
DISCOURSE.

REVELATION xvi. 13, 14.

And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

IN this passage, some interesting events are foretold. To this sure word of prophecy, let us give earnest heed, that we may foresee evils, and seek protection in Jehovah. His name is a strong tower, into which the righteous may run and find safety.

There is difficulty in explaining prophecies of temporal events, until they receive their accomplishment. For, as writers have judiciously observed, it is the nature of such prophecies not to be thoroughly understood, till they are thoroughly fulfilled. They have, however, so definite a meaning, that we may safely

consult them to influence our views, feelings and pursuits ; to strengthen and confirm our faith in the universal and perfect government of Jehovah.

Saint John was favored with a revelation of the most interesting events from the time in which he lived, to the end of the world. In the passage just read, we are apprized of the baleful influence of three impure and evil spirits, which proceed out of the mouth of the dragon, of the beast, and the false prophet. It is well known that in the prophetic language of scripture, a kingdom or government is often represented by some kind of beast. Nor is it unusual in scripture, for the same thing to be represented under different similitudes. In Daniel's prophecy, the Persian empire is represented by a bear and a ram, and the Grecian by a leopard and a he-goat.

The dragon is said, in Rev. xx. to be that old serpent which is the Devil and Satan. He is mentioned in chapter xii. as existing before the beast and the false prophet, and he continues to practise infernal wickedness after they are cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone, as you will see by comparing chapter xix. 20, with chapter xx. 10. The dragon, in chapter xii. is represented as having seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads. Heathen Rome appears to be intended by this prophetic representation. The seven heads, which were crowned, are

seven kings or forms of government, which were successively adopted at Rome. The ten horns are the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman empire was afterwards divided. In this view, the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan, may be fully represented as having seven heads and ten horns. For Satan reigned in heathen Rome. The seven forms of government there adopted were under his influence; and so were the ten kingdoms, which afterwards arose. For after he *was cast out** of the Roman empire, by the accession of Constantine the Great to the imperial throne, and by his edict in favor of the christians, then the power of the dragon was displayed by the beast† which rose up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy. And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority. This is the beast mentioned in the text; and it appears that he had temporal authority over the ten kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided. But we are informed, verse 11, of another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon. And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose

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* Chap. xii. 9. † Chap. xiii. 1.

deadly wound was healed. And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do, &c. This beast may be the same with the false prophet in the text. They agree in their most prominent features. This beast doeth great wonders; and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast. Of the false prophet it is said, chapter xix. 20, And the beast was taken and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. Hence the dragon, the beast and the false prophet are combined together in the same cause. The dragon gave the first beast his power, and his seat, and great authority. And the second beast exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him. Being thus combined, they form the Papal power.*

This power, we are informed, is to continue 1260 years. The rise was gradual, and it appears that the fall will be so likewise. Could we exactly ascertain when this power acquired its complete state, we might know when it

* By the judicious remarks of a respected friend, the foregoing paragraph has been some altered, since the Discourse was delivered.

would be completely destroyed. As early as 606, the Pope was declared to be universal bishop. He had then, and even before, great influence, not only in ecclesiastical concerns, but also in the temporal affairs of the Roman empire and other kingdoms connected with it. In 752, he began to dispose of kingdoms, by dethroning Childeric, king of France, ordering him into a monastery; and then releasing Pepin of his oath, and assigning him the kingdom. King Pepin, four years afterwards, prosecuted a war in Italy, where he subdued the Lombardo, and took the territory of Ravenna, which he presented to the Pope, and thus gave him the authority of a temporal prince. This authority of the Pope was afterwards confirmed by Charlemagne, the son and successor of Pepin in the kingdom of France. For when a king of the Lombardo violated his engagements and rebelled against the Pope, Charlemagne besieged and defeated the rebellious king, and then went in person to Rome to visit the Pope, where he adjudged and determined that *his Holiness, being God's Vicar, could not be subject to the judgment of man.* The Pope rewarded him for his service and complaisance, by declaring him emperor on christmas eve, A. D. 800.

We have clear scriptural authority for considering France as peculiarly active in establishing the Papal power; in that we have lately seen this nation attempting to destroy this

power. This is agreeable to the prediction : Rev. xvii. 16, 17 ; “ And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire. For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.” The same power which exalts, shall be the great instrument of destroying the Romish hierarchy. The attempts, however, of France to destroy the beast have hitherto been only partial. For Bonaparte has re-established Popery in France, Italy, and some other parts. A numerous train of Jesuits has also been instituted, after they had been, for a number of years, suppressed in all Roman catholic countries. Bonaparte has likewise invited the Pope of late to crown him emperor. The Pope has complied ; and Bonaparte has received the imperial crown at his hand, as Charlemagne had done, 1000 years before. The Pope, in this late coronation, has not however conducted in that haughty, imperious manner, his predecessor did. He is greatly fallen. And, if we begin to reckon the 1260 years continuance of the beast, from the time the Pope became a temporal prince, we may look for the complete abolition of the Romish hierarchy in about 200 years from this time.

In the chapter containing the text, we have account of seven vials, to be poured out in succession upon the beast and those devoted to his interest, and under his influence. In this way, God's wrath is in part executed upon this idolatrous power. It seems that the running of these vials is to take up the time of the beast's continuance, or 1260 years. By comparing the prophetic descriptions of these vials with events which have taken place, we have satisfactory evidence that five of these vials were poured out some time since. The fifth vial is pretty generally supposed to refer to the reformation, which was begun by Luther, in 1517. Then the Pope and his adherents suffered great vexation and anguish : their light was turned into darkness, and their wisdom into foolishness. They were baffled and confounded in their attempts to prevent the reformation, or to suppress the northern heresy, as they called it. They blasphemed the God of heaven, by reviling his servants and the truths they preached, by their anathemas against them, and by establishing, in the council of Trent, the whole system of their corrupt doctrines and idolatrous worship.

Allowing the seven vials to be running 1260 years, each one will have a period of 180 years. If the fifth vial began to be poured out in 1517, it would cease running, according to this computation, in 1697. Consequently the running of the sixth vial would commence

about that time. We may therefore look in the last century and the beginning of this, for events, which correspond with the prophetic description of this vial.

“ And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates, and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.”

