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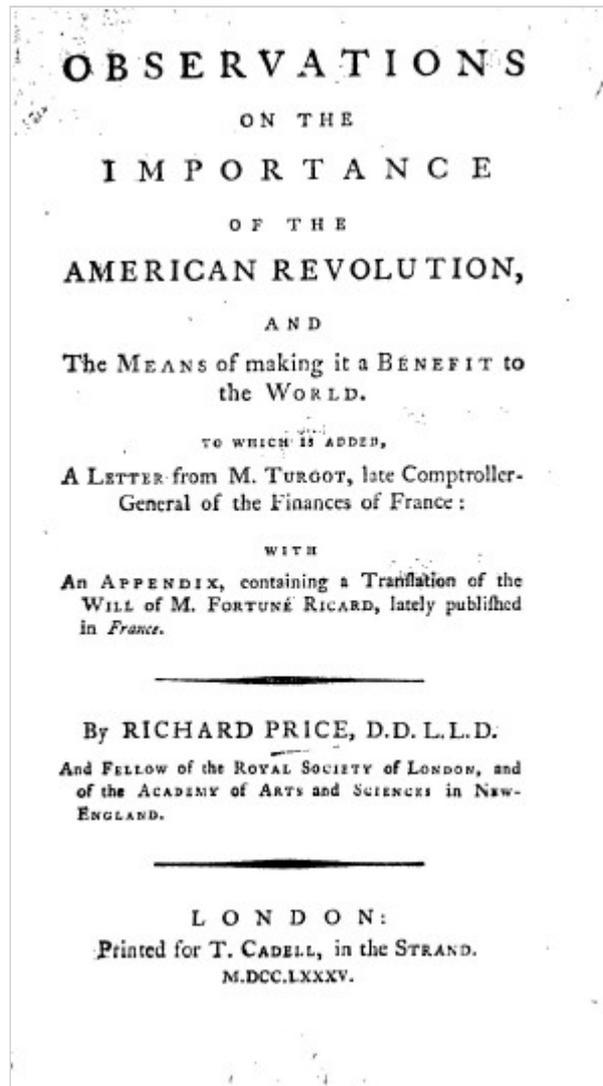
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Edition Used:

Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution, and the Means of Making it a Benefit to the World. To which is added, a Letter from M. Turgot, late Comptroller-General of the Finances of France: with an Appendix, containing a Translation of the Will of M. Fortuné Ricard, lately published in France (London: T. Cadell, 1785).

Author: [Richard Price](#)

Author: [Anne-Robert-Jacques Turgot](#)

Author: [Charles-Joseph Mathon de La Cour \(Fortuné Ricard\)](#)

About This Title:

A defence of the American Revolution by one of its key supporters in Britain, along with a letter by Turgot and a short essay by Mathon de la Cour (also known as Fortuné Ricard).

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TO

The Free and United States of AMERICA,

THE FOLLOWING OBSERVATIONS ARE HUMBL Y OFFERED,

as A LAST TESTIMONY of THE GOOD-WILL of

The Author.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

HAVING reason to hope I should be attended to in the American States, and thinking I saw an opening there favourable to the improvement and best interests of mankind, I have been induced to convey thither the sentiments and advice contained in the following Observations. They were, therefore, originally intended only for America. The danger of a spurious edition has now obliged me to publish them in my own country.

I should be inexcusable did I not take this opportunity to express my gratitude to a distinguished writer (the Count de Mirabeau) for his translation of these Observations into French, and for the support and kind civility with which it has been accompanied.

Mr. Turgot's letter formed a part of this tract when it was conveyed to America. I have now given a translation of it.

I think it necessary to add that I have expressed myself in some respects too strongly in the conclusion of the following Observations. By accounts from persons the best informed, I have lately been assured that no such dissensions exist among the American States as have been given out in this country; that the new governments are in general well settled, and the people happy under them; and that, in particular, a conviction is becoming universal of the necessity of giving more strength to that power which forms and which is to conduct and maintain their union.

March, 1785.

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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, in a sequestered continent possessed of many singular advantages, a place of refuge for oppressed 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.

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 progress 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 American 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^{*}*confederates*, not *subjects*; and their rulers, *servants*, not *masters*.—And that all legitimate government consists in the dominion of equal laws made with common consent; that is, in the dominion of men over *themselves*; and not in the dominion of communities over communities, 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, “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 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.

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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. Supposing their debts to amount to *nine millions* sterling, carrying interest at $5\frac{1}{2}$ *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 $20\frac{1}{2}$ 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 (supposing 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 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 $4\frac{1}{2}$ 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 if no very strong measures are soon taken to reduce it within the limits of safety, it must 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.

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.

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*Of*Peace,

And The Means Of Perpetuating It.

CIVIL Government is an expedient for collecting the wisdom and force of a community or confederacy, in order 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; 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 suppressed, 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 such means *universal* peace may 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 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 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 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?

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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 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 advanced 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.

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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 on all who oppose sacred doctrines, or who maintain pernicious opinions.”—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 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 persecution, 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 wherever 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 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 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, must 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 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; 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 as well as the ablest 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 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.

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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 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 byass 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 and best 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 toall 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, Metaphysics, 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 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 proneness 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 has there not been also a religion (so called) which has done this, by leading its professors to a persuasion that there exists a power on earth 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 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 such in particular is 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 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 benevolent 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 controversies of faith, and power to decree rites and ceremonies*. We are the deputies of Christ upon earth, who have been commissioned by him to interpret his laws, and to rule his church. You must therefore follow US. The scriptures are insufficient. Our interpretations you must receive as Christ's laws; our creeds as *his* doctrine; our inventions as *his* institutions."

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 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 even of Christians may go on for ages in idolatrous worship, after a general conviction may have taken place, that there is but *one* being who is the proper object of religious adoration, and that this *one* being is that one only living and true God who sent Christ into the world, and who is *his* no less than he is *our* God and father. What a sad scene of religious hypocrisy must such a discordance between public conviction and the public forms produce? 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.

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 Christianity 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 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* 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 *Massachusetts'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*.”

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 *Massachusetts'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 “acknowledges 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 evermore.” 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 *dishonest* 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?

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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, 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 are confident 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 *unlearn*. 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 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 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 desending them against opponents; 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 is 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 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 intellectual 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 even here to be avoided. 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 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 Lectures on the New Testament are seldom or ever 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 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 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.

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Of TheDangersTo 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 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.

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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 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.

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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 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 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. Wallace*, &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, 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 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 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.

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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 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 conveniencies 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 best means of the most profitable traffic, and the amplest scope for it. Why should they look much farther? What occasion have they 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 neighbours, 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, 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, than of 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 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 on the strength and duration of a *Bubble*.—I am very sensible that paper credit is one of the greatest of all conveniencies; but this makes it likewise one of the greatest of all temptations. A public Bank, (while it can circulate its bills) facilitates 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 alarm) 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 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*.

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*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, 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.

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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.

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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 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 irreligion 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.

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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.

