

S E R M O N,

PREACHED IN NEW-YORK, JULY 4th, 1793.

B E I N G T H E

A N N I V E R S A R Y

O F T H E

I N D E P E N D E N C E O F A M E R I C A :

AT THE REQUEST OF THE

TAMMANY SOCIETY, OR COLUMBIAN ORDER.

By SAMUEL MILLER, A. M.

ONE OF THE MINISTERS OF THE UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES, IN
THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

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M. P. W. 4 Aug. 1793

In Society, July 4, 1793.

RESOLVED, That the Thanks of this Society be returned to the Rev. Mr. SAMUEL MILLER, for his elegant and patriotic Discourse, delivered by him, before the Society, this Day.

ORDERED, That Brothers Rodgers, Mitchell, and Ker, be a Committee to wait on Mr. MILLER, for this Purpose, and to request a Copy for the Press.

A true Copy from the Minutes,

BENJAMIN STRONG, Secretary.

TO THE
TAMMANY SOCIETY,
OR
COLUMBIAN ORDER—

WHOSE PRINCIPLES OF ASSOCIATION

MERIT THE HIGHEST APPLAUSE—

AND WHOSE PATRIOTIC EXERTIONS

DEMAND THE WARMEST GRATITUDE

OF EVERY AMERICAN—

THIS SERMON,

Delivered and published at their Request,

Is respectfully dedicated,

By their Fellow-Citizen,

THE AUTHOR.

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

THE following Discourse is published, almost verbatim, as it was delivered, excepting the addition of the Notes. It was composed on very short Notice—amidst many pressing Avocations—and, consequently, in great Haste. These Circumstances, together with the want of Abilities and Experience in the Author, must apologize for its indigested and defective Appearance.

CHRISTIANITY

THE
GRAND SOURCE, AND THE SUREST BASIS,

OF
POLITICAL LIBERTY:

A SERMON.

II. CORINTHIANS, iii. 17.

—AND WHERE THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD
IS, THERE IS LIBERTY.

IN contemplating national advantages, and national happiness, numerous are the objects which present themselves to a wise and reflecting patriot. While he remembers the past, with thankfulness and triumph; and while he looks forward, with glowing anticipation, to future glories, he will by no means forget to enquire into the secret springs, which had an active influence in the former, and which, there is reason to believe, will be equally connected with the latter.

THESE ideas naturally arise, in the mind of every American citizen, especially on this

Anniversary of our country's natal hour. While we review, with gratitude and exultation, the various steps which have paved the way, for our political advancement, we are obviously led to search for the happy principles, which laid at the foundation of these—And while we suffer fancy to draw aside, for a moment, the veil which covers futurity, and to disclose its bright scenes, we cannot overlook the same objects, on the extension and farther influence of which, we are to build our hopes.

We have convened, indeed, principally to celebrate the completion of another year of freedom to our western world. We are to keep this day as a memorial of the time which gave rise to the precious privileges we enjoy, as a sovereign and independent people. It may, therefore, be imagined, that our only proper employment, on the present occasion, is, to take a retrospect of the interesting scenes, which that glorious æra presented to the mind, and to recount the noble achievements, which, under the direction of infinite wisdom, laid the foundation of our prosperity and happiness. But

Why should our chief attention be directed toward these objects? They are objects, indeed, upon which to gaze, delights and elevates the patriotic mind. They are objects, which, to lose sight of, is to forfeit the character of a faithful citizen. But, at the same time, they are objects too familiar to all present to need the formality of repetition. I address many of those who were near witnesses of these stupendous transactions; and not a few who were agents in the important work. Whose hearts burn within them, at the recollection of events, which the world beheld with amazement: and who view with transport, the political greatness which these events were the means of ushering in, and establishing in our country.

In an audience of this description, then, where is the necessity of my trespassing on your patience, by a bare recital of what is so well known, and so feelingly remembered? Where is the need of my attempting, with minute care, to call up to your view, the patriotic and wise management of our counsels, in those trying times—the fortitude and enthusiastic ardor of our heroes—the splen-

dor of our conquests—or the dignity and glory to which we are exalted by the supreme Arbiter of nations? Rather let us turn our attention to the grand *Source*, from which we are to expect the long continuance, and the happy increase of these invaluable gifts of heaven.