You will recollect that in the revelation of St. John, Babylon represents Rome. Hence by adverting to the manner in which ancient Babylon was destroyed, we may learn, in view of this passage, how mystical Babylon, or the church of Rome, is to be weakened, and its final destruction accelerated. The river Euphrates was of great utility to the ancient Babylon. It ran through the city; it also ran around the city on the outside of the walls by means of an artificial canal. Hence the river defended the city, and also supplied it with water and fish, and other provisions which were brought into it by water carriage. It seems the city could not be taken by a besieging army, while it enjoyed the rich advantages of this river. Hence it was by turning the course of this river, so that the channel under the wall was dry, that Cyrus marched in, and took the city for his uncle Darius, the Mede. Cyrus and Darius were kings of the east; and in the words of St. John there is an allusion to the manner in which Babylon was taken. As the water of the Euphrates was, in effect, dri-

ed up to prepare the way for the kings of the east to destroy Babylon ; so the great source of wealth and power to the church of Rome, or mystical Babylon, is to be cut off, to prepare for its destruction. This was greatly done the last century. In 1773, the order of Jesuits was suppressed and abolished. These had been warmly engaged in promoting the Papal power. Possessing eminent abilities, and a very enterprizing spirit, they had, for a time, fair prospects of propagating the catholic faith through the world. In Germany, the friars and nuns were suppressed in 1785 ; and five years after, in France. In some Popish countries, the inquisition has been abolished, the last century ; and in others, its dreadful severity and cruelty have been moderated. The Pope has also, in the same period, greatly lost his influence, his power, and his revenue in Rome, in France, in Germany, and other places. A vast many of the Romish clergy have been slain or banished, and their estates confiscated. “ At the same time, the personal revenues of the Pope have been exceedingly diminished, and in a great measure annihilated. Avignon, that ancient and opulent city, and the whole province, of which it was the capital, has been taken from him. The late Pope was seized, divested of all temporal dominion, restricted to a certain pension, and exiled from his royal city.” How exceedingly have been dried up the waters of the mystical Euphrates.

But notwithstanding the man of sin has been exceedingly weakened, in some respects, yet, in others, he has had astonishing influence and success, agreeably to divine prediction. *And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.* No friend of revelation, on reading this passage, can doubt but that here is a prophetic description of some mighty efforts of wickedness. Descriptions, similar in substance, are given in other parts of the sacred volume. In Daniel xii. 10, we are informed of a period, probably the same with this in the text, when many shall be purified and made white and tried; but *the wicked shall do wickedly, and none of the wicked shall understand.* The wicked always do wickedly. But here seems to be a period foretold, when they shall do wickedly to a far greater degree, and be in a state of greater blindness and infatuation. We are told in II. Timothy iii. that *in the last days, probably the present, or the time of the sixth vial, perilous times shall come: for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unboly, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those*

that are good, traitors, beads, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power that of. What an amazing complication of wickedness is here foretold. St. Peter also apprizes us of the same abounding wickedness. *There shall come, in the last days, scoffers, walking after their own lusts.** He also informs us that these will deride the idea of the Lord's coming to judgment, and insinuate that all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation. Consequently they will deny that there ~~has~~ been any such universal deluge and destruction of mankind as the Bible declares. His words in the preceding chapter may point out the manner in which these agents of the wicked one proceed. *For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption.†*

It appears from the text that these agents of infernal wickedness, these spirits of devils, shall do wonders; for so the word, translated *miracles*, may be rendered. The wonders they perform may be their awful and successful attempts to promote wickedness and infidelity, and combine kings or rulers and the people of the whole world in opposing the Most

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* II. Epistle, iii. 3.

† Verses 18 and 19.

High. In this way, the wicked will become ripe for destruction, and then the battle of the great day of God Almighty will commence in the pouring out of the seventh vial.

Let us examine the accomplishment of this interesting prophecy.

As these evil spirits proceed from the beast, so we must look for their origin and first appearance in those places, where the beast has most successfully exerted his influence.

In a nation, under the influence, and greatly devoted to the interests, of the beast, a conspiracy was formed, the last century, to abolish the christian religion. In this conspiracy, Voltaire was a distinguished character. He was born, A. D. 1694, in France; and there he received his education. He so early engaged in the design of abolishing christianity, that, while a student, he received this prophetic rebuke from his instructor: "Unfortunate young man, you will one day come to be the standard bearer of infidelity.*"

After this, he associated with men of corrupt morals; and, in 1730, he became so open and sanguine in opposing christianity, that when it was said to him, "you may do or write what you please, you will never be able to destroy the christian religion," he replied without hesitation, "That is what we shall see." He was so confident of success, that he

* Payson's Modern Antichrist, page 32.

would say, "I am weary of hearing people repeat that twelve men have been sufficient to establish christianity; and I will prove that one may suffice to overthrow it."* But he soon found that he was not equal to the work. He therefore obtained the aid and confidence of others, particularly D'Alembert, Frederic II. king of Prussia, and Diderot.† In 1752, the conspiracy assumed a regular form, and Voltaire became its chief.‡ "*Crush the Wretch,*" was their watch word, which they used to animate each other. The person whom they designated by this opprobrious name, and whom they intended to crush, was Jesus Christ. *Twelve scoundrels,* they termed his apostles.§ A number of distinguished characters, and persons in high stations associated with Voltaire in his design against christianity. Of these were "Joseph II. emperor of Germany, Catharine II. empress of Russia, Christiern VII. king of Denmark, Gustavus III. king of Sweden, Ulrica, queen of Sweden, and Poniatowski, king of Poland."

"A great part of the ministry, the nobles, and higher class of citizens in France, and (excepting the clergy, who for the most part remained firm in the cause of religion) the literati, not of France only, but of Europe in general, appear to have been ensnared with this fascinating philosophy. Nor was it confined

* Ibid. page 33.

† Ibid. page 38.

‡ Ibid. page 31.

§ Ibid. page 36.

to men of science.”* Its influence extended to the lower classes of society. This anti-christian spirit drew in kings and rulers, as well as common people, to promote its corrupt designs.

A detail of some of the methods, which the conspirators adopted to accomplish their object, may exhibit increasing evidence of their designs, give some view of their success, and lead us to reflect on our own danger.

