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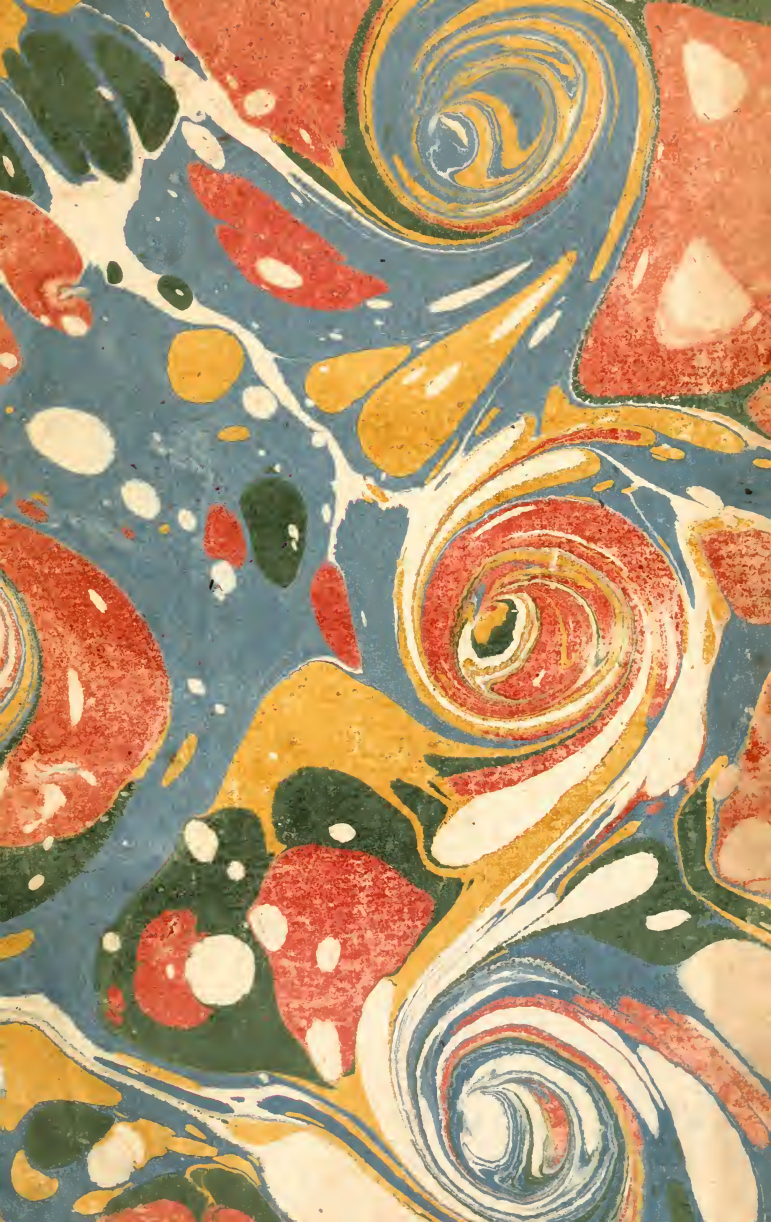

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OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

IMPORTANCE

OF THE

AMERICAN REVOLUTION,

AND

The MEANS of making it a BENEFIT to the WORLD.

By RICHARD PRICE, D.D. L.L.D.

And FELLOW of the ROYAL SOCIETY of LONDON, and of the ACADEMY of ARTS and SCIENCES in NEW-ENGLAND.

Printed in LONDON in 1784.

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TO

The FREE AND UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS

ARE HUMBLY OFFERED,

AS

A LAST TESTIMONY

OF

THE GOOD-WILL

OF

THE AUTHOR.

JULY 6. 1784.

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Newington: Green

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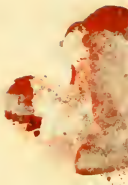
JULY 6. 1784.

OBSER-

Dr Price presents his compliments to Mr Bell.
His pamphlet on the American Revolution not
having been intended for publication in this
country he has but few copies to spare.
He has however sent him one copy for Mr
Genet to which he is very welcome.
It is not in Dr Price's power to spare more
than one copy; nor has he at present more than
one in his possession.

Newington Green Nov: 27th 1784

Dr. Price's obfervations on the American revolution are fo replete with theoretic reafoning, that it is worthy the perufal of every American, who ought to have its dictates imprinted on his mind, as the remarks are facred, and to us intereſting truths.



OBSERVATIONS, &c.

Of the IMPORTANCE *of the* REVOLUTION *which has eſtabliſhed the Independence of the United States.*

HAVING, from pure conviction, taken a warm part in favour of the *Britiſh* colonies (now the United States of America) during the late war; and been expoſed, in conſequence of this, to *much* abuſe and *ſome* danger; it muſt be ſuppoſed that I have been waiting for the iſſue with anxiety —— I am thankful that my anxiety is removed; and that I have been ſpared to be a witneſs to that very iſſue of the war which has been all along the object of my

wiſhes. With heart-felt ſatisfaction, I ſee the revolution in favour of univerſal liberty which has taken place in *America*;—a revolution which opens a new proſpect in human affairs, and begins a new æra in the hiſtory of mankind;——a revolution by which *Britons* themſelves will be the greateſt gainers, if wiſe enough to improve properly the check that has been given to the deſpotiſm of their miniſters, and to catch the flame of virtuous liberty which has ſaved their American brethren.

The late war, in its *commencement and progreſs*, did great good by diſſeminating juſt ſentiments of the rights of mankind, and the nature of legitimate government; by exciting a ſpirit of reſiſtance to tyranny, which has emancipated one *European* country, and is likely to emancipate others; and by occaſioning the eſtabliſhment in *America* of forms of government more equitable and more liberal than any that the world has yet known. But, in its *termination*, the war has done ſtill greater good by preſerving the new governments from that deſtruction in which they muſt have been involved, had Britain conquered; by providing,

ing, in a ſequeſtered continent poſſeſſed of many ſingular advantages, a place of refuge for oppreſt men in every region of the world; and by laying the foundation there of an empire which may be the ſeat of liberty, ſcience and virtue, and from whence there is reaſon to hope theſe ſacred bleſſings will ſpread, till they become univerſal and the time arrives when kings and prieſts ſhall have no more power to oppreſs, and that ignominious ſlavery which has hitherto debaſed the world is exterminated. I therefore, think I ſee the hand of Providence in the late war working for the general good; and can ſcarcely avoid crying out, *It was the Lord's doing*.

Reaſon, as well as tradition and revelation, lead us to expect that a more improved and happy ſtate of human affairs will take place before the conſummation of all things. The world has hitherto been gradually improving. Light and knowledge have been gaining ground, and human life *at preſent*, compared with what it *once* was, is much the ſame that a youth approaching to manhood is compared with an infant.

Such are the natures of things that this progreſs muſt continue. During particular intervals it may be interrupted, but it cannot be deſtroy'd. Every preſent advance prepares the way for farther advances; and a ſingle experiment or diſcovery may ſometimes give riſe to ſo many more as ſuddenly to raiſe the ſpecies higher, and to reſemble the effects of opening a new ſenſe, or of the fall of a ſpark on a train that ſprings a mine. For this reaſon, mankind may at laſt arrive at degrees of improvement which we cannot now even ſuſpect to be poſſible. A dark age may follow an enlightened age; but, in this caſe, the light, after being ſmothered for a time, will break out again with a brighter luſtre. The preſent age of increaſed light, conſidered as ſucceeding the ages of *Greece* and *Rome* and an intermediate period of thick darkneſs, furniſhes a proof of the truth of this obſervation. There are certain kinds of improvement which, when once made, cannot be entirely loſt. During the dark ages, the improvements made in the ages that preceded them remained ſo far as to be recovered immediately at the reſurrection of letters, and to produce afterwards that more rapid pro-

greſs in improvement which has diſtinguiſhed modern times.

There can ſcarcely be a more pleaſing and encouraging object of reflection than this. An accidental obſervation of the effects of gravity in a garden has been the means of diſcovering the laws that govern the ſolar ſyſtem*, and of enabling us to look down with pity on the ignorance of the moſt enlightened times among the antients. What new dignity has been given to man, and what additions have been made to his powers, by the invention of optical glaſſes, printing, gun-powder, &c. and by the late diſcoveries in navigation, mathematics, natural philoſophy, &c. ?

But among the events in modern times tending to the elevation of mankind, there are none probably of ſo much conſequence as the recent one which occaſions theſe obſervations. Perhaps, I do not go too far when I ſay that, next to the introduction of Chriſtianity among mankind, the Ame-

* This refers to an account given of Sir Iſaac Newton in the Preface to Dr. PEMBERTON's View of his Philoſophy.

rican

rican revolution may prove the moſt important ſtep in the progreſſive courſe of human improvement. It is an event which may produce a general diffuſion of the principles of humanity, and become the means of ſetting free mankind from the ſhackles of ſuperſtition and tyranny, by leading them to ſee and know "that nothing "is *fundamental* but impartial enquiry, an "honeſt mind, and virtuous practice—— "that ſtate policy ought not to be applied "to the ſupport of ſpeculative opinions "and formularies of faith."——"That the "members of a civil community are *con-* "*federates*, not *ſubjects*; and their rulers, "*ſervants*, not *maſters*.——And that all "legitimate government conſiſts in the do- "minion of equal laws made with com- "mon conſent; that is, in the dominion "of men over *themſelves*; and not in the "dominion of communities over commu- "nities, or of any men over other men."

Happy will the world be when theſe truths ſhall be every where acknowledged and practiſed upon. Religious bigotry, that cruel demon, will be then laid aſleep. Slaviſh governments and ſlaviſh Hierarchies will then ſink; and the old prophecies be verified,

verified, " that the laſt univerſal empire " upon earth ſhall be the empire of reaſon " and virtue, under which the goſpel of " peace (better underſtood) *ſhall have free* " *courſe and be glorified, many will run to* " *and fro and knowledge be increaſed, the* " *wolf dwell with the lamb and the leopard* " *with the kid, and nation no more lift up* " *a ſword againſt nation.*"

It is a conviction I cannot reſiſt, that the independence of the *Engliſh* colonies in America is one of the ſteps ordained by Providence to introduce theſe times; and I can ſcarcely be deceived in this conviction, if the United States ſhould eſcape ſome dangers which threaten them, and will take proper care to throw themſelves open to future improvements, and to make the moſt of the advantages of their preſent ſituation. Should this happen, it will be true of them as it was of the people of the Jews, that *in them all the families of the earth ſhall be bleſſed.* It is ſcarcely poſſible they ſhould think too highly of their own conſequence. Perhaps, there never exiſted a people on whoſe wiſdom and virtue more depended; or to whom a ſtation of more importance in the plan of Providence has

has been assigned. They have begun nobly. They have fought with success for themselves and for the world; and, in the midst of invasion and carnage, established forms of government favourable in the highest degree to the rights of mankind.——But they have much more to do; more indeed than it is possible properly to represent. In this address, my design is only to take notice of a few *great* points which seem particularly to require their attention, in order to render them permanently happy in themselves and useful to mankind. On these points, I shall deliver my sentiments with freedom, conscious I mean well; but, at the same time, with real diffidence, conscious of my own liableness to error.

Of the Means of promoting human Improvement and Happineſs in the United States. —And firſt, of PUBLIC DEBTS.

IT ſeems evident, that what firſt requires the attention of the United States is the redemption of their debts, and making compenſation to that army which has carried them through the war. They have an infant credit to cheriſh and rear, which, if this is not done, muſt periſh, and with it their character and honour for ever. Nor is it conceivable they ſhould meet with any great difficulties in doing this. They have a vaſt reſource peculiar to themſelves, in a continent of unlocated lands poſſeſſing every advantage of ſoil and climate. The ſettlement of theſe lands will be rapid, the conſequence of which muſt be a rapid increaſe of their value. By diſpoſing of them to the army and to emigrants, the greateſt part of the debts of the United States may probably be ſunk *immediately*. But had they no ſuch reſource, they are very capable of bearing taxes ſufficient for the purpoſe of a gradual redemption. Sup-

poſing their debts to amount to *nine millions* ſterling, carrying intereſt at 5½ *per cent.* taxes producing a revenue of a million *per ann.* would pay the intereſt, and at the ſame time leave a *ſurplus* of *half* a million *per ann.* for a *ſinking fund*, which would diſcharge the principal in thirteen years. A ſurplus of a *quarter* of a million would do the ſame in 20½ years. After diſcharging the principal, the appropriated revenue being no longer wanted, might be aboliſhed, and the States eaſed of the burthen of it. But it would be imprudent to aboliſh it entirely. 100,000 *l. per ann.* reſerved, and faithfully laid out in clearing unlocated lands and other improvements, would in a ſhort time increaſe to a treaſure (or continental patrimony) which would defray the whole expenditure of the union, and keep the States free from debts and taxes for ever *. Such a *reſerve* would (ſup-

* The lands, foreſts, impoſts, &c. &c. which once formed the *patrimony* of the crown in *England*, bore moſt of the expences of government. It is well for this kingdom that the extravagance of the crown has been the means of alienating this patrimony, for the conſequence has been making the crown dependent on the people. But in America ſuch a patrimony would be *continental* property, capaple of being applied only to public purpoſes, in the way which the public (or its delegates) ſhould approve.

posing it improved so as to produce a profit of 5 *per cent.*) increase to a capital of three millions in 19 years, 30 millions in 57 years, 100 millions in 81 years, and 261 millions in 100 years. But supposing it capable of being improved so as to produce a profit of 10 *per cent.* it would increase to five millions in 19 years, 100 millions in 49 years, and 10,000 millions in 97 years.