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*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 remerciement; 1° de votre ouvrage dont je connois depuis longtems le prix, et que j'avois lu avec avidité, malgré les occupations multipliées, dont j'étois assailli, lorsqu'il a paru pour la première 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 additionnelles. J'aurois pu la mériter, si vous n'aviez eu en vue d'autre maladresse que celle de n'avoir pas sçu démêler les ressorts 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'être. Mais il m'a paru que vous m'imputiez la maladresse d'avoir choqué grossièrement 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 lumières 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 subjuguier 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 système de monopole et d'exclusion qui règne chez tous vos écrivains politiques sur le commerce, (J'excepte Mr. Adam Smith et le Doyen Tucker) système 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 intéressante 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 étiez un peu moins mal que les autres, que vous avez tourné toutes vos spéculations à vous persuader que vous étiez 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 intérêts 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, que la liberté consiste à n'être soumis qu'aux loix, comme si un homme opprimé par une loi injuste étoit 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 vérité, et que vous vous en soyez expliqué, peut-être méritoit-

elle que vous la développassiez 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 Angleterre 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 intérêt, il a le frein du remords, ou celui de l'opinion 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 accélérée. 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 été rédigées jusqu'à présent par les différens Etats Américains. Vous reprochez avec raison à celle de la Pensylvanie le serment religieux exigé pour 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 Jerseys 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 à balancer ces différens pouvoirs; comme si cet équilibre de forces, qu'on a pu croire nécessaire 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'étoit pas une source de divisions. En voulant prévenir des dangers chimériques, on en fait naître de réels; on veut n'avoir rien à craindre du clergé, on le réunit sous la barrière 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 intérêt que les autres à la défense commune de sa liberté et de ses propriétés, est-il exclus d'y contribuer de ses lumières et de ses vertus, parce qu'il est d'une profession qui exige des lumières 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 intérêts, que quand on a imaginé d'avoir une religion établie par la loi, comme si les hommes pouvoient avoir quelque droit, ou quelque intérêt à régler la conscience les uns des autres; comme si l'individu pouvoit sacrifier aux avantages de la société civile les opinions auxquelles il croit son salut éternel attaché; comme si l'on se savoit, ou se damnoit, en commun. Là où la vraie tolérance, c'est-à-dire l'incompétence absolue

du gouvernement sur la conscience des individus, est établie, l'ecclésiastique au milieu de l'affemblée nationale n'est qu'un citoyen, lorsqu'il y est admis; il redevient ecclésiastique lorsqu'on l'en exclut.

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 particulière et locale; à constituer des assemblées locales subsistantes, qui remplissant presque toutes les fonctions de détail 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 nonpropriétaires; à leurs intérêts 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 intérêt contraire à l'intérêt 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 entière 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 homogène. 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. 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 bête fausse de la très ancienne et très vulgaire politique; sur le préjugé que les nations, les provinces, peuvent avoir des intérêts, en corps de province et de nation, autres que celui qu'ont les individus d'être libres et de défendre leurs propriétés contre les brigands et les conquérans: intérêt 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: intérêt prétendu d'avoir un territoire plus vaste, d'acquérir telle ou telle province, telle ou telle isle, tel ou tel village: intérêt d'inspirer la crainte aux autres nations: intérêt 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 propriété, tous les prétendus interêts de commerce disparaissent. Les prétendus interêts de posséder 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 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 juridictions 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'être 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 est inépuisable, et tous profitent des découvertes des 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.

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 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 sévérité 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 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 suceptible. Il est l'espérance du genre humain. Il peut en devenir le modèle. 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 éclairés, tous les amis de l'humanité devraient en ce moment réunir leurs lumières 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 zèle; 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'espère 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'accroissement des dettes et des charges, * * * * * , et la ruine d'un grand nombre de citoyens en seront peut-être l'unique résultat. L'Angleterre m'en paroît 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 étoit 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 événements, 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 éprouvera 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 épigraphe. Je ne crois point que ceci vous mène à devenir une nation méprisable, 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 élections annuelles, en repartissant le droit de représentation d'une manière plus égale et plus proportionnée aux intérêts 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 vite 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'avez inspirée, et de la satisfaction que j'éprouve à penser qu'il y a quelque ressemblance entre nos manières de voir. Je compte bien que cette confiance n'est que pour vous. 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'être, Monsieur, avec toute la considération possible,

Votre Très Humble,
Et Très Obeissant Serviteur,

TURGOT.

It is not easy to do justice in English to many parts of the preceding letter. The following Translation of it will however, I hope, be found to be nearly correct; and I think myself greatly obliged to the Gentleman who has been so good as to favour me with it.

TRANSLATION.

To Dr. Price, London.

Paris, 22d March, 1778.

Sir,

MR. FRANKLIN by your desire has put into my hands the last edition of your *Observations on Civil Liberty, &c.* for which I think myself doubly indebted to you. In the first place, for the work itself, of which I have long known the value and read with great avidity, notwithstanding the multiplicity of my engagements, when it was first published: And in the next place, for the politeness you have shewn in leaving out the imputation of *want of address*,* which you intermixed with the handsome things you said of me in your additional observations. I might have merited this imputation, if you had in view no other *want of address* than incapacity to unravel the springs of those intrigues that were employed against me, by some people who are much more expert in these matters than I am, or ever shall be, or indeed ever desire to be: But I imagined you imputed to me *a want of address* which made my opinions grossly clash with the general opinions of my countrymen; and in that respect I thought you neither did justice to *me* nor to *my country*, where there is a degree of understanding much superior to what you generally suppose in England, and where it is more easy perhaps, than even with you, to bring back the public to hearken to reason.

I have been led to judge thus by the infatuation of your people in the absurd project of subduing America, till the affair of Burgoyne began to open their eyes; and by the system of monopoly and exclusion which has been recommended by all your writers on Commerce, (except Mr. Adam Smith and Dean Tucker); a system which has been the true source of your separation from your Colonies. I have also been led to this opinion by all your controversial writings upon the questions which have occupied your attention these twenty years, and in which, till your observations appeared, I scarce recollect to have read one that took up these questions on their proper ground. I cannot conceive how a nation which has cultivated every branch of natural knowledge with such success, should have made so little progress in the most interesting of all sciences, that of the public good: A science, in which the liberty of the Press, which she alone enjoys, ought to have given her a prodigious advantage over every other

nation in Europe. Was it national pride which prevented you from profiting by this advantage? Or was it, because you were not altogether in so bad a condition as other nations, that you have imposed upon yourselves in your speculations so far as to be persuaded that your arrangements were compleat? Is it party spirit and a desire of being supported by popular opinion which has retarded your progress, by inducing your political writers to treat as vain Metaphysics* all those speculations which aim at establishing the rights and true interests of nations and individuals upon fixed principles. How comes it that you are almost the first of the writers of your country, who has given a just idea of liberty, and shewn the falsity of the notion so frequently repeated by almost all Republican Writers, “that liberty consists in being subject only to the laws,” as if a man could be free while oppressed by an unjust law. This would not be true, even if we could suppose that all the laws were the work of an assembly of the whole nation; for certainly every individual has his rights, of which the nation cannot deprive him, except by violence and an unlawful use of the general power. Though you have attended to this truth and have explained yourself upon this head, perhaps it would have merited a more minute explanation, considering how little attention is paid to it even by the most zealous friends of liberty.

It is likewise extraordinary that it was not thought a trivial matter in England to assert “that one nation never can have a right to govern another nation”—“that a government where such a principle is admitted can have no foundation but that of force, which is equally the foundation of robbery and tyranny”—“and that the tyranny of a people is the most cruel and intolerable, because it leaves the fewest resources to the oppressed.”—A despot is restrained by a sense of his own interest. He is checked by remorse or by the public opinion. But the multitude never calculate. The multitude are never checked by remorse, and will even ascribe to themselves the highest honour when they deserve only disgrace.

What a dreadful commentary on your book are the events which have lately befallen the English nation?—For some months they have been running headlong to ruin.—The fate of America is already decided—Behold her independent beyond recovery.—But will She be free and happy?—Can this new people, so advantageously placed for giving an example to the world of a constitution under which man may enjoy his rights, freely exercise all his faculties, and be governed only by nature, reason and justice—Can they form such a Constitution?—Can they establish it upon a never failing foundation, and guard against every source of division and corruption which may gradually undermine and destroy it?