One method was to abound in professions of love and regard to their fellow men. They made great pretensions to toleration, reason and humanity. They proclaimed themselves the friends of liberty and the rights of man. By such professions, often repeated, many were exceedingly captivated, and disposed to view the conspirators as their best friends. Numbers were charmed with the magic sounds of reason and philosophy, of liberty and the equal rights of man. If Voltaire and his associates had appeared without disguise, and called themselves the enemies of christianity, they would have been generally despised; but by intrigue and dissimulation, they induced many to favor their abominable views. Without hesitation, they could make professions of religion when they saw it expedient, for obtaining their object. “Many were duped by what D’Alembert calls *his vows to religion*; and Vol-

* Ibid. page 55, 56.

taire boasts much of the success of his master stroke of policy in erecting a church and constantly receiving communion.”*

Another method was to disseminate infidel, corrupt, disorganizing publications. In this way great efforts were made to weaken and destroy the truth of scripture history, to unhinge the public mind, and effect a general revolution of moral and religious sentiment. “ Writings, in every form and shape, calculated to excite licentious desires, to deprave the moral taste, to communicate the infection of infidelity, and exhibit religion in a ridiculous view, were crowded upon the public.”† These publications were sold to some, and freely given to others. In these writings, it was insinuated and declared that the God of the Jews and of the Christians is but a phantom and chimera; that all ideas of justice and injustice, of virtue and vice are arbitrary and dependant on custom; that the soul is a chimera; that modesty is only an invention of refined voluptuousness; and that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of folly.‡ Various other immoral, impious, and abominable opinions were inculcated.

Another method was to conduct in the most secret manner. Secrecy they viewed essentially necessary, in order to be successful.

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* Ibid. page 54.

† Ibid. page 47.

‡ Ibid. page 49, 50.

They designed to act completely the part of conspirators. Hence their chief would often remind them, "Strike; hurl the javelin, but hide your hand." They concerted plans to disseminate their pernicious sentiments, as secretly as possible. This was greatly effected by the publication of the French Encyclopedia; a work, projected by D'Alembert, one of the conspirators. The public were promised that it should be a complete treasure of human arts and sciences; and that all the articles on religious subjects should be compiled by learned and orthodox divines. But the work proved to be the handmaid of infidelity. The publication was greatly opposed by the virtuous and enlightened, and was for a time suspended. At length, it was completed; and following editions, under the appearance of being corrected, were more filled with the poison of infidelity and atheism.*

The secret societies instituted in France and Germany had great influence in promoting the designs of the conspirators. These societies were instituted much in the manner of lodges of free-masons. Their object and views however were very different, being this, to disseminate the most corrupt and pernicious sentiments. The most distinguished of these societies was the *Grand Orient* at Paris. This may be considered, rather as a *masonic parlia-*

* Ibid. page 39, 40, 41.

ment, composed of delegates from all the principal lodges, and in which masonic concerns were ultimately determined. In 1782, this society had under its direction 266 improved lodges.*

Similar societies were also formed in Germany about the middle of the last century. A close connexion was formed between some of these and the societies in France. Becoming acquainted with the new discoveries of the French, the German adepts imbibed the opinion, "that religion was the slavery of the freeborn mind; that reason was the only safe guide, and the only deity whom mankind ought to worship; that the establishment of government was the original sin; and emancipation from all legal restraint, the true regeneration taught by Jesus Christ; and which can be effected only by the wonderful power of those two words, liberty and equality."† It appears that the great object of the societies was to propagate these and similar sentiments.

A distinguished character in these societies was "Dr. Adam Weishaupt, professor of canon law in the university of Ingolstadt. He had acquired a high reputation in his profession, which drew around him numbers from the neighboring universities."‡ His extensive influence was employed in disseminating the

* Ibid. page 74.

† Ibid. page 77.

‡ Ibid. page 81.

most pernicious opinions. He practised various arts of deception and intrigue to obliterate from the minds of others every moral and religious sentiment. He explored every avenue to the human heart, that he might seduce his fellow-men, and lead them to adopt such principles as would best promote his designs. And according to his own representation of the matter, as it afterwards appeared, the most infamous characters were associated with him in this business. To gain proselytes, not only artful insinuations, but also downright lying were practised.

It was by the discovery of many dangerous publications, secretly circulated, that the public were first alarmed. Some of these were traced back to the society of which Weishaupt was member. Methods were taken to detect the conspirators; and, "in 1785, four professors of the Marianen Academy, with some others, who appear to have withdrawn from the order under a conviction of its evil tendency, were summoned before a court of enquiry.—Their evidence was alarming.—They declared that in the lodges sensual pleasures were advocated, and self-murder justified on epicurian and stoical principles; that death was represented as *an eternal sleep*; patriotism and loyalty were called narrow-minded prejudices, incompatible with universal benevolence. Nothing was so frequently discussed as the propriety of employing, for a good purpose,

the means which the wicked employed for evil purposes.'—These depositions, given separately, under oath, and the signature of the deponents, were perfectly harmonious."*

In 1786, a collection of their original writings was found. From these, it appears that they inculcated atheism and the mortality of the soul, or that death is the final end of man; that they used the name *christian*, and substituted reason for christianity; and that they acknowledge their system to be '*a bundle of lies.*' It also appears that their object was an universal revolution, to be effected in the most secret manner.† Can there be any doubt that here is a fulfilment, in part at least, of the prediction of three unclean spirits, going forth to gather the world together against the Almighty? For "three of the witnesses above mentioned declare, that while connected with the order, they were several times informed, that it had extended to Italy, to Venice, to Austria, to Holland, Saxony on the Rhine, and even to *America.*"‡

How widely extended was their influence at that period. But it does not appear that this discovery defeated the designs of the conspirators. Weishaupt had previously said, "Let my whole order go to rack and ruin, in three years, I will answer to restore it, and that to a more powerful state than it was in

*Ibid. page 116, 117. † Ibid. page 117, 118, 119, 121.

