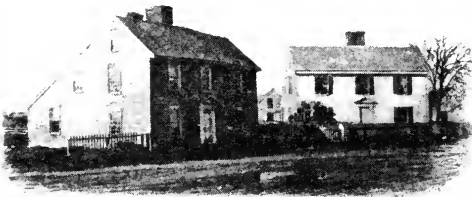
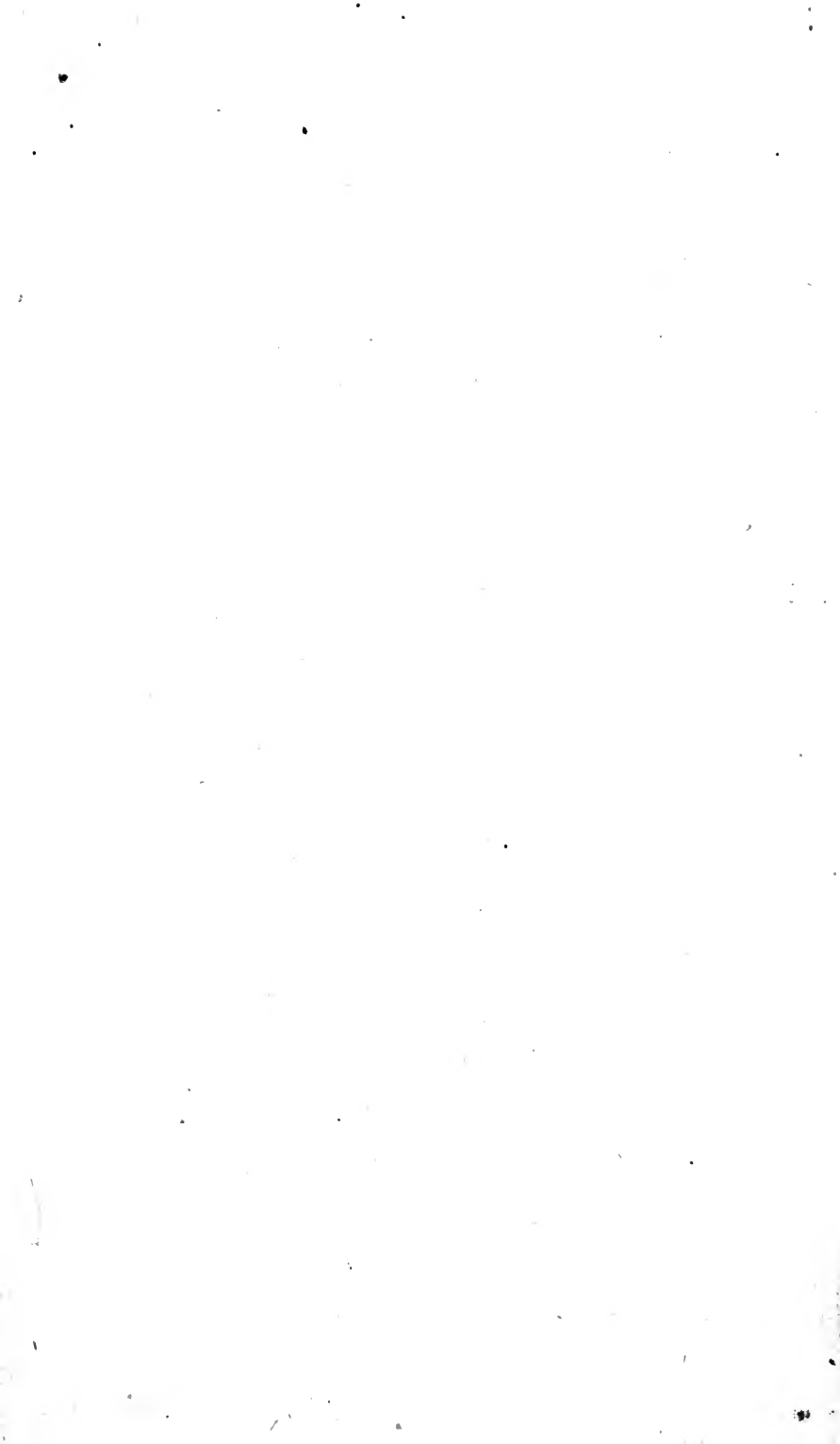


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A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

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OCCASIONED BY THE APPROACHING DEPARTURE

OF THE

SENIOR CLASS

FROM THE

UNIVERSITY.



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A

DISCOURSE.



S the present crisis of human affairs is very solemn and eventful ; as we, in common with our fellow citizens, feel a lively interest in it ; and as this University is soon to resign a considerable number of her sons to the service of their country and mankind ; I cannot but seize this affecting opportunity, to address to them and the students at large some observations and counsels, suggested chiefly by the present state of the world.

These counsels may be pertinently introduced by the seasonable advice of Solomon to young persons in

Proverbs xix. 27.