I confess that I am not satisfied with the Constitutions which have hitherto been formed by the different States of America. It is with reason that you reproach the State of Pennsylvania with exacting a religious test from those who become members of the body of Representatives. There are much worse tests in the other States; and there is one (I believe the Jerseys) which requires(†) a declaration of faith in the *Divinity* of Jesus Christ.—I observe that by most of them the customs of England are imitated, without any particular motive. Instead of collecting all authority into one center, that of the nation, they have established different bodies; a body of representatives, a council, and a Governour, because there is in England a House of Commons, a House of Lords, and a King.—They endeavour to balance these different powers, as if this

equilibrium, which in *England* may be a necessary check to the enormous influence of royalty, could be of any use in Republics founded upon the equality of all the Citizens; and as if establishing different orders of men, was not a source of divisions and disputes. In attempting to prevent imaginary dangers they create real ones; and in their desire to have nothing to fear from the clergy, they unite them more closely by one common proscription. By excluding them from the right of being elected into public offices they become a body distinct from the State. Wherefore should a Citizen, who has the same interest with others in the common defence of liberty and property, be excluded from contributing to it his virtue and knowledge? Is it because he is of a profession which *requires* knowledge and virtue? The clergy are only dangerous when they exist as a distinct body in the State; and think themselves possessed of separate rights and interests and a religion established by law, as if some men had a right to regulate the consciences of other men, or could have an interest in doing this; as if an individual could sacrifice to civil society opinions on which he thinks his eternal salvation depends; as if, in short, mankind were to be saved or *damned* in *communities*—Where *true* toleration, (that is, where the absolute incompetency of civil government in matters of conscience, is established); there the *clergyman*, when admitted into the national assembly, becomes a *simple citizen*; but when excluded, he becomes an *ecclesiastic*.

I do not think they are sufficiently careful to reduce the kind of business with which the government of each State is charged, within the narrowest limits possible; nor to separate the objects of legislation from those of the general administration, or from those of a local and particular administration; nor to institute local permanent assemblies, which by discharging almost all the functions in the detail of government, make it unnecessary for the general assemblies to attend to these things, and thereby deprive the members of the general assemblies of every means, and perhaps every desire, of abusing a power which can only be applied to general objects, and which, consequently, must be free from the influence of the little passions by which men usually are agitated.

I do not find that they attend to the great distinction (the only one which is founded in nature between two classes of men), between landholders, and those who are not landholders; to their interests, and of course to their different rights respecting legislation, the administration of justice and police, their contributions to the public expence, and employment.

No fixed principle of taxation is established. They suppose that each State may tax itself according to its own fancy, by establishing either *personal* taxes, or taxes on *consumption* and *importation*; that is, that each State may assume to itself an interest contrary to the interest of the other States.

They also every where suppose that they have a right to regulate commerce. They even delegate authority to executive bodies, and to Governors, to prohibit the exportation of certain commodities on certain occasions. So far are they from being sensible that the right to an entire liberty in commerce is the consequence of the right of property. So much are they still involved in the mist of European illusions.

In the general union of the States I do not observe a coalition, a fusion of all the parts to form one homogeneous body. It is only a jumble of communities too discordant, and which retain a constant tendency to separation, owing to the diversity in their laws, customs and opinions; to the inequality in their *present* strength; but still more, to the inequality in their advances to *greater* strength. It is only a copy of the Dutch republic, with this difference, that the *Dutch* republic had nothing to fear, as the *American* republic has, from the future possible increase of any one of the Provinces.—All this edifice has been hitherto supported upon the erroneous foundation of the most ancient and vulgar policy; upon the prejudice that Nations and States, as such, may have an interest distinct from the interest which individuals have to be free, and to defend their property against the attacks of robbers and conquerors: An interest, in carrying on a more extensive commerce than other States, in not purchasing foreign merchandize, and compelling foreigners to consume their produce and manufactures: An interest in possessing more extensive territories, and acquiring such and such a province, island or village: An interest in inspiring other nations with awe, and gaining a superiority over them in the glory of arts, sciences, and arms.

Some of these prejudices are fomented in *Europe*, from the ancient rivalship of nations and the ambition of Princes, which compel every State to keep up an armed force to defend itself against the attack of neighbours in arms, and to look upon a military force as the principal object of government. *America* is likely in no long time to enjoy the happiness of having no external enemy to dread, provided she is not divided within herself. She ought, therefore, to estimate properly those pretended *interests* and causes of discord which alone are likely to be formidable to her liberty. On that sacred principle, “liberty of commerce considered as a natural right flowing from the possession of property,” all the pretended interests of commerce must vanish.—The supposed interest in possessing more or less territory disappear on this principle, “that a territory does not belong to nations, but to the individuals who are proprietors of the lands.” The question, whether such a canton or such a village belongs to such a Province or such a State, ought not to be determined by the interest in it pretended by that Province or that State; but by the interest the inhabitants of the canton or village have in assembling for transacting their affairs in the place most convenient for them. This interest, measured by the greater or less distance that a man can go from his home to attend to important affairs without injuring his private concerns, forms a natural boundary to the jurisdiction of States, and establishes an equipoise* of extent and strength between them, which must remove every danger of inequality, and every pretence to superiority.

There can be no interest in being feared when nothing can be demanded, and when men are in a situation not to be attacked by a considerable force with any hope of success.

The glory of *arms* is nothing to those who enjoy the happiness of living in peace.

The glory of arts and sciences belongs to every man who can acquire it. There is here ample scope. The field of discovery is boundless; and all profit by the discoveries of all.

I imagine that the Americans are not as sensible of these truths, as they ought to be, in order to secure the happiness of their posterity. I do not blame their leaders. It was necessary to provide for the necessities of the moment, by such an union as they could form against a present and most formidable enemy. They have not leisure to consider how the errors of the different constitutions and States may be corrected; but they ought to be afraid of perpetuating these errors, and to endeavour by all means to reconcile the opinions and interests of the different provinces, and to unite them by bringing them to one uniform set of principles.

To accomplish this they have great obstacles to surmount.

In Canada, an order of Roman Catholic Clergy, and a body of Nobles.

In New England, a rigid puritanical spirit which has been always somewhat intolerant* .

In Pennsylvania, a very great number of inhabitants laying it down as a religious principle, that the profession of arms is unlawful, and refusing to join in the arrangements necessary to establish the military force of the State, by uniting the character of the Citizen with that of the Soldier and Militiaman, in consequence of which the business of war is made to be the business of *mercenaries*.

In the Southern Colonies, an inequality of fortune too great; and what is worse, a great number of Blacks, whose slavery is incompatible with a good political constitution; and who, if emancipated, would occasion great embarrassment by forming two distinct people in one State.

In all of them, various prejudices, an attachment to established forms, a habit of paying certain taxes, and a dread of those which must be substituted for them; a vanity in those colonies which think themselves most powerful; and a wretched beginning of national pride. I imagine that the Americans must aggrandize themselves not by war, but by agriculture. If they neglect the immense deserts which are at their backs, and which extend all the way to the western sea, their exiles and fugitives from the severity of the laws, will unite with the Savages, and settle that part of the country; the consequence of which will be that bodies of Banditti will ravage America, as the Barbarians of the North ravaged the Roman Empire, and subject the States to the necessity of keeping the frontiers always guarded, and remaining in a State of continual war. The Colonies next to the frontier will of course be better disciplined than the rest; and this inequality of military force will prove a dreadful incentive to ambition. The remedy for this inequality would be to keep up a standing army, to which every State should contribute in proportion to its population; but the Americans, who have the fears that the English *ought* to have, dread nothing so much as a standing army. In this they are wrong. There is nothing more easy than to combine a standing army with a militia, so as to improve the militia, and gain additional security for liberty. But it is no easy matter to calm their apprehensions on that head.

