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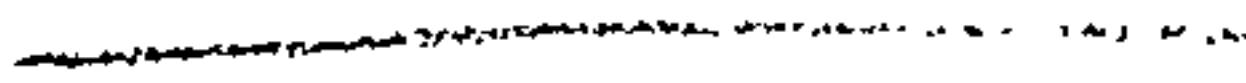
TO THE CANDID,

UPON THE PRESENT STATE OF

Religion and Politics

IN

CONNECTICUT.



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IN
C O N N E C T I C U T.

THE following is presented to the public, in compliance with the wishes of many very worthy citizens of Connecticut. They consider every man, as entitled to the general benefits of society. In particular, to the enjoyment of his religion, and the right to direct the education of his children. The laws have provided for the protection of both, but at this moment both are violated, to the great disgrace of this State. Our liberties are falling rapidly. Enemies are busy in undermining the foundations of general confidence, public peace, and universal good will.

To establish public prosperity upon the basis of religion, law, and knowledge, the

representatives of the people, have taken public money to build up Yale-College. In compliance with the importunity of a few, and the eloquence of President Dwight, a large sum has been bestowed within a short period. Notwithstanding this, abuses exist there, that were never more formidable, than under the present administration. We have placed eight of our superior civil magistrates in the government of that institution, but they have not been able to effect a reform. Thus the money, honor, felicity, and wishes of the State and people at large are sported with.

It has often been justly repeated, that Yale-College is the property of the State; that it has been founded, endowed, and supported by the people at large. It is now absorbed into the hands of party: No man can hold an office of honor or profit in it, but such as can subscribe to the Saybrook platform; and, that no time or opportunity may be lost, to make it an engine, by which bigots may usurp over the rights of conscience and laws of toleration, it is made a separate religious society. Restrictions are placed upon the students, which amount to prohibiting them, from attending such other congregations in New-Haven, as parents, guardians, and pupils desire.

This last offence against law, justice, pi-

ety, love of truth and order, is persisted in, merely to give an opportunity to the President, to spread the Edwardean tenets, of which his grandfather and Calvin were teachers, that his family pride may be indulged, and his desire to appear a champion, and leader in divinity and politics—may be gratified.

When Yale-College was first founded, and obtained public money to build it up, attempts were made to gain a repeal of the above law, but without success—Not long after, an Episcopal Church was founded in New-Haven, the sons of the then Episcopal Clergyman, (Mr. Punderfon) were fined during the whole time of their residence in the College, for attending divine service with their father.

The present worthy Episcopal Clergyman in that town, has educated three sons at Yale, and they have been obliged to pass the door of the church every Sunday, and go to the meeting in College.

Doct. Stiles, partially ashamed of this, attempted to lead these young men, to call upon him for liberty to attend the church, and with mildness of address appeared to remove the impediment.—But, such was not the Doctor's intention, for they must ask liberty every Sunday. He did not mean to give that general license, which takes place

in every other College in America. Being once told by the Tutors, that they could not lawfully restrain the young men, he answered, that he cared not for that, that the staff was in his hands, and he would hold it; that they should come and ask leave of him.

The sons of many gentlemen have been sent from the West-India and Bermuda Islands to Yale for education, with letters to merchants of the first respectability in New-Haven, requesting that such young men might attend the church. This could not be permitted but once a quarter.

The son of an Episcopal Clergyman, was lately placed in that College. Upon his entrance, Doct. Stiles was addressed by the father, *in the most respectful terms*, and informed that this young man was directed by him, to attend all the religious exercises of the College, in subordination to those of the church;—that, on Sundays, and the Fasts and Festivals, this parent expected that his son would attend divine service with the Episcopal minister: Dr. Stiles paid no attention to this. After Dr. Dwight had been six months in the chair, this parent addressed Governor Wolcott and the Corporation or Trustees at Yale, and requested that they would cause the law to be done away, and that the young man might attend

the church, as the statute of the College was contrary to the constitution of the United States, to modern maxims of liberty, and the practice of other Colleges. Upon this, the President sent his compliments to the parent, by the young man, and informed him, that the young man might attend the church when he pleased. The President was asked by a written message, for a copy of the resolve of the Governor and Trustees upon the letter. His answer was, that they came to no resolve, only declared that there was no such law as was complained of. The Statutes of the College were consulted—The Professor of Natural Philosophy—The present Episcopal minister and his brother—Several merchants and lawyers in New-Haven and resident graduates were called upon, and all declared that there was such a law.

