

S O M E

Important OBSERVATIONS,

Occasioned by, and adapted to,

The PUBLICK FAST,

Ordered by AUTHORITY,

DECEMBER 13th, A. D. 1765.

British Colonies.

On Account of the PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES of
the present Day.


Now humbly offered to the PUBLICK,

BY THE AUTHOR.

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S O M E
O B S E R V A T I O N S, &c.

The OBSERVATIONS in the following DISCOURSE, take
their rise from

A C T S, 7th Chap. 6th and 7th Verses.

*“ And God spake on this wise, that his seed should sojourn in a
“ strange land, and that they should bring them into bondage,
“ and intreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation,
“ to whom they shall be in bondage, will I judge, said God :
“ And after that they shall come forth, and serve me in this
“ place.” -----And the time of deliverance being fully come,
God appears to Moses in a burning bush, and proclaims as
in verse 34th : “ I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my
“ people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groanings,
“ and am come down to deliver them.”*

THE occasion of our solemn assembly in the house of
God, this day, is the most interesting and affecting,
this land has ever known. The calamities which
impend over us, and which we are now to deplore and
deprecate, are the heaviest the churches and inhabitants of this
land have ever felt, from any earthly power ; and threaten
(in our apprehension) * no less than slavery and ruin to this

* The apprehensions of Americans are clearly seen in the Resolves of the houses
of assembly in the several provinces.

great people, in this widely extended continent. Who does not know? who has not heard, that the fatal decree is already past, which seems to determine the unhappy fate of all America, and the West-India islands? Unhappy decree! full of woe! which imposes a burthen (as is conceived) far beyond our circumstances to bear, and strips us of very important privileges; and (in our view) partly by its natural operation, and partly as a precedent, it highly endangers our slavery and wretchedness; unless God, in infinite mercy, interposes, and changes the British councils, or opens some other way of our deliverance. In a situation so extremely alarming! well do our civil rulers call us to fasting and mourning, to deep humiliation, and earnest supplication to the God of Israel, the God of our fathers, and of all our salvation. And surely we shall be very greatly wanting in our duty to God, and his church, to ourselves, to our dear native country, and to our posterity, if we do not heartily engage in, and faithfully discharge the solemn duties of this day.

To arouse and animate us to this, I have chosen the words of the text, which sets before us, at once, the most shocking instance of slavery and oppression, and the most marvellous precedent of the delivering arm of God, which we have in all holy writ, or indeed in history.

The occasion, on which this holy martyr makes use of these historical facts, was very different from that which calls us together this day; and so is his improvement of them. What that was, and how excellently they answer his purpose, I shall not now consider, but briefly notice in the progress of the subject.

I am far from a design of drawing a parrallel between the Jewish bondage, and the evils to which we stand immediately exposed; or by any means to impute to our gracious King (whom God forever bless) the evils to which we are exposed, of whose affection to his subjects, and determination to preserve the British constitution, with their invaluable rights and liberties, we are

are assured by his royal proclamation; and who has our most cordial affections and wishes of his prosperity and happiness. Nor can I by any means admit it, the design of the British parliament to deprive us of our essential English liberties,---or that a measure of this nature could be in any shape agreeable to the body of the inhabitants in Great-Britain; but if perceived, would be as abhorrent to them, as it is to right and justice. But these evils I take to be owing to the misguided councils of some of the late British ministry, the authors and promoters of the late destructive measures against the colonies; and to the virulent writers against the colonies, who have been, and are for supporting these hard measures, and urging on to worse: And be their design what it will, (without relief) the consequences are like to be very fatal.

Upon this occasion, it may not be improper to look into the general nature and consequences of enslaving measures,---and to observe some general doctrine of truth relative to the subject, as well as the particular duties that are more immediately and eminently our concern at this time: And therefore the following observations are recommended to serious consideration.

I. The enslaving a free people, the covenant people of God, into a state of wretched bondage, is a very great iniquity, and high provocation in God's sight. Against the Egyptians his resentment is high and dreadful: "The nation, &c. will I judge."

II. The manner in which Pharaoh brought out the oppression and bondage of Israel, as a specimen of what has been commonly practised by arbitrary enslavers in all ages.

III. The good influence and effect of their oppression upon them, before their deliverance, as a teaching example to us, under present calamities.

IV. How God appears for them in their oppressions, and finally accomplishes their deliverance. These

These particulars will prepare the way for many useful reflections.

I. The first observation, which invites our serious attention, is, "The enslaving a free people, the covenant people of God, into a state of wretched bondage, is a very great iniquity, and a high provocation in God's sight."

A lively sense of this sad truth tends to a double good effect, viz. to make us more wakeful, and very attentive to all approaches and tendencies to this dreadful state, and more earnest for deliverance from all the evils of it. And further,---it carries in it a mighty encouragement to all prudent, vigorous means of deliverance and preservation,---particularly in crying to God for it, as we know it must be pleasing to a holy and merciful God to be importunate with him, to prevent iniquity, so offensive in his sight, and to avert so great injury and wretchedness from a free people. I shall, therefore, offer some considerations to prove the truth of the observation. The text affords us full proof.

Israel were a free people, when they went down into Egypt; they had a right to freedom afterwards, as they had done nothing to forfeit it; and no man nor nation had a right to take it from them. They were a people separate from the Egyptians in religion and language; a people consecrated and devoted to the God of Abraham, and under his more immediate protection and blessing, as had been often shewn in the days of their fathers. In short, they had all the right to freedom, and to the privileges of a free people, in full, that any people could have; and the subjecting them to bondage (though an event predicted of God) yet, in the Egyptians, was a great iniquity, and the indignation of God against them was very dreadful.

The great evil of it appears (1.) in that it is high and aggravated injustice, so to invade and take away the liberty and most important rights of a free people.

Arbitrarily

Arbitrarily to take away the rights of a people, in the nature of it, is gross wrong and injustice; but, in the case of enslaving a people, who have a right to freedom, the injustice is high, and greatly aggravated. It is aggravated, by the importance and inestimable value of the rights taken away, the most important of this world, (for such their liberty and freedom is) as with it goes all their security of life and liberty, religion and property. All, all is gone, and depends on the precarious, arbitrary will of others, where a people are enslaved. The injustice is further aggravated and multiplied, in proportion to the numbers, the millions that are enslaved;---and also according to the myriads of myriads yet unborn, to which such slavery may be extended. And where this injustice falls upon a loyal and religious people, who have always signalized their affection and zeal for their king and country; a people devoted to the eternal God, in the profession and practice of the true religion; it is a great aggravation, and makes it a sin of a crimson dye. In the single point of its injustice, theft, robbery, common murder, yea parricide, cannot compare with it; and may I just add, nor regicide equal the enormous, complicated iniquity of enslaving a freeborn, a free christian people.

2. The greatness and malignity of this evil appears from the shocking ill effects, and terrible consequences of it, to the oppressors and oppressed, to the enslavers and enslaved.

As to the contrivers and authors of such oppressions, a most venal, covetous and arbitrary spirit of lawless ambition, is generally the accursed spring and incentive of this great wickedness. And what is the tendency of their slavish measures, carried into execution, but to add fuel to ungodly lusts; to inflame their avarice, their pride, and arbitrary, boundless ambition; to plunge them into all manner of unrighteousness and oppression, riot, debauchery, and wickedness. If we look around the world, shall we not see these generally the fatal effects, and terrible consequences,

consequences, of enslaving measures, both to the unhappy authors, to their associates, to their cringing, dependent flatterers, and ungodly adorers, whereby they often plunge into the greatest perplexities, and ripen for a seven-fold vengeance. To what a dreadful height, in a satan-like spirit, Pharaoh arrived, when he cast off the fear of God, and all regard to the just rights of mankind, you see in his blasphemous answer to Moses, requiring Israel's deliverance in the name of God: "Who is the Lord, (says he) that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." Exod. v. 1, 2.

As to the oppressed and enslaved, we cannot enumerate or fully describe the shocking effects and terrible consequences of their wretched bondage. They are miserably affected by it every way; not only in liberty and property, but, in the issue, in their religion also. Where arbitrary power reigns, civil constitutions are nothing worth; nor can religious constitutions stand upon any firm and lasting foundation. See it in France. What stronger security could be given, than the Protestants had in the famous edicts of Nantz? Yet arbitrary power could reverse those edicts, and murder thousands and thousands of the most loyal and best subjects in the kingdom, and all in cool blood. Nor need we go out of our own kingdom: We have seen the insecurity of our religion under arbitrary power in former Popish reigns; when the Protestant religion was brought to the brink of ruin in the nation, by this monstrous power. And the reason of this insecurity is plain, because, by arbitrary power, the hedge of all legal securities, which we have in a free constitution, (as to life, liberty, religion, and property, and even of the Protestant succession) is broken down, and effectually taken away; and no new security can be superinduced and given superior, or indeed equal, to that in the constitution, to the preservation of which all the authority of the nation are most solemnly sworn, but which is demolished by the entrance of arbitrary power and slavery; and

and consequently, after the entrance of these monsters, there remains no solid foundation for any further security and confidence. It is an outlet to all good and happiness; and an inlet to all vice and misery. Where tyranny and slavery reign, good learning and piety, truth and virtue, religion, yea humanity and righteousness, are soon banished from such a people in general. And on the other hand, ignorance and gross barbarity, in thought, spirit and behaviour, with all manner of vice, flattery, deceit, wilie cunning, debauchery, and wickedness, have a dreadful reign over such an enslaved people. The fear of man, and of the fury of the oppressor, takes place of the fear of God; and religion, or the appearances of it, degenerate into empty forms, hypocrisy, and superstition. And how can a people be in a more wretched condition? So wretched in this world, and very likely to be slaves to their lusts, and lost in the snares of Satan to all eternity. And these terrible consequences we do not collect merely from the nature of things, and the fatal tendency of such a state; but from examples, numerous examples, in fact. Such were the terrible effects of arbitrary power in the ten tribes, and in the enslaving the free states of Greece, once famous for learning, humanity, and virtue, now terrible for ignorance and barbarity. And such were the terrible consequences of the slavery of Rome heathen, and afterwards of Rome christian, under the arbitrary power of the Popes. These are sufficient to shew the fatal, dreadful effects of enslaving, arbitrary power; all which are abominable, and very offensive in the sight of a holy, merciful, and righteous God.

3. The great obligations violated, in the sinful ways and means, by which a free people are usually brought under bondage, will further illustrate the great iniquity of it.

A people, free by nature, and by civil constitution, cannot be brought into bondage any way (by any artifice, corruption, treachery, bribery, or abuse of power) without great iniquity.

These

These devices, indeed, by the authors, and their blind, slavish admirers; are oft gloried in, as the heights of wisdom and deep reaches of policy; but in the eye of God, and of wise and good men, they appear as they are, the heights of folly, the depths of iniquity, and hateful sportings of their own deceivings.

Sometimes this bondage is brought on by conquering tyrants, invading the rights, and subduing the power of other nations and states. But this bloody way shocks every one with horror and detestation, for the greatness of the cruelty and iniquity; and yet perhaps, this is as innocent as any way of enslaving; at least fewer of the great obligations lying upon human nature are violated in this, than in some other more plausible ways. The great obligations of the law of nature, and of common justice, are sacrificed in this, and in all other ways: But in some others there is a sacrifice of great additional and very endearing ties. The strong bonds of government, which bind all the members of civil community, are violated, when subjects of the same nation lend a helping hand to enslave their fellow subjects in any part of the dominions, whose freedom and liberties they are bound, by these common ties, to do all in their power to preserve.

