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*** START OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONSIDERATIONS ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION ***

**CONSIDERATIONS
ON
RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION,**

WITH

REMARKS

ON THE *SPEECH* OF

M. DUPONT,

DELIVERED IN THE

NATIONAL CONVENTION

OF

FRANCE.

TOGETHER WITH

AN ADDRESS TO THE LADIES, &c.

OF

GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND.



BY HANNAH MORE.



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A PREFATORY ADDRESS TO THE LADIES, &c. of GREAT BRITAIN and IRELAND, IN BEHALF OF THE FRENCH EMIGRANT CLERGY.



If it be allowed that there may arise occasions so extraordinary, that all the lesser motives of delicacy ought to vanish before them; it is presumed that the present emergency will in some measure justify the hardiness of an Address from a private individual, who, stimulated by the urgency of the case, sacrifices inferior considerations to the ardent desire of raising further supplies towards relieving a distress as pressing as it is unexampled.

We are informed by public advertisement, that the large sums already so liberally subscribed for the Emigrant Clergy, are almost exhausted. Authentic information adds, that multitudes of distressed Exiles in the island of Jersey, are on the point of wanting bread.

Very many to whom this address is made have already contributed. O let them not be weary in well-doing! Many are making generous exertions for the just and natural claims of the widows and children of our brave seamen and soldiers. Let it not be said, that the present is an *interfering* claim. Those to whom I write, have bread enough, and to spare. You, who fare sumptuously every day, and yet complain you have little to bestow, let not this bounty be subtracted from another bounty, but rather from some superfluous expense. [4]

The beneficent and right minded want no arguments to be pressed upon them; but I write to those of every description. Luxurious habits of living, which really furnish the distressed with the fairest grounds for application, are too often urged as a motive for withholding assistance, and produced as a plea for having little to spare. Let her who indulges such habits, and pleads such excuses in consequence, reflect, that by retrenching *one* costly dish from her abundant table, the superfluities of *one* expensive desert, *one* evening's public amusement, she may furnish at least a week's subsistence to more than one person,^[A] as liberally bred perhaps as herself, and who, in his own country, may have often tasted how much more blessed it is to give than to receive—to a minister of God, who has been long accustomed to bestow the necessaries he is now reduced to solicit.

Even your young daughters, whom maternal prudence has not yet furnished with the means of bestowing, may be cheaply taught the first rudiments of charity, together with an important lesson of economy: They may be taught to sacrifice a feather, a set of ribbons, an expensive ornament, an idle diversion. And if they are thus instructed, that there is no true charity without self denial, they will *gain* more than they are called upon to *give*: For the suppression of one luxury for a charitable purpose, is the exercise of two virtues, and this without any pecuniary expense.

Let the sick and afflicted remember how dreadful it must be, to be exposed to sufferings, without one of the alleviations which mitigate *their* affliction. How dreadful it is to be without comforts, without necessaries, without a home—*without a country!* While the gay and prosperous would do well to recollect, how suddenly and terribly those for whom we plead, were, by the surprising vicissitudes of life, thrown from equal heights of gaiety and prosperity. And let those who have husbands, fathers, sons, brothers, or friends, reflect on the uncertainties of war, and the revolution of human affairs. It is only by imagining the possibility of those who are dear to us being placed in the same calamitous circumstances, that we can obtain an adequate feeling of the woes we are called upon to commiserate. [5]

In a distress so wide and comprehensive, many are prevented from giving by that common excuse—"That it is but a drop of water in the ocean." But let them reflect, that if all the individual drops were withheld, there would be no ocean at all; and the inability to give much ought not, on any occasion, to be converted into an excuse for giving nothing. Even moderate circumstances need not plead an exemption. The industrious tradesman will not, even in a political view, be eventually a loser by his small contribution. The money raised is neither carried out of our

country, nor dissipated in luxuries, but returns again to the community; to our shops and to our markets, to procure the bare necessities of life.