AND to this choice of a subject I am also led by the recollection, that the respectable SOCIETY to which this discourse is, in a particular manner, addressed, hold up, as the great object of their attention, every thing that may tend to promote the progress of civil liberty, and to transmit it, pure and undefiled, to the latest posterity. They profess to stand as guardians over those inestimable rights and privileges, which have been so dearly purchased, and, in general, to seek, in every form, the advantage of their country. To an association established upon such laudable principles, nothing that is included in these great outlines of their system, can be considered either as foreign to their plan, or beneath their attention. Nothing can be considered entirely inapplicable to their designs, in celebrating this auspicious day, that

is, in any degree, connected with the promotion of public dignity and happiness.

It is under this impression, my fellow citizens, that I propose, on the present occasion, to offer you a few general remarks on the important influence of the Christian religion in promoting political freedom. And, as the foundation of these remarks, I have chosen the words which have just been read in your hearing.

I am well aware, that these words, taken in their proper sense, have a principal reference to liberty of a different kind from that to which I would accommodate and apply them. They refer to that glorious deliverance from the power, and the ignoble chains of sin and satan, which is effected by the Spirit of the Lord, in every soul, in which his special and saving influences are found. They point out, also, that release from the bondage of the legal administration, which the gospel affords to all who receive it in sincerity and truth.—But, as I am persuaded the proposition contained in our text is equally true, whether we understand it as

speaking of spiritual or political liberty, we may safely apply it to the latter, without incurring the charge of unnatural perversion.

THE sentiment, then, which I shall deduce from the text, and to illustrate and urge which, shall be the principal object of the present discourse, is, *That the general prevalence of real Christianity, in any government, has a direct and immediate tendency to promote, and to confirm therein, political liberty.*

THIS important truth may be established, both by attending to the nature of this religion, in an abstract view ; and by advert- ing to fact, and the experimental testimony with which we are furnished by history.

THAT the corrupt passions and the vices of men, have, in all ages of the world, been the grand source and support of tyranny, and of every species of political and domestic oppression, is a truth too well known, and too generally admitted, to require formal proof, on the present occasion. A moment's reflection on the nature of tyranny, and of those dispositions in the constituent members of society, which lead to its origin

and advancement, is sufficient to convince every unprejudiced mind, that human depravity is the life and the soul of slavery. What was it that first raised this monster from the infernal regions, and gave him a dwelling among men, but ignorance, on the one hand, and on the other, ambition and pride? These his complotters and associates, proceeding in a state of indissoluble connection, have always held up his deformed head, and wielded his iron rod. Together they have invariably come into being—together they have lived and flourished—and into one common grave have they sunk at last.

THE truth is, that political liberty does not rest, solely, on the form of government, under which a nation may happen to live. It does not consist, altogether, in the arrangement or in the balance of power; nor even in the rights and privileges which the constitution offers to every citizen. These indeed, must be acknowledged to have a considerable effect in its promotion or decline. But we shall find, on a close inspection, that something else is of equal, if not of greater

importance. Cases may easily be conceived, where, without a single material or glaring deficiency, in any of these, true and desirable liberty may be almost unknown; and, on the other hand, where, under the most wretched organization of government, the substance of freedom may exist and flourish. Human laws are too imperfect, in themselves, to secure completely this inestimable blessing. It must have its seat in the hearts and dispositions of those individuals which compose the body politic; and it is with the hearts and dispositions of men that Christianity is conversant. When, therefore, that *perfect law of liberty*, which this holy religion includes, prevails and governs in the minds of all, their freedom rests upon a basis more solid and immoveable, than human wisdom can devise.—For the obvious tendency of this divine system, in all its parts, is, in the language of its great Author, to bring *deliverance to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to undo the heavy burthens; to let the oppressed go free; and to break every yoke.* But to be more particular—

THE prevalence of real Christianity, tends to promote the principles and the love of political freedom, by the *doctrines* which it teaches, concerning the human character, and the unalienable rights of mankind; and by the *virtues* which it inculcates, and leads its votaries to practice.—Let us take a hasty view of each of these—

CAN oppression and slavery prevail among any people who properly understand, and are suitably impressed with, those great Gospel truths, that all men are, by nature, equal—children of the same common Father—dependent upon the same mighty power, and candidates for the same glorious immortality? Must not despotism hide his head in those regions, where the relations of man to man are distinctly realized—where citizens, of every rank, are considered as a band of brethren, and where the haughty pretensions of family and blood, are viewed in all their native absurdity, and in those odious colours in which this sublime system represents them? In short, must not every sentiment, favorable to slavery, be forever banished from a nation, in which,

by means of the benign light of the glorious Sun of righteousness, all the human race are viewed as subject to the same great laws, and amenable to the same awful tribunal, in the end.