‡ Ibid. page 127.

before. Obstacles only stimulate my activity.”* Hence a new confederation was projected, under the name of the *German Union*. This confederation owed its existence in a great degree to this circumstance: That scheme of religion, which excludes from the gospel its *peculiar* and distinguishing doctrines, had made rapid progress in Germany, until christianity appeared but very little, if any, superior to the religion of nature. Hence a favorable opportunity was presented to those, who wished to destroy the christian religion, to join with those divines, who denied or explained away the peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel. The opportunity was gladly embraced by the enemies of christianity, and the German Union was formed. Immediately “a multitude of writers appeared, who expressed great zeal for christianity; but the manifest object of this zeal was to reduce it to a system of natural religion. The Bible was explained, corrected, allegorized, and otherwise twisted, till the minds of men had hardly any thing left to rest on, as a doctrine of revealed religion.”† This prepared the way for others to come forward and deny revelation, and then declare that reason was man’s only rule. And the next step taken was to inculcate the doctrines of materialism and atheism.‡ On the whole, “it appears,

* Ibid. page 132. † Ibid. page 133, 134.

‡ See Note A. at the end of the Discourse.

as an eminent character observes,* from *undoubted evidence, collected from the most authentic sources, and produced about the same time by two different authors, of different countries and different religions, and writing without the least concert or communication with each other,† that there have in fact subsisted in the heart of Europe, certain sects of men, distinguished by various mysterious rites and ceremonies, but all concurring in one common object, namely, the gradual overthrow, not merely of all religion, but of all civil government and all social order throughout the whole christian world. This design they had been carrying on with incredible industry and perseverance in various ways for a long course of years; some openly attacking the great bulwarks of morality and religion, others secretly undermining their foundations, till at length the explosion burst out instantaneously on one devoted country."*

Who then can wonder that the French revolution has taken place, when such means had been used to corrupt the public mind? When infidel and atheistical sentiments had been extending their influence for years among that people, it cannot surprize us that the following blasphemous sentiments should be expressed in a discourse, composed by Anacharsis Cloots, and printed and circulated by order of the National Convention. "Man, when free,

* The bishop of London, in his charge to the clergy of his diocese.

† Barruel and Robison.

wants no other divinity than himself. Reason dethrones both the kings of the earth, and the *king of heaven*. No monarchy above, if we wish to preserve *our republic* below. Volumes have been written to determine whether a republic of atheists could exist: I maintain that every other republic is a chimera. If you admit the existence of an heavenly sovereign, you introduce the wooden horse, within your walls; what you adore by day will be your destruction at night.* Considering the zeal and industry of Voltaire and his associates, we need not wonder that the National Convention gave an explicit sanction to the above sentiments. When the people had been abundantly taught that family government is the beginning of all tyranny, and civil government a curse; that chastity and natural affection are mere prejudices; that murder, adultery, and other crimes are lawful and virtuous, when circumstances require them to be perpetrated, we need not be surprised that thousands have been inhumanly murdered; that mothers have given their babes to be killed, that they themselves might be freed from the trouble of nursing them; that the sacred obligations of the marriage covenant have been dissolved, and prostitution countenanced by the National Convention.† How strikingly we behold the fulfilment of the text, and the genuine

* Payson's Mod. Anti. page 213.

† Ibid. page 224, 225, 226, 227.

tendency of infidelity and atheism, in this threefold combination against religion, civil government, and domestic society. Wonders have been performed—such wonders as astonish a great part of mankind.

The sure word of prophecy informs us that these evil spirits will extend their influence through the world of mankind. Accordingly it appears that Weishaupt contemplated the plan of an order, which should in time govern the world. Have we then no reason to fear lest we, in these United States, should be brought under the influence of these evil spirits? Have we no cause to suspect that this is already the case, in some degree?

It is very evident to every impartial, discerning mind, that impiety, infidelity, and various kinds of wickedness have greatly increased in this land, within a hundred years past. A writer of eminence* and well acquainted with the history of the last century, observes, that “the first considerable change in the religious character of the people of this country was accomplished by the war, which began in 1755.—Looser habits of thinking began then to be adopted, and were followed, as they always are, by looser conduct. The American war increased these evils.—A long train of immoral doctrines and practices spread into every corner of the country. The profanation

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* Dr. Dwight, President of Yale College.

of the sabbath, before unusual, profaneness of language, drunkenness, gambling, and lewdness were exceedingly increased; and what is less commonly remarked, but is perhaps not less mischievous than any of them, a light, vain method of thinking concerning sacred things, a cold, contemptuous indifference towards every moral and religious subject.—At this period, infidelity began to obtain, in this country, an extensive currency and reception.” Other events have greatly contributed to the spread of infidelity among us. The late revolution in France has greatly animated infidels in this country. It has given a new spring to their exertions, and inspired them with greater boldness in attacking the christian faith. Infidel and atheistical publications have been industriously circulated through our land.* Great efforts have been made to corrupt the public mind, and promote the increase of wickedness. These evils have indeed received a partial check by the correct information, which has since been diffused respecting the French revolution, and by the happy revivals of religion in many parts of our land. But while many are purified and made white, the wicked still do wickedly; nor will they understand.

We have also information, worthy of credit, that secret societies, similar to those in Eu-

* See Note B.

rope, have been established in this country. In the original writings of the conspirators, found in Germany, several lodges in America are found on the list as existing prior to 1786. We are also informed by respectable authority, that a lodge was instituted at Portsmouth, in Virginia, as early as 1786, and was a branch of the Grand Orient of France. The members of this Lodge, consisting of one hundred, were chiefly emigrants from France and St. Domingo. A similar society existed at New-York, called the Grand Orient of New-York, and derived in like manner from the lodge of the same name in France. From these, issued several other societies. This information is confirmed by a variety of circumstances, by other testimony, and by events which have taken place.*

May not these things, my brethren, justly alarm us? Must not our danger be great, if hundreds among us are combined together for the vilest purposes, and accomplishing their designs with great secrecy and intrigue? May not such secret combinations of men, acting in perfect concert, have vast influence in disseminating pernicious, disorganizing sentiments, and corrupting the public mind? And how soon, unlawful combinations of men,

* On this subject, the reader, if he wish for further information, is desired to peruse, candidly, chapter 14th of Payson's Modern Antichrist.

in midnight assemblies, may deprive us of our invaluable privileges, none can tell.

But our danger demands a more particular consideration. This is a subject, in which I am equally concerned with yourselves. My interest is involved with yours. It is not a party interest, but your best good for time and eternity—the best interests of my country and the welfare of mankind, which I wish to keep in view, and zealously promote.