Some have objected to the difference of *religion* of those for whom we solicit. Such an objection hardly deserves a serious answer. Surely if the superstitious Tartar hopes to become possessed of the courage and talents of the enemy he slays, the Christian is not afraid of catching, or of propagating the error of the sufferer he relieves.—Christian charity is of no party. We plead not for their faith, but for their wants. And let the more scrupulous, who look for desert as well as distress in the objects of their bounty, bear in mind, that if these men could have sacrificed their conscience to their convenience, they had not now been in this country. Let us shew them the purity of *our* religion, by the beneficence of our actions.

[6]

If you will permit me to press upon you such high motives (and it were to be wished that in every action we were to be influenced by the highest) perhaps no act of bounty to which you may be called out, can ever come so immediately under that solemn and affecting description, which will be recorded in the great day of account—*I was a stranger and ye took me in.*—



[7]

The following is an exact Translation from a SPEECH made in the National Convention at Paris, on Friday the 14th of December, 1792, in a Debate on the Subject of establishing Public Schools for the Education of Youth, by Citizen DUPONT, a Member of considerable Weight; and as the Doctrines contained in it were received with unanimous Applause, except from two or three of the Clergy, it may be fairly considered as an Exposition of the Creed of that Enlightened Assembly. Translated from Le Moniteur of Sunday the 16th of December, 1792.



What! Thrones are overturned! Sceptres broken! Kings expire! And yet the Altars of GOD remain! (Here there is a murmur from some Members; and the Abbé ICHON demands that the person speaking may be called to order.) Tyrants, in outrage to nature, continue to burn an impious incense on those Altars! (Some murmurs arise, but they are lost in the applauses from the majority of the Assembly.) The Thrones that have been reversed, have left these Altars naked, unsupported, and tottering. A single breath of enlightened reason will now be sufficient to make them disappear; and if humanity is under obligations to the French nation for the first of these benefits, the fall of Kings, can it be doubted but that the French people, now sovereign, will be wise enough, in like manner, to overthrow those Altars and *those Idols* to which those Kings have hitherto made them subject? *Nature* and *Reason*, these ought to be the gods of men! These are my gods! (Here the Abbé AUDREIN cried out, "There is no bearing this;" and rushed out of the Assembly.—A great laugh.) Admire *nature*—cultivate *reason*. And you, Legislators, if you desire that the French people should be happy, make haste to propagate these principles, and to teach them in your primary schools, instead of those fanatical principles which have hitherto been taught. The tyranny of Kings was confined to make their people miserable in this life—but those other tyrants, the Priests, extend their dominion into another, of which they have no other idea than of eternal punishments; a doctrine which some men have hitherto had the good nature to believe. But the moment of the catastrophe is come—all these prejudices must fall at the same time. *We must destroy them, or they will destroy us.*—For myself, I honestly avow to the Convention, *I am an atheist!* (Here there is some noise and tumult. But a great number of members cry out, "What is that to us—you are an honest man!") But I defy a single individual, among the twenty-four millions of Frenchmen, to make against me any well grounded reproach. I doubt whether the Christians, or the Catholics, of which the last speaker, and those of his opinion, have been talking to us, can make the same challenge.—(Great applauses.) There is another consideration—Paris has had great losses. It has been deprived of the commerce of luxury; of that factitious splendour which was found at courts, and invited strangers hither. Well! We must repair these losses.—Let me then represent to you the times, that are fast approaching, when our philosophers, whose names are celebrated throughout Europe, PETION, SYEYES, CONDORCET, and others—surrounded in our Pantheon, as the Greek philosophers were at Athens, with a crowd of disciples coming from all parts of Europe, walking like the Peripatetics, and

[8]

teaching—this man, the system of the universe, and developing the progress of all human knowledge; that, perfecting the social system, and shewing in our decree of the 17th of June, 1789, the seeds of the insurrections of the 14th of July and the 10th of August, and of all those insurrections which are spreading with such rapidity throughout Europe—So that these young strangers, on their return to their respective countries, may spread the same lights, and may operate, *for the happiness of Mankind*, similar revolutions throughout the world.

[9]

(Numberless applauses arose, almost throughout the whole Assembly, and in the Galleries.)



FOOTNOTES:

[A] Mr. Bowdler's letter states, that about Six Shillings a week included the expenses of each Priest at Winchester.

