

S E R M O N,

Preached in B I L L E R I C A,

On the 23^d of NOVEMBER, 1775.

Being the DAY appointed by CIVIL AUTHORITY,

FOR A

PUBLIC THANKSGIVING

Throughout the Province of MASSACHUSETTS-BAY.

By HENRY CUMINGS, A. M.

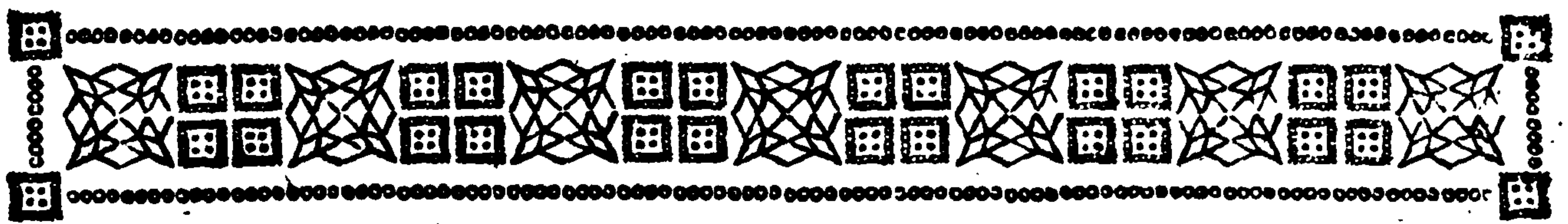
Pastor of the Church there.

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A THANKSGIVING SERMON.



P S A L M LXXVII. vii, viii, ix, x, xi, xii.

Will the Lord cast off forever? and will he be favourable no more?

Is his mercy clean gone forever? Doth his promise fail forevermore?

Hath God forgotten to be gracious? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies? Selah.

And I said, this is my infirmity: But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High.

I will remember the works of the Lord: Surely I will remember thy wonders of old.

I will meditate also of all thy work, and talk of thy doings.

‘**T**HE theatre is not yet opened, wherein solid happiness can be found by man.’ God never designed we should enjoy compleat felicity in this state of discipline. Every scene that opens upon us, in the present drama of human life, has in it an intermixture of good and evil. The most prosperous and happy condition is attended with many unavoidable sorrows and troubles. There is also a certain proportion of good to be found in the most adverse and distressing circumstances. In prosperity we find enough of evil to wean us from this world, and teach

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us to seek for happiness in that *better country*, which christianity opens to our view. And in adversity we experience so much of the undeserved goodness of God, as affords abundant matter for thanksgiving, and lays a foundation for hope and trust.

But such is the perverseness of our nature, that prosperity is apt to make us forgetful of God and our future interests ; and adversity, to fill our minds with murmuring and despondency, and to turn off our attention from the many mercies that are intermixed with our troubles, and which demand our grateful acknowledgments.

In times of calamity, men are apt to confine their views too much to the dark side of things, and, looking through the gloomy mediums of doubt and distrust, to wrap their minds in clouds of ominous darkness, and fill them with anxious anticipations of future evils, which may never happen. From hence arise unworthy thoughts of God and his providential government, inconsistent with that grateful and resigned frame of mind, which it becomes us as reasonable creatures, and as christians, to cultivate and preserve “ through all the changing scenes of life.” Did we but frequently turn our eyes off from the dark, and fix them upon the fair and bright side of things, we should find ourselves surrounded with so many mercies, even in the most unfavourable concurrence of events, as would, at the same time, serve to mitigate our sorrows, to excite our gratitude to God, and encourage a religious and cheerful dependance on his providence.

Though the dispensations of divine providence are sometimes overcast with clouds and darkness, yet even at such times, we are not left wholly destitute and forlorn ;

lorn ; but have many experimental evidences of the paternal care of our heavenly father. Some rays of divine goodness shine through the darkest scenes. And if, religiously resigned to the will of God, we behave well, in times of trouble, we have reason to hope, that in the issue of things, good will come to us out of evil. For that God consults the good of his creatures, not only in the mercies he bestows, but in the evils he brings upon them, during their state of probation, is a truth, which no one can doubt of, who entertains just apprehensions of the perfections of his nature. Justice and righteousness are the pillars of his throne ; and his dominion is founded in infinite wisdom, equity and benevolence.

But, besides an attention to the many blessings, that are mingled with the troubles and afflictions of this life, it would be well for us, in all times of adversity, distress and danger ; and whenever the aspects of providence are dark, and our minds are agitated with anxious sollicitudes about the event of things ; to turn our thoughts back upon past favours, and reflect on the manifold mercies we have already received. This would tend to banish all murmuring, distrust and ill-boding apprehensions from our minds ; to awaken those grateful sentiments for favours past, that are requisite to prepare us for the reception of future needed mercies ; and to dispose us to exercise such an humble and cheerful dependance on the goodness of God for all necessary succour and relief, as would be a mighty support to our spirits, under the most grievous outward trials and calamities. This, as appears from the passage at the head of this discourse, was the method which the Psalmist took, to raise himself from despondency, and encourage his hope in God, in a time of distress and affliction.