Here are a number of difficulties; and perhaps the private interests of powerful individuals will unite with the prejudices of the multitude, to check the efforts of true Philosophers and good Citizens.

It is impossible not to wish ardently that this people may attain to all the prosperity of which they are capable. They are the *hope* of the world. They may become a *model* to it. They *may* prove by fact that men can be free and yet tranquil; and that it is in their power to rescue themselves from the chains in which tyrants and knaves of all descriptions have presumed to bind them under the pretence of the public good. They may exhibit an example of *political* liberty, of *religious* liberty, of *commerical* liberty, and of industry. The *Asylum* they open to the oppressed of all nations should console the earth. The case with which the injured may escape from oppressive governments, will compel Princes to become just and cautious; and the rest of the world will gradually open their eyes upon the empty illusions with which they have been hitherto cheated by politicians. But for this purpose *America* must preserve *herself* from these illusions; and take care to avoid being what your ministerial writers are frequently saying She *will* be—an image of our *Europe*—a mass of divided powers contending for territory and commerce, and continually cementing the slavery of the people with their own blood.

All enlightened men—All the friends of humanity ought at this time to unite their lights to those of the *American* sages, and to assist them in the great work of legislation. This, sir, would be a work worthy of you. I wish it was in my power to animate your zeal in this instance. If I have in this letter indulged too free an effusion of my sentiments, this has been my only motive; and it will, I hope, induce you to pardon me for tiring you. I wish indeed that the blood which has been spilt, and which will continue for some time to be spilt in this contest, may not be without its use to the human race.

Our two nations are about doing much harm to each other, and probably without the prospect to either of any real advantage. An increase of debts and public burthens, (perhaps a national bankruptcy), and the ruin of a great number of individuals, will prove the result. England seems to me to be more likely to suffer by these evils, and much nearer to them, than France.—If instead of going to war, you had at the commencement of your disputes endeavoured to retreat with a good grace; if your Statesmen had then consented to make those concessions, which they will infallibly be obliged to make at last; if the national opinion would have permitted your government to anticipate events which might have been foreseen; if, in short, you had immediately yielded to the independence of America without entering into any hostilities; I am firmly persuaded your nation would have lost nothing.—But you will *now* lose what you have already expended, and what you are still to expend; you will experience a great diminution of your commerce for some time, and great interior commotions, if driven to a bankruptcy; and, at any rate, a great diminution of weight in foreign politics. But this last circumstance I think of little consequence to the real happiness of a people; for I cannot agree with the *Abbe Raynal* in your motto*. I do not believe all this will make you a contemptible nation or throw you into slavery.—On the contrary; your misfortunes may have the effect of a necessary amputation. They are perhaps the only means of saving you from the gangrene of

luxury and corruption. And if they should terminate in the amendment of your constitution, by restoring annual elections, and distributing the right of suffrages for representation so as to render it more equal and better proportioned to the interests of the represented, you will perhaps gain as much as America by this revolution; for you will preserve your liberty, and with your liberty, and by means of it, all your other losses will be speedily repaired.

By the freedom with which I have opened myself to you, sir, upon these delicate points, you will judge of the esteem with which you have inspired me; and the satisfaction I feel in thinking there is some resemblance between our sentiments and views. I depend on your* confining this confidence to yourself. I even beg that you will not be particular in answering me by the Post, for your letter will certainly be opened at our Post-Offices, and I shall be found much too great a friend to liberty for a minister, even though a discarded minister.

I have the honour to be with all possible respect,

Sir,
Your Most Humble,
And Most Obedient Servant,

TURGOT.

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APPENDIX,

containing

A Translation from the French of

THE TESTAMENT

of

M. FORTUNÉ RICARD,

Teacher of Arithmetic at D—.

Read and published at the Court of Bailiwick of that Town, the 19th of August, 1784.

printed in m.dcc.lxxxv.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

THE following Testament was lately published in France, and conveyed to me by Dr. Franklin. It exemplifies, with an instructive pleasantry and great force, the account in page 10, &c. of the powers of Compound Interest or a Sinking Fund, and the uses to which they may be applied for the benefit of nations and of posterity. For this reason I here offer to the public the following translation of it, not doubting but I shall be excused if the turn of humour in it renders it a composition of a nature not perfectly suitable to the other parts of this pamphlet.

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THE TESTAMENT, &C.

IN the name of God, I Fortuné Ricard, Teacher of Arithmetic at D—, invoking the Holy Virgin and Saint Fortune my patron, do make this my last Will as follows—

[“The Executors, who have caused this Will to be printed in order to fulfil the intentions of the late *M. Fortuné Ricard*, do not think it necessary to publish those particular bequests which concern only his own family.—After having disposed of his patrimony among them with wisdom, he proceeds in the following manner.”]

It remains now for me to declare my intentions with regard to the promise of 500 livres*, subscribed on my behalf by M. P. banker of this town. This sum proceeded originally from a present which was made me by *Prosper Ricard*, my much honoured grandfather, when I entered the eighth year of my age. At that age he had taught me the principles of writing and calculation. After having shewn me that a capital, with its accumulating interest at five *per cent.* would amount at the end of 100 years to more than 131 times the original sum*, and seeing that I listened to this lecture with the greatest attention, he took 24 livres† out of his pocket, and addressed me with an enthusiasm which is still present to my mind—“My child, said he, remember while thou livest, that with œconomy and calculation nothing is impossible for man. Here are 24 livres which I give thee. Take them to a merchant in our neighbourhood, who will place them in trade out of regard to me. Every year thou shalt add the interest to the principal. At thy death thou shalt employ the produce in good works for the repose of thy soul and my own.”—I have executed this order with fidelity, and in the course of my life I have planned many projects for employing this money. Having reached the 71st year of my age, it amounts to 500 livres; but as I must some time or other set bounds to myself, I now desire that it may be divided into five portions of 100 livres‡ each; to which the interests shall be annually added, and the accumulated sums shall be successively applied to the following uses.

1. In a *hundred* years the first sum of 100 livres will amount to more than 13,100 livres§, (5822*l.*). From this sum a prize of 4000 livres shall be given for the best theological dissertation, to prove the lawfulness of putting out money to interest. Three medals, of 600 livres each, shall also be given for the three dissertations which shall be adjudged the next in merit to the prize-dissertation. The remainder of the 13,100 livres shall be expended in printing the prize dissertation and extracts from the others. Copies of these shall be sent, *gratis*, to all the bishops, clergy, and confessors of the kingdom. I had intended to have sent them also into foreign countries; but I observe that all the universities of the christian world, excepting those of France, have solemnly recognized the lawfulness of putting money to interest*; and that it continues necessary only in this kingdom to explain a question in morals so interesting to the welfare of the State.

2. After *two hundred* years a *second* sum of 100 livres, amounting, with its accumulated interest, to more than 1,700,000 livres†, (756,500*l.*) shall be employed in establishing a perpetual fund for fourscore prizes of 1000 livres each, to be

distributed annually by the different academies of the kingdom, as follows:—Fifteen prizes for the most distinguished virtuous actions—fifteen for works of science and literature—ten for solutions of questions in arithmetic and calculation—ten for such new processes in agriculture as shall produce the best crops—ten for master-pieces in the fine arts—and ten to encourage races and other exercises proper to display the force and agility of the body, and to restore amongst us a taste for the gymnasium which was in such great esteem among the Greeks, and which formerly made so many heroes.

