

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED ON THE

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING

IN

MASSACHUSETTS,

NOVEMBER 29, 1804.

BY *ELIPHALET GILLET*,
MINISTER IN HALLOWELL.

Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.
JESUS CHRIST.

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Thanksgiving Sermon

ISAIAH xxxiii. 6.

AND WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE THE STABILITY OF THY
TIMES, AND STRENGTH OF SALVATION.

THE interests both of church and state, in the Jewish nation, were often endangered by domestic feuds, and the incursions and oppressions of surrounding enemies. God instructed and forewarned them by the prophets. Sometimes he predicted these calamities, as a judgment for their unbelief and rebellion ; at other times, he declared the certainty and pointed out the means of their prevention, as a source of encouragement. The text is a prophecy of the latter description. It points to a time, when their civil and religious privileges should not lie at the mercy of the momentary impulse of their own giddy passions, or the intrigue and arms of their foes : but they should possess the blessing of internal liberty, stability and order, and the power of external defence. It points also to the necessary means of this good. " WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE shall be the stability of thy times, and strength of salvation." By *wisdom* we are here to understand, true benevolence, or " that wisdom which is from above ;" and by *knowledge*, the general diffusion of science. They should have understanding to " discern the signs of the times"—to know the measures

measures of public safety and utility ; and goodness to adopt them. Their privileges, immunities and enjoyments, spiritual and temporal, should be thoroughly understood and heartily promoted. They should serve God in sincerity, conduct their affairs with discretion, and obtain a divine blessing. The words thus explained naturally lead us to the object of the following Discourse, which is to shew that

PIETY AND LITERATURE ARE THE GRAND PILLARS WHICH SUPPORT CIVIL AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

I shall *First* explain what is meant by liberty, civil and religious : and *Secondly* shew that piety and literature are the pillars which support it.

I am *First* to explain civil and religious liberty.

Liberty is so congenial to the human mind, and possessed of such charms, that it cannot fail to captivate our affections, and recommend itself to our judgment. It alleviates our cares, and sweetens our enjoyments. It denotes some essential good, without which, even life would be burdensome. But it is often misunderstood, and oftener still, perverted. The magic sound of it has enslaved thousands. This circumstance will serve as an apology, should the explanation be longer and more particular, than at first view would seem necessary.

Liberty, in its most extensive sense, is found only in a state of nature, where the savage roams the desert, independent of his fellow-men ; uncherished by their sympathies,

sympathies, unaided by their power, and unawed by their opinions.* But this is liberty in the extreme ; and a state the most uninviting to beings possessed of social natures, except its contrast ; where, in barbarous nations, the slave is chained to the oar in the galley ; or where, in civilized nations, slavery is legitimated, and the devoted fellow-mortal is driven to his task by the lordly tenant of the soil. Liberty however, without its social blessings, has little to distinguish it from slavery, but the name. As neither of these states could be desirable to a rational and cultivated mind, we must look for *civil* liberty somewhere between them. It is the liberty of society, and not the liberty of an insulated individual.

Civil liberty consists in the security of our persons, property and freedom of action, by laws and regulations agreed upon by the body of the people, either expressly or tacitly ; either by themselves personally or by their representatives. Salutory restraint necessarily comes into the definition of such a state. Where every one is permitted to exercise his natural liberty of “ doing what is right in his own eyes,” there can be no enjoyment of civil liberty. Every state of society requires the relinquishment of some rights for the preservation of others. There is an abandonment of privileges for the protection of law. And for the security and preservation of liberty among a people, the nature and extent of the privileges retained, and the beginning of salutary restraint with the manner of its operation, are objects, limits and bounds, which ought to be accurately defined in the CONSTITUTION which unites them. This is the Palladium—the strong hold of freedom. To this all parties must resort in

* *Anonymous Pamphlet on the French Revolution.*

in difference of opinion, and clashing of interests. This must be the umpire to judge of their measures, and silence their disputes. And liberty can be no longer preserved, than its awards are held sacred.