It is wonderful that no state has yet thought of taking this method to make itself great and rich. The smallest appropriation in a sinking fund, *never diverted*, operates in cancelling debts, just as money increases at compound interest; and is, therefore, *omnipotent* *. But, if *diverted*, it loses all its power. BRITAIN affords a striking proof of this. Its sinking fund (once the hope of the kingdom) has, by

* One penny put out at our Saviour's birth to 5 *per cent.* compound interest would, before this time, have increased to a greater sum than would be contained in TWO HUNDRED MILLIONS of EARTHS all solid gold. But, if put out to *simple* interest, it would have amounted to no more than *seven shillings and six-pence.* All governments which alienate *funds* destined for reimbursements, chuse to improve money in the *last* rather than the *first* of these ways.

the practice of alienating it, been rendered impotent and uſeleſs. Had it been inviolably applied to the purpoſe for which it was intended, there would, in the year 1775, have been a *ſurplus* in the revenue of more than five millions *per ann.* But inſtead of this, we were then encumbered with a debt of 137 millions, carrying an intereſt of near 4½ millions, and leaving no ſurplus of any conſequence. This debt has been ſince increaſed to 280 millions, carrying an intereſt (including expences of management) of *nine* millions and a half.—A monſtrous bubble; — and as no effectual meaſures are likely to be taken (or perhaps *can now* be taken) for reducing it within the limits of ſafety, it muſt, ſome time or other, produce a dreadful convulſion. Let the United States take warning—Their debts at preſent are moderate. A Sinking fund, guarded * againſt miſapplication, may ſoon extinguiſh them, and prove a reſource in all events of the greateſt importance. Let ſuch a fund be eſtabliſhed. Could a ſacredneſs be given it like that of

* When not thus guarded, public funds become the worſt evils, by giving to the rulers of ſtates a command of revenue for the purpoſes of corruption.

the

the ark of God among the Jews, it would do the ſame ſervice.

I muſt not, however, forget that there is ONE of their debts on which no ſinking fund can have any effect; and which it is impoſſible for them to diſcharge: —— A debt, greater, perhaps, than has been ever due from any country; and which will be deeply felt by their lateſt poſterity. —But it is a debt of GRATITUDE only— Of GRATITUDE to that General, who has been raiſed up by Providence to make them free and independent, and whoſe name muſt ſhine among the firſt in the future annals of the benefactors of mankind.

The meaſure now propoſed may preſerve America for ever from too great an accumulation of debts; and, conſequently, of taxes—an evil which is likely to be the ruin not only of *Britain*, but of other *European* States. — But there are meaſures of yet greater conſequence, which I wiſh ardently to recommend and inculcate.

For the ſake of mankind, I wiſh to ſee every meaſure adopted that can have a tendency to preſerve PEACE in America; and to make it an open and fair ſtage for diſcuſſion, and the ſeat of PERFECT LIBERTY.

Of

Of PEACE,

And the Means of perpetuating it.

CIVIL GOVERNMENT is an expedient for collecting the wiſdom and the force of a community or confederacy, to preſerve its peace and liberty againſt every hoſtile invaſion, whether from *within* or from *without*.—In the latter of theſe reſpects, the United States are happily ſecured; but they are far from being equally happy in the *former* reſpect. Having now, in conſequence of their ſucceſsful reſiſtance of the invaſion of *Britain*, united to their remoteneſs from *Europe*, no external enemy to fear, they are in danger of fighting with one another.—This is their *greateſt* danger; and providing ſecurities againſt it is their *hardeſt* work. Should they fail in this, America may ſome time or other be turned into a ſcene of blood; and inſtead of being the hope and refuge of the world, may become a terror to it.

When a diſpute ariſes among *individuals* in a State, an appeal is made to a *court* of law;

law; that is, to the wiſdom and juſtice of the State. The court decides. The loſing party acquieſces; or, if he does not, the power of the State *forces* him to ſubmiſſion; and thus the effects of contention are ſuppreſt, and peace is maintained.—In a way ſimilar to this, peace may be maintained between any number of confederated States; and I can almoſt imagine, that it is not impoſſible but that by ſome ſuch means *univerſal* peace may ſome time or other be produced, and all war excluded from the world.—Why may we not hope to ſee this begun in America?—— The articles of confederation make conſiderable advances towards it. When a diſpute ariſes between any of the States, they order an appeal to Congreſs, —an enquiry by Congreſs, —a hearing,— and a deciſion.—But here they ſtop.—What is moſt of all neceſſary is omitted. No proviſion is made for enforcing the deciſions of Congreſs; and this renders them inefficient and futile. I am by no means qualified to point out the beſt method of removing this defect. Much muſt be given up for this purpoſe, nor is it eaſy to give up *too* much. Without all doubt the powers

powers of Congreſs muſt be enlarged. In particular, a power muſt be given it to collect, on certain emergencies, the force of the confederacy, and to employ it in carrying its deciſions into execution. A State againſt which a deciſion is made, will yield of courſe when it knows that ſuch a force exiſts, and that it allows no hope from reſiſtance.

By this force I do not mean a STANDING ARMY. God forbid, that ſtanding armies ſhould ever find an eſtabliſhment in America. They are every where the grand ſupports of arbitrary power, and the chief cauſes of the depreſſion of mankind. No wiſe people will truſt their defence out of their own hands, or conſent to hold their rights at the mercy of armed *ſlaves*. Free States ought to be bodies of armed *citizens*, well regulated, and well diſciplined, and always ready to turn out, when properly called upon, to execute the laws, to quell riots, and to keep the peace. Such, if I am rightly informed, are the citizens of America. Why then may not CONGRESS be furniſhed with a power of calling out from the confederated States, *quotas* of *militia* ſufficient to force at once the compliance

pliance of any State which may ſhew an inclination to break the union by reſiſting its deciſions ?

I am very ſenſible that it will be difficult to guard ſuch a power againſt abuſe; and, perhaps, better means of anſwering this end are diſcoverable. In human affairs, however, the choice generally offered us is "of two evils to take the leaſt." We chuſe the reſtraint of civil government, becauſe a leſs evil than anarchy; and, in like manner, in the preſent inſtance, the danger of the abuſe of power, and of its being employed ſometimes to enforce wrong deciſions, muſt be ſubmitted to, becauſe a leſs evil than the miſery of inteſtine wars. Much, however, may be done to leſſen this danger. Such regulations as thoſe in the ninth of the articles of confederation will, in a great meaſure, prevent haſty and partial deciſions. The rotation eſtabliſhed by the fifth article will prevent that corruption of character which ſeldom fails to be produced by the long poſſeſſion of power; and the right reſerved to every State of recalling its Delegates when diſſatisfied with them, will keep them conſtantly reſponſible and cautious.

The obſervations now made muſt be extended to money tranſactions. Congreſs muſt be truſted with a power of procuring ſupplies for defraying the expences of the confederation; of contracting debts, and providing funds for diſcharging them: and this power muſt not be capable of being defeated by the oppoſition of any minority in the States.

In ſhort, the credit of the United States, their ſtrength, their reſpectableneſs abroad, their liberty at home, and even their exiſtence, depend on the preſervation of a firm political union; and ſuch an union cannot be preſerved, without giving all poſſible weight and energy to the authority of that delegation which conſtitutes the union.

Would it not be proper to take periodical ſurveys of the different ſtates, their numbers of both ſexes in every ſtage of life, their condition, occupations, property, &c.?——Would not ſuch ſurveys, in conjunction with accurate regiſters of births, marriages and deaths at all ages, afford much important inſtruction by ſhewing

ing what laws govern human mortality, and what ſituations, employments, and civil inſtitutions, are moſt favourable to the health and happineſs of mankind?—— Would they not keep conſtantly in view the progreſs of population in the ſtates, and the increaſe or decline of their reſources? But more eſpecially, are they not the only means of procuring the neceſſary information for determining accurately and equitably the proportions of men and money to be contributed by each ſtate for ſupporting and ſtrengthening the confederation?

Of LIBERTY.

THE next point I would inſiſt on, as an object of ſupreme importance, is the eſtabliſhment of ſuch a ſyſtem of perfect liberty, *religious* as well as *civil*, in America, as ſhall render it a country where truth and reaſon ſhall have fair play, and the human powers find full ſcope for exerting themſelves, and for ſhewing how far they can carry human improvement.

The faculties of man have hitherto, in all countries, been more or leſs cramped by the interference of civil authority in matters of ſpeculation, by tyrannical laws againſt hereſy and ſchiſm, and by ſlaviſh hierarchies and religious eſtabliſhments. It is above all things deſirable that no ſuch fetters on reaſon ſhould be admitted into America. I obſerve, with inexpreſſible ſatisfaction, that at preſent they have no exiſtence there. In this reſpect the governments of the United States are liberal to a degree that is unparalleled. They have the diſtinguiſhed honour of being the firſt

ſtates

ſtates under heaven in which forms of government have been eſtabliſhed favourable to *univerſal* liberty. They have been thus diſtinguiſhed in their *infancy*. What then will they be in a more advaned ſtate; when time and experience, and the concurring aſſiſtance of the wiſe and virtuous, in every part of the earth, ſhall have introduced into the new governments, corrections and amendments which will render them ſtill more friendly to liberty, and more the means of promoting human happineſs and dignity?—— May we not ſee there the dawning of brighter days on earth, and a new creation riſing. But I muſt check myſelf. I am in danger of being carried too far by the ardor of my hopes.

The liberty I mean includes in it liberty of conduct in all *civil* matters—liberty of diſcuſſion in all *ſpeculative* matters—and liberty of conſcience in all *religious* matters.——And it is then *perfect*, when under no reſtraint except when uſed to injure any one in his perſon, property, or good name; that is, except when uſed to deſtroy itſelf.

In liberty of diſcuſſion, I include the liberty of examining all public meaſures, and the conduct of all public men; and of writing and publiſhing on all ſpeculative and doctrinal points.

Of Liberty *of* Discussion.

IT is a common opinion, that there are ſome doctrines ſo ſacred, and others of ſo bad a tendency, that no public diſcuſſion of them ought to be allowed. Were this a right opinion, all the perſecution that has been ever practiſed would be juſtified. For, if it is a part of the duty of civil magiſtrates to prevent the diſcuſſion of ſuch doctrines, they muſt, in doing this, act on their own judgments of the nature and tendency of doctrines; and, conſequently, they muſt have a right to prevent the diſcuſſion of all doctrines which they *think* to be too ſacred for diſcuſſion or too dangerous in their tendency; and this right they muſt exerciſe in the only way in which civil power is capable of exerciſing it, "by inflicting

"penalties

" penalties on all who oppoſe ſacred doc-
" trines, or who maintain pernicious opi-
" nions." —— In *Mahometan* countries, therefore, civil magiſtrates have a right to ſilence and puniſh all who oppoſe the divine miſſion of *Mahomet*, a doctrine there reckoned of the moſt ſacred nature. The like is true of the doctrines of tranſubſtantiation, worſhip of the Virgin Mary, &c. in *Popiſh* countries; and of the doctrines of the Trinity, ſatisfaction, &c. in *Proteſtant* countries. —— In *England* itſelf, this principle has been acted upon, and produced the laws which ſubject to ſevere penalties all who write or ſpeak againſt the Supreme Divinity of Chriſt, the Book of Common Prayer, and the Church Articles of Faith. All ſuch laws are right, if the opinion I have mentioned is right. But in reality, civil power has nothing to do with any ſuch matters; and civil governors go miſerably out of their proper province, whenever they take upon them the care of truth, or the ſupport of any doctrinal points. They are not judges of truth; and if they pretend to decide about it, they will decide wrong. This all the countries under heaven think of the application-

plication of civil power to doctrinal points in every country but their own. It is, indeed, ſuperſtition, idolatry, and nonſenſe, that civil power at preſent ſupports almoſt every where, under the idea of ſupporting ſacred truth, and oppoſing dangerous error. Would not, therefore, its perfect neutrality be the greateſt bleſſing? Would not the intereſt of truth gain unſpeakably, were all the rulers of States to aim at nothing but keeping the peace; or did they conſider themſelves as bound to take care, not of the *future*, but the *preſent* intereſt of men;—not of their *ſouls* and their *faith*, but of their *perſons* and *property*;—not of any *eccleſiaſtical*, but *ſecular* matters only?

All the experience of paſt time proves that the conſequence of allowing civil power to judge of the nature and tendency of doctrines, muſt be making it a hindrance to the progreſs of truth, and an enemy to the improvement of the world.

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 kind contributed to the death of *Socrates*. The threats of bigots and the fear of perſecu-

tion, prevented *Copernicus* from publiſhing, during his whole 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. And ſo lately as the year 1742, the beſt commentary on the firſt production of human genius (NEWTON's *Principia)* was not allowed to be printed at ROME, becauſe it aſſerted this doctrine; and the learned commentators were obliged to prefix to their work a declaration, that on this point they ſubmitted to the deciſions of the ſupreme Pontiffs. Such *have* been, and ſuch (while men continue blind and ignorant) *will* always be the conſequences of the interpoſition of civil governments in matters of ſpeculation.

