

$$\begin{array}{r} 21410 \\ 198 \\ \hline 211512 \\ 1312 \\ \hline 198 \end{array}$$

$$\begin{array}{r} 1 = 10 \\ 3 = 4 \\ 4 = 3 \end{array}$$

DR. EDWARDS'S

ELECTION-SERMON.

MAY 8th, 1794.

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7-11
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 1

*The Necessity of the Belief of Christianity by the
Citizens of the State, in order to our political
Prosperity ;*

ILLUSTRATED IN A
S E R M O N,
PREACHED BEFORE HIS EXCELLENCY
SAMUEL HUNTINGTON, Esq. L. L. D.
G O V E R N O R,
AND THE HONORABLE THE
G E N E R A L A S S E M B L Y
OF THE
S T A T E O F C O N N E C T I C U T,
CONVENED AT HARTFORD ON THE DAY OF THE
ANNIVERSARY ELECTION.

MAY 8th, 1794.

BY **JONATHAN EDWARDS, D. D.**
PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN NEW-HAVEN.



H A R T F O R D :
PRINTED BY HUDSON AND GOODWIN.

M D C C X C I V .

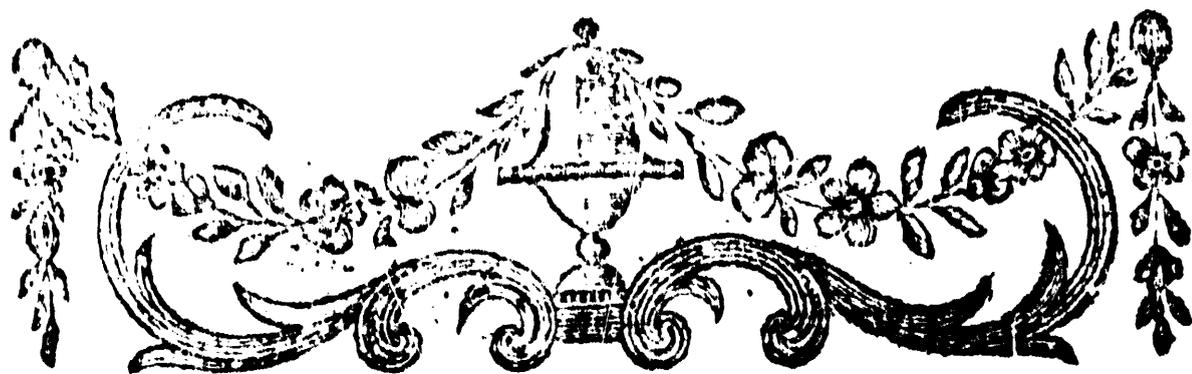


*At a General Assembly of the State of
Connecticut, holden at Hartford, on
the second Thursday of May, A. D.
1794.*

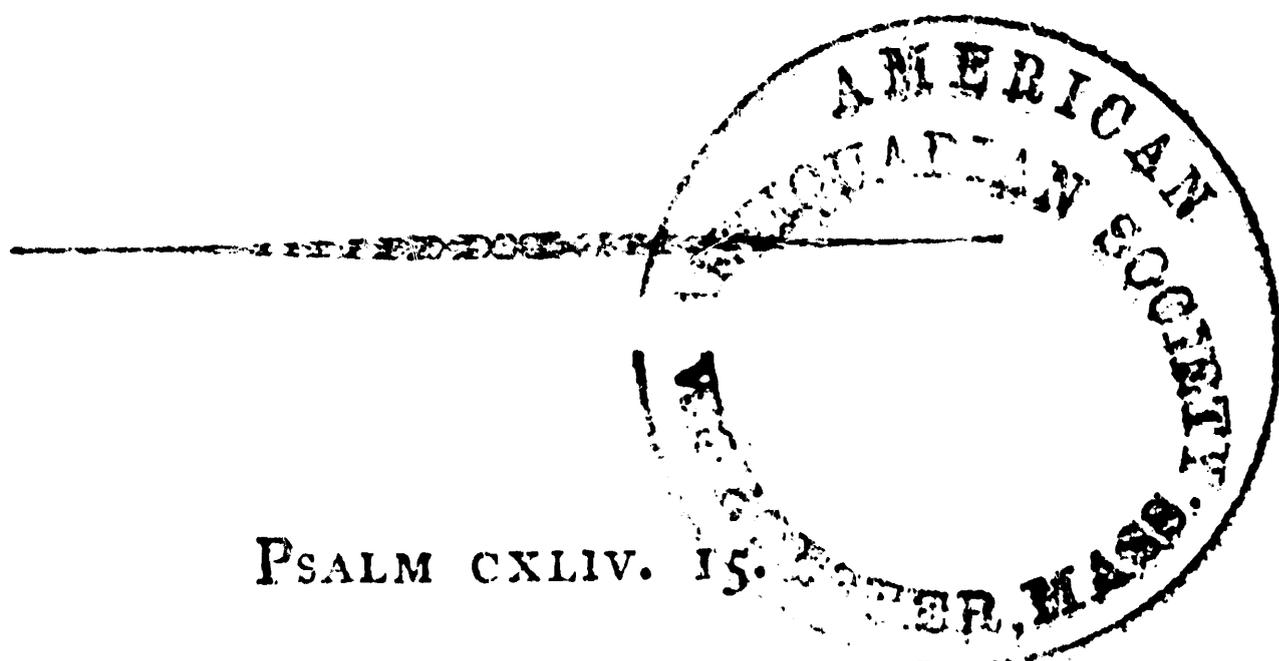
ORDERED, that the Hon. JON-
ATHAN INGERSOL, and DA-
VID DAGGETT, Esqrs. return the
Thanks of this Assembly, to the
Rev. Doct. EDWARDS, for his Ser-
mon deliverd on the Anniversary
Election, and desire a Copy there-
of, that it may be printed.

*A true Copy of Record,
Examined,
By GEORGE WYLLS, Sec'y.*





ELECTION SERMON.



PSALM CXLIV. 15.

Yea, happy is that people whose God is the LORD.

IN this passage of sacred scripture, that people is pronounced happy, whose God is the LORD. But what is the meaning of the expression, “whose God is the LORD?” or when may it be truly said, that the God of any people is the LORD? The answer is, when they believe, worship and obey the Lord or Jehovah, as the only true God, and that according to his revealed will. The Lord was the God of the Israelites, when they complied with the dispensation, under which they lived; and he is our God, when we cordially believe and comply with the gospel. If we do so, the text pronounces us happy; and it plainly implies, that we cannot be happy on any condition short of this.

THEREFORE the subject, which I beg leave to propose from our text for present consideration, is this, The necessity of a belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, in order to our public and political prosperity. This proposition is plainly implied in the text. For if that people only be happy or prosperous, whose God is the Lord ; and if to believe and comply with christianity be implied in having the Lord for our God ; it follows, that the belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, is necessary to our political prosperity.