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What the particular calamities were, that the psalmist here refers to, or whether they were of a publick or private nature, we cannot perhaps certainly determine ; but it is plain they were such as lay very heavy on his mind, and caused him almost to doubt of the goodness of divine providence. “ His complaints, as one observes, seem to be of personal grievances, but the encouragements relate to the public concerns of the church : If they were private troubles that he was groaning under, we are therefore taught that what God has wrought for his church in general, may be improved for the comfort of particular believers : If it was some public calamity, that he is here lamenting, his speaking of it so feelingly, as if it was some particular trouble of his own, shews us how much we should lay to heart the interests of the church of God, and make them our own.”

The Psalmist under melancholy fears and presages respecting the issue of his troubles, and almost ready to renounce his hope in God, expresses himself in the language of a disconsolate, deserted soul, walking in darkness, with scarcely one reviving ray of light, to comfort and cheer it. *Will the Lord cast off forever ? And will he be favourable no more ? Is his mercy clean gone forever ? Doth his promise fail for evermore ? Hath God forgotten to be gracious ? Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies ?* But as he is going on in this melancholy strain, he suddenly checks himself, with that word, *Selah*. He pauses, and, on a moment's reflection, finds that his thoughts had taken a wrong turn. *This is my infirmity*, says he ; that is, these distrustful thoughts of providence ; these gloomy fears and apprehensions, are owing to my weakness and wrong views of things. And in order to recover himself from this state of dejection, and encourage his trust in God for deliverance, he calls to mind
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his past favours and loving-kindnesses. *I will remember, says he, the years of the right hand of the Most High. I will remember the works of the Lord ; surely I will remember thy wonders of old, &c.*

The text does therefore, naturally suggest the following observation, viz. That in times of trouble, difficulty and danger, a grateful commemoration of former instances of divine mercy and goodness, would be of excellent service, to keep us from despondency, and to encourage a cheerful hope in God, and dependance on his providence for all needed salvation.

I presume, my hearers, you all believe that the providence of God presides over the world, and interposes in all human affairs ; that all second causes and subordinate agents are subject to his government ; that no events happen contrary to, or beside his will, positive or permissive ; that riches, and honour, and prosperity, come from him ; and that all adversities and calamities, whether public or private, are ordered by him. Without such a faith as this, we cannot take a single step towards a religious improvement, either of mercies or afflictions. Such a faith is necessary to lay a foundation for gratitude in prosperity, and for resignation and trust in God in adversity. This faith is the support of good men, amidst the confusions and disorders, the wars, tumults and revolutions of this world, and in all times of hazard and danger. Such men, believing that all things are subject to the superintending providence of God, infinitely wise and infinitely gracious, cheerfully refer themselves to his mercy, in confidence that he will so dispose events, as shall be for their interest and advantage, on the whole. Upon the wisdom, power, and goodness of God, they depend ; and are ready to say with the Psalmist, *God is our refuge and strength, a very present help*

help in trouble : therefore will we not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea ; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, and the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

God is an immutable being. He is *the same yesterday, to-day, and forever ; without any variableness, or shadow of turning.* Unchangeable in his nature and perfections, his power, wisdom and goodness endure forever. And therefore, as in his past dealings with us, he hath given a full demonstration of his infinite benevolence, and the brightest evidences of his merciful disposition towards us, it becomes us, while with gratitude we recollect the same, from thence to encourage ourselves still to hope and trust in him, whatever difficulties and troubles, we may be involved in.

We short-sighted mortals can see but little way into the vast scheme of divine providence. There are no certain principles upon which we can proceed in calculating the revolutions of the secret wheels thereof. We are unable to trace things into their various connections, or to look forward into all their remote and distant consequences. The most perplexed and calamitous circumstances, and gloomiest appearances of things, are no sure indications of God's having forsaken us finally. In the hidden, and to us uncertain connection of events, the most afflictive dispensations of providence, may be best adapted to promote our well-being. As God treats us as beings in a state of trial and discipline, so it cannot be reasonably doubted, but he will order all events respecting us, in such a manner, as his infinite wisdom shall see best calculated to promote our happiness, taking our present and future existence into one connected view. In this view, the troubles and calamities, which we meet
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with in this world, may be considered as disciplinary corrections, proceeding from the mercy of God, who hath assured us, that, although for the present, they are not *joyous* but *grievous*, yet, if we improve them aright, they will finally *work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Nor have those things which are grievous to us, for the present, a beneficial tendency in reference to our future state only; but they may also be meant for our good even in this world, and be designed in providence to prepare the way for our greater prosperity and outward felicity. The good patriarch, Jacob, when he cried out, *All these things are against me*, little thought how wonderfully providence was working for the salvation of himself and his family.