When men aſſociate for the purpoſe of civil government, they do it not to defend truth, or to ſupport formularies of faith and ſpeculative opinions; but to defend their civil rights, and to protect one another in the free exerciſe of their mental and corporeal powers. The interference, therefore, of civil authority in ſuch caſes

is directly contrary to the end of its inſtitution. The way in which it can beſt promote the intereſt and dignity of mankind, (as far as they can be promoted by the diſcovery of truth) is, by encouraging them to ſearch for truth whereever they can find it; and by protecting them in doing this againſt the attacks of malevolence and bigotry. Should any attempt be made by contending ſects to injure one another, its power will come in properly to cruſh the attempt, and to maintain for all ſects equal liberty, by puniſhing every encroachment upon it. The conduct of a civil magiſtrate, on ſuch an occaſion, ſhould be that of *Gallio* the wiſe Roman proconſul, who, on receiving an accuſation of the apoſtle Paul, would not liſten to it, but drove from his preſence the accuſers who had laid violent hands upon him, after giving them the following admonition:—*If it were a matter of wrong or wicked lewdneſs, reaſon would require that I ſhould bear with you. But if it be a queſtion of words and names and the law, look you to it. For I will be no judge of ſuch matters.* Acts xviii. 12. &c. How much happier would the world have been, had all magiſtrates acted in this manner? Let

America learn this important leſſon, and profit by the experience of paſt times. A diſſent from *eſtabliſhed* opinions and doctrines has indeed often miſerably diſturbed ſociety, and produced miſchief and bloodſhed. But it ſhould be remembered, that this has been owing to the *eſtabliſhment* of the points diſſented from, and the uſe of civil power to enforce the reception of them. Had civil government done its duty, left all free, and employed itſelf in *procuring* inſtead of *reſtraining* fair diſcuſſion, all miſchief would have been avoided, and mankind would have been raiſed higher than they are in knowledge and improvement.

When Chriſtianity, that firſt and beſt of all the means of human improvement, was firſt preached, it was charged with turning the world upſide down. The leaders of Jewiſh and Pagan eſtabliſhments were alarmed, and by oppoſing the propagation of it, converted a religion of peace and love into an occaſion of violence and ſlaughter; and thus verified our Lord's prophecy, that he was come *not to ſend peace, but a ſword on earth.* All this was the effect of the miſapplication

of the powers of government. Inſtead of *creating*, they ſhould have been employed in *preventing* ſuch miſchief, and been *active* only in cauſing the Chriſtian cauſe to receive a fair hearing, and guarding the propagators of it againſt inſult.—The like obſervation may be made concerning the firſt reformers.—What we all ſee would have been right in *Pagan* and *Popiſh* governments with reſpect to Chriſtianity and the Reformation; would it not be *now* right in *Chriſtian* or *Proteſtant* governments, were any attempts made to propagate a new religion, or any doctrines advanced oppoſite to thoſe now held ſacred? Such attempts, if unſupported by reaſon and evidence, would ſoon come to nothing. An impoſture cannot ſtand the teſt of fair and open examination. On the contrary, the cauſe of truth will certainly be ſerved by it. *Mahometaniſm* would have ſunk as ſoon as it roſe, had no other force than that of evidence been employed to propagate it; and it is an unſpeakable recommendation of *Chriſtianity*, that it made its way till it became the religion of the world in one of its moſt enlightened periods, by evidence only, in oppoſition to the ſtrongeſt exertions

tions of civil power. There cannot be a more ſtriking proof, that nothing but fair diſcuſſion is neceſſary to ſuppreſs error and to propagate truth. I am grieved, indeed, whenever I find any Chriſtians ſhewing a diſpoſition to call in the aid of civil power to defend their religion. Nothing can be more diſgraceful to it. If it wants ſuch aid, it cannot be of God. Its corruption and debaſement took place from the moment that civil power took it under its patronage; and this corruption and debaſement increaſed, till at laſt it was converted into a ſyſtem of abſurdity and ſuperſtition more groſs and more barbarous than Paganiſm itſelf.——The religion of Chriſt diſclaims all connexion with the civil eſtabliſhments of the world. It has ſuffered infinitely by their *friendſhip*. Inſtead of ſilencing its opponents, let them be encouraged to produce their ſtrongeſt arguments againſt it. The experience of *Britain* has lately ſhewn that this will only cauſe it to be better underſtood and more firmly believed.

I would extend theſe obſervations to all points of faith, however ſacred they may be

be deemed. Nothing reaſonable can ſuffer by diſcuſſion. All doctrines *really* ſacred muſt be clear and incapable of being oppoſed with ſucceſs. If civil authority interpoſes, it will be to ſupport ſome miſconception or abuſe of them.

That *immoral tendency* of doctrines which has been urged as a reaſon againſt allowing the public diſcuſſion of them, may be either *avowed* and *direct*, or only a *conſequence* with which they are charged. If it is *avowed* and *direct*, ſuch doctrines certainly will not ſpread. The principles rooted in human nature will reſiſt them; and the advocates of them will be ſoon diſgraced. If, on the contrary, it is only a *conſequence* with which a doctrine is charged, it ſhould be conſidered how apt all parties are to charge the doctrines they oppoſe with bad tendencies. It is well known, that *Calviniſts* and *Arminians*, *Trinitarians* and *Socinians*, *Fataliſts* and *Free-willers*, are continually exclaiming againſt one another's opinions as dangerous and licentious. Even Chriſtianity itſelf could not, at its firſt introduction, eſcape this accuſation. The profeſſors of it were conſidered as *Atheiſts*, becauſe they oppoſed Pagan idolatry; and

their

their religion was on this account reckoned a deſtructive and pernicious enthuſiaſm. If, therefore, the rulers of a State are to prohibit the propagation of all doctrines in which they apprehend immoral tendencies, an opening will be made, as I have before obſerved, for every ſpecies of perſecution. There will be no doctrine, however true or important, the avowal of which will not in ſome country or other be ſubjected to civil penalties. — Undoubtedly, there *are* doctrines which have ſuch tendencies. But the tendencies of ſpeculative opinions have often very little effect on practice. The Author of nature has planted in the human mind principles and feelings which will operate in oppoſition to any *theories* that may ſeem to contradict them. Every ſect, whatever may be its tenets, has ſome *ſalvo* for the neceſſity of virtue. The philoſophers who hold that matter and motion have no exiſtence except in our own ideas, are capable of believing this only in their cloſets. The ſame is true of the philoſophers who hold that nothing exiſts *but* matter and motion; and at the ſame time teach, that man has no ſelf determining

power;

power; that an unalterable fate governs all things; and that no one *is* any thing that he can avoid *being*, or *does* any thing that he can avoid *doing*.——Theſe philoſophers when they come out into the world act as other men do. Common ſenſe never fails to get the better of their theories; and I know that many of them are ſome of the beſt men in the world, and the warmeſt friends to the true intereſts of ſociety. Though their doctrine may ſeem to furniſh an apology for vice, their practice is an exhibition of virtue; and a government which would ſilence them would greatly injure itſelf.—— Only overt acts of injuſtice, violence or defamation, come properly under the cognizance of civil power. Were a perſon now to go about London, teaching that "property is founded in grace," I ſhould, were I a magiſtrate, let him alone while he did nothing but *teach*, without being under any other apprehenſion than that he would ſoon find a lodging in *Bedlam*. But were he to attempt to carry his doctrine into its conſequences by actually *ſtealing*, under the pretence of his right as a ſaint to the property of his neighbours, I ſhould think

think it my duty to lay hold of him as a felon, without regarding the opinion from which he acted.

I am perſuaded, that few or no inconveniencies would ariſe from ſuch a liberty. If magiſtrates will do their duty as ſoon as violence begins, or any overt acts which break the peace are committed, no great harm will ariſe from their *keeping themſelves neutral* till then. Let, however, the contrary be ſuppoſed. Let it be granted that civil authority will in this caſe often be too *late* in its exertions; the juſt inference will be, not that the liberty I plead for ought not to be allowed; but that there will be two evils, between which an option muſt be made, and the leaſt of which muſt be preferred.——*One* is, the evil juſt mentioned.——The *other* includes in it every evil which can ariſe from making the rulers of States judges of the tendency of doctrines, ſubjecting freedom of enquiry to the controul of their ignorance, and perpetuating darkneſs, intolerance and ſlavery. I need not ſay which of theſe evils is the leaſt.

Of Liberty *of* Conscience, *and* Civil Establishments *of* Religion.

In Liberty of Conscience I include much more than *Toleration*. Jesus Christ has established a perfect equality among his followers. His command is, that they shall assume no jurisdiction over one another, and acknowledge no master besides *himself*.——It is, therefore, presumption in any of them to claim a right to any superiority or pre-eminence over their brethren. Such a claim is implied, whenever any of them pretend to *tolerate* the rest.——Not only all *Christians*, but all *men* of all religions ought to be considered by a State as equally entitled to its protection as far as they demean themselves honestly and peaceably. *Toleration* can take place only where there is a civil establishment of a particular mode of religion; that is, where a predominant sect enjoys *exclusive* advantages, and makes the encouragement of its own mode of faith and worship a part of the constitution of the State; but at the same time

time thinks fit to SUFFER the exercise of other modes of faith and worship. Thanks be to God, the new American States are at present strangers to such establishments. In this respect, as well as many others, they have shewn, in framing their constitutions, a degree of wisdom and liberality which is above all praise.

Civil establishments of formularies of faith and worship are inconsistent with the rights of private judgment—They ingender strife— They turn religion into a trade — They shoar up error — They produce hypocrisy and prevarication — They lay an undue byas on the human mind in its enquiries, and obstruct the progress of truth. —— *Genuine* religion is a concern that lies entirely between God and our own souls. It is incapable of receiving any aid from human laws. It is contaminated as soon as worldly motives and sanctions mix their influence with it. Statesmen should countenance it only by exhibiting in their own example a conscientious regard to it in those forms which are most agreeable to their own judgments, and by encouraging their fellow-citizens in doing the same. They cannot as *public men* give

it any *other* aſſiſtance. All beſides that has been called a *public leading* in religion, has done it an eſſential injury, and produced ſome of the worſt conſequences.

The Church Eſtabliſhment in *England* is one of the mildeſt ſort. But even here what a ſnare has it been to integrity? And what a check to free enquiry? What diſpoſitions favourable to deſpotiſm has it foſtered? What a turn to pride and narrowneſs and domination has it given the clerical character? What ſtruggles has it produced in its members to accommodate their opinions to the ſubſcriptions and teſts which it impoſes? What a perverſion of learning has it occaſioned to defend obſelete creeds and abſurdities? What a burthen is it on the conſciences of ſome of its beſt clergy, who, in conſequence of being bound down to a ſyſtem they do not approve, and having no ſupport except that which they derive from conforming to it, find themſelves under the hard neceſſity of either *prevaricating* or *ſtarving?*——No one doubts but that the Engliſh clergy in general could with more truth declare that they *do not*, than that they *do* give their *unfeigned aſſent to*

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all and every thing contained in the thirty-nine Articles and the Book of Common-Prayer; and yet, with a ſolemn declaration to this purpoſe, are they obliged to enter upon an office which above all offices requires thoſe who exerciſe it to be examples of ſimplicity and ſincerity. — Who can help execrating the cauſe of ſuch an evil?

But what I wiſh moſt to urge is the tendency of religious eſtabliſhments to impede the improvement of the world. They are boundaries preſcribed by human folly to human inveſtigation; and incloſures which intercept the light and confine the exertions of reaſon. Let any one imagine to himſelf what effects ſimilar eſtabliſhments would have in Philoſophy, Navigation, Metaphyſicks, Medicine or Mathematicks. Something like this took place in Logick and Philoſophy; while the IPSE DIXIT of Ariſtotle and the nonſenſe of the ſchools maintained an authority like that of the creeds of churchmen: And the effect was a longer continuance of the world in the ignorance and barbarity of the dark ages. But civil eſtabliſhments of religion are *more* pernicious. So apt are mankind to miſrepreſent the character of the

the Deity, and to connect his favour with particular modes of faith, that it must be expected, that a religion so settled will be what it has hitherto been—a gloomy and cruel superstition bearing the name of religion.

It has been long a subject of dispute, which is worst in its effects on society, *such* a religion or speculative Atheism. For my own part, I could almost give the preference to the latter.——ATHEISM is so repugnant to every principle of common sense, that it is not possible it should ever gain much ground, or become very prevalent. On the contrary; there is a particular pronenes in the human mind to SUPERSTITION, and nothing is more likely to become prevalent.——ATHEISM leaves us to the full influence of most of our natural feelings and social principles; and these are so strong in their operation, that in general they are a sufficient guard to the order of society. But SUPERSTITION counteracts these principles, by holding forth men to one another as objects of divine hatred; and by putting them on harrassing, silencing, imprisoning and burning one another in order to do God service.—ATHEISM is a sanctuary for

vice by taking away the motives to virtue ariſing from the will of God and the fear of a future judgment. But SUPERSTITION is more a ſanctuary for vice, by teaching men ways of pleaſing God without moral virtue, and by leading them even to compound for wickedneſs by *ritual* ſervices, by bodily penances and mortifications, by adorning ſhrines, going pilgrimages, ſaying many prayers, receiving abſolution from the prieſt, exterminating heretics, &c.—ATHEISM deſtroys the ſacredneſs and obligation of an oath. But is there not alſo a religion (ſo called) which does this, by teaching that there is a power which can diſpenſe with the obligation of oaths, that *pious* frauds are right, and that faith is not to be kept with heretics?