POLITICAL prosperity requires the general practice of a strict morality. But this cannot be so well secured by any other means, as by a belief of christianity. Motives of a religious kind appear to be necessary to restrain men from vice and immorality. Civil pains and penalties alone are by no means sufficient to this end ; nor are civil honours and rewards sufficient encouragements to the practice of virtue in general. The civil magistrate does not pretend to reward virtue in general according to its moral excellency. He does indeed reward some particular acts of virtue, which are highly beneficial to the public. But the many virtues of private life pass without any other reward from him, than the bare protection, which is afforded in common to the persons who practise those virtues, and to all who are free from gross crimes.

NOR does the magistrate pretend to punish vice in general. He does undertake to punish those gross vices, which consist in the violations of the *perfect* rights of men, and in those cases

only, in which the violations are both manifest and are manifestly proved before a proper tribunal. But all violations of even these rights which are perpetrated in private, or which, though perpetrated publicly, are not legally proved, pass entirely free from civil pains and penalties. The same is true of all violations of the *imperfect* rights, as they are called, which are violated by ingratitude, selfishness, neglect of kind offices, &c. Yet these vices are in their consequences, often as hurtful to the public good, as injustice, fraud or robbery; and indeed the former are the source of the latter. Now to restrain from vices of this latter description, from all vices practised in private, and from vice in general, nothing is so useful as a full belief of a final judgment, and of a subsequent state of rewards and punishments, in which all sin not renounced by sincere repentance, shall be punished, and every man shall receive according to that which he does in the body, whether it be good or evil.

LET us suppose a citizen restrained from vice by the fear of civil penalties only. Such a person will feel himself under no obligation to pay either public or private debts, unless he expects legal judgment and execution; and under no obligation to speak the truth, unless he fears a prosecution for fraud or defamation. He will feel himself at liberty to live in idleness, profusion, intemperance and lust, and to take every advantage consistent with law, to defraud and oppress his fellow citizens. He will requite no kind offices, as he has no motive to gratitude. He will have no motive to the greater part of his duty to his own children, and in a thousand

instances may neglect them, when he is bound by the strictest moral obligation, to assist and do them good. He may indulge himself in passion and ill nature, in contention and violence, so far as not to expose himself to the law ; and of course will take no pains to preserve peace among his neighbours ; but will rather, as his humour happens to be, foment by words and actions, animosities, law-suits and contentions in every form. Ever complaining under the mildest and justest government, he will in numberless ways oppose measures, and especially expences, subservient and necessary to the public good ; and will excite and spread discontent among others. Now is this a good citizen ? What if the whole state consisted of such citizens ? Could it enjoy political prosperity ?

THE best and perhaps the only remedy for such diseases, is a full belief of the divine universal providence, of the accountableness of all men to God for all their conduct, and of a future equal retribution.

SOME religion then, and some belief of a future state is necessary to our political prosperity. But what religion shall we adopt ? and what system concerning a future state is most useful to the state ? It is not possible to introduce and give a general spread through the state, to Mahometanism or Paganism ; and it would be a work of time and of great difficulty, to lead the citizens in general into the belief of Deism or what is called the philosophical religion. Therefore we seem necessitated to have recourse to christianity : and this is most excellently adapted to the ends of restraining men from vice and

promoting that general practice of strict morality, which is so essential to the political prosperity of any people. It is adapted to these ends by its precepts ; by the moral character of the author of those precepts ; by his absolute supremacy and sovereignty ; by the motives of reward and punishment with which those precepts are enforced ; by the facts which it relates, and by the examples which it exhibits. It is enforced not by the bare authority of our feeble reason, but by the authority of our Creator, our Judge, and our all-perfect God. It depends not on the obscure investigations, subtil refinements and uncertain conclusions of human intellect ; but on the omniscience, the veracity, the justice, the goodness and the will of God : And thus it is excellently adapted to the principles and feelings which are common to human nature, and which exist in the weakest and most ignorant, as well as the most intelligent and learned. A man who cannot follow the shortest and most easy chain of reasoning on the nature of things and the tendency of human actions, and who will not from such reasoning feel his obligation to virtue in general or to particular virtues, will at once feel the force of the positive and authoritative declarations and requisitions of the Almighty : and where is the man, learned or unlearned, of weak or strong powers, who does not see and feel the difference between the advice and directions of some learned and acute philosopher, and *thus saith the Lord* ? Above all, the motives arising from the doctrines of the final judgment and a future state, lay an inconceivably greater restraint on the depravity of human nature, than any thing that is or can be suggested by the philosophical religion.

LET us compare this religion with christianity in a few particulars, which immediately relate to our present subject.

IT is a maxim of infidelity to follow *nature*. Now to follow her, is to follow all the appetites and passions of which we are naturally the subjects; and this will lead to all kinds of vice. But it is a maxim of christianity, to follow the divine law, the precepts of the gospel and the example of Christ: and whether these lead to vice or virtue, I need not inform you.

ANOTHER maxim of infidelity is, that man was made for his own happiness; that is, that every man was made for his own individual happiness. This then is to be the supreme object of every man; and this object is to be pursued, as infidels themselves teach, by gratifying his natural appetites and passions, which brings us just where we were before, to all vice and wickedness: And if an infidel deny his appetites and passions, he must be governed by other motives than any which his system of morality suggests. But christianity teaches, that we were created for an end, which so far as we pursue, we cannot fail of sincere piety and strict morality.

INFIDELS are divided into two classes, those who deny a future state of existence, and those who allow such a state. The former deny all moral government of God, and that we are at all accountable to him; and some of the most noted among them deny any evidence of his moral perfections. Now it is manifest, that according to this system mankind can be under

no restraint from vice, by the consideration of a future state of rewards and punishments, or by the consideration of their accountableness to God, or of his commands or prohibitions. Nor does this system admit of any motives derived from these sources, to the practice of virtue. Yet these motives, with respect to mankind in the gross, are the most powerful. The authors and abettors of this system seem to rely on *a sense of honour*, as the great motive to virtue and restraint from vice. And what is this *sense of honour*? If it be a sense of shame in doing wrong, and a sense of the honourableness of doing right, it is a mere sense or knowledge of right and wrong; and this so far as it is founded on truth, is undoubtedly a proper rule of conduct, and a man who is disposed to virtue, will practise according to this rule. But how are men in general, without the aid of revelation, to attain, in all cases, to the knowledge of right and wrong, of virtue and vice? It is manifest by abundant experience both antient and modern, that mere human reason is insufficient for this.

If by this sense of honour be meant, as I imagine is generally meant, a sense of our own supposed personal dignity, a pride naturally arising from this sense, and a disposition to resent and revenge every thing which is grating to our pride; this in many cases is so far from a motive to virtue and restraint from vice, that it is itself a vice. Let this sense of honour be ever so well limited and explained, it cannot be a motive to virtue and a restraint from vice to all men; because it does not reach and cannot influence all men. How many are there

in every nation and country, who have very little sense of their own dignity, and very little elevation of soul in a consciousness of it? How many are there, who in a prospect of gain, would not scruple to betray their friends, to steal their neighbours property or to betray their country?

