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FOR THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

THE NEW WORLD.

No. IX.

An enquiry into the Character of the People of the United States of America.

AS it has been represented, that the citizens of United America are attached to the true principles of humanity, so it is now intended to be maintained, that they are *sincere friends of political morality.*

The law of nations is clearly recognized by the North Americans, in their invaluable constitution of public welfare, union and justice, as a code of existing rules among civil societies, enjoining on each what is right and forbidding to all what is wrong. They consider the law of nations as *the law of morals.* Whatever has been, whatever is, and whatever may be the treatment of this sysem of general law by the sovereigns, or the courts of other countries, it is well known that the judiciary department of the U. S. is bound to adjudicate by those rules of polical morality, which are to be collected from the great system of this prescriptive or common law of independent states. Aggrieved & injured in our persons and property by violations of this law exceeding all example, we have never consented to raise our voice for its future abrogation. We have not countenanced any derogation from its true force. As soon could we think of repealing the rules of honor, of private morality or of religion itself. They compose in truth altogether one great, and good and binding law, with a precious variety of high sanctions. They are indeed but different names for the same inestimable thing. For there can be no honor, or private morals, or public morality, which is not found in the system of our religion. We have not committed to our Executive power the authority to dispense with the law of nations, nor have we accorded to the judges permission to reject its venerated rules. We have voluntarily extended its benefits even to those Indians, who were not at the time, within any of our municipal jurisdictions, though subject to the power of our arms. We have applied it between our contending states, between every state and the Union, between a state & an individual, and between the body politic of our whole confederacy and every private person, whether foreign or native. It has been to this country, in and out of our courts, a fixed rule of conduct and of judgment. It has been our constant endeavor to maintain its salutary obligations among our friends, our rivals and our open enemies. For his noble adherence to this half sacred law, when storms and tempests menaced the minor kingdom of Denmark on every side in the year 1793, we have engraven the name of the virtuous *Bernstorff* among those of *the illustrious dead—the temporal saviors of men—the enlightened faithful servants of the Almighty.*

It is peculiar to the constitutions of the United Americans, that they have recognised the law of nations as a part of the law of the land, while other countries have permitted it to suffer the most serious derogations from the hands of the municipal executive power. National expediency, susceptible as it is of every degree of ingenious pretence and perversion, has not been allowed in the U. S. to take the place of those accepted rules of *political morality,* which are calculated to preserve peace on earth and good will among nations. Princes and rulers, as well as private men, are subject to the motions of conscience and the judgment of the Almighty beyond the grave. If the highest temporal advantages are to be gained to a nation by the intentional destruction of those laws, which forbid the wanton sacrifice of the property and people of neighboring states for every light and transitory cause, for every bubble of imaginary honor, let the Americans continue to forego the temptation. It cannot be laid to our charge that by contributing to annihilate the law of public morals, we have run into each other the extremes of the civilized and savage state and to make a tophet of the terraqueous globe. We do not undertake to arraign the governments of other countries, for such is not at all the object or design of this enquiry. It is only our desire to convince the uninformed, that the mixture of ingredients in our national composition has not rendered the whole mass of a negative character, or produced any other deplorable effect, derogatory from the dignity of human nature, or contrary to the great plan of Divine Providence, who manifests in the free-will operations of his innumerable and variegated creatures the stupendous power of their sole creator.

If success has attended the endeavor to prove the united Americans are the friends of religious liberty, of humanity and political morality, it may be reasonably expected that they have *a considerable share of religious character,* for these are a part of its genuine elements.

It is necessary to remember in relation to individuals and communities, that *profession,* abroad or at home, is not the whole of true religion; that however a Divine Judge may require the reality in each of his responsible creatures, *the character* of nations, on this subject, is really comparative. Barbarian plunderers, rejecting every good rule among men, must be deemed inferior to the several civilized nations. It will not be argued that we are as pious, as just, or as perfect as we ought to be. Nor shall we, in an unworthy spirit of self-righteousness, attempt to exalt ourselves above any particular nation, much less do we claim, on this delicate and all important subject, merits superior to all others.