CHRISTIANITY, on the one hand, teaches those, who are raised to places of authority, that they are not intrinsically greater than those whom they govern; and that all the rational and justifiable power with which they are invested, flows from the *people*, and is dependent on their sovereign pleasure.— There is a love of dominion natural to every human creature; and in those who are destitute of religion, this temper is apt to reign uncontrouled. Hence experience has always testified, that rulers, left to themselves, are prone to imagine, that they are a superior order of beings, to obey whom, the ignoble multitude was made, and that their aggrandizement is the principal design of the social compact. But the religion of the Gospel, rightly understood, and cordially embraced, utterly disclaims such unworthy sentiments, and banishes them with abhorrence from the mind. It contemplates the

happiness of the community, as the primary object of all political associations—And it teaches those, who are placed at the helm of government, to remember, that they are called to preside over *equals* and *friends*, whose best interest, and not the demands of selfishness, is to be the object of their first and highest care.

On the other hand, Christianity, wherever it exerts its native influence, leads every citizen to reverence himself—to cherish a free and manly spirit—to think with boldness and energy—to form his principles upon fair enquiry, and to resign neither his conscience nor his person to the capricious will of men. It teaches, and it creates in the mind, a noble contempt for that abject submission to the encroachments of despotism, to which the ignorant and the unprincipled readily yield. It forbids us to call, or to acknowledge, any one master upon earth, knowing that we have a Master in Heaven, to whom both rulers, and those whom they govern, are equally accountable. In a word, Christianity, by illuminating the minds of men, leads them to consider

themselves, as they really are, all *cō-ordinate terrestrial princes*, stripped, indeed, of the empty pageantry and title, but retaining the substance of dignity and power. Under the influence of this illumination, how natural to disdain the shackles of oppression—to take the alarm at every attempt to trample on their just rights; and to pull down, with indignation, from the seat of authority, every bold invader!

BUT again—The prevalence of Christianity promotes the principles and the love of political freedom, not only by the *knowledge* which it affords of the human character and of the unalienable rights of mankind, but also by the *duties* which it inculcates, and leads its votaries to discharge.

THE fruits of the spirit are, justice, love, gentleness, meekness, and temperance: Or, in other words, these are among the distinguished graces and duties, which the Christian system not only commands us constantly to regard, but which it creates in the mind, and which are found to prevail, in a greater or smaller degree, in all who sincerely adopt it. Now these are unquestionably

the grand supports of pure and undefiled Liberty.—They stand equally opposed to the chains of tyranny, and to the licentiousness of anarchy.

It is a truth denied by few, at the present day, that political and domestic slavery are inconsistent with *justice*, and that these must necessarily wage eternal war—So that, wherever the latter exists in perfection, the former must fly before her, or fall prostrate at her feet. What, then, would be the happy consequence, if that golden rule of our holy religion, which enjoins, that we should do unto all men whatever we would wish that they should do unto us, were universally received and adopted? We should hear no more of rulers plundering their fellow citizens of a single right; nor of the people refusing that obedience to equitable laws, which the public good requires. We should see no oppressor claiming from his equals, a subjection which they did not owe; nor should we see the latter lifting up their lawless hands, to resent the reasonable requisitions of an authority constituted by themselves. In short, were this principle

universally to predominate, we should see nothing, on the one side, but demands founded on a sincere regard to the general interest; and, on the other, that ready compliance, which promotes the peace and happiness of society.