It is a point much controverted by politicians, how far a people must give up, and how far they may retain, their natural rights and privileges, to enjoy the greatest portion of civil liberty. But it is a point which has never been settled. And for this obvious reason. It is not a principle of general application. It must vary with different ages and climates. It must accommodate itself to the different circumstances, habits, tempers and opinions of people; as also to their different degrees of information. That Constitution of government which would secure the greatest portion of liberty, and promote the greatest happiness of a people who were generally informed, who were pacific in their dispositions, and of established habits of piety and morality, would be very inapplicable to a nation of a different cast; whose minds were unenlightened, whose passions were unsubdued, and whose steps were marked with violence; where the principle was authorised and established, that "blindness needs no guide, and perverseness no restraint."

That may be called the most free and eligible state of civil society, where all the offices of honor, profit and trust are equally open to all ranks and orders of men, who by their talents and integrity are rendered worthy of them, and who by their manner of life obtain the public confidence. Where the door to wealth is equally open to the industrious of all descriptions; and the avails of their industry and frugality secured to them. Where the laws have a uniform operation upon all—prevent the poor from

from plundering the rich, and the rich from oppressing the poor. And where no class of people has any exclusive rights—no preeminence, but of mental endowments, or personal virtue.

But this is paying homage to our own government. Indeed it is meant so. We may assert, without subjecting ourselves to the accusation of partiality or pride, that the Constitution and Laws of this Commonwealth, in the wisdom of their construction and salutary operation, are inferior to none, on the face of the globe: There is no Institution in the civilized world, where the liberties of people are more clearly defined, or more fully secured. In the Declaration of Rights, it is asserted that "all men are born equal and free,"* that "no man, nor corporation or association of men, have any other title to obtain advantages, than what arises from the consideration of services rendered to the public; and this title being in nature neither hereditary, nor transmissible to children or descendants or relations by blood, the idea of a man born a magistrate, lawgiver, or judge, is absurd and unnatural."† This is the broad basis upon which is erected that beautiful superstructure, of statutes, laws and regulations, which has hitherto secured to us so great a portion of liberty, peace and mutual enjoyment.

It were to be wished that the state of society in the world would admit every political association of men to enjoy all the liberties they naturally inherit, except those which they must relinquish for the promotion of order and regulation in their respective bodies. But the lusts of men are so fruitful in "wars and fightings," that small states,

* Art. I.

† Art. VI.

states, like those in America, are obliged to surrender a still further portion of their rights, to form a system of national defence. Otherwise, not only the smaller states would lie at the mercy of the greater, but each one would lie at the mercy of foreign foes. Their riches would present temptation, and their weakness would insure success, to every unprincipled adventurer.

As individuals in a community, from difference of opinion and conflicting passions, are obliged to relinquish some of their rights to give power to Law to secure others; so individual states are obliged to make a still further relinquishment to form a system of general defence. And this is not inconsistent with the enjoyment of the greatest possible portion of civil liberty, in the existing state of things in the world, provided they receive an equivalent in their national security. And this is guaranteed in the Constitution of America. "The United States shall guarantee to every State in this Union, a republican form of government, and shall protect each of them against invasion; and on application, against domestic violence."* So that if we are not unjust to ourselves, we may enjoy the richest portion of civil liberty—"sit under our own vines and our own figtrees, having none to disturb us, or to make us afraid."

As I have adverted to our own Constitutions of government in illustrating the nature of *civil* liberty, I shall avail myself of the same helps in explaining *religious* liberty. For the promotion of the former, the laws of a country ought to be very *particular*; for the promotion of the latter, very *general*. There may be some re-
religious

* Art. IV. Sect. 4.

ligious liberty; where there are ecclesiastical establishments, if different sects are tolerated, as in England, Scotland, Russia, and many other nations of the world. But it cannot be enjoyed in its full extent, unless the Constitution and Laws of a country equally favor and protect all religious sects and denominations. Hence, in the Amendment to the Constitution of the United States, it is declared, that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof."* And in Massachusetts Declaration of Rights, "No subordination of any one sect or denomination to another shall ever be established by law."† This is religious liberty. All denominations are permitted to choose their religion, and protected in the practice of it, but no one, to the detriment of the other, established or preferred by law. So that all the preeminence, one sect in religion can have over another, must arise from the superiority of its numbers, or its preeminent virtues. (a)

But as some think they have no *civil* liberty, unless they are at liberty to do any thing they please, however absurd and pernicious; so there are some who think they have no *religious* liberty, unless they have liberty to have no religion at all. The laws of our State require people to worship God: but it is left to their own choice, whether they do it through the mediation of Christ, or the Virgin Mary, or without any mediation at all. Religion is enjoined upon us: but as to the doctrines we shall believe, and the duties, modes and forms we shall practice, we are left to consult our own
B consciences.

