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Although acting in character as Speculator may lead me to examine any subject in politicks or divinity, yet I mean not to engage in controversy with any sect in religion, of any party in government. I would rather calculate all my speculations, as well as order all my actions and discourses, so as to conciliate and unite. Patriotism and benevolence are the principles I avow, and wish to recommend. By these I hope ever to be actuated, and their excellence I would endeavour to display by my writings, conversation and example. As it is not my design to attack or confront any publick writer or speaker, I wish not to expose myself to the attacks of others. Next to the sword of the duelist, or the dagger of the assassin, I abhor the envenomed pen of ill natured satire and malignant revenge. As I would demean myself a peaceable subject of civil government, and an useful member of society, according to my narrow sphere and capacity, it is my wish, and shall be my endeavour, to encourage others to become the same. In these my speculations I hope the publick will find me at least inoffensive, should they judge that I fail in being instructive or entertaining.

To be consistent with myself in claiming the right of private judgment, and to secure the candid sentiments of others, I must not disturb them in the exercise of the same right, nor withhold from them my candour and good will. It cannot be expected that minds so differently situated, instructed, and biassed, as ours unavoidably are, should think alike in politicks or religion. But, though there cannot be union of sentiment, there may and ought to be union of affection. At this point all parties should aim. I hope therefore I shall not incur the censure of any, especially of orthodox divines and sober christians, if in this speculation I take it for granted, that human nature is not wholly depraved; and that my fellow citizens, in a particular manner, are conscious of superiour dignity in the construction and furniture of their minds, and the disposition of their hearts: That they feel and cherish the operations of worthy and virtuous principles, and are capable of being fired with a noble emulation in discarding every thing that is base, and encouraging every thing that is excellent—in refining and exalting our common nature to the highest pitch, and in diffusing virtue and happiness to the greatest extent. Degenerate as human nature is, and vicious as mankind too generally are, I like not to hear *it* or *them* industriously decried. If any profess to believe the doctrine of total depravity, I would charitably hope they do not mean hereby to palliate or excuse any voluntary meanness or wickedness in themselves; but on the contrary, that by the goodness of their hearts and actions they contradict their professed belief. I freely own, and wish to do it without offence, that the *dignity* and not the *depravity* of human nature, is the most pleasing theme of my contemplations. And although I may be told that this is an evidence of my pride, and therefore of my own depravity, I wish to refute them by no other argument, than acting up to this sentiment. If any should point me to an *Arnold*, I would point him to a *Washington*.

To inspire noble sentiments, and to prompt to virtuous exertions and attainments, we must not dwell on the imbecility and meanness, but on the exalted capacities and

designs of man. And although I am extremely mortified at the folly and baseness which so many of my fellow citizens were guilty of the last year, in flying in the face of so excellent a constitution as ours of this Commonwealth, and of a government so well administered, thereby bringing such disgrace upon themselves and their country, yet I flatter myself, that by the seasonable exertions and examples of the wise, the virtuous and the influential in the community, this enlightened people, who are sensible of their error, will use every endeavour to retrieve their character, and demonstrate to the world, that they have a sense of the value of their privileges, and will never more act unworthy of *them* or of *themselves*.

As the wisdom of the United States has by free choice been selected and centered to devise a form of government which shall cement, secure, and dignify the whole, I flatter myself that the prudence, piety and patriotism of my dear native country, breaking forth like the sun from behind the clouds, will be soon displayed in the ready adoption of the proposed constitution. For my part, when I consider the dilemma into which we are plunged, the necessity of a firm, effective federal government—the expectations and demands of other nations from us—the knowledge and integrity employed in concerting the plan, and the disgrace and ruin that await us if such a measure be rejected, I cannot but conclude that all the states view the subject in the same light of importance, and laying aside all party and local prejudices, and inspired as with one enlightened benevolent spirit, are already stretching out an eager hand to grasp the offered boon. To facilitate so auspicious an union, let my fellow citizens pay, as the subject deserves, a close and unprejudiced attention, not only to the form of government so deliberately and unitedly constructed, but also to the unanimous resolve of its most respectable framers, and to the letter of the illustrious President, the man, who, of all others, has shewn himself worthy of the confidence and esteem of his country. Should this happy event take place, what an additional lustre would accrue to America! already is she distinguished among the nations for a glorious and successful struggle in the cause of freedom. She has produced upon the stage the brightest geniuses in war, politicks, in the mercantile and refined arts. And may we not promise ourselves, that conscious of her advantages and duty, she will now aspire to the still nobler distinction of improving human nature, and exhibiting the highest degree of moral worth; of displaying, for the honour of the species and the good of the world, the most skilful and vigilant instructors of youth—the most catholick and successful preachers—the most learned and honest lawyers—the most able and humane physicians, and a race of inhabitants, who, thoroughly possessed and actuated by the spirit of Christianity, shall demonstrate, by the benevolence of their tempers, and the usefulness of their lives, the efficacy and divinity of the religion which they profess.

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