No less extensively beneficial in its effects on civil liberty, is that pure and refined *benevolence*, which the Christian system inculcates, and establishes in the minds of those who are under its government. Though the constitution of a country be ever so defective; yet if every rank of citizens be under the habitual influence of that universal charity and good will, which is one of the distinguished glories of our holy religion, there will freedom substantially flourish. To suppose that oppression, with the numerous hell-born woes, which follow in his train, can be cherished in regions, where the mild Spirit of benevolence and love reigns, is to suppose that the most discordant principles are capable of uniting; that demons of darkness, and angels of light can dwell together in harmony.—Impossible! Wherever that heavenly temper is found, which, like the Deity himself, de-

lights in showering down blessings, both on enemies and friends; there will the unalienable rights of men be acknowledged, and every infringement of them will be viewed with abhorrence.*

NOR let us omit to take notice of the peculiar *temperance* and *moderation*, which the Gospel system joins. These are of no less importance, with respect to their influence on political happiness, in general, and especially as they affect the interest of civil liberty. It is an observation as old as the fact upon which it is founded, that nothing more certainly tends, to subvert the principles of freedom, and abate a laudable enthusiasm for republican equality, than a de-

* Here it will, perhaps, be objected, that however just these remarks may appear in theory, yet their force is not a little weakened, by adverting to the numerous persecutions and wars, to which Christianity has given rise.—But let it be remembered, that Christianity has been more frequently the mere pretext, than the true motive, of those multiplied acts of cruelty and intolerance, which sully the pages of history. Generally have the offspring of ambition, revenge, or some equally corrupt principle, been attributed to religion, and supposed to have nothing else for their origin. But admitting for a moment, that Christianity has in reality, been the cause of much mischief of this kind; yet it was Christianity shamefully misunderstood, and impiously perverted. It was not the pure and benevolent system of the Gospel, but blind zeal and mad fanaticism.

parture from that simplicity of manners, and that prevailing moderation, which our religion inculcates and promotes. Ever since the establishment of civil society, the words of the Roman Poet, when speaking of his own country, have been applicable to most great empires——

Sævior armis
Luxuria incubuit, victumque ulciscitur orbem.

JUV.

BUT for this evil, there is no preventive that promises so much success, no cure so effectual, as that which is here presented. Christianity, more powerful than human strength, and more efficacious than human law, regulates the passions, and roots out the corruptions of men. It not only tames the savage breast, and gives a deadly blow to barbarity of manners; but also tends to quench every extravagant thirst for power; to beat down every high thought, that exalteth itself against the general good; and to render men contented with those rights which the God of nature gave them. While these dispositions prevail, slavery must stand at an awful distance, bound in chains, and

—— Liberty, fair daughter of the skies !
Walk in majestic splendor o'er the land,
Breathing her joys around ——

HAVING thus contemplated, in an abstract view, the native tendency of the Christian religion, to promote civil liberty; let us now take our stand with History, that mistress of wisdom, and friend of virtue, who from her exalted station, causes human events to pass in review, before her impartial tribunal.

WHEN we compare those nations, in which Christianity was unknown, with those which have been happily favored with the light of spiritual day, we find ample reason to justify the remarks which have been made. It may be asserted, with few exceptions, that there never was a regularly organized government, since the foundation of the world, where the true religion was not received, in which political slavery did not hold a gloomy reign.*—It has been general-

* To relate the enormities of despotism, and the consequent degradation and wretchedness to which human nature has been reduced, in many parts of the globe, would be equally shocking and incredible to an American ear. How must the lives and fortunes of men have been trampled upon, among the Mexicans, when, at the dedication

ly found, indeed, that in proportion as the faint glimmerings of the light of nature, with which Pagan nations were favored, gathered strength, and grew in brightness, in the same proportion has something like social freedom been promoted and extended. But these glimmerings have still proved inadequate to the desirable purpose, of imparting to their liberty a consistent and permanent character.* As examples of this truth, you will readily recur to the African and Asiatic kingdoms, not excepting some in other quarters of the globe.

On the other hand, it may be observed, with equal confidence, and with fewer exceptions, that there never was a government, in which the knowledge of pure and undefiled Christianity prevailed, in which, at the same time, despotism held his throne with-

of their great temple, we are told they had 60 or 70,000 human sacrifices; and that the usual amount of them, annually, was about 20,000! See Clavigero's History of Mexico, vol. I. page 281.

* *The republics of Greece and Rome must be acknowledged, in some degree, exceptions to this general remark. But even among them, numerous were the instances in which the aspect of their political affairs bore testimony to their sad want of Christian knowledge.*

out controul.* It is true indeed, that in the Christian world, during those centuries wherein gross superstition reigned, and the truth was buried in darkness, slavery reared his head, and scattered his poison among men. It is true, that then, the cloud of oppression sat thick and deep over the nations, and the world was threatened with a relapse into ancient barbarity. But when, at the auspicious æra of the reformation, the great source of day rose again upon the benighted world; when the true knowledge of the Lord revived, the truth speedily made men free. When, in this splendid and glorious light, they began to see what they were, and what they ought to be; they delayed not to cast off their chains, and to assert their rights, with dignity and independence. This is the light, which ever since those days, has been gradually undermining the throne of tyranny in Europe.† This is the light, which, ga-

* “Christianity, says Baron Montesquieu, has prevented despotism from being established in Ethiopia, notwithstanding the heat of the climate, the largeness of the empire, and its situation in the midst of African despotic states.”