* Art. I. † Art. III.

(a) Note, at the end of the Discourse.

conscience. Our rulers wisely foresaw, that if persons were not disposed to be conscientious in their religion, it was not in the power of law to make them so. And therefore gave liberty to all, to think what they pleased, and to speak, write and practice what they thought, concerning the different principles and institutions of religion. Every one sees that this is opening the door as wide to error as to truth, and may lead to the abuse of religious liberty. But we must subject ourselves either to the *abuse*, or to the *want* of it. And no one can hesitate a moment which to prefer, who has seen or heard of the horrors of ecclesiastical persecution—the numbers whom the rack has tortured, or the faggots consumed.

HAVING attempted to explain civil and religious liberty, I now proceed, Secondly, to shew that piety and literature are its pillars of support. My arguments will be drawn from three sources: from the nature of the case—from the holy scriptures, and from a general survey of ancient and modern nations.

1. It appears from the very nature of piety and literature, that they are pillars of support to the beautiful fabric of civil and religious liberty. The enlightened and informed mind is able to take a comprehensive view of national concerns—discerns the distant connexion and tendency of measures, and foresees and can provide for the issue of events; and piety consecrates all these talents, faculties and opportunities, to the honor of God and the good of mankind. It is the nature of piety to desire and promote happiness universally; and knowledge prevents one from mistaking the means of it. These qualifications united, in all ranks of people, would be a safeguard of their liberties, and give permanence

nence to their tranquility. The pious ruler would imitate the Supreme Ruler of the universe, in diffusing blessings and suppressing evils, to the extent of his influence; and pious subjects or citizens would pay a willing obedience, refrain from acts of mutual oppression, and lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty." Thus "liberty would be proclaimed to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that were bound."

I know that some literary characters, men of superior talents and extensive information, have been the direst scourges of mankind—have imposed upon their credulity, misled and enslaved them. But this does not form an objection against knowledge, but the *perversion* of it. As well might we argue against strength, because it sometimes binds the weak; or against wealth, because "the prosperity of fools destroys them." It shews us, however, the great importance of the accompanying influence of piety to give a right direction to the faculties and improvements of the mind. Knowledge must be under the influence of that "charity which seeketh not her own." The element of fire, when controled, invigorates, warms and cheers; but let loose in the city, the sport of winds and tempests, its steps are marked with universal devastation,

There must be a union of virtue and talents. The public liberty and safety rest on their combined influence. Piety may seek the general good, but if accompanied with ignorance, cannot devise the means to effect it; and impiety, however learned, would much sooner enslave than bless a people. It would sacrifice their liberties at the shrine of its own ambition. But where a cultivated

cultivated mind is united with a heart of integrity, the means of liberty are seen and pursued—the public interest is discovered and promoted. This sentiment is supported

2. From the testimony of scripture. We are there taught the nature and tendency of “wisdom and knowledge.” They are said, in the text, to be the “stability of the times and strength of salvation.” To promote the freedom and happiness of a people, these qualifications are declared to be necessary, both to those who exercise authority, and to those who are called to submit to it. The wisest of men hath said, “As a roaring lion, and a ranging bear; so is a wicked ruler over the poor people. The prince that wanteth understanding is also a great oppressor.” Hence the divine command, “Take ye wise men and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you.” This was an omen for good. But “wo to thee, O land, when thy king is a child.” The scriptures require of all civil rulers, that they be able to say with Job, “I put on righteousness and it clothed me; my judgment was as a robe and diadem.” We are taught that the public interest depends upon these qualifications. “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when the wicked bear rule, the people mourn.”

But it is not to rulers exclusively that wisdom and knowledge should attach themselves. Like air and water, they must be common blessings of a community. The ignorant would not understand the laws, and the impious would not obey them. Hence the scripture requires us “to be ready unto every good work—that nothing be done through strife and vainglory—that every one

one study to be quiet and do his own business—to render unto all their dues, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, honor to whom honor: and that none speak evil of dignities, nor use liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” Thus “through wisdom is an house builded, and by understanding it is established.”