[10]



**REMARKS
ON THE
SPEECH of Mr. DUPONT,
ON THE SUBJECTS OF
Religion and Public Education.**



It is presumed that it may not be thought unseasonable at this critical time to offer to the Public, and especially to the more religious part of it, a few slight observations, occasioned by the late famous Speech of Mr. Dupont, which exhibits the Confession of Faith of a considerable Member of the French National Convention. Though the Speech itself has been pretty generally read, yet it was thought necessary to prefix it to these Remarks, lest such as have not already perused it, might, from an honest reluctance to credit the existence of such principles, dispute its authenticity, and accuse the remarks, if unaccompanied by the Speech, of a spirit of invective and unfair exaggeration. At the same time it must be confessed, that its impiety is so monstrous, that many good men were of opinion it ought not to be made familiar to the minds of Englishmen; for there are crimes with which even the imagination should never come in contact.

But as an ancient nation intoxicated their slaves, and then exposed them before their children, in order to increase their horror of intemperance; so it is hoped that this piece of impiety may be placed in such a light before the eyes of the Christian reader, that, in proportion as his detestation is raised, his faith, instead of being shaken, will be only so much the more strengthened.

[11]

This celebrated Speech, though delivered in an assembly of Politicians, is not on a question of politics, but on one as superior as the soul is to the body, and eternity to time. The object here, is not to dethrone kings, but HIM by whom kings reign. It does not here excite the cry of indignation that *Louis* reigns, but that *the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*.

Nor is this the declaration of some obscure and anonymous person, but an exposition of the Creed of a public Leader. It is not a sentiment hinted in a journal, hazarded in a pamphlet, or thrown out at a disputing club: but it is the implied faith of the rulers of a great nation.

Little notice would have been due to this famous Speech, if it had conveyed the sentiments of only *one* vain orator; but it should be observed, that it was heard, received, *applauded*, with two or three exceptions only—a fact, which you, who have scarcely believed in the existence of atheism, will hardly credit, and which, for the honour of the eighteenth century, it is hoped that our posterity, being still more unacquainted with such corrupt opinions, will reject as totally incredible.

A love of liberty, generous in its principle, inclines some good men still to savour the proceedings of the National Convention of France. They do not yet perceive that the licentious wildness which has been excited in that country, is destructive of all true happiness, and no more resemble liberty, than the tumultuous joys of the drunkard, resemble the cheerfulness of a sober and well regulated mind.

To those who do not know of what strange inconsistencies man is made up; who have not considered how some persons, having at first been hastily and heedlessly drawn in as approvers, by a sort of natural progression, soon become principals;—to those who have never observed by what a variety of strange associations in the mind, opinions that seem the most irreconcilable meet at some unsuspected turning, and come to be united in the same man;—to all such it may appear quite incredible, that well meaning and even pious people should continue to applaud the principles of a set of men who have publicly made known their intention of abolishing Christianity, as far as the demolition of altars, priests, temples, and institutions, *can* abolish it; and as to the religion itself, this also they may traduce, and for their own part reject, but we know, from the comfortable promise of an authority still sacred in this country at least, that *the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*. [12]

Let me not be misunderstood by those to whom these slight remarks are principally addressed; that class of well intentioned people, who favour at least, if they do not adopt, the prevailing sentiments of the new Republic. You are not here accused of being the wilful abettors of infidelity. God forbid! "we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation." But this *ignis fatuus* of liberty and universal brotherhood, which the French are madly pursuing, with the insignia of freedom in one hand, and the bloody bayonet in the other, has bewitched your senses, and is in danger of misleading your steps. You are gazing at a meteor raised by the vapours of vanity, which these wild and infatuated wanderers are pursuing to their destruction; and though for a moment you mistake it for a heaven-born light, which leads to the perfection of human freedom, you will, should you join in the mad pursuit, soon discover that it will conduct you over dreary wilds and sinking bogs, only to plunge you in deep and inevitable ruin. [13]

Much, very much is to be said in vindication of your favouring in the first instance their political projects. The cause they took in hand seemed to be the great cause of human kind. Its very name insured its popularity. What English heart did not exult at the demolition of the Bastile? What lover of his species did not triumph in the warm hope, that one of the finest countries in the world would soon be one of the most free? Popery and despotism, though chained by the gentle influence of Louis XVIth, had actually slain their thousands. Little was it then imagined, that anarchy and atheism, the monsters who were about to succeed them, would soon slay their ten thousands. If we cannot regret the defeat of the two former tyrants, what must they be who can triumph in the mischiefs of the two latter? Who, I say, that had a head to reason, or a heart to feel, did not glow with hope, that from the ruins of tyranny, and the rubbish of popery, a beautiful and finely framed edifice would in time have been constructed, and that ours would not have been the only country in which the patriot's fair idea of well understood liberty, and of the most pure and reasonable, as well as the most sublime and exalted Christianity might be realized?