Whatever unfavourable conclusions, any persons, in the despondency and dejection of their spirits, may draw from the publick troubles we are now involved in, the supreme Governor of all things may have intended them for the opening a way for the exaltation of the American colonies to the highest pitch of glory, honour, opulence, and renown. He, we know, is able to defeat the designs of aspiring ambition, and to over-rule the oppressive and arbitrary schemes that are now formed against America, for rendering her more honourable and important among the nations, than she would otherwise be. The present unconstitutional and violent ministerial politicks, for aught we know, may have been permitted by him, with a view to roll the ball of empire over to this Western world; and to make this land, (maugre the utmost efforts of powerful ambition and tyranny) the happy seat of peace, liberty, learning, arts, virtue and religion; where, if any miserable people, in other quarters of the globe, after being stript of the blessings of freedom, and having their necks galled, beyond human

patience, with the cruel yoke of bondage, should be driven in their extremity, to seek a safe retreat, they may find a secure asylum from slavery and oppression, and quietly enjoy the fundamental rights of human nature. Should this be the effect of the vigorous exertions of the noble patriots and sons of freedom, who, at the risk of their lives and estates, are now engaged in the defence of their country, against the violent assaults of arbitrary power, unborn millions will rise up and call them blessed ; and their memories will be dear to all posterity, and will more deservedly receive the honours and praises of future generations, than the memories of many renowned heroes of antiquity, who are justly infamous in the view of every lover of human kind, for being celebrated chiefly for the successful havock and devastation they committed among their fellow-creatures, and the misery and wretchedness which they spread through the world.

But whatever favourable or unfavourable conjectures any one may make, we know that the event of things is in the hands of God. We are unable to unfold the volumes of futurity ; and therefore we cannot with infallible certainty determine, what will be the issue of the present civil commotions and hostile contests. However, let us, this day, in imitation of the Psalmist, by a grateful recollection of past favours, cheer and encourage our hearts, and endeavour to raise our confidence in Almighty God, the supreme disposer of all events, who can easily break in pieces that yoke of bondage, which is prepared for our necks. The wonderful interpositions of his providence in favour of our worthy ancestors, who, in order to remove themselves out of the reach of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, and to enjoy unmolested the blessings of liberty, voluntarily exchanged the fair fields of Britain for the inhospitable wilds of America, may encourage

encourage us, their posterity, in the present day of difficulty and danger, to put our trust in him, and to refer our cause to him, in hopes that he will prosper our exertions for the defence of those invaluable privileges, that were so dearly purchased by them.

When we consider that the grand motive, which induced our forefathers to leave their native country, and to transplant themselves into the uncultivated deserts of America, where they were sure of meeting with the greatest hardships and difficulties in acquiring a comfortable subsistence, was a love of liberty, the blessings whereof they were not permitted to enjoy on cheaper terms : When we consider also the many indubitable proofs, which the American colonies have given, from the beginning, of their loyalty and firm allegiance to the British sovereigns, and their warm affection for the parent-state; and likewise that Great-Britain has been amply repaid for all the expence she has ever been at in protecting them, by regulating and restricting their commerce in such a manner, as to secure the principal advantages and profits thereof to herself :---When we consider these things, how unjust and cruel must it appear in her, to attempt to deprive us of our dearly bought and unforfeited liberty, and reduce us to servitude and bondage? Will she never let us rest in peace, until we come to that place where all *the weary are at rest*? Is it not enough that she drove out our progenitors by the iron rod of tyranny and oppression, and forced them to flee for refuge into the howling wilderness of America? Will she also pursue us, their posterity, into these remote regions, to chastise us with the same iron rod, for no other fault than that of being a free people, and being resolved to continue so? One can hardly think of being thus pursued from Britain into the deserts of America, without recollecting that pas-
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sage in the Revelations, *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place ; where she is nourished--from the face of the serpent : And the serpent cast out of his mouth water, as a flood, after the woman, that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.*

Depotism has for some time been advancing with alarming strides against American liberty. For several years past, we have been involved in a controversy of a most interesting nature with Great-Britain ; a controversy, which strikes at the root of our civil, and greatly endangers our religious * liberties and privileges. The British parliament, in which we are, in no sense, represented †, have in pursuance of an assumed right to make laws binding on the colonies, *in all cases whatsoever*, passed many grievous acts, tending to tear up our constitution by the roots, to rob us of freedom, and subject us to a state of inglorious servitude. Alarmed at these proceedings, the colonies have reasoned, have remonstrated, have petitioned, but all in vain ; they who controul the councils of Great-Britain, being determined, as it seems, at all hazards, by force and violence, to carry their oppressive schemes into execution. Since the last anniversary of this sort, things have been driven to extremity, and America has been reduced to the disagreeable necessity of resisting to blood. British troops have stained their honour, by drawing the sword and commencing hostilities against their brethren and fellow

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* We can have no security of enjoying long our religious privileges, should that ministerial system of oppression, which has been lately planned against us, be once established among us. For civil and ecclesiastical tyranny are nearly allied ; and the latter follows close at the heels of the former. From the Canada bill, and some other things favourable to popery, we have grounds to fear, that should the present schemes of arbitrary power succeed, the Scarlet Whore would soon get mounted on her Horned Beast in America, and, with the CUP OF ABOMINATIONS in her hand, ride triumphant over the heads of true Protestants, making multitudes DRUNK WITH THE WINE OF HER FORNICATIONS.