Though the scriptures are not designed as a code of civil laws, and do not derive their chief excellency from describing our duties and promoting our happiness, as citizens of this world, yet these are not wholly overlooked. “Godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.” And there is the promise of liberty and happiness implied, as well as duty enjoined, in the command to magistrates, to “rule in the fear of God,” and to people to “submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake.” In the performance of these mutual duties, there is mutual peace and enjoyment. The gospel never separates personal benefit from a compliance with its injunctions. The reward may be distant, and require the exercise of faith; but it shall be sure. “Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days.” It is laid down as a maxim, and a maxim equally applicable to bodies of men, as to individuals. “If thou art wise, thou art wise for thyself; but if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.” So just is this sentiment that God often grants wicked rulers “in his anger;” and permits discord “in his wrath.” People having become ripe for judgments, their own folly and vice are made the rod of chastisement. “I will give children to be their princes, and babes shall rule over them;

them ; and the people shall be oppressed, every one by another, and every one by his neighbor. Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men : therefore behold, I will proceed to do a marvellous work among this people, even a marvellous work and a wonder ; for the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid. SURELY YOUR TURNING OF THINGS UPSIDE DOWN SHALL BE ESTEEMED AS THE POTTER'S CLAY." These truths will be confirmed to us from history, observation and experience, if we take a general survey of ancient and modern nations. This was the

3. Source of arguments in proof of our doctrine.

Africa, tho advantageously situated for a connexion and intercourse with the other quarters of the world, is as yet comparatively but little known. But so far as a desire to spread the christian religion, a desire to promote the object of geographical knowledge, and a desire of unrighteous gain in a commerce of the lives of men, have brought us to an acquaintance with that territory, we are assured that ignorance and impiety have no connexion with liberty, civil or religious. Except some exertions that are made to enlighten and christianize them, on the western coast and at the Cape, they quietly remain in sottish ignorance and slavery. (e) In some parts of the country, they wage war upon their brethren, for the sole purpose of making captives for sale at the market. A practice the most barbarous and inhuman, except that of christian nations in buying them. From such scenes the

(e) Note.

the eye turns away with pity and disgust. But it finds little relief in the extensive region of Asia.

Here was once planted "the garden of the Lord." Here "in the fullness of time," the Saviour appeared. And here were established the first christian churches. But their glory has departed. "Darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people." With very few exceptions, they are universally destitute of any valuable knowledge, or rational piety. (i) And in such circumstances, we should look in vain, for civil or religious liberty. Where ignorance and impiety extend their scepter, like Goths and Vandals, they leave no vestiges of freedom, peace or social enjoyment.

In Europe we find instances more particularly calculated to illustrate our subject. We can there mark with more precision, the influence of piety and literature, in the promotion of the immunities and privileges of a people.

Where popery has been the established religion, the civil government has always been rigid and cruel. The throne and the altar have been propped up by ignorance, and the grossest religious superstitions. A general diffusion of science would weaken the arm, and endanger the existence, of civil and ecclesiastical oppression. It strikes us with surprise, that not two centuries ago, the earth could not revolve round the sun, without a papal anathema ; and that discoveries of the works of nature, and a knowledge of the word of God, were interdicted, on pain of banishment, imprisonment, or death. But the sun of science has chased away these palpable clouds. Its beams have shone with such brightness,

(i) Note.

ness, as not to be wholly resisted. It has undermined the fabric of superstition and tyranny, and led expectation to stretch out her neck, and listen, to hear the angel's voice, when he should cry, "BABYLON THE GREAT IS FALLEN, IS FALLEN!" But liberty gains little by the progress of science, unless accompanied by virtue and piety. Without religion, men may exchange tyrannies, but they cannot enjoy freedom.

Spain is a kingdom which has long existed. Her government is strong, like the "bars of a castle." But, if we were ignorant of her oppressions and cruelties, neither her piety nor knowledge would lead us to look there for liberty. And Portugal is too nearly allied to her, both in situation and manners, to give us a fairer prospect.

