most of the forms of their native country. Yet they did not allow themselves to be trammelled by British precedent. They seem to have looked at law in the abstract as containing rules of civil government for free and intelligent men, who were imposing just restraints upon themselves rather than lording it over others. With a fearless neglect of ancient customs, and of forms rendered sacred by antiquity, they began a system of legal reform so soon as they trod the New England soil. They affected no disregard for the wisdom or learning of their ancestors; they made no pretensions to any better knowledge of man's true social position than that which prevailed in England; nevertheless, with a steady eye upon ancient precedents and English usage, they began a system of legal change, radical yet conservative. They opened the BIBLE and sought to form laws in accordance only with its spirit and precepts. A high authority has said: "The known defects in the laws and practises of England, pointed out and forcibly stated by Lord Brougham in his great Law Reform Speeches, were discovered and banished from the New England Colonies by their first settlers. Nor are there any essential changes or improvements, called for by that eminent English Statesman, which were not actually adopted by one or another of the early New England Colonies."

I might here mention many instances, collected from various quarters, of their wisdom in legal reforms—some of which are still being vainly sought for in other countries. Take, for example, the subject of imprisonment for debt, one of the most barbarous usages of the darkest night of the Middle Ages—a law only very slightly modified by our own Canadian Parliament at its last Session. In 1650, it was enacted in Connecticut that "no person should be imprisoned for any debt or fine, except when there appeared to be some estate which he would not produce." Nor was this a mere theory or a dead letter. It is a proud boast that no honest debtor was ever confined in a Connecticut prison. Thus also in a case of bankruptcy, no preference or priority of claim was admitted; the law directed that all attachments should inure to the benefit of all creditors in