† “ Among all the rights and privileges appertaining unto us, (to Englishmen) that of having a share in Legislation, and being to be governed by such laws as we ourselves shall chuse, is the most fundamental and essential.” Lord SOMMERS.

low subjects, for the base purpose of enslaving them. They have wantonly ravaged and destroyed some of our maritime towns. Our capital, once the seat of peace, prosperity and opulence, wrested from its proper owners, they have made the seat of violence and all the rigours of military despotism. Many of our brethren, driven from thence and from other sea-ports, have been obliged to seek an asylum in the country, from the unprovoked insults and outrages of these instruments of ministerial vengeance and ambition. Some of our brave sons have been slain in battle, whose memories are dear to us, for having fallen in defence of their country. Unwearied pains have been taken to rouse the Canadians and the savages of the wilderness against us, and excite them to fall on our frontiers. In short, every iniquitous method hath been attempted, for bringing slavery and misery upon us.

But God hath not forsaken us in these times of difficulty and danger. He hath shewn mercy to us in a variety of instances. Many beams of his goodness have shone upon us through these dark scenes. The Canadians and savage Indians hath he inspired with friendly dispositions, and defeated all attempts to provoke them to draw the sword against us. Our Western expedition hath he remarkably prospered, giving into our hands many important forts and garrisons of our enemies, and enabling us to penetrate into the heart of Canada. He hath also smiled on our military operations in this province, and given such efficacy to our arms, as has enabled us to confine the main body of ministerial forces within narrow limits, and, in spite of all their pretended skill and power, to prevent their breaking forth, and making those hostile excursions into the country, which they intended, and by which the dishonourable designs, upon which they were sent here, were to be forced into execution.

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And though they may boast of victory in the never to be forgotten battle of Charlestown, yet it was bought at the expence of so many lives on their side, that a few more such victories would prove their total defeat.

It also demands our grateful notice, that the supreme disposer of all things, who has access to all minds, and influences them as he pleases, has inspired the colonies with one heart and one soul ; and by inkindling within them that ardent love of liberty, which glowed in the breasts of the first settlers of this country, and which has all along been a distinguishing characteristic of New-England, has disposed them to unite as a band of brethren, for the defence of their common liberties and privileges, against the hostile invasions of arbitrary power.

It becomes us also, with thankful hearts, to acknowledge the goodness of God to us, in bestowing on us a great variety of private personal blessings, amidst the public calamities which have fallen upon us. Amidst the dark aspects of providence, in reference to our public affairs, we have enjoyed competent supplies of food and raiment, and been favoured, not only with the necessaries, but with many of the delights and pleasant enjoyments of life. And although in addition to our other troubles, God has been pleased this year to send the pestilence into many of our towns, whereby we have been bereaved of many of our dear friends and relatives, and to visit us with a severe drought, which prevailed for a while, threatening us with famine ; yet through his good providence the voice of health is again restored, and the earth has yielded her increase in sufficient plenty for the comfortable supply of all our wants.

It likewise deserves our most grateful acknowledgments, that God has not yet permitted our religious
privileges

privileges to be formally invaded ; and that we have hitherto quietly enjoyed his word and ordinances, and been allowed to worship him agreeable to our consciences.

These, with many other instances of divine goodness, which every grateful soul will naturally recollect, are plain evidences, that God hath not *forgotten to be gracious* ; and they call for our devout and thankful acknowledgments this day.

But though in the midst of our troubles, we have had happy experience of many instances of divine goodness, yet still a dark and dreary cloud hangs lowering over our land. May God almighty disperse it, and restore a serene sky. To be compelled to wage war for the defence of our just rights against the encroachments of brethren, with whom we wish to live in peace, cannot but be looked upon, by every considerate person, as one of the most distressing calamities, that God ever brings upon a sinful people. Every one who has a spark of true patriotism in his breast, cannot but feel the most sensible concern for his country, under the present perplexed and alarming situation of affairs. The appeal is now made to Heaven, to the sovereign arbiter of right and wrong, for the decision of the controversy between Britain and America. The sword is drawn, and it seems, the sword, under God, must decide it. If God be for us, we need not be afraid of the power or policy of those who have forced us to take up arms in our defence. All the boasted omnipotence of Britain, which has been thundered in our ears, in order to intimidate us into a tame surrender of our privileges, we know, is as nothing in comparison with the power of the Lord God of Hosts, who can accomplish his purposes, in spite of the utmost opposition of earth and hell. But
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he turn against us, we must fall before our enemies, although we were tenfold more powerful than they. It concerns us therefore to give all diligence to secure his friendship and patronage, by repentance and a cheerful submission to his laws and authority. Our present troubles are indications of his displeasure towards us, as a people, for our sins. By them he is now calling upon us to forsake our sins and amend our lives, that iniquity may not prove our ruin. If we hearken to his monitory warning voice, and reform, we may hope that he will soon *cause his face to shine* upon us, and scatter the present gloomy shades of night by the return of a bright and joyful day. For this is his language ; *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it : If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them.*

When we look above instruments to the supreme disposer of all events, we must acknowledge that we are justly dealt with, in the troubles that have been brought upon us. *For, shall not the judge of all the earth do right ?* We know that it is impossible for him to do otherwise. The most intricate footsteps of his providence are agreeable to the everlasting rules of righteousness, and would appear so to us, had we a thorough comprehension of the whole scheme of his *moral government.*