† One of the bitterest enemies of Christianity, Mr. Hume, observes, that “the precious sparks of liberty were kindled and preserved by

thering strength and refinement, by its passage over the mighty deep, hath kindled a flame in this western world, which, we trust, will continue to blaze, with encreasing brightness, while the Sun and Moon shall endure.

NOR is it political slavery alone, that yields to the mild and benign Spirit of Christianity. Experience has shewn, that domestic slavery also flies before her, unable to stand the test of her pure and holy tribunal. After the introduction of this religion into the Roman empire, every law that was made, relat-

the Puritans in England; and that, to this sect, whose principles appear so frivolous, and whose habits so ridiculous, the English owe the whole freedom of their constitution." The unfounded and malicious reflection which this passage contains, deserves no comment. The concession is worthy of notice, as it is the concession of an adversary.

It may also be mentioned, in this place, that out of the 17 provinces of the Low Countries, which groaned under the tyranny of Philip II. only the 7, now called the United Provinces, which admitted and established the principles of the reformation, succeeded in their attempts to throw off the Spanish yoke. The rest, indeed, made a faint effort to gain their liberty, but failed; and are not, to this day, a free people. A remarkable testimony, that Christianity can only be expected to exert her native influence, and produce the happiest effects, when she appears in her beautiful simplicity, stripped of that gaudy and deforming attire, with which corrupt and ambitious men have ever been disposed to clothe her.

ing to slaves, was in their favor, abating the rigors of servitude, until, at last, all the subjects of the empire were reckoncd equally free.*

HUMANITY, indeed, is still left to deplore the continuance of domestic slavery, in countries blest with Christian knowledge, and political freedom. The American patriot must heave an involuntary sigh, at the recollection, that, even in these happy and singularly favored republics, this offspring of infernal malice, and parent of human debasement, is yet suffered to reside. Alas, that we should so soon forget the principles, upon which our wonderful revolution was founded!

* *When Pope Gregory the great, who flourished toward the end of the 6th century, gave liberty to some of his slaves, he offered this reason for it——“Cum Redemptor noster, totius Conditor naturæ, ad hoc propitiatus, humanam carnem volueret assumere, ut divinitatis suæ gratia, dirempto (quo tenebamur captivi) vinculo, pristina nos restitueret libertati : salubriter agitur, si homines, quos ab initio liberos natura protulit, et jus gentium jugo substituit servitutis, in eâ, quâ nati fuerant, manumittentis beneficio, libertati reddantur.”* Gregor : Magn : ap. Potgiess : lib. iv. c. 1. sect. 3. *What a triumph is here exhibited, of Christian principles, over the sordid dictates of pride and selfishness ! Would to God we could more frequently hear this language, and see corresponding practice, in Christians of the present day !*

But, to the glory of our holy religion, and to the honor of many benevolent minds, this monster has received a fatal blow, and will soon, we hope, fall expiring to the ground. Already does he tremble, as if his destruction were at hand.—With pleasure do we behold many evident presages of the approaching period, when Christianity shall extend her sceptre of benevolence and love over every part of this growing empire—when oppression shall not only be softened of his rigours; but shall take his flight forever from our land.

THAT happier times, and a more extensive prevalence of liberty, are not far distant, there are numerous reasons to believe.—If so signal and glorious has been the influence of Christianity, in promoting political and domestic freedom, notwithstanding her restrained and narrow operation among men, what may we not expect, when her dominion shall become universal? If such have been her trophies, amidst so much opposition, and the continual struggles of contrary principles, what may we not indulge the

hope of seeing, when her empire shall be co-extensive with terrestrial inhabitants—when *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the depths of the sea?*