1. An undue attachment and partiality to others may mislead our judgment and be a source of evil. We have had a peculiar attachment to the French nation. They generously assisted us in our arduous struggle for independence. Their assistance was so necessary and timely, that we felt ourselves under obligations of gratitude. Having ourselves experienced the happy consequences of our revolution, we felt a peculiar sympathy towards them, when their revolution commenced. We wished them success, and rejoiced in their prospect of enjoying civil liberty. But have we duly distinguished between their fighting for liberty, and their practising the most abominable licentiousness? Have we not been apt to excuse, not only their errors and unavoidable irregularities, but also their cruelty, impiety, and atheism? or to doubt and disbelieve their evil designs and abominable conduct? It gave us great joy to behold them destroying popery; but, while they were

ostensibly, pursuing this object, some here did not see that they were infidels, the enemies of truth, of righteousness and the eternal GOD. And hence some have viewed the clergy, in this land, as acting inconsistently in praying for the downfall of popery, and then lamenting the event when it took place. But there is a manifest distinction between attempts to destroy popery, and attempts to destroy the gospel. Abundant and correct information assures us that the great design of leading men in the French revolution, has been to abolish, not merely popery, as such, but the pure and holy religion of Jesus Christ. But have not many been unwilling to admit this? And why? Has it not been owing to a fond, partial attachment to the French?

A similar attachment to any other nation, or to any individuals among ourselves, may be exceedingly pernicious; and especially when such attachment is accompanied with an uncandid and violent spirit of party. Under the influence of such a spirit, we shall not suitably attend to the merits of highly interesting questions. But party feelings will prejudice our understandings and bias our judgments. In no instance, perhaps, will such a spirit be more pernicious, than in attending to the character and conduct of rulers, or of candidates for civil offices. This being the case, some will hear nothing but what is for, and.

others nothing but what is against, a person. But is this the way to arrive at the truth? Is this the way to obtain correct information?

2. We may be in danger by attending more to the professions of men, than to their conduct and designs. It is easy for men to make great professions of love to others, and it is a very successful way of gaining their affection and confidence. This has been the way, which designing men have heretofore taken to overturn civil government and destroy religious institutions. When Absalom wished to dethrone king David, and usurp the government, he rose early and stood by the way of the gate to the king, that he might address those who came to court on business. He flattered them that their cause was good, but insinuated that the king neglected them, and that they suffered through his neglect. He then added, *O that I were made judge in the land, that every man which hath any suit or cause might come unto me, and I would do him justice.* When any one came nigh, he held out his hand, embraced and kissed him. In this way, he stole the hearts of the people, and formed a conspiracy, which assumed a formidable appearance, and threatened the nation with ruin. History informs us that similar methods were practised by designing men in Greece and Rome, to gain the affection and confidence of the people in order to aggrandize themselves. It was by flattering the people that Marat and

Robespierre, in France, acquired astonishing confidence and authority ; and then they destroyed thousands whom they had flattered. In the same way, the Helvetic republic was destroyed. Mengaud, the commissioner of the Executive Directory, thus addressed the Swifs : “ We come among you as friends. We are your brothers. Do not be afraid of any ill-treatment. Property and persons shall be protected, as much as the enemies of liberty shall be made to suffer.”* This happy people had, for many years, “ quietly enjoyed all the manifold advantages, which sound policy, steadily pursued, could confer.” But by listening to these flattering proposals, they lost their civil government, and suffered the various evils, which the most base and perfidious flatterers could inflict, even “ imprisonments, insults, rapes, requisitions and rapine of all kinds.”

Such examples give us solemn admonition. We see our danger. Happy it will be for us, if we always discern it, and escape the fatal snare. For we are not to expect that those, who would deprive us of our privileges, will come forward and openly avow their designs. This would be departing from the principles of their masters. It is their maxim to bind with *invisible bands*, to strike, but hide the hand. Hence we must expect that those, who

* Mallet Du Pan's destruction of the Helvetic republic, Boston edit. 1799, page 256.

would attempt the destruction of the christian church, will make professions of religion, and deceive by good words and fair speeches.

3. Our danger may be great from the spread of anti-christian and inflammatory publications. In this way, the judgments of people may be blinded by misrepresentation, and their passions artfully inflamed. Much has heretofore been done, in other places, by disseminating infidel, disorganizing publications, to corrupt the minds of people, and lead them, first to a loose way of thinking, and then to licentious conduct. We may experience the same evils. Let us be ever so able and successful in repelling powerful enemies, who invade our rights by force of arms; yet "an army of" corrupt "principles," circulating among us in pamphlets and periodical publications, will soon undermine our religious institutions, subvert our liberties, and ruin our country. The great advantages of information we enjoy, may be easily used by designing men to effect our ruin. We might derive great benefit from the general and extensive circulation of newspapers, if they were all correct and impartial. But how many are so conducted as to deceive, mislead, and inflame the minds of people. Many other publications are assiduously circulated, which have a manifest tendency to promote immorality and impiety. The speaker lately saw a pamphlet,* much ap-

* Called the Federal Catechism.

plauded, no doubt, by some ; but evidently designed to accomplish a party, political purpose ; and, at the same time, calculated to bring divine truth and ordinances into utter contempt. When men circulate such publications in order to accomplish their designs, their real object becomes very apparent ; and we behold great cause of alarm.

4. A fallacious mode of reasoning on important subjects may be a great source of evil. It may greatly mislead and deceive many, to argue that the civil magistrate has nothing to do with religion, so that under the administration of men of no religion, or of infidels, we shall enjoy equal or greater religious liberty, than under the administration of those who credibly profess to believe in divine revelation, to fear God, and embrace the Saviour. But is not such reasoning fallacious ? Is it not calculated to deceive ? For is it not vastly important to a people, that their rulers fear God, believe in his word, and look for a state of final retribution ? In no other way, can an oath have any binding efficacy on the conscience. Let rulers and others discard the doctrines of revelation, and disbelieve the final judgment and *the wrath to come*, and the administering of oaths will be a trifling, senseless affair. Can we then expect fidelity in rulers, or integrity in magistrates ? Who would wish to be ruled, or to have causes, interesting to himself and his children, decided by

