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SERMON

DELIVERED IN

#### St. PAUL's CHURCH,

On the 4th of July, 1786.

When the "Form of Prayer and Thanksgiving to Almighty God, for the ineltimable Blessings of religious and civil Liberty," was first used.

By SAMULL MAGAW,  $^{19+0-1912}$ .

Rector of St. Paul's in Philadelphia, and Vice-Provost of the University of Pennsylvania.

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BRARY OF CONGACOS.

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CONGACOS

CON WASHINGTON

# Benjamin Franklin, Esq.

## President;

And to all the Honourable Members of the Supreme Executive Council of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

### GENTLEMEN,

IT is with deference and esteem sufficient, perhaps, to render even intrusion excused, that I have presumed to inscribe the following little piece to so very respectable a body.

The true spirit of laws, in their principle, as well as operation, and the spirit of our religion, oppose not, but consociate with, one another. The teachers of the latter, should ever regard the faithful conservators and executers of the former, as friends to both; and preeminently the Ministers of God, and the Benefactors of man.

To

To you, under Divine Providence, the citizens of this commonwealth immediately look up for the propitious influence of wife, impartial government. They know, your object is, their firm possession and enjoyment of freedom, peace, and an expanded sweet equality. They know, you wish them to excel in virtue, in order that they may excel in character and happiness.

May the history of Pennsylvania, through the ages to come—be the history of Patriots, and of an enlightened, undivided, great, and good people!

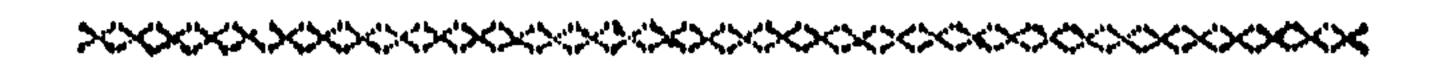
I am,

Gentlemen,

Your obedient, and most dutiful servant,

Sam. Magaw.

Philadelphia, ?
August 4, 1786.



#### Deuteronomy xxxiii. 29.

Happy art thou, O Ifrael: who is like unto thee; O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency!

tiful verses preceding them, have been fixed on, in our church, to introduce the fervice of the day: a circumstance engaging me, by predilection, to make them the ground of what I have now to offer.

11

No man did ever possess more piety, and real patriotism united, than Moses, the venerable conductor and lawgiver of the sons of Jacob. From these heroic principles, he resused the dignities and wealth of Egypt: he chose rather, for the people's welfare, to take his share in every difficulty and danger they had to conslict with. For their advancement too in that celestial wisdom which was to insure their happiness, and to prolong

long their days within the promised land,—" his doctrines incessantly dropped as the rain, his speech distilled as the kindly dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." They found in him, an able head, a warm affectionate heart, and an amazingly powerful hand; for the God of Israel was with him.

It is not very often that a true hero or patriot is born, or that men are railed up illustrious for great and good actions in the world. Of the names that have been founded loud and high by the breath of fame, more have been as scourges, and a curse to mankind, than any benefit or blessing.

Real usefulness both in the smaller, and the larger circles of life, depends chiefly on uprightness of intention, sincerity, and goodness: and it can only be expected from greatness of ability, when that greatness goes in connection with goodness.—Yet, let it be remembered, for the consolation of virtue, and her support, among whatever order of the people, or classes, she may be found, that, no labour of love, no act of beneficence, not even the silent breathings of an honest heart ascending from the loneliest cottage in the land,

and wishing to draw down grace and blessings on the public—shall ever, in the sight of heaven, be disregarded or forgotten.

THE chapter before us contains, "the blessing wherewith Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before his death."

His ministry and divine legation were soon to close: they had been sulfilled with distinguished sidelity, and attended with superlative success. The numerous people of whom he had the charge, had now passed through the tedious dangers of the wilderness, and were near their entry into the promised land. The only barrier that remained, was Jordan. Over this, however, he was not to go himself.

Preparatory to the resignation of his high trust, to Joshua his successor; and his ascent unto the top of Pisgah—having adjusted every great concern, and given his last solemn charge to that people whose prosperity was ever near his heart; he annexes thereunto a parting benediction. This had a respect, not only to the nation at large, but to every tribe distinctly and particularly considered.