It is manifest therefore, that this philosophical religion, could it be generally introduced and established among us, would be a very great political evil, as it would weaken and even annihilate those motives to virtue and restraints from vice, which are most powerful on the minds of men in general.

BESIDES : this system so far as it denies the evidence of the moral perfections of God, not only cuts off the motives to virtue, drawn from a future state and from those divine perfections; but even suggests motives to vice. If it be a matter of uncertainty, whether God be a friend to virtue or a friend to vice, it may be, that we shall please him most by an unrestrained indulgence of vice, and by the practice of virtue shall provoke his malice and vengeance. Nay, if it be a matter of uncertainty, whether the Deity be a benevolent or malicious being, we can have no certainty, but that he will give us an existence in a future state, on purpose to gratify his malevolence in our everlasting torment. And to be consistent, the advocates for the system now under consideration should not say a word against the christian doctrine of endless punishment, on the ground of its supposed injustice or opposition to grace and mercy; because they acknowledge, that they know not, that God is just, gracious or merciful.

THUS this scheme, which was invented to avoid the fears of future punishment, defeats itself ; and while it attempts to deliver us from a just punishment, leaves us exposed to any punishment ever so unjust, cruel and malicious.

As to that kind of infidelity, which allows the divine moral perfections and a future state of rewards and punishments ; though this is more plausible than the former ; yet the motives to virtue and restraints from vice, which it affords, are not to be compared with those of the gospel. Agreeably to the gospel all men are to be rewarded according to their works done in the body, whether they be good or evil. Some are to be beaten with few stripes, some with many stripes, according to their several aggravations of guilt. But in the future punishment which infidels admit, there is nothing vindictive, nothing therefore which is intended to support law and government. The only punishment which they admit, is that which is designed for the good of the person punished ;* and therefore as soon as the person punished repents, he is released. Now it is manifest on the slightest reflection, that the motive to avoid sin and vice on this plan, is exceedingly diminished from what it is on the plan of the gospel. On the plan of the gospel the motive is endless misery, proportioned in degree to the demerit of the person punished. On the infidel plan it is a merciful chastisement, which is to continue no longer than till the subject shall repent. **And as every sinner will naturally flatter him-**

* See Blount and Tyndal.

self, that he shall repent as soon as he shall find his punishment to be intolerable ; so all the punishment, which on this plan he will expect, is one that shall continue but for a moment, after it shall have become extreme or intolerable. And whether this momentary extreme punishment be an equal restraint on vice, as the endless misery threatened in the gospel, let every man judge. It is plain, that in a comparative view it is as nothing. Therefore as even this, the most plausible scheme of infidelity, cuts the sinews of morality and opens the flood-gates of vice ; the prevalence of it in our state would be a very great political evil.

If we take the pains to compare christianity with antient paganism, we shall find, that the former has, even in a political view, the like advantage over the latter, which it has over infidelity.—If in the account, which I shall now give of the pagan religion, some things shall be mentioned, which will be grating to those of the most delicate feelings ; I think I shall be entitled to the pardon of my hearers, as otherwise it will be impossible for me to do justice to this important subject.

PAGANISM, though it taught a future punishment of wicked men of certain descriptions ; yet indulged and even encouraged vice in a variety of ways. It taught that there were many gods, some male and some female ; some comparatively good, others exceedingly evil ; but all and even the chief god, on many occasions acting a most wicked part and indulging the vilest lusts. Some of their female deities were deceased women of most abandoned characters.

Jupiter, whom they called *the father of gods and men*, was himself the son of Saturn who according to some, was king of Crete ; according to others, was Ham the son of Noah ; according to others, was Adam ; but on every hypothesis was a mere man. This man, the antient heathens believed, had a number of children, and was wont to devour them as soon as they were born : but Jupiter was saved by an artifice of his mother. He, grown to maturity, rebelled against his father, who till then was supposed to be the supreme God, drove him from his throne, and seized his authority and dominions. When Jupiter had by these means raised himself to the place of supreme deity, he was wont to transform himself into various visible shapes, to facilitate his designs of criminal intercourse with women here on earth. Now how destructive of the interests of virtue and morality must necessarily have been these ideas of the gods ; and especially these ideas of the character and conduct of the supreme god, *Jupiter the greatest and the best !*

IN like manner destructive to morality must have been almost all their other ideas of their gods ; as of their animosities and contentions among themselves ; of their intrigues and lusts ; and the vicious and most abominable practices by which, in many instances, they were worshipped. The goddess Venus was openly worshipped by whoredom ;* and the feasts called Saturnalia and Bacchinalia were celebrated by the prac-

* Every woman among some nations was obliged, at least once in her life, to prostitute herself to any person, even the greatest stranger, who would accept her favour. This done in honour to Venus.

tice of every lewdness and debauchery. The vices of drunkenness and whoredom in these cases were accounted, instead of moral evils, the highest acts of virtue and piety.

Now as all these ideas and practices tended to a general depravity of morals; so their effects abundantly appeared in the vicious lives of the heathen world.

I AM well aware, that it has been said, that christianity has depraved the morals of mankind; that vice is far more predominant among christians, than ever it was among the antient heathens; and that therefore we may justly conclude, that christianity is less subservient to virtue and a moral life, than paganism. This has been urged as an argument against the divine original and the truth of christianity; and may be urged as an argument against the good policy of encouraging and supporting it in any state. The consideration of this objection then is pertinent and necessary to the discussion of the subject now before us.

IN answer to this objection I beg leave to observe in the first place, that if vice *were* more predominant in christian nations, than it was among the heathens, it would not certainly follow, that this increase of vice is the effect of christianity. Christianity prevails in civilized nations only; and in such nations there is much more opportunity for many vices and much more temptation to them, than among those who are not civilized. Nay, in civilized nations only, is there a possibility of the prevalence of many vices. In proportion as civili-

zation is promoted, the wants of men are increased. Their food, their drink, their apparel and the education of their children, must be more expensive, and more expense is in every respect required to their living in fashion among their neighbours. And in proportion to the increase of their wants, the temptation to covetousness, extortion, oppression, deceit and fraud, is increased. Again, in proportion as civilization is promoted, the means of luxury of every kind are increased, and with the means, the temptations to luxury and luxury itself are increased. No wonder a savage, who wishes for nothing more than what he may take in hunting and fishing, and who has furnished himself with this, does not steal, rob or extort his neighbour's property; no wonder he attempts not to obtain it by falsehood or fraud. Nor is it any wonder, that living on such a low and scanty diet as he generally does, he is very rarely guilty of a rape, of adultery or other lewdness. Nor ought it to be matter of wonder, that all these vices are far more prevalent in civilized nations, than among barbarians. But the prevalence of these vices in such nations, is not owing to christianity, but to civilization and its usual attendants. They were at least as prevalent among the antient Greeks and Romans, as they are among us. Persecution does not usually obtain among heathen, because either they have no religion themselves to instigate them to persecution; or there is no religion different from their own, to be the object of their persecution; or if there be a different religion, it makes no opposition to that which they have chosen, and therefore their religious zeal is not excited against it.

