

AN  
ORATION,

DELIVERED AT HARTFORD ON THE 6TH OF JULY,

A. D. 1802.

BEFORE THE SOCIETY OF THE

CINCINNATI,

FOR THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT,

Assembled to celebrate the Anniversary of

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

BY BENJAMIN SILLIMAN.

*Presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. — they speak great swelling words of vanity, — While they profess to be liberty, they themselves are the servant of corruption —*

2. Peter, ii. 10, 18, 19.



HARTFORD:

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1802.

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*At a meeting of the Connecticut State Society of Cincinnati at the  
city of Hartford, July 6th, A. D. 1802.*

VOTED, That Capt. NATHAN BEERS, be requested to  
wait on Mr. BENJAMIN SILLIMAN, and present him  
the thanks of this Society, for his Oration delivered before  
them this day ; and that the Treasurer be directed to procure  
three hundred copies of the same for the use of the members.

A true Copy of Record,

JOHN MIX, SECRETARY.

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THE THEORIES OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY IN  
RELIGION, GOVERNMENT AND MORALS,  
CONTRASTED WITH THE PRACTICAL  
SYSTEM OF NEW-ENGLAND.

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AN ORATION.

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THERE are few propensities of the human mind which solicit indulgence so successfully, as those which prompt us to commemorate the anniversaries of illustrious events, and to eulogise those by whom they were atchieved.

WE return with mournful pleasure to seasons of darkness, and kneel with gratitude, over the tombs of those who have bled for their country. The recollection of the events which impelled them to action, transports us back to the periods, and conveys us to the places in which they fought. We linger with strong emotions, on the ground which has been wet with the blood of our friends; we mark the spot which was once a scene of carnage, and survey, again and again, the ramparts of war now covered with verdure. Our feelings of joy for the success of our country are almost swallowed up in the strong sympathy which we experience for the sufferings and death of some distinguished individual. Hence the place where WARREN fell will be pointed out to the latest posterity.

HOWEVER grateful it might be to our feelings to recapitulate the dangers through which we have passed, and to celebrate the assertors of our independence, we forbear to resume a theme which has been already exhausted, and to tear open the wounds which time has closed. While we drop a tear over those heroes who fell in the storm of war; remember with gratitude those whom the course of nature has since called to the grave, and survey with reverence the worthies who still remain, we yield to the crisis of the times, and pass from the recapitulation of dangers which are *gone* to the contemplation of those which are *present*.

THE interruption of domestic happiness, the exhaustion of public and private wealth, and the immense sacrifice of lives by which our revolution was accomplished, were esteemed a cheap price for the preservation of our ancient privileges, and for the assurance of future security. For a considerable period, our union in private life and energy in council seemed to laugh to scorn the predictions of our enemies; while a progress, almost unparalleled, in wealth, reputation and numbers, rendered less improbable the chimerical visions of poets and the dreams of enthusiastic patriots. A NEW ERA in human things was said to be commenced, and the ardent lovers of mankind anticipated, with sanguine confidence, the return of the golden age, and the commencement of a glorious millennium.

SUCH were the prospects which brightened upon the world just before the evening of the eighteenth century. Who could have thought that the sun, which had burst from the clouds with so much glory, was *so soon* to set in blood!

A NEW ERA in human things is now indeed commenced.

THAT bold and impious philosophy, which promises the total regeneration of mankind; which has

summoned to its banners the millions of Europe, and founded the charge to universal carnage, has commenced, in this country, the initiatory work of public corruption, and daily renews its labors, with a zeal not to be damped, and a success which mocks all opposition.

At such a period the *crisis of the times*, naturally prescribes to the orator of the day, the subject of discussion.

In seasons of common tranquillity, novelty alone might charm and ingenuity arrest the attention ; but there are periods when a sense of danger renders futile every effort to amuse, and the mind is satisfied, only with a serious and impressive representation, of the impending ruin, and of the means of escape.

We are called upon by this philosophy, to abandon every principle which we have learned, every habit which has been sanctioned by experience, and every institution which we have derived from our fathers.

To accomplish this work of sacrilegious devastation, a degree of zeal is exerted worthy of a better cause, and while the success by which it is attended, on the one hand, inspires new confidence, on the other, it excites alarm and doubtful apprehension. Few even of those most actively engaged, are apprised of the real tendency of the principles which they advocate, and the fatal effect of the measures they pursue. In many instances, honest in their views, but deluded by superior art, they mistake *demagogues* for *patriots*, and *devastation* for *reform* ; while they continue to accumulate sorrow and guilt for themselves, and ruin for the land which gave them birth. Like the ox, whose labor helps to rear the altar on which himself is to bleed, they are made the victims of their own credulity, and the humble instruments of their own destruction. But the CHAMPIONS of the new philosophy, fully appri-



led of the nature of their doctrines, and the effect of their exertions, move forward in this impious enterprise, with a rullen intrepidity, which fears no obstacle and starts at no consequence.

SOMETIMES arrogant, bold and commanding, they awe the timid into acquiescence, and with the imposing appearance of talents and dignity, command the homage of the undiscerning; at other times, persuasive, modest and alluring, they steal upon the heart by the smoothness of adulation, and delude the mind by glowing pictures of future happiness and glory. Addressing themselves to the fears, the ambition, the envy, the avarice, and, universally, to the weakness and corruption of mankind, they find the heart prepared to yield before the understanding is convinced, and the hand is stretched forth to destroy, even before the victim is known.

THE impulse thus received, is communicated, by sympathy, to increasing numbers, until the multitude, stimulated to madness against those whom they deem their oppressors, and blindly devoted to their self-styled friends, demand the victims of their fury, with an importunity not to be denied.