After *three hundred* years, from another sum of 100 livres, increased in that time to more than two hundred and twenty-six millions, (10,057,000 *l.*) there shall be appropriated 196 millions towards establishing, in the most considerable places in France, 500 patriotic banks for lending money without interest; the largest of which shall have a fund of ten millions of livres, and the smallest a fund of 100,000 livres. These banks shall be managed by a committee of the most upright citizens in each place, and the money shall be employed in loans to succour the unfortunate, or advanced towards promoting agriculture, trade, and industry. The remaining thirty millions shall be expended in sounding twelve *museums* in the cities of Paris, Lyons, Rouen, Bourdeaux, Rennes, Lisle, Nancy, Tours, Dijon, Thoulouse, Aix, and Grenoble. Each of these *museums* shall be placed at the most agreeable end of the city. Five hundred thousand livres shall be expended upon each building, and in the purchase of grounds which shall belong to them, and be laid out into botanical and fruit gardens, and also into kitchen gardens and extensive walks. To each museum shall be annexed an income of 100,000 livres; and there shall be lodged and boarded in it forty literary men and artists of superior merit, who, at the time of meals shall be divided into four tables, that their repasts may be chearful without being too noisy. Each museum shall be provided with six Secretaries, a designer and engraver, and four carriages. There shall be also a hall for concerts, a theatre, a chymical laboratory, a cabinet of natural history, a hall for experimental philosophy, and a grand gallery for a common library. A *hundred thousand* livres shall be expended on a separate library for each of these establishments. The same sum shall be employed in providing them with separate cabinets of natural history and with philosophical instruments. And 10,000 livres shall be reserved annually for keeping up and increasing these cabinets and philosophical instruments.*

The libraries shall always be open to the public. Twenty members of the museum shall be engaged in giving public and gratuitous courses of lectures upon the foreign languages, and upon all the arts and sciences. The other twenty shall be engaged in such other employments as may be most useful. No one shall be admitted a member till he has previously given proof, not of his rank, descent, or nobility, but of his morals, and of his never having dishonoured his pen by writing against† religion and government, or by satirising any member of the community. On being admitted he shall make oath, “That he will prefer virtue, truth, and his country to every thing; and the general good of literature to his own fame.” The works of the members of the museum shall be printed at the expence of the establishment, and when those expences are reimbursed, the profits shall belong to the authors.

4. After *four hundred* years the fourth sum of 100 livres, amounting, with interest, to near 30,000 millions, (1,330,000,000*l.*) shall be employed in building 100 towns, each containing 150,000 souls^{*}, in the most agreeable situations which can be found in France. The means of peopling these towns, of governing and making them flourish, are explained in a memorial annexed to this will[†]. In a short time there will result from hence an addition of 15 millions of inhabitants to the kingdom, and its consumption will be doubled, for which service I hope the œconomists will think themselves obliged to me.

I am sensible that all the specie in Europe is not equal to these 30,000 millions, and that it will be impossible to make provision in money for such immense sums. For this reason I leave it to the discretion of my executors to exchange cash at convenient seasons for landed and other real possessions. The revenue arising from those possessions shall either be laid out in cash, or realized by further purchases, so that my bequests may be fulfilled in their due time without any difficulty.

I am convinced, by the most accurate calculations, that my arrangements instead of clogging will give activity to the circulation of specie. Laying out the money I have ordered in the purchase of estates, will soon increase their value; and when these accumulating riches shall have so produced their effect as that there can no longer be found in France a landholder who will sell his estate, purchases must be sought for among the neighbouring nations.

5. Finally, with regard to the last sum of 100 livres, amounting nearly, by the accumulation of *five hundred* years, to four millions of millions of livres,^{*} it shall be disposed of as follows.

Six thousand millions shall be appropriated towards paying the national debt of France, upon condition that the Kings, our good lords and masters, shall be entreated to order the comptrollers general of the finances to undergo in future an examination in arithmetic[†] before they enter upon their office.

Twelve thousand millions shall likewise be employed in paying the public debts of England.—It may be seen that I reckon that both those national debts will be *doubled* in this period; not that I have any doubts of the talents of certain ministers to increase them much more, but their operations in this way are opposed by an infinity of circumstances which lead me to presume that those debts cannot be more than doubled. Besides, if they amount to a few thousands of millions more, I declare that it is my intention that they should be entirely paid off, and that a project so laudable should not remain unexecuted for a trifle more or less. I beg that the English would not refuse this slight mark of the remembrance of a man, who was indeed born a Frenchman, but who sincerely esteemed their nation, and always was a particular admirer of that magnificent work which Newton, their countryman, has entitled *Universal Arithmetic*. I earnestly *desire* that, as an acknowledgment for this legacy, the English nation will consent to call the French *their neighbours*^{*} and not *their natural enemies*; that they be assured that *nature* never made man an enemy to man; and that national hatreds, commercial prohibitions, and, above all, *wars* constantly produce a monstrous error in calculations. But I dare not, in this instance, *require* any

thing. We must hope for all we desire from time; and when we have the happiness of rendering a service, we must not destroy its value by annexing conditions to it which may encumber those whom we wish to serve.

Thirty thousand millions shall be formed into a fund for producing an annual revenue of 15 hundred millions to be divided in times of peace among all the powers of Europe. In time of war the share of the aggressor or aggressors shall be given to those who have been attacked unjustly, in order to engage sovereigns, if possible, to reflect a little before they commence unjust hostilities. This revenue shall be distributed among the different nations in proportion to their population. Every ten years an exact numeration shall be taken with a view to this distribution, which shall be made by a diet composed of deputies from all the different nations; but I direct that a larger proportion shall be distributed to those sovereigns who shall apply for it and appear to desire it with no other view than to encourage population among their subjects.

I leave to the wisdom of my executors the care of extending the benefits of this bequest to the other parts of the world; and if, by this means, they should hope to succeed in extinguishing throughout the world the absurd and barbarous rage of war, I willingly consent that they appropriate for this purpose the further sum of one hundred thousand millions. I wish that six thousand millions may be offered to his Majesty, the King of France; namely, a *thousand* millions to supersede the necessity of lotteries, a sort of tax imposed upon wicked men which infallibly renders them a great deal more wicked; a *thousand* millions to buy in all useless offices which are attended with the sad inconvenience of persuading many persons that it is a sufficient discharge of their duty to their country to occupy an office without functions, and that an honour may be derived from bearing a senseless title; a *thousand* millions to buy in offices which, on the contrary, are too important to be left exposed to the danger of venality; a *thousand* millions to purchase a domain for his Majesty worthy of his crown, and sufficient for the expences of his court, so that the nation may clearly perceive that the taxes imposed upon them are applicable only to the expenditures of the state. The remaining two thousand millions shall form a fund, whose annual produce shall be employed by his Majesty in pensions and gratuities. By these means, if sometimes those favours should be conferred upon intriguing and undeserving persons, the nation will have no cause to complain of the improper use of money drawn from taxes and the labours of the husbandman.

I appoint a *thousand millions* towards adding a thousand *livres* to the settled income of all the clergy in the kingdom, and 600 *livres* to that of their vicars, upon condition that they no longer demand fees for saying masses. I had also some thoughts of proposing to them the suppression of fees for baptisms, marriages, and burials; but I have considered those functions to be of a *civil* as well as *religious* nature; and that on this account the clergy may, without impropriety, be allowed to receive a pay which is, in fact, more moderate than would be required by any other public officers in their places. Besides, this pay, perhaps, renders the service more exact, more speedy on their part, and less irksome to the delicacy of some of those who receive it.

I appoint two thousand millions towards forming an income of *ten livres* a month to all the children which shall be born in the kingdom till they are three years of age; and

I desire this legacy to be increased to *thirty* livres a month to those children which shall be nursed by their own mothers. I do not except even the children of the rich; on the contrary, I invite rich parents to accept this donation without reluctance, as an honorary prize awarded to paternity and the cares of maternal love. They may, if they please, apply it to acts of charity and benevolence.