infidels? by those who neither fear God, nor look for his righteous judgment? Is it of no importance to society, that civil rulers should favor and promote religion by their example and influence?—Is it likely that we shall enjoy more religious liberty under wicked, infidel rulers, than under those who fear God and believe in his word? How was it at Rome? Was more religious liberty enjoyed under heathen than under christian emperors? Who persecuted men for their religion? Not christian emperors, but heathen. Was more religious liberty enjoyed under Jeroboam the son of Nebat, than under David or Solomon? These pious kings used their influence to have men fear God and walk in his ways. But Jeroboam used his influence to prevent this; *he draws Israel from following the Lord.* It is true that under his government the wicked could more freely indulge their evil, licentious desires; they had more liberty to commit iniquity, than they had under the government of pious rulers. Such liberty is pleasing to many. It is pleasing to those of a factious disposition, to those who indulge a spirit of opposition against law and order. Liberty and equality are their favorite words. These they will repeat with great pleasure. But is that liberty desirable, which is a freedom from all religious and moral obligation? Or is that equality desirable, which subverts all social order? Can we expect to

enjoy true, rational liberty under the reign of infidelity? when “it directly tends to *arm licentiousness against law, confusion against order, and vice against virtue.*” Is it wise, is it prudent to adopt this maxim, that we shall never be free until the christian church is abolished?*

5. Our danger may be increased by our unwillingness to receive admonition and warning. Too often, persons, in the greatest danger, in a moral sense, will be highly offended with those, who would give them friendly admonition and faithful warning. Too many resemble “those patients, who are angry with the physician for describing their disorder to them.” This is an alarming symptom. It shews that ruin is fast and insensibly approaching. Just before the Swiss experienced their distressing revolution, they were offended at predictions, which were meant to put them on their guard. If this should ever be the case with us, if, instead of listening to the voice of warning, we should treat those, who would warn us, with clamor and scurrilous abuse, how sad, how alarming will be the omen! Ahab was soon destroyed, after he rejected the faithful warning of the prophet Micah, and added insult and abuse, by ordering him to be confined in prison, and fed with the bread and water of affliction.—But,

* See Note C.

6. Our danger principally arises from the spread of loose sentiments on religious subjects, and the prevalence of vice and impiety. As a people, we have greatly departed from the purity of gospel doctrines. The first settlers of New-England were remarkable for their attachment to the essential and peculiar doctrines of the Bible. This attachment greatly continued for a hundred years or more, after the first settlement of this country commenced. But, in the last century, a great change has taken place. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel are discarded by many, and a scheme of religion is inculcated, which is nearly, if not quite, on a level with the religion of nature. We have reason to fear, from the aspect of the times and some recent events, that this evil will increase, and prepare the way for the greater spread of infidelity.* Our danger is great in this view; and greatly increased by the prevalence of vice and impiety. Many have become bold and daring in wickedness. Drunkenness, profane swearing, and lewdness have become very common. We are guilty of much extravagance in our use of the bounties of Heaven. Much is expended to please the eye, to gratify the taste or the pride of man. Great is the rage for superfluities and luxuries. These evils are naturally followed by various kinds of fraud, deceit, injustice and

* See Note D.

iniquitous speculation, as well as more open and daring wickedness. For they that thirst to be rich, and to appear in a style of grandeur above their neighbors, are easily led to the practice of iniquity. They fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts. The profanation of the Sabbath is a common and prevailing iniquity. The word and ordinances of God are greatly despised. It is common for many to speak of divine things in a vain, trifling and contemptuous manner. Many ridicule and scoff at gospel truths and experimental godliness. Many prayerless, irreligious families are to be found. A great part of the youth are taught, some by precept, and more by example, to profane the Sabbath, to despise the scriptures, and take the name of God in vain. And how many in authority neither fear God, nor hate covetousness. These are alarming symptoms. For it is righteousness which exalteth a nation; but sin is the reproach and ruin of a people. May not Jehovah say, *shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

Behold the late rapid spread and awful effects of infidelity in Europe; view the same infidelity prevailing in our land, and can you avoid being alarmed? For let this infidelity prevail, until it forms our national character, or let men of this cast controul our national counsels, and then "America must drink the cup of Babylon. Then she will become a

limb of the beast, whose body God hath said shall be given to the burning flame." O then let us listen to the advice of Heaven—*Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues.*

At this eventful period, when the powers and emissaries of darkness are so active, shall we be inactive? When their zeal is so great, shall we be cold and indifferent? When they exert themselves in opposition to the gospel, to civil and religious institutions, shall we, by sloth and indolence, manifest a willingness to part with our dearest privileges? May I not, my brethren, anticipate your answer? "No, we will arise, and by the help of the mighty God, we will earnestly contend for the faith, once delivered to the saints; suppress and discountenance vice and impiety; and zealously labor to promote virtue and godliness." Let this, my brethren and fellow citizens, be your firm unshaken resolution, in humble dependence on the Almighty. See that you receive the truth in love. Be firm in your adherence to the peculiar doctrines of divine revelation. Nothing short of this will be a sure defence against the fascinating charms of infidel philosophy. Be bold and resolute in advocating the truth, and defending divine institutions against the attacks of the ungodly. Your Lord and Judge thus addresses you in reference to the present time—*Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments lest he walk naked and they see his shame.* The

Lord will come at a period, unexpected to the wicked, to execute on them his wrath. O then watch and pray. Zealously guard against all those principles and practices, which are fast preparing the ungodly, antichristian world for the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Humble yourselves before God, that he may exalt and save you. Continue instant in prayer for rulers, for your country, and for the world of mankind. Pray without ceasing that the just may be established; that Zion may rise superior to all opposition, and be a joy and praise in all the earth. Decidedly frown upon all the works of darkness. In patience, possess your souls, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh. View the hand of God, and submit to his will in all events. He will make the wrath of man to praise him; and the remainder of that wrath he will restrain. Be careful not to imitate *them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government; presumptuous are they, self-willed, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.* Cultivate a spirit of love and harmony. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. And having done your best, to prevent a flood of infidelity, vice and irreligion from overspreading our happy land, then trust in the Lord; and when his judgments are executed on the wicked, then:—
Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.