BEFORE we yield to a delusion thus complete, and an impulse thus uncontrollable; let us examine, with severe scrutiny, the doctrines which we are solicited to believe, and the practices which we are urged to adopt; and let us compare the enjoyments which are promised us, with our real blessings and substantial happiness.

FOR, the contemplated change, when once accomplished will be final:

“Facilis descensus averni

.....  
Sed revocare gradum, superasque evadere ad auras  
Hoc opus, hic labor est.”

The descent to ruin is easy, but to retrace our steps and reach again the light of heaven, is indeed difficult and laborious.

THIS projected reform is not confined to a few important particulars, but embraces every human interest, from the chair of supreme magistracy to the cottage fire-side. Unconnected with any system of faith and politics, it wages war against every government and every religion. Society itself is to stand upon a new basis ; government, religion and every social institution are to be abolished, and men are to become immortal by the mere omnipotence of mind over matter.

SUCH is the abstract jargon of this new philosophy. Contemptible as it may appear in the eyes of rational men, it has done more, within a given period, to destroy the happiness of mankind, than the arms of conquerors, or the ravages of the pestilence.

LET us therefore delineate its features, and then compare it with the *good, old, practical* SYSTEM OF NEW-ENGLAND. Thus, by viewing the two pictures together, we shall be able to decide which is beautiful, in the correct proportions of nature, and the modest simplicity of religion, and which is distorted in its form, and daubed, like Jezebel of old, with false deceptive coloring.

THE great code of "improved modern ethics, morality and legislation" where the doctrines of the *new school* are drawn out into system, and gravely assume the name of philosophy, is GODWIN'S "Political Justice." Were not this work of Mr. Godwin\* the BIBLE of modern reformers ; were not



\* MR. GODWIN.

It may perhaps seem superfluous to add any thing to the remarks which have been made by different writers upon this author. In England, he has been hunted down by the united

his impious, absurd and abominable dogmas daily taught in our streets, and preached on the house tops, an apology might well be demanded for introducing him again to the public attention. But when our ALL is at stake we must have "line upon line, and precept upon precept." We are bound to use all the arms, which are furnished by argument and ridicule, to scout such men from society and drive them into obscurity and contempt. In this production will be found most of the principles here commented upon, while the rest will be drawn from ephemeral writings, and the colloquial rant of modern philosophy.

THE efforts of this philosophy are directed principally against RELIGION and GOVERNMENT, and as a principal mean in overthrowing these, it strikes at the EDUCATION, HABITS and MORALS of private life. In no point do its disciples agree more universally, than in their enmity to the CHRISTIAN RE-

powers of reasoning and ridicule. The writer of the "Pursuits of Literature," in particular, with great keenness of wit, and force of ridicule, has exposed the impious theories and miserable weakness of this REPUBLICAN PHILOSOPHER.— But it is necessary that similar efforts should be made in this country also. GODWIN is read and admired, by all that class of citizens who arrogate to themselves the title of REPUBLICAN. How far they merit this appellation, may best be learned from the *humility*, *MODERATION* and *disinterestedness* by which their leaders are so much distinguished. The principles of Godwin's "Political Justice," if carried into full effect in this country, would make the UNITED STATES, what FRANCE has been; a NATION OF RAVISHERS, ASSASSINS and PREDATORY WARRIORS. It is therefore a sacred duty to expose his miserable dogmas to that contempt which they deserve. It is not difficult to conceive why bad men should be his advocates. But it is really more than even *charity* can do to acquit both the *heads* and the *hearts* of Mr. Godwin's disciples. They are at liberty to take their choice of either part of the alternative.

As a *fine writer*, Mr. Godwin's pretensions ought never to be mentioned. He is obscure, diffuse and frigid; dull, formal and abstract.



LIGION, and to the dominion of him who bled on CALVARY. For, it is totally hostile to that pride of intellect, and impatience of control, by which they are uniformly characterized, and the doctrines which it inculcates are directly opposed to most of their favorite tenets. Hence, the destruction of Christianity is an object of primary importance, for it stands in the very vestibule of modern improvement, armed with the *two-edged sword of THE ALMIGHTY*.

THE bible is said to exhibit a false picture of the human character. In the language of philosophy : Man is not naturally depraved, but innocent. Inclined to virtue, and warm in the pursuit of knowledge, religion and social institutions have served only to corrupt his primeval innocence, and to cramp the energies of his intellect. Left to himself, he would instinctively soar to the brightest regions of virtue and the most glorious heights of understanding. Nay, perpetually progressing in the endless career of perfectibility, he would eventually supercede the necessity of sleep ; subdue the dominion of passion, and, by the mere energy of mind, baffle the attack of every disease, and triumph over the KING OF TERRORS. Not only does the bible give a false account of the powers of the human mind, and the propensities of the human heart, but the virtues which it inculcates are said to be mean and selfish. It commands its disciples to do good to those who are within their reach ; to relieve the distressed wanderer in the streets, and visit the prisoner in his dungeon ; and not merely to say “ be ye warmed and filled,” but to perform the deed of charity, and leave the event to heaven.

BUT modern philanthropists feel no particular attachments, and exercise no particular benevolence. With “ a certain cold-blooded indifference to all the mild, pious and honorable feelings of our common

nature," they spurn the misery which lies imploring at their feet, but glow with philanthropy to future generations. Extending their views to distant worlds and systems, they overlook "this little spot which men call earth." Their benevolence is exhausted upon beings who do not exist ; they burn to relieve those who are conscious of no oppression ; and long to bound over oceans, and to traverse continents, in search of sufferings unredressed, and injuries unavenged. They weep over a dying ass, but shout at the decapitation of a king. The implicit submission of the Turk, and the apathy of the Chinese, call forth a flood of tears, while the bleeding trunks around the guillotine, the smoking ruins of ravaged countries, and the carnage of slaughtered armies, awaken a horrid joy at the progress of liberty.

