



Doctor TAPPAN'S
THANKSGIVING SERMON,

February 19, 1795.



**CHRISTIAN THANKFULNESS
EXPLAINED AND ENFORCED.**



A

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED

AT CHARLESTOWN,

In the AFTERNOON of FEBRUARY 19, 1795.

T H E D A Y

OF

GENERAL THANKSGIVING

Through the UNITED STATES.

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TO
THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY
IN
CHARLESTOWN,

AND
OTHERS WHO HAVE ENCOURAGED THE PUBLICATION
OF
THIS DISCOURSE,

IT IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND

AND
HUMBLE SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.



COLOSSIANS, 3d CHAP. 15th VER.

BE YE THANKFUL.



AS we are called by the President of the United States to devote this day to public Thanksgiving and Praise ; the words just read seem well adapted to guide our meditations and animate our devotions on the great and joyful occasion. How pleasing, how enlivening is the thought, that the millions which compose our federal Republic, with their beloved WASHINGTON at their head, are this day uniting, like one family, in paying their filial and grateful homage to their common FATHER and GOD ! Let us, my brethren, aspire to bear our humble part in this grand concert of praise ; and in order to this, devoutly attend to the inspired exhortation before us.

The precept, BE YE THANKFUL, though found in the midst of a large cluster of christian duties, yet forms by itself a complete, as well as very important sentence, and will therefore engage our immediate and particular consideration.

The comprehensive view, which your respected Pastor gave us in the morning, of our distinguished and invaluable national privileges has left me little else to do than to illustrate and press upon you the due acknowledgment and improvement of the divine benefits.

benefits.* As true gratitude for the favors of Heaven is the proper business of a public Thanksgiving, and indeed the main duty and end of our rational existence ; I presume it will not be disagreeable to a serious audience to hear the nature and obligations of christian thankfulness distinctly explained and strongly enforced.

To be thankful for favors received imports something more than to feel pleased and joyful in the reception of them. For nature itself reaches and inspires gladness in receiving and enjoying any good, which suits our natural appetites and affections. Yea, criminal sensuality, avarice, and pride will rejoice in the blessings of providence, considered as affording materials for their own gratification. But none will say that a natural instinctive gladness, which overlooks its Divine Origin and Benefactor, or a proud, selfish, and carnal joy, which directly opposes Him, and turns his own gifts into weapons of hostility against Him,—none will say that either of these is true gratitude to Him.

In order, therefore, to consecrate our natural delight in the pleasing objects and entertainments of life into devout gratitude, there must be an impressive sense of the hand and benignity of God in them. When the thankful christian rejoices in the bounties of nature and providence, in the endowments and comforts of his body and mind, in his personal and social advantages ; his joy is ever attended and dignified

* This discourse was prepared with a view to succeed that of the Rev. Doctor Morse, which was expected to pay particular and ample attention to the great political objects presented by the occasion. This expectation was fully answered.—This circumstance will excuse the author of the following sermon for devoting a smaller portion of it to political contemplation than might otherwise have been

nified by an affectionate impression of the goodness and greatness of the Being, from whom these blessings flow. When the sun shines, the rain descends, and the earth smiles ; when the spring, summer, and autumn entertain us with their respective scenes of beauty or liberality ; the eye of religious gratitude looks up and sees God shedding down the genial influences of the heavens, enlivening the principles of vegetation in the earth, and thus clothing the seasons with fruitfulness, and filling each heart with food and gladness. If the good man has faithful friends, whose tender sympathy and agreeable conversation lessen his griefs, and double his joys ; if he is blest with a bosom-companion, whose soul mingles with his own, and children who give him delight and transport ; in all these endearing objects he sees, adores, and enjoys his benevolent Creator ; he views the union and communication of love from heart to heart, as the effusion and inspiration of divine love and goodness. Thus he intermixes thankful devotion with every pleasing enjoyment of life.

O what an unspeakable charm, what a divine grandeur must this impart to every blessing ! to receive it as a gift from an infinitely great and benevolent Parent, whose goodness and greatness reflect unspeakable beauty and splendor upon each other ! While his goodness mollifies and endears his greatness, which would otherwise overwhelm and confound us ; his greatness adds force, direction, and awful dignity to his goodness, and renders its various exercises towards man inconceivably condescending and free, surprising and glorious. Accordingly,
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the man of true gratitude primarily and supremely esteems and delights in the intrinsic beauty and majesty of God ; he triumphs in his essential character, as combining every thing great and benevolent ; and as the effect of this, highly values and gratefully rejoices in his numerous benefits. He is delighted with these benefits, not merely because they contribute to his own happiness, but because they display and honor their excellent and beloved Author, and furnish new advantages and incentives to himself to serve his divine Benefactor, and do good to his rational family.

While the thankful christian thus regards and exalts God, he proportionably abases himself. Those persons who do not feel their own dependence, meanness and guilt, but proudly imagine themselves important and meritorious beings, cannot properly see and acknowledge their obligations to the divine bounty, but will ascribe their prosperity to their own superior wisdom, activity, or worth. But the humble, grateful soul, feeling its entire dependence, its unspeakable littleness and ill desert, ascribes all its enjoyments and hopes to the pure benevolence of the Deity ; saying with good Jacob, I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE LEAST OF ALL THE MERCY AND ALL THE TRUTH, WHICH THOU HAST SHEWED UNTO THY SERVANT ; and with David, NOT UNTO ME, O LORD, NOT UNTO ME, BUT TO THY NAME GIVE GLORY:—O my brethren, when the humble penitent contrasts his own meanness as a creature, and deformity as a sinner with the transcendent majesty and purity of the Creator, what admiring gratitude transports his heart

heart in the reflection, that a Being so great has stooped from his exalted height to notice and comfort such a little atom as he ; that a Being so holy not only endures, but shows the most liberal kindness to a creature so polluted and offensive ; and that a Being armed with omnipotent power spares and holds up so provoking a rebel, when he could so easily and so justly destroy him ! What holy astonishment, what fervent thanksgiving do these contemplations inspire !

Christian gratitude likewise respects and adores Jesus Christ as the purchaser and medium of all divine favors to man. It beholds his atoning blood as the price which has bought, the channel which conveys, and the odour which perfumes all the blessings both of time and eternity. Accordingly, it rejoices chiefly in Christ Jesus, in his wonderful sacrifice, in his great and everlasting redemption. It rejoices in the view of that mediatorial kingdom, which is put into his hands ; a kingdom, which connects the councils of eternity and all the events of time into one great scheme of wise comprehensive benevolence, to be completed in the inconceivable, ever growing perfection and bliss of innumerable millions of holy and redeemed beings. Well may these ideas constrain the most enraptured ascriptions of praise for redeeming love. THANKS BE UNTO GOD FOR HIS UNSPEAKABLE GIFT. WORTHY IS THE LAMB THAT WAS SLAIN TO RECEIVE POWER AND RICHES AND WISDOM AND STRENGTH AND HONOR AND GLORY AND BLESSING.