A few words to my young friends will end the discourse. Perhaps you tremble at a recital of the measures, which the enemy pursue to destroy the cause of truth and righteousness. But remember that this cause enjoys the favor and protection of the infinite God. You need not therefore indulge despondency; nor be afraid to espouse this cause with your whole heart. The kings of the earth may set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against his Anointed; and the people imagine they can destroy his cause, and free themselves from the restraints of law and social order, of truth and righteousness. But they shall not prosper. They may proceed so far as to distress many, and destroy the ungodly from the earth. But the righteous shall enjoy the favor of Heaven. *He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* If you should be continued long on the earth, you may behold great changes and revolutions in societies and nations. For God will overturn, and overturn, until the kingdom of his Son shall be established throughout the earth. The last efforts of the powers of darkness, the last struggles of the expiring *beast* may be the most violent, and cause the greatest convulsions. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion, to consume and to destroy it unto the end. And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to

the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him. Be solicitous then, my young friends, to be the servants of God through Jesus Christ. Beware lest any spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit. Avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science falsely so called. Considering your age, unwearied pains may be taken to have you join with the enemies of truth and righteousness. They may address your passions; they may use banter and ridicule;* they may accuse you of being superstitious, bigotted, and under the influence of narrow-minded prejudices; they may speak in high terms of their cause and of those on their side; they may also use many smooth and flattering speeches; and if, after all this, you appear unwilling to join them, they may intimate, that if they cannot gain, they will ruin you. For it is a maxim with some at the present day, *To gain every promising character, or ruin him in the public opinion.* But neither listen to their intreaties, nor regard their threatenings. *My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools, or sinners, shall be destroyed.* Be therefore wise and

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* "Deists have long found this their best mode of attack." Banter and ridicule are now doing the work of former times. Hence you may be in great danger of being laughed out of your religion, or kept from seriously attending to it.

circumspect in the choice of associates. Beware of those who appear in sheep's clothing, while inwardly they are ravening wolves. Beware of those who promise you liberty, while they themselves are the servants of corruption. Beware of that secret and pernicious influence, which would lead you astray from the doctrines and precepts of the gospel. Beware of all those publications, which tend to pervert the judgment, deprave the heart, and inflame the passions. Make the Bible your choicest treasure of instruction. Daily peruse it with delight, and with prayer to the Father of lights for heavenly wisdom. Never relinquish this maxim—*That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments.* Be cool, be candid and deliberate in forming an opinion on important subjects. Labor to obtain correct information; and faithfully improve your advantages to acquire useful knowledge. And as you come forward into more active life, may you conduct in the fear of God; and possess all needed wisdom and prudence, integrity and fortitude; till, having served your generation according to the will of God, and finished your course on earth, may you then be admitted, through the merits of the Almighty Redeemer, to endless glory in heaven. AMEN.

NOTES.

NOTE A.

THE doctrine of the Trinity, or of three equal persons in the Godhead; the real and proper deity of Jesus Christ; the eternal, unconditional election of some of mankind to eternal life; the total depravity of the impenitent heart; regeneration by special grace; justification by faith; and the final perseverance of all who are born again, are peculiar and essential doctrines of the gospel. If these be exploded, the gospel will be destroyed, and infidelity triumph. Hence "it has been observed, and I think justly, says an eminent writer,* that 'there is no consistent medium between genuine christianity and infidelity.' The smallest departure from the one is a step towards the other. There are different degrees of approach, but all move on in the same direction." In giving up either of these doctrines, we virtually give up a part of divine revelation, and make an advance towards deism or infidelity. To renounce the doctrine of the Trinity is to subvert the gospel method of salvation. It destroys the only foundation, which is laid for the redemption of guilty men. It robs Christ of his infinite glory; degrades him to the rank of a mere creature; makes void his atonement for sin; and exceedingly "lessens the sin of rejecting him, and affords the adversaries of the gospel a ground for accusing him of presumption, which must necessarily harden them in unbelief. The Jews consider their nation, according to the sentiments of orthodox christians, as lying under the charge 'of crucifying the LORD and SAVIOUR of the world:' but according to" the sentiments of those who reject the essential doctrines of the gospel, they have only "crucified a prophet, who was sent to them in the first instance." This "consideration diminishes the degree of their guilt; tends to make them more indifferent; and consequently must harden them in unbelief. By considering our Lord as merely a prophet," the Jews may charge him with presumption. This charge if supported will prove that he neither was sent of God, nor is the Messiah. For he preached himself the *light of the world, the way,*

* Dr. Andrew Fuller.

the truth, and the life. This no mere prophet ever did. Hence to suppose that Christ is a mere prophet is to make him guilty of presumption, and to destroy his moral character. For he made himself God ; he justified himself in so doing ; and when he died he sealed his testimony with his own blood. If therefore Christ was a person of truth and moral sincerity, he is really and truly God. And to say that he is not really and truly God, destroys his moral goodness. Let this be done, and his gospel will sink into contempt. Hence it is said that professed unbelievers, or deists, rejoice in the spread of unitarianism, or the denial of the Trinity and the real and proper deity of Jesus Christ, as favorable to their views.*

Discarding the essential doctrines of the gospel favors infidelity, as it prevents the increase of vital piety, and flatters men in their impenitence and rejection of the truth. We are informed by a writer of much celebrity,† that the divines in England, towards the close of the 17th century, inculcated the moral and practical precepts of christianity, without maintaining her peculiar doctrines, or shewing how the practical precepts of christianity grow out of these doctrines, and are connected with them. “ By this fatal error,” he observes, “ the very genius and essential nature of christianity imperceptibly underwent a change. She no longer retained her peculiar character, or produced that appropriate frame of spirit, by which her followers had been characterized. The peculiar doctrines of christianity went more and more out of sight, and, as might naturally have been expected, the moral system itself also began to wither and decay, being robbed of that, which should have supplied it with life and nutriment. At length, in our own days, these peculiar doctrines have almost altogether vanished from the view.” It is in this period, that impiety and infidelity have made the most rapid progress in England. Dr. Fuller says that the number of infidels increased in the last century, in as great if not greater

* *The Calvinistic and Socinian Systems examined and compared, by Andrew Fuller ; Letter 15th.*

† *William Wilberforce, esq. member of the British parliament: Practical View of Religion ; second American edit. p. 229.*

proportion than the number of Socinians, or of those who deny the real and proper deity of Christ and other essential doctrines of revelation. Great multitudes, he observes, are carried away with a spirit of infidelity; and no wonder, for it disguises itself under a variety of specious names, such as *liberality, candor* and *charity*, by which it imposes upon the unwary. Fact therefore confirms the position, that departing from general christianity is advancing towards infidelity.