AFFECTION for our parents, brothers, sisters and friends, is proscribed by Mr. Godwin as the result of prejudice, and an offence to the principles of justice. The true cosmopolite feels no gratitude, for he has no attachments. He prefers "no human being to another because that being is his father, wife or son, but because for reasons which equally apply to all understandings that being is entitled to preference." Thus a theoretical candor, a cold calculation of merit, is to expel from the breast every tender and amiable feeling. Those to whom we owe our being, our education, and the seeds of every virtue, must be abandoned to want, disease and death, while a visionary philanthropy impels us to seek objects of fancied worth, whom we never have seen, and to whom we owe no obligation. The scriptural account of rewards and punishments is hooted at by Mr. Godwin and the whole band of demoralizing sophists. The former directly prefers the liberal gods of pagan theology ; those pliant deities, whose morality could give no offence to the most easy voluptuary, and whose mysterious rites enjoined no mortifying penance upon human propensities.

WELL may we suppose that the corruptors of the universe, the assassins of human virtue and happiness, would wish to escape the scrutiny of him whose eyes are "as a flame of fire," and the retributions of those torments "whose smoke ascendeth forever and ever."

A FAR different remuneration is proposed by them to persevering virtue ; in the good opinion of a world, whose shouts of applause are often bestowed upon successful villany ; while the hiss of contempt and the pointed finger of scorn are the reward of inflexible rectitude.

BUT if the code of modern philosophy were harmless in other respects, Mr. Godwin, in his chapter upon promises, has dispatched all moral obligation at a single stroke. Hear his own words : " I have promised to bestow a sum of money upon some good and respectable purpose. In the interval between the promise and my fulfilling it, a greater and nobler purpose offers itself, and calls with an imperious voice for my co-operation. Which ought I to prefer ? That which best deserves my preference. *A promise can make no alteration in the case.* I ought to be guided by the intrinsic merit of the objects, and not by any external and foreign consideration. No engagements of mine can change their intrinsic claims."

THIS is, unquestionably, a very convenient mode of paying a debt ; nor need we wonder that cosmopolites are very partial to such morality when it frees them, at once, from the impertinence of sheriffs, and the tyranny of courts of justice. It is peculiarly convenient for those generalizing philosophers, whose time is so much devoted to the care of the universe, that they have none left to bestow on the sordid employments of industry, and the selfish avocations of family good. But in a serious view how execrable is such a teacher of morality—how



contemptible such a philosopher ! These are “ thy Gods, O Israel !”

SUICIDE is justified by this writer. He would think it rather unphilosophical to destroy one's own life merely to avoid some personal evil. But if the *general good* demands such a measure, it is the highest instance of disinterested heroism. If the *general good*, a phantom before which all *particular happiness* vanishes, requires that an innocent man, known to be such, should be tortured, the torture must be inflicted. Thus the good of the whole consists in the misery of the parts, and the felicity of the universe is consistent with the wretchedness of every individual which it contains.

BUT an evil, resulting from religion, which excites the most lively solicitude in the breasts of these gentlemen, is, that it maintains an order of men, who, in this country, possessed of the slenderest means of support—remote from the scenes of ambition, and wholly engrossed in doing good to mankind, are still described as plotting the most nefarious designs against the state, and burning with lust of power and hatred to liberty. Enemies to the gods of modern philosophy, they pay no worship at their shrines, and offer no incense on their altars. Hostile to that total dereliction of principle, which assumes the name of liberality of sentiment ; to that boastful philanthropy, which flows from the most exclusive selfishness ; and to that raging love of liberty, which springs only from a perfect impatience of control ; they assert with firmness the principles which they believe ; inculcate that love of mankind which is consistent with affection for our friends and our country, and advocate that rational liberty which is allied to firmness, energy and order. Hence their days are numbered by the genius of reform, and the hand-writing on the wall has already marked them out for destruction. As preparatory to a consummation so devoutly to be wished, their characters



must be covered with infamy ; the protection of society withdrawn ; all contracts and laws for their support annulled, and, if contempt and poverty cannot sink them to the grave, they must then be offered up to appease the incensed deity of revolutions.

Thus religion must be discarded, its altars and temples thrown down, its ministers driven from society, or consigned to the executioner, and all sense of moral obligation banished from the breast, before mankind can enjoy the blessings of that equality, which seeks only the level of desolation, the dismal independence of the grave ! “ Be astonished O ye heavens at this, and” thou, O earth, “ be horribly afraid !”

It was not to be expected that men who thus defy the omnipotence of heaven, should feel any scruples in laying violent hands upon GOVERNMENT. But considering mankind as not yet ripe for that consummation of philosophical reform, which is to sweep every institution, literary, civil and religious, from the face of the world, they are contented for the present, to impair the energy of government by little and little ; thus inducing a gradual decline which must finally end in dissolution.

THEIR first position is that all nations are capable of enjoying liberty. The brutism of the Hottentot, and the prejudices of the Hindu form no obstacle to this favorite theory. Virtue and information are not necessary to the existence of rational freedom ; licentiousness is liberty ; and rapine and murder are among the rights of man. Conscious that all good men will oppose their doctrines, no arts are too low—no sycophancy is too abject to secure the applause of the populace, that they may marshal them in hostility, against the wealth, the dignity and the virtue of society. Hence that senseless jargon which proclaims *the will of the people* as paramount to all laws,

human and divine. In settling the constitution of a country, it is allowed that this *will*, ascertained in the most correct manner, must be the determining power. But in framing and administering laws, under a constitution already formed, the duty of a ruler compels him to disregard the popular clamor. The man who directs his political conduct by any other rule than the dictates of his own breast, commits himself to the winds and the waves. The same capricious populace, who bow the knee before him, to-day, may burn him in effigy, or in person, to-morrow. If it is the duty of a ruler to contravene the will of the people, when it is founded upon a mistaken or partial view of the subject; when calumny has excited suspicion where confidence ought to have been reposed; and the people, thus deluded, are urging their governors to ruinous measures; how much more is it his duty when the clamors and falsehoods of a few men, seeking *honor* and *confidence*, are trumpeted thro the nation as the voice of the people!