From the mutual charity of our religious societies, by which none deprives the others of their rights in temporal or spiritual affairs; from the equity of our distributions of the good things of this world among all the children of our families, without distinction of age or sex; from the increased provision for the tender objects of conjugal affection and for the venerable parents of our human lives; from the principles of substantial equality on which our constitutions provide for the distribution of *right* to ourselves and to Aliens, to our country and to foreign nations, we hope and trust, that, as a people, we have shewn no uncommon deficiency of respect for the first member of the Divine command—"*Do justice.*" Torn and agitated by an eight years war; left in a destructive condition by six years absence of federative ligaments; the unjust passions threatening to overwhelm us or to render us an easy prey to some foreign destroyer, we rose, in the strength of the wisdom and virtue, which heaven had infused into our characters, we rose as the friends of man and as the servants of God, to *the great work of reforming the empire.* In all our endeavors, on that memorable occasion, to bring the vessel of the state into the port of safety, *eternal justice* was our polar star. Such do our constitutions prove to be *the piety of our politics—the true religion of our civil institutions.* Prudence, Temperance and Justice adorn the face of those beloved codes, and are skilfully transfused through their body and substance. Mercy too, as we have already shewn, shines in the midst of them, with the mild radiance of the morning star, and where justice and mercy are, there surely is our holy religion.

It is thus, as a nation, considering and ordaining, under the favor of Divine Providence, for ourselves and our posterity, that we have provided a wholesome succedaneum—a glorious substitution for an established church.

The pomp, the luxury, and the extreme voluptuousness of the church, before the coming of Jesus Christ, required his reforming power, and influence and labors. The vain pomp and luxury and voluptuousness, with the anti-christian assumption of power, of the church in the sixteenth century again demanded the effort of reformation. The contest was fluctuating, and those human reformers often turned their impassioned arms against each. The victims, on both sides, in many countries, were caused to shed tears of blood and were impiously devoted in this world to the flaming torments of the damned* The world will consider, that such is not the religion of the united Americans. On the contrary, when they perceive, even in this day of general light, that some countries, nay some churches in Europe still torture the body, some the conscience of man, they exclaim, in deep astonishment and sorrow—'*Merciful God that the teachers of thy religion should ever want humanity!*'

The happy simplicity of the churches in America occasions the ministers of religion not to be led into those fatal temptations, which have produced the necessity for the great reformations in various ages. It is a reflexion favorable to man, that in proportion as vice is not to be observed in persons in conspicuous and influential situations, the body of the community is more virtuous. So far therefore as religion is secured by abstaining from many evils, the united Americans exhibit the character. Nor will this circumstance be found, on consideration, of little importance, or of a negative quality, for the presence of habitual vice excludes the possibility of the presence of genuine religion. Considering then the ministers of religion and the religious societies to be of moral habits, the circumstance is of great importance, connected with the other evidences of a religious character. Morality too may be said to keep open the door for the entrance of religion, while immorality prevents its admission.

An attention to the scholastic and religious instruction of the rising generation is among the indispensible duties of a pious nation. The monies expended in printing and purchasing books, necessary to such instruction, has greatly increased, is at this time very considerable, & seems every year to become more extensive. Similar observations may be correctly made on the importation of books for the same purposes. Every male youth is taught some occupation, trade, calling, or profession, for it is held that independence is highly favorable, if not absolutely necessary to virtue. So deep are the impressions made by this reflection, that it has given rise to the desire of bestowing some such education in a trade, occupation, calling or profession to all the young females. To them, it is plain, that reputable means of subsistence are still more necessary to the preservation of their many and their precious virtues. Steady efforts to effect such ameliorations, resulting in ultimate success, will be accepted at every human tribunal as evidences of a religious character. Heaven itself, as we humbly trust, will survey with favor and approbation the generous heart guided by the intelligent and vigorous mind, in its virtuous endeavors to secure the permanent good of the rising generation.