THE stile is, in part, prophetic; descriptive of their several future fortunes and conditions: the spirit and manner of the whole is exceedingly sublime and animated.

He sets out with commemorating that instance of the divine goodness which concerned the United States of Israel, in general, (being a common blesfing to them all,) the Almighty's revelation of his mind and will to them, and the manifestation of his continual glorious presence, and condescending providence. "The Lord came from Sinai and rose up from Seir unto them: he shined forth from mount Paran, and he came with ten thousands of saints: from his right hand went a law given them out of the midst of sire." "Yea, he loved the people."——-He owned them for his son, and his first-born; he constituted them a venerable holy nation; re-established them under his special care, that he might instruct, and render them eminently happy.

HE forthwith proceeds to notice the preservation of the descendants of Reuben; to foretell their prosperous condition, though they were not so considerable in respect of numbers as some other tribes. "Let Reuben live, and not die; and let not his men be few." Simeon does not appear to be expressly mentioned here, inasmuch as [according to some expositors] that tribe was included in Judah, and "their inheritance" was blended with the inheritance of Judah: But it seems more probable that Simeon shares in the benediction of the first mentioned patriarch; and so his record stands in some ancient copies of this book.

The pre-eminent felicity of Judah is next obferved—"Hear, Lord, the voice of Judah, and bring him unto his people: let his hands be fufficient for him; and be thou an help to him from his enemies."

The designation and privileges of Levi do next take place. "Let thy Thummim and thy Urim be with thy holy One."—Let there be continued in this tribe the sacred priesthood—the exalted honour also of consulting heaven, and receiving divine instruction by the High Priest, in relation to the public welfare; or, make them upright and saithful, as well as able and discerning in the suffilment of their trust. "They shall teach Jacob thy judgments, and Israel thy law: they shall put incense before thee, and whole burnt offerings upon thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands."

B

THE next in their order are Benjamin, "The beloved of the Lord," dwelling in safety, and covered with the presence of his glory all the day long;—Joseph possessing a delightful, fertile country, blessed of the Most High, "for the precious things of heaven; for the precious things brought forth by the sun and moon; for the chief things of the ancient mountains;" and for the kindly produce of the earth, and the sulness thereof; and for the goodness of him that dwelleth in the heavens, and revealed himself in glory in the burning bush.

——Then follow "the ten thousands of Eph-RAIM, and the thousands of MANASSEH-;" " Zebulon rejoicing in his going out, and Issa-CHAR in his tents"—inviting the people to the facred mountain to worship in the house of the Lord—; Gad in possession of an ample inheritance, and presently enlarging it; dwelling in much safety, though encompassed with enemies; " coming with the chiefs of the people—executing the justice of the Lord, and his judgments with Israel"-; Dan endowed with the courage of "a young lion, and leaping from Bashan"—; NAPHTHALI " satisfied with favor, and full with the bleffing of the Lord"-; and, lastly, Asher, happy in a numerous beautiful offfpring;

spring; acceptable to his brethren; nourished with plenty; sustained with power; embellished with delight; favoured with numerous days, and a proportional increasing strength.

HAVING in this elevated descriptive manner, characterised the state of each particular tribe; and pronounced in favour of them, distinct peculiar benedictions,—he throws into one grand view, their general felicity, by representing the whole people as distinguished from every other, in having the most perfect all-glorious Being, for their Father, their Friend, their Saviour, their God; in possessing, under his gracious providence, every thing that could make them prosper;—enfured of victory, freedom, plenty, peace. "There is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in his excellency on the sky."——" The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms: and he shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, Destroy them.— Israel shall then dwell in safety alone: the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine; also his heaven shall drop down dew."----Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the fword of thy excellency!

THE considerations I shall now dwell on a little while, deduced particularly from this last recited passage, are the following—

THAT a nation, or people, counselled, protected, and assisted by the Almighty God, must undoubtedly be great and happy:

That the only way in which a people can secure and perpetuate this heavenly aid and favour, is in the extensive, general observance of purity and virtue:

That to retain a constant, deeply impressed sensibility of the care of Providence and the smiles of Heaven; and to express this often in the most public general manner, must have an excellent effect upon the public manners and conduct.——

THESE matters will directly lead us to what concerns ourselves at this day;—to review the past—to attend to the present—to look forward to the probable suture fortunes of this rising country.