But though we must acknowledge our troubles to be just considered as ordered by God, yet have we reason to accuse the *instruments* thereof of *great injustice and cruelty.* I trust we can safely appeal to that Being, *who searches all hearts,* to witness for our sincerity, when we declare, that we have desired
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no more than the peaceable enjoyment of our just rights and liberties. The invasion of these, in violation of the sacred security of charters founded on royal faith, is the sole ground of the present resistance of America. The charges of disloyalty and rebellious dispositions, that have been brought against us, have had no foundation, but in the calumnies of enemies. Though I will not vouch for the effects of the desperation into which the colonies are now driven, yet I will venture to affirm that their resistance to the measures of administration, did not originate from a desire of independancy. They had it not even in contemplation to break their connection with Great-Britain. On the contrary, it has been their warmest wish, to live in friendly union with her, might they be permitted to do so, without a resignation of their invaluable rights. Had she adhered to that true art of government, which, as the Bishop of St. Asaph observes, lies in *not governing too much*, they would never have made any resistance. But when she had pushed things to such an extremity, that there was no other alternative, but either such concessions and submissions as they plainly perceived would be fatal to their liberties, or resistance ; impressed with a sense of the importance of freedom, they choose the latter.

However bad we may be in a moral view, yet we are perswaded our cause is good. Happy would it be for us, if we had the satisfaction of a good conscience towards God, as we have of a good cause. The cause in which we are engaged, is the same, for which our worthy ancestors sacrificed every thing else that was dear to them. For the sake of Liberty they quitted their tenderest connections and the dearest delights of life, and voluntarily exposed themselves to all hazards, and encountered all perils and difficulties. And the Almighty manifested his appro-
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bation of their cause, by remarkably supporting and prospering their noble exertions. From hence we have reason to hope that he will also graciously appear for us, and espouse our cause, if we put our trust in him, and pay him due acknowledgments and respects.

Time would fail me to recount the wonders, which God hath wrought for his *American-Israel* in times past ; how he shielded them against the rage of the Savages of the wilderness ; and caused them, when few in number, to triumph over their numerous enemies ; how often he relieved them in distresses, and protected them in dangers, and interposed to defeat the crafty policies and mischievous machinations of those that rose up against them ; how wonderfully he provided for them in all their straits, and strengthened them to overcome difficulties, to human appearance unfurmoutable : But there are two remarkable instances of the goodness of providence towards this land, which, at such a day as this, it may be profitable for us to call to remembrance, in order to encourage our hope and trust in God ; I mean, the overthrow of the arbitrary schemes of that tyrannical despot, James the second, under the administration of Sir Edmond Andros, about ninety years ago ; and the defeat of the French fleet and army, at Chebucatah, about thirty years since.

The first charter of the Massachusetts-Bay, with other charters of the New-England provinces, having been unrighteously * taken away, the lives, liberties and

* After a Quo-Warranto was issued against their charter, the Massachusetts province were cited by a writ of Scire Facias to appear at Westminster to make their defence ; but the time allowed them was so short, that before they received the Scire Facias, the case was decided against them. Though it was strongly urged in the Court of Chancery, that in the time given it was impossible to have a return from New-England, and that as they had not given time long enough, it was, in effect, giving no time at all, yet the court, being predetermined, decreed the Charter forfeited ON DEFAULT OF APPEARANCE. Vid. Hut. Hist. Vol. I. How unfair, and contrary to all rules of equity, was this !

and properties of the inhabitants, became subject to the absolute disposal of the government at home, which was sufficiently inclined to tyranny. Soon after this, James the second, an avowed papist, acceded to the throne, whose reign was distinguished, by his resolute endeavours to banish liberty from his dominions, and enslave all his subjects. In 1686 he sent Sir Edmond Andros to execute his tyrannical schemes in New-England. No sooner had Sir Edmond arrived in Boston, and entered on his government, but, (as it is no unusual thing for the greatest tyrants to do) he made high professions of regard for the publick good and the welfare of the people. But “ *Nero concealed his tyrannical disposition more years, than Sir Edmond did months. It was not long before the case of some, who apprehended themselves to be oppressed, came under consideration, and one of the council told them that they must not think the privileges of Englishmen would follow them to the end of the world.---Men’s titles to their estates were declared of no value, and they were called upon to purchase new patents.---The people were menaced that their meeting-houses should be taken from them, and the public worship, in the congregational way, should not be tolerated.---The Governor threatened to punish any man who gave two-pence towards the support of a non-conformist minister.* ” “ *Some churches who had agreed to set a-part days of thanksgiving on a particular occasion, were told, that they should meet at their peril, and that soldiers should be sent to guard their meeting-houses*.* ”

The insults and oppressions of Sir Edmond’s administration at length became intolerable. The people, exasperated beyond all patience, flew to arms, seized the

* These things are related on the authority of one of our own Historians, who, it may be presumed, would not exaggerate the methods taken on the side of government to infringe the liberties of the people, since in a letter to a member of parliament, relative to the present disputes, he gives it as his opinion, that THERE MUST BE AN ABRIDGMENT OF WHAT ARE CALLED ENGLISH LIBERTIES.

the Governor with many others who had been aiding to his arbitrary measures, being resolved, at all hazards, if possible, to tear from their necks that grievous yoke of bondage, that was put upon them. What would have been the effect of the people's rising and taking arms on this occasion, had James accomplished his arbitrary designs in Great-Britain, we cannot tell. The vengeance of that haughty despot, would, no doubt, have attempted some severe punishment. But Heaven prevented. For providence ordering a Revolution † in England about the same time, the power of oppression was broken, and this people were happily delivered from the sad effects of enraged tyranny, which they might otherwise have feared, and restored to the peaceable enjoyment of the blessings of liberty ‡, which they were in the utmost danger of losing forever.

