

J Libbey to his
Friend Mr Belknap

Rev. Mr. BUCKMINSTER'S DISCOURSE.

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A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED

AT

PORTSMOUTH, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

NOVEMBER 1st, 1789.

ON OCCASION OF THE

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

George Washington.

HONORING T. AT CAPITAL

WITH A VISIT.

BY JOSEPH BUCKMINSTER, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE

FIRST CHURCH IN PORTSMOUTH.

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THE following discourse, prepared in great haste, and under many interruptions, claims the candor of the public : but if it may be considered as the smallest portion of the tribute of grateful remembrance due to the ILLUSTRIOUS PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES ; and may excite any to be looking and preparing for his approach, who is higher than the kings of the earth ; the author will have no reason to repent, that he has exposed himself to the censure of the critic, in yielding to the general request that it should be published.



A DISCOURSE, &c.

 O take notice of the events of providence, which deeply interest the views and feelings of a people, cannot be unsuitable, at any time or place. You will not then, think it improper, that, on this sacred day, and from the desk devoted to the purposes of religion, I should take occasion to congratulate you, my dear brethren, upon the safe arrival of the PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES, to this metropolis.

No event, of this nature, could be more highly pleasing to the hearts of a free and grateful people. You
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have doubtless, made it the matter of your devout acknowledgment to him, by whom you believe all events ordered : and without whom, not a sparrow falls to the ground.

We see the MAN, whom heaven designed as the principle instrument of accomplishing, one of the greatest revolutions in the nations of the earth, of whom the event has proved that God said as of Cyrus. “ Thy right hand will I uphold, and I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight. I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in funder the bars of iron.”

We see the MAN, endued by him, “from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift,” with that rare assemblage of qualities which unites the jarring interests, views, and affections of an extensive continent ; who, when the cruel hands of tyranny, and unjust usurpation had formed chains and shackles to bind us at their pleasure, at the call of his country, cheerfully stepped forth, in the first place of danger, to oppose their measures, to guide and direct your efforts to defend our liberties.

We see the GENERAL, who, with a cool intrepid bravery, faced every danger ; with unexampled firmness sustained every discouragement ; and, with persevering magnanimity, surmounted every obstacle of a
long

long and unequal war ; and, under the auspices of an indulgent providence, procured for us peace, liberty, and independence.

You see the MAN, who shared with your fathers, your brethren, and sons, the fatigues and perils of many dangerous battles : who sympathized with them in their sufferings, and mingled his tears with yours in your various losses.

We see the MAN, who, having fought our battles, and defended our liberties, nobly retired to private life, claiming only his share, with the multitude of his brethren, in those privileges which he had secured to them.

But heaven had not yet accomplished all its purposes by him.—Leading you to form a new constitution of government, to unite the interests and resources of these extended states ; He who has the hearts of all in his hands, with an unanimity that is unparalled, led three millions of people to make choice of him as their chief magistrate, and place him at the head of this rising empire.

We see the MAN, who bowed obedient to the voice of God thus expressed by the people,—who sacrificed every private consideration to the wishes of his country; leaving his beloved retreat again to immerge in the cares and duties of public life, at a time when they are
peculiarly

peculiarly embarrassed——May heaven reward him for his generous sacrifice with blessings greater than earth can give—may he find support proportioned to his burdens ; and may that “wonderful Counsellor, by whom kings reign, and princes decree justice,” make him as distinguished in the cabinet, as he has been in the field, and as renowned in his laws, as he has been in his victories.

We now see this illustrious patriot, like the father of a great family, visiting its various branches to bless, and to be blessed, to start the tear of joy, and awaken mutual congratulations——He comes, not attended with mercenary guards, like kings and emperors who hold their dignity by hereditary descent, who even fear where no fear is—He comes, not in the triumph of military parade, to shew the spoils and laurels he hath won—but he comes triumphing in the confidence and affections of a free and grateful people, who, under God, hail him the deliverer of their country, and the protector of its liberties——

It has been pleasing to see with what anxious emotions his arrival has been expected from place to place, how every exertion has been made to smooth the way before him, how all ages and characters have united to bid him a hearty welcome, and testify the joy they felt at the honour of a visit.