Upon the opening of the following session of the Legislature, Governors Wolcott and Trumbull, and Generals Swift and Grovesnor were visited by the father, and the above facts accurately stated. Governor Wolcott *unsolicited* promised that he would speak to the President, and that no such impediment should take place in future. As misinformation was now circulated by some followers of the College, and the Legislature was in session, observations on the College, and its constitution and laws, were printed, un-

der the signature of this parent, in the newspaper, which were followed by an anonymous scurrility from *one of the Tutors*. The father was also threatened by a relation, who received his information from an intimate friend of President Dwight, Professor Meigs, the Tutors, Mr. Treasurer Hillhouse, and Mr. Sub-Treasurer Goodrich, that he (the father) would injure his son in the College, his family, and himself, by his zeal and activity on this subject.

The President, followers of the College, and *Ministers meetings*, also circulated that the young man had shewn no disposition to attend the church. The young man had been directed by his father upon entering the College not to meddle with this business, but if unlawful restrictions were established, to submit as patiently as possible.— As the Presidents were thus obstinate, it was not proper for a modest, ingenuous, sensible, excellently behaved young man, an ornament to the College and universally beloved, to excite tumults, to disobey his parent, give offence to the government of the institution, and expose himself to severities, *which party rage would gladly have inflicted*.

Governors Wolcott and Trumbull, and President Dwight, have been addressed upon these points; the threatening of the parent

and the impeachment of the young man, have been stated to those three gentlemen, and to hundreds of our best citizens in the States.

The immediate directors of the College did not relax. The young man determined to leave the College—A book-store, the army, and other occupations, alternately were the projected objects of his pursuit. The President finding the determination of the young man was to quit, now used the arts of flattery and persuasion to lead him to stay; but it was too late; Governor Trumbull was requested by the father, to use his influence with the President to give the young man, a merited certificate of dismissal. This was done in honourable terms; for cruelty and bigotry, were ashamed.—The young man has now gone into a foreign nation, to seek bread, and better treatment.

The College administration did not relax, in their efforts to injure the father and son, and to deprive him of the means to support himself, his family and son.

The wishes of the young man, and the wishes, influence, and authority of both his parents, were thus defeated in Yale-College. It was their wish and the desire of numerous friends, that the young man should have completed his education in the States.—This was also told at the time to Genera

Newbury, and by letter to Gov. Trumbull.

These facts are literally true; more cruel incidents are stated by private letters to Doct. Dwight—It is not the design of this publication to excite pity or indignation.—It is to inform the prudent people of the State of Connecticut of what *they* ought to know.

This young man is descended from a long list of ancestors, who have been public benefactors in their generations. He asked no favors, but upon his own account.

Such is the effect of usurpation in religion, and the College. President Dwight is making great strides, after universal controul in Connecticut, New-England, and the United States, over religious opinions and politics. He is inspiring his pupils with political prejudices against some of our best fellow citizens, in warm and unbecoming language. He is seeking to establish the Edwardean system of doctrines and discipline, from pride for his grandfather's (President Edwards) talents and fame, while but few indeed of that deceased gentleman's dependants believe in his tenets. With a large salary paid from public bounty, he is maintained in his place, and excites and perpetuates party designs.

His Uncle, Doct. Edwards of Colebrook, retired from public scenes to his study, is

writing, printing and growing rich, by polemical divinity.

Thus to gratify two men, who are prompted by the pride of descent from him, whom Doct. Dwight has exalted into the Apostolic chair, in the triumph of infidelity, are the public money, public peace, parental authority, the rights of conscience and the honor of Religion, the Nation and State degraded. The influence of the clergy, their preachings, prayers, monthly and quarterly meetings, interference with elections, recommendations of Candidates for civil offices, denunciations of those who have resisted their discipline, and usurpations, are employed in this tyranny.

The diplomas, honors and employments of the College, are also devoted to this purpose.—To silence the calls for reformation, and the establishing of universal toleration in the College and State. Attempts were made in this way last year, to buy off Governor Trumbull, General Swift and two Bishops—Men whose duty it is, to protect, and do honor to religion and law, who have been conspicuous in different public stations, were thus insulted with assaults of bribery, as Balak attempted to seduce Balaam to curse Jacob and defy Israel, by the promises, of wealth and preferment.