I appoint four thousand millions towards purchasing the waste lands of the kingdom. These shall be divided into 500 thousand little farms or tenements of four or five acres each, on which shall be erected as many commodious cottages. These 500 thousand farms shall be given as freeholds to an equal number of married *peasants*, chosen in each parish by a vestry composed of ten of the most aged inhabitants. The possessors of these *freeholds* shall be obliged to make them their only residence, to cultivate them with their own hands and those of their families, and to report every year the improvements of them which they have made. These *freeholds* shall be hereditary, but only upon condition that they shall neither be divided, nor any two of them engrossed by one person. When a freeholder dies without leaving behind him either wife, children, brothers, sisters, nephews, or nieces, who have lived and laboured with him for three years prior to his decease, the freehold shall be declared vacant, and given anew by the vestry of the parish to that peasant who shall appear to deserve it best.

I desire that two thousand millions be laid out in purchasing all the manors of which there shall be sellers, and that the vassals thereon be for ever afterwards exempted from all servitude and fealty.

Six thousand millions shall be employed in founding houses of education in all the country parishes, agreeable to the plan of the author of a work entitled, *Patriotic Views respecting the Education of the People*. If in executing this plan of a man of genius and an excellent citizen it should appear to want some little amendments and alterations, I direct that they shall be adopted.

I appoint 20,000 millions towards erecting in the kingdom 40,000 houses of labour, or public work-houses; to each of which shall be appropriated from 10,000 to 50,000 livres annual income. Every man and woman shall have a right to offer themselves at any time to be maintained and employed in them. I chuse to say nothing of any other particulars in the government and management of these houses; hoping that the ideas which begin to be formed concerning establishments of this kind will be perfected before the period fixed for these shall arrive; and that it will at length be universally acknowledged, that though it is dangerous and foolish to give alms in money to a strong beggar, yet that society has no right to deprive him of his liberty and inflict punishments upon him, while it does not hold out to him any other means of subsistence, or at least point out to him a method of discovering what means he is capable of using.

I intreat the managers of these public work-houses to give the greatest encouragement to such trades as can be performed by women. This sex, so dear to all sensible minds, has been neglected or oppressed by all our institutions.—Seductions of all kinds seem to conspire against their virtue—Necessity precipitates them involuntarily into an abyss of infamy and misery.—The low price which is set upon the labour of women is

out of all proportion to the inferiority of their bodily strength. Let the public workhouses set the example of paying them better.

There are in *France* many houses of correction where the misconduct of women is severely punished, but where in reality it is only suspended, mere consinement having no tendency to eradicate vice. Why should there not be *one* establishment where a young woman, conquered by temptation and on the brink of despair, might present herself, and say—“Vice offers me gold: I only ask for labour and bread. In compassion to my remorse assist and strengthen me. Open an asylum for me where I may weep without being seen, expiate those faults which pursue and overwhelm me, and recover a shadow of peace.”—Such an institution exists no where—I appoint, therefore, a thousand millions towards establishing one.

The snares which are laid by vice for women without fortunes, would make fewer victims if more assistance was given them. We have an infinity of establishments for persons in the higher ranks of life which do honour to the generosity of our forefathers. Why have we none for this purpose?—I desire, therefore, that two thousand millions be employed in establishing in the kingdom *a hundred* hospitals, which shall be called Hospitals of Angels. There shall be admitted into each a hundred females of the age of seven or eight years, and of the most engaging forms. They shall receive the most perfect education in regard to morals, useful knowledge, and agreeable accomplishments. At the age of eighteen they may quit the hospital in order to be married; at which period they shall each be paid a portion of 40,000 livres. I mention this moderate sum because it is my wish that they be neither reproached for want of fortune, nor espoused from interest. An annual income of 2000 livres shall be given also to their parents. * * * * Except once in the year at a solemn and splendid procession, they shall rarely appear in public, but shall be constantly employed in their asylum in learning all that can render them one day excellent wives and mothers.

In order to fit them, in particular, for *domestic œconomy*, I desire that after they have been taught the most accurate ideas of expences of all kinds, questions be proposed to them from time to time to which they shall be obliged to give answers by word of mouth, and also in writing; as for example—“If you had such or such an income, under such or such circumstances, how much would you appropriate to your table, your house-rent, your maintenance, and the education of your children? How many servants would you keep? How much would you reserve for sickness and unforeseen expences? How much would you consecrate to the relief of the unfortunate and the public good?—If your income depended either entirely or in part upon a transient advantage or a place which was not *assured* to you, how much would you expend annually? What sum would you reserve for forming a capital?” &c. &c. Prizes publicly given to the best answers to questions of this kind would constitute, in my opinion, an exercise equally engaging and more useful than the little comedies and novels with which young persons in the higher stations are generally entertained.

The honours conferred upon great men have always appeared to me the most effectual means of *producing* great men. I appoint, therefore, a thousand millions towards striking medals, and placing in the halls of all towns, or in any other convenient places, statues and busts in honour of such great men as shall hereafter rise up. I

desire further that these honours be not paid them till ten years after their decease; and that they be decreed and proportioned by a tribunal composed of such upright, enlightened, and worthy citizens, as shall be most likely not to be dazzled by false virtues.—It has been once reckoned, that founding hospitals for the sick is one of the best public services. For some years a conviction has been gaining ground, that breathing the pestilential air of hospitals doubles the danger of diseases; and that on this and other accounts they probably *destroy* more lives than they *save*. I desire, therefore, that 10,000 millions be employed in establishing in each parish of the kingdom *houses of health*, in which shall be maintained a physician, a surgeon, and a convenient number of sisters of charity and nurses. These houses shall supply the sick *gratis* in their own houses with every assistance in food and medicine, and none shall be taken to the house of health excepting those whom it shall be impossible to assist at home.

I have hitherto only directed the employment of about two hundred thousand millions. There remain still near *four millions of millions*, the appropriation of which I leave to the discretion of my executors. I wish them to purchase and pull down all such houses as incommode the public way in all towns; to multiply squares, quays, fountains, gardens, &c. in order to give salubrity to the air of towns; to empty ponds; to clear heaths; to deepen the beds of rivers so as to render them navigable, and to unite them by means of canals;—in a word, I wish them to co-operate in every possible method with nature, which seems to have designed *France** to be the most delightful country under heaven.

I hope that all good citizens will assist my executors in the choice of such useful establishments as shall yet remain to be formed. I call upon them to publish the ideas with which patriotic zeal may inspire them, since now they are encouraged by the consoling certainty that funds for executing them cannot be wanting.

I name for executors my dearest and best friends M. M. - - - - - [Here the testator names six executors, who do not think proper at present to reveal themselves, and then goes on as follows].

I beg of them to meet as often as the affairs of my executorship shall require. In case of an equal division of opinions, the oldest shall have the casting vote. When one of them dies, I desire the survivors to fill the vacancy, as soon as may be, with the most honest, zealous, and disinterested citizen of their acquaintance, and to proceed in this manner for ever. I hope that during the first years of their executorship, when the operations of the fund will be easy, they will transact in this business out of regard to me and to the public. I foresee that, in process of time, the sums to be laid out will become so immensely great, as to render necessary voyages and other considerable expences, which will be productive of no profit. For this reason I have left 125,000 livres of the second sum unappropriated; of the third 711,000; and of the fourth thirty-two millions. These sums I request them to accept as a compensation for their expences and trouble. I charge them always, as far as they can, without hazarding the security of the fund, to prefer those ways of laying out the accumulating sums which shall be most serviceable to individuals and the public.

If a reduction in the rate of interest, or any unforeseen losses, should injure the fund, so as to retard its increase, the execution of my desires need only be postponed in proportion to the interruption that shall happen.

May the success of these establishments cause one day a few tears to be shed on my grave. But above all, may the example of an obscure individual* kindle the emulation of patriots, princes, and public bodies; and engage them to give attention to this new but powerful and infallible means of serving posterity, and contributing to the future improvement and happiness of the world.