It is indeed only a rational and liberal religion; a religion founded on juſt notions of the Deity as a being who regards equally every ſincere worſhipper, and by whom all are alike favoured as far as they act up to the light they enjoy; a religion which conſiſts in the imitation of the moral perfections of an almighty but benevolent governor of nature who directs for the beſt all events, in confidence in the care

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of his providence, in reſignation to his will, and in the faithful diſcharge of every duty of piety and morality from a regard to his authority and the apprehenſion of a future righteous retribution. —— It is only THIS religion (the inſpiring principle of every thing fair and worthy and joyful, and which in truth is nothing but the love of God and man and virtue warming the heart and directing the conduct.)—It is only THIS kind of religion that can bleſs the world, or be an advantage to ſociety.—This is the religion that every enlightened friend to mankind will be zealous to promote. But it is a religion that the powers of the world know little of, and which will always be beſt promoted by being left free and open.

I cannot help adding here, that this is in particular the *Chriſtian* religion.—— Chriſtianity teaches us that there is none good but one, that is, God; that he willeth all men to be ſaved, and will puniſh nothing but wickedneſs; that he deſires mercy and not ſacrifice (benevolence rather than rituals); that loving him with all our hearts, and loving our neighbour as ourſelves, is the whole of our duty; and that in every nation

nation he that feareth him and worketh righteouſneſs is accepted of him. It reſts its authority on the power of God, not of man; refers itſelf entirely to the underſtandings of men; makes us the ſubjects of a kingdom that is not of this world; and requires us to elevate our minds above temporal emoluments, and to look forwards to a ſtate beyond the grave, where a government of perfect virtue will be erected under that Meſſiah who has *taſted death for every man*.—What have the powers of the world to do with ſuch a religion?—It diſclaims all connexion with them; it made its way at firſt in oppoſition to them; and, as far as it is now upheld by them, it is diſhonoured and vilified.

The injury which civil eſtabliſhments do to Chriſtianity may be learnt from the following conſiderations.

Firſt. The ſpirit of religious eſtabliſhments is oppoſite to the ſpirit of Chriſtianity. It is a ſpirit of pride and tyranny in oppoſition to the Chriſtian *lowly* ſpirit; a contracted and ſelfiſh ſpirit, in oppoſition to the Chriſtian enlarged and benevo-

lent ſpirit; the ſpirit of the world in oppoſition to the Chriſtian *heavenly* ſpirit.

Secondly. Religious eſtabliſhments are founded on a claim of authority in the Chriſtian church which overthrows Chriſt's authority. He has in the ſcriptures given his followers a code of laws, to which he requires them to adhere as their *only* guide. But the language of the framers of church eſtabliſhments is—We *have authority in con-* " *troverſies of faith and power to decree rites* " *and ceremonies.* We are the deputies of " Chriſt upon earth, who have been com- " miſſioned by him to interpret his laws, " and to rule his church. You muſt there- " fore follow us. The ſcriptures are inſuf- " ficient. Our interpretations you muſt " receive as Chriſt's laws; our creeds as " *his* doctrine; our inventions as *his* in- " ſtitutions."

It is evident, as the excellent HOADLY has ſhewn, that theſe claims turn Chriſt out of the government of his own kingdom, and place uſurpers on his throne.—They are therefore derogatory to his honour; and a ſubmiſſion to them is a breach of

of the allegiance due to him. They have been almoſt fatal to true Chriſtianity; and attempts to enforce them by civil penalties, have watered the Chriſtian world with the blood of ſaints and martyrs.

Thirdly. The difficulty of introducing alterations into church eſtabliſhments after they have been once formed, is another objection to them. Hence it happens, that they remain always the ſame amidſt all changes of public manners and opinions*; and that a kingdom may go on for ages in idolatrous worſhip, after a general conviction has taken place, that there is but one object of religious worſhip, namely, *the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.* What a ſad ſcene of religious hypocriſy muſt ſuch a diſcordance between public conviction and the public forms produce?

* This is an inconvenience attending *civil* as well as *eccleſiaſtical* eſtabliſhments, which has been with great wiſdom guarded againſt in the new *American* conſtitutions, by appointing that there ſhall be a reviſal of them at the end of certain terms. This will leave them always open to improvement, without any danger of thoſe convulſions which have uſually attended the corrections of abuſes when they have acquired a ſacredneſs by time.

At this day, in ſome *European* countries, the abſurdity and ſlaviſhneſs of their hierarchies are ſeen and acknowledged; but being incorporated with the ſtate, it is ſcarcely poſſible to get rid of them.

What can be more ſtriking than the State of *England* in this reſpect?—The ſyſtem of faith and worſhip eſtabliſhed in it was formed above two hundred years ago, when *Europe* was juſt emerging from darkneſs and barbarity. The times have ever ſince been growing more enlightened; but without any effect on the eſtabliſhment. Not a ray of the increaſing light has penetrated it. Not one imperfection, however groſs, has been removed. The ſame articles of faith are ſubſcribed. The ſame ritual of devotion is practiſed.—There is reaſon to fear that the *abſolution of the ſick* which forms a part of this ritual, is often reſorted to as a paſſport to heaven after a wicked life; and yet it is continued.—Perhaps nothing more ſhocking to reaſon and humanity ever made a part of a religious ſyſtem than the damning clauſes in the *Athanaſian* creed; and yet the obligation of the clergy to declare aſſent to this creed, and to read it as a part of the public devotion, remains.

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The neceſſary conſequence of ſuch a ſtate of things is, that,

Fourthly, Chriſtianity itſelf is diſgraced, and that all religion comes to be conſidered as a ſtate trick, and a barbarous mummery. It is well known, that in ſome Popiſh countries there are few Chriſtians among the higher ranks of men, the religion of the State being in thoſe countries *miſtaken* for the religion of the Goſpel. This indeed ſhews a criminal inattention in thoſe who fall into ſuch a miſtake; for they ought to conſider that Chriſtianity has been grievouſly corrupted, and that their ideas of it ſhould be taken from the New Teſtament only. It is, however, ſo natural to reckon Chriſtiany to be that which it is held out to be in all the eſtabliſhments of it, that it cannot but happen that ſuch an error will take place and produce ſome of the worſt conſequences.——There is probably a greater number of rational Chriſtians (that is, of Chriſtians upon enquiry) in *England*, than in all Popiſh countries. The reaſon is, that the religious eſtabliſhment here is Popery *reformed*; and that a conſiderable body diſſent from it, and are often inculcating the neceſſity of diſtinguiſhing

guiſhing between the Chriſtianity eſtabliſhed by law and that which is taught in the Bible.——Certain it is, that till this diſtinction is made, Chriſtianity can never recover its juſt credit and uſefulneſs.

Such then are the effects of civil eſtabliſhments of religion. May heaven ſoon put an end to them. The world will never be generally wiſe or virtuous or happy, till theſe enemies to its peace and improvement are demoliſhed. Thanks be to God, they are giving way before increaſing light. Let them never ſhew themſelves in America. Let no ſuch monſter be known there as HUMAN AUTHORITY IN MATTERS OF RELIGION. Let every honeſt and peaceable man, whatever is his faith, be protected there; and find an effectual defence againſt the attacks of bigotry and intolerance.—In the united States may RELIGION flouriſh. They cannot be very great and happy if it does not. But let it be a better religion than moſt of thoſe which have been hitherto profeſſed in the world. Let it be a religion which enforces moral obligations; not a religion which relaxes and evades them.—A tolerant and *Catholic*

tholic religion; not a rage for proſelitiſm.—A religion of peace and charity; not a religion that perſecutes, curſes and damns.——In a word, let it be the genuine Goſpel of peace lifting above the world, warming the heart with the love of God and his creatures, and ſuſtaining the fortitude of good men by the aſſured hope of a future deliverance from death, and an infinite reward in the *everlaſting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour.*

From the preceding obſervations it may be concluded, that it is impoſſible I ſhould not admire the following article in the declaration of rights which forms the foundation of the *Maſſachuſett's* conſtitution.—"In this State every denomination of "Chriſtians demeaning themſelves peaceably and as good ſubjects of the commonwealth, ſhall be EQUALLY under the "protection of the law; and no ſubordination of any one ſect or denomination "to another ſhall ever be eſtabliſhed by "law *."

* The *North Carolina* conſtitution alſo orders that there ſhall be no eſtabliſhment of any one religious church or denomination in that State in preference to any other.

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This is liberal beyond all example.—I ſhould, however, have admired it more had it been MORE liberal, and the words ALL MEN OF ALL RELIGIONS been ſubſtituted for the words *every denomination of Chriſtians.*

It appears farther from the preceding obſervations, that I cannot but diſlike the religious teſts which make a part of ſeveral of the *American* conſtitutions.——In the *Maſſachuſett's* conſtitution it is ordered, that all who take ſeats in the Houſe of Repreſentatives or Senate ſhall declare "their "firm perſuaſion of the truth of the "Chriſtian religion." The ſame is required by the *Maryland* conſtitution, as a condition of being admitted into *any* places of profit or truſt. In *Penſylvania* every member of the Houſe of Repreſentatives is required to declare, that he "acknow-"ledges the Scriptures of the Old and "New Teſtament to be given by divine "inſpiration." In the State of *Delaware*, that "he believes in God the Father, and "in Jeſus Chriſt his only Son, and in the "Holy Ghoſt, one God bleſſed for ever-"more." All this is more than is required even in *England*, where, though

every perſon however debauched or atheiſtical is required to receive the ſacrament as a qualification for *inferior* places, no other religious teſt is impoſed on members of parliament than a declaration againſt Popery. —It is an obſervation no leſs juſt than common, that ſuch teſts exclude only *honeſt* men. The *dis*honeſt never ſcruple them.

MONTESQUIEU probably was not a Chriſtian. NEWTON and LOCKE were not *Trinitarians*; and therefore not *Chriſtians* according to the commonly received ideas of Chriſtianity. Would the united States, for this reaſon, deny ſuch men, were they living, all places of truſt and power among them?

Of EDUCATION.

SUCH is the ſtate of things which I wiſh to take place in the united *American* States. — In order to introduce and perpetuate it, and at the ſame time to give it the greateſt effect on the improvement of the world, nothing is more neceſſary than the eſtabliſhment of a wiſe and liberal plan of EDUCATION. It is impoſſible properly to repreſent the importance of this. So much is left by the author of nature to depend on the turn given to the mind in early life and the impreſſions then made, that I have often thought there may be a *ſecret* remaining to be diſcovered in education, which will cauſe future generations to grow up virtuous and happy, and accelerate human improvement to a greater degree than can at preſent be imagined.

The end of education is to direct the powers of the mind in unfolding themſelves; and to aſſiſt them in gaining their juſt bent and force. And, in order to this,

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its buſineſs ſhould be to teach *how* to think, rather than *what* to think; or to lead into the beſt way of ſearching for truth, rather than to inſtruct in truth itſelf.—As for the latter, who is qualified for it? There are many indeed who are eager to undertake this office. All parties and ſects think they have diſcovered truth, and that they alone are its advocates and friends. But the very different and inconſiſtent accounts they give of it demonſtrate they are utter ſtrangers to it; and that it is better to teach *nothing*, than to teach what they hold out for truth. The greater their confidence, the greater is the reaſon for diſtruſting them. We generally ſee the warmeſt zeal, where the object of it is the greateſt nonſenſe.

Such obſervations have a particular tendency to ſhew that education ought to be an initiation into candour, rather than into any ſyſtems of faith; and that it ſhould form a habit of cool and patient inveſtigation, rather than an attachment to any opinions.

But hitherto education has been conducted on a contrary plan. It has been a *contraction*, not an *enlargement* of the

intellectual faculties; an *injection* of falſe principles hardening them in error, not a *diſcipline* enlightening and improving them. Inſtead of opening and ſtrengthening them, and teaching to think *freely*; it hath cramped and enſlaved them, and qualified for thinking only in *one* track. Inſtead of inſtilling humility, charity, and liberality, and thus preparing for an eaſier diſcovery and a readier admiſſion of truth; it has inflated with conceit, and ſtuffed the human mind with wretched prejudices.

The more has been learnt from *ſuch* education, the more it becomes neceſſary to *un*learn. The more has been taught in this way, of ſo much the more muſt the mind be emptied before true wiſdom can enter.—Such was education in the time of the firſt teachers of chriſtianity. By furniſhing with ſkill in the arts of diſputation and ſophiſtry, and producing an attachment to eſtabliſhed ſyſtems, it turned the minds of men from truth, and rendered them more determined to reſiſt evidence, and more capable of evading it. Hence it happened, that this heavenly inſtruction, when firſt com-

communicated, was *to the Jews a ſtumbling block, and to the Greeks fooliſhneſs*; and that, in ſpite of *miracles themſelves*, the perſons who rejected it with moſt diſdain, and who oppoſed it with moſt violence, were thoſe who had been educated in colleges, and were beſt verſed in the falſe learning of the times: And had it taught the true philoſophy inſtead of the true religion, the effect would have been the ſame. The doctrine "that the ſun ſtood ſtill and that "the earth moved round it," would have been reckoned no leſs abſurd and incredible, than the doctrine of a *crucified Meſſiah*. And the men who would have treated ſuch an inſtruction with moſt contempt, would have been the *wiſe and the prudent*; that is, the proud ſophiſts and learned doctors of the times, who had ſtudied the *Ptolemaick* ſyſtem of the world, and learnt, by cycles and epicycles, to account for all the motions of the heavenly bodies.