I. The divine most blessed Being, whose protection and grace shed peace and goodness around individuals—doth often manifest himself to a people in their national capacity, as " a crown of glory,

glory, and a diadem of beauty." Before him, indeed, "all nations are, comparatively, as nothing; and they are counted to him, less than nothing and vanity." Yet doth he "humble himself to behold the things that are on the earth, as well as in the heavens." He, whose knowledge and superintendence are such, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered; and even a sparrow falls not to the ground without his order,—the same great Arbiter of every event, continually watches over the kingdoms and nations of the world, either to "build and to plant," and to cause them to prosper; or else "to pluck up, and to break down, and to throw down, and to destroy, and to afflict."

The grand extensive object of his various works and ways, is, the complete establishment of perfection and happiness. Through the revolution of numerous periods, this his illustrious work is carrying forward. All the occurrences and incidents that happen in the world; the several causes whether natural or moral, with their estects respectively, that any where take place, are no other than instruments, under his controul, for the advancement of his purpose: and, even where they appear not to the human eye to have that tenden-

cy, his over-ruling power continually conducts them to it.

The human species, by the appointment of the Creator, being parcelled into nations; and constituting, according to situation, times, and circumstances, distinct states, kingdoms, and communities; whatever is applicable to individuals, considered as agents in the divine hand, may likewise be applied to those public bodies, though still in a larger view.

As to the Almighty's arrangement, and providential allotment of gifts and qualifications, we may discern a very clear analogy between the state of individuals, and of nations. In the case of the former, the allotments are various, and of different degrees; so it is with the latter: And in regard to both, this maxim will always hold sure, that where much is given, the more (in point of duty and excellence) will be required.

It is in a national capacity, and within the diftricts of civil fociety, that men are capable of the greatest good, and have the opportunities of practising the most extensive virtues——

Theirs " are the plans of policy and peace, To live like brothers, and conjunctive all, Embellish life."——

It is here that humanity, benevolence, charity, can best have their generous operation: It is here, men learn to live, and also are taught to die, not to themselves alone. It is here, that God is best seen and adored, the Friend of individuals—the guardian God of nations.

Now, when He in his wise providence, to answer, and, as it were accelerate the completion of his gracious plans, chuses that this people, or the other, should eminently grow in power; possess extensive territory; enjoy a happy equality among themselves; a reasonable well-confirmed freedom; and withal, practife, and hold up to the world, a religion pure and undefiled;—the various circumstances relating to their earlier, or more advanced condition, he watches over, and manages for good; a spirit of general wisdom, economy, and prudence, he inspires; desenders of the public weal, able, determined, and faithful, he raises up and strengthens; events seemingly disastrous, he controuls, and renders salutary;—in dangers he encourages them; in conflicts he is their stay; and in the time of affluence and safety, their joy and their crown.

In this way did he peculiarly reveal and express his excellencies to Israel of old; so did he conduct,

conduct, inform, magnify, and bless the children of "Abraham his friend," in all things which they waited upon him for; and as long as their dependence on his sole power and goodness was dutifully shown in ardent piety, and uniform obedience.

—"Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help."—

II. I am led now to this next consideration, That the only way by which a people can ascertain, and render durable the Divine assistance and blessing, is, by attending duly to the unseigned practice of holiness and virtue.

cannot -

It is an established maxim in the order of things, and of very high authority, that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation," but "Sin is a people's reproach."—As naturally as correspondent essects slow from their immediate causes; so doth the happiness, or misery of nations, spring from virtue, or vice. That behaviour in the members of society, which is consonant to truth, regularity, uprightness, purity, must, unquestionably, give to all their affairs, the happiest adjustment and disposition; place them on the sirmest sooting, and insure to them the most success. Conforming to the rules of charity and goodness, they

cannot but advance each others ease and comfort: maintaining justice inviolate; adhering to a candid, impartial, disinterested conduct invariably—observing temperance, frugality, together with an animated diligence in all things; especially venerating most sincerely the Supreme Lord of the so-cial system; they must, with a collected, noble operation, build up, and render beautiful, the fabric of public happiness.