WHAT can be more pleasing than the efforts of hu-

man nature, however imperfect, to express a grateful remembrance of past benefits, and a lively sense of present favours. May the illustrious **PRESIDENT** long live to receive fresh testimonies of affection from a free people, and to be the instrument, in the hand of **GOD**, of fresh blessings to the undeserving. Too much respect, that falls short of religious homage, cannot be paid to one, to whom we are so much indebted ;—were this to be offered, he would say, with the Angel in the book of the Revelation “See thou do it not, I am thy fellow servant, and of thy brethren, that have the testimony of Jesus—worship **GOD**.”

What ever distinctions there may be among mankind, however indebted we may be to an earthly benefactor, “We have all one father, for one **GOD** hath created us, there is none in the heavens that may be compared to him, there is none among the sons of the mighty that may be likened to Jehovah.” Permit me then, my brethren, to take occasion, from this auspicious event of a kind providence, to excite your expectation, and solicit your preparation for the approach of that glorious character “who is the brightness of the father’s glory and the express image of his person;” who is so infinitely exalted, that it is the crowning excellence of the most dignified human character to be his servant and disciple. This I shall do by calling your attention to that sublime demand of the royal poet.

P S A L M 24th,——7th and 8th verses.

“Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is this king of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.”

This Psalm was doubtless penned, upon occasion of the king of Israel removing the ark, from the house of Obededom to the city of David, to the tabernacle which he had pitched for it upon mount Zion. And it was calculated to be sung, at least the latter part of it, in alternate responses between those who bore the ark, and those that waited at the tabernacle.

When they approached this sacred place which God had chosen as his rest; the priests and levites shouted in the language of the text, “Lift up your heads O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in;” and the porters, or those who waited at the tabernacle, ask “Who is this king of glory?” And the answer is, “The Lord strong and mighty,” &c. The demand is again made, Lift up—the question is repeated, and a general shout “the Lord of hosts he is the king of glory,” closes the Psalm.

But was nothing more intended, by this sublime description, than the introduction of the ark into its temporary residence in the tabernacle, or the temple at Jerusalem; both which have long since sunk in ruins? Whatever the ideas of the inspired poet might be, that

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Being who inspired him, had a more glorious scene in view, one that has not yet, perhaps, been fully represented. The ark was the symbol of **GOD**'s presence with Israel, but it was also a most signal type of **CHRIST**; it contained the law and the testimony, and was the place where **GOD** manifested himself, and where he revealed his mind and will: "He who at sundry times and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his son," by him who is the **LORD** from heaven, through him alone **GOD** manifests himself to sinners, and through him alone they have access to **GOD**; by him, life and immortality are brought to light, and a voice has been more than once heard from the excellent glory, "This is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him."

As this Psalm doubtless has reference to Christ, so the words of the text may be primarily applied to his glorious ascension into heaven; after he had been for a time, like the ark, in a strange land, encompassed with enemies, and exposed to insult: but, finishing the work for which he humbled himself, and conquering all his enemies, he returned triumphantly to heaven, the Angels, his attendants making the demand of the text; Lift up your heads, &c. meaning those celestial gates of happiness and glory, which were shut against us by our rebellion and apostacy; entrance through which, **CHRIST** had merited, for himself and his, by his obedient sufferings

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unto death. The Angels, who keep the gates of this glorious city, as it is represented in accomodation to our conceptions, ask the question, Who is this king of glory? and the response is given, the LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

It is JESUS the king, whom GOD hath made strong for himself, the mighty conqueror, who hath triumphed over hell and the powers of darkness; and leads captivity captive.

But the words also may be applied to the entrance of CHRIST, by his word and spirit, among his church and people; and by his grace into the hearts of sinners. And so we would now consider them. Christ speaks of his entrance into the heart of man in language correspondent to that of the text, "Behold I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me".—The entrance of his word giveth light, and of his grace giveth life, to the soul,—“to as many as receive him, to them power is given to become the sons of GOD, even to them that believe on his name;” and though we are never to expect the bodily presence of the Saviour again on earth, till he shall come, “to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe :”—yet we are to expect the presence of his spirit, and his spiritual reign on earth, in a more glorious extent, than what has yet been seen.