BUT demagogues, incessantly proclaiming themselves *the friends of the people*—exalt their pretended will into a law too holy to be questioned, too terrible to be resisted. Assuming the humble style of *servants of the people*, they soothe their masters with such agreeable tales of *defalcators detected, abuses reformed, economy of the public money*, and universally of the most tender and disinterested regard to their happiness, that they soon become the idols of popular devotion.

MR. GODWIN remarks: “It is extremely probable that a national assembly, chosen in the ordinary forms, is just as much empowered to change the fundamental laws, as to change any of the least important branches of legislation.”

“GIVE us equality and justice,” he cries, “but NO CONSTITUTION.” How monstrous is such a

doctrine ! If a legislature, the creature of the constitution, may alter or annul any part of that instrument which gives them being, where is the security against a popular despotism ? Yet such is the doctrine, and such is the practice of modern innovators. When we hear this incessant appeal to the will of the people by men whose aims we know to be exclusively selfish, and see them rise by these means to wealth and power, how can we refrain from pitying the stupidity of the multitude, or from execrating the villainy of those who deceive them !

ONE of the most plausible but fatal dogmas of philosophy, is, that all *opinions* are perfectly harmless and innocent. No matter what a man thinks ; sincerity is every thing. The sacred liberty of thought and speech will be infringed, if any difference be made between one man and another, on account of opinions which they entertain. Every man is under obligations to society to proclaim without reserve all the opinions, and to express all the sentiments of his mind. It is true that religion, government, public morals and private character may suffer, but this is a trifling sacrifice to liberty of opinion. No injury can be eventually sustained, for truth is omnipotent and will finally prevail. Besides, opinions have no influence upon practice. A man's *conduct* must be the only criterion of our confidence or suspicion. In other words, the command of an army may safely be given to a general who, altho his conduct has hitherto been faithful, still believes it no crime to change sides ; or you may travel with safety in company with one whose speculative opinions authorize both robbery and murder, since he has never been guilty of either. Is not this the same thing as to assert, that a man with bad principles or with none, is worthy of confidence equally with one of religious firmness ? What is opinion but a settled rule of action ; how then can it be indifferent ? Have we any right to conclude that a man is better than he profess-



ses himself to be ? Away then with an idea so senseless and absurd ! It is fit only for knaves and fools.

ANOTHER doctrine, belonging to the same family, is, that libels are to be tolerated and even encouraged, because they tend to promote a spirit of *free inquiry*. This is a principle coolly advanced by Mr. Godwin, and most faithfully practised by the pupils of the new school. Hence superior talents, elevated station and approved fidelity excite no esteem in their breasts and produce no external respect. Every man who is thus distinguished, becomes the object of unrelenting calumny ; gross falsehoods are framed and no means are left untried to cover him with infamy. Pursued into every private retreat, and every abode of domestic quiet, even the abdication of office, and the renunciation of the pursuits of ambition are resorted to in vain, to appease the spirit of slander. Thus the post of honor becomes emphatically a private station. Talents, patriotism and long-tryed fidelity are driven into private life, while the calumniator seizes upon the spoils of him whom he has traduced. Such are the effects of that spirit of licentious slander which covers itself under the name of *free inquiry*. But demagogues, when once elevated to the chair of magistracy, and invested with the robes of office, shrink from the touch of the wand of truth, as Satan from the spear of Ithuriel.\* Free inquiry then becomes

#### \* SPEAR OF ITHURIEL.

The admirers of Milton will feel the force of the allusion. They will remember that Satan is represented as

“ Squat like a toad close at the ear of Eve,  
Assaying by his devilish art to reach  
The organs of her fancy.....

.....  
Him thus intent, Ithuriel with his spear  
Touch'd lightly ; *for no falsehood can endure  
Touch of celestial temper, but returns  
Of force to its own likeness* : up he starts  
Discover'd and surpris'd.”



“*oppugnation and disrespect*,” and “*treason*” is cried at every corner.

WE will not dwell upon the idea, often soberly advocated, that superior talents and worth justly render a public officer the subject of suspicion. The obvious result, that fools and knaves possess the highest qualifications for office must excite a blush of confusion even upon the hardened face of modern philosophy. Nor does the doctrine, that jealousy is the vital principle of freedom, and that public officers become villains, of course, merit a serious refutation, however correct the principle might be when applied in particular instances. In no way, do modern reformers address themselves more successfully to the passions of the people than by affecting a great concern for public economy. Hence armies are disbanded and navies dismantled; the iron barriers of war are broken down, or suffered to fall into ruins, and useful offices are abolished, and institutions of national dignity destroyed, lest expense should be incurred for their support. The accumulation of wealth in the public coffers is said to afford only a temptation to wanton conquest and unprovoked aggression. Hence the public revenues must be reduced to the lowest possible limit, lest the people should be oppressed with taxes, or the government, like Jeshurun of old, waxing fat in prosperity, should court the dubious chances of war. Thus the government must be fed upon meagre diet, and the sources which sustain its vital energy must be cut off, lest a superfluity of health should excite to acts of wanton excess. Like the unfortunate patient, who, to avoid a fever, has been starved into a consumption, it maintains a doubtful existence, still lingering onward to the grave, equally unable to molest its enemies, or protect its friends. How degraded must be the character of a nation governed upon such principles; how cheap a con-

~~quest~~ quest would it afford to the arms of a warlike and adventurous people !