THE wise and gracious Ruler of the universe, delights in holiness and virtue.

"Whatever he delights in must be happy."

A temper, and fuch manners as refemble, in some considerable degree, his essential goodness, purity, and love, is that alone which blesses, and renders glorious an individual; the same will bless and glorify a number of individuals;—it is this which makes us happy, singly considered; it is this which will make us so, collectively.

We find the safety of states and countries in all ages, running parallel with the observance which they paid to the Divine Being and his laws. Religion and piety, even in countries where their true objects were unknown, had, we find, a propitious influence upon the public concerns: They fixed a restraint upon the passions of the people; they

heightened their moral fense; increased their ideas of a common interest; gave them a confidence in the time of dangers; firmness under trials; a modesty and temperance amidst their successes. The most slourishing periods of ancient Greece and Rome, were those, in which a regard to the Powers supposed to be above them, and the practice of their religion, even such as it was, did most obtain.

In that land where the true object of religious worship was known; where the only living God had been pleased to manifest his perfections, and his will,—the connection between piety and happiness, was eminently conspicuous; the direct relation subsisting between obedience to the heavenly orders, and the prosperity of the people, was every where discerned and felt.

You cannot be strangers to the great and goodly promises held up to Israel, grounded on this
condition, that they "should hearken diligently
unto the voice of the Lord their God, to observe
and to do all his commandments." As citizens
connected with the public—as members of domestic society—as venerable tillers of the ground—
possessor of slocks and herds, and owners of various property—as warriors too, called forth at
times

times to guard and defend their country;—in every place, in every circumstance; and whatever rank or character sustaining, they were to be successful and happy. "Blessed shall thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field; blessed when thou comest in, and when thou goest out.—I'he Lord shall cause thine enemies that rise up against thee, to be smitten before thy sace. He shall command the blessing upon thee in thy store-houses, and in all that thou settest thine hand unto.—He shall establish thee an holy people unto himself."

Now these things are for an example and encouragement to all nations which were to come after; — meanwhile, the evils threatened, the vexation, rebukes, and manifold calamities which did ensue, upon the general disobedience and ingratitude of that people, exhibit an awful warning—

III. A particular yet remaining to be considered, is as follows,

THAT to maintain a constant deeply-impressed sensibility of the care of Providence, and the favour of Heaven, in regard to the affairs of nations, as well as individuals; and to express the same frequently in the most public grateful man-

ner, tendeth to shed the happiest influence upon the public measures and behaviour.

Most certainly, that God who "is not far from every one of us"—in whom "we live, and move, and have our being," we ought in every thing to fee, acknowledge, and adore.—A prevailing perception of his presence, grace, and excellences, attended with such manners as that perception invariably produces, must constitute felicity, wherever it is found. A sense of God, and its delightful fervent operations, can alone constitute solid peace and pleasure.

THAT which holds true in this matter, with refpect to one or another of the human kind, may be transferred, as applicable to any number: that which can establish you, or me, in real quiet, serenity, and bliss, and produce as it were, a paradise regained, in each smaller circle to which we more immediately belong; can do the same to multitudes—, can constitute the peace, the order, the prosperity of consederated millions.

Is it not therefore desirable—is it not indispensably necessary, for the general welfare, that this divine sense should prevail wide and far? that, at the least, the major part of every community and state should possess its sulness, and show its power?—The more they know of God and his inestimable sayours, the more will they admire and love him; and the higher this admiration and this love,—the more uniform, exalted, and pure, the returns will be of acknowledgment and praise. And it must then follow, that the State will flourish in proportion.

THE Almighty Patron and Friend of pious individuals-the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, was the God of Israel as a nation; and he is at all times the God and Guardian of every nation and state, that pays a due respect to his superintending rule and majesty. Causes and effects are intirely at his command. Every circumstance, and every event, either by its immediate or ultimate operation, proves subservient, under him, to his divine purposes. It is He who alone can command a bleffing upon the counfels of a people, or confound their devices; who can strengthen and exalt them; or diminish and bring them low: who can open the heavens in their beauty, and shower down the abundance of his treasure; or shut them up in blackness, and send forth the terrors'of his anger. It is He who brings health and plenty smiling through a land—or bids the pestilence to cleave to the inhabitants, and famine to purfue

pursue them until they are consumed: It is He who gives them the victory in battle; or causes them to slee, or fall before their enemies.