If we pass over into Italy the scene changes. We see the arts and sciences flourish. But they are rather brilliant, than solid; suited rather to an effeminate, than a vigorous and manly people. They are literally *Finé* arts; and which have as often flourished, and been carried to as high perfection, in absolute governments, as in any other. But Italy has not been without its liberties. Separated into many distinct governments, several of them have obtained the name of Republics: though they have enjoyed but few blessings, which that name is designed to convey. And in the late revolutions of the world, they have experienced many changes, by which they have gained no material advantage; and perhaps, in point of real liberty, have lost little, as they had little to lose. Venice, in particular, has long been famous, or rather infamous, for intrigue and assassination; and the whole country has been but too justly styled "a land of
illiberal

illiberal vices." As Spain has too much apathy, so Italy has too much levity and impiety, either to secure or to enjoy, upon any rational foundation, stability of times, or strength of salvation.

The Republic of Holland, though she never enjoyed all the rights and immunities which we should attach to such a state, yet for a long time possessed a great portion of civil and religious liberty. There our forefathers found a sanctuary, in their persecution. And there the people in general found plenty, security and peace. These times lasted as long as the nation was distinguished for that "wisdom which is from above, pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." But when their religion became lax, and shaped itself to every changing circumstance, the door was open to "confusion and every evil work." Their liberties were retained no longer, than they were influenced by that "charity, which is the bond of perfectness." The liberties of the Swiss, in their rise, preservation and ruins, are so similar, as hardly to furnish a separate article.

Russia and her northern neighbors, tho' different religions are tolerated and some civil privileges enjoyed, furnish but little to invite our attention. To expect a great portion of civil or religious liberty, in countries where knowledge is so limited and piety has so little influence, would be as unnatural, as to expect to "reap where we had not sown, and gather where we had not strawed."

In Great Britain, I suppose it will be generally conceded, that a greater portion of liberty is enjoyed,
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than in any other foreign nation. And there religion and knowledge have flourished the most extensively. Both England and Scotland have made great exertions to spread and establish christianity in the destitute parts of the earth, and have experienced great revivals of it at home. Tho we ought to lament that religion is made so much an engine of state, and that her policy is sometimes as unjust, as it is selfdestructive, especially in her treatment of her once Colonies ; yet we cannot, without doing violence to truth, deny them a large portion of valuable knowledge, and a considerable prevalence of true religion : and there is secured and promoted a proportionate share of their liberties. We wait, and perhaps wait in vain, to see her separate religion, as an establishment, from her national policy, and admit of a more equal representation in her civil community. Whether these evils are retained from party views, or through fear of greater evils from innovation, is best known to those who are interested in her changes. And we leave her to manage her own concerns ; and take a view of the affairs of her rival nation.

In France, there has been the fairest trial possible, whether the liberties of a people could be supported without piety and knowledge. And the issue, tho matter of regret, is none of surprise. The change from a very oppressive government, to almost no government at all, raised the highest hopes and expectations. But, as in many other cases, they were raised only to be disappointed. The people were rather infatuated than blessed with their freedom. They raised altars to the Genius of Liberty ; but, like the Athenians in St. Paul's time, they ought to have inscribed them, " TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." And they had as little piety, as they had knowledge.

Their

Their former government had been very unfavorable to its growth ; and in their change, its aid was interdicted. After a twelve years struggle, and twice as many changes, while their liberties often " hung by a thread and factions always sharpening their weapons to cut it," being convinced that they could not preserve their own rights and privileges, they have heaped them up as a sacred deposit, and committed them to the keeping of one, who has both the power and the inclination to do it ; and who will be faithful to his trust. A sacred regard to the principles of piety, and a general diffusion of knowledge, might have secured her liberties, with stability of times and strength of salvation. But the most beautiful fabric, without these necessary supports, like a house built on the sand, will be swept away by storms and tempests.

America has a fairer prospect. Her revolution commenced in principle, not in passion. And time, and the wisdom of her rulers, have given some stability to her government ; which is not wholly destitute of piety and knowledge as its support. She has also the fatal destinies of other nations, held up as beacons, to warn her of the rocks upon which they have made shipwreck of their liberties. Being now the only Republic on earth, IT IS YET IN EXPERIMENT, whether she will profit from her means of instruction.

As tho the state and condition of contemporary nations were insufficient, Providence has handed down to us, by the pen of sacred and profane historians, the rise, the glory and ruin of ancient nations.