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He has in one age and another appeared glorious in his truth, extending the knowledge of his gospel, and the triumphs of his cross. In the first propagation of the gospel, the simple preaching of CHRIST and him crucified, triumphed over the idolatry of nations, the wisdom of philosophers, and the power of empires. He again rode forth in the chariot of truth, "conquering to conquer, in the days of the reformation. He signally displayed the grace of his gospel in the hearts of our forefathers, who settled this country; and the power of his providence, in wasting the heathen before them, and giving them secure possession. And in different ages and nations, before and since, hath he manifested himself to his church, enlarging the bounds of her habitation, and increasing the number of her converts: But it remains yet to be accomplished,—" That the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.——And that *all* shall know the LORD from the greatest to the least." It remains yet to be accomplished, that GOD's ancient people be recovered, and the fulness of the gentiles come in. These events we expect upon the credit of scripture prophecy, which the sacred poet has thus expressed :

' Nor shall thy spreading gospel rest,
Till thro' the world thy truth hath run ;
Till CHRIST has all the nations blest,
' That see the light or feel the sun.'

Let me exhort you my brethren to be in expecta-
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tion of this event, diligently attending to your preparation for it : or, at least, for the manifestation of **CHRIST** to his people, as they have sometimes seen him in the sanctuary : But if you think this event too distant to animate your expectations ; (for the times and seasons the Father hath put in his own power) prepare to receive **CHRIST**, by his spirit, into your hearts, individually, which is absolutely necessary to your peace or safety, either here, or hereafter ; “ For if any man have not the spirit of **CHRIST**, he is none of his”.

Do you ask how shall we prepare for this approach of **CHRIST** ? the words of the text suggest an answer. Lift up your heads, in earnest expectation of his coming, and the doors of your hearts to give him entrance. Wait for the **LORD**, let your soul wait, and in his word do you hope. Watch for him, more than they who watch for the morning. With humble gratitude, receive that sacred volume which he has sent from heaven ; study and believe its contents ; see what it requires of you, in order to his approach—Attend to the voice of his messengers ; so far as they accord with his written message ; and present the most fervent loyal addresses at the footstool of his throne ; humbly beseeching him, graciously to draw near, and visit your souls with his salvation. Remove every thing out of the way, that you know may be an obstacle, or an offence to him. Let the crooked ways be made straight

straight, and the rough places smooth——cast away all your transgressions by which you have transgressed against him ; and prepare him a broken and contrite heart ; a penitent, lowly, and humble mind, and he will come to you, and take up his abode with you. For in this sublime, yet condescending manner does he promise by the prophet Isaiah. “ Thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is holy, I dwell in the high and holy place ; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of contrite ones.”

To animate you to this preparation, consider how glorious the personage whose coming we are to expect.

Do you ask in the language of the text, Who is this king of glory ? I answer in the same language—The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD, mighty in battle—The LORD of hosts, he is the king of glory. He is the eternal son of GOD, “in whom dwelleth the fulness of the Godhead bodily,”—To whom, in the language of scripture, it is said : “Thy throne, O GOD, is forever and ever, a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”

We admire and venerate distinguished excellencies in a fellow-mortal : but the most distinguished of these, are but faint rays from the sun of righteousness ; they are but drops, from the fulness that is in CHRIST.

He

He is also the son of man, the friend of men. "Who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich," whose condescending kindness the Apostle thus describes: "Forasmuch as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself, likewise took part of the same; that through death, he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil." And deliver them, who, through fear of death, were all their life-time subject to bondage.

With grateful emotions we view the fellow-mortal who sacrifices his ease to bless his brethren. With how much higher emotions ought we to view him, who laid aside his glory, and took the form of a servant, that we might be made the sons of God?

He is the mediator of the new and everlasting covenant; the man of God's right hand, whom he hath made strong for himself. He is our surety, who hath undertaken to discharge our debt of guilt, and obligation to punishment. "He hath born our sins, in his own body on the tree—was wounded for our transgressions, was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his stripes we might be healed."