THIS affords an answer to an objection to christianity much insisted on by some, that the heathens do not persecute ; but that christians do most virulently persecute even one another ; and therefore that christianity makes men worse instead of better. The answer to this objection is, that the different religious sentiments and forms of worship among the antient heathens did not in general oppose each other. They rather justified each other, as the heathens maintained an intercommunity of gods and religions. Though every nation had its own gods and religion ; yet whenever the individuals went into another nation, they joined in the worship of the gods and in the observance of the rites of the nation in which they then were. Therefore there was no opportunity for persecution. But the nature of christianity is very different. It condemns and opposes all other religions as false and ruinous. Therefore as it touches the pride of those whom it condemns, it provokes opposition and the persecution of itself, merely because it tells the truth. And the professors of christianity too, by a misguided zeal, have been often led into the spirit and practice of persecution.

Now this persecution of christianity by those of other religions, is not the effect of christianity, but of opposition to it ; and the persecuting spirit which has appeared in some christians, is not the effect of christianity, but of the abuse and perversion of it ; and for neither of these is christianity itself answerable. The best institution in the world may be opposed and persecuted ; and the best institution in the world may be abused and perverted. But christianity nev-

er gave any just occasion for either the perfecution or perversion of itself.

BESIDES, the charge of perfecution may justly be retorted. For no sooner did christianity make its appearance in the world, than it was violently opposed and virulently persecuted, by those very heathens, who in the objection now before us are said not to have been guilty of perfecution. And as long as they had the power in their hands, this opposition was continued or repeated, under various Roman Emperors, for ten successive and bloody persecutions, in which thousands and hundreds of thousands were martyred in various ways, the most malicious and cruel.

NAY, the heathens showed a disposition to persecute not only christians, but one another, whenever there was opportunity. No sooner did Socrates oppose the religion and polytheism of his countrymen, than they began a perfecution of him, which ended in his death. And Cambyfes, the Persian monarch, in contempt of the Egyptian god Apis, not only stabbed him with his dagger, but ordered the priests of Apis to be severely whipped, and all the inhabitants of Memphis to be slain, who should be found rejoicing on the occasion of the appearance of that god.* These things demonstrate, that the ancient heathens did possess an high degree of the spirit of perfecution, and not only toward the christians, but toward one another. The like spirit hath been manifested by heathens of modern times. Passing other instances, I shall mention one which took place in our own country.

* Prideaux's connection.

By the exertions of our ancestors, the first European settlers of this country, a considerable number of the aborigines were converted to the christian faith. The pagan Indians were displeas'd with this, banish'd from their society all the converts, and when they could do it with safety, put them to death, and would have massacred them all, had they not been restrained by the fear of our ancestors*.

THE facts concerning Socrates and Cambyfes, furnish an answer to that part of the objection under consideration, which urges that christians persecute not only heathens, but one another; whereas heathens did not persecute one another. It appears by the facts just mentioned, that heathens have persecuted one another. Besides, the same reason is to be assign'd for christians persecuting one another, as for the heathens persecuting christians. The protestants say, that the religion of the papists is fundamentally wrong; on the other hand, the papists assert the same concerning the protestants. Thus by a mutual renunciation, condemnation and excommunication of each other, the false zeal of these and other different sects among christians is kindled into persecution, on the same grounds on which persecution is begun and carried on, between christians and heathens. But by reason of the forementioned intercommunity of gods and religions among the antient heathens, these grounds of persecution did not exist among them in general, though in some cases they did both exist and produce their usual fruits.

LET us now more directly attend to the charge

* Neal's Hist. New-England.

brought against christianity, that vice is more prevalent among christians, than it was among the antient heathens.

CHRISTIANS indeed have no virtue to be the ground of boasting ; on the other hand they have great reason to be ashamed and humbled on account of their vices and their depravity of manners. Still I maintain, that open vice is not so prevalent in christian nations, as it was among the antient heathens. Let us compare those antient heathens, of whom we know the most and who were the most improved and polite, with the christians of whom we know the most ; the antient Greeks and Romans with the citizens of the United States.

HERE it is to be observed, that we labour under great disadvantage. We know our own country and its predominant vices, both public and private. In order to this we need but open our eyes and look around us. We have not the same advantage to know the antients. We are entirely dependent on history for information concerning them and their vices ; and this generally relates the public transactions of nations only, as their wars and treaties, their laws and public judgments ; but is mostly silent concerning the morals and private lives of individuals or of the people considered collectively ; and so far as we are ignorant of the antients we have no right to charge them with vice. However, with all this disadvantage, I fear not to proceed to the comparison.

LET us then institute the comparison with respect to the principal moral virtues, as temperance, chastity, truth, justice and humanity.

1. As to temperance ; though this was reckoned among the virtues by the pagan moral writers, yet it is plain from their writers in general, that drunkenness was exceedingly common among them, and among all ranks, among magistrates, philosophers and priests, as well as others. Their priests in some of their religious feasts were always intoxicated. Even Cato, though a Stoic philosopher, one of their strictest moralists and a principal magistrate, was remarkably addicted to this vice. So was Zeno, the founder of the sect of the Stoics ; and Chrysippus, another Stoic philosopher died in consequence of excessive drinking at a sacrifice.* The character of their principal magistrates, priests and philosophers, does not appear to have suffered much, if at all, by this vice. It must therefore have been considered by the people, as a very venial fault, if any at all. Indeed this is evident by all their writers. But how it is esteemed among us, and what would be the effect of it on the reputation of our principal magistrates and divines, I need not inform you.

2. As to chastity, it is manifest from the whole current of pagan writers, that they considered fornication as no crime, and therefore ran into it without reserve. Not only is this observable of Homer's heroes, but even the modest Virgil's pious Eneas, who was meant to be a perfect character, had an amour with Dido, without the least shame or sense of indecency. Simple fornication was not only commonly practised without restraint ; but was allowed by all their philosophers, and was positively encourag-

* Priestley's Institutes.

ed by some of them.* Many of the customs of the Greeks and Romans promoted lewdness. The manner of the appearance of women in some of their public exercises, was such as directly tended to that vice ; and the ideas of the lawfulness and expediency of a community of wives so far prevailed and had such an influence on practice, as not only implied the violation of chastity, but had a most baleful general tendency with respect to that virtue.† Though it is hardly credible, yet unnatural vices had too much the sanction of some legislators and philosophers, and were countenanced by many of them. Xenophon informs us, that the sin of Sodom was encouraged by the public laws of several of the states of Greece. It was more especially so among the Cretans, in order to prevent too great an increase of the people. Solon, one of the seven wise men of Greece, and the celebrated law-giver of Athens, forbade this prac-

* “None of the philosophers ever represented simple fornication, especially on the part of the man, as any vice at all. Cato commended a young man for frequenting the public stews ; and Cicero expressly speaks of it, as a thing that was never found fault with.” *Priestley’s Institutes*. All that was enjoined by Epictetus, who of all the philosophers, is perhaps the most celebrated for his strict maxims of morality, was, “that people should abstain from fornication before marriage as far as they could ; and that if they did not abstain, they should use it lawfully, and not be severe in reprehending those who did not abstain.” *Enchiridion*, Chap. 47.