The more endearing ties of nature, the most dear and deep rooted natural affections, and the love of our country, are sacrificed by the authors and abettors of the slavery of their relations, friends, and native country. This is such shocking iniquity, that not only good christians, but good citizens and patriots of Greece and Rome, would sooner die, than perpetrate. The more solemn and sacred bonds of religion are sacrificed, where those of the same religion and brethren of the same christian profession, Protestants, bring into bondage their fellow subjects, and Protestant brethren, who are joint heirs with them in the family of God. And it is very highly aggravated, when the authors of such slavery violate the high obligations and confidence of dignified and special trusts in the state; to the faithful discharge

charge of which, they are most solemnly bound by the oath of God; and yet there have been instances, wherein all these high and peculiar obligations have been violated, for the enslaving a free people. Sometimes such a strange spirit of folly and infatuation has possessed a people, that they have voluntarily rushed into bondage, by a surrendery of their charters and liberties to encroaching tyrants, "as a bird hasteneth to the snare, not knowing it is for life." Thus it happened under the tyranny of James II. when he seized several charters, and performed many other surprising and intolerable acts of arbitrary power. Some of the free corporations in his dominions (to please his encroaching, tyrannic will) surrendered, and made him a compliment of their charters: Oh shocking! and thereby deservedly lost their inestimable privileges. But to deliver up the rights, charters, and privileges of a people, is a very high-handed treachery and wickedness; and is a rare thing, compared with another way of enslaving, viz. the perversion of high trusts of state, and the abuse of that exalted power, which is intrusted for their guidance and protection. This is the way the tyrannies of the earth are commonly set up and supported. It was by a most horrid abuse of the supreme power, which ought to have protected them, that Israel were brought into bondage in Egypt. Sometimes this abusive power is exercised by wheedling arts, corruption and bribery, by gradual encroachments, and usurping upon their rights by little and little, until they are all swallowed up in the all-devouring jaws of tyrannic will. Sometimes, where the case will bear it, this power is exercised by dint of force, and weight of violence; rending away, and then trampling upon their most sacred and invaluable rights and privileges, as France and others were enslaved. This is eminently a sin against special trust, in those who are raised to high trusts of dignity and power, of honour and profit. For such into whose hands a people's all, in this world, are reposed

(all their important rights, liberties, and privileges) for protection and preservation ; against the security and confidence of such a great trust, to take away and destroy them, instead of their protection and preservation ;---to make themselves (instead of their protectors) their enslavers, is such treachery and wickedness, perfidy and perjury, added to the sin of enslaving, as makes it very enormous, and detestable in the sight of God. I add once more,

4. From the admonitions and threatnings of God against this sin, and the terrible judgments with which he has punished it, we know it to be very heinous and offensive in his sight.

Those who go into the fatal schemes of enslaving free states, make a very light matter of it ; yea, are ready to boast of their measures, as the deep reaches of a very refined policy : But in the unerring judgment of a righteous God, it is directly the reverse. Who could make lighter of it, than Pharaoh and the Egyptians ? when the Israelites prostrate themselves at the foot of Pharaoh, and pour out their heavy, bitter, and just complaints before him, with what merciless cruelty, and insulting reproaches, does he spurn them away from the mercy seat ; “ ye are idle, ye are idle,” says he, “ go to your work.” But a righteous God, by his terrible judgments, taught Pharaoh and the Egyptians, the enormity of this iniquity, which far, far surpassed all their imaginations. The great God, who is infinitely higher than the highest, has guarded against these terrible injuries, in the admonitions of his word, saying, “ Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm.” Psal. cv. 15. which the context shews to be meant of his faithful, covenant people. But we need not go out of our text, for a demonstration to our purpose. His threatnings shew his resentment high and dreadful against Pharaoh and the Egyptians, accessory with him in the enslaving God’s people. “ The nation, to whom they shall be in bondage, will I judge,” i. e. he would punish them most surely, and with a tremendous

tremendous severity. This is the awful threat out against them, while vengeance was yet delayed ; nor was the execution less, but more terrible, when it came upon them to the uttermost, in all the vexing plagues, with which they were visited, more especially in the death of all their first-born, by a sudden and irresistible stroke, and in the drowning of Pharaoh and his army, who sunk as a mill-stone to the bottom of the sea. An uncommon, high-handed vengeance for this enormous and high-handed iniquity against God and his people. These particulars are sufficient to let us into the knowledge of the true nature of this sin, and great danger of enslaving measures.

II. I pass secondly to shew the manner, in which Pharaoh brought on the oppression and bondage of Israel, as a specimen of what has been commonly practised by arbitrary enslavers in all ages. And observe,

1. It was gradually, with increasing usurpations and oppressions. They taxed them with heavy burthens, and made them to serve. They set task-masters over them, to oppress and distress them, and see the thing effected. Afterwards they increase their burthens, demanding the full toll of bricks, according to the first imposition, but afford them no materials. They drew the chains of bondage hard upon them every way, for “ they made them to serve with rigour.” They added great vigilance, to have every decree and matter of duty and service exacted to the utmost, in all parts, and in all points, till “ they made their lives bitter with their hard bondage ; in all their service, wherein they made them to serve with rigour.” Exod. i. 14. And also decree to lessen their increase, by killing all their male infants. Ibid. verse 16. The policy of all these measures centers in these two grand points : (1.) To impoverish them effectually : (2.) To prevent their growth : That they might have neither wealth nor power ever to get out of that wretched bondage.

2. This bondage was effected under the colourable shew of necessary, deep, refined policy ; and plausible pretext of danger of Israel's independency.

To make the tyrannic enslaving measures (horrible to nature !) go down with the Egyptians, he alarms their fears of the danger of " their exalted efforts for independency : " Of course it was necessary to use most artful policy to distress, impoverish and diminish them ; and he says to his people, " Behold, the people " of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. " Come on, let us deal wisely with them ; lest they multiply, " and it come to pass, that when there falleth out any war, " they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so " get them up out of the land. Therefore they did set over " them task-masters," &c. Exod. i. 9, 10, 11. A shrewd common pretext, a fine colouring, to a black, tyrannic design. Here you have the grand, the whole strength of the enslaving cause ; nothing can be added to it of any avail. Had he expatiated upon his rights, and the greatness of his power,---or urged that they had nourished them in their infancy, and raised them to manhood, it would have added no strength to his argument, no ease to the Jews, no abatement of the cruelty in God's fight. In short, none ever offered a stronger reason in this cause, nor urged it better : He says, it was necessary for their own preservation, " lest they multiply, join our enemies, and fight against us : " And it was necessary to prevent their independency, " and so get them up out of the land : " And by this means they should lose all the vast profits they intended by their slavery. Such are the popular turns which must be given to slavish, arbitrary measures ; or otherwise they are so abominable to nature, they cannot go down with a people of common sense and honesty. When royal prerogative is to be stretched and exalted to a boundless extent, to the enslaving of a nation, a loud cry must be set up " of the divine, hereditary, indefeasible right of

" of kings, their dispensing power, and absolute supremacy above " all laws, with the danger of monarchy from commonwealth " principles, association plots," &c. &c. Such were the artifices and engines of tyranny and slavery set a going by the unhappy STEWARTS, which effected their own, instead of the nation's ruin. When the colonies must undergo such a dreadful state, a loud cry of " independency " must be set up against them, and be perpetually ringing and dinning in the ears of an abused nation. This artifice and policy pass very well with the sordid, covetous, selfish Egyptians ; but not so with a righteous God. They meant " to serve great national purposes," as this kind of politicians ever account it, if they fill their own coffers, enrich themselves and dependents, though they ruin a nation by it,---as here ; for, in fact, it drew down upon them, the most great and ruinous national judgments that nation ever felt. They meant to fasten down the Israelites in a state of irrecoverable slavery, and prevent their efforts for independency : But took the ready way to necessitate them to exalted and effectual efforts for their own deliverance and independency, in which it finally terminated. But notwithstanding this discouraging issue, in this, and many like instances, a corrupt, Frenchified party in the nation, have long, towards forty years, at times, set up this senseless and injurious cry against the colonies, " the danger of their independency." To impoverish and prevent their growth, they have used but too much diligence, and with it the most vile falsehoods, and undeserved aspersions, on the colonies, and various artifices of fraud and malice, to impress and gain the belief of it ; till at length it hath so far prevailed, as to reduce the innocent, but unhappy colonies, into the greatest crisis of difficulty and danger they were ever involved in : And the pains taken, and length of time in which it has been agitated, renders the influence of it upon the minds of British inhabitants, and the danger to the colonies, so much the greater. And unless the good people

people of the nation can be happily disabused, and recovered from these false impressions, and groundless prejudices, they may likely be attended with great and fatal consequences.

3. Their bondage was effected in the way of ingratitude, and vile forgetfulness of the good services they had done to the Egyptian nation.

This seems intimated, Exod. i. 8. "Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph." A strong intimation, had his good services to the nation been remembered, this great and intolerable mischief had not happened to them. He was willingly or wilfully ignorant, or very ungratefully forgetful, of the eminent services done to the nation by the Jews, particularly by Joseph, by whose wisdom and good œconomy, their nation was once saved and preserved in a very terrible seven years famine. * And this most vile spirit of ingratitude, which renders the heart hard, and insensible to the cries and distresses of a miserable people, prepares the way for all those monstrous and enormous vices, which are carried in the bowels of a spirit of tyranny. And had there been no such ingratitude, and forgetfulness of the good services the colonists have done for Great-Britain, we cannot conceive how the late B----sh M----y could have fallen upon such a surprising system of politicks, which (we are confident) in their operation, will be found the most injurious to Great-Britain, and her colonies, of any ever formed or adopted in the British nation. § It is scarce conceivable how any

* Allowing Shuckford's account, it will not excuse from wilful ignorance or vile ingratitude.

§ Politicks, by which the colonies are injured in their most dear civil rights and privileges. Politicks, that tend to disaffect, alienate, impoverish, and ruin the colonies; and stab to the heart, the trade and manufactures of Great-Britain. Politicks, which must render the settled colonies unserviceable to Great-Britain, in peace and war; and render, in a manner, useless those immense tracts of uninhabited crown lands in America;—that vast tract of territory lately ceded by France, as a compensation for the many millions the nation expended the last war; (which expence, some

any one could have been hardy enough to have offered this ruinous system, or indeed how it could have been adopted, had not the good services of the colonies been very strangely forgotten. Services, in which the colonists, at a vast expence of blood, toil, and treasure, have greatly contributed to the wealth, power, and glory of the British empire: By which they have, at their own costs, added to it a vast territory, much larger than the isle of Great-Britain: And, by trade, been a principal source of her wealth and power: And done signal services in war, once, at least, saved and gave peace to the nation, when sunk low by an unsuccessful, ruinous war: And by these, and other eminent services, (not now to be enumerated) they have so signalized their affection, duty and LOYALTY, as no colonies have ever exceeded them, nor, according to their power, have any done better; by which they have certainly merited highly of the British king, parliament, and good people of the nation. Whence then this requital? Whence this ruinous system, that carries their destruction in the bowels of it? Why to make way for, and support its adoption, the truth of facts must be inverted, by a very false representation; in which the memory of all these eminent services must be abolished and erased with one dash,---- by bold round assertions, "we have in a manner created the colonies; we have nourished them in infancy, and reared them to manhood," &c. &c. Which, applied to the old settled colonies, all the colonies, all the nation, and all the world, who know their history, know to be void of any truth and foundation. Nor can their merciless enemies be content with the injuries, which already oppress the colonies, but urge on to far greater,

some strangely imagine, the colonies should pay over again, after this compensation has been accepted and received) lands, under a proper regulation and improvement, would doubtless soon exceed the value of all the millions expended; but by the insuperable discouragements of this new adopted system, are like to be forever in a manner useless to Great-Britain. The damage of all which, to the king and nation, a great sum cannot countervail.