The oppressive laws, which art, war, violence and stratagem have obtained, are

unrepealed, from the influence of the Edwardean and Calvinistic party. The strides by discipline, missions, the College, and predicted millenium, to gain universal dominion over the conscience, call for vigilance among rulers & people, among all good christians and genuine patriots.

Legislatures and Courts have been degraded—The public has been defrauded, and impoverished by party. Men have been dragged to prison, and their property sold at public auction, to maintain systems of faith and discipline, which they neither believe nor follow.

In no period since the planting of Connecticut, did bigotry usurp more over others, than at this time, in every county, town, parish and neighborhood; and chiefly, from the doings of the College and opinions circulated from thence. The President is attempting to direct all the public affairs, civil, ecclesiastical, literary, military, and political.

Dr. Stiles was a bigot, active, obstinate, and persevering; but Dr. Dwight's little finger, will be greater than Dr. Stiles's loins. Dr. Stiles chastised with the whips of sermons, and letters upon politics—But Dr. Dwight will scourge with the scorpions of Calvinism and Edwardeanism, the scorpions of polemic divinity, party politics, po-

etry, satirical writings, the Triumph of Infidelity, and the prejudices circulated by young men and young divines taught by him.

The Edwardeans have always sought to gain sway through the Colleges. They began in New-Jersey immediately after the President's death of that name. Doctors Witherpoon and Smith hunted the system out, after it had spread from thence into every part of the country.

Dartmouth College took it up, and President Edwards on the Will, was studied as a classic, until the young men themselves made war upon it, and burned the book.—It is however, said to be restored, to please Mr. Niles of Vermont.

At Williamstown, Dr. West introduced Mr. Hopkins's Body of Divinity as a classic, but Mr. Sedgwick's resolution obtained a vote to exclude it, much to the disappointment of Dr. West and his party, but to the honor of Mr. Sedgwick, and the peace and prosperity of the College and neighboring towns.

At Yale-College, Edwardeanism has made but inconsiderable progress hitherto. It however rears its head, and is growing into importance under the direction of Dr. Dwight. That zeal for truth, which would introduce a favourite system from pride of ancestry would not abandon the living of four hundred

pounds per annum, for the sake of propagating it.

A love of fame, a desire to controul the consciences of others, and to gain money, by publishing favourite productions, appear to have had too great a share in propagating Calvinism, and all its subdivisions, and the varied forms bestowed upon it, by fanciful men.

The students, their parents and guardians, have often sought to obtain a release from the controul of bigotry, and polemic divinity; but the clergy have roused and united in every form, to oppose alterations. Severity, neglect, and expulsion, have often been the portion of young men, exceeded by none in the colleges for talents, literature, and morals.

The students at this time, in every New-England College, see in some degree, the designs of a party to make them the dupes of ambition and bigotry, but the influence of the clergy over Colleges, & schools, & many civil magistrates, damps that ardor & love of order & their country, which their own good sense already sees to be in danger.

Those who have held offices of honor and profit in this nation, during the revolution, and in the army, are intimidated. They will confess facts, acknowledge that oppressions exist, and yet *dare not* attempt a manly correction of such evils.

Thus, are we dishonored and disturbed in every direction. At this time, Connecticut is more completely under the administration of a Pope than Italy: Is more an ecclesiastical dominion. In no part, of countries at this time under the administration of the clergy of the church of Rome, is the kingdom of Christ perverted so much to a kingdom of this world, as in Connecticut.

President Dwight, elected by ecclesiastics who maintain their own succession, and pay obedience to no authority on earth, who controul the votes of eight of our first civil magistrates, in an institution where the general opinion and sentiment are formed upon all subjects, is a more formidable character than the Pope of Rome.

Constitutionally zealous, obstinate, busy, ready at inventing, unalterable;—a divine, a poet, eloquent, talkative, and undaunted he wants all the meekness, patience, vigilance, and superintendance of the people to keep within due bounds. Had he been as well acquainted with tactics, as some of the clergy, we should soon have him ready to propagate the faith of his grandfather by the power of the sword.

Deficient in this, he uses the more formidable, effectual, and offensive weapons, of sermons and prayers, preached and prayed at his hearers, or in conversation obliquely

satirically directed at his correspondents, company, and neighbours, who dare think and speak their own sentiments.