But, alas! it frequently happens that the wise and good are not the most adventurous in attacking the mischiefs which they perceive and lament. With a timidity in some respects virtuous, they fear attempting any thing which may possibly aggravate the evils they deplore, or put to hazard the blessings they already enjoy. They dread plucking up the wheat with the tares, and are rather apt, with a spirit of hopeless resignation,

"To bear the ills they have,
"Than fly to others that they know not of."

While sober minded and considerate men, therefore, sat mourning over this complicated mass of error, and waited till God, in his own good time, should open the blind eyes; the vast scheme of reformation was left to that set of rash and presumptuous adventurers, who are generally watching how they may convert public grievances to their own personal account. It was undertaken, not upon the broad basis of a wise and well digested scheme, of which all the parts should contribute to the perfection of one consistent whole: It was carried on, not by those steady measures, founded on rational deliberation, which are calculated to accomplish so important an end; not with a temperance which indicated a sober love of law, or a sacred regard for religion; but with the most extravagant lust of power, and the most inordinate vanity which perhaps ever instigated human measures; a lust of power which threatens to extend its desolating influence over the whole globe; a vanity of the same destructive species with that which stimulated the celebrated incendiary of Ephesus, who being weary of his native obscurity and insignificance, and preferring infamy to oblivion, could contrive no other road to fame and immortality, than that of setting fire to the exquisite Temple of Diana. He was remembered indeed, as he desired to be, but only to be execrated; while the seventh wonder of the world lay prostrate through his crime. [14]

It is the same over ruling vanity which operates in their politics, and in their religion, which makes Kersaint^[B] boast of carrying his destructive projects from the Tagus to the Brazils, and from Mexico to the shores of the Ganges; which makes him menace to outstrip the enterprises of the most extravagant hero of romance, and almost undertake with the marvelous celerity of the nimbly footed Puck,

"To put a girdle round about the earth
"In forty minutes."—

It is the same vanity, still the master passion in the bosom of a Frenchman, which leads Dupont and Manuel to undertake in their orations to abolish the Sabbath, exterminate the Priesthood, erect a Pantheon for the World, restore the Peripatetic Philosophy, and in short revive every thing of ancient Greece, except the pure taste, the wisdom, the love of virtue, the veneration of the laws, and that degree of reverence which even virtuous Pagans professed for the Deity. [15]

It is surely to be charged to the inadequate and wretched hands into which the work of reformation fell, and not to the impossibility of amending the civil and religious institutions of France, that all has succeeded so ill. It cannot be denied, perhaps, that a reforming spirit was wanted in that country; their government was not more despotic, than their church was superstitious and corrupt.

But though this is readily granted, and though it may be unfair to blame those who in the *first outset* of the French Revolution, rejoiced even on religious motives; yet it is astonishing, how any pious person, even with all the blinding power of prejudice, can think without horror of the *present* state of France. It is no less wonderful how any rational man could, even in the beginning of the Revolution; transfer that reasoning, however just it might be, when applied to France, to the case of England. For what can be more unreasonable, than to draw from different, and even opposite premises, the same conclusion? Must a revolution be equally necessary in the case of two sorts of Government, and two sorts of Religion, which are the very reverse of each other? opposite in their genius, unlike in their fundamental principles, and widely different in each of their component parts.

That despotism, priestcraft, intolerance, and superstition, are terrible evils, no candid Christian it is presumed will deny; but, blessed be God, though these mischiefs are not yet entirely banished from the face of the earth, they have scarcely any existence in this country.