to break up all their legislatures, "Abolish their assemblies, and leave nothing like a legislative power in such dangerous hands." And to effect it, blacken the colonists with most false, vile, impudent assertions, "as rich and turbulent; full of insolence and brutality; hardened beyond the feelings of humanity; and so treacherous, void of gratitude, loyalty, and all virtuous principles, as not to be trusted with any thing like a legislative power," &c. &c. * But un beholden to the courtesy of any man, or to any thing but the truth, the colonists have something that proclaims their vindication louder than words, which sets their true character high above the reach of grovelling envy, or soaring malice; yea, above the power of detraction. Their eminent and heroic services, speak their loyalty, their virtue, and good affection to the British king and nation, with a language and energetic force, (to the unprejudiced) that all the malicious wit and pens of their adversaries cannot resist or gainsay. These fully vindicate them from this idle scheme of "independency." They ever hated

* Not to insist upon the great iniquity of urging to such notorious breaches of public faith, it is strange these writers do not see their own palpable inconsistency, and all men of sense their ignorance, or insincerity. They pretend great anxiety and zeal against the colonies independency, and yet would have all their legislatures abolished, which puts them directly into this state of nature and independency. For the breach of public faith, in the abolition of their charters and privileges, annulling their governments and legal securities, abolishes their oaths of allegiance and connection with Great-Britain: And their government being thus dissolved, without any act of theirs, they are absolutely in a state of nature and independency. Should this ever happen (which I pray God never may) I see not but with all the freedom, and best reason in the world, they might go on much in their old forms, or assume what new ones they pleased. Might they not form a new connection with Great-Britain, or some other maritime power, or open free ports to all the maritime powers, under proper regulations, securities, &c. &c.? Be sure they would go to no foreign Pym to tell them what form they shall next assume, but take such as they like best; careful (no doubt) to place no undue confidence where grants, charters, and legal securities, are deemed but as waste-paper. Thus would these pretended friends to Old-England, but real promoters of French interest, completely effect the independency they seem so zealous to oppose. Yet these are the great luminaries, lately set in their orbits, to enlighten the British hemisphere, and guide her councils. Able charioteers! to guide and drive the chariot of the sun. Doubtless they have their reward.

the

the cursed brat, which owes its birth, nursings, rearings, with all its ruinous operations, not to the colonists, but to their and her FALSE FRIENDS, in Great-Britain. These facts also vindicate them from the other false aspersions cast upon them; and if an abused nation should not open their eyes to see it, still we have our consolation and refuge (the same which Israel had) in the infinite mercy and power of God; who (we trust) in his own time will vindicate our innocence, and redress our wrongs. The text teaches, God will hear the cries of the oppressed, when man will not.

Lastly,---The method of their slavery was the means of their full and final deliverance; at least prepared and opened the way to it.

It had a double operation that way; partly as it imbibbered life, and all their comforts to them, and made them willing to leave their house of bondage, to set upon an expedition to the promised land; willing to do or forego any thing for their own deliverance:---Partly, as it engaged them with an animated spirit to attend and use the appointed means of their own deliverance; to look and cry to God, their only help, to accept Moses for a lawgiver, judge, and deliverer, whom, as a nation, they at first refused, as the martyr shews in the context. Thus their cruel oppressions prove the means of their deliverance. Nor is this a singular and exempt case; but it has often happened, "that violent, arbitrary oppressions has drove the oppressed into that state of independency, which the oppressors feared, and the oppressed by no means desired." So it happened in the case of Rehoboam's oppression of the ten tribes. So also in the oppression of Holland, which brought on the revolution and independency of those high and mighty states: And it is possible, that, sooner or later, it may happen to the British colonies. But it need not happen, it is easy to prevent it for ages and centuries to come. Suppose a wise, kind, and

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gentle

gentle administration of the colonies, they have no temptation to independency ; but have every motive of affection and loyalty, of virtue and religion, and of duty and interest, to bind and continue their connection with Great-Britain most strongly and surely. But if the British empire should have filled up the measure of its iniquity, and become ripe for ruin : if a proud, arbitrary, selfish, and venal spirit of corruption, should ever reign in the British court, and diffuse itself through all ranks in the nation : if lucrative posts be multiplied without necessity ; and pensioners multiplied without bounds : if the policy of governing be by bribery and corruption ; and the trade and manufactures of the nation be disregarded and trampled under foot : if all offices be bought and sold at a high and extravagant price, which in the end must come out of the subject, in exorbitant fees of office, or lawless exactions : and if, to support these shocking enormities and corruptions, the subjects in all quarters must be hard squeezed with the iron arms of oppression,-----thence we may prognosticate the fall of the British empire ;---its glory is departing ;---the grand pillars of the state tremble, and are ready to fail. Rome fell by corruption, nor can any free state stand against the power of it. And if, to support these extravagant enormities, the rod of oppression must be laid on the colonies, with hard and redoubled strokes : if the iron yoke of bondage follow the rod of oppression, stripping them of their most important privileges, and to fasten them down in a state of hopeless, irrecoverable bondage : In short, if there be left to the colonies but this single, this dreadful alternative,---slavery or independency,---they will not want time to deliberate which to choose. But we hope better things, and that such direful events can never happen, while there is a glorious prince of the Hanoverian line upon the British throne ;---and that the wisdom, goodness, and rectitude of the British parliament, will long, long prevent such a fatal catastrophe : And that the present unhappy appearance,

appearance will soon blow over, and terminate in an unity, harmony, and love, between Great-Britain and her colonies, stronger and firmer than ever.

From the foregoing observations, we remark the following inferences and reflections.

1. No obedience is due to arbitrary, unconstitutional edicts, calculated to enslave a free people.

No obedience is required, by civil constitution, to edicts unconstitutional, and subversive of its fundamental privileges. They cannot bind ; it is a flagrant absurdity to suppose a free constitution empowers any to decree or execute its own destruction : For such a militating self-repugnancy in a constitution, necessarily carries its own destruction in it. No obedience is due to them by the law of God. If edicts and endeavours of slavery be gross injustice, a great iniquity and provocation in God's sight, they are uncommanded of God, and contrary to his righteous will : And a concurrence to promote such wickedness, and bring on such wretchedness upon a people, (free by nature, and by their civil constitution) in an active way, or by a slavish non-resistance, and passive obedience, cannot comport with the will of God, but seems highly injurious to the honour of God, to the interest of religion, and the good of mankind, and particularly to all the members of such a free state. And this doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance, applied to such purposes, is a doctrine of iniquity, and the grand support of misrule and tyranny. And it is the more hateful and abominable, to all free hearted Englishmen, because it has more than once confounded these nations, and brought them to the brink of slavery, popery and ruin : And has been the support of those arbitrary measures, which heretofore have shed the blood of the best men in the kingdom ; better men perhaps than are now living ; such as the great Lord RUSSELL, with others, who suffered in Popish reigns ; whose blood, to this day, cries aloud against tyranny, and for
English

English liberty ; and will continue to cry, with a voice too mighty not to be heard, while there is knowledge, good sense, and virtue, in the British empire.

But further to illustrate this remark,---I would observe,

Where authority, legislative and executive, keep within the bounds of the law of God, and the free constitution, by which they are empowered, and act pursuant to the trust reposed in them, there the bonds of our allegiance and obedience are entire and absolutely indispensable. But where they exceed these bounds, (as is clearly the case in all endeavours of slavery and usurpation, upon the great and essential rights of a free people) there reason tells us, and so do the best writers on the law, " Their acts are, ipso facto, void, and cannot oblige any to obedience." 'Tis a clear point from Magna Charta, (confirmed with the greatest solemnity, by the oath of king and barons, and since by almost forty parliaments) which declares, " We will not obtain of any one, for ourselves, or any other, any thing, whereby any of these concessions, or of these liberties may be revoked or annihilated : And if any such thing be obtained, it shall be NULL and VOID." And as there is no obligation of obedience in such case, so we cannot give up our liberties, to the arbitrary will and enslaving power of others. The most applauded writers of our nation tell us, we have no right or power so to give up our liberty ; * it being inconsistent with the law of nature, the great law of self-preservation, bound upon us by our MAKER. But, if we had a right to do it, by the law of nature, yet, in a state of government, and as members of a free community and kingdom, we cannot do it ; because, in this state, we hold our liberties and privileges jointly, in common with the rest of our fellow subjects ; and therefore cannot give them up, without betraying the liberty and privileges of the community and kingdom to which we belong, and which we are

* See Locke on government : Page 158 and 243.

bound

bound with life and fortune, to preserve. Nor can we give up our liberty, consistently with the affection, care, and duty, which we owe to posterity. Our invaluable English liberties are the natural birthright inheritance of our posterity. They are our's to enjoy, and our's (in trust) to keep ; but not to give up. Nor can we give them up, without betraying their invaluable rights, to which they are born ; and as much as in us lies, entail a wretched slavery upon posterity, born and unborn, to the latest generations, than which we can scarcely do them a greater wrong and injustice. The heinousness of this iniquity is exposed, with great poignancy, by a late Massachusetts assembly : " They esteem it sacrilege ever to give them up : And rather than lose them, they would willingly part with EVERY THING ELSE." * Further,

The best writers upon government, tell us, that when the authority of a free government invade the liberties of the people, and endeavour arbitrarily to take away their properties, and reduce them to slavery under arbitrary power ; that such slavish endeavours dissolve the government, and the subjects obligation of obedience ;---yea, constitutes a state of war with the people, in which the latter may reassume their natural rights, and defend themselves with all the power which God has given them ; and that they may use this power in way of prevention, before actually reduced to bondage. § This carries it much farther than the remarks we are illustrating ; and however that be,

It is allowed by all, we may resist an invasion of our rights and liberties, by robbers, highwaymen, or a foreign nation ; and if the rulers of a free state (by breach of trust, in which the people are over-reached, opposed, and defeated in their main intention) invade their liberties and properties ; why they also, in this, may not be resisted, is past my comprehension to conceive :

* See their noble spirited answer, in October, to their governor's speech.

§ Vide Locke on government : P. 154, 236, 237, 238, 243, 289, 290.

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For the right of resistance (I take it) is founded in the unalienable, indefeasible right every free man has to his liberty and property, which may not be taken away by arbitrary will and power.