We add that true gratitude for the displays of the

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divine goodness implies a conformity of temper to its adored object ; it imports that we possess a degree of the same benevolence, which we celebrate in the Deity. If our hearts are cold, selfish, and unkind, they cannot truly relish and praise the beauty of the divine beneficence. We cannot sincerely thank God for the exercises of infinite benevolence, if we do not feel and will not manifest the least degree of the same spirit either towards God or man. In this case we are enemies to goodness, and therefore cannot cordially join in its praises. True thankfulness then must be a kind and generous affection, implying pure enlarged friendship both to the Creator and his creatures, a disposition heartily to rejoice in the happiness of both, a prevailing desire and endeavor to imitate, and in this way to return the kindness of our heavenly Father, by freely imparting to his afflicted or destitute offspring what He has so freely conferred upon us. If therefore we cannot labor, pray, and give thanks for the welfare of others with the same sincerity as for our own, we are selfish, unthankful flatters, instead of benevolent and grateful christians.

In a word, true thanksgiving implies a certain prevailing frame or exercise of the heart. It begins in the inner man, and imports the noblest employment of its noblest faculties. In this employment the understanding views God in his infinite majesty and greatness ; the judgment suitably esteems Him, and prizes his benefits for his sake ; the will chooses and cleaves to Him as the sovereign good ; the passions are excited, and pours in upon the soul the whole

whole train of his benefits ; and as the result of all, the affections of the heart ascend with sacred rapture through these streams to their glorious source.

But though gratitude begins, it does not end in the soul. The powers and passions of the mind being tuned by this divine principle, will call in to their aid the faculties of the body. They will awaken the tongue to speak and to sing the praises of God in the closet and the family, in the circle of private friendship and the public assembly of the saints. Such vocal exercises, while they glorify God with our bodies as well as spirits, and spread abroad the honor of his name, conduce greatly to the religious improvement of our surrounding brethren, and at the same time directly express and exalt our own thankful devotions.

But our gratitude, if sincere, will not stop in the sound of our lips, but flow along through the current of our lives. It will be manifested by a studious daily conformity to the example and will of our divine Benefactor, and a pious, sober, and charitable use of his bounties. The thankful christian, deeply penetrated with the rich, free, overflowing goodness of God, will aspire to copy, to recommend, and honor it by a suitable practice ; which is the noblest and most acceptable memorial of the divine beneficence and our own gratitude ; for this is to love and thank him, not in word and tongue only, but in deed and in truth.

Having explained the nature, we are now to illustrate and enforce the duty and importance of christian thankfulness.

In the first place, common equity urges us to it. It is an evident dictate of the law of nature, that every one who receives a benefit, should entertain and express a sense of obligation for it in the first instance ; and in case of ability and opportunity, should make an equal return of kindness. The common perceptions, feelings, and language of mankind respecting human benefactors and offices of charity are founded on this principle. How much more strongly does the law of justice require a grateful acknowledgment of our original and supreme Benefactor ; whose benevolence is the prime source of all our blessings, and in particular is the inspirer of those kind affections and offices, to which we are so much indebted in our fellow creatures !—Which leads us to add,

The voice of every social connexion among men calls us to pious thankfulness. For gratitude is the basis and soul of society, the cement and sweetener of domestic, civil, and religious union, the main ground and spirit of the most sacred relative duties. The obligations of children to their parents, and of subjects to their rulers, the reciprocal duties of masters and servants, of neighbors and friends, are founded and comprehended in gratitude, in a due sense and requital of favors expected and received. Does not this proclaim and enforce the still higher social obligation, which binds us all to our divine Parent and Master, Sovereign and Friend ? Does it not inculcate constant gratitude to Him, as the life and support of that divine union and fellowship with our Maker, for which our rational and social nature was chiefly designed ? Is not communion with God the
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highest duty and happiness of man ? And is not this sacred intercourse maintained on our part, by answering with corresponding grateful exercises the communications of divine goodness and favor ? Is not a due attention to this first obligation and privilege of our social frame the greatest security and exaltation of our other relative duties and enjoyments ?

Further, is not gratitude the band which holds together the system of nature ? Look into the inanimate creation ; see what an unceasing reciprocation of benefits unites its various parts. While the air feeds the flame, see how the flame returns the kindness by enlightening and warming the air. See how the earth repays all the elements with her noble productions. How gratefully does she reflect the light and influence of the heavens !—Look over the animal tribes ; behold the lively expressions of gratitude, the affectionate and important services, which the most stupid brutes render to their human benefactors ! What name then shall we give to the man, who is unthankful to his God ? He is a contradiction to, and a kind of outcast from all nature ; he has no parallel in the universe, except in the abodes of perfect malignity and despair.

Again, our frame and rank in God's works point us to this duty. Why did our Maker give us an understanding fitted to know, a heart to feel, and a tongue to express our obligations to Him ? Was it not that we might employ these faculties in thankful praise, an exercise to which they are so exactly adjusted ? Does not man, by virtue of these noble powers,

powers, sustain the office of High Priest in this great temple of nature, to offer up to nature's God the sacrifice of devout and active homage, not only for himself, but in the name of all the inferior creatures ? He is their Head, Eye, and Mouth, to do that for them, which they cannot do for themselves. They, like the congregation of antient Israel, can only stand in the outer court of the temple, and with a silent but forcible eloquence beckon to man to enter into the holy place on their behalf, and there pay their common tribute of praise ? And shall we decline the noble and happy office, to which our make and station, and the voice of surrounding nature so earnestly invite us ?

The excellent, delightful, and advantageous nature of the employment itself, is another powerful motive to it. It is excellent, as it breathes a pure disinterested affection to our divine Benefactor, and with generous ardour reflects and spreads abroad the glory of his goodness. It is delightful, as it exerts and entertains our best powers and affections upon their highest object, in contemplating, adoring, and enjoying the supreme Beauty and Good. It is advantageous ; as it tends to expand our minds, to exalt our conceptions, to increase our devout regards to the Deity ; to assimilate us to that perfect goodness which we adore ; to encourage and confirm our trust and joy in the divine administration ; to humble us with a view of our own littleness and baseness, compared with that transcendent greatness, beauty, and beneficence, which we celebrate ; to engage us to the most cheerful and vigorous services both to
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God and man ; and in a word, to make us habitually contented and happy, lowly and kind, virtuous and useful.

