

13. *The Divine Science of Politics*

To James Warren

The Hague, 17 June, 1782.

Broken to pieces and worn out with the diseases engendered by the tainted atmosphere of Amsterdam operating upon the effects of fatiguing journeys, dangerous voyages, a variety of climates, and eternal anxiety of mind, I have not been able to write you so often as I wished; but now I hope the fine season and the pure air of the Hague will restore me. Perhaps you will say that the air of a Court is as putrid as that of Amsterdam. In a moral and political sense, perhaps; but I am determined that the bad morals and false politics of other people shall no longer affect my repose of mind nor disturb my physical constitution. What is it to me, after having done all I can to set them right, whether other people go to heaven or to the devil? I may howl and weep, but this will have no effect. I may then just as well sing and laugh.

Pray, how do you like your new allies the Dutch? Does your imagination rove into futurity, and speculate and combine as it used to do? It is a pretty amusement to play a game with nations as if they were fox and geese, or coins upon a checker-board, or the personages at chess, is it not? It is, however, the real employment of a statesman to play such a

game sometimes; a sublime one, truly; enough to make a man serious, however addicted to sport. Politics are the divine science, after all. How is it possible that any man should ever think of making it subservient to his own little passions and mean private interests? Ye baseborn sons of fallen Adam, is the end of politics a fortune, a family, a gilded coach, a train of horses, and a troop of livery servants, balls at Court, splendid dinners and suppers? Yet the divine science of politics is at length in Europe reduced to a mechanical system composed of these materials. What says the muse, Mrs. Warren?

What is to become of an independent statesman, one who will bow the knee to no idol, who will worship nothing as a divinity but truth, virtue, and his country? I will tell you; he will be regarded more by posterity than those who worship hounds and horses; and although he will not make his own fortune, he will make the fortune of his country. The liberties of Corsica, Sweden, and Geneva may be overturned, but neither his character can be hurt, nor his exertions rendered ineffectual. Oh peace! when wilt thou permit me to visit Penns-hill, Milton-hill, and all the blue hills? I love every tree and every rock upon all those mountains. Roving among these, and the quails, partridges, squirrels, &c., that inhabit them, shall be the amusement of my declining years. God willing, I will not go to Vermont. I must be within the scent of the sea.

I hope to send along a treaty in two or three months. I love the Dutchmen with all their faults. There is a strong spirit of liberty among them, and many excellent qualities. Next year their navy will be so strong as to be able to do a great deal. They may do something this.

I am going to Court to sup with princes, princesses, and ambassadors. I had rather sup with you at one of our hills, though I have no objection to supping at Court. Adieu!