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TABLES.

No. I.*

TABLE of the Produce of a Sum of 100 Livres, with its accumulating Interest, during
100 Years, at 5 per Cent.

Years.	£.	s.	d.	Years.	£.	s.	d.
	100	—	—		115	15	3
	Int. 5	—	—		Int. 5	15	9
1	105	—	—	4	121	11	—
	5	5	0		6	1	6
2	110	5	—	5	127	12	6
	5	10	3		6	7	6
3	115	15	3	6	134	—	—
	134	—	—		1145	14	—
	6	14	—		57	5	6
7	140	14	—	51	1202	19	6
	7	—	6	&c.			
8	147	14	6	60	1866	3	—
	7	7	6		93	6	—
9	155	2	—	61	1959	9	—
	7	15	—	&c.			
10	162	17	—	70	3039	13	9
&c.					151	19	6
20	265	4	—	71	3191	13	3
	13	5	—	&c.			
21	278	9	—	80	4951	4	6
&c.					247	11	—
30	431	18	—	81	5198	15	6
	21	11	9	&c.			
31	453	9	9	90	8064	18	9
&c.					403	4	9
40	703	8	3	91	8468	3	6
	35	3	3	&c.			
41	738	11	6	99	12511	5	9
&c.					625	11	3
50	1145	14	—	100	13,136	17	—

* RULE for an easy Conversion of Livres into Pounds Sterling.

Strike off from the number of livres the two figures on the right hand, and multiply by 4 the remaining figures. The product increased by a *tenth* of itself will give nearly the number of pounds answering to the number of livres.

Thus. 100,000 livres are equal nearly to 4000 multiplied by 4, and the product (4000) increased by 400. That is, they are equal to 4400*l*.

In like manner, 1,725,768 livres are equal to 17,257 multiplied by 4, and the product (69,028) increased by 6902. That is, they are equal to 75,930*l*.—*Translator's note*.

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OBSERVATIONS.

We found among the papers of the late *M. Ricard* a great number of very curious tables, but they have not been inserted here because they had no direct relation to the object of his Will. He had computed the produce of a sum of 100 livres, with the accumulated interest of 100 years, according to the different rates of interest; and the results varied much more than could be believed from the proportion of those different rates.

Interest at 4 <i>per cent.</i>	gives 50 }	
at 5 <i>per cent.</i>	— 131 }	times the original sum.
at 6 <i>per cent.</i>	— 339 }	
at 10 <i>per cent.</i>	— 13,780 }	

From hence it follows, that if the operations are well managed, and the money laid out to advantage, even by sinking the principal, (as is done in the fund for the 30 girls of Geneva) and converting afterwards the annual produce into capitals, the executors might considerably accelerate the accomplishment of the benevolent dispositions of the testator.

By laying out the money every three months, as is the custom in some commercial places, the operations might also be accelerated, although but in a small degree.

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REMARK, *By The* Translator.

These observations shew that *M. Ricard* was himself possessed in a high degree of that knowledge of arithmetic which he has required in the comptrollers-general (p. 139) as a condition of the redemption of the debts of *France*. In the last paragraph, however, there is an incorrectness which shews that he had not attended sufficiently to *one* circumstance in the improvement of money by compound interest. This will appear from the following calculations.

One hundred livres will amount, if improved at *5 per cent.* interest,

	Paid yearly. Livres.	Half-yearly. Livres.
In 100 years to	131,501	139,560
In 500 years to	3",932,400',000,000	5",296,100',000,000
	Paid quarterly.	
In 100 years to	143,890 livres.	
In 500 years to	6",166,000'000,000 livres.	

By directing, therefore, that the last hundred livres should be improved at *5 per cent.* *quarterly* interest, *M. Ricard* might have gained an additional sum equal to 2",234,000',000,000 livres; that is, nearly equal to *a hundred thousand millions* sterling, which is a sum more than sufficient to encompass the earth with a belt of guineas all close and five feet broad.

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No. II.

**Table Of The Produce Of Each Sum Of 100 Livres,
Bequeathed By The Testator, From One Hundred To Five
Hundred Years.**

It has been proved by the preceding table, that a sum of 100 livres, with the interest accumulating at 5 *per cent.* for 100 years, will produce 13,136*liv.* 17*sous.* By multiplying this sum by itself four times successively, it will appear that the following sums are the produce of each 100 livres at the end of each century.

	<i>Liv.</i>	<i>sous den.</i>
1 ^{mo} . Produce of 100 livres, with the accumulated interest during 100 years	13,136	17 —
2°. Produce of 100 livres, with the interest, during 200 years,	1,725,768	5 6
3°. Produce of 100 livres in 300 years	226,711,589	12 6
4°. Produce of 100 livres in 400 years	29,782,761,461	13 —
5°. Produce of 100 livres in 500 years	3,912,516,739,074	15 3

No. III.

TABLE of the Disposition of the first Sum, amounting to 13,136 livres 17 sous.

	<i>Livres</i>	<i>sous</i>	<i>den.</i>
A prize of	4,000	—	—
Three others of 600 livres each	1,800	—	—
An edition of the Prize Discourse, extracts from the three others, with 50,000 copies	7,336	17	—
	Total	13,136	17 —

No. IV.

TABLE of the Disposition of the second Sum, amounting to 1,725,768 livres 5 sous 6 den.

	<i>Livres</i>	<i>sous</i>	<i>den.</i>
A fund for 80 prizes of 100 livres each,	1,600,000	—	—
Reserved towards defraying the expences of the executors,	125,768	5	6
	Total	1,725,768	5 6

No. V.

TABLE of the Disposition of the third Sum, amounting to 226,711,589 liv. 12 sous 6
den.

	<i>Livres</i>	<i>sous</i>	<i>den.</i>
Five hundred patriotic banks for lending money without interest	196,000,000	—	—
Building 12 museums at 500,000 liv. each	6,000,000		
	}		
Fund for an annual income of 100,000 livres for each museum	24,000,000	30,000,000	— —
	}		
Reserved towards defraying the expences of the executors	711,589	12	6
	Total 226,711,589 12 6		

During the three years employed in building the museums, the income of 100,000
livres is to be laid by, towards purchasing the library, the cabinets, the carriages, the
horses, and all the furniture of the museum. Afterwards it is to be employed as
follows.

	<i>Livres.</i>
Table-expences for the 40 members of the museum, the six secretaries, the designer, the engraver, and all the domestics, coachmen, cooks, gardeners, &c. }	50,000
Salaries of the secretaries, designer, engraver, and wages of the domestics, }	12,000
Expences of the stable and carriages,	10,000
The library and cabinets,	10,000
Repairs of the building and furniture,	8,000
Printing and unforeseen expences,	10,000
	Total
	100,000

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No. VI.

**Table *Of The Disposition Of The 4Th Sum, Amounting To*
29,782,761,461 *Liv.* 13 *Sous.***

Towards building 100 towns, containing each of them 150,000 souls.

In order that these towns may be wholesome and convenient, it will be proper to consecrate to each of them a very large circular piece of ground, containing 6000 acres; which being estimated at the highest, may be valued at 1000 livres each acre. By judging from the towns which now exist, there will not be required more than from 4 to 5000 houses for 150,000 inhabitants; but it is not conducive to the health of mankind, to be so crowded together. I suppose then that each of these towns may contain 7500 houses^{*}, which, one with the other, will cost 35000 livres in building. Each town will cost

	<i>Livres.</i>	<i>sous.</i>
Six thousand acres of ground at 1000 livres per acre	6,000,000	—
7,500 houses, at 35,000 livres each house	262,500,000	—
Public buildings, town houses, bridges, churches, &c.	29,000,000	—
	Total 297,500,000	—
The preceding sum multiplied into 100, gives	29,750,000,000	—
Reserved towards defraying the expences of the executors, 32,761,461		13
	Total, 29,782,761,461	13

[*] These are the words of Montesquieu.