In the seasons of public distress and evil, as it is a people's duty to humble themselves very deeply, and to exercise most solemn penitence; so, when it doth please the Almighty to crown the public with his benefits,—a general sense of gratitude, returns of thankfulness, in some degree proportional, must, in every view, be decent, becoming, requisite——

"O that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness; and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men! That they would exalt him also in the congregation of the people; and praise him in the seat of the elders!"

There are bleffings which speak with a distinguished energy;—which sill the soul with new, increasing pleasure,—which spread dissurely their influence and effects; adapted also to produce, and justly laying claim to, the devoutest praise of every member of society. Surely nothing should obstruct, or in any degree restrain, the spirit of holy praise, the exercise of lively thanksgiving "unto God even the Father, in the name of our

Lord Jesus Christ:" especially as he, whose precious merits give influence to the sighings and the sorrows of a contrite heart, and render still acceptable every request of the penitent and holy worshipper,—renders their thanksgivings also divine, and sits the lovely sacrifice for presentation before the throne of the excellent glory.

Ir then such pious sensibility were cultivated, and kept awake;—were it happily to spread abroad, and to become general; and at every proper season to be expressed in servent united acts of social worship; the people among whom it so prevailed, must prosper—the dispositions susceptible of happiness would grow upon them—; the temper disqualifying men for it, would decline;—the virtues which adorn society would all revive;—the vices which disgrace it would languish and die;—order, tranquility, and peace would be secured; freedom would be established; and the truest dignity and glory ascertained.

In the course of these several considerations, I cannot doubt, my honoured audience, but that you have been making, as we went along, some useful improvement of them. You could not but perceive the relation which they bear in sundry respects, to our own circumstances as a people, at

the present period. This indeed I have steadily kept in view, from my first setting out, and through the whole of what hath been suggested.—
To be yet more particular and express, may have its benefit.

The special purpose of our assembling now, you are all acquainted with. It is to recognise the Divine Superintendence in an event perhaps of as extraordinary magnitude as ever marked the annals of the world. It is, in the spirit of devotion to the Most High, and of good will towards mankind, to celebrate the memory of a day, from which our future fortunes are likely to derive a permanent complexion and establishment:—a day on which were laid, by the august Fathers of their country, "the perpetual foundations of peace, liberty, and safety."

THE morning of this anniversary, now the tenth in the course of revolving years, since the evermemorable æra, hath, with an undiminished joy, poured its radiance from yonder skies.—Its blithsome hours wast blessings on their wings. "The mountains and the hills break forth into singing." A glory shines around: and the Recording Angel slies to report, and write in heaven——

ANITHER YEAR OF FREEDOM TO A WORLD.

AFFECTION

Affection for the land we live in, must, at the least, be an innocent passion. The Amor Patriæ, a steady, glowing, disinterested love for one's country, hath, by the wise and good in every age, been held in estimation. This, as Americans, we cultivate with ardor, in perfect consistency, I trust, with the genius of the blessed gospel, and undivided from a sacred regard to the rights of all the kindreds of the earth. We wish, dependent upon none but the God of nations, to rise and prosper; yet, we wish not this prosperity,—heaven forbid! to the disadvantage, much less upon the ruins, of any people.

While we adore and bless the power of the Lord, for the revolution that hath taken place, it is in perfect persuasion, that it will issue in the noblest consequences; it is, in a consciousness "void of offence" to wards the people from whom we separated; it is, in clear conviction, that the very time was come, for our assuming a distinct, personal rank in the family of nations; it is, in the experience, that religious and civil liberty go hand in hand.—

I FEEL no inclination for refinement on a subject of this kind. Conjecture I would shun, as rather fruitless: and, the possible entertainment of

a speculating fancy, willingly forego. Matters of unquestionable sact, alone, and the consequences they are likely, in their nature, to draw after them, are to our purpose.