† “At Sparta, young women appeared naked in the public exercises ; and when married women had no children, their husbands were encouraged to consent to a free intercourse between them and other men ; a custom which Plutarch vindicates. This was also agreeable to the doctrine of the Stoics ; and it is well known, that that rigid Stoic, Cato of Utica, consented to such an intercourse between his own wife and his friend Hortensius. Plato in his book of laws, recommends a community of women ; and he advises, that soldiers be not restrained with respect to any kind of sinful indulgence, even the most unnatural species of it, when they are on an expedition. *Priestly*.”

tice to slaves, which necessarily conveys the idea of his thinking it fit for free men only. According to Cicero, the Greek philosophers not only generally practised, but even gloried in this vice: And Plutarch informs us, that many parents would not suffer their children to keep the company of those philosophers, who pretended to be fond of them. Diogenes was remarkable for indulging himself in the most abominable practices openly, and without a sense of shame; affecting, according to the maxim of the Cynics, to live according to nature.* These unnatural vices were increased in a most astonishing manner, about the time of the promulgation of christianity. Seneca says, that in his time they were practised openly and without shame at Rome.”† These accounts given by heathen writers, fully justify the charges thrown out on this head against the heathens, by the writers of the New Testament, especially by the apostle Paul, in his first chapter to the Romans: Though to christians the inspired writers need no authority, but do of themselves sufficiently prove the amazing depravity of the heathen world in this respect.

3. Truth is a moral virtue, the obligation and necessity of which are perhaps as evident as those of any virtue whatever. Yet the Stoic philosophers taught that lying was lawful, whenever it was profitable; and Plato allowed, that a man may lie, who knows how to do it at a proper time.

4. LET us inquire how far justice was main-

* Does not the forementioned deistic maxim of following nature, directly lead to the same abominable practices?

† Priestly.

tained and practised among the antients. I now mean justice in matters of property. For that kind of justice which is opposed to oppression and cruelty, will come into view, when we shall consider the humanity of the antients. It is well known to have been a maxim at Sparta, that probity and every thing else was to be sacrificed to the good of the state. The Spartans encouraged their children to steal, but punished those who were taken in the fact, as not being dextrous in the business. “ We may judge of the state of Greece, with respect to the kind of justice of which we are now speaking, from that passage in a dialogue of Xenophon—in which he humourously shows the advantages of poverty and the inconveniencies of riches ; and by what Tacitus says, that the temples were full of debtors and criminals, as churches and monasteries used formerly to be in Popish countries. Rome and the neighbourhood of it, in the most interesting period of its history, viz. in the time of Cicero, abounded with robbers. Sallust says, that Cataline’s army was much augmented by the accession of highwaymen about Rome. Cicero observed, that had Milo killed Clodius by night, it might have been imagined, that he had been killed by highwaymen, and that the frequency of such accidents would have favoured the supposition, though he had with him thirty slaves completely armed and accustomed to blood and danger. By the law of the twelve tables, possession for two years formed a prescription for land, and of one year for moveables ; an evident mark of frequent violences, when such a law was necessary to secure a title to property.”* How

* Priestley’s letters on general policy.

different our situation is from this, and how much more secure our persons and property are, I need not mention in this auditory.

5. WE proceed now to inquire how far the antient heathens practised the duties of humanity, and how far they violated those duties by outrage, oppression and cruelty. The Stoics condemned all compassion. No wonder then that they imbibed and practised inhumanity. Some philosophers, particularly Democritus, recommended revenge; and Plato owns that forgiveness of injuries was contrary to the general doctrine of the philosophers. These ideas seem perfectly to coincide with those among the moderns, who are the great advocates for a sense of honour. And how far these ideas are consistent with scripture, with reason or with humanity, I leave you to judge.

IT was common with the Romans to make war on other nations for the end of enlarging their own dominions, and aggrandizing their empire. Generally they had no better motive to their wars than this. But what is such a war, but a complication of downright robbery, cruelty and murder? They practised equal injustice in the manner in which they carried on their wars. They enslaved their captives or put them to death in cold blood, as they pleased. Their triumphs were most oppressive and cruel. The conquered kings and generals, loaded with chains, were driven into the city, and to the capitol before their conquerors, and were followed by mimicks and buffoons, who insulted over their misfortunes. When they arrived at the forum, they were led back to prison and

there strangled ; and this under the pretence of taking full revenge of their enemies. What better is this, than the treatment which our savage Indians give their captives ?

THE treatment which they gave those captives whose lives they spared, was correspondent to this cruelty toward those whom they put to death. As has been observed, they absolutely enslaved them ; and by law, slaves were considered not as men, but as mere things, the mere property of their masters, and were treated, punished, and put to death at any time and in any manner, as their masters pleased, whether by beating, starving, torture, or otherwise. “ The Spartans having conquered a neighbouring nation, the Helots, enslaved them, frequently butchered them in cold blood, and applauded their youths, when they killed them by surprise.” “ The Romans were not ashamed to suffer their old and useless slaves, when worn out in their service, to starve on an island in the Tyber, as was the common practice. Vidius Pollio used to throw his slaves, who had disobliged him, into his fish ponds, to be preyed upon by his mullets.”*

THOUGH to our shame, to the shame of humanity and the scandal of christianity, a slavery and a treatment of slaves similar to what existed among the Romans, exist and are tolerated in some parts of America ; yet this scandal cannot be thrown on christendom in general. Such a slavery did indeed once generally obtain in Europe ; but the benevolent and humane spirit of the gospel and the principles of justice taught

* Priestly.

there, have long since generally abolished it from that quarter of the world.

THE proscriptions and assassinations, which were so common among the antients, are a further proof of their injustice, violence and inhumanity. It is well known that during the contests of Marius and Sylla, and during the triumvirate of Octavianus, Anthony and Lepidus, nothing was more common than to advertise a certain price for any man's or any number of men's heads; which was no other than hiring any cut-throat, and even a man's own domestics, to murder him and bring in his head. In this way the best men of Rome were murdered, and among the rest Cicero the great orator, philosopher and ornament of Rome. Amidst all the vices justly imputable to christians, they are not guilty of such barbarity and outrage as this. Such is the salutary influence of christianity, that even kings, who among the antients no sooner fell into the hands of their rivals or opposers, than they were assassinated, are now not put to death without a formal trial; which is a clear demonstration among many others, of our improvement in civilization and humanity, beyond any thing which existed among the most enlightened heathens.