I might add, as they have a right to the entire security and preservation of their liberties and properties, (for which they enter into government) so, when arbitrarily invaded, they have but two ways in which to hope for such preservation, viz. by miracles, or by means:---But to expect miracles (in the neglect of means) in this age of the world, is stupidly absurd: Therefore they are left and shut up to the use of means, as their only refuge upon earth. And, indeed, if no means are to be used when the liberties of a people are endangered, the appointment and business of this day is a gross absurdity. For these are means, and amongst the best which can be used: Yet we strenuously maintain, it is a doctrine of godliness, and highly christian, "to fear God and honour the king," and to obey magistrates in the due execution of their office and trusts, pursuant to the bounds and true ends thereof. And this leads to an easy answer to the sacred texts, commonly alledged in support of the doctrine of passive obedience and non-resistance to arbitrary, enslaving edicts, such as "render to Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's." We ask, are not the things which are Cæsar's, Cæsar's right and due? But Cæsar's rights are limited, as well as those of his subjects: Limited by the rights of God: "Render to God the things which are God's:" Limited also by some great and essential rights of the subjects. And supposing Cæsar demands not his own rights, but the rights and liberties of his subjects, the text enjoins no obedience in that case; it is altogether out of it, which terminates our obedience "in the things which are Cæsar's." Suppose he commands all his innocent subjects to lay down their heads on a block, that he may cut them off;---is this the right of Cæsar? Are they bound to obey? Would not such slavish obedience be a high breach of the great law of self-preservation, and of the sixth commandment, and most highly
sinful?

sinful? The case is clear, words would but darken it.---Will such obedience be urged from Rom. xiii. 1, 2. "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: For there is no power, but of God. The powers that be, are ordained of God. Who-soever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: And they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation." All perfectly right, but foreign to the purpose to which they are applied. To make this evident, we ask, what are these powers, that are ordained of God? And what this ordinance of God? Certainly not TYRANNY,---not usurpation upon the fundamental rights of a free people, to bring them into bondage; as it must be, to be apposite to the purpose for which it is alledged. To call this the ordinance of God, is shocking to nature, and abhorrent to reason and common sense! No, the text means quite another thing:--- "The ordinance of God" is civil government, which is mercifully erected of God in the world, for the protection and preservation of the fundamental liberties and rights of mankind, and not for their devastation: And "the powers that are ordained of God," are civil rulers, acting according to their office and trust, for the end of government, the good of the subject and community: And here our obedience is most solemnly bound; so that he who resist them, in the due execution of their office, resist the ordinance of God; and shall receive a heavy punishment from God and man. This appears the true sense, not only in the reason of the thing, but also in the special ground of obedience assigned in verse 16. "For he is the minister of God to thee." For what? to take away your rights and privileges? No such thing; but "for good," for their protection and preservation; for which end he wears not the sword in vain. To this we subscribe our hearty AMEN, and it is altogether consistent with the inference proposed.

But to understand the text, to bind us to subjection, and to pay our obedience to usurpation and tyranny, is of dreadful
consequence:

consequence. To make this the ordinance of God, is most shocking to a christian ear ! In the British empire, 'tis a doctrine of rebellion ; it breaks up our allegiance, which we owe and have sworn to King GEORGE III. and obliges us to go out of the kingdom, to some foreign tyrant and usurper, to pay our allegiance to : for (thanks to God) our rightful sovereign, GEORGE III. is neither tyrant nor usurper, but a most highly lawful king ; he ascended the throne according to the British constitution, and with the universal voice and approbation of his people, throughout the British empire. Therefore, in order to maintain good faith and allegiance, according to our oaths and constitution, we are bound to renounce all obligations of obedience to USURPATION and TYRANNY.

Will it be objected, for a people to set up to defend their own rights, to resist unconstitutional, enslaving edicts, is to break the peace, and to make tumults and confusion in the community and kingdom :---May we not ask, who is the aggressor, he that invades the right of a free people, or they who defend only what is their own ? Is not the peace already broke ? Is not the grand bulwark and hedge of protection and security taken away, by the invasion of the fundamental rights of a people, before they make a step to defend themselves ? And is it hard to determine where the guilt lies, whether on the aggressor, or on the people who assert and defend but what is their own ?----Will it be further objected, 'tis against the law, for private subjects to attempt to redress public grievances ? May it not be replied, the law, in such case, respects grievances which are within, and remediable by the constitution ; and it is founded in the highest reason : for private subjects, in such cases, to attempt a redress of themselves, is to take out of the hands of the authority that trust and power which by constitution is reposed in them ; which is doubtless a very high crime and misdemeanour. But this reaches not the case of grievances of a higher kind,---where constitution
itself

itself is attacked, or the fundamental privileges of it invaded, which affects many large communities, and millions of subjects, and the grievances are not remediable by constitution : Whether a people, in such a case, may not assume their natural rights, and the remedies and defence of a state of nature, is, perhaps, not hard to determine.---It is true, the best constituted governments in the world are imperfect ; some injuries may befall some particular subjects, which cannot be remedied.---In such cases there is no help, they must be patiently and peaceably borne ; still the bonds of our allegiance and obedience continue firm, unshaken, and indispenfible. But when the fundamental rights of community are invaded, it is so far from duty tamely to give them up, that, I conceive, duty to God and religion, to themselves, to the community, and to unborn posterity, require such to assert and defend their rights, by all lawful, most prudent, and effectual means, in their power : And this is a doctrine according to godliness,---the doctrine of the English nation, which they have loudly published in most important transactions : And which the sound and best part of the nation have ever asserted and defended : By which our rights and constitution have often been defended, and repeatedly rescued out of the hands of encroaching tyranny : And but for which, long before this day, we should have been no free kingdom, but a horrid state of tyranny and vassalage. This is the doctrine and grand pillar of the ever memorable and glorious revolution,---and upon which our gracious sovereign, GEORGE III. holds the crown of the British empire.---Thus much I thought proper to offer, to distinguish that doctrine of obedience which is according to godliness, and is an eminent part of christian duty, without which government must disband, and dreadful anarchy and confusion, (with all its horrors) take place, and reign without controul ; to distinguish this christian obedience, from that blind, enslaving obedience, which is no part of the christian institution, but is
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highly injurious to religion, to every free government, and to the good of mankind, and is the stirrup of tyranny, and grand engine of slavery.

2. Is tyranny, and the enslaving a free people, such a great iniquity and provocation to God, and replete with such infinite mischiefs to mankind; let us prize the free British constitution, bless God for it, lament we have improved no better by our precious privileges; and, to the utmost of our power, support and maintain our constitution, and transmit the blessings of it, in full, to posterity.

We have reason to prize our excellent constitution; to prize it very highly, next to our bibles, above the privileges of this world. Blessed be God, we have on the throne a Protestant Prince, of the illustrious house of Hanover, a race of most illustrious patriots, and defenders of the rights and liberties of the people; and for the present, and so long continuance of the constitution, by which we are a people, an empire so highly exalted in civil and religious privileges above far the greatest part of the World. It is doubtless amongst the choicest of God's providential gifts to Great-Britain and the British colonies. If, as a nation, or as colonies, we lightly esteem them, would easily part with them, and are unthankful for such great gifts, the great God will be offended for such contempt and ingratitude, and may soon take them away, and consign us to the evils and horrors of slavery. Have we not reason greatly to lament we have no better improved our excellent privileges in knowledge and holiness, godliness, and all christian graces and virtues; in which we should have been as distinguished, as we have been exalted, in privileges? but alas! are we not a sinful people, a nation laden with iniquity? Have we not reason deeply to lament the great prevalence of iniquity, whereby a righteous God may be provoked to chasten us sorely, if not to cut us off from the great privileges of his people. Further,

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This subject calls for our utmost exertion, to maintain our excellent constitution, and to transmit the blessings of it, in full, down to posterity. A constitution excellently calculated to secure us from all the oppressions and infinite evils of tyranny, and from all the confusions and terrors of anarchy; and which, as a nation, we have long enjoyed, have held most dear, for which we have been the envy of neighbour nations, and by means of it have risen to a high pitch of wealth, power and glory. It behoves us, in our several places, to the utmost, to support all the just rights of authority, supreme and subordinate,---and to maintain all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the subject, which we hold by the spirit of the British constitution, and by charter. This is an object so great and important, it is worthy the engaged attention of all ranks and orders of men, and of every subject. We have privileges, civil and sacred, O my brethren and countrymen, which are worth the *having*, worth the *holding*, at the dearest rate: And which (if need be) it were well, it were good earnings of mortality, to die for. And do we need motives for the warmest attachment to our constitution and privileges; and for such vigorous exertions in their support, as oft as occasioned? Let us look back to the foregoing pages, and see the evils, horrors and infinite mischiefs, with which a state of bondage is replete, and it will serve as a foil to set off the transcendent excellencies of the British constitution, and the vast importance of its securities. A constitution, by the spirit and laws of which, king and subjects all know their bounds, the one of governing, the others of allegiance and obedience. A constitution, which exalts the British king in glory and happiness, far, far above the most high and absolute tyrants of the earth: In glory, in that he is king of free men, they but masters of slaves. He has millions of free men in his dominions, the lowest and least of which, in point of freedom, stands higher and firmer than the highest favourites and ministers

niffers of tyrants, who depend on their fickle and arbitrary will. And as far does he furpafs them in happinefs and fecurity alfo ; in that it is moft intimately blended, yea, is the fame with that of his people ; he lives, reigns, and dies greatly beloved by his people, even as they love themfelves, and has the greateft happinefs and fecurity in this world, in the law, and deep-rooted affections of his fubjects : Whereas oppreffing tyrants have no fecurity from the injuries of their tyranny, and live, reign, and die greatly hated and detefted. A constitution, in which the free fubjects of this vaft empire are exalted as far above the vaffals of tyrants, in our fecurity, liberty, and happy privileges, as our gracious king is above their enslaving mafters, in which the loweft freeman (however inferior in other things) yet in point of freedom, ftands as high as the higheft fubject and peer in the realm ; yea, is as abfolute in his freedom as the prince upon the throne, for he holds his freedom and privileges upon the fame constitution as the king holds his crown, and all his high prerogatives ; and in which we have moft ample fecurity of our properties, and of all Englifh liberties and privileges.--- I am far from attempting a full difplay of the excellencies of the Britifh constitution ; a fubject improper, too delicate and copious, here to be attempted : but I would touch upon this fingle, this grand excellency of it, to which the general fubject invites, viz. That it has amply guarded every avenue of flavery and arbitrary power, and ftroingly barred them out of the Britifh dominions.---Could thefe monfters ever invade (we fpeak of an internal invafion only) it muft be either by the fupreme powers, or by the powers of inferior legislatures, or by the constitution's vefting fome, or any bodies of the fubjects, with an inherent power to invade the properties, and take away the liberties of others, their fellow-fubjects, in fome part of the dominions :--- There feems no fourth way. But the constitution has fo fully fortified againft thefe monfters, that it hath left them no avenue
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of entrance, in either of thefe ways. (1.) They cannot enter by the fupreme powers of the Britifh nation. As to the executive power through the whole empire, whether fupreme or fubordinate, it is out of queftion, becaufe it is all limited by law, and cannot go an inch beyond it ; if it does, their power becomes no power, it is lawlefs force, and may be refifted like all other lawlefs violence. And as to the fupreme legislature, confifting of KING, LORDS, and COMMONS, high and glorious as their power to do good is, yet have they no power, by constitution, to enslave the nation, or any part of the Britifh dominions, by invading the great and effential rights and liberties of the fubject, fecured to them by Magna Charta, and by the fpirit and fundamental laws of the constitution. It is a well known excellency of the constitution, often noticed and admired, that each high branch of this auguft legislature is a balance to the other : fo that there can be no encroachment upon the liberty of the fubject, without a conjunction of the whole ; and fuch a three-fold guard and cord is not eafily broken. But further,