*CEASE, MY SON, TO HEAR THE INSTRUCTION, WHICH
CAUSETH TO ERR FROM THE WORDS OF KNOWLEDGE.*

THIS inspired and parental caution is plainly intended to guard the rising generation against those wrong and dangerous opinions, which would seduce
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them from the principles and practice of sound morality and piety; whether such opinions be gravely taught by philosophers, artfully insinuated by wits, or powerfully enforced by political reformers; whether they be privately uttered in social circles, or propagated, like a general pestilence, in licentious publications; whether they present themselves in the garb of speculation, or in the actual conduct and circumstances of individuals or nations.

To render this advice directly applicable and useful to my auditors, I will enumerate some leading instances of wrong instruction, which characterize the present age; point out their pernicious tendency and fruits; and offer some hints, adapted to secure your minds against their fatal infection.

As the speaker means to express his sentiments and feelings on several delicate and interesting subjects with a freedom, confidence and zeal, which his relation and affection to this Society both warrant and inspire; he hopes to be heard with a candid and serious temper, and wishes that his observations may be regarded no farther than they approve themselves to unbiassed reason.

The FIRST INSTANCE I shall mention of dangerous but too fashionable instruction, is that which holds up all speculative principles as equally innocent; which asserts that as the unalienable right of private judgment involves the liberty of thinking as we please on every subject, our responsibility does not extend to our thoughts, but to our actions only; that human conduct is influenced, not by opinion,
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but by feeling or inclination ; that a person, who happens to fall into error, may be as honest and virtuous as one who embraces truth ; consequently, that if the christian religion should prove to be true, a man may be as sincere in not believing, as in assenting to it, and his general temper and practice, which form his moral character, may be equally amiable on the former supposition, as upon the latter.

We shall not combat this flattering representation by opposing or in the least disparaging that unfettered liberty of thought, which is eminently the boast of this enlightened and liberal age. We grant, yea earnestly contend that every man is both entitled and bound to examine and judge for himself upon every important question, and that he is not amenable for his opinions to any tribunal on earth. But does it follow that he is not accountable to God and his own conscience for the manner in which he conducts his inquiries, especially on the most serious and awful subjects ? If, as all agree, he is under law to his Maker with respect to his overt acts ; is he under no responsibility for those inward principles, by which such acts are prompted and guided ? Is not the connexion or reciprocal influence between the head and heart, between the judgment and practice, very intimate and strong ? Do not evil propensities, indulgences, and prejudices often mislead the understanding into licentious opinions ? And do not such opinions warrant and strengthen such vicious affections and manners ? In a word, are not speculative unbelief and practical infidelity alternate causes and effects of each other ? While a wicked heart and life eagerly resort to irreligious principles as necessary to their
own

own justification ; do not such principles, in return, directly encourage and patronize wickedness ? While the profligate derives protection and comfort from infidelity ; does not this find its principal resources in profligate habits and morals ?

As the volitions and consequent actions of men are mainly governed by their prevailing belief ; so he who steadily believes and obeys truth is a virtuous man ; while he who chooses and obeys falsehood is a vitious character. The great distinction between good and wicked men lies in this, that the former, though they may hold some speculative errors, are, for the most part, practically governed, not by these mistakes, but by those important truths which they universally and cordially embrace ; while the latter, though they may assent to some momentous truths, yet disregard them in practice, and their prevailing affections and conduct cleave to and are moulded by falsehood. The man who professes and visibly obeys the essential principles of religion and morality, has a claim to our charity, though his creed be mixed with many erroneous opinions. But the man who sets aside the great truths, on which virtue rests ; such as the being, character, or government of God, the future existence and retribution of man, the fitness and obligation of piety, justice, sincerity, temperance, and chastity ; the man, who confounds all moral distinctions, and teaches the rectitude of lying, fraud, cruelty, lewdness, and irreligion ; such a man cannot be a virtuous character. His principles directly operate to extinguish every virtuous sentiment, feeling, and action, and to nourish every opposite quality. It is incredible that an honest and good heart,
especially

especially when united with such talents and information as many patrons of infidelity have possessed, should embrace, much less eagerly propagate such errors. It is equally incredible that such principles should fail to demoralize the minds and conduct of their zealous friends and promoters. "Since error is in every sense the means of wickedness; since it acts as the direct guide and effectual temptation to it, and the grand support and comfort in it; it follows that he who is pleased with error, is a friend to vice, is a guilty enemy to himself, and a destroyer of his own well being, as well as a dishonourer of the God of truth; while he who fabricates, publishes, and defends it, is the common foe of God and man. The evil, which he does to the universe, is in some sense unbounded; and with all this evil he is chargeable. The ravages of Alexander were probably less injurious to men, and less guilty before God, than the ravages of the moral world by an able and zealous patron of infidelity."

