 001—if we should have an American Bibulus, we should, in some measure, approach the Spanish inquisition, where the inquisitor general was concealed. How terrible would be our situation, if our Cæsar should be covered with a mantle of secrecy, and how much more so, if of that Cæsar we might exclaim

Not in the regions  
Of horrid hell can come, a devil more damn'd  
In ill to top Macbeth.

[\*] It is seldom that we correctly appreciate the talents of a man. I think that those of Mr. H—— though they are respectable, have been overrated. Such circumstance is sometimes dangerous. The vulgar look upon such a man with awe, and he is furnished not only with incentives, but also the opportunity of becoming a leader. I scarcely know a branch of knowledge in which he has not superiors. The late Mr. Duer did, and Mr. Gallatin certainly does surpass him in finance. And as to oratory, in which he is supposed to stand preeminent, he is rather remarkable for circumlocution, than strength or perspicuity—he may boast of the *copia verborum*—words numerous as the autumnal leaves, which strew the brooks at Vallombrosa. He is not a disciple of the school of Cicero, a Quintilian—of his elocution it may be said, “*Corpus sine pectore.*”

[\*] The friends of a certain great man have lately been fond of comparing him to Buonaparte, for what reason we can readily divine. Of that man the Aurora has publicly said, that on his late visit to New-England, after drinking his favourite toast, “a strong government” he positively declared, that “if Mr. Pinckney is not elected president, a revolution will be the consequence, and that within the next four years he will lose his head, or be the leader of a triumphant army!!!” There is no other difference between such an expression and treason, than what exists between the meditation and execution of paricide. Such declarations have been copied in the public prints. I have waited for a denial of them, but have never been gratified. Shall the accusation be taken *sub silentio*[?] Friends of religion—ministers of the gospel, are you content to submit to the sacrifice of your civil constitution, and view the blood of your countrymen smoking upon the earth? O shame—if there is a villain in America capable of such enormous baseness, by heaven he shall “lose his head.” Cataline in the bosom of the Senate, or Cataline concealed is a formidable enemy—driven to desperation he is wretched, imbecile, and contemptible.

[\*] That the British have designs upon the government of this country, is a fact beyond the reach of doubt. When Mr. Jefferson was secretary of state, Lord Auckland had the presumption to recommend the infamous Cobbett as a clerk in his office; for what purpose? as a spy to betray the secrets of it. The wretch went to Philadelphia, buzzed about the government, and filled the country with his detestible effusions. Disappointed at length by the explosion in the cabinet, and ruined by the righteous verdict, in the suit of Dr. Rush, he blackguards the President and runs away. His successor, poor Fenno does a similar thing. Not all the democrats in the community have abused Mr. Adams with half the virulence of this young man; it is ludicrous yet somewhat provoking, to see such men as Fenno and Porcupine bedaub each other with praise. Is bene esse. Such is the abominable service in which Christianity is to be pressed.

[\*] Note. Those who are able to read the original Hebrew will find in this passage, as generally through the old Testament, ideas which can hardly be communicated by a literal translation.

[\*] The inaugural speech of the president had not at this time arrived. Otherwise a reference to that might have been sufficient, without alluding to the communications here mentioned, which had been seen.

The author presumes he shall not differ from the candid part of his fellow-citizens, if he declares this inaugural speech to be a very excellent specimen of fine sentiment, sound policy, and of that magnanimity and moderation which are inculcated in this discourse. And he is happy to observe a very striking resemblance between the writings of President Jefferson and the late illustrious Washington, which augurs well for our country.

[\*] A very instructive and valuable tract on this topick is found in a pamphlet, printed at Philadelphia, entitled “The origin and principles of the American revolution, compared with the origin and principles of the French revolution, translated from the German of Gentz, by an American gentleman.”

[†] Milton

[†] Shakespeare

[†] Nay, as it is only the scripture which authenticates the popular belief of an universal deluge, Mr. Jefferson’s insinuation can hardly have any meaning, if it be not an oblique stroke at the bible itself. Nothing can be more silly than the pretext that he shews the insufficiency of natural causes to effect the deluge, with a view of supporting the credit of the miracle. His difficulty is not to account for the deluge: he denies that; but for *the shells on the top of the Andes*. If he believed in the deluge, natural or miraculous, the difficulty would cease: he would say at once, *The flood threw them there*. But as he tells us, “*this great phenomenon is, as yet, unsolved,*” it is clear that he does not believe in the deluge at all; for this “solves” his “phenomenon” most effectually. And for whom does Mr. J. write? For Christians? None of them ever dreamed that the deluge was caused by any thing else than a miracle. For infidels?

Why then does he not tell them that the scripture alone gives the true solution of this “great phenomenon?” The plain matter of fact is, that he writes like all other infidels, who admit nothing for which they cannot find adequate “natural agents”; and when these fail them, instead of resorting to the divine word, which would often satisfy a modest enquirer, by revealing the “arm of Jehovah,” they shrug up their shoulders, and cry, “Ignorance is preferable to error.”<sup>+</sup>

<sup>+</sup>Notes on Virginia, p. 42.