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† The people of England, provoked at the arbitrary measures of James the second, carried their opposition to such an height, that he, through fear, left the kingdom; upon which, declaring the throne vacant, and excluding James and his family, they put the sceptre into the hands of William, Prince of Orange, and changed the line of succession.

And it may be observed in justification of America, that the principles upon which this memorable revolution was conducted and brought about, and the principles upon which she resists and opposes the unlimited claims of the British legislature, are much the same. For as it matters not whether slavery comes from the hands of one or of many, so the same reason that will justify a people in opposing arbitrary power in a single man, will equally hold to justify them in opposing the same kind of power in a number of men. No one, I believe, is possessed of such an acute discernment, as to be able to perceive any material difference between being subject to unlimited despotism in a single person, under the title of absolute monarch, and being subject to the like despotic power claimed by a far distant legislature, in which we are not represented. A right in the British parliament to legislate for us 'in all cases whatsoever,' as a sensible writer observes, "Would place us in the same situation the people of England would have been reduced to, had James the first and his family succeeded in their schemes of arbitrary power. Changing the word STUARTS for PARLIAMENT, and BRITONS for AMERICANS, the arguments of the illustrious patriots of those times, apply with inexpressible force and apposition, in maintenance of our cause, and in refutation of the pretensions set up by their too forgetful posterity over their unhappy colonists." And when we consider, that on the principles of the revolution, which are evidently in favour of America, his present Majesty's right to the throne depends; is there not reason to suspect, that the movers and abettors of the present oppressive and violent measures prosecuted against the colonies, (however free they are to charge us with disloyalty) are themselves Jacobites in heart; and have had it in view, first to produce a rupture between Britain and America, and then to take the advantage thereof, to introduce the Pretender, and advance the Stuart family to its ancient dignity!

‡ Though the people of this province had reason to rejoice with others, in the happy revolution, that was brought about in England, whereby they were delivered from the
tyranny

This deliverance ought ever to be remembered by us with gratitude to the *Most High, who ruleth in the kingdoms of men, and giveth them to whomsoever he pleaseth*. And it should encourage us to put our trust in the Almighty, who is able to defeat the unrighteous schemes of those, who without cause have risen up against us, and to return their oppressions on their own heads.

The other remarkable instance of God's merciful interposition for the salvation of New-England, which deserves our grateful commemoration, is the defeat of the French fleet and army at Chebuctah, about thirty years ago. This armament was the most powerful that ever before was sent to America. It consisted, says a credible writer, of "twenty men of war, an hundred transports, about eight thousand disciplined troops with veteran officers, and vast quantities of provision, powder, shot, arms, cannon, bombs and mortars, sufficient to take the strongest places ; and all under one commander of figure, Duke D'Anville, a nobleman of ability, skill and courage." And New-England was then in a weak and defenceless state, unable to withstand such a mighty force. But the Lord God omnipotent interposed, and marvellously defeated this formidable armada. He caused *the stars in their courses to fight against them*, as they did against Sisera of old. The winds and seas were mustered against them ; the pestilence was commissioned to invade their host ; innumerable blocks and unforeseen cross accidents were thrown in their way ; by all which, they were baffled, confounded, defeated,

tyranny of the Stuart family, yet they never recovered their first charter, which ought in equity to have been restored, since it was unjustly wrested from them, in arbitrary times, when many other charters, which were afterwards restored, fell a sacrifice to lawless power and ambition. However, they obtained another charter, which, though it abridged some of their former privileges, was yet so favourable to their liberties as Englishmen, that they cheerfully accepted the security it promised them against all future encroachments on their rights. But their posterity have found, to their sorrow, that the most solemn charters and stipulations are no fence against arbitrary power.

ed, and obliged to return ashamed, with a wretched remnant, to their own country. Thus salvation was wrought for us in a most miraculous manner, without the instrumentality of human means. This was the *Lord's doing*, and it ought always to be *marvelous in our eyes*. And this may teach us that the events of war, are not always agreeable to human conjectures and probabilities, but at God's disposal, who can easily, by ways and means little thought of by men, disconcert the best concerted human schemes, and crush into abortion the unrighteous enterprizes of his people's enemies.