If therefore the alleged sincerity of deists intend only that their disbelief of christianity is real or cordial; this fact, instead of rendering or proving them virtuous, may evince the reality and greatness of their moral depravity. For the supposition that this religion may be from God lays an immediate obligation on those, to whom it comes, to attend with fair and serious minds to its proofs; the result of which attention, in case of its truth, will be a full belief and welcome reception of it. As the general idea of a divine revelation implies that it possesses a sufficiency of evidence and importance to demand our faith and obedience; so the
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peculiar proofs and discoveries of the gospel greatly enhance the duty of believing, and guilt of rejecting it. While its various, abundant, and growing evidence satisfies the honest inquirer ; its doctrines, precepts, and motives are perfectly congenial, as well as unspeakably salutary and comforting to the humble and virtuous heart. Agreeably, a cordial faith in this system is represented by the sacred writers as an eminent expression and instrument of virtue ; while unbelief is censured as highly criminal and dangerous, as at once importing and perpetuating a vitious and obdurate character. These observations are greatly confirmed by the moral conduct and principles of ancient and modern infidels, compared with those of serious christian believers. While a spirit of humility and integrity, of devotion and charity has, in numberless instances, led to or been unspeakably improved by the belief of christianity ; it is a fact that the doctrines and lives of by far the greater part of infidels have been unfriendly both to virtue and piety. The bulk of deistical writers have sought to undermine natural religion and morality, as well as the christian faith. If they really and practically believed their own doctrines, how depraved must have been their moral characters ! If they did not believe them, what falsehood and malignity do they discover in deliberately attempting to deceive, corrupt and ruin mankind ! I add, what mean and wicked hypocrisy have the generality of British infidel authors, from Herbert to Gibbon, been chargeable with, in solemnly pretending great veneration and zeal for christianity, while insidiously and earnestly laboring to subvert it !

In a word, the assertion, that all religious opinions are alike, implies the following dreadful absurdities ; that God has not given his rational offspring sufficient means of distinguishing truth from falsehood, even in their highest concerns ; that truth is of no importance to man ; that it has no peculiar connexion either with his virtue or happiness ; that his conviction of the most interesting doctrines and facts has no tendency to influence either his temper or actions ! Even those who make these assertions, feel them to be false : else why do they labor to build up their own opinions on the ruins of christianity ? Why do they constantly inveigh against the pernicious influence of superstition and enthusiasm ? If the religious principle, misguided or perverted, produce such baneful effects ; the natural conclusion is, that the same principle, well directed, will have an influence proportionably happy.

The design and tendency of these remarks are not to restrain the privilege of free inquiry, but to prevent its abuse. If you ask, what is the exact boundary between the right and wrong exercise of this liberty ; I answer in one word, if a professed inquirer after truth honestly wishes to find it, and for this end, with candid and conscientious diligence collects, examines, and admits all the evidence within his reach ; he in this instance does his duty, and is not accountable for any mistake, which he may chance to imbibe. That the foes of christianity, and propagators of irreligious or immoral principles, have acted this part, is a supposition not supported by reason or fact.

A SECOND CLASS of wrong opinions, which threaten to seduce you from the path of wisdom and virtue, are such as recommend indolent ease, thoughtless dissipation, or licentious pleasure, as the principal sources of happiness. Such ideas too often find a welcome admittance into the youthful bosom. While the sprightly feelings of the young are eminently tuned for pleasure; their ardent and in many instances volatile spirits are peculiarly impatient of self-denying, laborious, and persevering application. This fondness for ease and amusement is nourished by the soft and frivolous taste, which too generally marks the present age, and in particular by the train of conversation, of conduct, and of reading, which distinguishes some of the more polished classes of society. It is a common observation, that as a community rises in affluence and refinement, its devotion to luxury and pleasure increases; of course, its relish for steady industry and solid learning, especially for the study and practice of strict virtue and piety proportionally decays. Wherever pleasure erects her throne, she enervates both the intellectual vigor and moral sensibility of her votaries.

How important then is it that all ranks of our citizens, particularly the youth of our country, especially those who are forming by a learned education to be future examples and leaders of mankind; how important that they religiously guard against the fascinations of this mighty and fatal enchantress! To this end, fix it deeply in your minds, that early habits of patient and continued application are necessary to your future eminence and usefulness; that the formation of such habits is one of the greatest advantages

vantages which a public education can bestow ; that those intellectual pursuits and accomplishments, which are more easy, brilliant, or pleasing, should ever be subordinate to those, which are more substantial and beneficial ; that a studious cultivation of the more solid parts of science is eminently needful at this day, to fortify you against that spirit of subtle and systematic innovation both in politics and religion, which threatens to overwhelm the order and peace of the world ; and finally, that self denying and virtuous diligence is the appointed road to the most pure, noble, and lasting delights. While the pleasures of idleness and vitious indulgence are empty and transient, and followed with languor, shame and remorse ; those of reason, conscience, and religion are at once satisfactory, improving, and perpetual.