The Jews were a people highly privileged. God took them under his own superintendency. Their laws and ~~ordinances~~ ^{ordinances} were of divine origin. While they were

were "willing and obedient, they ate the good of the land. Israel dwelt in safety. The heavens dropped down dew, and the Lord was the shield of his help. But when they refused and rebelled, they were devoured with the sword." Their liberty did not consist in their being exempted from civil and religious restraints, but in their being subject to them. There was "a long season when Israel was without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law." But this was not their freedom nor peace. It was anarchy, with all its fatal effects. "In those times, there was no peace to him that went out, nor to him that came in, but great vexations were upon all the inhabitants of the countries." As the partial evils of the Jewish nation, so her final dissolution, was owing to her infidelity and apostasy. "The scepter had not departed from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet," except through their own opposition and perverseness. Submissive to their God, and united among themselves, they had no reason to fear being crushed in the talons of the Roman eagle. "Jerusalem is ruined, and Judah is fallen; because their tongue and their doings are against the Lord, to provoke the eyes of his glory."

The Republic of Greece, like our own, comprehended a large number of distinct governments. Her Amphictyonic Council, and Achæan League, resembled in theory the Confederation of America. Tho her general government, if it might be called so, had not energy enough to suppress internal dissensions. Her improvements in the arts and sciences, and individual examples of public spirit, astonished the world, and have been the admiration of later times. After an existence

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of almost seven centuries, her own narrow policy, the opposition of rival states, and the introduction of Asiatic vices, eclipsed her glory, and blotted out her name from the list of nations. (o) A solemn memento to all placed in a similar situation.

Rome, which rose upon her ruins, which far exceeded her in extent, and filled the world with terror, was undermined by that doctrine which denied a future retribution. Her religion, poor as it was, was necessary to her existence as a republic. (u) When the influence of this was withdrawn, she sunk under her own weight. That state of things which justified the stranger in saying, "all things were venal at Rome,"* was the fatal prelude to her dissolution.

FROM an excursion to distant countries and to distant ages, we return with pleasure to our own Commonwealth. Amidst all commotions, difficulties and dangers, our "judges remain as at the first, and counsellors as at the beginning:" and I wish I might truly add the remaining part of the verse, that "we are called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." But we are blessed with many privileges.

It is of no small importance that we have one at the head of our State, † eminent for that WISDOM and KNOWLEDGE, which are the STABILITY OF THE TIMES. Having for a series of years honored one of the highest seats in the national legislature, and being, in profession and practice, a humble and pious follower of Jesus, he is peculiarly

(o) Note.

(u) Note.

* "Omnia venalia Rome." JUGURTHA.

† HIS EXCELLENCY CALEB STRONG, ESQUIRE.

peculiarly qualified, and has every motive, "to be a terror to evildoers, and a praise to them that do well." Prudence and moderation are calculated to command the respect and unite the feelings of all parties and descriptions of men. And it is with pleasure I recollect that those who differ from him in opinion in regard to political measures, admit, in their public communications, that he is "cautious in his conduct, and mild and moderate in his manners."* These are qualifications peculiarly valuable, where there are difference of opinions, and opposite and conflicting interests. It has been customary for nations, in setting forth their most celebrated personages, to have the picture grouped with laurels, and emblazoned with the trophies of war. But characters, possessing piety, prudence, extensive knowledge, firmness and moderation, have done more to save and bless mankind, and command more of our deference and esteem, than all the bloody conquerors, from Nimrod of Assyria down to the Emperor of the Gauls.

We have also very generally the means of instruction. Few territories of this extent, and of the same number of inhabitants, have the privilege of an University, two Colleges, so many Academies and smaller schools of literature. (y) Our churches, of various denominations, are many; and in a variety of instances, have experienced the outpouring of the Divine Spirit—have received "refreshment from the presence of the Lord." God has given us peace; remarkably blessed us with health; and so crowned the labor of our hands, that in all parts of the state we may come before him today with a THANK-OFFERING. It

* Address to the People of Massachusetts.

(y) Note.

It is not to be disguised, however, that infidelity and impiety have made, and are still making, strides among us; and that not only different opinions, but mutual oppositions prevail, and threaten the destruction of social enjoyment. If our passions are suffered to prevail over our judgment, and prejudice to blind our understandings, it will not only imbitter our own minds, and render us incapable of happiness, but undermine the whole fabric of our liberties. As the *physical power* of a nation is always in those that are governed, it will be impossible, if we give way to mutual opposition and revenge, for the best rulers to preserve order and prevent our ruin. We shall march with precipitancy to the gulph of destruction.