After all, the most direct and forcible bond and incentive to the duty before us arise from the consideration of God's mercies to us. These are so rich and free, so various and repeated, so constant and lasting, as to furnish inexhaustible and endless matter for thankful praise. Mercy has been pouring in upon us from every quarter, from the heavens and earth, from the air and the waters. It has enriched us with the blessings of creation, providence, and redemption. It has nursed our infancy, guarded our childhood, guided our youth, and supported our age.

But the occasion, on which we are convened, and the proclamation of our illustrious Chief, point our special attention to the political and public blessings, which distinguish our happy country.

How affecting is the contrast between our favored lot, and the condition of most, yea, in some respects of all other nations on the globe ! While war with unexampled fierceness, obstinacy, and carnage is harassing and desolating a great part of Europe ; while civil and spiritual tyranny still holds in slavish fetters the bodies and minds of a large majority of our species ; while the various systems of government and religion, of morals and customs, which prevail in most of the nations, are the offspring of political or priestly ambition, cunning and domination, combined with popular ignorance, credulity, and superstition, and operate in many respects to increase the debasement and corruption, the poverty
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and wretchedness of man ; in a word, while those three great scourges of heaven, the sword, famine, and pestilence are, by turns, almost constantly slaying their thousands in various parts of the old world ; our public and private situation exhibits the happy reverse of this picture of horror. We possess constitutions of government, local and general, which originated in our own free, peaceable, mature deliberation and consent ; which combine the principles of popular liberty and efficient energy ; which contain within themselves provisions for their own amendment and increasing perfection ; and which at this moment are dispensing unrivalled freedom and security, prosperity and satisfaction to every class of sober and industrious citizens, while they command the general admiration and envy of the world.

We likewise enjoy a distinguished share of external and domestic **PEACE**. How melodious the sound, how immense the value of peace ! It sheds a rich perfume, a fostering influence over all the blessings, connexions, employments, and satisfactions of life. O let us never forget the happy contrast, which our present tranquility forms to those distressing scenes of war, which gave birth and establishment to the American Revolution. What a dreadful mixture of suspense, calamity, and terror did we then experience ! Certainly the inhabitants of this place* must long retain the most lively impressions of the difference between the frowns of war and the smiles of peace. Under the former they beheld their business interrupted, their property spoiled, their accustomed

sources

* Charlestown was burnt by the British, June 16, 1775 ; and about 2000 of the inhabitants reduced from affluence or mediocrity, to poverty or great distress.

sources of wealth stopped, their beautiful habitations and town destroyed, and their beloved families involved in unutterable distress. But beneath the sunshine of returning peace they have seen their former splendor revive ; they have beheld a new city, in some respects more elegant and flourishing than the old, rising with wonderful speed from the midst of ashes and ruin. Yes, my brethren, we have all seen commerce and navigation, agriculture and manufactures, the elegant and useful arts, with almost every species of beneficial industry and improving science, suddenly acquiring new life and prosperity from the influence of general peace, directed and enlivened by our excellent national Government.

In this connexion, what gratitude do we owe to the Supreme Ruler of nations not only for blessing us with such a government, but for placing and continuing at the head of it a MAN, who is the delight and the boast of humanity ; whose personal virtues and talents have inspired the public mind with a veneration and confidence, which probably give him a greater influence in America than the mightiest potentate possesses in Europe ; an influence far more efficacious to regulate, to cement, and to bless the several parts of the Union, than the public authority, which the Constitution has given to the President. What degree of efficiency, therefore, really belongs to the Executive power itself, is a question which cannot be fairly decided, till some other man shall be chosen to administer it. In the mean time it becomes us to recognize with peculiar gratitude that enlightened, steady and vigilant patriotism,

otism, which has ever distinguished our Chief Magistrate, and which, during the late critical and dangerous times, has steered the political ship with such skill, fidelity, and success, as have equally gratified the friends, and confounded the enemies of our peace and prosperity. What praise is due to Heaven for giving to the Executive and Legislative Councils of our nation, in the course of the past year, such a glorious triumph over a formidable combination of internal faction and foreign influence *; for inspiring not only the President, but a respectable majority in both houses of Congress, and in our principal maritime towns, with such a temperate and dignified spirit; a spirit, which knew how to resent, and effectually demand satisfaction for insolent and injurious treatment received from a haughty nation, without madly

* The fatal effects of foreign influence, exciting and co-operating with domestic faction, have been and still are dreadfully exemplified in the recent history of Geneva. That little Republic, which for a long series of time was perhaps the most enlightened and free, the most virtuous and flourishing community on earth, has been suddenly convulsed and ruined by the operation of French politics on the Constitution and Administration of its government. Mr. Genet, who was afterwards employed in similar business in America, was the first Jacobin Emissary sent to Geneva, to prepare the way for the projected revolution in that city, designed to render it subservient to the views of the ruling party in France. Accordingly, a revolutionary government has been violently erected on the ruins of antient forms; a government, which, under the sacred name of liberty, has exercised the most iniquitous, cruel, and bloody tyranny; has robbed, banished, or murdered the most virtuous and respectable citizens; has destroyed the religion, the morals, the sciences, the arts, the property, the internal order and peace, for which that Commonwealth had been so conspicuous; insomuch that it hardly retains a single trace of its former splendor and happiness. See a Pamphlet intitled *Authentic History of the Origin and Progress of the late Revolution in Geneva*, written by a Citizen of that republic. This author pronounces Geneva to be "lost without resource." But we hope the favorable turn which the domestic affairs of France have lately taken, will gradually meliorate the condition of both these oppressed and distracted republics.—When we contemplate the scene of horror just described, can we restrain the most lively expressions of gratitude to that watchful and beneficent providence, which preserved us from a participation in the same calamities, to which we were exposed by the operation of similar causes?

madly sacrificing to the impulse of the moment the invaluable peace, property, and blood of our country? Blessed be God for the success of this firm, yet pacific, system under the management of a wise and faithful Envoy ; whose remonstrances and negotiations with the offending Power have issued in an amicable, and we hope, a justly satisfactory and permanent treaty between the United States and Great-Britain. Blessed be God that the spirit of impartial neutrality and peace still marks the character of our citizens in general ; that it has conspicuously operated in most of the late elections of federal rulers ; and that the prevalence of this sentiment, in conjunction with the present leading aspect of our public affairs, promises, under the divine benediction, a lasting confirmation of our national tranquility. Which brings us to observe that

Our domestic peace and order have derived great additional strength from the recent suppression of a dangerous insurrection in one of our Sister-States. While the paternal tenderness, wisdom, and firmness displayed by the President towards the deluded insurgents have attached new degrees of grateful respect and confidence to his person and administration ; the patriotic zeal and magnanimity with which many thousands of respectable citizens rallied round the standard of government ; the exact prudence and order, as well as immoveable constancy and perseverance of their behavior ; their speedy and complete success in extinguishing so formidable a rebellion without the effusion of kindred blood ; the sanction of public approbation and recompence which the
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national Legislature has given to their services ; the deep and salutary impression which this whole scene has made on the American mind ; these and many other concurring circumstances furnish ample matter for delightful reflection and thanksgiving. They assure us of extensive and durable good, as the providential result of a partial and temporary fermentation. They give additional lustre and strength to our Republican Constitution and laws ; they add a new and powerful cement to the happy union of liberty and order ; they tend to discourage and suppress those factious and unwarrantable combinations, which are equally hostile to good government and rational freedom.