To guard against a real danger, and to cure actual abuses, of which the existence has been first plainly proved, by the application of a suitable remedy, requires diligence as well as courage; observation as well as genius; patience and temperance as well as zeal and spirit. It requires the union of that clear head and sound heart which constitute the true patriot. But to conjure up fancied evils, or even greatly to aggravate real ones, and then to exhaust our labour in combating them, is the characteristic of a distempered imagination and an ungoverned spirit. [16]

Romantic crusades, the ordeal trial, drowning of witches, the torture, and the Inquisition, have been justly reprobated as the foulest stain of the respective periods, in which, to the disgrace of human reason, they existed; but would any man be rationally employed, who should now stand up gravely to declaim against these as the predominating mischiefs of the present century? Even the whimsical Knight of La Mancha himself, would not fight wind mills that were pulled down; yet I will venture to say, that the above named evils are at present little more chimerical than some of those now so bitterly complained of among us. It is not, as Dryden said, when one of his works was unmercifully abused, that the piece has not faults enough in it, but the critics have not had the wit to fix upon the right ones.

It is allowed that, as a nation, we have faults enough, but our political critics err in the objects of their censure. They say little of those real and pressing evils resulting from our own corruption, which constitute the actual miseries of life; while they gloomily speculate upon a thousand imaginary political grievances, and fancy that the reformation of our rulers and our legislators is all that is wanting to make us a happy people.

The principles of just and equitable government were, perhaps, never more fully established, nor public justice more exactly administered. Pure and undefiled religion was never laid more open to all, than at this day. I wish I could say we were a religious people; but this at least may be safely asserted, that the great truths of religion were never better understood; that Christianity was never more completely stripped from all its incumbrances and disguises, or more thoroughly purged from human infusions, and whatever is debasing in human institutions. [17]

Let us in this yet happy country, learn at least one great and important truth, from the errors of this distracted people. Their conduct has awfully illustrated a position, which is not the less sound for having been often controverted, That no degree of wit and learning; no progress in commerce; no advances in the knowledge of nature, or in the embellishments of art, can ever thoroughly tame that savage, the natural human heart, without RELIGION. The arts of social life may give a sweetness to the manners and language, and induce, in some degree, a love of justice, truth, and humanity; but attainments derived from such inferior causes are no more than the semblance and the shadow of the qualities derived from pure Christianity. Varnish is an extraneous ornament, but true polish is a proof of the solidity of the body; it depends greatly on the nature of the substance, is not superinduced by accidental causes, but in a good measure proceeding from internal soundness.

The poets of that country, whose style, sentiments, manners, and religion the French so affectedly labour to imitate, have left keen and biting satires on the Roman vices. Against the late proceedings in France, no satirist need employ his pen; that of the historian will be quite sufficient. Fact will put fable out of countenance; and the crimes which are usually held up to our abhorrence in works of invention, will be regarded as flat and feeble by those who shall peruse the records of the tenth of August, of the second and third of September, and of the twenty first of January.

If the same astonishing degeneracy in taste, principle, and practice, should ever come to flourish among us, Britons may still live to exult in the desolation of her cities, and in the destruction of her finest monuments of art; she may triumph in the peopling of the fortresses of her rocks and her forests; may exult in being once more restored to that glorious state of *liberty and equality*, when all subsisted by rapine and the chase; when all, O enviable privilege! were equally savage, equally indigent, and equally naked; may extol it as the restoration of reason, and the triumph of nature, that they are again brought to feed on acorns, instead of bread. Groves of consecrated misletoe may happily succeed to useless corn fields; and Thor and Woden may hope once more to be invested with all their bloody honours. [18]

Let not any serious readers feel indignation, as if pains were ungenerously taken to involve their religious, with their political opinions. Far be it from me to wound, unnecessarily, the feelings of people whom I so sincerely esteem; but it is much to be suspected, that certain opinions in politics have a tendency to lead to certain opinions in religion. Where so much is at stake, they will do well to keep their consciences tender, in order to do which they should try to keep their discernment acute. They will do well to observe, that the same restless spirit of innovation is busily operating under various, though seemingly unconnected forms. To observe, that the same impatience of restraint, the same contempt of order, peace, and subordination, which makes men bad citizens, makes them bad Christians; and that to this secret, but almost infallible connexion between religious and political sentiment, does France owe her present unparalleled anarchy and impiety.