FOREIGN commerce is also a subject which excites peculiar solicitude in the minds of these self-styled friends of mankind. Agriculture must be the only employment. No steamers must be hung in Indian skies, and no fleets spread their sails to the tropical winds ; along our coasts must be seen “no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby.” At the mercy of every naval power, our ports must be left exposed to every attack, and our commodities to decay upon the hands of the husbandman. A listless calm must succeed to the activity of business, and national poverty to national wealth.

ONE would suppose that the peaceful seats of science, remote as they are from the whirl of politics, might well have escaped the general condemnation. But the fact is far otherwise. Mr. Godwin pronounces an exterminating sentence against every literary institution, which has the least tendency to permanence. Such institutions are said to shackle the mind with formal dulness and scholastic pedantry ; the march of the understanding is impeded, and the extravagant sallies of intellect, boldly adventuring into new and unexplored regions, are prevented by prescribed limits.

BUT we hasten to the grand epoch of political reform. Before this epoch arrives, all coercion is, by degrees, to be abolished. Mr. Godwin declares that punishment is coercion, and is therefore hostile to the progress of mind. Hence he gravely tells us that the robber who demands our purse, and the murderer who attempts our life, must not be resisted by force, but disarmed by the efforts of reason. When the human mind has marched a certain distance on the high road of perfectibility, the expression of the countenance, the force of the gesture and the tone of the voice will give such majesty to truth

that the assassin, convicted by a single effort of mind, will drop his dagger and forego his felonious purpose. All necessity for punishment will thus be superceded, and therefore it will be abolished. Property will be shared, in equal portions, and of course, all the laws which now guarantee its individual possession will fall to the ground. Oaths of allegiance, religious tests, and oaths as the instruments of investigation in courts of justice, are a species of coercion. Hence their abolition will be one omen of the political millennium. In the affecting words of the philosopher himself: "the beauty of a simple and easy integrity" will supercede the coercive and tyrannical obligations of an oath.

When contemplating the rapid march of mind our philosopher concludes, that "hereafter it is by no means clear that the most extensive operations may not be within the reach of one man, or to make use of a familiar instance, that a plow may not be turned into a field and perform its office, without the need of superintendence !!!"

BUT passing over a number of subordinate improvements, we are now arrived at the great consummation of philosophical reform. The human intellect has made such an astonishing progress in knowledge, which is only another name for virtue, that injustice is exterminated from the world. The omnipotence of mind over matter has banished disease and bound the king of terrors in eternal chains; selfishness is swallowed up in universal philanthropy; the earth is fully peopled and men have subdued the empire of passion; no monopoly of property, friendship or love; no religion and no institutions of commerce or science. The pursuit of justice and knowledge employs every faculty and enlists every propensity; distinctions of family and country are forgotten, and the geographical limits of nations are no longer known or regarded. At this crisis, civil government is to be abolished, and all



men committed to their own direction. Then the human race will sing hallelujahs to theoretical philosophers, and plant the immortal tree of liberty on the graves of mouldering tyrants.

BEFORE the dawn of this auspicious era, a total revolution in the *manners, morals* and *pursuits* of PRIVATE LIFE must be accomplished. Hence, the benevolent reformers of mankind have condescended to employ their talents upon the most trivial concerns of the domestic circle, and the minutest branches of education. We will not enlarge upon the impious project of the abolition of marriage. It has often called forth the most deserved execration. Suffice it to say, that marriage is declared to be “a law and the worst of all laws”—“a property and the worst of all properties”—“the most odious of all monopolies,” and we are assured that its abolition will be attended with no bad effects. With an insulting composure, Mr. Godwin goes on to declare, that it is no matter in such a state of society whether the true father of every individual child is known, that such knowledge is of no importance, and that the abolition of sir-names will be accomplished at no very distant period. The practical adoption of these ideas alone would destroy every comfort and every virtue, and render society one great scene of violence, pollution and murder.

BUT from a picture so horrible we turn with disgust. On a former and similar occasion, it has been presented to your view with a strength of coloring which does not need the assistance of new tints to heighten the horror of its shades.

No public or private instruction is to be afforded to children. Their minds must be left unprepossessed by any ideas, especially in morals and religion, until the maturity of their own intellects shall enable them to distinguish truth from falsehood. Prejudice is asserted to be the great enemy of mankind.



Hence every doctrine must be rejected as absurd the nature of which is incomprehensible. Hence the king of Siam when he laughed in the face of the Hollander, who told him that the rivers of his native country were, during one season of the year, so hard that loaded carriages could pass on their surfaces, undoubtedly evinced that he was as good a philosopher as Mr. Godwin himself. But philosophers, disregarding a thousand analogical facts in which they themselves admit the truth of things which they do not understand, still continue to arraign before the tribunal of their own wisdom the reasonableness of God's word and providence. No one, for instance, can explain the connection between volition and agency, and, universally the connection between cause and effect. Yet every philosopher believes that he can move a limb when he wills it, or if he plants, that a crop will succeed. But still it is contended that the human mind ought to be left entirely to its own direction; no morals must be taught and no religion inculcated, lest the efforts of parents and instructors should plant the seeds of prejudice.

HERE also, as in civil government, coercion is tyranny. Children must not be reprov'd, restrained or corrected. They must grow up like "the wild asses' colt" without morals, without science, without religion and without natural affection. A race of beings, thus, sprung up spontaneously, and suffered to grow without culture and to shoot without pruning, would form a true cosmopolitical republic. Rather let me say, they would be fiends in human form, and the guilt and miseries of hell would be experienced on this side the grave.