To the political blessings already enumerated we might add the *natural* advantages of our country ; the vast extent of its territory, embracing almost all the varieties of climate, and the general fertility of its soil ; which fit it for almost every kind of valuable produce and beneficial occupation. We might notice the singular health, population, and plenty, with which it has been blessed. Above all, it becomes us thankfully to commemorate its high exaltation in RELIGIOUS respects ; its enlightened and free enjoyment of the christian revelation ; a system whose doctrines, institutions, and moral precepts not only instruct, purify, and comfort thousands of individuals, but diffuse knowledge and civilization, union and order through the Community, and thus contribute, beyond all human calculation, to our public, as well as personal happiness.

When we collect these various blessings into one
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mighty aggregate, can we avoid feeling the most forcible obligations to fervent and exalted praise? O let us express our gratitude, not merely by vocal ascriptions to the Deity, much less by transient effusions of joy and festivity, but by studiously imitating and obeying our divine Benefactor, and by suitably esteeming and improving his inestimable favors. For this purpose, let us earnestly labor and pray that our future conduct, and that of our fellow citizens, may be such as to recommend and promote the genuine spirit and blessings both of republican freedom and primitive christianity. Let us “fervently beseech the kind Author of our distinguished national privileges to imprint on our hearts a deep sense of our obligations to Him for them ; to give us a due estimation of their immense value ;” to save us from that restless, discontented, and murmuring spirit, which is ever ready to depreciate or to censure the most beneficent and prosperous course of affairs, merely from the impulse of unlimited, disappointed avarice, ambition, or vanity, or from the malignant feelings of envy and party animosity ; “to preserve us from that arrogant spirit in prosperity,” which disdaining the idea of dependence and obligation, affects to derive its happiness and security from its own conceited ability and merit, and proudly tramples upon the sacred rights and wholesome authority both of God and man ; to “restrain us from hazarding our real advantages by delusive pursuits,” especially by pursuing the splendid phantom of an undefined, romantic liberty and equality, which
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would at once clash with social order, moral justice, and the present frame and condition of man * ; “ to dispose

* Equal liberty, properly understood, is among the first of human rights and enjoyments. But this liberty may be as effectually destroyed by its own excess or abuse, as by exterior oppression. Even the freedom of men in a state of nature is restricted by the natural laws of their Creator, or the eternal rules of morality ; and this restriction constitutes its perfection and security, as it tends to keep its possessors, both from injuring themselves and oppressing one another. The design of civil government is to constrain the observance of these natural laws, and thereby complete the secure and happy enjoyment of liberty. The pursuit or exercise, therefore, of excessive, unrestrained liberty involves or produces real tyranny and slavery.—The late internal condition of France gives a dreadful sanction to these observations. The spirit of popular, aristocratic, and, may I not add, monarchical despotism, has cruelly oppressed that country under the forms and pretensions of high democratic freedom. An uninformed and furious populace, intoxicated with undigested notions of their own sovereignty, for a long time overawed, and in effect prescribed to the National Convention. This populace was artfully managed and inflamed by the Jacobin society, which, under the pretext of guarding and establishing republican liberty, usurped and exercised all the powers of an unlimited aristocracy. At length *Robespierre*, that famous popular incendiary, having by various arts acquired the real authority of an absolute monarch or dictator, secretly and efficaciously directed the whole political machine. These facts, and the shocking crimes and miseries which have attended or resulted from them, are attested to all the world by the present solemn declarations and measures of the French Convention and people ; who are gradually demolishing this monstrous fabric of tyranny, by correcting those intemperate ideas or wicked abuses of liberty, by which it was erected.

It is worthy of special notice that the false spirit of liberty and equality both in *France* and *Geneva* has pointed its peculiar vengeance against superior wealth, abilities, learning, virtue, and every other quality or circumstance which usually attaches an eminent degree of respect. The bare possession, yea, the most upright and beneficent use of these advantages, has marked out their possessors as dangerous aristocrats, and devoted them as victims to the avarice or envy of the ignorant and idle, the needy and profligate rabble, or their still more unprincipled and desperate leaders.—The natural and providential advantages just mentioned, by commanding peculiar regard and confidence, clothe their possessor with a superior personal influence, and thus produce an inequality among the citizens even under the most free and popular governments. But this inequality of influence is perfectly consistent with the possession of equal rights by all the citizens. The most violent advocate for equality cannot avoid feeling and expressing different degrees of respect and confidence towards different descriptions of his fellow-citizens ; though the claims of all, in his professed judgment, as well as in the sight of our constitution and laws, are perfectly equal.—When the superior personal influence just described is exerted to support the constituted authorities of our free and happy republic, as it is by the eminent federal characters through the Union, instead of violating, it secures the equal rights and dearest interests of the people at large. But if this influence, under pretence of guarding these equal

dispose us to secure the continuance of divine favors by not abusing them" to licentious and destructive purposes, and by manifesting "true gratitude for them by a correspondent conduct as men, as citizens," and as christians; "to diffuse and establish among us that useful knowledge, and those habits of sobriety and order, of morality and piety," which are eminently the basis and soul of a republic; which are equally necessary to public prosperity and individual happiness.

