

Washington City July 4. 1816

Dear Sir.

Although old men are destined by the laws of nature to become forgetful yet no law but the laws of death will justify old friends for forgetting one another. I am gratified with the opportunity of communicating a few lines to you. We learn from a pamphlet periodically published in New Haven, that there is a great shaking of the dry bones in the land of steady habits, which indeed, indicates some degree of unsteadiness. They seem to have reclined from their perpendicular position and to have taken a turn towards Religious enthusiasm. These things however are nothing new. They have been common in all ages, all nations and all religions. Jewish, Christian, Mahometan and Pagan, at certain irregular periods. _ We can no more account for these flights of enthusiasm those spasms of the mind, than for the cause and origin of the epidemic diseases that affect the body which alternately prevail in all the various regions and sections of the earth: but must attribute them both to some invisible effluvia, floating in the atmosphere or peculiar temperature of the air. We know indeed, that the subjects of these mental agitations attribute them to a supernatural origin, and the immediate agency of Divine Power. But this I deny. For we are not to believe, that all the vagaries of enthusiasm which agitate the minds of people of all religions are produced by the immediate operations of the holy spirit, for this would be to suppose the holy spirit operating on principles diametrically opposite to one another. When we are led to suspect none of them are dictated by the holy spirit and of course that all those agitations are but merely the result of the human mind. But whatever the cause may be, we know that all religions and all sects have their preachers, some of which are always ready to kindle the fire of enthusiasm, and others to blow the flame. For as Alexander the Coppersmith told the Ephesians, by this craft we have our Wealth. Pure religion and undefiled before God the father (says James) is to visit the Widow and fatherless and do good to them that are afflicted. In modern language, Pure religion and that which God approves of consists in acts of charity, benevolence and all the social virtues.

[p.2]

I percieve by the Religious Intelligencer, that some, at least, of those who advocate this overwhelming zeal, are in expectation that the Millenium will speedily commence and entertain an idea that they are lending their aid to help the Lord in hastening on that glorious day, poor feeble things, as if God was not able to do his own work. Neither is this any thing new: the Millineum has been coming, and still hard by, for about a thousand years, already in the opinion of the fanatics. They have frequently seen the signs of it, and marked out approaches with great confide, and often been able to calculate its actual comment, and now they have given it a new start; but I can assure them (without the spirit of propecy) that they will none of them live to see it, nor shall I. I suppose they are almost ripe already for an other Crusade to the holy land, and only waiting for another Peter the Hermit to bawl them into a perfect frenzy. As that man did all Christendom about 8 or 9 hundred years ago. When the millenium was immediately to take place. It was then that all Christendom arose in arms, to rescue by violence, the Holy City and Holy Land from the occupancy of Infidels Princes, nobles and people joined heart and hand in glorious work, exhausted all the treasure of Europe to gain a footing in Asia, pursued it a number of years ^ near two centuries lost a million or two of lives ^ aye several Milliones were often beaten repulsed, sent home often for fresh recruits and ultimately took Jerusalem, and what did they get by it? Why they could not keep it, the Pagans drove them off and Christ never came to take possession Paul with all his grace and learning I believe never though of the Millenium, but

but he evidently thought the world would immediately come to an end. He says in one of his Epistles, "We who shall be a live then shall not die, but shall be caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air" Peter, and I believe all the disciples entertained the same opinion, and well they might, for the Lord Jesus (according to Matthew) speaking of the end of the world, says verily verily I say unto you this generation shall not pass away till all these things are fulfilled. Heaven and earth shall pass away but my word shall not pass away. And as they believed him an honest man, they must have believed his prediction

[p.3]

But the time would fail me to go fully into the subject- it furnishes matter for volumes__ I have no news to transmit. You have all the News papers as well as we. I will only say the people of this country are but little affected with religious enthusiasm, except the Methodists, they seem engross the whole we have and we have a pretty tolerable proportion of them

This city increases fast in population and business. Indulges much in rich dress, costly furniture_ morning calls & visits, and what some would call high living. The Commisaries of the Navy are collecting materials and Workmen to build a 74. It seem by various accounts that the people of the several states generally disapprove of present Congress having feathered their nests so well last session and seem well agreed to select a new set of members for the next Congress. There was a remarkable coincidence of parties last Session no party spirit once lifted it head, but all seemed to labour for the public interest and not forget their own. Let me hear from you occasionally as occasion offer and give me leave to subscribe myself your old friend

Abraham Bradley [torn]

PS

As to any clerical blunders I submit them to your candor and correction for I have neither the time nor eyesight to correct them

For I read and I write
part by guess and part by sight

[reverse]

Abraham Bradleys
Letter Dated July 4th
1816

Majr Moses Seymour

Litchfield

Con

favd by Mr Wm Bradley