

A

SERMON,

DELIVERED AT PLYMOUTH, N. H.,

JULY 4, 1826,

IN COMMEMORATION OF

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

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SERMON.

PSALM cxxiv : 2, 3.

IF IT HAD NOT BEEN THE LORD, WHO WAS ON OUR SIDE, WHEN MEN ROSE UP AGAINST US ; THEN THEY HAD SWALLOWED US UP QUICK, WHEN THEIR WRATH WAS KINDLED AGAINST US.

It is uncertain whether the Psalmist here alludes to some one particular event, or not, when his nation were exposed to imminent danger from their enemies. The passage now read will apply to various seasons of peril and distress in their history. It is strikingly applicable to their preservation in Egypt, and their deliverance, when pursued by the mighty host of Pharaoh. Had they not then been protected by the Almighty arm of Jehovah, their enemies would have swallowed them up quick. And after they were settled in the land of Canaan, they were often attacked by their surrounding enemies, who sought their ruin, and who would have swallowed them up, had not the Lord been on their side, and protected them.

And may not we, with great propriety, adopt the declaration of the Psalmist in the text in reference to our own nation ? Is it not striking-

ly true, as it respects these United States? There is a remarkable similarity, in various respects, between the people of Israel, and our own nation, and especially New-England. The children of Israel were delivered from the yoke of oppression. And so were the first settlers of this land. Israel was conducted to a distant and strange land, and settled in it. And so were our ancestors. The original inhabitants were driven out before the children of Israel, to make way for them. So were the original inhabitants of this land. On the arrival of the first settlers in New-England, they were informed by the natives, that a very mortal disease had, a few years before, prevailed among them, and swept off the greater part of the original inhabitants. The children of Israel left Egypt, and settled in the land of Canaan, that they might "serve the Lord" without molestation, and worship him according to his own appointment. And for the same object our ancestors left England, and came into this land. God raised up for the children of Israel a leader, endued with extraordinary wisdom, and eminently qualified for the work assigned him of delivering them from oppression, conducting them through the wilderness, establishing for them laws, and securing their liberty and independence. And he raised up a Washington to deliver this nation from oppression, to protect our rights, to achieve

our independence, to secure to us equal liberty, and a free and most excellent constitution of government.

The interposition of Heaven in our favor has been truly striking; and we may, with the utmost propriety, exclaim in the words of our text, "If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us." This is manifest from the declarations of scripture and from fact.

1. It is manifest from the declarations of scripture.

The Bible clearly teaches the entire dependence of creatures upon their great Creator for all their blessings. We are expressly taught that "from him comes down every good and perfect gift;" that, "when the young ravens cry, they receive their meet from God;" and that he supplies the wants of "every living thing." He does indeed employ means and instruments, in accomplishing his kind designs. Still, however, we are taught to view him as the great and original source of all good. Though mankind are extremely prone to look no farther than to second causes, and to ascribe their privileges and enjoyments wholly to their own wisdom and efforts, or to the instrumentality of others, yet we are, in the word of God, taught a very different les-

son. We are there taught, when contemplating our blessings, to say, "not unto *us*, not unto *us*, but unto thy name be all the praise." We are there told that "God is our defence, a very present help in time of trouble," and are instructed to ascribe all our deliverances to him, whether individual or national. The best means of defence will be ineffectual without the protection of Heaven. For, "except the Lord keep the city, the watchman *waketh* but in vain." He giveth wisdom, and courage, and strength, and victory, and can cause a little band to put to flight a mighty host. But "how could one chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them; and the Lord had shut them up?" If then we believe the plainest declarations of scripture, that protection and "defence cometh from the Lord," we shall be persuaded that, "If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us." And this will appear more clearly if we advert

2. To Facts.

The history of this country will afford a striking illustration of the text in application to our own nation. And it will be illustrated by anterior events, as well as those of the revolution, by which our independence was secured.

Repeatedly was the country upon the very brink of ruin. The Indians, at different times, planned the utter extirpation of the English. If they had made the attempt soon after their arrival, when they were few and feeble, nothing but a miracle could have saved them. But God mercifully disposed the savages generally to live with them on terms of peace and friendship, for a number of years, till they had extended their settlements, and greatly increased in numbers and strength.

A plan was indeed laid by the Indians for the destruction of the English in Virginia fifteen years after their arrival. It was laid with great secrecy, and arrangements made for its execution, and for the indiscriminate massacre of all the inhabitants. The Indians, having been friendly, were admitted without suspicion among the whites. And their design was to go, at a concerted time, into all their settlements, and fall upon them unsuspected, and, when wholly unprepared to defend themselves, to murder them all. The plot however was discovered the evening before by an Indian, and was in consequence partially defeated, though three hundred and forty-seven men, women and children, were massacred.