ANOTHER instance of the barbarity and inhumanity of the antients, is their treatment of their children. "The antient Roman laws gave the father a power of life and death over his children, upon this principle, that he who gave, had also the power to take away. And a son could not acquire any property of his own during the life of his father; but all his acquisitions

belonged to his father, or at least the profits, for life.”* Thus children, during the life of their fathers, were perfect slaves, and in a worse condition than the slaves in this state; for the master in this state has not the power of life and death over his slaves. Nor were these mere speculations of the Romans; but their practice was correspondent. Hence the custom of exposing children; that is, of laying them, as soon as born, in the streets, on the banks of rivers, or in other frequented places, and unless some compassionate person should take them up and provide for them, leaving them there to perish and to be devoured by dogs. The motive to this horrid practice was, that the parents might be free from the trouble and expence of their education. Both Plato and Aristotle say, that there should be laws to prevent the education of weak children. Accordingly among the other Greeks, beside the Thebans, when a child was born, it was laid on the ground, and if the father designed to educate it, he immediately took it up. But if he forbore to do this, the child was carried away and exposed. The Lacedemonians indeed had a different custom; for with them all new born children were brought before certain triers, who were some of the gravest men in their own tribes, by whom the infants were carefully viewed; and if they were found lusty and well favoured, they gave orders for their education; but if weakly and deformed, they ordered them to be cast into a deep cavern in the earth, near the mountain Taygetus, as thinking it neither for the good of the children nor for the public interest, that defective children should be brought up. It was the un-

* Blackstone.

happy fate of daughters especially to be thus treated, as requiring more charges to educate and settle them in the world than sons.”*

IN several nations, not only infants, but also the aged and the infirm, were exposed and left to perish.

ANOTHER horrid inhumanity, prevalent among the antient heathens, was the practice of sacrificing captives and slaves at the funerals of the dead. Thus Achilles sacrificed twelve young Trojans to the manes of Patroclus; and Eneas sent captives to Evander, to be sacrificed at the funeral of Pallas. This was first practised with respect to persons of great eminence only, but at length it was done at the funerals of all persons of property, and became a necessary part of the ceremony.

ANOTHER practice as horrid as any I have mentioned, was that of exhibiting gladiators, trained to fencing and the use of the sword, spear, &c. on purpose that they might fight and kill one another on the stage, for the mere entertainment of the spectators, as some people now bait bulls and set dogs to fighting. “These poor wretches were made to swear that they would fight unto death; and if they failed of this, they were put to death by fire or sword, clubs, whips, or the like.”† “Those who have not attended to history, are apt to imagine, that the exhibition of gladiators was a rare thing, and that when it happened, a few pairs only were engaged. But it was far otherwise. Under the Roman emperors this inhuman entertainment cost

* Encyclopedia.

† Chambers Dictionary.

innumerable lives. Cesar when Edile, gave three hundred and twenty gladiators. Gordian in the time of his Edileship, exhibited twelve entertainments, that is, one in each month. In some of these were five hundred champions, and in none of them less than one hundred and fifty. Taking it at a medium, he must have exhibited at the very least, three thousand. Titus exhibited these cruel shows for an hundred days together. The good and moderate Trajan continued these spectacles for an hundred and twenty three days; and in that time gave ten thousand. When we consider how many different ranks of people gave these entertainments, Ediles, Pretors, Questors, Consuls, Emperors and Priests, besides private persons at funerals (which become so common a practice, that it was an article in a last will) we must be convinced, that the numbers were vast. What adds to the inhumanity of this custom, is, that it was designed for a gay entertainment and was attended as such. This horrible custom grew to such an extravagance, that it was found necessary to moderate it by law, in the time of the heathen Emperors. Constantine first prohibited it altogether. But so violent was the taste for it, that it crept in again. The Emperor Honorius entirely suppressed it.”*

I SHALL take notice of only one more vice of the antient heathens, that is *suicide*. This was recommended by many philosophers, as an heroic act of virtue, and was practised by some of the highest fame, as by Zeno the founder of the sect of the Stoics, by Cato of Utica, and by Brutus. No wonder if under such instructors and

* Doct. Leachman's Sermon 1. Cor. i. 21.

such examples, suicide was very common among the antients. Beside the wickedness of this in the sight of God, the ruinous tendency of it in a political view is manifest on the slightest reflection. By this one vice not only any man may deprive the state of his aid and throw his family and dependents on the public ; but the most important citizens, by throwing away their own lives in the most important and critical moment, may greatly endanger and entirely overthrow the commonwealth. What if our *Washington*, or the most wise and influential members of our Congress, had destroyed themselves in the most critical periods of the late war ?

FROM this brief survey of the vices of the antient heathens, I leave my hearers to judge how well founded the objection against christianity is, that it has depraved the morals of mankind.

I HAVE now finished the observations which I intended, on the subject proposed, which was, The necessity of a belief of christianity by the citizens of this state, in order to our public and political prosperity. In subserviency to this general design I have endeavoured to show, that some religion is necessary to our political prosperity ; that no other religion than the christian, can be generally received and established in this country ; and that if some other religion could be established among us, it would by no means be so useful in a political view, as the christian. I have endeavoured to illustrate the last observation by a comparison of christianity with the philosophical religion of infidelity and with antient paganism. I now beg leave to make two or three inferences from what has been said.

1. If christianity be more useful than any other religion, even for political purposes, we may presume that it is still more useful for the other purposes, which are indeed its immediate objects, piety and true virtue, and peace and comfort in them. The great foundations of religion and virtue are, the moral perfections of God, his moral government, the rule of our duty, a future state of retribution, the possibility of pardon and the end of our creation. Let us in these several particulars compare christianity with the philosophical religion, which is the only rival of christianity with any among us.

1. As to the moral perfections of God, christianity certainly teaches them more clearly than they can be learnt from any light afforded by the philosophical religion. The scriptures assure us, that holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; that he is a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he; that he is the Lord, the Lord God merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty. Yea, they assure us, that God is love. They clear up the difficulty arising from the evil in the world, by informing us of the end of all things, and that all things shall finally be overruled for good. But the philosophical religion gives no clear evidence at all of the moral perfections of God. This is acknowledged by some of the principal writers on that system. *Hume*, the most acute of all infidels, says we ought to infer from the works of God, intermixed as they are with good and evil, that God is of a mixed

character, partly good and partly evil. Also Lord Bolingbroke, another principal deistical writer, holds, that there is no evidence of the moral perfections of God.

2. THE like advantage have we by the scriptures as to the evidence of the reality and nature of the moral government of God. On the pretence that we are under the influence of a necessity of coercion, it is denied by some infidels that we are moral agents, and that we are capable of either virtue or vice. Now not only is this matter cleared up by revelation, but it is to be observed, that to be consistent, such infidels ought also to deny, that we are capable of any crime in civil society.

IF we be not moral agents, we are no more capable of murder, than a stock or a stone; and a man who from malice prepenſe kills another, no more deserves punishment, than the stone or the tree, which falls on a man and crushes him to death; and the man who from a wish to introduce and establish arbitrary government in his country, now a free and happy republic, betrays its ships and fortresses, no more deserves punishment, than the tempests which sink the former, or the fire which consumes the latter.