The sincerity and genuine goodness of the religion of the Americans is proved by the enumerated evidences of their humanity, by the erection of churches more than in any other country by means of voluntary contributions; by the founding of hospitals and other charitable institutions before they have established galleries of the fine arts; by the indulgence, which they extend to every emigration from foreign countries of persons, who have endeavored to exempt religion from disgrace & injury in the character of sober reformers, while the churches attempted to be reformed are kindly indulged with an equal tenderness. There are some things in all these churches which belong to true religion. In these things they all unite and accord. By these things they secure to themselves the merit, and to our country a considerable share of reputation for true religion. In lieu of persecution, good will arises among men; and, in lieu of the sword of human power, the peace of Heaven in the church upon earth.

This part of our enquiry is delicate in the extreme, for we ought ever to look with the most guarded eye towards the dangers of hypocricy, of self righteousness and of spiritual pride. It is therefore from the fruits of the tree, exhibited in their religious, civil, benevolent and didactic institutions, that it has been thought best to deduce the character of the United Americans upon the subject of true neighborhood to man and humble reverential love to the Supreme Being.

The inhabitants of this country have declined ostentation in all matters of the church and of the state. They have, perhaps more than any other people, spiritualized religion. The instrumental parts in the divine worship among them, are few and simple. Their estimation does increase. It is not believed, that sacrifices and offerings of material objects can be of any value in the sight of the all perfect spiritual creator and preserver of the universe. The conceptions of the Americans concerning the attributes of the divine nature are of course imperfect from the limited powers of the human mind. But it is not believed easy to find any nation, whose ideas, on this profound and sublime subject, are further removed from the grossness of idolatry and the weakness of superstition. The coercive Dogmas of civil governments, differing often as much from religious truth as from one another, are not necessarily to be supposed to comprehend the standard of the divine attributes. The original design may seem no inconsiderable presumption in fallible and short sighted man. To continue their operation in this happy country, where the freedom and elasticity of the humane mind, consequent on the various reformations in ecclesiastical affairs, is remarkably conspicuous, would be to partake deeply in the error. Instead therefore of the heathen mythology, which wrapt the Roman people, as in a dark cloud even in the Augustine Age; instead of the religious dreams, which filled Europe in the fifteenth century; & instead of the attributes ascribed to Heaven by discordant governments and councils, it is believed to belong to the power of God in the soul of man, through the means of the holy scriptures, to instruct him in the nature of the Being we were created to serve.

COLUMBIANUS.

* *The peculiar punishment of burning to death by a slow fire, was preferred by both sides, because it was alleged to resemble* Hell fire!

COBBETT's LETTER TO THE KING OF ENGLAND

On the Maritime war against France.

LETTER I.

(Concluded.)

The security of this extensive and most valuable commerce of the French dominions arises in great part from the use of land signals, or telegraphs, so constructed, placed and managed, as to keep the vessels upon the coast at all times correctly informed of what is passing upon the whole line of coast. From Flushing to Bayonne a report is exchanged four times a day; at light, ten o'clock in the forenoon, two o'clock, and just before sun set. So that at Flushing they know, four times during the day, what is passing at sea, within sight of the highest hill in the neighborhood of Bayonne, and of course they are informed of what is passing near all the intermediate ports of the coast. The same system is established along the coast of the Mediterranean, from the Gulph of Spezzia, to Rosas. The coasting vessels thus instructed how to move; thus kept constantly in a state of perfect knowledge as to the situation of our fleets or cruisers, are able to sail in safety, carrying on trade in as much security as if those ships were not in existence; and this only as I shall hereafter prove to your majesty, from causes which prevents the necessary exertions from being made, and which causes may instantly and easily be removed.