THEN, may we not conclude, that universal harmony and love, and as the necessary consequence of these, universal liberty, shall prevail? Then, may we not confidently hope, that oppression shall be as much abhorred, and as much unknown, as freedom is, at present, in many parts of the globe? That the name of *man*, of whatever nation, or kindred, or people, or tongue, shall then be the signal of brotherly affection:—When the whole human race, uniting as a band of brethren, shall know no other wishes, than to promote their common happiness, and to glorify their common God:—When *there shall be nothing to hurt nor destroy in all the holy mountain of God—when the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose; and when the kingdoms of this world, shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ?*

IMAGINE not, my fellow citizens, that these are the flights of a vain and disordered

fancy. The sacred volume teaches us to *comfort one another with these words*, and to triumph in the glorious prospect. The Author of truth himself, bids us look forward, with joy and gladness, to——

“The blest Immanuel’s gentle reign;”—
when, from the rising of the Sun, to the going down thereof, his name shall have free course and be glorified.

To the introduction of these happy days, it seems as if the present time afforded many hopeful preludes. Can we turn our eyes to the European states and kingdoms—can we behold their convulsive struggles, without considering them as all tending to hasten this heavenly æra? Especially, can we view the interesting situation of our AFFECTIONATE ALLIES, without indulging the delightful hope, that the sparks, which are there seen rising toward heaven, though in tumultuous confusion, shall soon be the means of kindling a general flame, which shall illuminate the darkest and remotest corners of the earth, and pour upon them the effulgence of ten-fold glory?

THE splendor of their prospects is, indeed, not altogether unclouded. But, we trust, that every difficulty and disorder will speedily vanish, and give place to harmony, and efficient government. We trust, that *He who rides in the whirlwind, and directs the storm*, will wield their fierce democracy with his mighty arm—hush the rude noise of war in their borders—breathe propitious upon their counsels—and, in the end, crown their exertions with abundant success.

THE glorious structure, which this once oppressed people are employed in erecting, has been assailed by numerous malignant foes. Black, and awfully threatening clouds have hung over it—the rains have descended—the floods have poured forth—the winds have blown—they have all beat violently upon it; but, as if founded upon a rock, it has yet stood. And we hope it will stand. We hope that, bidding calm defiance to the fury of every tempest, it will continue to rise with increasing greatness, until time shall be no more. Cease, then! ye shortsighted sons of ambition, who would oppose this important work; ye who delight in oppression,

and who feed on the miseries and debasement of men; cease to imagine, that by your feeble arm, you shall be able to withstand the Mighty One of Israel!—Remember, that if this cause be of the Lord, you cannot overcome it; and if, haply, you be found fighting against God, your labors, like those of the unhappy sufferer of old, will but revert upon your own heads.

Let the haughty kings of the earth, then, set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against the work of his hands;—He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh—the Lord will have them in derision. If this wonderful Revolution be, as we trust, a great link in the chain, that is drawing on the reign of universal harmony and peace; if it be occasioned by christian principles, and be designed to pave the way for their complete establishment, however it may appear to be sullied by irreligion and vice,* it is the cause of God, and will at last prevail.

* The Author is well aware, that, in offering his sentiments, thus freely, on the French Revolution, he stands upon controverted ground. It would, therefore, ill become his inexperience, and more particularly his profession, to enter into the details, or the warmth of

HAVING thus commented, in a general manner, on some of the leading objects,

this argument. He cannot help thinking, however, that the great pillars of this Revolution rest upon those natural rights of men, which are assumed by the best writers on government; and upon those fundamental principles of religion which the Author of our natures has revealed.

It is objected to this revolution, that it has been stained by violence and inhumanity of the most atrocious and unnecessary kind. Wherever a life has been wantonly destroyed, or other severities unnecessarily inflicted, no one should withhold his censure. But shall we make no distinction between the crimes of an enraged multitude, and the decisions of constituted authorities? or, between the precipitancy of a popular assembly, at the crisis of a struggle, and the deliberations of settled government? When a nation, so long distressed, lifts her avenging arm, and breaks her chains on the heads of her oppressors; when a people make a violent effort, to overturn the mountains of despotism under which they are buried, can we expect perfect wisdom, prudence, and moderation to guide all their exertions? While man remains such a creature as he is, this would be a miracle indeed!