NOTE B.

IT is "the maxim of *Thomas Paine*, that 'an army of principles will penetrate where an army of soldiers cannot. It is neither the Rhine, (he says) the channel, nor the Ocean that can arrest its progress. It will march to the horizon of the world, and it will conquer.' In conformity with this maxim, that infamous book, styled the '*Age of Reason*,' was written in France, (and, it is said, in the house and under the patronage of Mr. *Munroe*) printed there in the *English* language, and a cargo of 15,000 copies, at one time, sent into these United States, and disposed of by sale, at a cheap rate, or given away. Besides these imported copies, numerous editions of the same work (shame on our country!) have been printed here."* The attempt to revolutionize this country has been further prosecuted by circulating the writings of *Volney*, a French philosopher and atheist, and of others.

NOTE C.

IT is feared that even some friends of the Redeemer's cause have too much imbibed the sentiment of infidels, that civil rulers, in their official capacity, should do nothing respecting religion. The writer wishes to have no one form of religion established by the civil magistrate, nor to have any national religious establishment, like the British act of *Uniformity*. But he queries, whether it be not vastly desirable that the primitive days of New-England should return. That happy period is thus describ-

* *Dr. Morse's Thanksgiving Sermon, Nov. 29, 1798; second edition, Appendix, page 74.*

ed by OAKS, PRINCE, and SHEPARD, in their election sermons.—Mr. Oaks gives his testimony in these words: “As to your civil government, you have had *Moses*, men I mean of the same spirit, to lead and go before you. The Lord hath not given children to be your leaders, but pious, faithful, prudent magistrates, men of wisdom and understanding; men of *Nebemiah's* spirit, that fought not themselves, but sincerely designed the good, and consulted the welfare and prosperity of these plantations. Good magistrates, good laws, and the vigorous execution of them, have been the privilege and glory of New-England, wherein you have been advanced above most of the nations of the earth.”

Mr. Prince declares of the civil fathers of New-England, “They were mostly men of good estates and families, of liberal education, and of large experience; but they chiefly excelled in piety to God, in zeal for the purity of his worship, reverence for his glorious name, and strict observance of his holy Sabbaths; in their respect and maintenance of an unblemished ministry; the spread of knowledge, learning, good order, and quiet through the land, a reign of righteousness, and the welfare of this people; and the making and executing wholesome laws for all these blessed ends.”

“At that pure and pious period of our commonwealth, there was a happy concurrence between civil and ecclesiastical leaders in promoting religion.” “Then (says Mr. SHEPARD) might be seen magistrates and magistrates, upon the seat of justice, cemented together for the advancement of the kingdom of Christ in this wildness. Then might be seen magistrates and ministers together in way of advice: ministers and ministers cleaving together in way of communion: ministers and their respective congregations together in way of prayer and holy worship: churches and churches together in way of consultations, by greater and lesser synods: magistrates and ministers, and their people together, uniting hands and hearts in the common cause, breathing a public spirit, and conspiring with holy zeal and vigor, to advance the kingdom of Christ.”—“The excellent rulers

of that day united with their pastors in consultations and endeavors for the advancement and preservation of religion, and the privileges, peace and order of the churches. By their grave and prudent carriage they happily preserved a veneration for their persons and authority among the people; and yet carefully protected them in the full enjoyment of their precious liberties."* Admitting some few things then took place, not entirely conformable to the gospel, or compatible with the rights of man; yet what an excellent spirit then prevailed; how much happiness was enjoyed; and how much do we behold which highly deserves our zealous imitation.

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Note D.

THE essential doctrines of the gospel were fully and explicitly stated in a pamphlet, entitled, "*A seasonable testimony to the glorious doctrines of grace, at this day many ways undermined in the world: Considered by a general convention of ministers, meeting at Boston, May 28th, 1702; and voted by them to be published for the establishment of the churches in the present truth.*" That general convention of ministers stated the gospel doctrines in these words: "That the most high God, hath from all eternity elected certain persons ~~from~~ among the children of men, to be brought unto eternal happiness, in and by Jesus Christ; and this decree was not founded in the foresight of any merit and goodness in the chosen, but in the mere good pleasure of God who made choice of them: that the elected of God are in his everlasting covenant of redemption, after a peculiar manner given unto our Lord Messiah, who therein undertook to be their Head, and their Redeemer: that the redeemed of the Lord shall be in his time and way, every one of them infallibly made partakers of effectual vocation, and have the benefits which he hath purchased for them applied to them: that fallen man, having lost the freedom of his will to spiritual good, he wil' not believe and repent, and answer the call of the gospel, until a supernatural opera-

* See Dr. Morse's Sermon before The Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, in Boston, June 6, 1803; page 12, 13.

tion of the spirit of grace upon him, do change his will, which operation is bestowed in a way of mere sovereign grace upon those only that are ordained unto life: that upon a sinner's accepting that favor of God by faith, God imputes to him the righteousness of that active and passive obedience, with which the Lord Jesus Christ, appearing as the surety of his people, has fully answered the law of God for them; and the sinner is justified before God in that righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ: that every believer on the Lord Jesus Christ, being by faith united to him, does henceforth glorify his Lord, in doing the good works of *evangelical obedience*, by a strength derived from him; which good works are the fruit and proof, but not the cause of his justification: and finally, that the saints of God shall persevere in their sanctity, and nothing shall make them fall totally and finally from that grace wherein they stand, and may rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." These are the doctrines which our pious ancestors cordially embraced; and for these they earnestly contended. Hence those who now advocate these, do not advance new doctrines, nor new divinity. While these were generally maintained and inculcated, the preaching of the gospel was greatly blest in the conversion of sinners; the power of godliness was manifest; vice and immorality made little progress, and infidelity or deism was not known in New-England. It is a fact that maintaining and zealously inculcating these doctrines does not destroy good morals or good works, but drive men to infidelity; but produces the opposite effects. For it is since these fundamental truths have been greatly exploded or kept out of view, that vice and immorality have greatly prevailed, and infidelity rapidly increased. And this we must expect to be the case more and more, until pure and genuine christianity is generally inculcated and embraced. For "it is impossible," says the great Dr. Owen, "to maintain the power of godliness, where the doctrine, from whence it springs, is unknown, corrupted, or despised."