Now, when we recollect these and such-like signal interpositions of divine providence in favour of New-England and America, what abundant reason have we to hope and trust in God, in the present dark and difficult day? However great the power or policy of our enemies may be, still we have this to comfort us, that *the Lord reigneth*, who is able to confound the deepest policies of men, to turn their wisest counsels into foolishness, to overthrow all their mischievous devices, and entangle them in the snares, which they have prepared for others. The wrath of man is under his controul; he setteth bounds thereto, and saith, *thus far shalt thou come, but no further*. Whatever men may design, or attempt, *the counsel of the Lord, that shall stand*. And from what he has done for his American heritage in times past, we have reason to hope that he will never suffer it to be given up to reproach and ruin, but will still protect and defend it, and frustrate all the evil designs of its enemies, if prevailing sin does not obstruct the course of his mercy.

The cause of Liberty, is the cause of learning, arts, virtue and religion,

“ For

“ For which the patriot, and the sage,
 “ Have plann’d, and bled through every age.”

Slavery tends directly to increase the degeneracy of human nature, and to extinguish every spark of genius : It is the prolific source of ignorance, gross superstition, and savage barbarism : It is the bane of all social virtues, a mortal enemy to the liberal arts and sciences, and to *pure and undefiled religion*. The cause of liberty is therefore the cause of God. And if we do not exclude ourselves from his favour by incorrigible wickedness, we may reasonably hope that he will eventually succeed our exertions in this noble cause, either by inspiring the minds of our unnatural enemies with such peaceable dispositions, as may lay a foundation for a just and amicable accommodation ; or by throwing such insuperable obstacles in their way, as shall compel them to lay aside their ambitious schemes, and permit us again, in tranquillity, to enjoy that freedom, to which we have an unalienable right, founded in the great charter of our being. If we *order our conversation aright*, and humbly seek to God for help and deliverance, we cannot hope for too much from his providence. If we will but amend our ways, and imitate the piety of our worthy ancestors, we shall have grounds to hope, as our cause is good, that God will appear for us, as he often did for them, and cause us to *see his salvation*.

Were our noble ancestors, who came over to this country for the sake of liberty, to rise from their graves, and make their appearance on the stage, at this day ; with what inflamed indignation would they behold that system of oppression and slavery, which has been lately formed against New-England and America, and which has forced people, though with reluctant hearts, to take arms for their defence ? How would their generous souls be fired with honest
 resentment

resentment at the arbitrary schemes, and sanguinary violent measures of the British ministry, designed to rob their posterity of that inestimable patrimony of liberty, which at the dearest rate they obtained for them, and transmitted down to them, to be by them inviolably preserved, and handed from one generation to another, to the end of time ! With what peculiar satisfaction and smiling approbation, would they behold their sons, warmed with the same sacred flame of liberty, which once animated their breasts, zealously exerting themselves in freedom's noble cause, and earnestly contending for the defence and support of their invaded rights ! And while with pity they beheld those servile timid spirits, who, rather than engage in any noble exertion or tempt any hazard for the sake of freedom, would Issachar-like, *basely bow their shoulders to bear, and become servants unto tribute* ; with what sovereign contempt would they look down on those venal sordid few, who, in hopes of aggrandizing themselves, and rioting in the spoils of injured and oppressed innocence, have been inculcating the long exploded and treasonable * doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, and aiding, to the utmost of their power, the unconstitutional measures of administration, for the enslaving, and ruining their native country ? And with what ardor and earnestness, would they warn us against submitting to any yoke of bondage, and enjoin it upon us to stand fast in our liberties, and to persevere in our laudible struggles for the defence and preservation of them !---Methinks I hear these brave and venerable personages, bespeaking us in the following strain ; “ We fled from our native land for the sake
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* If the doctrine of unlimited submission and passive obedience to the **POWERS IN BEING**, be once admitted as just and reasonable, it will follow by inevitable consequence, that the last revolution in England was a grand rebellion ; and that all who had an hand in it, were rebels and traitors ; and that all the Kings who have reigned since that time in Great-Britain, deserve the title of usurpers.

of liberty, which we esteemed the sovereign boon of Heaven, and dearest of all outward enjoyments : For the sake of this inestimable blessing, we crossed the dangerous seas, and took up our residence in this then uncultivated wilderness : For the sake of this invaluable enjoyment, we expended our treasure, endured all fatigues and hardships, and often jeopardded our lives in bloody wars with the savage natives : We have suffered every thing in the cause of freedom---for this we have fought---for this we have bled. You have entered into our labours, and without being exposed to any great hardships and dangers, have enjoyed, till lately, the benign smiles of liberty, which cost us so much toil and blood. But now the day of trial is come. That infernal monster, Slavery, from which we fled, not discouraged by former unsuccessful attempts, has again in great wrath, crossed the Atlantic, determined, if possible, to erect his throne on these western shores. Be not daunted at his hideous form, nor affrighted at his menaces. Oppose him as a fiend of hell. Collect all your zeal and resolution into one united and vigorous effort, to expel him from hence. Quit yourselves like men ; be brave ; be courageous ; be determined, would you be free. Liberty is the legacy, the rich legacy, which we have bequeathed to you, under a sacred entail, to be by you conveyed inviolate to your posterity. Let it never be said of our sons that they have basely given up this legacy, and pusillanimously submitted their necks to the iron yoke of bondage. Let it never be said of our sons, that they consented to live in thralldom themselves, and to leave a race of slaves behind them. Disgrace not your noble parentage ; bring not everlasting infamy upon yourselves, and perpetual misery upon your descendants, by any submissions pernicious to liberty. Be not dismayed at the appearance of dangers and difficulties, but with
D fortitude