In like manner, when the improvement of Logick in Mr. Locke's *Eſſay on the Human Underſtanding* was firſt publiſhed in *Britain*, the perſons readieſt to attend to it and to receive it were thoſe who had never

never been trained in colleges; and whoſe minds, therefore, had never been perverted by an inſtruction in the jargon of the ſchools. To the deep profeſſors of the time, it appeared (like the doctrine taught in his book on the reaſonableneſs of chriſtianity) to be a dangerous novelty and hereſy; and the Univerſity of Oxford, in particular, condemned and reprobated the author.——The like happened when Sir Isaac Newton's diſcoveries were firſt publiſhed. A romance (that is, the Philoſophy of Descartes) was then in poſſeſſion of the philoſophical world. Education had rivetted it in the minds of the learned; and it was twenty-ſeven years before Newton's *Principia* could gain ſufficient credit to bring it to a ſecond edition.—Such are the prejudices which have generally prevailed againſt new lights. Such the impediments which have been thrown in the way of improvement by a narrow plan of education.—Even now the principal object of education (eſpecially in divinity) is to teach eſtabliſhed ſyſtems as certain truths, and to qualify for ſucceſsfully defending them againſt opponents;

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and thus to arm the mind againſt conviction, and render it impenetrable to farther light. Indeed, were it offered to my option which I would have, the plain ſenſe of a common and untutored man, or the deep erudition of the proud ſcholars and profeſſors in moſt univerſities, I ſhould eagerly prefer the former, from a perſuaſion that it would leave me at a leſs diſtance from real wiſdom. An unoccupied and ſimple mind I think infinitely preferable to a mind warped by ſyſtems; and the entire want of learning better than a learning, ſuch as moſt of that is which hitherto has been ſought and admired—A learning which puffs up, while in reality it is nothing but profounder ignorance and more inveterate prejudice.

It may be worth adding here, that a narrow education (ſhould it ever happen not to produce the evils now mentioned) will probably produce equal evils of a contrary nature. I mean, that there will be danger, when perſons ſo educated come to ſee the abſurdity of *ſome* of the opinions in which they have been educated, that they will become prejudiced againſt them *all*, and, conſequently, throw them *all* away, and

run wild into ſcepticiſm and infidelity. — At preſent, in this part of the world this is a very common event.

I am by no means qualified to give a juſt account of the particular method in which education ought to be conducted, ſo as to avoid theſe evils: That is, ſo as to render the mind free and unfettered; quick in diſcerning evidence, and prepared to follow it from whatever quarter and in whatever manner it may offer itſelf. But certain it is, that the beſt mode of education is that which does this moſt effectually; which guards beſt againſt ſilly prejudices; which enflames moſt with the love of truth; which diſpoſes moſt to ingenuity and fairneſs, and leaves the mind moſt ſenſible of its own need of farther information. — Had this been always the aim of education, mankind would now have been farther advanced. — It ſuppoſes, however, an *improved* ſtate of mankind; and when once it has taken place, it will quicken the progreſs of *improvement*.

I have in theſe obſervations expreſſed a diſlike of ſyſtems; but I have meant only

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to condemn that attachment to them as ſtandards of truth which has been too prevalent. It may be neceſſary in education to make uſe of them; or of books explaining them. But they ſhould be uſed only as guides and helps to enquiry. Inſtruction in them ſhould be attended with a fair exhibition of the evidence on both ſides of every queſtion; and care ſhould be taken to induce, as far as poſſible, a habit of believing only on an overbalance of evidence; and of proportioning aſſent in every caſe to the degree of that overbalance, without regarding authority, antiquity, ſingularity, novelty, or any of the prejudices which too commonly influence aſſent.——Nothing is ſo well fitted to produce this habit as the ſtudy of *mathematics*. In theſe ſciences no one ever thinks of giving his aſſent to a propoſition till he can clearly underſtand it, and ſee it proved by a fair deduction from propoſitions previouſly underſtood and proved. In theſe ſciences the mind is inured to cloſe and patient attention; ſhewn the nature of juſt reaſoning; and taught to form diſtinct ideas, and to expect clear evidence in all caſes before belief. They furniſh, therefore, the beſt exerciſe for the intellec-

tual powers, and the beſt defence againſt that credulity and precipitation and confuſion of ideas which are the common ſources of error.

There is, however, a danger to be avoided here. Mathematical ſtudies may abſorb the attention too much; and when they do, they contract the mind by rendering it incapable of thinking *at large*; by diſqualifying it for judging of any evidence except mathematical; and, conſequently, diſpoſing it to an unreaſonable ſcepticiſm on all ſubjects which admit not of ſuch evidence.——There have been many inſtances of this narrowneſs in mathematicians.

But to return from this digreſſion, — I cannot help obſerving on this occaſion, with reſpect to CHRISTIANITY in particular, that education ought to lead to a habit of judging of it as it is in the code itſelf of Chriſtianity; that the doctrines it reveals ſhould be learnt only from a critical and fair enquiry into the ſenſe of this code; and that all inſtruction in it ſhould be a preparation for making this enquiry and a communication of aſſiſtance in examining into the proofs of its divine original, and in determining to what degree of

evidence

evidence theſe proofs amount, after allowing every difficulty its juſt weight.—This has never yet been the practice among Chriſtians. The New Teſtament has been reckoned hitherto an *inſufficient* ſtandard of Chriſtian Divinity; and, therefore, formularies of human invention *pretending* to explain and define it (but in reality miſrepreſenting and diſhonouring it) have been ſubſtituted in its room; and teaching *theſe* has been called teaching *Chriſtianity*. And it is very remarkable, that in the *Engliſh* Univerſities no Lectures on the New Teſtament are ever read, or even ſuffered to be read; and that, through all Chriſtendom, it is much leſs an object of attention than the *ſyſtems* and *creeds* which have been fathered upon it.

I will only add on this ſubject, that it is above all things neceſſary, while inſtruction is conveyed, to convey with it a ſenſe of the imbecility of the human mind, and of its great proneneſs to error; and alſo a diſpoſition, even on points which ſeem the moſt clear, to liſten to objections, and to conſider nothing as involving in it our final intereſt but an HONEST HEART.

Nature has ſo made us, that an attachment muſt take place within us to opinions once formed; and it was proper that we ſhould be ſo made, in order to prevent that levity and deſultorineſs of mind which muſt have been the conſequence had we been ready to give up our opinions too eaſily and haſtily. But this natural tendency, however wiſely given us, is apt to exceed its proper limits, and to render us unreaſonably tenacious. It ought, therefore, like all our other natural propenſities, to be carefully watched and guarded; and education ſhould put us upon doing this. An obſervation before made ſhould, in particular, be inculcated, "that all mankind "have hitherto been moſt tenacious when "moſt in the wrong, and reckoned themſelves moſt enlightened when moſt in the "dark."——This is, indeed, a very mortifying fact; but attention to it is neceſſary to cure that miſerable pride and dogmaticalneſs which are ſome of the worſt enemies to improvement.——Who is there that does not remember the time when he was entirely ſatisfied about points which deeper reflexion has ſhewn to be above his comprehenſion? Who, for inſtance, does

not remember a time when he would have wondered at the queſtion, " why does " water run down hill?" What ignorant man is there who is not perſuaded that he underſtands this perfectly? But every *improved* man knows it to be a queſtion he cannot anſwer; and what diſtinguiſhes him in this inſtance from the leſs improved part of mankind is his knowing this. The like is true in numberleſs other inſtances. One of the beſt proofs of wiſdom is a ſenſe of our want of wiſdom; and he who knows moſt poſſeſſes moſt of this ſenſe.

In thinking of myſelf I derive ſome encouragement from this reflexion. I now ſee, that I do not underſtand many points which once appeared to me very clear. The more I have inquired, the more ſenſible I have been growing of my own darkneſs; and a part of the hiſtory of my life is that which follows.

In early life I was ſtruck with Biſhop BUTLER's *Analogy of religion natural and revealed to the conſtitution and courſe of nature*. I reckon it happy for me that this book

book was one of the firſt that fell into my hands. It taught me the proper mode of reaſoning on moral and religious ſubjects, and particularly the importance of paying a due regard to the imperfection of human knowledge. His ſermons alſo, I then thought, and do ſtill think, excellent. Next to *his* works, I have always been an admirer of the writings of Dr. CLARK. And I cannot help adding, however ſtrange it may ſeem, that I owe much to the philoſophical writings of Mr. HUME, which I likewiſe ſtudied early in life. Though an enemy to his Scepticiſm, I have profited by it. By attacking, with great ability, every principle of truth and reaſon, he put me upon examining the ground upon which I ſtood, and taught me not haſtily to take any thing for granted.——The firſt fruits of my reading and ſtudies were laid before the public in a Treatiſe entitled *A* REVIEW *of the principal Queſtions and Difficulties in Morals.* This publication has been followed by many others on various ſubjects.—And now, in the evening of a life devoted to enquiry and ſpent in endeavours (weak indeed and feeble) to ſerve the

the beſt intereſts, preſent and future, of mankind, I am waiting for the GREAT TEACHER, convinced that the order of nature is perfect; that infinite wiſdom and goodneſs govern all things; and that Chriſtianity comes from God: But at the ſame time puzzled by many difficulties, anxious for more light, and reſting with full and conſtant aſſurance only on this ONE truth —— That the practice of virtue is the duty and dignity of man; and, in all events, his wiſeſt and ſafeſt courſe.

Of the DANGERS *to which the American States are expoſed.*

IN the preceding obſervations, I have aimed at pointing out the means of promoting the progreſs of improvement in the united States of America. I have inſiſted, particularly, on the importance of a juſt ſettlement of the FEDERAL UNION, and the eſtabliſhment of a well-guarded and perfect liberty in ſpeculation, in government, in education, and in religion.—— The united States are now ſetting out, and all depends on the care and foreſight with which a plan is begun, which hereafter will require only to be ſtrengthened and ripened. This is, therefore, the time for giving them advice; and mean advice (like the preſent) may ſuggeſt ſome uſeful hints. —— In this country, when any improvements are propoſed, or any corrections are attempted, of abuſes ſo groſs as to make our boaſts of liberty ridiculous*, a clamour

* The majority of the BRITISH Houſe of Commons is choſen by a *few thouſands* of the dregs of the people, who are conſtantly paid for their votes.—— Is

clamour immediately ariſes againſt INNOVATION, and an alarm ſpreads, leſt the attempt to *repair* ſhould *deſtroy*. —— In America no ſuch prejudices can operate. *There* abuſes have not yet gained ſacredneſs by time. *There* the way is open to ſocial dignity and happineſs; and reaſon may utter her voice with confidence and ſucceſs.

Is it not *ridiculous* to call a country *ſo* governed *free?* —— See a ſtriking account of the State of the Britiſh Parliamentary Repreſentation, in Mr. *Burgh's* Political Diſquiſitions, Vol. I. p. 39, &c.

Of DEBTS *and* INTERNAL WARS.

I HAVE obſerved in the introduction to this Addreſs, that the *American* States have many dangers to ſhun. In what follows I ſhall give a brief recital of ſome of the chief of theſe dangers.

The danger from an endleſs increaſe of PUBLIC DEBTS has been already ſufficiently noticed.

Particular notice has been likewiſe taken of the danger from INTERNAL WARS.—Again and again, I would urge the neceſſity of purſuing every meaſure and uſing every precaution which can guard againſt this danger. It will be ſhocking to ſee in the *new* world a repetition of all the evils which have hitherto laid waſte the *old* world — War raging where peace and liberty were thought to have taken their abodes — The points of bayonets and the mouths of cannon ſettling diſputes, inſtead of the collected wiſdom of the confederation — and perhaps one reſtleſs and ambitious State riſing by bloody

bloody conqueſt above the reſt, and becoming a *ſovereign* State, claiming impiouſly (as *Britain* once did) " full authority to make " laws that ſhall bind its ſiſter States in all " caſes whatever," and drawing to itſelf all advantages at their expence. —— I deprecate this calamity. I ſhudder when I conſider how poſſible it is; and hope thoſe perſons are miſtaken who think that ſuch are the jealouſies which govern human nature, and ſuch the imperfections of the beſt human arrangements, that it is not within the reach of any wiſdom to diſcover any effectual means of preventing it, without encroaching too much on the liberty and independence of the States. I have mentioned an enlargement of the powers of CONGRESS. Others have propoſed a conſolidation of the powers of government in one PARLIAMENT repreſenting *all* the States, and ſuperſeding the particular parliaments by which they are now ſeparately governed. But it is obvious, that this will be attended with greater inconveniencies, and encroach more on the liberty of the States, than the enlargement I have propoſed of the powers of CONGRESS.——If

ſuch a parliament is not to ſuperſede any of the other parliaments, it will be the ſame with CONGRESS as at preſent conſtituted.

Of an UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF PROPERTY.

IT is a trite obſervation, that "dominion "is founded on property." Moſt free States have manifeſted their ſenſe of the truth of this obſervation, by ſtudying to find out means of preventing too great an inequality in the diſtribution of 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 the direction of heaven, all eſtates which had been alienated during the courſe of fifty years, returned to their original owners at the end of that term. One of the circumſtances that has been moſt favourable to the *American* States in forming their new conſtitutions of government has been the equality which ſubſiſts among them.