Each of the auguft branches of this fupreme legislature, are, by moft folemn trust, the high guardians of the fubjects liberty, and fundamental rights. If fo, it is a great inconfiftency and contradiction, to fuppofe, they can arbitrarily and rightfully take away thefe rights and liberties, of which they are guardians, to a very different and contrary purpofe. This high and awful trust is committed to the KING, when invefted in the regal office : By Magna Charta, and his coronation oath, he becomes the high guardian of the lives, liberties, properties, and immunities of his fubjects. It has been long known, from the writings of Bracton, Fortefque, and others, that the king is made and limited by law : And the fublime end of his government is the prefervation of the rights and good of his fubjects : But the nation, as with one voice, proclaimed it aloud, in the grand tranfaction of the revolution. James II. neglected and perverted
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this high and awful trust, by setting up arbitrary power, invading their rights and liberties, and endeavouring to enslave and ruin his subjects : And hereby forfeited his crown ; upon which an injured and justly incensed nation took it from him, and put it upon the head of a BETTER MAN : For what ? For the preservation of the laws, and fundamental rights and liberties of the people ; the noble, the sublime end, of English monarchy. This high trust and character of guardians to the constitution and people's liberties, also belongs to the house of PEERS ; and pursuant to it, the illustrious peers of that house have often exerted themselves most nobly, in the defence thereof.---And it is well known, the house of COMMONS are, in way of emphasis, the representatives of the people in Great-Britain ; and as such, designed to be the high guardians of their liberties and properties. And how ample the security, the constitution provides, in all these high and potent guardians. Moreover, it has lodged a further security in the hands of the people themselves. Should the supreme legislature, by mistake, be in danger of invading and impairing the great and essential liberties of the people,---the particular corporations have an inherent right to give instructions to their representatives in parliament, and in that way to prevent it : Or suppose heavy grievances actually to happen,---the constitution provides a remedy, by giving the subjects a right to petition to king and parliament, who are to give them redress : For (I conceive) they are not petitions of mere favour, but of right, and stand upon the same footing in the law as all other petitions of right, which, if well founded, the aggrieved are entitled to a redress :---Or, supposing all these to fail,--yet no parliament can exist beyond the time limited by constitution, and then the good people of the British realm have opportunity to right themselves, by a new choice of such members as they know will give them redress. From all which, it follows, that each branch of the supreme legislature must contravene the great
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end of their high trusts and the good people of the British realm, at least the electors, be strangely remiss and negligent of their duty, before the nation, or any part of the British dominions, can be enslaved. What nation can boast a constitution good, a security great, like this ?---Nor, 2dly, can they ever enter, by the inferior legislatures of particular governments. For they all partake of the same free, impartial, and righteous spirit of the grand legislature, and are alike guarded against encroachments, and some, perhaps, more friendly to the liberties of the subject : So that while they exist and operate, according to the true spirit and intention of them, the slavery of the subject can never enter by that door.---Nor, 3dly, has the constitution vested some, or any body of the subjects, with an inherent power to invade the properties, and take away the liberties of any particulars, or communities of subjects, with which they are enfranchised by and according to constitution. American subjects (e. g.) have no such inherent power and right to invade the liberties and properties of the subjects in Great-Britain. This, all readily allow. And supposing some hundreds of years being rolled away, the vast continent of America should be so replenished with people and riches, that in numbers and wealth they should surpass their's in Great-Britain ; yet would all this add nothing to their inherent rights ; not the least measure of power over those British subjects, more than they now have, so as to take away a farthing of their monies, without their consent ; nor abridge them of their right of trials by jury, or any other privilege and immunity, which they hold by law : Nor could they give such a power to others, as their representatives, which they have not inherent in themselves. All which is clear.---On the other hand, neither have the subjects in Great-Britain any such inherent power, by constitution, over the Americans : Nor can give or delegate such an invading, enslaving power to those, who, in other things, legally represent them. The reason is plain,
because

because as subjects of the empire, and expressly by charter, " We have all the rights, immunities, and privileges of English subjects, to all constructions and purposes whatsoever, as fully as though born in Great-Britain." Now such an express and entire equality, as to their inherent rights as subjects, (whether freeholders or others) does most absolutely exclude all such invading and enslaving superiority and power of the one over the other; delegation of power, by the one, without the other; superiority of numbers, or wealth, or priority of settlement, whence the denomination of mother and sons, and occasions the empty flourishes of enslaving writers.---I say, all these are nothing in construction of law; nor can, by the British constitution, operate the least advantage to the one, or disadvantage to the other, respecting their properties, fundamental rights, liberties, privileges, and immunities, which they hold by law and charters, the great fountains and bulwarks of English liberty. So that, I conceive, the spirit of the British constitution must first vanish; the frame of it be essentially altered; and the grand securities of it be broken down; before arbitrary power and slavery can invade any part of the British dominions, either by the supreme powers, or by inferior legislatures, or by the influence of some particulars, or any bodies of the subjects. And should arbitrary power and slavery, by any means, work itself into any part of the British dominions, it could not fail to be attended with the greatest mischiefs; it would rob the crown of its brightest jewel; the constitution of its greatest strength and glory, its freedom, rectitude, and impartiality; and injure and expose the rights of every free-born Briton. In short, such is its pervading, malignant nature, its entrance must shake the grand pillars of the British empire, and the foundation of the throne itself; which stands, and can rest secure, only upon the constitution. And besides the excellency of the constitution, we have other endearing motives to prize our birth-right privi-
leges

leges at the highest rate :---As a kingdom, because they are transmitted down to us, as in rivers of blood, which have been shed for their preservation: As a people in this land, because they are the dear bought patrimony of our pious, noble spirited ancestors, which they have procured for us, at an immense cost of treasure and blood: And shall they ever be lost, through our treachery or supine neglect? God forbid! What crying guilt this! too great to be out-lived. Let the mention of these things warm and animate our hearts, with all proper affections and fixed resolutions, to the utmost of our power, to maintain our constitution, and transmit our civil and sacred privileges and blessings, (our best earthly inheritance) in full, to posterity.---Such are our ardent affections for these blessings, and for the British king, parliament, and good people of the nation, that we have done and suffered much for the common cause; and if necessity required, and proper requisitions were made, should be willing to do more,---to run all hazards, and to the utmost of our power, for the common good of the empire. But if more than this should ever be required, viz. to give up our fundamental liberties and privileges, or truth and virtue, religion and a good conscience, 'tis too great a sacrifice, and vainly to be expected: We are descendents of, and, trust in God, heirs to a nobler spirit. Should we make a feint of submission, while we have no heart that way, would it not be hateful hypocrisy? or could we be such traitors to God, to ourselves, and to our country, as actually to make such a sacrifice, we should expect the detestation of God and mankind; should be ashamed to live, afraid to die, and more of a resurrection to everlasting condemnation and contempt. But in this, let us be unanimous and fixed (God assisting) by our piety and peaceableness, our loyalty and virtue, and by all the benevolent and beneficent virtues of good christians, and good subjects, to approve ourselves worthy the protection and privileges of such a constitution; to do nothing
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to weaken it, but hazard and lose all for it's maintenance, rather than lose our privileges ; well knowing, in such a hazard, we have a chance to save all ; and that bondage and despair is worse than death.---Could we be at ease, in a bondaged state ? No more than we could be calm, without emotion, with our houses, our substance, and whole county, all in flames.

We remark, 3dly, It must be well-pleasing to God, to humble ourselves before him, and seek to him, by religious fasting, and ardent supplications, under the heavy rebukes of his hand, in the threatening evils of the present day. We must piously and dutifully acknowledge the correction of God, to whom (though not to man) we have forfeited all our privileges : And a most holy God is righteous in all his dealings with us : It is a great judgment of God upon a nation, when suffered to fall into very hurtful measures, which impoverish and tend to the slavery and ruin of a free people ; and more especially upon those, who are most immediately affected by them. The distant approaches of such a state ought to be alarming ! But in proportion to the great iniquity of such measures, their innumerable attending evils, and near approaches, they ought to be the more deeply and pungently affecting. When antient Rome rested upon her natural and proper basis of a free constitution, she stood firm, "her legs were iron" : When upon the wheel of change, by the entrance of arbitrary power, which at first endeavours a sort of incorporation into their free state, by which unnatural heterogeneous, and detestable mixture, she became greatly weakened, "her feet part iron, part clay" ;* whence the transition was easy and unavoidable, to all clay ; which ended in a spacious, massy ruin :---A providential warning to all free states and kingdoms, against every specie of arbitrary power, and all infractions upon their liberties. The greater our trials, danger, and perplexity, the more weighty and urgent the argument, to bow ourselves at the foot of God, and make ardent applications

* Daniel ii.

to him for help and relief. We have had our trials, O my brethren, and countrymen ; have been trained up to them, as from our infancy, or rather from generation to generation, ever since our first implantation in this wilderness land : But I appeal, and trust I have a witness in your hearts, through this great continent, we never had any so peculiarly perplexing and exercising as in the present crisis. We have had invasion upon invasion, from as salvage, as cruel, and dreadful a foe, as perhaps lives upon the face of God's earth : But we have been inured to them, and trained up by a merciful and successful providence, to a sort of immovable firmness against them : But this trial comes from a most unexpected quarter, and is of a most perplexing nature. We have had requisition upon requisition, from the British court, even the last war ; we were cheerfully obedient and ready, even beyond our power ; we were (I may say) lavish of our men, our monies, and our blood, for the common cause, 'till we were reduced almost to the brink of ruin ; nor did we count it much, but good œconomy, good parsimony, because for the common good of the nation, as well as for our own protection. And more, we were, and are to this day, thankful to the British king and parliament, for their wise, seasonable, and effectual care for us, and the whole kingdom. We blessed God, that he gave us a king, who felt for his subjects ; that he raised us up (at that grand crisis) a ministry of great ability and integrity ; skilful, faithful, and successful, who well knew the vast importance of the colonies, and how to protect both them and the whole empire ; who will shine in history as the great ornaments and glory of the kingdom. But now,---and while we were just reposing ourselves from these trials and toils, and consulting how to retrieve ourselves from the evils, into which we are plunged by them, and earnestly expecting a more clear, ample, and unclouded state of security and tranquility ; behold, must the scene shift ? Must new trials come on, from bad to worse ? Must we be put

to a new and most strange trial of our loyalty? Can it be, that we must be tried, whether we will be true and loyal in adhering to the great and fundamental principles of the British constitution, (by which our king holds his throne, and every freeman his liberty) and to the spirit of that government, which we have sworn to maintain; or give them up to a --- power (in our view) incongruous and inconsistent therewith? Whether we will not give up our important privileges, and grand securities, (which we hold by an indefeasible right, have earned most dear, have long enjoyed, have defended at so great expence, and hold more precious than life) for we know not what slippery insecurities? In short, whether we will sacrifice the free, the christian, the truly British spirit, in which we so much glory, and feel so happy, and by which we ever have and must defend our privileges, and be of any important service to the kingdom: Must this great sacrifice be made, (as included in the others) and all this without any necessity, for no great provincial, continental, or national purposes, that we can imagine, but the very reverse. Good God! what meaneth the heat of thine anger, that hundreds of thousands of thy poor servants in this continent, should be put to such impossible sacrifices, and plunged into such most perplexing trials? That our loyal hearts must be torn with the distress we feel, in which a disloyal thought could never enter, and much less a disloyal purpose ever lodge. Impossible sacrifices, to such a people, under such views: No, we must first be unmade, and made up again of more base materials than English flesh and blood: Our British spirits must depart to happier regions, and those of a more base and servile complexion animate these clay machines; before things, so entirely abhorrent to our hearts, can be effected. But what shall we do? Shall we give up all for lost, and sink down into a state of inactivity? The most unchristian, pusillanimous, and worst thing we can do! No, in God there is help, who is the almighty protector of the injured,---

injured,---a deliverer of the afflicted, and "ready help in a time of trouble." Let us carry this important cause to him, to whom "the kingdoms and nations of the earth are but as the drop of the bucket, or dust of the balance," who can give us relief with infinite ease. This is a christian, loyal, pious course, the best that can be taken; pleasing to God, and all good people. The nature of the case shews it pleasing to God; and it is confirmed by the holy scripture. It is evident in the instance before us, in the cries and salvation of afflicted Israel. When they betake themselves to this duty and refuge, O see the soundings of his bowels! O hear the sweet, the melting voice of his infinite mercy to them! "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt; I have heard their groanings, and am come down to deliver them." And is such the immensity, freeness, and great condescensions of his mercy? Is such his encouraging and heart-melting voice, to a distressed and afflicted people? Let us make him our refuge, who is our father's God, our God and only helper. With deep humility, with ardent affection, and with entire trust (through Christ our great advocate) let us commit to God the perplexed state of this great kingdom, and the gloomy distressed state of these colonies; invited by the most gracious assurances, that he is most able and ready to help us.---Our petitions are already gone,---our cries will soon reach the ears of our gracious sovereign, and the British parliament, (under God) our great dependance: But there is one thing more, the great thing of all yet before us, to engage the favour and blessing of God, to render them successful: for he has all hearts and events in his own hands, to turn them whithersoever he will. When Esther must go in to petition the king, (in a time of great calamity,--- great, like our's, yea greater than our's) Mordecai and all the Jews, who were under a decree of ruin, must fast and cry to God: They did so,--- success follows: an animating example to all succeeding ages.