BUT the most affecting changes contemplated in private life are to be accomplished upon that sex whose native character is peculiarly abhorrent from the abominations of this "vain philosophy." Here happily, we have a female philosopher to carry the

torch before us, and to enlighten the misty paths through which we must tread. To that woman who afterwards became the *mistress* and then the wife of Mr. Godwin, is the world indebted for that singular production, which was designed to regenerate the female sex, and to excite in them a just regard to the injured "RIGHTS OF WOMEN." If your patience were not already exhausted, still decency would forbid a complete delineation of the features of that painted harlot, which Miss Wolstonecraft\* has exhibited as a model for the imitation of her sex. Polluted herself, and lost to every feeling of delicacy, and every sentiment of virtue, no one could have been more happily selected to become the Camilla of modern philosophy, and to lead its Amazonian legions. Adopting, in their full extent, the doctrines which have been described, she

#### \* MARY WOLSTONECRAFT.

The charming tale which Mr. Godwin has told, in his memoirs of the life of this assertor of the "Rights of Women," ought at once, to seal in silence the tongue of every lady who would otherwise be inclined to advocate the cause of Miss Wolstonecraft. But we are not inclined to judge severely. Probably Miss Wolstonecraft's writings have been read by many of her own sex without any very serious scrutiny into their MORAL TENDENCY. But it ought not to be concealed that they are calculated to give vice that degree of brilliancy, which shall enable it to look virtue out of countenance. *Indeed, indeed,* how ought the dignity of female virtue to "spurn at the officious interference" of a mere courtesan; a woman who laughs at that timidity which shrinks from a violation of the laws of chastity. But we trust that the dignified virtue and superior intelligence of American ladies will soon pronounce a final condemnation upon this "vindication" of the CRIMES of a single woman.

Were it necessary to recommend an antidote we should feel proud in mentioning Miss More's *Strictures on Female Education*. Let any lady who has been deluded for a moment, by Mary Wolstonecraft, peruse this admirable work of Miss More, and she will at once feel and acknowledge

....."How awful goodness is.....

Virtue in her shape how lovely.".....

made it her care to apply them to her own sex, and to fill up every deficiency from the resources of her own understanding. Disdaining the quiet of domestic peace and the employments of family industry, she holds out to her female disciples “ a wild independence,” a chimerical dignity, which would lead them to the scenes of popular debate and the field of military glory.

CONTEMPTUOUSLY rejecting the idea of dependence on man, she spurns at his tenderness and renounces the necessity of that union, which sanctified by religion, and cemented by affection, alone can insure the safety of women and the existence of society. With the same “ cold blooded indifference” which uniformly marks the disciples of the *new school*, she strikes out from her list of virtues not only the peculiar delicacies of the female character, but all the common decencies of life.— Sneering at modesty and emulating all the *masculine* qualities, she discards every thing feminine, either in feelings, manners, dress or employment; and lifts the standard of rebellion equally against every restraint of nature and society. She sees in philosophic vision the glorious heroine of some future Marathon\* and the laurel of some future Elis† borne off in triumph by a female combatant. When we reflect that such are to be the companions of modern philosophers in the last periods of human perfection, we can no longer doubt that the progeny will be continued to the consummation of time. These are some of the leading traits of that system of female philosophy, which in co-operation with



#### \* MARATHON.

Our classical readers will remember the dreadful battle fought at that place between the Greeks and Persians.

#### † ELIS.

The place where the Olympic games were celebrated.



the efforts of Mr. Godwin, and his disciples, is designed to accomplish the total overthrow of human virtue and happiness. Let the female admirers of the "*Rights of Women*," peruse this production *once more with a serious view to its influence on the delicacy and virtue of their sex*, and they will join in ratifying its condemnation, however they have been deluded by the prospect of future independence and dignity, or dazzled by the false brilliancy of a style, which is destitute of correctness and taste, and bedizened with the gaudy colors of a distempered imagination.

HAVING now exhibited the most prominent features of the new philosophy, and noticed the changes which it is destined to accomplish in the great interests of mankind, religion, government and the habits of private life, we will briefly contrast these visionary scenes with the actual state of society in New-England, and the causes by which that state has been produced.

HAVING been led by the delusive meteors of false philosophy through a progress so comfortless and terrifying, how agreeable is it to walk once more in the clear and steady light of reason, experience and religion, and to contemplate scenes where all is real, substantial and satisfying !

THE proposed contrast, has, probably, been already in some measure, anticipated in the minds of my audience.

THE founders of the happiness of New-England erected their state of society upon the sure basis of religion. They assumed for their guide that great moral code, which, in the words of an eloquent writer was "*once delivered and ratified by him who knew what was in man.*"....."*In that code all is practicable, all virtue is founded in mercy, kindness, benevolence and comfort, alike to him that gives and him that takes. There man plants, and God,*



not man, gives the increase ; there we find no wild supposition of an interest which cannot be described, as it does not exist ;..... that revelation was given unto man in a manner at once clear and perspicuous, pure and unmixed, uniform and consistent, persuasive and convincing, powerful and *authoritative*, in the name and in the majesty of Him *who* is from everlasting to everlasting, THE ALMIGHTY." Our ancestors learned from their bibles and their experience that man is naturally depraved and ignorant, constantly prone to vice and to error. Hence they believed that religious instruction, both public and private, is indispensable to the existence of a well ordered society. The sacred pages were therefore presented to the infant, before the tongue could distinctly pronounce the words of divine truth ; and in his future progress, the child was made familiar with every part of the inspired writings. The example and conversation of parents and superiors encouraged a respect for religion. Hence it became the settled habit of the man, and branched out into all his conduct.

BUT the venerable fathers of New-England did not rest contented with private instruction alone. The regular establishment of public worship ; a decent and sure support to the ministers of religion ; the strict observance of the sabbath ; and the guardianship of public morals, were among the earliest objects of their attention. Whatever objections may be urged against some of our ancient laws upon the subject of religion ; the system as it now stands, ought to command universal approbation. That system uniting the strictest justice with the most perfect liberality, obliged every man to contribute a certain portion of his property to the support of religion, while it leaves him to the selection of his own principles and mode of worship, as well as the minister upon whom he will bestow his money. Thus liberty

of conscience is left unviolated, while the regular support of religious institutions is effectually secured.