While we thus surround the throne of heavenly mercy with our united prayers, let us resolve to give them efficacy by suitable endeavors. Let us studiously exemplify in ourselves, maintain in our families, diffuse among our acquaintance, and transmit to succeeding generations the sentiments and manners of confederate republicans and sincere christians. Let

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equal privileges, be pointed against that government, which effectually secures them; if it be augmented and extended by a chain of political systematic associations, whose object is to control the elections and measures of our rulers, and whose members and proceedings, protected by the veil of secrecy, feel no restraint but that of conscience; in this case it becomes an unlimited and dangerous aristocracy, and unless defeated by the enlightened virtue of the citizens in general, may operate the same oppression and misery in the new world which it has effected in the old. It is not strange that many honest but ignorant people, under the deceptive influence of such an aristocracy, should be fired into jealous and factious opposition to the best government in the world. The great Neckar observes that it was an artful and successful contrivance of the French Jacobins to operate upon the multitude by two words, *liberty* and *equality*. "The people, adds he, are to be acted upon only by reducing things to a small compass: it is by restricting their ideas to the narrow circle of their feelings, and absorbing their passions in a single phrase that we become their masters. Criminal indeed are those who thus take advantage of their weakness, and practise arts to deceive and inflame them, rather than to render them happy by the sole authority of reason and morality." I cannot forbear adding, criminal and foolish beyond expression will be the conduct of Americans, if with all the light presented to them by the disorders and miseries of popular faction and tyranny in Europe, and by their own contrasted delightful experience of the blessings flowing from liberty and order, they should ever sacrifice or even hazard the latter by a delusive pursuit of the former.

us give our children an enlightened, virtuous, and pious education, and thus establish in their bosoms such principles and habits as may render them future pillars of American order, freedom, and glory. Let us vigilantly guard their minds and our own against the contagion of modern infidelity, dissipation and vice; against a spirit of base ingratitude and complaint amidst our present unrivalled prosperity; against ungrounded suspicions and censures of that Constitution of government, and of those public men and measures, to which, under God, we owe our confirmed tranquility and happiness. In this connexion you will permit me to mention it as a notorious fact, that our present established neutrality and peace, our assurance of indemnification for the injuries of British spoilers, the expected melioration of our commerce as the effect of the late treaty, with all the blessings resulting from these propitious circumstances, are owing, under divine providence, to the equally prudent and firm conduct of the President, and those members of the federal Legislature, who co-operated with his measures, and who on that very account have been absurdly and wickedly represented by some as odious Aristocrats and even British agents. All who have properly attended to the debates and resolutions of Congress, know that the great body of our Eastern Delegates, and among the rest the leading Members from this Commonwealth, have been able, steady, and successful supporters of the same impartial, conciliatory, yet spirited system, which the Executive authority has uniformly pursued, and which Heaven has crowned with its signal benedic-

tion. It is a well known fact that while these members advocated the plan of negotiation as the most fair and cheap, the most direct and successful method of procuring a happy accommodation ; they were equally zealous to place their country in the best posture of preparation for war ; and by thus uniting becoming energy and dignity with the spirit of conciliation they effectually defeated the hostile views of Britain, and induced her consent to terms of justice and amity. I mention these facts, not to inflame the spirit or promote the designs of party, but to engage your generous esteem, confidence and support to the worthy instruments of our common prosperity. Such grateful respect to the immediate and visible causes or mediums of our happiness is inseparably connected with pious gratitude to its supreme invisible Author. * I

* The intimate connexion between proper or improper feelings towards the instruments of our blessings, and a right or wrong temper towards their original source is strikingly exemplified in the history of ancient Israel ; whose unthankful and rebellious murmurings against God were ever combined with base ingratitude and complaint against Moses and Aaron, their greatest earthly benefactors ; as on the contrary, their expressions of pious thanksgiving and obedience to the Most High were attended with corresponding tokens of grateful veneration and confidence towards his beneficent public ministers. It deserves further notice that their murmurs were generally excited by the immediate pressure or prospect of great difficulties or perils ; which in some degree extenuates, though it by no means excuses their perverse behavior : but how much greater would have been their baseness and guilt, had they poured forth nothing but unthankful complaint in the very lap of ease and prosperity, and even loaded their rulers with censures and execrations for those very measures which procured them these blessings ! ! !—

The most precious requital, which the able and faithful servant of a republic can receive from his obliged constituents, is their *continued confidence and support*. To deny him this reward is great injustice both to him and to themselves. By refusing him their future suffrages they not only implicitly and ungratefully condemn his past meritorious conduct, but dismiss from their service his approved wisdom and integrity, his increasing stock of political experience, and the weight of character and influence which his public exertions have acquired ; and thus do themselves and their country a great and perhaps irreparable injury.

Though

I must add that since gratitude is a kind and generous affection ; since all men are members of one great Brotherhood ; and since the proclamation which has called us together, recommends the whole family of mankind to our devout and affectionate remembrance, it eminently becomes us to offer up our fraternal, our fervent prayers and thanksgivings in behalf of the magnanimous assertors of liberty in the European world. While we mingle our sympathizing tears and supplications with ill fated POLAND, crushed by the strong hand of foreign despotism ; let us send up to Heaven our joyful praises for its wonderful smiles on the cause of freedom in FRANCE, for the matchless energy and success with which a single unassisted nation has so long defended her rights against a most powerful, as well as iniquitous confederacy of kings and states ; for the pleasing prospect which she now has of ultimate and complete success against her foreign invaders ; especially for the gradual

Though the author felt it to be his duty to recommend the Eastern Members of Congress to the special gratitude of his fellow-citizens in this quarter ; yet he means not to express or to excite contemptuous or malignant party-feelings respecting Gentlemen in the American representation, who have supported different measures. He conceives that considerable diversities of sentiment on great and complicated questions ought to be expected among the rulers of an extensive community which combines so many various and even jarring interests and prejudices. He thinks too that it is but a just tribute both to our governors and ourselves to treat their personal characters and dignified stations with delicate respect, even while we freely canvass their public proceedings. In short he heartily echoes the following observations of a political writer. "The moment that delivers the United States from the danger of war, is the moment when all parties ought to embrace principles of conciliation. That danger being over, we have only to contend in opinion about foreign governments, or to quarrel for the loaves and fishes of our own. If instead of writing for party purposes, our ingenious men would now turn their attention to the improvement of our country, in education, commerce, agriculture, manufactures, laws and morals ; it is probable the virulence of party spirit would soon subside, and give way to returning confidence and social affection. Union and harmony are our true interest, and those who would disturb these, must be unfriendly to the happiness of their country."

nal melioration of her internal state by the influence of that moderate and beneficent system, which her supreme authority is endeavoring to establish on the ruins of a most atrocious and bloody faction. While humanity and christian benevolence weep over those torrents of human blood, which the internal confusions and the foreign conflict of this nation have shed ; while the spirit of science and the elegant arts beholds with indignation and grief the persecution and havock which Vandalism has committed on the authors and monuments of literature and refinement† ; while the genius of piety and of order laments that boasting infidelity and irreligion, that tumultuous and ferocious anarchy, which have unfortunately veiled the lustre, and retarded the progress of liberty ; while every sentiment of religion and of patriotism, as well as of private affection, calls forth our utmost vigilance in guarding our happy country from the poison of these foreign principles and manners ; it becomes us at the same time to rejoice in the great and benevolent designs, which Supreme Wisdom is undoubtedly pursuing by those actions and events, which fill the world with disorder and blood. We may confidently hope that these convulsive measures, under the direction of the Most High, will eventually shake down the antient and monstrous fabricks of civil and religious tyranny,