METHINKS I fee (and furely you discern with equal clearness) cause in abundance, to excite pleasure and exalted expectation;—though some, I must confess, for apprehension not so pleasing, and for regret.—In the distinguished aid and countenance of heaven, directing public measures, particularly at the conjuncture which we are looking back to; and in the conduct, still, of an illustrious few, we find the one: In a desiciency of measures since, to complete the system of our happiness; and in a too general want of virtue among the people, we can trace the other. But, I forbear to bring forward, at this time, any thing that might cloud the hopes we would most fondly cherish.

From the very rife of an arduous contest,—in what degree the counsels of America were illuminated from above; what special benediction and success attended the execution of them,—it is unnecessary, minutely to describe.

Whether we take a retrospective view of the host

host of dangers that have at times environed us, yet seasonably were dispelled;—our weaknesses, that have improved into strength;—resources sew and inconsiderable, growing into respectability;—occurrences disastrous on our side, soon issuing in our gain;—successes boasted of as brilliant on the part of our opponents, quickly terminating in their loss and disappointment;—and I may add, events numerous, diversified, shedding a positive renown upon the continental sederal proceedings, as pledges which bespoke the hastening full prosperity of that great country we inherit;—in all these circumstances and particulars, 'tis obvious beyond a question, that "underneath were the everlasting arms,"—that the Lord was the shield of our help.

In connection herewith, and in relation to the fame grand objects, and the Divine Arbiter of all, we place in the list of blessings—the tranquillity we enjoyed, even in the midst of war; the plenty that crowned the labours of the husbandman; the share of commerce slowing to, and from, our several ports; the means and opportunities of prostable knowledge, especially divine;—the amity confirmed, on principles of mutual good, between this country, and some of the greatest powers of the earth; the valour, perseverance, and fine order of the soldiery; the judgment, magnanimity, and enterprise

enterprise of the generals, and others in command; the temperance and humanity which adorned their victories;—the peace definitive that was agreed to, and an undisputed possession of our liberties and inaependence. Such are the accumulated facts and occurrences, dignifying the mighty business we have had in hand.

THE lines having fallen unto us in pleasant places, and our heritage being so goodly; the preservation and perfection of these blessings, should now be our leading aim. We can preserve and perfect them, only by revering their Great Bestower, and practising the virtues which he hath commanded, and delights in.

Senators, and Guardians of this rising Republic! Your abilities and nobleness of mind allow you not to doubt, that the felicity of a country depends on the virtue of its inhabitants; and the virtue of its inhabitants, on their being endued with a pure and manly piety. Unless the Divine Being hath the hearts of the people,—your laws will be considered as ungracious restraints; they will never sweetly draw, and rationally bind their affections. Unless their principles be rendered uncorrupt, and their morals pure, your very best contrived systems of policy—your most

most approved forms of government—your wisest plans of union and confederation, will never infure to the Public, stability, or happiness. Honour and recommend the religion therefore which constitutes the people's wisdom and welfare, by making them fear God; this will give your institutions an hold in their judgments and consciences, that no other principles can effect. Fix the credit of Christianity among them, and spread its glory by the lustre of Your Examples.

CITIZENS OF THESE STATES!——You are in possession of an extensive, noble country. Fertility and beauty vie with each other, in favour of your ease, accommodation and delight. Freedom, with its train of multiplying benefits, is here established as your own. Every avenue to national importance, and the felicity of individuals, is oper ed wide.——You will not be unmindful, I trust, of the mighty Giver of this wonderful prosperity. It is in obeying the God of your Fathers, that you will find his ancient mercies renewed; and all that have been lately bestowed, entailed upon you for ever. Your safety, your righteousness, and unchangeable excellency, will be in a conversation fuch as becometh the gospel. Proceed in every thing that is just, and venerable, and praise-worthy. Go on to love and cherish one another, as mem-

bers

" Can

bers of the same illustrious Family. Let your Union be indissolvable; and its Bond all the virtues that can adorn humanity. So will you, and your children's children after you, "sing with GLADNESS FOR JACOB, AND SHOUT AMONG THE CHIEF OF THE NATIONS."

#### F I N I S.

Page 12, line 15, for manners read measures.