SOME deny, that God at all concerns himself with human affairs or actions. But this is not only not reconcilable with the scriptures, but not with the moral perfections of God. If we be capable of virtue, and yet he neglect us, so as not to set before us proper motives to it, and not to show by proper rewards and punishments his approbation of the virtuous, and disappro-

bation of the vicious ; this cannot be reconciled with his moral perfection.

It is further urged, that we are not in any case punishable, as all things are right, or as the poet expresses it, *whatever is, is right*. If by this observation be meant, that things are by the all-wise and all-governing providence of God, overruled to answer a good purpose, though in many instances directly contrary to their natural tendency ; this is granted. But if it be meant, that all things in their own nature tend to good, this is not true. Malice has no natural tendency to good but a natural tendency to evil. On the other hand, benevolence has a natural tendency to good. Nor will it be pretended, that if malice reigned through the universe, the universe would be as happy, as if benevolence universally reigned. It is the natural tendency of a rational action, which determines its moral quality, and not the consequence produced by Almighty God, contrary to its natural tendency.

If all human actions were in a moral view indifferent, we should no more deserve punishment for murder, than we should for saving our country from ruin.

This scheme shuts all moral *good* out of the universe, as well as all moral evil. For if all the tempers and actions of men, are as to morality alike, it must be because there is no morality in any of them. If there be moral good in any of those tempers or actions, there must be moral evil in the directly opposite ; and if there be no moral evil in the latter, there is no moral good in the former : as if there were no

natural evil in pain there would be no natural good in pleasure.

BUT while infidels confound themselves and the principles of reason, in their discourses concerning the moral government of God; the scriptures assure us of the reality of that government, and of our accountableness to God.

3. THE scriptures give us a plain and excellent rule of duty, pointing out our duty not only in general, but in all the most important particulars. How extremely deficient in this instance also, is the philosophical religion? It is indeed said, that the rule of our duty is right reason and the law of nature, and that virtue is a conformity to them. But this is saying no more than that virtue is virtue, and that the rule of our duty is the rule of our duty. For right reason in this case means what is reasonable and right in a moral sense; and duty and what is right in a moral sense are the same thing: and it is just as difficult to find out the law of reason and of nature, as to find out our duty.

4. THE scriptures give us the most positive assurance of a future state. But the philosophical religion can never assure us of this, because it cannot assure us of the moral perfections of God, by which alone he is disposed to reward the righteous and punish the wicked. Therefore infidels are greatly divided among themselves on this subject. Some as was before observed believe a future state, some disbelieve it. Those who believe such a state, believe that God made all men for their own personal happiness, and that therefore he will make them all happy in

the future world. But all this depends on the moral perfections of God, of which they, as their principal writers confess, have no evidence. And if there be no evidence of God's moral perfections, there is no evidence, that he designs the happiness of his creatures either here or hereafter : nor is there any evidence but that he designs the final *miser*y of all his creatures.—Or if infidels had evidence of the moral perfections of God, they would not have evidence, that God made every man for the end of his personal happiness. The perfect goodness of God doubtless implies, that he made all things with a design to promote good on the whole or on the large scale. So that taking the system of intelligent creatures together, there shall be the greatest possible happiness in it. But this does not imply, that every individual creature shall be completely happy. There is no accounting for the calamities and sufferings of this life on any other supposition, than that they will all finally issue in the greatest happiness of the system : and to suppose that they conduce to the good of the system, by making the persons themselves who suffer them here, more happy hereafter, is a mere conjecture unsupported by any argument. Therefore to indulge it and to build upon it, is altogether unreasonable and unphilosophical.

ON the whole, there is no evidence but that the good of the general system may be promoted by the exemplary punishment of the wicked in the future world. And if it would be promoted by such a punishment, infinite goodness not only admits of it, but requires and demands it.

5. THE scriptures assure us of a way of pardon and acceptance with God ; but the philosophical religion gives no such assurance. Infidels do indeed expect to be pardoned on their bare repentance. But the expectation of *pardon* on repentance, implies an acknowledgment, that they deserve punishment even though they repent, and that such punishment would be just : otherwise there could be no *pardon* in the case. To pardon is to exempt from punishment not an innocent man, but a guilty one : and to pardon a penitent implies that he deserves punishment, and that his punishment would be just. But if the punishment of the penitent would be just, the interest of the kingdom of God, the great community against which he has sinned, requires his punishment. The very idea of a just punishment is of one which, (there being no atonement or substitution,) is due to the community or to the public good of the community, against which the crime punished was committed. But if the public good of God's kingdom, which is the universe, require the punishment of the sinner, it is not consistent with divine goodness to pardon him. What ground then has the infidel to expect pardon, when both justice and goodness require his punishment ?

6. CHRISTIANITY informs us of the end of our creation. It is generally holden by infidels, as was before observed, that we were made for our own personal happiness. But if this were true, it would prove, that God does concern himself with human actions, and that he aims to prevent those which tend to our destruction. It would also prove, that those rational actions which tend to destroy our happiness, are mor-

ally evil, and that all actions are not in the same sense right. The evidence that God created us for our own happiness, must depend on the evidence of God's moral perfections. But as has been observed, the infidel has no evidence of these. Besides, if God really created us all for the end of our own personal happiness, it seems that he has in this world obtained his end, in a very imperfect degree only; and on the plan of infidelity there is no evidence of a future state. Therefore on that plan there is no evidence, that God will ever obtain his end in our creation.

OR if infidels should grant, that we were made for the general good of the system of intelligences, this would be to give up the chief object of infidelity; because the general good may admit of our misery in the future world, as it does of our misery in this.

BUT christianity clearly informs us, that God made all things for his glory, implying the greatest happiness and perfection of the creation as a system; or for the glorious exercise and display of his power, wisdom and goodness in raising his kingdom, which is the creation, as a system, to the highest degree of perfection and happiness.

THUS we see in what darkness, as to the most essential principles of religion, we should have been involved, had we not been favoured with the light of divine revelation, and in what darkness they are involved, who embrace the philosophical religion of infidelity. And thus we have further proof how happy that people is,

whose God is the Lord, not only as this circumstance lays a foundation for their political good, but especially as it lays a foundation for true virtue and piety, for peace and comfort here and eternal happiness in the favour of God hereafter.

2. A SECOND inference from this subject is, that since christianity appears to be necessary to the public good of the state, it ought to be encouraged by magistrates and rulers of every description. They are appointed to be the guardians of the public good ; of course it is their duty to protect and promote every thing tending to it, and especially every thing necessary to it. Therefore as christianity is necessary to the public good, they are bound to encourage, promote and inculcate that, by their example and profession, by speaking and acting in favour of it both in public and private, by supporting christian ordinances and worship, and by promoting to places of trust and profit those who profess it and live agreeably, and who are otherwise properly qualified. Magistrates are called to do all this on the ground of the soundest policy.

3. FOR the same reasons the citizens in general are obligated to encourage and promote christianity, by being themselves christians and that not only in profession, but in heart and life, and by giving their suffrages for those who are of the same character. It is indeed to be confessed, that not all professed christians are good men or real christians ; yet among professed christians are many men, who possess good abilities and a proper share of informati-

on, who are strictly moral and upright, and who expect to give an account of their conduct to God. Such are the men to be promoted in the state; and the citizens by promoting such men, will encourage and promote christianity, and at the same time promote the good of the state.