OUR fathers were not theoretical philosophers. They did not therefore inquire whether truth is competent to fight its own battles, nor whether it is an offence to the omniscience of the human mind to hold up to its view the mirror of revelation and experience. But knowing that religion makes men better fathers, husbands, rulers and citizens, they felt and acknowledged the obligation to provide for its permanent support. Indeed no mind, which has not been corrupted by philosophism, could possibly consider the maintenance of public worship by law as a tyranny, while it readily assents to the demands of the state for other purposes of public utility. Legislators may compel societies and individuals to build bridges, and construct roads, to purchase arms and perform military duty, but they may not afford them the means of becoming good men in this world and saints in the next. We find it enacted among our earliest laws that every man shall attend public worship on the sabbath, and keep for the use of his family, a statute book and a bible. However sneering folly or mistaken liberality may have ridiculed these primitive habits, it is certain that to the prevalence of such ideas and practices we must impute our present happy state of society.

CONSCIOUS that religion cannot exert its most powerful influence over society without public ministers to investigate and declare its doctrines, and to recommend it to the world by an amiable and Christian life, they early selected, settled, honored and supported a learned and pious clergy. These men were considered not as the enemies of public liberty, but the guardians of public morals, the directors of souls to heaven, the endearing friends of private life, and the patterns of private virtue. They were sought as the agreeable and instructive

companions of the family circle, the wise counselors of youth and age, the firm defenders of public liberty and the best earthly comforters in the dreadful moment of dissolving nature. Indeed we may well appeal to the conviction of every one present, and ask whether this has not been the character of the New-England clergy from the beginning to the present hour. What opinion must we then form of a cause which attempts to compass success by stigmatizing this venerable order as the enemies of liberty and of their country? “Ye shall know them by their fruits.” Let modern philosophy produce from its schools such examples of public and private virtue, or point out the individuals among the clergy whose accomplishments in vice may justly claim a competition with those of its own disciples, and we will readily join in driving them from society. But, until this is done, we cannot cease to

“Venerate the man whose heart is ~~firm~~,  
 Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine ~~is~~ whose life  
 Coincident, exhibit lucid proof  
 That he is honest in the sacred cause.”

The influence of religion and of its ministers produced the most happy effects in every department of society. The sabbath was honored; the sanctuary frequented, and the people literally carried much of the sabbath into the week with them. Open and unblushing vice was rarely found; and if it existed in any solitary instance, was forced to reform, or at least to assume a decent exterior. Men did not then glory in their shame; pollution was not openly practised in the “*sight of this sin*,” nor did fresh laurels of fame flourish on the head of the hoary adulterer. The Christian virtues sprung up spontaneously in the life, and were exhibited in the conduct. No sighs were wasted upon imaginary distress; no tears were shed for China or Japan; but misery was relieved wherever it was found, and brothers, sisters and friends were preferred to strangers. Hav-



ing never heard of the endless perfectibility of man and of the omnipotence of mind over matter, the fathers of New-England believed themselves erring, mortal and accountable beings. Hence they endeavored to lead a life of Christian virtue, patiently waiting for the recompense of reward.

SUCH habits naturally formed them to become the best subjects of the wise, rational and free governments which they established. As they came into the world before the era of Godwin, Condorcet and Paine, they gave credit to the voice of history and the declarations of their bibles, as the best evidence then in being concerning the character of man. They therefore believed that a vigorous civil government was necessary to restrain the factious, and a system of instruction to inform the ignorant. In their institutions, all was real, practical and useful. No calculations were made, no theories were formed concerning remote generations, but their maxims, as they were drawn from experience, were directly applicable to practice. The *sacred right of insurrection* was not then contained in the volume of the rights of man, but submission to lawful government was believed to be among his duties. Hence the governments which they instituted have come down to us unimpaired and uncorrupted.

NEXT to religious instruction, they conceived that information upon subjects of human science and business was indispensable to the enjoyment of rational liberty and social happiness. The establishment of seminaries, from the village-school up to the academy and college was therefore an object which claimed their earliest attention. They did not provide exclusively for the rich and noble, like the ambitious founders of European institutions of learning ; but they brought instruction to every man's door, and gave the means of information to the most indigent and depressed. In vain shall we search the old world for a country where every man

can read and write, keep his own accounts, and transact the common business of life without assistance. No state can be found which, like Connecticut, containing only 250,000 inhabitants, appropriates more than 90,000 dollars annually to the support of its college and schools, and more than 80,000 dollars of this sum to its private schools alone. When we remember, also, that by the donations of individuals, and by voluntary associations, many other schools are supported without public assistance, we shall find still greater reason to applaud the wisdom of a people, who are stigmatised as the dupes of priest-craft and of political delusion. ✓

MASSACHUSETTS instituted a college within six years from the first settlement of the colony. \* Connecticut has enjoyed hers more than a century ; and New-England, with a population of 1,232,711 can boast of seven regular colleges, besides numerous respectable grammar-schools and academies, and village-schools without number. With such means of information, both in the concerns of this world and of the next, well might we suppose that the people of New-England would stand high in the scale of intellectual and moral improvement. It is imputable to these causes alone, under the good providence of God, that New-England has hitherto stood firm amidst the convulsions of a falling world. The governments of this country probably approach as near to the state of democratical equality as is at all consistent with the peace and safety of society. Indeed if you ask for their constitutional energy, they have none ; if for their high-toned power, it cannot be found. They stand entirely upon the intelligence, the morals and the affections



\* The colony of New-Haven projected a College before the year 1650, but relinquished the design lest it should injure the infant seminary at Cambridge ; about fifty years after, the plan was executed.

of the people. The land is † held in fee simple, and cultivated almost universally by its own proprietors. Vassalage has never existed and tenancy is hardly known. Hence the highest degree of *practicable* equality in wealth prevails. Obligated to be industrious, the people have no leisure for debauchery and rebellion; secure in the enjoyment of their gains, they are not driven by despair into anarchy.