The

The happieſt ſtate of man is the middle ſtate between the *ſavage* and the *refined*, or between the wild and the luxurious ſtate. Such is the ſtate of ſociety in CONNECTICUT, and ſome others of the *American* provinces; where the inhabitants conſiſt, if I am rightly informed, of an independent and hardy YEOMANRY, all nearly on a level—trained to arms,—inſtructed in their rights—cloathed in home-ſpun—of ſimple manners—ſtrangers to luxury—drawing plenty from the ground—and that plenty, gathered eaſily by the hand of induſtry; and giving riſe to early marriages, a numerous progeny, length of days, and a rapid increaſe—the rich and the poor, the haughty grandee and the creeping ſycophant, equally unknown—protected by laws, which (being their own will) cannot oppreſs; and by an equal government, which wanting lucrative places, cannot create corrupt canvaſſings * and ambitious intrigue.——O diſtinguiſhed people! May you continue

* In this State, and alſo the State of *Maſſachuſetts*, *New Jerſey*, &c. any attempt to canvas, or even the expreſſion of a wiſh to be choſen, will exclude a candidate from a ſeat in the Houſe of Repreſentatives. The ſame is true of any ſtain on his moral character.

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long thus happy; and may the happineſs you enjoy ſpread over the face of the whole earth!—But I am forgetting myſelf. There is danger that a ſtate of ſociety ſo happy will not be of long duration; that ſimplicity and virtue will give way to depravity; that equality will in time be loſt, the curſed luſt of domineering ſhew itſelf, liberty languiſh, and civil government gradually degenerate into an inſtrument in the hands of the *few* to oppreſs and plunder the *many*.—Such has hitherto been the progreſs of evil in human affairs. In order to give them a better turn, ſome great men (*Plato*, Sir *Thomas More*, Mr. *Wallis*, &c.) have propoſed plans, which, by eſtabliſhing a community of goods and annihilating property, would make it impoſſible for any one member of a State to think of enſlaving the reſt, or to conſider himſelf as having any intereſt diſtinct from that of his fellow-citizens. Such theories are in ſpeculation pleaſing; nor perhaps are they wholly impracticable. Some approaches to them may hereafter be made; and ſchemes of government may take place, which ſhall leave ſo little, beſides perſonal merit, to be a means of diſtinction,

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as to exclude from ſociety moſt of the cauſes of evil. But be this as it will; it is out of doubt that there is an equality in ſociety which is eſſential to liberty, and which every State that would continue virtuous and happy ought as far as poſſible to maintain. — It is not in my power to deſcribe the beſt method of doing this. — I will only obſerve, that there are THREE enemies to equality againſt which *America* ought to guard.

Firſt; Granting hereditary honours and titles of nobility. Perſons thus diſtinguiſhed, though perhaps meaner than the meaneſt of their dependents, are apt to conſider themſelves as belonging to a higher order of beings, and *made* for power and government. Their birth and rank neceſſarily diſpoſe them to be hoſtile to general liberty; and when they are not ſo, and diſcover a juſt zeal for the rights of mankind, it is always a triumph of good ſenſe and virtue over the temptations of their ſituation. It is, therefore, with peculiar ſatisfaction that I have found in the articles of confederation an order that no titles of nobility ſhall be ever granted by the united States. Let

there

there be honours to encourage merit; but let them die with the men who have earned them. Let them not descend to posterity to foster a spirit of domination, and to produce a proud and tyrannical aristocracy. —In a word, let the united States continue for ever what it is now their glory to be—a confederation of States prosperous and happy, without LORDS—without BISHOPS*—and without KINGS.

Secondly; The right of primogeniture. The tendency of this to produce an improper inequality is very obvious. The disposition to raise a name, by accumulating property in one branch of a family, is a vanity no less unjust and cruel, than

* I do not mean by *Bishops* any officers among Christians merely *spiritual*; but *Lords spiritual*, as distinguished from *Lords temporal*, or Clergymen raised to preeminence, and invested with civil honours and authority by a State establishment.

I must add, that by what is here said I do not mean to express a *general* preference of a *republican* constitution of government. There is a degree of political degeneracy which unfits for such a constitution. BRITAIN, in particular, consists too much of the high and the low, (of *scum* and *dregs*) to admit of it. Nor will it suit *America*, should it ever become equally corrupt.

dangerous

dangerous to the intereſt of liberty; and no wiſe State will encourage or tolerate it.

Thirdly; FOREIGN TRADE is another of the enemies againſt which I wiſh to caution the united States. But this operates unfavourably to a State in ſo many more ways than by deſtroying that equality which is the baſis of liberty, that it will be proper to take more particular notice of it.

Of TRADE, BANKS, *and* PAPER CREDIT.

FOREIGN trade has, in ſome reſpects, the moſt uſeful tendency. By creating an intercourſe between diſtant kingdoms, it extends benevolence, removes local prejudices, leads every man to conſider himſelf more as a citizen of the world than of any particular State, and, conſequently, checks the exceſſes of that *Love of our Country* * which has been applauded as one

* The love of our country is then only a noble paſſion when it engages us to promote the *internal* happineſs of our country, and to defend its rights and liberties againſt domeſtic and foreign invaſion, maintaining at the ſame time an equal regard to the rights and liberties of other countries. But this has not been its moſt common effects. On the contrary, it has in general been nothing but a ſpirit of rivalſhip between different communities, producing contention and a thirſt for conqueſt and dominion.—What is his *country* to a *Ruſſian*, a *Turk*, a *Spaniard*, &c. but a ſpot where he enjoys no rights, and is diſpoſed of by owners as if he was a beaſt? And what is his *love* to his country but an attachment to degradation and ſlavery?—What was the love of their country among the *Jews* but a wretched partiality for themſelves and a proud contempt for other nations? Among

one of the nobleſt, but which, *really*, is one of the moſt *deſtructive* principles in human nature.——Trade alſo, by enabling every country to draw from other countries conveniences and advantages which it cannot find within itſelf, produces among nations a ſenſe of mutual dependence, and promotes the general improvement.—But there is no part of mankind to which theſe uſes of trade are of leſs conſequence than the *American* States. They are ſpread over a great continent, and make a world within themſelves. The country they inhabit includes ſoils and climates of all ſorts, producing not only every *neceſſary*, but every *convenience* of life. And the vaſt rivers and wide-ſpread lakes which interſect it, create ſuch an inland communication between its different parts, as is unknown in any other region of the earth. They poſſeſs then within themſelves the

Among the *Romans* alſo what was it, however great in many of its exertions, but a principle holding together a band of robbers in their attempts to cruſh all liberty but their own? — Chriſtianity has wiſely omitted to recommend this principle. Had it done this, it would have countenanced a vice among mankind.—It has done what is infinitely better — It has recommended UNIVERSAL BENEVOLENCE.

beſt means of the moſt profitable *internal* traffic, and the ampleſt ſcope for it. Why ſhould they look much farther? What occaſion can they have for being anxious about puſhing *foreign* trade; or even about raiſing a great naval force?—Britain, indeed, conſiſting as it does of *unarmed* inhabitants, and threatened as it is by ambitious and powerful neighhours, cannot hope to maintain its exiſtence long after becoming open to invaſion by loſing its naval ſuperiority.——But this is not the caſe with the American States. They have no powerful neighbours to dread. The vaſt Atlantic muſt be croſſed before they can be attacked. They are all a well-trained *militia*; and the ſucceſsful reſiſtance which, in their infancy and without a naval force, they have made to the invaſion of the firſt *European* power, will probably diſcourage and prevent all future invaſions. Thus ſingularly happy, why ſhould they ſeek connexions with *Europe*, and expoſe themſelves to the danger of being involved in its quarrels?—What have they to do with its politics?—Is there any thing very important to them which they can draw from thence—except INFECTION?——Indeed,

deed, I tremble when I think of that rage for trade which is likely to prevail among them. It may do them infinite miſchief. All nations are ſpreading ſnares for them, and courting them to a dangerous intercourſe. Their beſt intereſt requires them to guard themſelves by all proper means; and, particularly, by laying heavy duties on importations. But in no caſe will any means ſucceed unleſs aided by MANNERS. In this inſtance, particularly, there is reaſon to fear that an increaſing paſſion for foreign frippery will render all the beſt regulations ineffectual. And ſhould this happen, that ſimplicity of character, that manlineſs of ſpirit, that diſdain of tinſel in which true dignity conſiſts, will diſappear. Effeminacy, ſervility and venality will enter; and liberty and virtue be ſwallowed up in the gulph of corruption. Such may be the courſe of events in the American States. Better *infinitely* will it be for them to conſiſt of bodies of plain and honeſt farmers, rather than opulent and ſplendid merchants. —— Where in theſe States do the pureſt manners prevail? Where do the inhabitants live moſt on an equality, and moſt at their eaſe? Is it

it not in thoſe inland parts where agriculture gives health and plenty, and trade is ſcarcely known?——Where, on the contrary, are the inhabitants moſt ſelfiſh, luxurious, looſe, and vicious; and at the ſame time moſt unhappy? Is it not along the ſea coaſts, and in the great towns, where trade flouriſhes and merchants abound?—— So ſtriking is the effect of theſe different ſituations on the vigour and happineſs of human life, that in the one population would languiſh did it receive no aid from emigrations; while in the other it increaſes to a degree ſcarcely ever before known.

But to proceed to ſome obſervations of a different nature——

The united States have, I think, particular reaſon to dread the following effects of foreign trade.

By increaſing importation to feed luxury and gratify prodigality, it will carry out their coin, and occaſion the ſubſtitution of a deluſive paper currency; the conſequence of which will be, that *ideal* wealth will take place of *real*, and their ſecurity come to depend [illegible] on the ſtrength and duration of a *Bubble*. —— I am very ſenſible that paper credit (as the Security of Britain does)

credit is one of the greateſt of all conveniences; but this makes it likewiſe one of the greateſt of all temptations. A public Bank, (while it can circulate its bills) faciliates commerce, and aſſiſts the exertions of a State in proportion to its credit. But when it is not carefully reſtricted and watched; when its emiſſions exceed the coin it can command, and are carried near the utmoſt length that the confidence of the public will allow; and when, in conſequence of this, its permanence comes to depend on the permanence of public credulity—In theſe circumſtances, a BANK, though it may for a time (that is, while a balance of trade too unfavourable does not occaſion a run, and no events ariſe which produce alarms) anſwer all the ends of a MINE from which millions may be drawn in a minute; and, by filling a kingdom with caſh, render it capable of ſuſtaining *any* debts, and give it a kind of OMNIPOTENCE. — In ſuch circumſtances, I ſay, notwithſtanding theſe temporary advantages, a public BANK muſt *at laſt* prove a great calamity; and a kingdom ſo ſupported, at the very time of its greateſt exer-

exertions, will be only ſtriving more violently to increaſe the horror of an approaching convulſion.

The united States have already verified ſome of theſe obſervations, and felt in ſome degree the conſequences to which I have alluded. They have been carried through the war by an emiſſion of paper which had no ſolid ſupport, and which now has loſt all value. It is indeed ſurpriſing that, being ſecured on no fund and incapable of being exchanged for coin, it ſhould ever have obtained a currency, or anſwered any important purpoſe.

Unhappily for *Britain*, it has uſed the means of giving more ſtability to its paper-credit, and been enabled by it to ſupport expences greater than any that have been yet known, and to contract a debt which now *aſtoniſhes*, and may hereafter produce a cataſtrophe that will *terrify* the world.—A longer duration of the late war would have brought on this cataſtrophe immediately. The PEACE has put it off *for the preſent*. God grant if ſtill poſſible, that meaſures may be adopted which ſhall put it off *for ever*.

Of

Of OATHS.

OATHS are expedients to which all States have had recourſe in order to obtain true information and aſcertain facts by ſecuring the veracity of witneſſes. But I know not how to reliſh that *imprecation* which always makes a part of an oath. Perhaps, there is no ſuch neceſſity for it as is commonly imagined. An AFFIRMATION ſolemnly made, with laws inflicting ſevere penalties on falſhood when detected, would probably anſwer all the ends of oaths. — I am, therefore, diſpoſed to wiſh, that in the united States *imprecatory* oaths may be aboliſhed, and the ſame indulgence in this reſpect granted to all which is now granted to the *Quakers*. But I am afraid they will think this too dangerous an experiment; and what is of moſt conſequence is to avoid,

Firſt, Such a multiplicity of oaths as will render them too familiar.

And, Secondly, A ſlight manner of adminiſtering them. ENGLAND, in this reſpect,

ſpect, ſeems to be ſunk to the loweſt poſſible degree of degeneracy. Oaths among us are required on ſo many occaſions, and ſo careleſsly adminiſtered, as to have loſt almoſt all their uſe and efficacy. It has been aſſerted, that, including oaths of office, oaths at elections, cuſtom-houſe oaths, &c. &c. there are about a *million* of perjuries committed in this kingdom *annually*.——This is one of the moſt atrocious of our national iniquities; and it is a wonder if we are not to be viſited for it with ſome of the ſevereſt of God's judgments.

Of

Of the NEGRO TRADE *and* SLAVERY.