There are doubtless in that unhappy country multitudes of virtuous and reasonable men, who rather silently acquiesce in the authority of their present turbulent government, than embrace its principles or promote its projects from the sober conviction of their own judgment. These, together with those conscientious exiles whom this nation so honourably protects, may yet live to rejoice in the restoration of true liberty and solid peace to their native country, when light and order shall spring from the present darkness and confusion, and the reign of chaos shall be no more. [19]

May I be permitted a short digression on the subject of those exiles? It shall only be to remark, that all the boasted conquests of our Edwards and our Henrys over the French nation, do not confer such substantial glory on our own country, as she derives from having received, protected, and supported, among multitudes of other sufferers, at a time and under circumstances so peculiarly disadvantageous to herself, *three thousand priests*, of a nation habitually her enemy, and of a religion intolerant and hostile to her own. This is the solid triumph of true Christianity; and it is worth remarking, that the deeds which poets and historians celebrate as rare and splendid actions, and sublime instances of greatness of soul, in the heroes of the Pagan world, are but the ordinary and habitual virtues which occur in the common course of action among Christians; quietly performed without effort or exertion, and with no view to renown; but resulting naturally and necessarily from the religion they profess.

So predominating is the power of an example we have once admired, and set up as a standard of imitation, and so fascinating has been the ascendancy of the Convention over the minds of those whose approbation of French politics commenced in the earlier periods of the Revolution, that it extends to the most trivial circumstances. I cannot forbear to notice this in an instance, which, though inconsiderable in itself, yet ceases to be so when we view it in the light of a symptom of the reigning disease.

While the fantastic phraseology of the new Republic is such, as to be almost as disgusting to sound taste, as their doctrines are to sound morals, it is curious to observe how deeply the addresses, which have been sent to it from the Clubs^[C] in this country, have been infected with it, as far at least as phrases and terms are objects of imitation. In other respects, it is but justice to the French Convention to confess, that they are hitherto without rivals and without imitators; for who can aspire to emulate that compound of anarchy and atheism which in their debates is mixed up with the pedantry of school boys, the jargon of a cabal, and the vulgarity and ill-breeding of a mob? One instance of the prevailing cant may suffice, where an hundred might be adduced; and it is not the most exceptionable.—To demolish every existing law and establishment; to destroy the fortunes and ruin the principles of every country into which they are carrying their destructive arms and their frantic doctrines; to untie or cut asunder every bond which holds society together; to impose their own arbitrary shackles where they succeed, and to demolish every thing where they fail.—This desolating system, by a most unaccountable perversion of language, they are pleased to call by the endearing name of *fraternization*; and fraternization is one of the favourite terms which their admirers have adopted. Little would a simple stranger, uninitiated in this new and surprising dialect, imagine that the peaceful terms of fellow-citizen and of brother, the winning offer of freedom and happiness, and the warm embrace of fraternity, were only watch-words by which they in effect, [20]

And let slip the dogs of war.

In numberless other instances, the fashionable language of France at this day would be as unintelligible to the correct writers of the age of Louis the XIVth, as their fashionable notions of liberty would be irreconcilable with those of the true Revolution Patriots of his great contemporary and victorious rival, William the Third. [21]

Such is indeed their puerile rage for novelty in the invention of new words, and the perversion of their taste in the use of old ones, that the celebrated Vossius, whom Christine of Sweden oddly complimented by saying, that he was so learned as not only to know whence all words came, but whither they were going, would, *were he admitted to the honours of a sitting*, be obliged to confess, that he was equally puzzled to tell the one, or to foretel the other.

If it shall please the Almighty in his anger to let loose this infatuated people, as a scourge for the iniquities of the human race; if they are delegated by infinite justice to act, as storm and tempest fulfilling his word; if they are commissioned to perform the errand of the destroying lightning or the avenging thunder-bolt, let us try at least to extract personal benefit from national calamity; let every one of us, high and low, rich and poor, enter upon this serious and humbling inquiry, how much his own individual offences have contributed to that awful aggregate of public guilt, which has required such a visitation. Let us carefully examine in what proportion we have separately added to that common stock of abounding iniquity, the description of which formed the character of an ancient nation, and is so peculiarly applicable to our own—*Pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness*. Let every one of us humbly inquire, in the self-suspecting language of the disciples to their Divine Master—*Lord, is it I?* Let us learn to fear the fleets and armies of the enemy, much less than those iniquities at home which this alarming dispensation may be intended to chastize.