I BEG the further patience of the auditory, while I close the discourse, with the addressees usual on this occasion.

IN the first place I beg leave to address myself to His Excellency the GOVERNOR.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR EXCELLENCY,

IN obedience to your command I appear in the desk this day; and I could think of no subject more important and at the same time more suitable to the present occasion, than the happiness of that people whose God is the LORD. I have therefore endeavoured to illustrate the necessity of the christian faith and practice, to the prosperity of the state. I may appeal to your Excellency how far this faith and practice have hitherto contributed to our political prosperity. Had not our ancestors been firm and exemplary in this faith and practice; had they not taken pains to hand them down to us; had they not in all their towns and settlements instituted schools, in which the principles of christianity, as well as other things were taught; had they not provided for the support of public worship, for the due observance of the Lord's day and for the public teaching of christianity on that day; had they not provided for the support

of a studious and learned ministry, who being themselves men of knowledge, should be able to instruct others ; I appeal to your Excellency, whether our political affairs would not at present have worn a very different aspect. And if our supreme magistrates had not been, both by profession and apparent practice, christians, it would doubtless have had a very baleful influence on the christian and moral character of the people at large, and consequently on our political prosperity. But we are happy in that we have had from the beginning, even to the present day, a series of Governors, who have been not only an honour to the state, but ornaments to our churches. May such a series be still kept up without interruption. This, as it will be a proof of our christian character, will also be a proof of our public prosperity in every successive period, and a pledge of our subsequent prosperity. May God grant, that your Excellency shall effectually contribute to this prosperity in every way, in which your eminent situation affords opportunity. And when earthly states and empires shall be no more, may your Excellency, in that series of excellent men and excellent Governors, and among all real christians, “ shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of your Father.”

2. THE discourse addresses itself to his Honour the Lieutenant Governour, to the Legislative Council of the state, and to the Representatives of the towns in General Assembly.

HONOURABLE LEGISLATORS,

SINCE the belief and practice of christianity are so necessary to the political good of our state,

and since you are appointed to be the guardians of our political good, I thought it not impertinent to suggest to you some important means, by which you may obtain the end for which you are appointed. Opposition to christianity both in faith and practice was never, at least in our country, so great and so increasing, as at the present day. It lies with you, gentlemen, by a steady belief, profession and practice of christianity ; by your conversation and weight ; by the appointments which you shall make to the various offices, civil and military, and by all your public proceedings, to withstand this opposition, and to guard against the danger to the public good, arising from the depravity of manners which opposition to christianity naturally induces. It is your province, in conjunction with his Excellency the Governour, to appoint all our executive civil authority and to confer the higher military honours. When men of licentious principles and practice are promoted either in the civil or military line, it gives a dignity and an influence to vice and irreligion. And “one sinner destroys much good,” especially when exalted to a high station of honour and authority. Now, if you give this advantage to vice, you will thereby injure the state ; but more immediately you will injure religion and the kingdom of Christ. And let me beseech you to remember, that you also have a master in heaven, to whom you, as well as the rest of men, must give an account. The only way to gain his approbation is, to keep a conscience void of offence, and in your political transactions not to act from party attachments and private connections, not to practice intrigue to serve your own interests or those of your friends ; but to endeav-

our to serve the public in the best manner according to your capacity and opportunity. In so doing you will appoint to the several executive offices, men of knowledge and discretion ; men that fear God and hate covetousness ; men who will be just and rule in the fear of God. By the promotion of such men, virtue will be encouraged and vice will be restrained ; by their official proceedings, law and justice will be executed, and “ judgment will run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream,” even that righteousness which exalteth a nation.” Then shall our political interests be in a prosperous state ; then shall we be that happy people whose God is the Lord.

3. THE Reverend Pastors of the churches, who are present, will suffer the word of exhortation.

MY FATHERS AND BRETHREN,

WE who are employed in the work of the ministry, are deeply interested in this subject. We are interested in the prosperity of the state, and are peculiarly interested in this mean of prosperity on which I have been insisting. It is our business to study and teach christianity, and thus to promote the political good of the state, as well as the spiritual good of the souls of our hearers. This is a noble employment, to fidelity and zeal in which, not only the motives of religion call us, but even those of patriotism. Therefore if we have any love to religion and the souls of men ; nay if we have any public spirit and love to our country, let us diligently study the evidences, the nature, the doctrines

and duties of christianity, and inculcate them with all plainness, assiduity and perseverance, giving line upon line and precept upon precept. This is to be done,

1. By instruction. Without communicating instruction and information concerning the truth, we can expect to do nothing in our work to any good purpose. Knowledge and not ignorance is the mother of real devotion. The rational mind is to be led by the exhibition of the truth only.

2. By every motive to persuade, drawn from reason and revelation, from time and eternity; and among others this motive of the public good of the state and our general happiness, liberty and prosperity as a people, is not to be omitted.

3. By a christian life and conversation. If we do these things; if we thus instruct, persuade and live, we shall at last stand in our lot, and shall be owned as his, when Christ our Lord and judge "shall make up his jewels."

4. I SHALL, in the last place, address myself in a very few words to this numerous auditory collectively. Men and brethren, this subject nearly concerns you all. How happy would you be, if the Lord were indeed your God? Nor can you be truly happy on any other condition. However prosperous you may be in your private concerns, in your property, your business and your reputation; yet unless you are the objects of the favour of God and the heirs of eternal life, you are truly in a miserable

situation. You have not only the motive of eternal happiness to choose the Lord for your God ; but the motives of the peace, good order, and happiness of the people as a body politic, and the general prosperity of the state. You all feel a firm attachment to your liberties and to the privileges of a republican government. Of all forms of government a republic most essentially requires virtue and good morals in the great body of the people, in order to its prosperity and even its existence. But the way to virtue and good morals is to choose the Lord for your God. Nor is this all ; you not only have to choose and serve the Lord yourselves, but by the same reasons by which you are obligated to choose the Lord for your God, you are obligated to seek out and by your suffrages to promote to legislative authority, such as are of the same character. In a republic all authority is derived from the people : and such as they generally are, we may expect their representatives, legislators and all their civil authority will be. If you have the Lord for your God, you will elect those of the same character with yourselves, to be your legislators ; you will encourage and support them and other faithful rulers in the thorough discharge of their duties of civil government, and you will withhold your suffrages from those who acknowledge not the Lord as their God and regard not his law. Nor can you consistently and innocently give your suffrages to men of this last description : for thus you would give a sanction and influence to sin and vice, would be partakers of their wickedness and would do an injury to the state.

BUT if you and the good people of the state

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in general shall unite to practise virtue and christianity, and to promote the wisest and best men among us, we shall doubtless be that happy people described in the text, and as so many instances of our happiness “ judgment shall dwell in the wilderness and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.”

THE END