THIRDLY, let me caution you against those opinions, whether vented by philosophers or men of the world, which represent our species as destitute and incapable of any higher principle than meer selfishness, as not framed nor obliged to exercise any real benevolence or integrity, any genuine friendship, patriotism, or devotion ; and consequently, that the profession or appearance of these virtues in any of mankind is nothing more than an artful self-seeking policy, which conceals and accomplishes its own views by the fair but delusive show of disinterested goodness. Without stopping to discuss this theory upon philosophical principles, it is sufficient to observe that the uncorrupted voice of reason, conscience, and scripture, of the wise and good in all nations and ages, of universal history and experience, proclaim the

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the real existence and obligation of benevolence and piety, as well as self love ; and of course warrants us to believe that those who are most expert in giving such a shocking portrait of the best human characters, have drawn their picture from the conscious baseness and wickedness of their own hearts.

From the subtilty of false speculation we appeal to common sense, and ask, is there not an essential difference in the character and ruling principles of a WASHINGTON and a *Robespierre* ; of the present Executive of our country, and that of a certain *great* and *terrible* republic ? While you are struck with the contrast between these several characters ; do you not feel a sacred obligation to copy the integrity, the patriotism, the active and enlarged philanthropy of the one, and to avoid the selfishness, injustice, and villainy of the other ?

I intreat you to carry these moral sentiments along with you into the future scenes of active life. Let them consecrate and dignify the respective parts, which Providence shall call you to perform both in the church and commonwealth. Never forget that sound philosophy, as well as christianity, teaches that you were made, not for yourselves only, but for God and the universe ; that you were intended to serve, not merely the purposes of time, but those of eternity. Beseech the Author of your frame to impress these ideas on your minds, to inspire your hearts with correspondent affections, and thus to form you to a generous and elevated character, becoming reasonable, social, and immortal beings.

But if you cherish the degrading sentiment, that you are bound to love and seek yourselves only, it
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will preclude or extinguish that glow of public affection, which is the soul of personal excellence and general usefulness. It will render you religious hypocrites in the church, and political ones in the state.

While we thus caution you against the debasing influence of this selfish theory; I think it highly expedient in the

FOURTH PLACE to remind you of a more recent system, which affects the contrary aspect of extreme and universal good-will, and has for its ostensible object THE REGENERATION OF AN OPPRESSED WORLD TO THE BLISSFUL ENJOYMENT OF EQUAL LIBERTY.

You all know that those who led in the French Revolution early held out, at least in a partial degree, this fraternal intention; and that their successors are to this moment affectedly prosecuting it with their utmost policy and force. Mr. Robison, Professor of Natural Philosophy, and Secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, in a work recently published, has endeavoured to trace the principles and measures of France to a more early, profound, and extensive source than has been generally supposed. After long possessing, as he asserts, uncommon means of information, and exploring the subject with the most inquisitive and laborious attention, he gives the public a minute account of a society, calling itself the ILLUMINATI, which was founded in Germany by Dr. Adam Weishaupt in 1775, and under the mask of universal philanthropy has been aiming at complete dominion over the minds and bodies of mankind.

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For this purpose, "it has formed, and to an alarming degree executed a plan for exterminating Christianity, Natural Religion, the belief of a God, of the Immortality of the Soul, and Moral Obligation; for rooting out of the world civil and domestic government, the right of property, marriage, natural affection, chastity, and decency; in a word, for destroying whatever is virtuous, refined or desirable, and introducing again universal barbarism and brutality." "This society, according to our author, under various names and forms, in the course of a few years secretly extended its branches through a great part of Europe, and even into America. The aim of its members is to inlist, in every country, such as have frequently declared themselves discontented with the usual institutions; to acquire the direction of education, of church management, of the professional chair, and of the pulpit; to bring their opinions into fashion by every art, and to spread them among young people by the help of young writers; to get under their influence reading and debating societies, reviewers, booksellers and postmasters, journalists or editors of newspapers and other periodical publications; and to insinuate some of their fraternity into all offices of instruction, honor, profit, and influence, in literary, civil, and religious institutions. As it is one of their favorite maxims, that "the end sanctifies the means," they have nothing to restrain them from pushing their plans by the vilest methods."*

A careful

* This compendious view of the Illuminati, founded on Professor Robison's details, is mostly borrowed from two recent American publications, viz. PRESIDENT DWIGHT's sermons on *infidel philosophy*, and DR. MORSE's discourse on the National Inst. I have quoted their accounts, because they are concise and accurate.