POSSESSING arms, and trained to use them from childhood, they feel no jealousy that the government will attempt to enslave them; while at the same time they stand ready to defend their country against every invasion.

ACCUSTOMED to regulate the local concerns of their own districts, parishes, towns and counties, they are enabled to promote their interests in the best manner; and are thus trained up thro these successive schools of public business, until they acquire the confidence of their fellow-citizens, and the capacity to manage their more extended concerns.

HENCE we have never been pestered with demagogues, until the disciples of modern philosophy began to teach the people that their rulers were tyrants—their religion a delusion—their morals hypocrisy, and their clergy a curse. The governments of New-England are strictly republican, and the state in which we live, so often stigmatised as the hot bed of aristocracy, is in fact the most *democratical* country on earth. It is true there is an aristocracy of talents, virtue, learning, wealth, experience and patriotism, which has been uniformly elevated to stations of honor and power by the voluntary suffrages, and unsolicited preference of the peo-



† The word *held* is used instead of a better which seems to be wanting, for strictly speaking we have no such thing as a *tenure*.



ple. What good man would wish to see such an aristocracy destroyed ?

BUT our philosophers, with Mr. Godwin at their head, continue to insist that such men ought to be excluded from office, because their superior claims to confidence enable them to abuse it with more success when obtained. Heaven grant that modern philosophy may never be able to transfer the sceptre of power to weakness, profligacy, ignorance, indigence, inexperience and venality. May we never know by experience that “the wicked walk on every side, when the vilest men are exalted.”

With such institutions of science, government and religion, it may well be supposed that the maxims of private life, in New-England, must be very abhorrent from the theories of philosophism.

It was the great object of our venerable fathers to form good members of society and obedient subjects of the God of heaven. To these ends, it is evident, that all the institutions, which we have passed over in rapid review, directly tended. Hence sobriety, industry, economy, morality and religion were constantly inculcated by precept and enforced by example. Our early statute books abound with laws calculated to enforce private morals and even the most exemplary decorum. Their magistrates were indeed “a terror to evil doers ;” they were not flexible, time-serving politicians, “with doctrines fashioned to the varying hour ;” but the firm friends of order, and the determined foes of profligacy and sedition.

Who does not remember the period when magistrates accomplished more by the weight of their own characters, than by the terrors of the law ? The state of society resembled that of a well regulated family. The sway of rulers was mild but inflexible ; the obedience of subjects affectionate but respectful.

HENCE the most salutary effects resulted to the peace and happiness of private life. Men were not yet intoxicated with visionary ideas of liberty, nor deluded with theories of the perfectibility of man. The delusive prospect of a *general good*, too general to be perceived or attained, had not seduced the sober yeomanry from the pursuits of industry, and the concerns of domestic employment. A group of politicians was not to be seen in every tavern and at every corner ; nor was it esteemed more laudable *to prate politics* than to sustain a family with decency and to educate them to virtue. Each one pursued his own business, provided for those who were dependant upon him, relinquished the guardianship of the state to its rulers, and left the welfare of distant countries and of remote generations to the care of heaven.

THE female sex, as yet were ignorant of the doctrines of modern philosophy. They read in their bibles that “the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit .....is in the sight of God, of great price.” To sustain with fidelity the very important relations which devolve upon them in society was therefore the height of their ambition and the summit of their wishes. Feeling no emulation to rival the other sex in masculine attainments, they confined themselves to the scenes in which God and nature have placed them. Who does not remember that his first impressions of virtue, and his earliest emotions of piety were derived from the affectionate instructions of a tender mother ? Thus they formed the mind to principles of religion and habits of morality, almost before it felt a temptation to vice. In this way they contributed, perhaps even more than the other sex, to form good citizens and happy republics.

Such are the institutions and such is the happiness which we have derived from the wisdom of our fathers, and the good providence of God.

THE dreadful moral deluge, which has swept away the happiness of other nations, is even now roaring around your walls. It is yours to decide whether you will yield to its fury, and be precipitated into that ocean whose shores are drenched in blood, and whose billows are covered with the wrecks of ruined nations. Choose then "*this day*," whether you will substitute the miserable chimeras of modern philosophy in place of *the real blessings and substantial happiness* which you have derived from YOUR ANCIENT INSTITUTIONS.

WILL you render vain the labors of the FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, and the blood of those who died by his side, to save you from ruin? Will you shame the faces of the heroes, your companions in arms, who still survive, by basely yielding the prize for which they so bravely contended?

WILL this *\*little band of brothers* whom danger has tried and glory has crowned, and from whom death has recently snatched an illustrious individual, consent to stain those swords with disgrace, which have been so gallantly drawn in the cause of their country? The spirits of your fathers are hovering around you, anxious lest you should dishonor their memories and provoke the vengeance of heaven. The finger of God is pointing you to the ruins of nations, still reeking in blood, still smoking from the conflagration.

THE shouts of fiends are already begun to see your rapid declension to the pit of destruction. Flee therefore, while there is yet hope, to the mountain of safety. Resolve to adhere with inflexible firm-



\* The Cincinnati of Connecticut.

† Col. Timothy Taylor of Danbury.



ness to your SOCIAL HABITS, YOUR GOVERNMENT AND YOUR RELIGION. Then shall you enjoy the blessing of heaven, and your "children shall rise up and call you blessed."

"THE rain may descend, the floods come, and the winds blow," but you may bid defiance to "the tempest and the storm," for your foundation is the ROCK OF AGES.