We

We are urged to it by all the great evils, natural and moral, which present themselves to our view : By all our ardent affection for our gracious king, and for the tranquility, prosperity, and glory of this great kingdom : And by the weighty concern we feel for ourselves, and our distressed country ; and by our duty to God, and the cause of liberty and virtue, (highly important) if there be any in the world : nor have we any reason to despair of this best of causes ; it is of God, and will finally prevail. And besides, there ever have been wisdom and virtue enough in the nation to save or recover their liberties, when endangered ; and (doubt not) if it comes to an obstinate trial, will be found so at this day, and for ages yet to come. In a word, the grand importance of impending events, urge us with an energy beyond the power of words, or of human voice, though it were loud as thunder : Events big with the fate of the colonies, and perhaps of Great-Britain also : For who knows the fatal consequences (if relief fails) whether the British empire may not be shattered into parties, torn into pieces, and, in the end, broken up and ruined. "A kingdom divided against itself, cannot stand."

III. We pass to the third general head, to shew the good influence and effect their oppressions had upon the Israelites, before their deliverance, as a teaching example to us, under present calamities.--- (1.) Their oppressions wrought in them a quick, lively sense of their misery, and danger of utter ruin ; and great need of speedy relief. When their bondage first came on, by lesser, and perhaps almost imperceptible degrees, likely they made light of it, and thought little about it, (as Americans have done, as to what has heretofore passed, now urged by way of precedent, as the foundation of their ruin) but when the decrees multiplied upon them, with increasing terrors ; when they were every way straitened, with the bands and chains of their slavery ; when their petitions were rejected, and there was no ease, no avoidance, nor relaxation, no mitigation for them

them in any points ; but task-masters every where set over them, to make them to serve with rigour : In short, when they saw their bondage dreadfully complete, and their miseries shockingly increased and multiplied,---saw all their important rights decreed away,---gone, forever gone ; no solid security of life or liberty, religion or property, remaining to them ; nothing before them but poverty, hardships, misery and ruin to themselves, and dear posterity, for ages to come : This stings them to the quick, yea pierces them to the heart : Now life itself is a burthen to them, they are weary of it, and see a most urgent necessity of speedy relief. And this pungent sensibility of their misery, and danger of utter ruin, and great need of speedy relief, became a foundation and grand motive of their ardent cries to God ; for in process of time, "the children of Israel sighed by reason of their " bondage, and cried : And their cry came up unto God, by " reason of their bondage." Exod. ii. 23.

2. They were brought to a lively and affecting sense of their great and absolute dependance upon God, for help and relief.

Almost four hundred years were now rolled away, since they had been in that strange land ; forsaken, and in a measure forsaken of God : Some hundreds of years were passed, since God had appeared to them, with such sensible manifestation of eminent favour, power and glory, as he had done heretofore to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, and Joseph, their pious and venerable ancestors ; so that they had almost lost the knowledge, veneration, and worship of God, amidst the ignorance, barbarity, and idolatry of the Egyptians : * They had strangely forgotten the mighty works which God had wrought, and good things he had spoken to their fathers, &c. &c. How entire their dependance upon him, how absolutely their all, for time and eternity, was in his hands. But their wretched oppression and

* It appears from Josh. xxiv. 14. and elsewhere, that they were wretchedly apostatized and sunk into Egyptian idolatry.

bondage has a kindly operation, to open their eyes, and bring them to their spiritual senses, to awake and enquire after the Lord God of their fathers, if happily they may find him, in their day of extremity. For when they saw how complete their bondage! how deplorable their ruin! how helpless their state! when the mighty powers which should protect them, became their enslavers;--and from the greatness of the Egyptian powers, (which oppressed them) which were great, far above any of the powers or monarchies of the earth; as also from the mighty force and power of the motives, which did and would operate against their relief, viz. the haughty pride, the sordid covetousness, and ensnaring, complicated wrong views of self-interest, in those who had schemed away their liberty, and were so active in their ruin: Hence they saw no hope, no help, from an arm of flesh; but were driven of necessity to make the mercy and the almighty, everlasting arm of God, their refuge. Now they begin to think, in earnest, of the greatness and glory,---the immense wisdom, power, goodness, and perfection of the God of Israel, their supreme, omnipotent and eternal king;---and also, how righteous, how absolute, supreme, unlimited, and all-controlling his dominion, changing times and seasons, and disposing of states and kingdoms, and of all their great affairs and revolutions, as seems good to his infinite majesty: And hereupon make him their refuge, their absolute and entire dependance:---As appears in the course they take;---“They cried unto God.” Exod. ii. 23. Numb. xx. 16.

3. Their oppressions brought them wisely and affectionately to consider their relation to God, as his professing, covenant people, and their duties and hopes resulting from hence.

This seems evident, in that they cried to the Lord, and not to the idol gods of the Egyptians: And that they made application and cried to God, upon the principles and encouragement of his gracious covenant, seems further evident in God's merciful

ful answer to their cries, immediately subjoined; “And God
“heard their groanings, and God remembered his covenant with
“Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. And God looked
“upon the children of Israel, and God had respect unto them.”
Exod. ii. 24, and 25. They cry to God upon the encouragement of this covenant, and God remembers them with the mercies of it. Doubtless with great gratitude, they now remember God's covenant stipulation with Abraham and his seed, to be to them a God, and for them to be unto him a people; and affectingly behold! how high the dignity, how great the privileges of such a state; as also how great the duties, and how high the obligations of such a people: How much the great God had done to endear himself to them, in the relation of a covenant God,---partly in his very gracious and marvellous dispensations and appearances to and for Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph; as to the last, how marvellously he blessed him, kept him as in his hand, in all his trials and dangers,---highly exalted him with his right hand, and made him a great, a singular, and unspeakable blessing to his own people, and the Egyptians, with other instances of his singular care and kindness to them, as his people: Partly, in his very great and precious promises; particularly in that most great promise, “to be to them a God;” which, taken in it's highest sense and greatest extent, is the sum of all happiness; the greatest and best they can possibly enjoy, in time and eternity. And to mention but one more, for the present,---as his covenant people, God gave them the promise of the land of Canaan, the glory of all lands; and they had left with them, some very striking and affecting memorials of the fulfillment of God's promises, as in the dying words of Jacob; “Behold I die; and God shall be with you, and bring you
“again unto the land of your fathers:” * And as a confirming token, gives it in charge to carry him up, “and bury him with
“his fathers.” || So also in the dying prediction of Joseph, when

* Gen. lxxviii, 21.

|| Gen. xlix. 29.

taking his last, his dying farewell of his brethren, he says, "die; and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he swore to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob." And as an ensuring pledge of it, he left his bones in charge with them, under the solemnity of an oath; for he took an oath of them, "saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence."* But all this (to which much more might be added) notwithstanding, they had greatly revolted from, and forgotten God, forgotten his gracious word, and mighty works,---his covenant and promises, their relation to him, and high obligations as his covenant people; with all the great good he had set before them, for time and eternity, to allure, fix, and engage them in his service; but by their afflictions, he brought them to an affectionate remembrance of these important things of their peace; to remember him with gratitude and renewed trust, to return, acknowledge, and worship him in some suitable, devout, and becoming manner. And full well does our nation and land need the alarming judgments of God, which threaten such great and extensive distractions, calamity and ruin, to bring us back again to God from our deep revoltings.---By profession, we are a christian, protestant nation; in this land we are a people under the most solemn, endearing, and awful bonds of the christian religion; but how little of the genuine spirit and fruits of christianity appearing in the nation and land, to what might be expected from the greatness of our privileges, and advantages, and obligations. No nation, no people, under heaven, more highly exalted in civil and sacred privileges, than our's: None upon the face of the earth, to whom the great God has more endeared himself, by most astonishing dispensations of grace, mercy, and salvation. How repeatedly has he saved the nation with a most merciful, strong, and mighty hand, when upon the very brink of ruin; sometimes, from the designs, great preparations and invasions

* Gen. l. 24, 25.

of

of foreign enemies, both French and Spanish: At other times, from the no less dangerous, internal invasions of slavish, arbitrary power. How great his mercy and salvation to the people in this land, saving them in all their great, unparalleled dangers; and repeatedly delivering them from the jaws of destruction, with a high hand, and outstretched arm, with many tokens of his great grace, and undeserved mercy. Surely, no nation, no land upon the face of God's earth, more deeply indebted to his infinite goodness, than our's. Yet alas! how soon, how much, how ungratefully is all forgotten? How poor, how very unworthy and unequal our returns, to what is challenged by such transcendent, infinite goodness? Yea, notwithstanding all the infinite obligations of creating goodness, redeeming love, and the mighty motives from our christian profession, and from the infinitely kind and endearing dispensations of the great God to us; yet, how does iniquity prevail? How does infidelity, horrible profaneness, and all manner of corruption, prevail; and threaten like a torrent, or overflowing inundation, to overwhelm the nation, and bear down all before it, in terrible ruin? And shall not a holy and righteous God visit for these things? Shall we wonder we are threatened with so great and terrible calamities? Or rather, shall we not expect greater, (if greater can be) if these fail to recover us to God and goodness? And if threatening calamities have a kindly operation, and do us good, they will surely bring us affectionately to remember God, our absolute and entire dependance on him, and infinite obligations to him, for all his transcendent and infinite goodness; and will engage us to return, through Christ, and devote ourselves to him. And for animating encouragement, let us remember, wherever a people thus think upon his blessed name, his word, his covenant, repent, and return to him, in the true spirit and obedience of it, he will also remember for them the great mercies and blessings of his covenant; not only in time, but to a blessed eternity,

ternity; according to the tenor of his gracious declaration to Jews and Christians. *Exod. ii. 24. Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12.*

4. Another good effect of their calamities; they were awakened and stirred up to the exercises of piety and virtue. It caused them to pour out their groans and lamentations before God, for their sins and wretchedness. God most high, hears the groans of prisoners, *Psal. cii. 20.* But, of all others, he has a most tender regard for the groans of his faithful people, when caused by mighty oppressions, by great cruelty and wrongs. They were also ardent and importunate, in their supplications and cries to God: Looking above and beyond all other hopes and help, they carried and left the important cause with God. So pathetick, fervent, and importunate were their cries, they were (like Jacob's in another case, *Gen. xxxii. 26. and 28.*) such as would admit of no denial, no delay: they reach the gracious ear and heart of God; they cried not in vain, for their cry came up unto God. *Exod. ii. 23.* It reached the mercy seat, and prevailed; the bowels of infinite mercy are as all in motion for their deliverance. No language can be more tender and affecting than that by which it is expressed. "I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people, which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them." Every expression, clause and repetition, shews how much the heart of God was moved and engaged for their deliverance. Oh! for a spirit of humble faith, of fervent prayer, and of engaging importunity: Oh! "for the fervent, inwrought prayer of the "righteous, which avails much;" for such a general spirit thro' the land, (in such a day as this) that it may prevail, and we also may see the soundings of God's bowels, and therein the salvation of his people.---- Further,