[*] 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, capable of being applied only to public purposes, in the way which the public (or its delegates) would approve.

[*] 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.

[*] See the *Postscript* to a pamphlet, entitled, *The State of the Finances of the Kingdom, at signing the Preliminary Articles of Peace* in January 1783, printed for Mr. Cadell.

[†] 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.

[*] 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.

[*] 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.

[*] 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.—It is 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.

It was proposed to the convention for settling the *Massachusetts's* constitution, that *one* of the two houses which constitute the *general court* of that State should be a representation of *persons*, and the *other* a representation of *property*; and that the body of the people should appoint only the *electors* of their representatives.—By such regulations corruption in the choice of representatives would be rendered less practicable; and it seems the best method of centering in the Legislature as much as possible of the virtue and ability of the State, and of making its voice always an expression of the will and best sense of the people.—On this plan also, the number of

members constituting a Legislature might be much lessened.—This is a circumstance of particular consequence, to which the united States, in some future period of their increase, will find it necessary to attend. It has been often justly observed, that a legislative body very numerous is little better than a *mob*.

[*] In this State, and also the State of *Massachusetts, New Jersey, &c.* any attempt to canvass, 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.

[*] 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.

[*] 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 rivalry 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 right, 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 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.

[*] See a remonstrance, full of energy, directed to the united States on this Subject, by a very warm and able friend to the rights of mankind, in a Tract, entitled—*Fragment of an original Letter on the Slavery of the Negroes*; written in the year 1776, but published in 1784, by Thomas Day, Esq.

[*] See the Notes annexed to the Translation of this Letter.

[*] What is here said refers to the following account of M. *Turgot's* administration in the *second* tract on *Civil Liberty and the War with America*, p. 150, &c. “A new reign produced a new minister of finance in *France*, whose name will be respected by posterity for a set of measures as new to the *political* world, as any late discoveries in

the system of nature have been to the *philosophical* world—Doubtful in their operation, as all untried measures must be, but distinguished by their tendency to lay a solid foundation for endless peace, industry, and a general enjoyment of the gifts of nature, arts and commerce—The edicts issued during his administration exhibit indeed a *phænomon* of the most extraordinary kind. An absolute King rendering a voluntary account to his subjects, and inciting his people to *think*; a right which it has been the business of all absolute princes and their ministers to extinguish.—In these edicts the King declared in the most distinct terms against a bankruptcy, &c. while the minister applied himself to increase every public resource by principles more liberal than *France*, or any part of *Europe*, ever had in serious contemplation.—It is much to be regretted, that the opposition he met with and the intrigues of a court should have deprived the world of those lights, which must have resulted from the example of such an administration.” In this passage I had, in the first edition, mentioned improperly Mr. *Turgot’s want of address* among the other causes of his dismissal from power. This occasioned a letter from him to inform me of the true reasons of his dismissal, and begun that correspondence, of which this letter is a part, and which continued till his death.—It may not be improper to add here, that his successor was Mr. *Necker*, author of the interesting Treatise on the Administration of the Finances of France just published; and that in the passage just quoted, the following notice is taken of this appointment.—“After a short interval, a nomination, in some respects still more extraordinary, took place in the Court of *France*. A court, which a few years since was distinguished by its bigotry and intolerance, has raised a *protestant*, the subject of a small but virtuous republic, to a decisive lead in the regulation of its finances. It is to be presumed that so singular a preference will produce an equally singular exertion of integrity and talents.”

[*] See Mr. Burke’s Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol.

[†] It is the Constitution of *Delware* that imposes the test here meant. That of the *Jerseys*, 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.

[*] 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 embarrassment and danger to which it exposes the union ought to be guarded against as far as possible in laying out future States.

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

[*] This refers to the following words (taken from Mr. Justamond’s translation of the *Abbe Raynal’s* History of the European Settlements) in the Title-page to the Second Tract on Civil Liberty—“Should the morals of the English be perverted by luxury—should they lose their colonies by restraining them, &c. they will be enslaved. They will become insignificant and contemptible; and Europe will not be able to shew the world *one* nation in which she can pride herself.”

[*] In compliance with Mr. *Turgot's* desire, this letter was kept private during his life. Since his death I 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 and the excellent Philosopher and Statesman 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 omitted in Page 52.

The imperfection of *real* knowledge may often produce unreasonable incredulity.—Had the best Philosophers been told a few years ago, “that there existed fishes which had the command of *lightening*, and which used it to kill their prey,” they would have scouted the information as absurd and ridiculous.

[*] 22 l. 4 s. 6 d.

[*] See table 1st annexed to this Will.

[†] Nearly a guinea.

[†] Four pounds nine shillings.

[§] See table 1st and 2d.

[*] See the approbations of the Universities of Alcala, Salamanca, Ingolstadt, Fribourg in Brisgaw, Mayence, Cologne and Treves, printed at the end of a *Treatise upon Usury and Interest, Lyon, Bruysel-Ponthus, 1776*, in 12mo. The first five of these approbations have been deposited in the archives of the consulship of the town of Lyons.

[†] See table 2d and 4th.

[*] See table 5th.

[†] No good men will ever write against religion and government. On the contrary; they will do all they can to render them greater blessings, by spreading just notions of them, and clearing them from those abuses and corruptions by which usurpers and hypocrites have made them the means of enslaving and debasing mankind.

[*] See table 6th.

[†] The Executors have not yet determined whether they shall publish this Memorial, which is very copious, and contains some ideas that may claim originality. The more immediate concerns of their executorship have not yet afforded them time for examining the whole of it. Besides, there can be no necessity of hurrying the publication, inasmuch as the towns of which it treats are not to be built till the end of four centuries.

[*] 176 thousands of millions sterling.—See tables 2d and 7th.

[†] There have been, it is said, even in England Lords of the Admiralty who could not *count*, and Chancellors of the *Exchequer* who could not *read* figures.

[*] The parable of the good Samaritan directs every man to look upon every man as his *neighbour*, without regarding his country or religion. *M. Ricard* appears to have attended to this divine instruction. But *Englishmen* probably forget it, when, in their public devotions, they pray that God would *abate the pride* and *assuage the malice* of their enemies.

[*] France, undoubtedly, possesses some of the best *natural* advantages, and is a great kingdom. But it wants the first of all advantages. It wants a free constitution of government. It wants civil and religious liberty. Britain enjoys these blessings; and this, though less than a *fourth* of France in extent and population, gives it a vast preeminence. May these blessings be soon recovered by one of these countries, and never lost by the other.—*Translator's note.*

[*] During the printing of this Will, the *Gazette de France* announced a legacy of the same kind, which will prove to our readers that those ideas may sometimes be realized. “We read in some of our papers a very singular fact. Judge Normand, of Norwich, who died 1724, made a will, in which he bequeathed 4000l. sterling towards building in 60 years, from that time, a charity school, to the founding of which the principal, and its accumulating interest, during this period, should be appropriated. His further dispositions fix the number of scholars to 120, regulates their meals for every day in the week, each to have for dinner on Sunday a pound of roast beef, and in the evening ten ounces of plum-pudding. He invests the management of this school in the Bishop, the Chancellor, the Dean, the four members for the city and county, and eight clergymen. The period determined upon for the execution of this Will expired in the month of May, and the accumulated sum amounts to 74,000l. sterling.”

Gazette de France, Friday, Aug. 13, 1784. No. 65.

[*] It would have been much better if *M. Ricard* had allowed a house for every family, which would have made the number of houses about 30000.