

# AMPSHIRE GAZETTE.

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## PROPOSAL for Printing by Subscription, THE Moral and Religious MISCELLANY;

SIXTY-ONE  
Aphoristical Essays,  
in some of the most important Christian  
Doctrines and Virtues.  
By HUGH KNOX, D. D.  
In St. CROIX.

**THE CONTENTS.**  
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*We the Subscribers, Members of the Gospel in the Town of Hartford, recommend the above Treatise to the Public, and particularly to the People of our own Congregations. The Subjects are in their Nature important and the manner of treating them is plain, instructive and awakening, as cannot fail giving Entertainment to every serious Mind.*

BENJAMIN BOARDMAN,  
NATHAN STROUD.

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 THE OBSERVER.—No. IV.

*The people have suffered an immense sum by the devalued state of the national debt.*  
**A** Fier all that the public have suffered by the confusion, of finance in the union and several states, it is not strange that their patience is nearly exhausted. The want of a general government hath cost millions to the people, which are now very happily shared, and enjoyed among a set of people who have been very scrupulous about liberty, the collectors of the taxes you have paid, and speculators in your disordered funds.

It is time the truth should be fairly spoken to the people at large, and the Observer will do whatever may be the consequence. Some of the false & rapacious people now will to play over the old game, and fill you with jealousies that they may have a second harvest; but their day is past. For our own preservation it is necessary we should attend to the sources of past confusion. By the national debt I mean all those funds which the union at large, and the particular states stand obligated to pay. These funds were incurred in one common cause, our defence in the general war—it was chance and not option which fixed men's names to the list of Continental or State creditors.

The general idea is a true one, that the whole must stand or fall together, and most people had little preference to either kind of security. There is not at present any reason in equity why one class of creditors should be preferred to the other—the whole ought to stand on the same funds, and have equal justice. Soon after the war a new constitution of government was found necessary to set things right, but a that juncture the country was not sufficiently enlightened to obtain it. The consequence was, the continent without any power of creating funds, began in a defaulty manner to arrange their own finances. The several States finding the weakness of the union, began to make partial arrangements for that very debt, which on every principle of justice ought to be sustained by the whole nation. Such remedies as these, adopted by different bodies of men, and at different places and very different times, mult in their nature be different and confined.

From this source you have seen more than fifty kinds of paper securities, one time, within the United States, differing but a small matter in value, but enough to spread confusion over the whole, and betray the honest into the hands of designing men. The people have paid enough to make the creditors contented, had it come to their hands in a regular and equal method: but in the midst of this darkness and confusion has been effected. The members of the old Congress, and of your assemblies, were men of wisdom, but what could wisdom do in such different and distant bodies, which had no constitutional connection, and of course could have no general system. Matters of this kind cannot be planned in a numerous body of men, be they ever so wise. A treasury board of proper composition, systematically arranged, and furnished with information, must concert, and the legislature after proper discussions must give the authority to execute.

The first step towards order and light is to reduce the whole national debt to one kind, and one set of regulations; and unless something of this nature takes place, you have millions more to pay without coming any nearer to the desired end. It is impossible that a plain man, who is an industrious and good subject, should distinguish between so many kinds of taxes of different value. Let the whole sum of this debt be brought together—placed on a common and familiar scale, and regularly introduced to the business—the public will then know their situation—thirty men will do that business for the whole nation which now employs through the several States two hundred and fifty, all of whom are supported by the people.—The creditors will understand a plain and honest plan, and be saved from a thousand impositions—taxes will be of one kind, and the man who purchases to pay, them will know the price he ought to give. I can foresee there will be objections to what I advance, and some very cunning men will cry danger! danger! but I never yet saw any evil from simplifying money matters, when all the people have to pay. It is the rolling up to

grains of a number of half made systems, which endangers the people; for they cannot see thro them, and the man that must borrow his neighbours wits to manage his own affairs, must soon borrow money to pay his debts. The present is a fortunate moment for this country, and the only one they will ever have to simplify their treasury matters. Let one great and inclusive system for the whole be adopted, and your finances may soon be reduced to perfect order. Should the present opportunity be pass, and the federal system not take in the whole of your national debt, another opportunity must not be expected—confusion will continue—the poor and unsuspecting will be cheated—creditors will demand all orders of citizens—who will be no public faith, and your moaned men will hide their property—a stable medium for business will be severely wanted—and your future agriculture, manufactures and commerce, be denied that spring which might now be given them.

## ON THE MEANS OF PRESERVING PUBLIC LIBERTY.

**W**HEN a system of national freedom hath been established by great exertions, it becomes an inquiry how it shall be best preserved. The speculative Philosopher, and the practical Statesman have united their endeavours to answer this question.

A natural thirst for power in the human mind, with the emulations springing from authority, tend to a general encroachment on the rights of human nature—even patriots and honest men their weakness, passions, and appetites, and in little instances may be tyrants, while they wish for general freedom.

Many systems have been formed which in theory appear almost perfect—many checks have been devised; all these are, and we most expect there will be, abuses of power, until the nature of man is delivered from its present imperfections: In every state some person or persons must be representatives of the public, in whose hands the power of the whole is lodged, for general protection; and without this investiture of public authority, to restrain and punish, the wicked will be a scourge to all within their reach; and it is also possible, that the very persons who are clothed with public power, may become cruel and unjust.—Without power in some national head, anarchy will be the fate of man, every one will retaliate and abuse as his passions dictate, which is the worst of tyrannies— with power the rulers of a nation may do injury, for man is frail—great men may misjudge—good men may fall.

To give unlimited power, is a greater temptation than ought to be placed before a frail being: at the same time, placing too many checks on rulers is in effect dismembering the body, and destroys its energy of action and of defence, both against foreign enemies and its own evil subjects. So far as we may judge from American experience, a nation of freemen, in modelling their government, are more apt to err in overlimiting, than in giving too great scope to the power of rulers.—In both cases the consequence is nearly the same; for when the citizens find their constitutional government cannot protect and do justice, they will show themselves into the hands of some bold usurper, who premises much to them, but intends only for himself; and in this way very many free states have lost their liberties. The forming a constitution of government is a serious matter—the fruit of deliberation and concession, with which it hath been taken up by the citizens at large, and thus far carried into effect, is a new event in the history of mankind. The present constitution of the United States, appears to embrace the essential principles both of freedom and energy in national operations; still very little dependence is to be made on this Constitution, as a future safeguard to the American liberties. I would by no means undervalue those energetic productions, which we call the constitution of the several states, and of the whole—their express our present ideas of the rulers' power and duty, and the subjects' right—they are a written basis on which national habits will be formed, and in this way will cherish sentiments of freedom and retard the rise of oppression—on these your children will look as maxims of their fathers' wisdom, but if they have no other protection, the lust of those who have opportunity will undermine their privileges. Every generation must assert its own liberties; and for this the collective body of the people must be informed. A general diffusion of science, in every class of people, is the true cause of that new order of events which have taken place in the United States. In every other country a great proportion of the people are unacquainted with letters.—In several great and civilized kingdoms of Europe, it is but a comparative few who can read & write. The vast number of well meaning and ignorant people, become instruments of superior policy, to oppose every effort of national freedom; but in Amer-