They were a reformed, virtuous people. They were taught, by their necessities and distresses, to be very frugal, virtuous, and industrious; that their poverty and ruin might not be immediately

and totally complete. Happy New-England! happy the whole continent of America! if we learn these important lessons of piety and virtue, repentance and reformation, frugality and industry: if our ardent supplications be accompanied with a renunciation of all vice and extravagance; if to these be added all the virtues of a reformed, virtuous people, with all the lovely graces of christianity, under the outstretched hand of God against us: Then shall we be wrought into a happy preparation for the favour and salvation of our God: Then will he never leave nor forsake us, nor give us up to be a prey to enslaving ambition and avarice, or to desolating judgments: But the Lord God of Israel will see our affliction, hear our groanings and cries, (through his eternal Son) and appear to deliver us: For "he is the same to-day, yesterday, and forever." And it is a standing maxim of his most wise and holy, righteous and good government, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and 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 to them." *Jer. xviii. 7, 8.*

Finally, in a word,---They were wrought to such a spirit, as thankfully to accept deliverance in God's way, and upon his terms: Before, they were obstinate and hard-hearted,---froward against God; nor would accept Moses for their ruler, judge and deliverer, nor have deliverance in God's way. This comes directly within the design of the holy martyr, for which he introduces and improves this memorable part of their antient history, viz. to shew the Jews of that generation, that, although they had most vilely rejected and crucified Christ, yet he might, in truth, be the great Messiah, the anointed of God, and saviour of the world: for such frowardness, and opposition to the will of God, and rejecting the saviour of his appointment, was no new thing with their nation. To exemplify it, so their fathers re-
jected

jected Moses, who was, nevertheless, ordained of God to be their redeemer out of Egypt. And just so, in the same spirit, they now act against Jesus, whom God has anointed their messiah, their prince, and the saviour of the world. This is his purpose, for which he introduces this history; nor could any thing be better adapted to his design. See this in his application, ver. 51, 52, &c. "Ye stiff-necked, &c. ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye, &c." But God continues them in their cruel bondage, under the Egyptian tyranny, 'till he brings down this froward, rebellious spirit in them; 'till, with a spirit of thankfulness, they would accept deliverance upon God's terms, and in his way. Moses was trained up in Pharaoh's court, until forty years old; and being well accomplished for the great work, for which he was raised up in providence: At that age he was to visit his brethren in bondage, designing to take his fortune with them, openly recognizing the relation, and refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; "choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches, than the treasures in Egypt." Heb. xi. 25, 26. He openly appears to head the nation, as their deliverer, by two notable acts, in avenging an oppressed Israelite, by killing the oppressing Egyptian. This act was likely by a prophetic commission, in which he plainly shewed he was willing to risque his life and fortune, and run all hazards with them, for their deliverance. A very noble, generous, benevolent spirit in him towards his people. The other instance was, by endeavouring to compromise a difference, which happened between two Israelites, who were brethren: but they thrust him away with contempt and indignation, saying, "Who made thee a ruler and judge over us?"* In which they shewed the froward spirit of the nation; when, contrariwise, he supposed,

* See the account more at large in the context, from ver. 20 to 39.

by

all the remarkable in his history, his preservation in his infancy, education in Pharaoh's court, now recognizing his true relation to the Jews, and openly offering his life, and to run all hazards with them;---by all they would have understood,---how that "God by his hand would deliver them." Ver. 24, context. But when he saw "they understood not," and the spirit of the nation was to thrust him away, he flees to the land of Media for forty years more;----then, by a voice out of the burning bush, is ordered back of God, with assurance to find in them a better temper, "and they shall hearken to thy voice."|| Moses returns to them, with the voice of deliverance, and presently finds them in a different spirit, viz. willing to accept deliverance upon God's terms, and in his way. At first, indeed, they disbelieved him, and were backward to fall in with the design,---yet not from obstinacy, as before, but from a different source, viz. because they were heart and spirit broken by their cruel bondage; and could not believe the news, of so great good designed for them; as is intimated Exod. vi. 9. "And Moses spake so unto the children of Israel: but they hearkned not unto Moses, for anguish of spirit, and for cruel bondage." However, at length they were brought to submission to God, as appears in their ready obedience to the orders of Moses and Aaron,---especially in the preparation and observation of the passover, that immediately preceded their deliverance; and which was to be a standing memorial of it, to the coming of the Messiah, to accomplish a redemption, infinitely more important for all his spiritual Israel, whether by nature, Jew or Gentile. And no sooner were they brought to a submission to the will of God, and thankfully to accept deliverance upon his terms, than he came down by his majesty, power, and outstretched arm, to accomplish their long-wished for redemption. And whenever the christian church, in any age, under any grievous and heavy oppressions, persecutions, and calamities, are wrought

|| Exod. iii. 18.

into

into a pious spirit of cordial and affectionate submission and signation to the will of God, to have deliverance in his own way and time, and upon his own terms; they may expect he will, one way or another, surely appear for them. It is not to be doubted, if the inhabitants of New-England, and the other American colonies in this vast continent, were brought to a pious, happy submission to God,---in an effectual faith and obedience to the gospel of his son; to love and live to the Lord, to be to him a people cleaving to him with all the heart, seeking him with the whole desire, living to his gospel, cordially devoted to his service and glory forever; but in God they would find ample protection, and great grace and favour. Our calamities would soon blow over; our light brake forth as the morning, our salvation be as the lamp that burneth, and our fears, perplexities and lamentations, would soon be turned into joy and gladness: For God's ear is not heavy, that he cannot hear, nor his hand shortned, that he cannot save.

IV. But I hasten to the 4th and last thing proposed, in which I shall be very brief, viz. to shew how God appears for them in their oppressions, and finally accomplishes their deliverance.

Of the many things which might be noticed, I shall only observe,---God supported their hearts under these oppressions, which were designed to break their spirits: he blessed them with health, and a multiplied, exceeding increase*; the more they were oppressed, the more they multiplied: he protected their infant offspring, when doomed to destruction, by a bloody and most cruel decree: he put his awful fear into the hearts of those appointed to execute their destruction, and hereby made them their protectors and preservers; in return for which, God remarkably blessed them: || He very graciously owns and avouches them for his people, in the day of their extremity. Moreover, he gives them a heart to look and cry to him, with

* Exod. i. 7. || Ibid. ver. 20.

it of courage and resolution to attempt their own deliverance. A promising token for good. And finally, he wrought out their redemption with a high hand and outstretched arm, by the instrumentality of Moses, whom he raised up for this excellent purpose, and honoured in this exalted service. And pertinently might we (with gratitude) recollect some of the many and great favours of a gracious God to the people in this land. Has he not, for several years past, favoured the land with remarkable health? Has he not increased it, since its first settlement, with a great and multiplied increase? Perhaps no continent of the like age, now in the world, has been attended with the like numerous increase of its inhabitants. Has he not often preserved us, when destruction has been decreed us by our cruel Heathen and Papal enemies? Yea, and blessed us with great, and almost unparalleled successes and salvations? Has he not blessed us in various kind dispensations of providence and grace? and does he not yet continue many tokens of his favour and kindness? Is not that remarkable and almost unparalleled spirit of unanimity, unity, and public zeal for their important rights and privileges, which now happily reigns in the American colonies, a happy token for good? As it is rare that a free people are enslaved, 'till first infatuated with a spirit of blindness and stupidity, or subdued by an infamous, luxurious, effeminate, venal, slavish spirit of corruption, more fatal than policy or arms! will not posterity applaud, and all impartial, good patriots, and warm friends to the British interest, rejoice in the noble stand made by the colonies (in this day of trial) for the liberty and welfare of their country, as an essential and very important service to Great-Britain, as well as the colonies? And shall we not bless God, who raises us up warm and powerful friends in the mother country? But who may be honoured, as the great instrument of our deliverance, and of settling Great-Britain and her colonies in a happy state of tranquility

quility and prosperity, God only knows. The moral nosticks of such a happy change, are found in a wise attention and dutiful improvement of the admonitions of God.

The APPLICATION.

1. The impending calamities which threaten us, are a very loud call to humiliation and repentance.-----Israel's last and forest bondage, was a chastisement of their perverseness. And have we not reason to conclude, these heavy rebukes of almighty God, are out against us, for our many, God-provoking sins; for our forgetfulness and great ingratitude to God; for our contempt of the grace of God, the glories of the gospel, and of the unsearchable riches of Christ; for our unfruitfulness under all our great mercies, obligations and privileges; and sad declensions, in spirit and practice, from the right and good ways of the Lord: but especially for our pride, extravagance, sensuality, prodigality, and unrighteousness. These, these seem pointedly and peculiarly punished, by the rebuking hand of God. No enemy we have cause to fear, like sin: None of our causeless enemies in Great-Britain, none in France, none in the universe, can hurt us like our iniquities. Sin kindles a fire in the divine anger, which (without repentance and pardon in the blood of Christ) will burn to the lowest hell. Deut. xxxii. 22. It lays us open to the vengeance of an infinite God; * to devouring fire, and everlasting burnings ||. If we consider the evil of sin, in the nature of it, how infinite! like as our obligations, in which we are bound to an infinite God: or, in its consequences, how vast! how dreadful! how extensive, innumerable, and eternal, the destructions of sin! how has it changed angels into devils, and torn them from their infinitely delightful seats in Paradise, and plunged them into the abyss and everlasting

* Deut. xxxii. 41, 42.

|| Isai. xxxii. 14. Matth. xxv. 46.

torments

torments of hell? What terrible desolation and ruin has it bro't on the human race; on the souls and bodies of mankind? How did it drown the old world; and kindle the consuming flames of Sodom and Gomorrah, and set them forth as an example of eternal fire? What infinite mischiefs, convulsions, confusions, and revolutions, has it wrought in the kingdoms of the earth; and how often turned the world into an Aceldama, a field of blood! in the several ages of it? Yea, how has it not only filled the earth with such unrighteousness and violence, but peopled hell with all its millions of lost, condemned, tormented spirits? And the earth, and all its works, stands condemned to the fire and general conflagration of the last, great day ||. The condemnation of sin is great: it is condemned by the reason and conscience of mankind, in the law and gospel of God, in the terrible executions of divine justice, in the sufferings and death of the well-beloved and eternal Son of God, and in the extreme and eternal torments of the damned. And when the great God is risen up in anger against us for our sins, shall we not humble ourselves under his mighty hand; that he may spare us, as a father his children; yea, and exalt us in safety*? Shall we not lament our provocations against him, "with broken hearts, and contrite spirits;" hate and reject all iniquity with indignation, suitable to the great, the infinite evil of it? Shall we not, by believing application, fly for refuge and redemption, to the blood and righteousness of our almighty Redeemer, and to the all-sufficient grace of God §? And shall we not hasten an unfeigned return to God, in a spirit of divine love, and new obedience; in the vigorous exercises of faith and holiness, and diligent practice of the duties of godliness, charity, righteousness, sobriety, purity, humility, frugality, and industry; that we may be a people prepared for the mercies of God? Does not the anger of God appear great against us, when we consider the

|| 2 Pet. iii. 10. * 1 Pet. v. 6, & 7, § Isai. xlv. 23. Heb. vi. 18. Phil. ii. 13.
nature,

nature, the number, the degree, and long duration, of the calamities threatened? What more terrible in this world than slavery, under insupportable burthens, to so many millions, and to be extended to their posterity through all generations? Good God! what an alarming prospect this? Did the land ever tremble under fiercer wrath, or greater temporal judgments, than these, if they fall upon us? But, blessed be God, our case, however perplexing and distressing, is not yet desperate. How pathetic, encouraging, and animating, the call of God by his prophet: "Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even unto me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rent your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil; who knoweth if he will return and leave a blessing behind him." Joel ii. 12, 13, 14. And the higher the threatening, the louder the call, and more weighty and powerful the argument, for such humiliation, unfeigned repentance, and return to God.