A careful attention to Mr. Robison's book has, in many instances, produced an alarming apprehension, yea a full conviction of its general truth. This conviction is founded on the positive assertions and details

accurate, and had been seen by very few of the hearers of this Lecture; and because I was desirous of adding authorities so respectable to the more private testimonies of many judicious and excellent persons in favor of the *general* credibility of the narrative in question.—It ought not to surprize us that the report of a scheme so novel, extravagant, and diabolical should at first strike many wise and good men as a ridiculous and incredible romance. Nor is it strange that persons of irreligious and disorganizing principles or manners, and those whose eyes continue dazzled with the splendid declarations and successes of France, or with the enchanting prospects of political, philosophical, or religious fanaticism, should be slow to believe, or at least eager to discredit a publication so hostile to their opinions or wishes. Nor does it seem difficult to account for the real or affected incredulity, with which this work is regarded by some *British Reviewers*. Many of these reviewers have long shown themselves ardent friends to political and religious innovation. Some of them have zealously advocated, probably from the best principles, a civil and ecclesiastical reform in their nation; while others are implicated in this history as principal or secondary agents in the grand scheme of illumination. To which we may add, the censures passed on our author by some of these literary tribunals, may probably have been the offspring of a very few individuals; in which a great majority of the judges had little or no participation.

The displeasure expressed against this writer by some worthy members of the *Masonic Fraternity*, seems to have been excited by his tracing the origin of the Illuminati to the corruptions of Free Masonry in Europe; by his representing them as artfully converting to their own advantage the peculiar respectability, protection and secrecy, the intimate, regular and extensive connexions of the Masonic Lodges on that Continent; by his holding up these Lodges as at best a frivolous institution, and all secret and mysterious societies as dangerous; and on this ground devoutly wishing their voluntary and formal dissolution. His opinion of the universal frivolity or mischievous tendency of such meetings may be incorrect and injurious; while the leading facts, on which he founds it, are true. The warm and virtuous indignation and even horror, which these facts justly excited, may have induced him too hastily to condemn an institution, which in its simple state may be innocent and laudable, but which in his view had been perverted to dreadful purposes. If we justly blame this undistinguishing censure, let the principle which prompted it engage our generous indulgence. Let the proofs of a good understanding and heart, of enlightened and fervent zeal for pure christian morality and piety, which distinguish his book, procure for it a candid and thorough examination. At the same time

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tails of a gentleman of character and station † before the bar of an enlightened and vigilant public; on the printed confessions of four considerable members of the society in question, on the exposed contents of many of its secret papers, on many other publications of notoriety and reputation, and on the testimony of respectable living informers. The author declares that he has the authority of printed evidence for all his assertions, except one anecdote, which was told him by many credible witnesses.

But what connexion had this German association with the Revolution and consequent measures of France? The answer is, the secret papers of the society prove that it had extended its branches into the latter country before the year 1786; that Mirabeau and Talleyrand, two distinguished agents in that revolution, were officers of a secret lodge at Paris in 1788; that during the sitting of the *Notables* in that year deputies were sent to France from the German Illuminati, at the request of this lodge, to aid in the projected subversion of religion and government; that the Duke of Orleans, afterwards Egalite, who had for several years been at the head of 266 secret societies,

let the approved characters of the principal Masons in this country, especially in the Eastern States, “ induce us to hold the Fraternity here in esteem and honor, as delighting in hospitality, devoted to humanity, and favorable to the support of civil authority.” *

* *President Adams' reply to the address of the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts.*

† The Editors of the *British Encyclopedia* mention Professor Robison among the most distinguished contributors to that work, assigning to him alone *twenty three* valuable articles in science and arts, such as Physics, Pneumatics, &c. and ascribing *philosophy* to his agency in union with that of Dr. Gleig, another learned and leading contributor. Surely a writer of such eminence claims our respectful attention, and ought not to be lightly accused or even suspected of enthusiasm, illiberality, or falsehood.

societies, and by his corrupt influence had converted them into nurseries of impiety and sedition, was about this time illuminated by Mirabeau ; that the German agents, on their arrival, persuaded each of these lodges to form a political committee, whose object should be to devise the best means for a general revolution. From these committees arose the famous JACOBIN CLUB, whose primary aim was to revolutionize not only France, but, if possible, the world. By means of this parent club at Paris, and subordinate societies generated by and acting with it throughout the nation, an entire revolution was effected in a moment. This previous train, thus secretly laid, accounts for the instantaneous and universal explosion which ensued. This holds up a cause adequate to that total and uniform change of opinion and feeling, of language and conduct, which at the same instant appeared in every corner of that extensive country. In short, the known zeal of the illuminated brethren, and the glorious opportunity, which the dawn of the French Revolution afforded, of exerting it with success, joined with the printed evidence of their actual and very efficient co-operation, especially in 1790 and 1791, leave no reasonable doubt that the revolutionary principles and measures of France are in a considerable degree their offspring.

Accordingly, the avowed sentiments, objects, and even language of the French government have, from the beginning of the revolution, remarkably coincided with those of this brotherhood. In 1792, their National Convention by a solemn decree OFFERED HELP AND FRATERNITY TO ALL PEOPLE. In 1793, they expressly decreed, that the object of their war

against surrounding countries was THE ANNIHILATION OF ALL PRIVILEGES, WAR WITH THE PALACES, PEACE WITH THE COTTAGES. This decree was ordered to be translated into all languages, and dispersed into all the neighbouring countries. In execution of this system, their agents or armies have uniformly excited discontent, if not insurrection, in every nation which they meant to fraternize or subdue; and by the aid or under the cover of this, have compelled the invaded people, at the point of the bayonet, to accept the offered boon of liberty and equality!