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† See *Gregoire's* late celebrated report, stating to the Convention the prodigious ravages of libraries and monuments of the arts and sciences, wrought by popular tyrants and their ignorant followers ; who are styled *Vandals*, because they resemble those fierce Barbarians of the North, who overran the Roman Empire. “ Republican Liberty is the daughter of cultivated reason,” and therefore loves and cherishes learning and the elegant arts ; while despots and false patriots, who are the enemies of Liberty, are hostile to their improvement and progress.

tear up old and deep rooted prejudices, clear away the rubbish of superstition and error, and thus prepare a free and open stage for impartial inquiry and discussion, and so for the future triumph of christian as well as political truth and virtue.* By some such train

* I cannot help particularly observing that not only the astonishing success of the French, and defeats of their insolent invaders, but even the errors and calamities of the former are adapted to convey much useful instruction to mankind, and thus to produce the most extensive and happy effects. The mistakes and disorders of our Allies, compared with the original principles and expected triumph of their general cause, experimentally teach the world such lessons as these :—that liberty and licentiousness are opposites, which mutually destroy each other ; that those persons and measures, which are important and beneficial in pulling down a despotic government, are often very incompetent and unfit to erect, support, or administer a government of freedom ; that a certain popular enthusiasm, which is necessary to repel the attacks of foreign invaders, is pernicious and destructive, when applied to regulate or control the internal established authorities ; that a political constitution may be so free as to destroy freedom by generating perpetual faction and confusion ; that a few self-seeking demagogues, by combining their influence, may poison the minds of millions, and impel them to acts of savage phrenzy, which otherwise they would have contemplated with horror—that a high ardor for liberty, not accompanied with equal knowledge and virtue, requires a corresponding energy of government to restrain it from defeating its own purpose, and that this energy must bear some proportion to the extent, as well as disposition of the community ; that great apparent zeal in the cause of reason, liberality, and universal freedom, is often no better than blind, superstitious, intolerant fanaticism ; that the most clamorous and boasting advocates of this cause usually possess the disposition, and if opportunity presents, exert the powers of the greatest tyrants ; that rational liberty, however professed by imprudent or deceitful votaries, is still the cause of justice and of heaven, and will therefore ultimately prosper, while its false or intemperate friends, as well as its open invading foes, shall be severely chastised ; and finally, that moral and religious sentiments are, above all things, necessary to permanent republican freedom and happiness. With astonishment the world has beheld a novel and bold experiment made by the French Politicians to establish their new government on the foundation of a merely civil and atheistical morality. The experiment has been fully tried. What has been its success ? The human mind, loosened from religious restraints, soon became wild and extravagant ; its boasted reason was intoxicated, its passions inflated, its sentiments debased, its manners brutalized. Social virtue and mutual confidence were awfully subverted. The general relaxation and even contempt of those principles, which are the only security of mutual fidelity and honor, produced universal disorder and disorganization. Viewing man as but an higher order of beast, and death as an ever-lasting sleep, no wonder the citizens of France plunged into such excesses, and in particular cruelly sported with each other's lives, and committed the violent extinction of a human being to a rival, yet in some instances a friend, and much less a murderer. Thus the dreadful principles of an atheistical

train of events we anticipate the full accomplishment of the glorious scheme of providence laid open in the predictions and promises of divine revelation. What a stupendous and magnificent scene do these contemplations exhibit to the pious and benevolent mind ! Under the impression of them can we forbear echoing the celestial song, AMEN, ALLELUIA ; FOR THE LORD GOD OMNIPOTENT REIGNETH. GREAT AND MARVELLOUS ARE THY WORKS, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY ; JUST AND TRUE ARE THY WAYS, THOU KING OF SAINTS.

O let the sublime and consoling prospect which is opened by the present operations of providence, compared with scriptural prophecy, animate our prayers for its speedy fulfilment in the universal prevalence

philosophy, combining with the ferocious spirit of faction and war, naturally account for those tremendous scenes of carnage, which have disgraced the present nation and the best cause in the world. Do not these facts testify to all mankind the indispensable necessity of sound religion and morality as the basis and security of social order and happiness ? Even the tyrant *Robespierre*, convinced of this necessity, recommended to the national Legislature the leading principles of natural religion and morals, and the Convention seriously echoed this recommendation, and gave a public sanction to these principles. When the more enlightened and sober part of that nation shall have leisure to look further into this interesting subject, they will be gradually convinced that the religion of nature derives its chief illustration, support, and practical influence from divine revelation ; that they mutually confirm and enforce each other ; and that the principles of christianity are eminently congenial to republican liberty and order. The result, we hope, will be a rational and welcome reception of the christian system, and a consequent experience of its happy effects.—I have dwelt so long on the affairs of France, because I consider her revolution as a stupendous and most instructive spectacle, exhibited for the general benefit of the world ; and because I think it of unspeakable importance to my fellow-citizens to distinguish accurately between the laudable and reprehensible parts of her conduct ; that we may be fairly affected and profited by both. As this distinction is forced upon us by the present sentiments and measures of the French nation, enlightened and matured by long and dreadful experience ; let us show a truly delicate respect to our Allies, as well as the most prudent regard to ourselves, by carefully separating their general character and conduct from those of a wicked and tyrannical party, which has brought infinite disgrace and mischief upon itself.

prevalence of christian piety and morality, and so of temporal freedom and happiness through the earth.

I am unwilling to close without quitting for a moment so extended a field of meditation, and bringing home the subject, by serious application, to the bosom of each individual in this assembly. We are now celebrating a second public Thanksgiving after a short interval of time from the annual religious Festival of this Commonwealth. Can we avoid feeling ourselves under a special call to examine whether our manner of observing these solemnities indicates the genuine spirit of religious gratitude? A thanksgiving-festivity, especially one so sublime as the present, which combines a very large and prosperous Community in one great effort of joyful praise, must naturally awaken some degree of transport in every breast. It rouses into operation a thousand sources of gladness. It cheers our animal frames with the dainties of luxuriant tables. It gratifies our selfish feelings with the contemplation of our personal prosperity, and our benevolent, patriotic affections with surveying and participating in the public felicity. It kindles our domestic and relative joys by the sight and enjoyment of agreeable connexions, particularly of blooming children or grand-children, like so many olive-plants, surrounding our tables. In short, it unites in one stream the various pleasures which flow from the recollection of past blessings, the fruition of the present, and a lively anticipation of the future. These natural feelings of rapture are proper, are beautiful on such an occasion. But let us seriously remember that the sentiments of true gratitude

on a solemnity like this rise unspeakably higher than the mere sensibilities of nature. The joy of the thankful christian, on this inspiring occasion, ascends to the throne of God ; it centers and terminates in his transcendent majesty, beauty and goodness ; it prizes and exults in the light of his countenance far more than in all the other sources of entertainment which this day presents. These pure and sublime feelings of devout thankfulness at once limit, consecrate, and improve our innocent inferior delights, and give them a humble and temperate, a benevolent and pious complexion.