Party men have generally fought, by art, to obtain the powerful engine of the education of youth, into their hands. The Jesuits made themselves obnoxious to the nations of Europe in this way. The Calvinists in Geneva, Scotland, New-England, and the United States, are striving to monopolize the business to themselves. While they have openly inspired the people with a desire after knowledge, as the foundation of government, they have assiduously endeavoured to become the teachers, that they may controul government, through the instrumentality of their pupils, who may obtain public places in any kind, and of every degree.

The kingdom of Christ is not a kingdom of this world. The constitution of these states, secures universal protection in religion; but peace and happiness will never flourish in either church or state, as long as our colleges are under the controul of the Calvinistic party,—a party of modern date, obstinate, ambitious, selfish, and undaunted; prompted by love of fame, to countenance divisions and tyranny in religion and politics.

The erroneous opinions of this party, their zeal against the church of Rome, and

fanatical hope, to have the sway in the States, have brought us into our present confusions with the nations of Europe. Implacable, like their prophet Calvin, to the church of Rome, they have ever taught, that she is anti-christ, the beast of the revelations, and Babylon, that is to be destroyed. Fixing this, as a principal article in their creed, they have built their superstructure upon it; and whenever the church of Rome has been assaulted, distressed, and convulsed, they have buoyed themselves up with new hopes, taught their flocks to expect the millenium and wonderful events in favor of Calvinism. As often have they been foiled. Such was the system taught thirty years before the late revolution in America. Such were the sentiments lately scattered from the pulpits. Upon this false opinion, they built their prophecies and predictions. They aided civic feasts and rejoicings, until the hopes of France, the caution of Britain, and the revenge of both, were turned upon us. The issue is, distress in the midst of our councils and councils. The millenium has not arrived. Folly and fanaticism are foiled; but we are in distress. Deism has spread, Calvinism cannot check it. It is its parent and preserver.

The writings of Price, Priestley, Landon, Linn, Austin, Edwards, Hopkins and

Dwight, have taught this obnoxious opinion. The zeal, prayers, and other efforts of the clergy, have been devoted to accomplish a revolution in France, as a prelude to a revolution in church and state in America, which would reduce this nation to Calvinistic Popery, when the present President of Yale would extend his fostering wings over us, and Edwardeanism spread far and wide. When all must bow to the idols of gold, and polemic divinity. Happy for us, the age of miracles has ceased, and the clergy at this time have not one to present before us to blind our eyes. Happy at inventing such legends when war rages, we are yet in peace, and no such impositions can be attempted, as may make us superstitiously believe that the Lord loves war, or will turn and overturn until Edwardeans rule and reign to please Dr. Dwight.

This learned gentleman used, during the last war, to confess in his public prayers, that we had sold our brethren for money, and the poor for a pair of shoes. Has he forsook those opinions which will ever end in oppression of the poor, and distress to nations.

The objections against the present government, and establishment of the college, and a separate religious society, and the law restricting students on Sundays, to the exercises of the chapel, are, C

1st. That Religion, and the Sabbath, are perverted by the President and Tutors, to party purposes, in religion and politics.

2d. That the creeds and devotions of the college, are not adopted for truth and propriety, by any denomination of professing christians, even the Congregationalists themselves.

3d. That thereby feuds arise, and are perpetuated during life, among the students themselves, and the students and instructors.

4th. That the right of parents to teach their children, the statutes and ordinances of heaven, during their minority, are trampled upon, and from hence they fall into irreligion, deism, and opposition to christianity; and parental authority is spurned at, on the part of the clergy and College.

5th. That great expence and disorder arise, from the various champions and parties among the Congregationalists, who are at contention about the government of the College.

6th. That the Legislature has, and constantly does, violate the constitution by taking money out of the public treasury for party purposes.

7th. That the honour of the clergy and College, and the confidence of the public in them are degraded, when religion and learning, are pretexts to obtain public

money, and to indulge the ambition and selfishness of party men.

8th. That the dignity of the State and its ruler, is lessened throughout the United States by these means.

9th. That the public wishes are defeated, by the loss of students in consequence of these laws and usages.

10th. That it is evident, that the present directors and the clergy, wish to place impediments in this way, against the universal dissemination of knowledge, and would debar other denominations from the privilege of cultivating the talents of their children, that they may fall a prey to usurpation and spiritual tyranny, without the ability to defend themselves, their families, and country, by their wisdom and learning.