They have also exactly copied the scheme of the Illuminati with respect to religion and morality. As early as 1792, a proposition was made in their Convention, and received with loud and general applause, for ABOLISHING THE ALTARS OF GOD. Their legislature likewise early set aside the christian era, and by substituting decades in place of weeks artfully contrived to destroy the observation and even memory of the christian sabbath. They also decreed that *death was an everlasting sleep*, and ordered an inscription to this effect to be placed in capitals at the entrance of their grave yards. In 1793, the Convention solemnly renounced both the belief of a God and the immortality of the soul, asserted that all religions were the daughters of ignorance and pride, decreed the publication of these sentiments in all languages, and assumed the sublime function of diffusing truth over the whole earth. The avowed moral principles and conduct of regenerated France are also a faithful copy of Illuminatism: they are such as brutalize the human character, and prostrate the safety, beauty and happiness of human society.

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I cannot forbear adding that the supposition of so deep and extensive a conspiracy against government and religion as our author attempts to prove, easily accounts for the rapid progress of impious and disorganizing principles, and the wonderful success of the French arms and intrigues, in various and distant parts of the world ; for that ardent and obstinate devotion to the principles and measures of a hostile and abandoned foreign power, which still characterizes some intelligent and even native Americans, and some high or influential characters in our national councils ; for the zealous, persevering support and circulation of certain newspapers and other productions, which are uniformly devoted to malignant falsehood, calumny, and sedition, which aim or directly tend to undermine the religious and moral, as well as civil institutions, principles and habits of our country, to destroy the character and official existence of its present rulers and clergy, and to establish on their ruins the dreadful reign of infidelity and confusion. If these and similar facts do not evince so early and broad a system of wickedness as this writer supposes (the truth of which in *all* its extent the speaker is not prepared to support ;) yet they indicate a real and most alarming plan of hostility against the dearest interests of man ; and thus lay an ample foundation for those remarks and counsels, which are to finish this discourse.

One obvious and important inference is, that fervent professions of general philanthropy, or splendid and passionate harangues on universal freedom and equality, are too often either fanciful or hypocritical,
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and for the most part productive of evil effects. They are fanciful, as they hold out a pleasing abstract idea, a beautiful phantom, which does not apply to the present frame and condition of man; and substitute a metaphysical, speculative, and artificial benevolence, which has no real, definite object and use, in place of those natural and important duties, which we owe to ourselves, our families, and our country.* They are likewise often hypocritical. In the view both of reason and experience, unnatural and extravagant pretensions,

* It is readily granted that both reason and revelation enjoin upon us what may be called *universal love*, or an impartial affection to *all* intelligent beings with whom we are connected, especially to the whole human race. It is the glory of our religion, that it subordinates every private and limited affection to this public principle. But this enlarged good-will does not imply fruitless wishes or attempts to change that order of things, which is proper, necessary, and advantageous in the present condition of man. Nor does it consist in such high speculations and feelings respecting the system at large, as neither do nor can prove their own sincerity, and contribute to the public good, by producing corresponding practical fruits. That benevolence, which is not or cannot be verified in beneficent practice, is not only useless, but is very apt to cheat and dazzle its possessor, by setting up refined but cheap sentiment and feeling in the room of self denying, laborious and expensive goodness. A man who is not *practically* ready to devote a small part of his property, labor, or time to the comfort of his poor neighbour or even the support of his own family, may yet by the force of speculation work up his mind into a fancied and perhaps rapturous willingness to sacrifice his whole interest temporal and eternal to the good of the universe! Such a willingness implies no *actual* or *possible* sacrifice, and therefore no sure proof of real benevolence; yet as it has the appearance of very sublime and disinterested affection, its possessor is in danger not only of entertaining a high and confident opinion of his own goodness, but of despising and neglecting the ordinary and substantial duties of christian love. But a steady, conscientious and affectionate practice of the domestic and neighbourly, the friendly and patriotic virtues is the best, and, generally speaking, almost the only method, in which the bulk of christians can prove the sincerity, and promote the objects of universal benevolence. That is true philanthropy, which makes its subject actively and usefully benevolent to his family, vicinity, country, and as far as possible, his whole species; and which pursues the good of particular portions of mankind, in consistency with and subordination to the great interests of the whole.

pretensions, especially when united with talents and information, are usually void of sincerity. Thus the pretences to refined morality, to the most generous zeal for universal liberty and happiness, which have been made both by the Illuminati and by French Politicians, have been perpetually confuted by their own sensual, ambitious, tyrannical, and profligate characters. Hence their professions and doctrines are commonly pernicious; as they make the bulk of mankind discontented with their lot, and urge them on to sacrifice every virtue and comfort suitable or possible to man, whether personal or domestic, patriotic or religious, and eagerly rush into every opposite crime and misery, in pursuit of an unattainable and romantic felicity. Let the horrid practical fruits of such pretensions in the Old World engrave on your hearts a perpetual caution against those innovating theories, which overlook the real capacities and dispositions, the mutual wants and dependences of mankind. LEARN TO VIEW MAN AS HE IS. On this base erect the system of his rights, duties, and enjoyments. By this standard sacredly govern your future conduct.