And now, my friends, do your sensations and deportment on this festive day agree with this description ? Does conscience testify that you take pleasure, not in exalting yourselves, but in exalting God ; that you derive your principal satisfaction, not from selfish or carnal sources, nor even from high political and patriotic feelings for your country ; but from the nobler sentiments of piety and universal benevolence ; in particular from resembling and honoring your beneficent heavenly Father and compassionate Redeemer, by imparting comfort and happiness to your destitute and afflicted brethren of mankind ? Does not conscience bear witness against some of you, that your joy on this occasion is a selfish and proud, a sensual and extravagant, or at best a merely natural and civil delight ; and that you are secretly determined to go from this assembly and openly insult, in your practice, that infinite goodness and majesty, which you have now been solemnly thanking and adoring ? O how absurd, how vile is such a conduct !

duct ! If then we wish a blessing, and not a curse, may follow this oblation of public praise, let us aim to be honest and consistent characters ; let us cultivate an habitual temper of thankful and fervent devotion, and manifest it in all its various and lovely effects. Then shall we not only see good days here, but shortly unite in the elevated, the everlasting thanksgiving and felicity of the heavenly state.



APPENDIX.

AFTER the preceding discourse was sent to the press, a sermon delivered on the same occasion by the Rev. Mr. Bradford of Rowley was put into my hands. As this sermon contains many assertions and insinuations, which appear unsounded and improper, and unfortunately calculated to gratify and inflame a spirit of unthankfulness, discontent, and sedition ; I feel myself impelled, as I trust, by motives of benevolence, patriotism, and piety to bestow upon it some free but candid remarks. To this I am further induced by a wish to justify and give additional enforcement to the opposite sentiments of the foregoing discourse.

I shall pass over many exceptionable parts of Mr. B.'s sermon, which seem less important, or which evidently carry their own confutation. Among these we may reckon those sentences, which deny our exemption from foreign war, and affirm " that we have suffered much ~~more~~ by British perfidy, and Algerine malice the year past, than we ever suffered in a single year in our open warfare against Britain ;" that " the Indian war, &c. are evils which America *have* never heretofore felt ;" and " that our peace and tranquillity *wholly* depends on the success of the French Republic." To the same class we may assign his doubt " whether the Western Insurrection did not owe its rise to existing impolitic laws," his implied contemptuous representation of Mr. JAY's success at the British Court, his repeated reflections on the Author of the Proclamation for mentioning a number of articles *twice*, and the air of disrespect which surrounds even his high encomiums on that ILLUSTRIOUS CHARACTER. We shall also omit the numerous instances of careleßs, inelegant, and even

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ungrammatical composition, which distinguish his publication, and which have an inauspicious aspect on the literary character of the author, on the success of the cause which he espouses, and the reputation of those who have eagerly patronized and circulated his discourse.

In p. 13. after citing the clause, which directs us to beseech Almighty God “to dispose us to merit the continuance of his favors, &c.” Mr. B. criticises the word *merit* with great freedom, as if it necessarily imported a *strict and proper desert* of divine blessings. But the popular use of this or similar terms, yea, the application of them by christian Divines, and even by the sacred writers, often amount to no more than real or eminent virtue or moral goodness, and the fitness or congruity which there is in approving and rewarding its possessors. Thus certain characters are declared in the gospel to be *worthy*, and others *not worthy* of its spiritual and everlasting blessings. These terms are nearly coincident, if not equally strong with the expression before us. Agreeably, when we say, a people, who abuse their liberty, do not deserve to enjoy it, while they who thankfully and virtuously improve it, merit its continuance; we mean that it is morally fit that the former should be punished with the loss, and the latter blessed with the continuation of their privileges. Accordingly, the declarations of scripture and the conduct of providence have established a suitable and certain connexion between the moral character of rational creatures and the tokens of divine approbation or displeasure. The humble christian, then, while he rejects with abhorrence every self-righteous claim, every idea of strict merit, seeks to be more and more prepared for the reception and continuance of undeserved favors; and views such preparation as giving him a real title, by divine promise, to their bestowment.—A moderate degree of candor and de-

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cent respect will readily put this favorable construction on the objected expression in the Proclamation*.

In p. 16. and 20. Mr. B. severely censures the omission of the christian religion and the name of Christ in the appointment of a National Thanksgiving. The attachment of our beloved President to the christian religion has long been fully evinced by his steady profession of it and attendance on its sacred institutions; by his earnest recommendation of its principles to his fellow-citizens in his circular letter at the close of the late war; by the bright exemplification of its virtues in his public and private life, especially that conspicuous christian humility and piety, which have distinguished even his political addresses. The omission in question may, therefore, be accounted for, and perhaps fully justified by the following causes:—by the *special occasion* of the Proclamation, which appears to have been our recent confirmed exemption from foreign and domestic war, joined with our superior national prosperity;—by a modest wish in our Chief Magistrate to appear merely as the political Head of the Union, and not in any sense the Dictator of its religious opinions and worship, † and thus to keep at the greatest distance from that spiritual domination, which the monarchs of christian, as well as other nations have exercised; and finally, by a desire to unite in our general thanksgiving

* The theological writers of past ages, even such as were most celebrated for calvinian orthodoxy and accurate distinctions, ascribed one sort of merit to the performances of real christians, which they called *merit of congruity*, importing a kind of natural suitableness or correspondence between the action and the reward, though no proportion in point of real value; and including also a sure title to the reward by virtue of the divine promise. This they distinguish from merit of *condignity*, which denotes an equal value or due proportion of the work and the recompence. Perhaps merit in the former sense will eminently apply to national virtue and its corresponding reward; because it is eminently fit that public bodies, which do not exist in a future state, should be immediately and conspicuously treated according to their visible moral character. There is likewise much greater appearance of proportion between national virtue and temporal prosperity, than between the imperfect holiness of an individual and perfect everlasting happiness.—I have dwelt so long on this point, not to vindicate or recommend the common use of the word *merit* in the connexion before us, which I do not approve; but merely to show the impropriety, and defeat the ill tendency of our author's insinuations.

† The writer remembers a sentiment of this kind in the President's answer to an address presented to him by a Presbytery in one of the Eastern States.

giving *all* the inhabitants of our favored land, whether Christians, Jews, or Deists ; that those who were joint partakers of the national prosperity, might all conspire in celebrating its glorious Author. In this view some of our leading Democrats, who are avowed infidels, have peculiar reason to applaud this liberal omission !