fortitude and heroism becoming the importance of the cause, continue your zealous endeavours, to save yourselves, your country and posterity from impending servitude. And for your encouragement, *remember the years of the right hand of the Most High*, and call to mind the many wonders which he has wrought in times past, in favour of his church and people in this land ; and consider that *his arm is not shortened that he cannot save*, but that he is as able to help and deliver you, as he was your forefathers. Make him your friend and ally, and apply to him for aid, and doubt not, but he will interpose, to divert the evils that are levelled against you, to banish servitude far from you, and to succeed and prosper your laudible contests for the maintaining and securing the blessings of freedom. *May the Lord of Hosts be with you, and the God of Jacob be your refuge."*

In imitation of our pious progenitors, let us, while we are in the use of all natural and lawful means of defence and safety, put our trust in God, the only hope and saviour of his people in times of trouble. And while we refer our cause to him, let us take care to approve ourselves to him, by a conscientious obedience to his holy will, as we desire that he should espouse our cause, and secure to us those outward liberties and privileges, for which we are now earnestly contending. Let us be thankful to him for such mercies as we have received and still enjoy, and express our gratitude by a pious and holy conversation. Whatever blessings he is pleased to bestow upon us, let us improve to his honour, with sobriety and thanksgiving. Let us beware of pride, and cautiously abstain from intemperance, prodigality and extravagance, vices, which, as they are contrary to the spirit of religion, and highly provoking to Heaven, so they also, in the natural course of things, tend to bring

bring poverty and ruin upon a people ; and which, we have reason to think, have had a great hand in pulling down the present calamities upon us. Let us, in our manner of living, confine ourselves to the strictest rules of frugality and prudential œconomy, as being highly ornamental to christians ; greatly conducive to the prosperity of society, at all times ; and peculiarly necessary at such a day as this. And to frugality and œconomy let us add industry, and then, while we are blessed with the common smiles of providence, we need not fear being starved into slavery, in such a land of plenty as this. The simplicity of living which obtained among our forefathers in the early age of this country, much resembling the simplicity of the patriarchal ages, was much better adapted to promote temporal felicity, than the luxury, which, with the increase of wealth, has since taken place and prevailed. Nature is content with little. It is comparatively easy to supply the necessities of nature ; but to satisfy pride is impossible. Pride introduces luxury and expensive ways of living ; and custom gives such a currency to superfluities, that frugality can scarcely escape the odious epithets of meanness and avarice. But by whatever hard names it may be called, frugality is a virtue of high importance to a people's prosperity ; and therefore, as we wish well to our country, in the present troublesome times, it behoves us to retrench our extravagancies and superfluous expences ; to drop foreign luxuries ; and confine ourselves, as much as possible, to our own manufactures, and the productions of our own land. This is what providence is now inculcating upon us, by the obstructions thrown in the way of foreign commerce. And happy shall we be, and abundant reason shall we have to give thanks to God, if we can enjoy our liberty, though we should be deprived of those foreign superfluities, which have been
generally

generally too shamefully abused as occasions of pride and vanity.

But let us, my hearers, more especially take care to make a wise improvement of our religious advantages and privileges, which, through the goodness of God, have been hitherto preserved to us entire. Let us live up to our obligations as christians, and by a diligent improvement of the means of grace, endeavour to make seasonable preparation for a blessed immortality in the world to come. This world, at best, is a *vale of tears*. Many are the unavoidable sorrows and infelicities, that flow from the frailties of our frame, and the precarious unstable nature of all earthly enjoyments ; much greater and more numerous are the troubles, vexations and woes, that flow from the ungoverned lusts of men, which are an unhappy source of perpetual discord, variance, strife, rapine, violence and war. But we are assured that there is a better world, prepared beyond the grave, for all good men, where they shall be exempt from all evil, and enjoy compleat and endless felicity. Thither let us soar in our affections ; thither let us bend our course ; and to prepare therefor let us make the main business of our lives. If we will do thus, the prospect of future blessedness and glory, which, with increasing brightness, will open to our view, will greatly alleviate and assuage the sorrows of this life, and afford us consolation amidst all the afflictions and tribulations of this troublesome transitory world.

Religion, my friends, the religion of Jesus imbibed into the heart, and reduced to practice, is the channel through which the greatest comforts that can be enjoyed on earth, are conveyed unto men. This will give us hope in God, and quiet repose under the wings of his mercy, in times of the greatest trouble
and

and danger. This will give us liberty of a far more noble and happifying nature, than that outward civil liberty for which we are contending this day. This will free us from the tyrannical dominion of our lusts and passions, and advance us to the *glorious liberty of the children of God*, wherein the perfection and happiness of human nature consist, and without which, we shall be slaves, how much soever we may hate the name. This, in fine, will afford us great joys, in the views of divine favour, here ; and prepare the way for our admission to *joys unspeakable and full of glory*, to joys uninterrupted, everlasting, and adequate to our capacities, in the beatific presence of God hereafter. AMEN.