

whatever the character of the national feeling may be, and the zeal with which they support the institutions framed on the principles thus inculcated. To be informed that they are wise and intelligent and that none are their superiors is so delicious a morsel to the innate self-love of men that such a maxim coming recommended from those they respect, there is no doubt of its being greedily swallowed. Now truths are not generally so flattering to the self-love of men, and consequently are not eagerly received, the mind requiring to be disciplined and prepared for their reception; and when errors become confirmed in the mind, wrought into convictions, and incorporated with the feelings according to which the will acts, they render that mind inaccessible to the reception of truth. Hence the very circumstance of certain maxims being readily received and spread amongst men may occasion us to be sceptical respecting the validity of their foundation.

We see then the importance that the civil principles on which the institutions necessary to social order are grounded should be truths and not errors. All national feeling, inasmuch as the bulk of the people in a nation, from the causes already mentioned, are incapable of having their convictions on civil subjects grounded in a cultivated reason, partakes more or less of prejudice. Prejudice may be in conformity with, or it may be opposed to, moral and civil truth; in the former case it is harmless and may be more properly termed ignorance; in the latter case it is full of the most mischievous consequences to society in both a civil and moral view. Prejudice instead of being grounded in reason, originates in authority, custom, habit and breeding up; all therefore must be the subjects of prejudice before they can be the subjects of reason and truth. But those under the influence of prejudice should be governed, and those under the influence of reason and truth should govern. If their situations be reversed prejudice occasions shipwreck to the social system.

Prejudice may, however, exist to a considerable extent under the British form of Government without danger to civil order, since the British constitution is not founded on an acknowledgment of the wisdom of all the people. But as the constitution of the United States is founded on such admission, the presence of such prejudice as they both theoretically and practically deny to exist, is fatal to the reasonableness and probable stability of their institutions.

We find accordingly that the system of government built on the adoption of those fundamental civil principles is inconsistent with the vigorous and effective execution of the laws. The want of confidence in the good intentions and wisdom of the government is such that a physical force sufficient for the preservation of civil order, and to provide against foreign aggression, is not allowed lest it should be turned against the liberties of the nation. In a nation like the United States, the extent of whose territory would render it almost untenable by a foreign enemy, and the paucity of whose population in proportion to extent of territory, occasions the means of subsistence to be at present easily procured, the evils originating in such