In p. 17. and 18. Mr. B. pays a fervent tribute of respect to the *democratic associations*, which he styles *schools of political knowledge*, and affirms to have answered most excellent purposes in the time of the late war, and since. He asserts too that *the present liberty of France is greatly owing to associations of this kind*. It is granted that the *Jacobin Society* in France, as well as the *American Committees of safety* in the first stages of our late war, were probably useful in combining all parts of the nation into one vigorous system of opposition to tyranny * : but when a free government of their own choice was established and put into operation in the two countries, these associations were no longer needful or safe. The destructive effects of them in France have been noticed in the preceding discourse. Their unhappy influence in this country is sufficiently exemplified in that spirit of falsehood, of party and faction, which some of them, at least, assiduously and too successfully promote, and especially in the late dangerous and expensive western insurrection, which may be evidently traced, in a great degree, to the inflammatory representations and proceedings of these clubs, their abettors and friends.†

In p. 19. our author expresses his astonishment, that

* It ought to be remembered that our Committees of safety were not self-created usurping combinations of men, but regularly chosen and intrusted with certain powers by our several Corporations, under the auspices of our provincial Conventions, and general Congress, to answer important temporary purposes during our then unsettled and exposed situation. In these respects how unlike to the aristocratic societies now existing in America ! How unlike in their constitution, their objects, and their manifest fruits !

† See this matter largely and satisfactorily illustrated in the Rev. Mr Osgood's Sermon on the General Thanksgiving, p. 20--24. See also the fatal tendency of these associations amply shown in a Pamphlet, intitled *the Revolution in France considered*.

that the President should pass over in silence the late success of the French nation.—But would it have consisted with enlightened, just and uniform policy for the Head of a *neutral* nation, in opposition to his early, constant declarations and measures, to hold up, in a solemn public instrument, the triumphs of one of the belligerent powers over the rest, as an object of national gratitude and rejoicing ; especially at a time when a train of negotiation had been recently and successfully pursued to establish a fair and advantageous friendship with one of the defeated nations ! Has not the whole public life of the AMERICAN CHIEF, both military and civil, proclaimed his ardent and invincible attachment to the freedom and happiness of man, and consequently to the *general* cause of the French ? Did not his Commission to Mr. *Munroe*, the American Minister at Paris, explicitly confirm this attachment ? Yea, does not the Proclamation itself virtually embrace the success of the French Republic as a proper subject both of our intercessions and thanksgivings, by directing us to pray that God would impart *all* the blessings we possess or ask for ourselves, to the *whole* family of mankind ?—I must, therefore, in my turn, express my grief and astonishment that a religious teacher of the people should *cause them to err*, by seeking to inflame their minds with groundless and pernicious jealousies of their rulers as ungrateful and inimical to their French Benefactors and Allies, and of course enemies to the cause of liberty. Mr. B. lays great stress on the kindness and generosity of the French nation to us in the time of our distress. But to whom are we indebted for this generous assistance ? I answer, to the then existing government ; to the King, Nobles, and dignified Clergy of France ; to FAYETTE and many other illustrious patriots ; who have been either killed, or forced into distressing exile by the ruling party in the nation. To whom then are we to ex-

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press our gratitude? To our real benefactors, or to their mortal enemies?—I mention this, merely to show that the argument of gratitude is wrongly applied by Mr. B., as well as many other opposers of the impartial, pacific system of our federal government.

I must also declare my regret and surprize that so warm a friend to christianity as our author, should pass in silence the irreligion and infidelity of the French nation; that he should celebrate their cause and success in such a strain of high, undistinguishing panegyric and thanksgiving, as would too naturally lead his less informed hearers and readers into a blind enthusiastic admiration of all their sentiments and measures. Does not faithful friendship to the cause of Christ and to the best interests of man require the public teachers and defenders of the gospel explicitly to guard their flocks and their country against those sceptical irreligious principles, which come to them recommended by the boasted and fascinating charms of *reason* and *liberality*, and arrayed in all the splendor of a popular and triumphant Revolution?

In p. 16—20. Mr. B. is professedly occupied in supplying the many and great omissions of our Chief Magistrate! Such a needless display of vanity, such officious and pointed disrespect to the man, whom America, yea, the world delighteth to honor, will not, I presume find many admirers. I should blush for my country and for human nature, if the spirit, which breathes through this sermon, met with many congenial souls! I must add that all the objects of prayer, which our author affects to supply, are evidently comprehended in the spirit of the proclamation.

On the whole, the leading features of this discourse exhibit, and tend to excite the spirit of sullen gloom and unthankful complaint, rather than of grateful and joyful praise. The author studiously depreciates and
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almost nullifies many of those great blessings, which distinguish our happy country ; and thus casts a sickening damp on our pious gratitude to God, our thankful respect to his beneficent public ministers, our cheerful sensibility and improvement of the divine benefits.—Candor, however, obliges us to admit that error, prejudice, and passion, to which the best of men are liable, frequently present objects to our minds through a false medium and in a distorted shape. Even the loss of a *gourd* could so pervert the feelings and the understanding of a true Prophet of JEHOVAH, as to make him view life itself as a grievous calamity, and justify himself in angry murmurings against the conduct of Heaven. Let us not then be too much surprised, if we see a *christian prophet* betrayed into a degree of peevish discontent with that course of affairs, which has reduced his “fixed stipend into a sorry pittance,” and brought many honest and useful citizens into “a starving situation”*.—It is, indeed, a melancholy fact, that those circumstances, which have contributed to the rapid increase of our general prosperity, have greatly diminished the annual support of our respectable Clergy, and of many other individuals, whose subsistence depends on fixed nominal salaries, or a certain yearly interest in money. But if christian societies duly regarded the spirit and intention of their contracts, or the principles of common justice, humanity, and gratitude, this ground of complaint on the part of their faithful Ministers would, in this day of increasing affluence, be speedily removed. In the mean time it reflects no small honor on our public religious Instructors, that the depreciation of their yearly stipends, and the consequent straitened condition of some of their families have not loosened their patriotic attachment to that national government and social order, which, under God, are the basis of our general happiness.—The writer recognizes with pleasure the

* See p. 7. and 9. of his sermon.

the laudable zeal and magnanimity of Mr. B. in espousing the cause of government in this Commonwealth a few years since, amidst an alarming scene of discontent and insurrection. He remembers a public discourse of his in that trying period, the sentiments and spirit of which form a most striking contrast to the sermon before us. He, therefore, flatters himself that this recent publication of our author is not an exhibition of his steady, mature opinions and feelings ; but the hasty offspring of a misguided and gloomy interval, which will soon be lost in those more enlightened and patriotic views, which once marked his character. With this agreeable prospect he now takes his leave of him and the public.