The war which the French have declared against us, is of a kind altogether unexampled in every respect; insomuch that human wisdom is baffled when it would pretend to conjecture what may be the event. But this at least we may safely say, that it is not so much the force of French bayonets, as the contamination of French principles, that ought to excite our apprehensions. We trust, that through the blessing of GOD we shall be defended from their open hostilities, by the temperate wisdom of our Rulers, and the bravery of our fleets and armies; but the domestic danger arising from licentious and irreligious principles among ourselves, can only be guarded against by the personal care and vigilance of every one of us who values religion and the good order of society. [22]

GOD grant that those who go forth to fight our battles, instead of being intimidated by the number of their enemies, may bear in mind, that "there is no restraint with GOD to save by many or by few." And let the meanest of us who remains at home remember also, that even he may contribute to the internal safety of his country, by the integrity of his private life, and to the success of her defenders, by following them with his fervent prayers. And in what war can the sincere Christian ever have stronger inducements to pray for the success of his country, than in this? Without entering far into any political principles, the discussion of which would be in a great measure foreign to the design of this little tract, it may be remarked, that the unchristian principle of revenge is not our motive to this war; conquest is not our object; nor have we had recourse to hostility, in order to effect a change in the internal government of France^[D]. The present war is undoubtedly undertaken entirely on defensive principles. It is in defence of our King, our Constitution, our Religion, our Laws, and consequently our *Liberty*, in the sound and rational sense of that term. It is to defend ourselves from the savage violence of a crusade, made against all Religion, as well as all Government. If ever therefore a war was undertaken on the ground of self-defence and necessity—if ever men might be literally said to fight *pro ARIS et focis*, this seems to be the occasion. [23]

The ambition of conquerors has been the source of great and extensive evils: Religious fanaticism of still greater. But little as I am disposed to become the apologist of either the one principle or the other, there is no extravagance in asserting, that they have seemed incapable of producing, even in ages, that extent of mischief, that comprehensive desolation, which *philosophy, falsely so called*, has produced in three years.

Christians! it is not a small thing—it is *your life*. The pestilence of irreligion which you detest, will insinuate itself imperceptibly with those manners, phrases, and principles which you admire and adopt. It is the humble wisdom of a Christian, to shrink from the most distant approaches to sin, to abstain from the very appearance of evil. If we would fly from the deadly contagion of Atheism, let us fly from those seemingly remote, but not very indirect paths which lead to it. Let France choose this day whom she will serve; *but, as for us and our houses, we will serve the Lord*.

And, O gracious and long suffering God! before that awful period arrives, which shall exhibit the dreadful effects of such an education as the French nation are instituting; before a race of men can be trained up, not only without the knowledge of THEE, but in the contempt of THY most holy law, do THOU, in great mercy, change the heart of this people as the heart of one man. Give them not finally over to their own corrupt imaginations, to their own heart's lusts. But after having made them a fearful example to all the nations of the earth, what a people *can* do, who have cast off the fear of THEE, do THOU graciously bring them back to a sense of that law which they have violated, and to participation of that mercy which they have abused; so that they may happily find, while the discovery can be attended with consolation, that *doubtless there is a reward for the righteous; verify, there is a GOD who judgeth the earth*.

THE END.

FOOTNOTES:

- [B] See his Speech, enumerating their intended projects.
- [C] See the Collection of Addresses from England, &c. Published by Mr. Mc. KENZIE, *College Green*, DUBLIN.
- [D] See the Report of Mr. Pitt's Speech in the House of Commons on Feb. 12, 1793.

Transcriber's note

Printer errors have been changed and are listed below. All other inconsistencies are as in the original.

The following changes have been made to the text:

Page 18: Changed "involve their religous" to "involve their religious".

Page 18: Changed "in order to which they" to "in order to do which they".

*** END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK CONSIDERATIONS ON RELIGION AND PUBLIC EDUCATION ***

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