But the main instruction, which the preceding view inculcates, is a lesson in favor of RELIGION, especially of CHRISTIANITY. The recent philosophers of Germany and France began their assault upon the order and peace of the world, by attacking all religious principles and institutions. Their first effort, like that of their infidel predecessors, was to inflame the appetites and passions of their pupils; then to hold up religion as imposing absurd and cruel restraints

straints upon these propensities; then to represent these restrictions as the selfish contrivance of priests and despots; and thus to gain over to infidelity the numerous tribes of voluptuous, ambitious, and discontented members of society. Does not this process evince that, even in the view of these philosophers, religion and morality are inseparably connected? Why else do they prepare men for infidelity by corrupting their morals, and train them up to profligate manners by extinguishing the sentiments of religion? Does not this display at once the hypocrisy of these pretended refiners of virtue, and the importance of religion as the great support of morality?

The same lesson is further enforced by the immoral lives of these modern reformers. The founder and principal members of the illuminated brotherhood, while deluding mankind with a beautiful picture of virtue, rescued from the defiling embraces of superstition, were themselves stained with vices of the most gross, savage, and monstrous complexion. It is a remarkable fact, that the most distinguished promoters of this new morality both in France and Germany, are either licentious and prostituted clergymen, who had solemnly professed to believe and sworn to inculcate the doctrines of christianity, or men in other departments, whose characters were a reproach to human nature. In the former class we might reckon *Talleyrand*, once a christian but very immoral bishop; in the latter *Mirabeau*, *Orleans*, and others, whose meanness and profligacy stamped their names with infamy. Compare these prime ministers of infidelity with the list of christian Apostles, Confessors, and Martyrs; with the serious believers of the Gos-
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pel in every age; with the noble train of christian patriots, teachers, and professors in your own country, from our exemplary Chief Magistrate down to the lowly and virtuous peasant; and say, which of the opposite classes would you choose for your moral instructors and patterns? From whose lips would you expect the most pure and salutary doctrines? Does not the contrast hold up experimental proof, that the lovely portrait of virtue drawn by its impure and hypocritical admirers is at best a lifeless image, a body without the spirit; while christianity, with a sovereign energy peculiar to herself, BREATHES INTO THIS IMAGE THE BREATH OF LIFE, AND MAKES IT A LIVING SOUL? Which leads us to add that

The same conclusion results from tracing the effects of infidel philosophy on the great body of its disciples. Behold France converted by it into one great theatre of falsehood and perjury, of cruelty and ferocity, of robbery and piracy, of anarchy and despotism, of fornication and adultery, and of course reduced to a state of unspeakable degradation and misery. Compare this picture with the existing character and state of our own country; with the un sullied purity of its public administration, and the general order, refinement and happiness of its citizens; and then say, which is most friendly to the human character and condition, the atheistical system of France, or the christian institutions of America? Does not the comparison force a conviction, that infidelity is the mortal foe, and christianity the guardian angel both of personal worth and public felicity? Was there ever a more complete acknowledgment of the excellence of
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the christian religion, than she has received from those, who have systematically labored to destroy her, as the great opposer of their brutal vices and their horrid conspiracy against the human race? Did the principles of an atheistical and demoralizing philosophy ever receive so full and impressive a confutation, as from the flocking revolution they have lately produced in the human heart? What an instructive spectacle does France, in this view, exhibit to mankind! May we not hope that in this way *her fall may eventually prove the riches of the world*, and that her own experience of the dreadful effects of irreligion may at length recal her to the sentiments of christian piety and virtue?

The present times, my young friends, afford you uncommon advantages and motives to pursue the contrast now instituted, in its utmost extent. The present theory and practical fruits of infidel and seditious philosophy are but the natural growth of the seed, which has long been sowing in the publications, lives, and secret concerts of its friends. Various causes have contributed to accelerate and perfect this moral vegetation. Among the most powerful of these have been the disgusting and oppressive abuses attending the political and religious establishments of Christendom, and the growing discontent or indignation of those, who have remarked their impropriety or felt their pressure.

While the attentive eye thus beholds in former times the embryo of the present revolutionizing system; it must be especially struck with the uniform tendency of infidel tenets, in their various and even best forms, to undermine virtue and encourage vice.