But it will be further asked---Why, since the great object of this discourse, is to establish a natural connection between christianity and political liberty; why, in France, amidst the prevalence of the latter, does the former appear to be so little respected and acknowledged, especially among the principal friends and promoters of the revolution? Why do we not see a remarkable attention to real religion, amidst so many exertions to secure the rights of men? The answer is; that Christianity, considered as a system of principles, in theory, may produce extensive effects, where its special and saving influence is extremely small. Nay, every attentive observer of human affairs, has doubtless discovered a secret but important operation of these principles, on minds actually despising and rejecting them. The one half of that

which presented themselves from the passage of scripture which was chosen, the first emotions which naturally arise, both from the preceding remarks, and this interesting occasion, are those of gratitude and of praise. Here, happily, our thankfulness as patriots, and our thankfulness as christians, perfectly coincide, and are inseparably connected together.

LET US unite, then, in offering our grateful acknowledgments, to the Sovereign

light, in which infidels boast, as the splendid result of reason alone, is, in fact, the light of revelation; and while they condemn its grand Source, they adopt and use it, in all their religious creeds, and in many of their daily actions. A small extension of this thought, will, perhaps, when applied to the French nation, and to all similar cases, go far toward solving the difficulty in question—That people may be acting in the light of christian principles, though they know it not, neither regard them. A deliverance from the darkness of superstition, may have led them, at once, to cast off the chains of tyranny, and to renounce even the just restraints of real Christianity.

But, after all: is there not reason to hope, that many of the accounts which have been circulated in America, respecting the disorder, vice, and contempt of all sacred things, prevalent in France, are totally groundless? Is it not possible, that there is much more regularity, decorum, and real religion, in that struggling Republic, than her neighboring enemies, so fond of misrepresentation and calumny, are willing to allow? That many shameful instances of exaggeration have been detected is well known.

Dispenser of all blessings, that, while many nations are covered with the mantle of darkness and superstition; and in consequence of this, are groaning under the yoke of servitude; the Sun of righteousness hath risen upon us, with healing in his wings; and hath taught us, in a political view, to know, and to maintain our proper character. Let us bless his holy name, that, under the influence of this light, we have been led to assert the dignity of human nature—to throw off the chains of oppression—to think and act for ourselves, and to acknowledge no other king than the *King of the universe*. Let us bless his name, that, under the guidance of the same light, we have been led to frame a constitution, which recognizes the natural and unalienable rights of men; which renounces all limits to human liberty, but those which necessity and wisdom prescribe; and whose great object is, the *general good*. *O give thanks unto the Lord! for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the oppressor, and delivered from all their destructions. O that*

men would praise the Lord, for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

AGAIN; if it be a solemn truth, that the prevalence of Christianity, has a natural and immediate tendency to promote political freedom, then, those are the truest and the wisest patriots, who study to encrease its influence in society. Hence it becomes every American citizen to consider this as the great palladium of our liberty, demanding our first and highest care.

THE Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. The lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage. We possess an extensive, noble country. Fertility and beauty vie with each other, in favor of our ease, accommodation, and delight. Every avenue to national importance, and the felicity of individuals, is opened wide. Let it, then, in addition to all these advantages, and to complete its glory, let it be Immanuel's land. This will refine, and inconceivably appreciate your freedom. This will render you at

once the pattern, and the wonder of the world.

To each of you, then, my fellow citizens, on this Anniversary of our Independence, be the solemn address made! Do you wish to *stand fast in that liberty, wherewith* the Governor of the universe *hath made you free?* Do you desire the encreasing prosperity of your country? Do you wish to see the law respected—good order preserved, and universal peace to prevail? Are you convinced, that purity of morals is necessary for these important purposes? Do you believe, that the Christian religion is the firmest basis of morality? Fix its credit, then, by adopting it yourselves, and spread its glory by the lustre of your example! And while you tell to your children, and to your children's children, the wonderful works of the Lord, and the great deliverance which he hath wrought out for us, teach them to remember the Author of these blessing, and they will know how to estimate their value. Teach them to acknowledge the God of heaven as their King, and they will despise submission to earthly despots. Teach them to be Christians, and they will ever be free!

AND O, THOU EXALTED SOURCE OF LIBERTY ! not only grant and secure to us POLITICAL FREEDOM ; but may we all, by the effectual working of thy Mighty Power, and through the mediation of Christ Jesus, be brought into the GLORIOUS LIBERTY OF THE SONS OF GOD ; that when this world, and all that is therein, shall be burnt up, we may become citizens of a better country, that is an heavenly.

A M E N !