He is the LORD *mighty in battle*, hath conquered the hosts of hell, and, as was promised that he should, hath bruised the head of the serpent, who by seducing, enslaved

flaved our race. We were in subjection to the usurped dominion of this cruel tyrant : but J E S U S C H R I S T hath “spoiled principalities and powers, led captivity captive,” and vindicated into liberty, even the liberty of the sons of G O D, all that will accept of his offers, and follow his standard. Of him does the prophet speak, and with respect to his sufferings and victory, when he says ; “ Who is this that cometh from Edom, with died garments from Bozrah, this that is glorious in his apparel ; travelling in the greatness of his strength : I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save.”

We venerate the benevolent conqueror in the cause of liberty—We love the man, whom heaven has made instrumental of bursting the bands of oppression, vindicating the oppressed, and delivering from temporal enemies—and shall we not more highly venerate and love, that glorious conqueror who subdues spiritual enemies, delivers the soul from oppression, and blesses with the liberty of the sons of G O D ?

We hail welcome the saviour of his country ; we wish in every proper way to testify the grateful emotions of our hearts—and shall we not, much rather, hail welcome, *The Saviour of the World*, and testify our higher obligations for his infinite merits ? who, “being made perfect, becomes the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him ;” who, in terms of con-

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descension, says, "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "He that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst: and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand. The lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them to living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes"—Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors, and the *king of glory* shall come in; who is this king of glory? *The Lord strong and mighty the Lord mighty in battle.*

Let me further add, the presence of the greatest earthly benefactor, whatever happiness it affords, can be enjoyed but a very little time: the pleasing scene of congratulation, is soon succeeded by the painful farewell: but if we receive CHRIST JESUS the LORD, he has said, he will never leave nor forsake us. O how sweet is that promise, John 14, 23, "If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Nay, in a more solemn manner still, must the greatest human character, take his leave of those he has been made the instrument of blessing; "it is appointed unto all men once to die. Our Fathers, where are they? and the prophets, do they live forever"?—Where are the kings and emperors, who subdued kingdoms and wrought

wrought righteousness? Where are the ancient friends and benefactors of mankind? They live, indeed, in the memory of grateful and admiring posterity: but the places here that knew them, know them no more forever. **JESUS CHRIST** lives forever; death hath no more dominion over him; He lives to make his subjects happy, to support and conduct them safe, through the perplexities of life, the agonies of death, and the solemnities of judgment; to receive those who have received him, to mansions of eternal glory, that where he is, they may be also. And in that solemn, joyful hour, when he shall say, "come ye blessed of my father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world": He will present every individual of the happy throng, with a crown of glory that fadeth not away, and they shall live and reign with him forever and ever. O my brethren receive this glorious prince,—This friend, this benefactor, this favourer of men;—Look and long for his approach—Let the fervor of your affections dictate the most warm addresses—throw open the doors of your hearts, to give him entrance—remove every obstacle out of the way;—and let your loyalty and fidelity be testified, by the future uniform obedience of your lives, and your entire devotedness to his pleasure. O that there were such a heart in us—such a disposition prevailing in the citizens of this country in general, would afford

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the most happy pledge and presage of its future greatness and glory : “For righteousness exalteth a nation, —those who honor God, he will honor :” and those who hearken to his voice and obey his gospel, he will make a name and a praise in the earth. Then should we be assured, that the administration of our government, would be, “as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds ; as the tender grass springing out of the earth, by the clear shining after rain”.

In a humble hope, and earnest wish, that CHRIST and his gospel may be thus honoured here ; that this may be, in an emphatic sense, Immanuel’s land :—Let me close, with expressing your devout acknowledgments to the Supreme Ruler, for his past benefits ; your fervent supplications, that he would reward, of his own munificence, those whom he hath made the instruments of his blessings ; and your earnest prayers, that he would make the great things which he hath done for us in this land, introductory to the greater things which he hath yet to accomplish in the world : that he would pour out his spirit ; ride forth in the chariot of everlasting truth—“give his son the heathen for his inheritance,

and

and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession ;
That the earth may be full of the knowledge of the
LORD, even as the waters cover the sea.

So come LORD JESUS, come quickly."

A M E N.