11th. That the abetors of these laws on the part of the laity, are not learned themselves, and are not patrons of universal toleration, that countenance these oppressions to secure their own elections.

12th. That in this way, fanaticism, intolerance, and deism are perpetuated in the State of Connecticut.

13th. That the College is the property of the State, that the clergy have no claims in law, equity, honor, prudence, or policy to control it, but the reverse.

14th. That as the College has been and

is now administered, the President becomes the director of religion, learning and politics, and has and exercises a controul over rulers and elections; which is absurd, usurping, tyrannical, and degrading to our civil magistrates and the constitution.

15th. That the confidence of the citizens in each other, and unity of heart among christians, are defeated, by the proceedings of the President, Tutors, and directors of that institution.

16th. That it is made an engine to promote bigotry, and spiritual tyranny.

17th. That honours, and other excitements to obtain knowledge, to cultivate talents, perform the duties of patriotism, and to deserve well of our country are neglected, while men of inferior merit are noticed to foster a party.

No christian State of equal numbers, has submitted to heavier burdens in support of its clergy than Connecticut.

A good soil, economical habits, and industry, have surmounted many evils, which would have resulted from the mode, in which the people have been impoverished by means of the clergy.

The wars and commotions they have excited, are but a small part of the charge that have fallen upon the people, from the projects of their ministers. Large sums a

constantly paid as settlements, which become the property of the ministers, and enable them to extend their purchases to the enriching of themselves and their families.

The clergy pay no taxes, and by collusion have also exempted the real estates of their sons from taxation. They have annual salaries and perquisites, which give not only a competency, but independence and affluence. All of which is collected from the sweat of the people and their labors.

But this also is a small part of the burden, laid by the clergy. The expence incurred in the Legislature, to which appeals are made as to an ecclesiastical court. The trials in the law courts, the usurpations, councils, ministers meetings, and occasional callings off from labor; to elect, contend with, and gratify the clergy, enhance the enormous sum. Indeed the greatest part of the expence incurred in Connecticut is from the projects of the clergy. The expence of the civil list is moderate. In addition to all this no State has less permanent property for the support of religion.

The art of the clergy has ever been successfully played upon the credulous and unwary. Clamour against establishments, has been improved, to prevent the accumulation of durable funds, and the deposit of perma-

nent property. Sacrilege has been considered as no crime, and in most places where parish property has been reserved in houses and lands, the clergy have had the success to obtain them as their property in fee. While they have fought, in every mode to gain property, influence, and consequence for themselves, they have with equal zeal, strove to foil the wishes of other denominations, to enjoy their religion.

The favorite plans of late years are two, discipline and missions.

A discipline, by which, for real or supposed offences, the people may be called before the ministers, and their adherents, and be tried, judged, and censured, as whim and caprice may dictate. The weak, credulous, and unforgiving, have improved this as a mean to wreak revenge, where good sense and the civil law would not interfere. The clergy have expected to gain greater power over tender consciences, and by numbers have often led to the violation of every substantial right. Men have been condemned unheard for supposed offences. Lapse of time, removal to other towns, and denominations, have not screened them from discipline, & excommunication; that mortification, and injuries may overtake them, and their families, for daring to doubt the power, prudence, and wisdom of the ministers.

Missions have been projected, and money collected to support them, which have been fruitless, offensive, and dangerous.— Their object is to extend the Calvinistic doctrines and discipline, to controul Colleges and schools, and to confederate the Calvinistic clergy, as a body formidable to other christian societies.

These abuses of liberty, toleration, government, peace, and religion, are thus summarily stated, that the people may behold them in a compendious form. They would have appeared in a large work, but it was intended to give an opportunity to all, to become possessed of these facts, in as cheap and clear a form as possible.

If upon a candid review of all that is now written, more should be thought needful in proof, it shall be presented. Enough appears now, to lead every honest man, good christian, and good citizen, to call upon the clergy, and rulers, and to learn whether these things are so. If upon examination they should appear as truths, the Legislature while it retains the semblance of power, ought to be petitioned for a redress of grievances, for a law enacted wisely and prudently, by which Yale-College may no longer be the engine of party, to spread error and divisions. That Popery may not extend over rulers and people, but that the

kingdom of Christ, which is not of this world, may come, and spread truth, peace, light, liberty, and love among us.

End.