If these observations could not be made, but from extensive political knowledge, I should not have the vanity to make them.

"When some neglected fabric nods beneath
 "The weight of years, and totters to the tempest,
 "Must heaven dispatch the messenger of light,
 "Or wake the dead, to warn us of its fall?"

The thing is plain and speaks for itself. "He that runs may read."

Do you ask what course one must take, when every thing seems to depend upon the success of the measures he wishes to promote? The answer is easy. I would give the same advice I would take. Like an independent citizen, unprejudiced and uninfluenced, I would vote for those whom I thought to be good rulers. If I did not succeed in my wishes, I would submit to bad ones. I would submit, "not only for wrath, but for conscience sake"; knowing that the next step beyond submission is anarchy and civil war; the measures of which

no wisdom can foresee, nor power suppress ; and the evils of which do not admit of calculation.

Being of no party, having nothing to gain or lose by the rise or fall of any sect or description of men, except in common with my fellow citizens ; having no expectation of office from state or nation, and as little desire, as I have expectation ; my opinions may be thought, if not the result of much wisdom or knowledge, at least the result of sincere conviction. Those opinions being perfectly known to you, it is as unnecessary, as it would be improper, for me to trespass upon your patience in more explicitly stating them. And I pray God to create in us an heavenly temper, and endow us with so much knowledge, that we may see our best good, and pursue it ; that, in the mutual exercise of candor and forbearance, we may still enjoy peace, and know " how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

THESE remarks may be easily extended. Whatever is for the benefit of this state would be for the benefit of each state in the Union, and for the whole nation, and indeed for all the nations of the earth. For it is a principle equally true, in every age, and of universal application, that " righteousness exalteth a nation, and sin is a reproach to any people."

If the time shall ever come, when neither infidelity nor ignorance, nor the combined influence of both, shall, in the opinion of the citizens of our country, disqualify characters for offices of profit and trust :—When they shall raise persons, by their suffrages, to the most elevated situations, and clothe them with power and influence, not for their firmness, penetration and integrity,

but because their political opinions accord with their own :—when parties, wrought up to a high pitch of enthusiasm by mutual abuse and recrimination, are so blinded to the morality of actions ; that the blackest crimes whiten into virtues, because they attach themselves to a favourite sect ; and instead of endeavoring to conciliate, are bent upon exterminating each other : when, those in authority, forgetting the majesty of their office, and their responsibility at a future tribunal, shall court popularity from a union with the ignorance and vice of society, set the wicked on high, and cast practical contempt upon the sacred institutions of christianity :—in fine, when, among the great body of the people (which is always an accompanying circumstance, or a necessary effect) the whispers of conscience are stifled, and the commanding authority of religion ceases :—then, I shall only wish for the freedom and happiness of my country ; the hope will be dismissed forever. Every pious heart will then mourn for the degradation of America, and weep at the tomb of her liberties.

GRACIOUS GOD ! Avert from us these calamities, which our iniquities deserve, and which our ignorance, infidelity and vice, are hurrying down upon us. And in the plenitude of thy beneficence, fulfil unto us the ancient and animating prophecy. " I WILL ALSO MAKE THY OFFICERS PEACE, AND THINE EXACTORS RIGHTEOUSNESS. VIOLENCE SHALL NO MORE BE HEARD IN THY LAND, WASTING NOR DESTRUCTION WITHIN THY BORDERS ; BUT THOU SHALT CALL THY WALLS SALVATION, AND THY GATES PRAISE."

AMEN.

CONCEIVING it improper to make any thing more than mere verbal alterations, in the preceding Discourse, and not even those, where a political sentiment might be affected; I have taken the liberty of subjoining a few remarks, chiefly historical, in the following

NOTES.

(a.) Page 9. That the State does not give any preference to any denomination of christians, is a truth so plain, as hardly to admit of altercation. But since Congregationalists are the most numerous, and have, perhaps for that reason, with many obtained the name of the "standing order;" some have contended that they were specially favored by the civil government. To rectify such a mistake, however, it is necessary only to refer them to the

Laws of the Commonwealth.