2. These awful rebukes should lead us to God, as our great and everlasting dependance; and to know deliverance and safety comes from his almighty hand and blessing.

It is high time to look to the rock, whence we were hewn; and to the most high God, our redeemer. If we withdraw our affectionate dependance from God, how righteously may he cast us out of his protection? Our dependance upon God, how great, how entire! for a heart to seek him aright, and for every blessing. "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, is from the Lord." || The councils of the nation, the spirit of the people,---all events are in the hands of the great God: * "Safety is of the Lord." His unlimited perfections, his supreme government, his gracious word, and his

|| Prov. xvi. 1, 2, 3. * Prov. viii. 14, 15, 16. Ch. xix. 25. Ch. xxi. 30. Ch. xvi. 33. almighty

works, all, all invite us home to God, in Jesus Christ, to make him our entire and everlasting dependance. Were the way of our relief a thousand times more difficult to comprehend and compass, than now it appears, yet were there no grounds of despair. The supreme, boundless wisdom of God can find out a way of salvation to the distressed, not only far beyond our conceptions, but far beyond the utmost bounds of human policy, or angelick wisdom; as in Israel's redemption, and in the redemption of lost mankind, and in numerous instances of his wonderful providence. "The Lord is a help and shield, to them that fear and trust in him." Psal. cxv. 9, 10, 11. "The name of the Lord is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe." Prov. xviii. 10. Scripture precepts ||, promises*, and successful examples § of prayer, (too many to be here enumerated) all powerfully urge us to make God our refuge, "to call on him in a day of trouble, that he may answer and deliver us; that we may glorify him." Israel's sighs and lamentations were ineffectual, 'till they cried to the Lord. Let us never forget, our forefathers were a generation that sought the Lord with all their hearts, and remarkable were their successes and salvations. Let us never forget that spirit of prayer and dependance on God, which preceded the first conquest of Cape-Breton; nor that spirit of prayer, which was awakened in many in England, Scotland, and America, which preceded and attended the marvellous successes, and glorious achievements, of the last war; when, previously, our circumstances were very deplorable and distressing. We believe our cause righteous and important, and therefore may be bold and firm in it; and humbly apply to God with encouraging hope. And if we make him our dependance, and secure his favour, what have we to fear? "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Should causeless enemies rise

|| Psal. l. 15.

* Isai. v. 8, 9.

§ 2 Chron. xiv. 11, 12.

up against us, cruel and bloody as Haman, avowing construction ; yet God can give our good king a heart more wise, great, and good, than King Ahasuerus, and more tenderly and affectionately engaged for our protection. He can raise us up friends, more numerous and mighty than they ; full of a spirit of wisdom, humanity, justice, and christian benevolence ;---with a benevolence heightened by their malice, to prevent their bloody mischiefs, to remove our grievances, to procure and confirm our safety.

3. Let us call to mind, this day, we are planted in this land for God ; and all our deliverances are wrought of God, that we might be to him a people, uprightly and affectionately devoted to his service.

Israel was called and set apart for God, in the peculiar engagements of his covenant, that they might be to him a holy people, for a name and praise ; and he subjected them to his yoke, and redeemed them out of Egypt, and brought them to Canaan, with a high hand, for his great name sake, that " they might serve him in that place." And let us never forget, that our forefathers left the dear delights of their native country, and fled to the inhospitable deserts of America, not for worldly wealth or honours, pomps or pleasures ; but for the glorious cause of liberty, and undefiled religion ;---amply to enjoy their civil and religious rights and liberties ;---to promote the cause of truth and righteousness ; to secure the blessings, and promote the great, everlasting interests of the kingdom of God. We succeed in their room, and are embarked in the same great interest. And highly does it concern us, ever to maintain a proper indignation against every degree of that tyranny, from the face of which they fled into the wilderness of cruel salvages ; to cherish and maintain a warm heart and affection (not counting our very lives dear) for that blessed cause, for which they conflicted with such trials, dangers, and enemies, and suffered and hazarded

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It well becomes us to remember how they taught, they lived, and how affectionately, living and dying, they recommended to us, the glorious cause of liberty, and of pure and incorrupt christianity. And highly also it concerns us to consider, that all our great mercies and deliverances are wrought of God, to endear his service to us, and engage us more warmly, fixedly, and affectionately in promoting the great and everlasting interests of his gospel and kingdom. And are not our inestimable liberties and privileges chiefly to be desired and maintained to this end ? We are dying, but the cause of truth and liberty, the cause of Christ and true christianity, will never die ; but one generation shall arise to praise and exalt his name, and speak of his mighty works, to another. Our conflict is short, and soon shall we be gathered to the fathers. Our great concern is well to act our part upon this stage, that we may enter into the joys of our Lord, and secure that immarcesible crown of life and glory, which the chief shepherd and eternal judge will give to the faithful, at his appearing. Whether we have a rough or smooth passage through the remainder of life, is comparatively of small moment ; but for our dear posterity, for ages to come,---we cannot but be anxious, under the evils which threaten us. While we teach, and affectionately charge them, to know the Lord God of their fathers, to serve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind, in the simplicity and purity of the gospel of Christ, we cannot but be deeply anxious, and would do what in us lies, to leave them in a state of full freedom and security, and under the best privileges and advantages, to know and practice the truth as it is in Christ ;---to secure to themselves the blessings, and promote the everlasting interests of the kingdom of God ;---of that kingdom of righteousness, which lies so near the heart of God, and of the blessed favour ; and is chief in the hearts of the wise and good, of all ages. And what better course, for the lasting security and welfare of ourselves,

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our country and posterity, than affectionately to devote to the love and service of Christ; and stand fast in the law wherewith he has made us free: To avouch the Lord to be our God; to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes and commandments, in that excellent spirit of faith, piety, benevolence, and virtue, so powerfully recommended in his word; that he may avouch us for his peculiar people. Deut. xxvi. 17, 18, 19. Moses acting in this excellent spirit, readily makes the greatest sacrifices for the service of God, of his people, and their posterity, when engaging and risking his all for the redemption of Israel. A service to God very acceptable; to the people very important and beneficent; to himself, the gain great and eternal. When heir apparent to the crown of Egypt, and to all the regal riches, honours, pomps and pleasures of the Egyptian empire, he sacrifices all, all these grand, alluring prospects, in refusing to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing, (in that competition) rather to take part and suffer affliction with the people of God: Esteeming the reproach of Christ, with a part in his unfearcheable riches, greater riches, an infinitely better inheritance, than all the treasure of Egypt, which he had sacrificed: For he had respect to the recompence of reward in and with Christ.---Here opens a joyous, a transcendent, and unbounded prospect, in the eternal recompence of the just, which a faithful God will render to them in the great day. A recompence great, beyond the power of words, and ineffable;---great, beyond all our conception. "It has not entered into the heart of man to conceive it."---A recompence in the nature of it, of divine and supreme excellence; in degree, inconceivable as the capacities of glorified spirits in their most exalted refinements, enlargements, and improvements: In duration, everlasting: An infinite God is their exceeding great reward. Such a recompence for eternity, and for time, they that love, pray for, and seek the peace and prosperity of his Jerusalem, shall prosper. Psal. cxxii. 6. Lastly,

Threatning calamities should awaken in every true fear of God, and of his divine wrath; a holy dread of sin, and of the eternal torments of hell.

What words can describe, or what imagination can paint, all the horrors, distractions, confusions, bloody mischiefs, and desolations, which have been caused by the erection and exercise of the tyrannies of the earth? and these numberless oppressions, infinite cruelties, and miseries, which flow from them, plainly indicate them to be most terrible scourges of an angry God; and amongst his most dreadful punishments executed upon sinful states and kingdoms in this world. What the language of such threatening calamities, but the voice of lamentation and woe to the inhabitants of the nation & land? These calamities & miseries are very terrible in the nature of them, but far more so as they are expressive of the evil of sin; and considered as terrible executions of the wrath of God upon sinners. And yet these revenges of sin, and dreadful executions of divine wrath in this world, are but the beginnings of tribulation and sorrow; but the preludes of infinitely greater, and not to be compared to the wrath to come; to the eternal torments of hell, which await the ungodly, who continue impenitent. Considered in this connection, these awful threatnings should awake the most thoughtless sinners to solemn thought, and an attentive consideration of their state; the most careless and slothful, to anxious solicitude, and most earnest concern, what they should do to be saved; and to vigorous activity to escape the wrath to come.---In short, it should awake the most fearless, hardened sinners to repentance; to break off their sins by righteousness, and their iniquities by turning to the Lord: To look to Christ the saviour, and secure an interest in him, who, of God, is made to believing penitents, "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption." 'Tis the concurrent voice of the word and providence of God, "Consider this, ye that forget God; lest I tear you in
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pieces,

“ pieces, and there be none to deliver.”
 civil slavery in this world be so very terrible,---and ..
 such pains, struggles, great sacrifices, and rivers of blood, which
 have been shed for the avoidance of it ; Oh what is the far more
 terrible slavery of sin, and accursed tyranny of Satan ; which is
 not only over the body, but over the immortal powers of the
 soul ; and the intollerable terrors and miseries of it extended,
 not only through time, but an endless eternity. And is not a
 deliverance from this great and eternal ruin, worthy propor-
 tionably greater thought, care, and pains ? If the chains of
 temporal bondage be so shocking, and absolutely intollerable to
 a free and noble mind ; how much more shocking and hateful
 the strong bands of sin ? How far more intollerable, chains of
 everlasting darkness, in despair and torment ? Your generous
 souls would disdain the approach of a civil chain, to bind you
 and your country in a wretched bondage ; and resent it with
 warm indignation : But how much greater should be your in-
 dignation against this slavery and tyranny of sin and Satan ?
 Which is worthy our far greater care and fear, detestation and
 dread. If the wrath of a king be as the roaring of a lion ;---
 O what is the wrath of an infinite God, inkindled by unbelief,
 impenitence, and disobedience to the glorious gospel, which burns
 to the lowest hell. These things should awake in us the fear
 of God infinitely above the fear of man : The fear of sin
 above all calamity and suffering : The fear of the wrath of God,
 and everlasting destruction from his blessed presence ; and the
 glory of his power, infinitely above all the evils of this mortal
 state. These things should infinitely endear the blessed Saviour
 to us, who delivers his people from the power and guilt of sin,
 from the horrid tyranny of Satan, from everlasting destruction,
 and finally from all evil ; who vindicates them into all the
 blessed liberties of the sons of God, in a free happy spirit of
 holiness, and in a firm title to all the immunities and immense
 privileges

of God. O happy they, that are
 , who have chosen and are blessed with
 that .. nim, which shall never be taken away.---
 Happy .. people who effectually know, in this their day, the
 things of their eternal peace.



F I N I S.