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This feature is visible in their most chaste, refined, and able instructors ; such as Herbert, Shaftesbury, and Rousseau.* Mr. Hume, the greatest and apparently one of the most virtuous of these authors, justifies and recommends pride, self-murder, adultery, and female infidelity ; and after spending his days in laboring to exterminate the belief of a God, a providence, and a future state, employs his last moments in affectedly sporting with the most serious of all subjects, a final retribution. Christianity, on the contrary, not only forbids every vice, and enjoins every virtue in its utmost perfection, but discourages the one and enforces the other by infinite motives. “ Hence to say that a man is a real christian, is universally understood as a declaration, that he is a man distinguishedly virtuous. But to say, a man is an infidel, is generally understood as a declaration, that he is plainly immoral,” or devoid of any fixed principle of honesty and goodness.

The deistical doctrine has also been perpetually shifting its character and mode of defence. About a century ago it was theism or natural religion ; then total disbelief ; then the mere animal system ; then universal doubt ; now it is downright atheism ;

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* The inefficacy of these doctrines to reform their votaries, and their pernicious influence on the human character, are stated with great particularity and force in Dr. Dwight's Sermons on infidel philosophy ; in which he proves, by large details, that this philosophy in all its shapes, as maintained by ancient heathens and modern unbelievers, instead of forming men to virtue, has ever tended to vice, and if “ thoroughly practised, would overwhelm the world with that depravity and misery, which the Scriptures exhibit as experienced in hell.” The writer gratefully owns his obligation to these sermons for several important ideas, as well as for a number of sentences marked as quotations ; and recommends them to the serious attention of those who wish rightly to estimate that boasting but vain philosophy, which is seeking to exalt itself on the ruins of christianity.

shortly it will re-ascend from atheism towards natural religion. What certainty, what resting place can the serious inquirer find in such an ever varying and discordant system? But the leading doctrines and proofs of revelation, amidst all these changes, have remained uniform, unshaken, immutable.

Compare also the comforting and elevating influence of christianity with the gloomy and desponding spirit of infidelity. The latter affords no sure standard of faith, conduct or hope; it presents no truths to guide, encouragements to enliven, sanctions to enforce, or succours to aid the returning virtue of conscious offenders. But the gospel, by revealing an equally holy and merciful Deity, a perfect Mediator and atonement, a divine Sanctifier and Comforter, a free pardon and glorious reward, animates the humble penitent to rise from moral degeneracy and guilt, to renovated, progressive holiness and peace. In this way it confers upon him the dignity of conscious virtue, the sunshine of an approving mind, the comfort of divine friendship, and the bright prospect of everlasting bliss.

Should Providence hereafter conduct you into domestic or public life, christian principles diffused through your temper and conduct will render you amiable, useful and happy, as husbands and fathers, as neighbours and friends, as political or religious guides and examples. While your country is chiefly indebted to its religious and moral institutions for its distinguished knowledge, order, union, and prosperity; remember that she sacredly calls on you, her literary sons, to preserve and transmit these blessings to posterity. She peculiarly expects it from those,
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who, in a late spirited Address to her excellent Head, have published their abhorrence of “ those principles which subvert social order,” and have solemnly “ offered their unimpaired youthful energies, and even their lives, to the service of their country.”

As the local situation and other signal advantages of our favored land seem to point her out as the destined barrier against the threatened universal inundation of irreligious and political fanaticism ; so the firm and united stand of her enlightened youth in favor of the opposite principles may ultimately rescue and bless the world. This is a species of universal philanthropy, which is solid and noble, and which I earnestly recommend to your emulous pursuit.

In this way you may effectually counterwork the subtle policy of the common enemies of God and man. While they are seeking to brutalize the world by exterminating the weekly sabbath and christian instructors ; you are invited, and indeed have virtually sworn, to oppose this infernal artifice by supporting these great pillars of social order. While they are outraging female modesty and dignity, prostrating the venerable rites of marriage, debasing the important and endearing connexions of husband, son, and brother, reducing both men and women to worse than brutal impurity and barbarism, forming both into a motley compound of the swine and the tiger, and at last consigning them, with kindred beasts, to eternal sleep and putrefaction ; while this is the boasted work of modern reformers, be it yours to assert the dignity of man, to guard and improve the delicacy and worth of the female character, to exemplify the fairest portraits of domestic virtue and happiness,

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to exhibit, in their most alluring forms, the devout and benevolent christian Pastor, the strictly just as well as able Lawyer, the equally humane and skilful Physician, the inflexible Friend and Patriot, the beneficent Leader and Pattern of mankind.

The SOLEMN FAREWELL, which this occasion bids me pronounce, reminds us of that far more awful separation from each other, which death will ere long proclaim. In the prospect or experience of this separation, infidelity strips us both of comfort and of hope. But the most ardent and anxious friendship cannot wish you a greater good, than that after a long scene of honorable and useful conduct founded on pious and evangelical principles, christianity may “ seat herself by your dying pillows, draw aside the curtains of eternity, point your closing eyes to the opening gates” of everlasting life, and convey your departing spirits in peace and transport to a state of perfect, evergrowing knowledge, virtue, enjoyment, usefulness, and glory.