THE NEGRO TRADE cannot be cenſured in language too ſevere. It is a traffick which, as it has been hitherto carried on, is ſhocking to humanity, cruel, wicked, and diabolical. I am happy to find that the united States are entering into meaſures for diſcountenancing it, and for aboliſhing the odious ſlavery which it has introduced. 'Till they have done this, it will not appear they deſerve the liberty for which they have been contending. For it is ſelf-evident, that if there are any men whom they have a right to hold in ſlavery, there may be *others* who have had a right to hold *them* in ſlavery. —— I am ſenſible, however, that this is a work which they cannot accompliſh at once. The emancipation of the Negroes muſt, I ſuppoſe, be left in ſome meaſure to be the effect of time and of manners. But nothing can excuſe the united States if it is not done with as much ſpeed, and at the ſame time with as much effect, as their particular

circumſtances and ſituation will allow. I rejoice that on this occaſion I can recommend to them the example of my own country.——In *Britain*, a *Negro* becomes a *freeman* the moment he ſets his foot on *Britiſh* ground.

Conclusion.

SUCH is the advice which I would *humbly* (but *earneſtly*) offer to the united States of *America*.——Such are the means by which they may become the ſeats of liberty, ſcience, peace, and virtue; happy within themſelves, and a refuge to the world.

Often, while employed in writing theſe papers, have I wiſhed for a warning voice of more power. The preſent moment, however auſpicious to the united States if wiſely improved, is critical; and, though apparently the end of all their dangers, may prove the time of their greateſt danger. I have, indeed, ſince finiſhing this Addreſs, been mortified more than I can expreſs

preſs by accounts which have led me to fear that I have carried my ideas of them too high, and deceived myſelf with viſionary expectations.——And ſhould this be true—Should the return of peace and the pride of independence lead them to ſecurity and diſſipation—Should they loſe thoſe virtuous and ſimple manners by which alone Republics can long ſubſiſt—Should falſe refinement, luxury, and *impiety*, ſpread among them; exceſſive jealouſy diſtract their governments; and claſhing intereſts, ſubject to no ſtrong controul, break the federal union——The conſequence will be, that the faireſt experiment ever tried in human affairs will miſcarry; and that a REVOLUTION which had revived the hopes of good men and promiſed an opening to better times, will become a diſcouragement to all future efforts in favour of liberty, and prove only an opening to a new ſcene of human degeneracy and miſery.

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following letter was written by the late M. *Turgot*, Comptroller General (in the years 1774, 1775, and 1776) of the finances of FRANCE. It contains obſervations in which the United States are deeply concerned; and, for this reaſon, I now convey it to them, not doubting but that the eminence of M. *Turgot*'s name and character will recommend it to their attention, and that it will do honour to his memory among all the friends of public liberty.

A Monſieur PRICE,
A Londres.

A Paris, le 22 *Mars,* 1778.

MR. FRANKLIN m'a remis, Monſieur, de votre part, la nouvelle édition de vos obſervations ſur la liberté civile, &c. Je vous dois un double remerciment; 1° de votre ouvrage dont je connois depuis longtems le prix, et que j'avois lu avec avidité, malgré les occupations multipliées, dont j'etois aſſailli, lorſqu'il a paru pour la premiere fois; 2° de l'honnêteté que vous avez eue de retrancher l'imputation de maladreſſe * que vous aviez mêlée au bien que vous diſiez d'ailleurs de moi dans vos obſervations additionelles. J'aurois pu la meriter, ſi vous n'aviez eu en vue d'autre maladreſſe que celle de n'avoir pas ſçu demêler les reſſorts

* What is here ſaid refers to an account of M. *Turgot's* adminiſtration in the *ſecond* tract on *Civil Liberty and the War with America*, p. 150, &c. In the firſt edition of this tract I had mentioned improperly his *want of addreſs* among the other cauſes of his diſmiſſion from power. This occaſioned a letter from him to inform me of the true reaſons of his diſmiſſion, and begun that correſpondence of which this letter is a part, and which continued till his death.

d'intrigues

d'intrigues que faiſoient jouer contre moi des gens beaucoup plus *adroits* en ce genre que je ne le ſuis, que je ne le ſerai jamais, et que je ne veux l'etre. Mais il m'a paru que vous m'imputiez la maladreſſe d'avoir choqué groſſierement l'opinion générale de ma nation ; et à cet égard je crois que vous n'aviez rendu juſtice ni à moi, ni à ma nation, où il y a beaucoup plus de lumieres qu'on ne le croit généralement chez vous, et où peut-être il eſt plus aiſé que chez vous même de ramener le public à des idées raiſonnables. J'en juge par l'infatuation de votre nation ſur ce projet abſurde de ſubjuguer l'Amérique, qui a duré juſqu'à ce que l'aventure de Burgoyne ait commencé à lui deſſiller les yeux. J'en juge par le ſyſtême de monopole et d'excluſion qui règne chez tous vos écrivains politiques ſur le commerce, (J'excepte Mr. Adam Smith et le Doyen Tucker) ſyſtême qui eſt le véritable principe de votre ſéparation avec vos colonies. J'en juge par tous vos écrits polémiques ſur les queſtions qui vous agitent depuis une vingtaine d'années, et dans leſquels avant que le vôtre eut paru, je ne me rappelle preſque pas d'en avoir lu un, où le vrai point de la queſtion ait été ſaiſi. Je n'ai pas conçu comment une nation qui a

cultivé avec tant de ſuccès toutes les branches des ſciences naturelles a pu reſter ſi fort au deſſous d'elle même, dans la ſcience la plus intereſſante de toutes, celle du bonheur public ; dans une ſcience où la liberté de la preſſe, dont elle ſeule jouit, auroit dû lui donner ſur toutes les autres nations de l'Europe un avantage prodigieux. Eſt-ce l'orgueil national qui vous a empêchés de mettre à profit cet avantage ? Eſt-ce parce que vous etiez un peu moins mal que les autres, que vous avez tourné toutes vos ſpéculations à vous perſuader que vous etiez bien ? Eſt-ce l'eſprit de parti, et l'envie de ſe faire un appui des opinions populaires qui a retardé vos progrès, en portant vos politiques à traiter de vaine * métaphyſique toutes les ſpéculations qui tendent à établir des principes fixes ſur les droits et les vrais interêts des individus et des nations ? Comment ſe fait-il que vous ſoyez preſque le premier parmi vos écrivains qui ayez donné des notions juſtes de la liberté, et qui ayez fait ſentir la fauſſeté de cette notion rebattue par preſque tous les écrivains les plus républicains,

* See Mr. Burke's letter to the *Sheriffs of Briſtol.*

que

que la liberté conſiſte à n'être ſoumis qu'aux loix, comme ſi un homme opprimé par une loi injuſte êtoit libre. Cela ne ſeroit pas même vrai quand on ſuppoſeroit que toutes les loix ſont l'ouvrage de la nation aſſemblée; car enfin l'individu a auſſi des droits que la nation ne peut lui ôter, que par la violence et par un uſage illegitime de la force générale. Quoique vous ayez eu égard à cette verité, et que vous vous en ſoyez expliqué, peut-être méritoit-elle que vous la dévelopaſſiez avec plus d'étendue, vû le peu d'attention qu'y ont donnée même les plus zelés partiſans de la liberté.

C'eſt encore une choſe étrange que ce ne fût pas en Angletterre une vérité triviale de dire qu'une nation ne peut jamais avoir droit de gouverner une autre nation; et qu'un pareil gouvernement ne peut avoir d'autre fondement que la force, qui eſt auſſi le fondement du brigandage et de la tyrannie; que la tyrannie d'un peuple eſt de toutes les tyrannies connues la plus cruelle et la plus intolérable, celle qui laiſſe le moins de reſſource à l'opprimé; car enfin un deſpote eſt arrêté par ſon propre interêt, il a le frein du remords, ou celui de l'opinion

nion publique, mais une multitude ne calcule rien, n'a jamais de remords, et ſe decerne à elle même la gloire lors qu'elle mérite le plus de honte.

Les événemens ſont pour la nation Angloiſe un terrible commentaire de votre livre. Depuis quelques mois ils ſe précipitent avec une rapidité très accelérée. Le dénouement eſt arrivé par rapport à l'Amérique. La voila indépendante ſans retour. Sera-t'elle libre et heureuſe ? Ce peuple nouveau ſitué ſi avantageuſement pour donner au monde l'exemple d'une conſtitution où l'homme jouiſſe de tous ſes droits, exerce librement toutes ſes facultés, et ne ſoit gouverné que par la nature, la raiſon et la juſtice, ſaura-t'il former une pareille conſtitution ? ſaura-t'il l'affermir ſur des fondemens éternels, prévenir toutes les cauſes de diviſion et de corruption qui peuvent la miner peu-à-peu et la détruire ?

Je ne ſuis point content je l'avoue des conſtitutions qui ont eté rédigées juſqu'à-préſent par les différens Etats Américains. Vous reprochez avec raiſon à celle de la Penſylvanie le ſerment religieux exigé pour avoir

avoir entrée dans le corps des repréſentans. C'eſt bien pis dans les autres ; il y en a une, je crois que c'eſt celle des Jerſeis qui exige (†) * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * * Je vois dans le plus grand nombre l'imitation ſans objet des uſages de l'Angleterre. Au lieu de ramener toutes les autorités à une ſeule, celle de la nation, l'on établit des corps différens, un corps des repréſentans, un conſeil, un gouverneur, parce que l'Angleterre a une chambre des communes, une chambre haute et un Roi. On s'occupe a balancer ces différens pouvoirs ; comme ſi cet équilibre de forces, qu'on a pu croire neceſſaire pour balancer l'énorme prépondérance de la Royauté, pouvoit être de quelque uſage dans des Républiques fondées ſur l'égalité de tous les citoyens ; et comme ſi tout ce qui établit différens corps n'êtoit pas une ſource de diviſions. En voulant prévenir des dangers chimériques, on en fait naitre de réels ; on veut n'avoir rien à

(†) It is the conſtitution of *Delaware* that impoſes the teſt here meant. That of the *Jerſies*, with a noble liberality, orders that there ſhall never in that province be any eſtabliſhment of any one religious ſect in preference to another, and that all Proteſtants of all perſuaſions ſhall enjoy equal rights and privileges.

craindre

craindre du clergé, on le réunit ſous la barriere d'une proſcription commune. En l'excluant du droit d'éligibilité, on en fait un corps, et un corps étranger à l'Etat. Pourquoi un citoyen, qui a le même interêt que les autres à la defenſe commune de ſa liberté et de ſes propriétés, eſt-il exclus d'y contribuer de ſes lumieres et de ſes vertus, parce qu'il eſt d'une profeſſion qui exige des lumieres et des vertus ? Le clergé n'eſt dangereux que quand il exiſte en corps dans l'Etat ; que quand il croit avoir en corps des droits et des interêts, que quand on a imaginé d'avoir une religion établie par la loi, comme ſi les hommes pouvoient avoir quelque droit, ou quelque interêt à régler la conſcience les uns des autres ; comme ſi l'individu pouvoit ſacrifier aux avantages de la ſocieté civile les opinions auxquelles il croit ſon ſalut éternel attaché ; comme ſi l'on ſe ſauvoit, ou ſe damnoit, en commun. Là où la vraye tolérance, c'eſt-à-dire l'incompétence abſolue du gouvernement ſur la conſcience des individus, eſt établie, l'eccleſiaſtique au milieu de l'aſſemblée nationale n'eſt qu'un citoyen, lorſqu'il y eſt admis ; il redevient eccleſiaſtique lorſqu'on l'en exclut.

Je

Je ne vois pas qu'on ſe ſoit aſſez occupé de réduire au plus petit nombre poſſible, les genres d'affaires dont le gouvernement de chaque Etat ſera chargé ; ni à ſéparer les objets de légiſlation, de ceux d'adminiſtration générale et de ceux d'adminiſtration particuliere et locale ; à conſtituer des aſſemblées locales ſubſiſtantes, qui rempliſſant preſque toutes les fonctions de detail du gouvernement diſpenſent les aſſemblées générales de s'en occuper, et ôtent aux membres de celles-ci tout moyen, et peut-être tout déſir d'abuſer d'une autorité qui ne peut s'appliquer qu'à des objets généraux et par là même étrangers aux petites paſſions qui agitent les hommes.

Je ne vois pas qu'on ait fait attention à la grande diſtinction la ſeule fondée ſur la nature entre deux claſſes d'hommes, celle des propriétaires de terres, et celle des non-propriétaires ; à leurs interets et par conſéquent à leurs droits différens, relativement à la légiſlation, à l'adminiſtration de la juſtice et de la police, à la contribution aux dépenſes publiques et à leur emploi.

Nul principe fixe établi ſur l'impôt; on ſuppoſe que chaque province peut ſe taxer à ſa fantaiſie, établir des taxes perſonnelles, des taxes ſur les conſommations, ſur les importations, c'eſt-à-dire ſe donner un interêt contraire à l'interêt des autres provinces.

On ſuppoſe par tout le droit de régler le commerce; on autoriſe même les corps executifs, ou les gouverneurs à prohiber l'exportation de certaines denrées dans certaines occurrences; tant on eſt loin d'avoir ſenti que la loi de la liberté entiere de tout commerce eſt un corollaire du droit de propriété; tant on eſt encore plongé dans le brouillard des illuſions Européennes.