The advantages to the *nations* (for they are many) which carry on this commerce, are not greater than they are to Napoleon himself in his views of conquest and dominion. From this commerce, notwithstanding our opinions to the contrary, he derives no small part of his revenue through the means of a stamp tax, imposed upon every article exported or imported; and hence he is able to dispense with *direct taxes* which are always odious, & which are, indeed, those which have uniformly ended in exciting the feelings and producing the acts, under which so many governments have perished. This is a great point. By the means of this commerce, he disguises from his people the burdens which they bear. It is indeed, a gross imposition to a people, that *commerce* pays taxes, the fact being that those taxes still fall upon the people themselves; but, as your majesty must have observed, it is an imposition, it is a fraud; it is an act of duplicity and knavery the success of which in *other countries* warrants the belief that it must be greatly useful to your majesty's implacable and powerful enemy. Very much, then, are your majesty's servants deceived when they suppose that the Emperor Napoleon has no custom house, whereat to collect duties. His scale may not be so noble as to afford him dukes for deceivers; he may not have marquisses for collectors, baronets for wharfingers, and knights of the eagle for wine tasters; but I am of opinion that this custom-house yields him a much greater clear revenue than is derived from any similar establishment in the world—and that it affords him the means of drawing upon other sources of taxation with so sparing a hand, that his people, especially within the ancient boundaries of France, have reason to congratulate themselves upon the comparative lightness of their burthens. A great many of your majesty's subjects, including some in high stations too have at different times expressed their astonishment, and indeed their vexation, that the people of France, should be slow in rebelling against their Emperor with whom your majesty made a treaty of peace and "*amity*" only about seven or eight years ago; but if they had been informed of the facts here stated relative to the commerce of France, and especially relative to the revenue yielded by that commerce together with the relief given thereby to all the other sources of taxation, itself not appearing as a tax; if they had been duly informed of these facts, & had been possessed of but a very moderate portion of that sort of knowlege which enables men to trace popular discontent to their real causes—they never would have entertained a hope of seeing a rebellion in France.

But great as are the financial advantages of this commerce, Napoleon derives from it the still greater advantages attending such a nursery of seamen. It has been most clearly proved over and over again, that for our navy the nursery is our coasting trade. There requires, therefore, nothing more to satisfy us, that from a coasting trade such as I have described, the advantages to Napoleon are so great as to excite well grounded alarm in the mind of every reflecting Englishman. It is from this copious source that the Emperor of France has drawn those hundreds of thousands of seamen with whom he has manned his fleets and squadrons for many years past, and which fleets and squadrons, though always hitherto defeated, and in many instances captured and destroyed, by the superior skill and valour of your Majesty's fleets, answer the terrible purpose of causing us to keep up a force by land as well as sea, so immense, so disproportionate to our population and our pecuniary means, that the country is stripped of its youth and its vigor—the fields are left to be tilled by the poor and the decrepid—and the taxes are so general and so heavy, and the anticipations upon them so great—that Hope, which alleviates all other burthens, here refuses her sustaining hand. Year after year, we not only see the taxes and tax gatherers increase—we not only feel their immediate pressure, but we see mortgaged, deeper, & deeper, the very seeds of property; we see taken from us, for the purposes of current expence, that which was held out to us as the sure pledge of permanent relief. Could we once be sure that it was out of the power of Napoleon to send a fleet to sea, how different would be our situation! But this assurance we can never have, so long as he has the command of the seamen necessarily employed in such a commerce. How often, within the last 14 years, have we *annihilated* the navy of France! how often have we *swept the ocean!* But still France, in the midst of all this annihilation finds the means of sending out fresh squadrons and fleets and proves beyond a doubt, that she possesses, in spite of all we have hitherto done, the means of forming a navy in a very short space of time.

The Parliament has recently been told, in your Majesty's name, that the aid you are giving to the enemies of France upon the Continent of Europe, *is given with a view of keeping Napoleon from our own shores.* The expressions are somewhat different but this is the substance, this is the real meaning of the words. Does it not then become me, if I have it in my power, to prove