(c.) Page 14. The settlements of the Dutch at and near the Cape of Good Hope, as also of some French protestants, who emigrated thither, at the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, have done much to promote the industry and civilization of the inhabitants in their vicinity. And the late exertions of the apostolic Dr. Vanderkemp, among the Caffres, and of the Rev. Mr. Kicherer on Zak River, among the Boschemen, have received the smiles of that Redeemer, to whose faith and practice they were endeavoring to train up these ignorant and long-neglected brethren. The return of Mr. Kicherer to England with three Hottentot converts, the first fruits of his labors—their simple, plain and evangelical relation of christian experience, in some of the most crowded churches in the métropolis, and the lively interest many feel on the subject, are pretty sure pledges of an increase of exertion and success. Tho the cloud at present is no bigger than "a man's hand," yet a combination of such favorable circumstances leads us to hope soon to hear "a sound of abundance of rain." It is a Divine Promise, yet to be fulfilled, that "Ethiopia shall stretch out her hands unto God, and Seba offer gifts."

M. Le Poivre, and Missionary Journals.

(i.) Page 15. China may be thought an exception. The knowledge of the empire has been considerably celebrated: Her claims to remote antiquity (undoubtedly just to a certain degree) and her pacific state, give her a decided preference to the surrounding nations. Her internal regulations, however, are little known; and the nature of her religion is such, as to forbid any sanguine expectations.—The labors

of the English Missionaries on the Malabar Coast, and in Bengal, have been very considerable: and would have been much more so, had the East India Company favored their design. Why they might not, even consistently with worldly policy, is difficult to conceive.—The translation of the Bible into the Bengalee language will reward the persevering exertions of those employed in that object, in facilitating the spread and establishment of christianity. And Christ will again, we trust, visit Asia in Spirit, as he once did in Person.
European Magazines.

(o.) Page 21. The length of time mentioned, as the existence of the Grecian republic, applies rather to Sparta, than to every individual government in the kingdom. Sycion and Argos were prior to Sparta; but most others were posterior. Tho Athens, as a democracy, did not outlive its founder, yet with many changes, in the enjoyment of more or less liberty, she existed till the destruction of all Greece. A desire to be free oneself and to enslave others, is a principle interwoven in human nature. It shews itself in bodies of men, and individuals. Athens is an instance in point. The results of two polls of ATHENIAN CITIZENS remain reported to us. One taken in the time of Pericles, the other in the time of Demetrius Phalereus. By the first, they were found to be no more than 14,040 persons (probably above 30 years of age, tho not certain;) and at the second period 21,000. At the same time there were found resident in Attica 10,000 freemen of age to pay the capitation-tax, who had not the rights of Athenian Citizens, being either foreigners, or of foreign extraction, or freed slaves, or descended from such: and the slaves in actual bondage, men, women and children, 400,000. Many later instances might be adduced, where people increase the number of their slaves, in proportion to their zeal for their own liberties.

Misford's Hist. of Greece.

(u.) Page 21. Tho Rome did not continue a republic, to her decline and fall, yet her liberties were not very materially affected by her change of names. She did not enjoy a very perfect state of freedom at any period, and she was not wholly destitute of it to her decline. Whatever the form of her government was, her Epicurean doctrines and consequent immoralities, were the procuring cause of her ruin. And her change of principles and practice was precipitate, as it was awful. "Non gradu, sed precipiti cursu a virtute descitum est ad vitia transcursum est".

Paterculus. Goldsmith.

(y.) Page

(y.) Page 22. University at Cambridge; Williams' College at Williamstown; and Bowdoin College at Brunswick, Maine. The latter of which, tho in its infancy, is respectable in its funds, its library and philosophical apparatus. For these it is indebted not only to the generosity of the Legislature, but also to many individual benefactions. Its principal private donor is the Honorable James Bowdoin, esquire; whose name the institution bears. From the talents and respectability of those who have the care of its immediate government and instruction of the Youth, we may justly calculate upon its rising growth and celebrity.—There are in the State about thirty Academies, ten of which are in the District of Maine. That at Hallowell, by the name of HALLOWELL ACADEMY, being the first incorporated, has been considerable time in operation, under a succession of good instructors; and is an Institution which promises to be useful to this part of the country, and especially to the County of KENNEBEC.

F I N I S