Dans l'union générale des provinces entre elles, je ne vois point une coalition, une fuſion de toutes les parties, qui n'en faſſe qu'un corps *un*, et homogene. Ce n'eſt qu'une aggrégation de parties, toujours trop ſéparées, et qui conſervent toujours une tendance à ſe diviſer, par la diverſité de leurs loix, de leurs mœurs, de leurs opinions; par l'inégalité de leurs forces actuelles; plus encore par l'inégalité de leurs progrès ultérieurs.

rieurs. Ce n'eſt qu'une copie de la République Hollandoiſe; et celle-ci même n'avoit pas à craindre comme la République Américaine les accroiſſemens poſſibles de quelques unes de ſes provinces. Tout cet édifice eſt appuyé juſqu'à préſent ſur la bâſe fauſſe de la très ancienne et très vulgaire politique; ſur le prejugé que les nations, les provinces, peuvent avoir des interêts, en corps de province et de nation, autres que celui qu'ont les individus d'être libres et de défendre leurs propriétés contre les brigan et les conquerans: interêt prétendu de faire plus de commerce que les autres, de ne point acheter les marchandiſes de l'étranger, de forcer l'étranger à conſommer leurs productions et les ouvrages de leurs manufactures: interêt prétendu d'avoir un territoire plus vaſte, d'acquérir telle ou telle province, telle ou telle iſle, tel ou tel village: interêt d'inſpirer la crainte aux autres nations: interêt de l'emporter ſur elles par la gloire des armes, par celle des arts et des ſciences.

Quelques-uns de ces préjugés ſont fomentés en Europe, parce que la rivalité ancienne des nations et l'ambition des

princes oblige tous les Etats à ſe tenir armés pour ſe défendre contre leurs voiſins armés, et à regarder la force militaire comme l'objet principal du gouvernement. L'Amérique a le bonheur de ne pouvoir avoir d'ici à bien longtems d'ennemi extérieur à craindre, ſi elle ne ſe diviſe elle même; ainſi elle peut et doit apprécier à leur juſte valeur ces prétendus interêts, ces ſujets de diſcorde qui ſeuls ſont à redouter pour ſa liberté. Avec le principe ſacré de la liberté du commerce regardé comme une ſuite du droit de la proprieté, tous les prétendus interêts de commerce diſparoiſſent. Les prétendus interêts de poſſeder plus ou moins de territoires s'évanouiſſent par le principe que le territoire n'appartient point aux nations, mais aux individus propriétaires des terres; que la queſtion de ſavoir ſi tel canton, tel village, doit appartenir à telle province, à tel Etat ne doit point être décidée par le prétendu interêt de cette province ou de cet Etat, mais par celui qu'ont les habitans de tel canton ou de tel village de ſe raſſembler pour leurs affaires dans le lieu où il leur eſt le plus commode d'aller; que cet interêt étant meſuré par le plus ou moins de chemin

chemin qu'un homme peut faire loin de ſon domicile pour traiter quelques affaires plus importantes ſans trop nuire à ſes affaires journalieres, devient une meſure naturelle et phyſique de l'étendue des juriſdictions et des Etats, et établit entre tous un équilibre * d'étendue et de forces, qui écarte tout danger d'inégalité, et toute prétention à la ſupériorité.

L'interêt d'etre craint eſt nul quand on ne demande rien à perſonne, et quand on eſt dans une poſition où l'on ne peut être attaqué par des forces conſidérables avec quelque eſpérance de ſuccès.

La gloire des armes ne vaut pas le bonheur de vivre en paix. La gloire des arts, des ſciences appartient à quiconque veut s'en ſaiſir ; il y a dans ce genre à moiſſonner pour tout le monde ; le champ des découvertes

* This ſeems to be a particular of much conſequence. The great inequality now exiſting, and which is likely to increaſe, between the different States, is a very unfavourable circumſtance ; and the embaraſſment and danger to which it expoſes the union ought to be guarded againſt as far as poſſible in laying out future States.

eſt

eſt inépuiſable, et tous profitent des découvertes de tous.

J'imagine que les Américains n'en ſont pas encore à ſentir toutes ces verités, comme il faut qu'ils les ſentent pour aſſurer le bonheur de leur poſtérité. Je ne blâme pas leurs chefs. Il a fallu pourvoir au beſoin du moment par une union telle quelle, contre un ennemi préſent et redoutable; on n'avoit pas le tems de ſonger à corriger les vices des conſtitutions et de la compoſition des différens etats. Mais ils doivent craindre de les éterniſer, et s'occuper des moyens de réunir les opinions et les interêts et de les ramener à des principes uniformes dans toutes leurs provinces.

Ils ont à cet égard de grands obſtacles à vaincre.

En Canada, la conſtitution du clergé Romain, et l'exiſtence d'un corps de nobleſſe.

Dans la Nouvelle Angleterre, l'eſprit encore ſubſiſtant du Puritaniſme rigide, et toujours, dit on, un peu * intolérant.

* This has been *once* true of the inhabitants of *New-England*, but it is not ſo *now*. See p. 47.

Dans

Dans la Penſylvanie, un très grand nombre de citoyens établiſſant en principe religieux que la profeſſion des armes eſt illicite, et ſe refuſant par conſéquent aux arrangemens néceſſaires pour que le fondement de la force militaire de l'Etat, ſoit la réunion de la qualité de citoyen avec celle d'homme de guerre et de milicien ; ce qui oblige à faire du métier de la guerre un métier de mercenaires.

Dans les colonies méridionales, une trop grande inégalité de fortunes, et ſur tout le grand nombre d'eſclaves noirs dont l'eſclavage eſt incompatible avec une bonne conſtitution politique, et qui même en leur rendant la liberté embarraſſeront encore en formant deux nations dans le même Etat.

Dans toutes, les préjugés, l'attachement aux formes établies, l'habitude de certaines taxes, la crainte de celles qu'il faudroit y ſubſtituer, la vanité des colonies qui ſe ſont cru les plus puiſſantes, et un malheureux commencement d'orgueil national. Je crois les Américains forcés à s'agrandir, non pas par

par la guerre, mais par la culture. S'ils laiſſoient derriere eux les déſerts immenſes qui s'étendent juſqu'à la mer de l'Oueſt il s'y etabliroit du mélange de leurs bannis, et des mauvais ſujets échappés à la ſéverité des loix, avec les ſauvages : des peuplades de brigands qui ravageroient l'Amérique, comme les barbares du nord ont ravagé l'empire Romain ; de là un autre danger, la néceſſité de ſe tenir en armes ſur la frontiere et d'être dans un état de guerre continuelle. Les colonies voiſines de la frontiere ſeroient en conſéquence plus aguerries que les autres, et cette inégalité dans la force militaire ſeroit un aiguillon terrible pour l'ambition. Le remede à cette inégalité ſeroit d'entretenir une force militaire ſubſiſtante à laquelle toutes les provinces contribueroient en raiſon de leur population ; et les Américains qui ont encore toutes les craintes que doivent avoir les Anglois, redoutent plus que toute choſe une armée permanente. Ils ont tort. Rien n'eſt plus aiſé que de lier la conſtitution d'une armée permanente avec la milice, de façon que la milice en devienne meilleure, et que la liberté n'en ſoit que plus affermie. Mais il eſt mal aiſé de calmer ſur cela leurs allarmes.

Voila

Voila bien des difficultés, et peut-être les interêts ſecrets des particuliers puiſſans ſe joindront-ils aux préjugés de la multitude pour arrêter les efforts des vrais ſages et des vrais citoyens.

Il eſt impoſſible de ne pas faire des vœux pour que ce peuple parvienne à toute la proſpérité dont il eſt ſuſceptible. Il eſt l'eſpérance du genre humain. Il peut en devenir le modéle. Il doit prouver au monde, par le fait, que les hommes peuvent être libres et tranquilles, et peuvent ſe paſſer des chaines de toute eſpece que les tyrans et les charlatans de toute robe ont prétendu leur impôſer ſous le pretexte du bien public. Il doit donner l'exemple de la liberté politique, de la liberté religieuſe, de la liberté du commerce et de l'induſtrie. L'aſyle qu'il ouvre à tous les opprimés de toutes les nations doit conſoler la terre. La facilité d'en profiter pour ſe dérober aux ſuites d'un mauvais gouvernement forcera les gouvernemens d'être juſtes, et de s'éclairer; le reſte du monde ouvrira peu-à-peu les yeux ſur le néant des illuſions dont les politiques ſe ſont bercés. Mais il faut pour cela que l'Amérique s'en

garantiſſe, et qu'elle ne redevienne pas comme l'ont tant repeté vos écrivains miniſteriels une image de notre Europe, un amas de puiſſances diviſées, ſe diſputant des territoires ou des profits de commerce, et cimentant continuellement l'eſclavage des peuples par leur propre ſang.

Tous les hommes eclairés, tous les amis de l'humanité devroient en ce moment réunir leurs lumieres et joindre leurs réflexions à celles des ſages Américains pour concourir au grand ouvrage de leur légiſlation. Cela ſeroit digne de vous, Monſieur ; je voudrois pouvoir échauffer votre zêle ; et ſi dans cette lettre je me ſuis livré plus que je ne l'aurois dû peut-être à l'effuſion de mes propres idées, ce déſir a été mon unique motif, et m'excuſera à ce que j'eſpere de l'ennui que je vous aurai cauſé. Je voudrois que le ſang qui a coulé, qui coulera encore dans cette querelle ne fût pas inutile au bonheur du genre humain.

Nos deux nations vont ſe faire réciproquement bien du mal, probablement ſans qu'aucune d'elles en retire un profit réel. L'ac-

L'accroiſſement des dettes et des charges, * * * * * * * * * * * * *, et la ruine d'un grand nombre de citoyens en ſeront peut-être l'unique reſultat. L'Angleterre m'en paroit plus près encore que la France. Si au lieu de cette guerre vous aviez pu vous exécuter de bonne grace dès le premier moment, s'il êtoit donné à la politique de faire d'avance ce qu'elle ſera infailliblement forcée de faire plus tard, ſi l'opinion nationale avoit pu permettre à votre gouvernement de prévenir les evenemens, en ſuppoſant qu'il les eut prévus, s'il eût pu conſentir d'abord à l'indépendance de l'Amérique ſans faire la guerre à perſonne, je crois fermement que votre nation n'auroit rien perdu à ce changement. Elle y perdra aujourd'hui ce qu'elle a dépenſé, ce qu'elle dépenſera encore ; elle eprouvera une grande diminution pour quelque tems dans ſon commerce, de grands bouleverſemens intérieurs ſi elle eſt forcée à la banqueroute ; et quoiqu'il arrive une grande diminution dans l'influence politique au dehors, mais ce dernier article eſt d'une bien petite importance pour le bonheur réel d'un peuple, et je ne ſuis point du tout de l'avis de l'Abbé Rainal dans votre épi-

graphe. Je ne crois point que ceci vous mene à devenir une nation mepriſable, et vous jette dans l'eſclavage.

Vos malheurs feront peut-être au contraire l'effet d'une amputation néceſſaire; ils ſont peut-être le ſeul moyen de vous ſauver de la cangrene du luxe et de la corruption. Si dans vos agitations vous pouviez corriger votre conſtitution en rendant les elections annuelles, en repartiſſant le droit de repréſentation d'une maniere plus égale et plus proportionnée aux interets des repréſentés, vous gagneriez peut-être autant que l'Amérique à cette révolution ; car votre liberté vous reſteroit, et vos autres pertes ſe répareroient bien vîte avec elle et par elle.

Vous devez juger, Monſieur, par la franchiſe avec laquelle je m'ouvre à vous ſur ces points délicats, de l'eſtime que vous m'avéz inſpirée, et de la ſatisfaction que j'eprouve à penſer qu'il y a quelque reſſemblance entre nos manieres de voir. Je compte bien que cette * confidence n'eſt que pour vous. je

* In compliance with Mr. *Turgot*'s deſire, this letter was kept private during his life. Since his death I have

Je vous prie même de ne point me répondre en détail par la poſte, car votre réponſe ſeroit infailliblement ouverte dans nos bureaux de poſte, et l'on me trouveroit beaucoup trop ami de la liberté pour un miniſtre, même pour un miniſtre diſgracié !

J'ai l'honneur d'etre, Monſieur, avec toute la conſideration poſſible,

Votre très humble,

et très obeiſſant ſerviteur,

TURGOT.

have thought the publication of it a duty which I owe to his memory, as well as to the United States and the world. I can add, with much ſatisfaction, that my venerable friend whoſe name introduces this letter; and alſo, that ſome intimate friends of Mr. *Turgot*'s, who have been conſulted on this ſubject, concur with me in this ſentiment.

Note

Note for Page 5th.

Who could have thought, in the firſt ages of the world, that mankind would acquire the power of determining the diſtances and magnitudes of the ſun and planets? ——Who, even at the beginning of this century, would have thought that in a few years they would acquire the power of ſubjecting to their wills the dreadful force of lightening, and of flying in areoſtatic machines?—— The laſt of theſe powers, though ſo long undiſcovered, is only an eaſy application of a power always known and familiar. Many ſimilar diſcoveries may remain to be made, which will give new directions to human affairs; and it may not perhaps be too extravagant to imagine that (ſhould civil government throw no obſtacles in the way) the progreſs of improvement will not ceaſe till it has excluded from the earth, not only *vice* and *war*, but even *death* itſelf, and reſtored that *paradiſaical* ſtate, which, according to the *Moſaic* hiſtory, preceded our preſent ſtate.

Note for Page 53d.

The imperfection of *real* knowledge may often produce an unreaſonable incredulity. Had the beſt philoſophers been told a few years ago "that there exiſted fiſhes "which had the command of *lightening*, and always uſed "it to kill their prey," they would have thought the information abſurd and ridiculous.

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