A similar plan was formed, in 1712, to destroy in one night the whites in North Carolina, but which was defeated with the slaughter of a num-

ber of the inhabitants. And in 1715 was a general combination of all the southern Indians, against the whites, formed with great secrecy. And though it was so far executed as to occasion the destruction of much property and many lives, and to produce great distress, yet it was rendered in a measure abortive.

But in New-England the most systematic, deep laid, and dangerous plots were formed, and the most persevering attempts made, for the utter extermination of the English.

In 1636, sixteen years after the arrival of the first settlers at Plymouth, a formidable effort was made to exterminate the English by the Peqots, a powerful tribe of Indians. This was however defeated after a short contest.

But the most extensive and dangerous conspiracy among the Indians against the English, was formed by king Philip, a powerful sachem of very superior mental endowments, and of great skill and courage in war. "He was, says a distinguished writer,* from the year 1670, till 1675, when hostilities actually commenced, secretly preparing for the war, by obtaining arms and negotiating with the neighboring tribes." And the same writer observes, that he produced "a combination of Indians so formidable, and a war so bloody, as to threaten the very existence of all New-England."

*Judge Marshall.

He engaged in the contest almost all the Indians through New-England, who were numerous and powerful, and who "spread themselves, says a writer of those times, like grasshoppers all over the country." And their mode of warfare rendered them a peculiarly dangerous enemy, and the war with them uncommonly desolating and destructive. They approached the English settlements secretly, and often in the night, and burned their dwellings, and killed, or led into captivity, the inhabitants. And the country being then new, the settlements scattered and defenceless, and much woods and thick swamps remaining, these circumstances greatly favoured their design of utterly destroying the English. And they were for a time successful, and destroyed many towns, and boasted that they should burn Boston.

But though God corrected the inhabitants of the country severely, he did not give them "over to the will of their enemies," but mercifully interposed for their protection, preservation and deliverance. Divisions, defection, and mortal diseases among the savages, greatly weakened them, and tended to bring the war to a favorable termination. The arm of Jehovah was extended over his people, and his providence often signally interposed for their deliverance. And "had not the Lord been on their side, when the enemy rose

up against them, they would have swallowed them up."

In 1746, New-England experienced another remarkable divine interposition for her protection and deliverance. The French formed the design, with a formidable armament, of invading and laying waste the country. With this view they fitted out a fleet, "consisting of near 40 ships of war, of which seven were of the line; of two artillery ships; and of 30 transports laden with provisions and military stores, carrying 3,500 land forces, and 40,000 stand of small arms for the use of the Canadians and Indians in the French interest, who were expected to co-operate with the regulars." Intelligence of this designed invasion occasioned great alarm and apprehension in this country, and led the people to seek to the Lord of Hosts for protection and help. And he signally interposed, and very manifestly fought for this people. For "the fleet in its passage was attacked by such furious and repeated storms, that many of the ships were wrecked, and others dispersed. In addition to this the troops labored under a dreadful mortality, which carried them off in great numbers." A few ships only of the fleet escaped, and returned singly to France. "Never," says a very respectable historian,* speaking of these events, "never was the hand of di-

* Dr. Belknap.

vine Providence more visible than on this occasion. Never was a disappointment more severe on the part of the enemy, nor a deliverance more complete, without human help, in favor of this country." Well might the people exclaim, "If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when men rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick."

But the words of our text were most strikingly illustrated in the revolutionary war, and the events, which led to the establishment of our national independence. No person can impartially review the history of those times without being convinced that, "if the Lord had not been on our side," we should have been swallowed up, or subdued. Who could have imagined that these feeble colonies could have contended successfully with one of the most powerful nations in the world, when that nation was in the zenith of its power and glory? It had a few years before triumphantly terminated a war with France, in the course of which it had wrested from her the most of her American possessions, the Canadas, Nova-Scotia, Louisiana, and several of her West-India Islands. In this war the colonies had borne a distinguished part, had incurred very heavy expenses, and lost many men, one third of the effective men of Massachusetts being in the service in the campaign of 1758. From these calamities they had

not recovered when the war of the revolution commenced. How amazingly unequal was the contest between Great Britain and her American colonies! The former had a powerful fleet and veteran army, inured to the fatigues of war and used to victory. She was in possession of Canada, Nova-Scotia, and the frontier posts, and in alliance with the Indian tribes generally, and had them under her influence.

But the colonies were then weak and impoverished; had no regular army or navy; were very destitute of military and naval stores; had an extensive frontier and sea-coast much exposed, without means of defence, and were divided among themselves. The governors of the Provinces, and many of the other officers, were dependent upon the crown, and adhered to the royal cause. So that the government, at the commencement of the revolution, was divided and distracted, and could not act with concert or energy. And though the most of the people were probably friendly to the liberties of their country, yet many imagined it would be in vain to resist the mighty power of Great Britain, and thought it more prudent to accede to such terms of accommodation as they could obtain. They were therefore unwilling to risk their all in such a doubtful, and, as they supposed, hopeless contest. Hence arose a division in the country, which greatly weakened the cause

of freedom. There was beside, in the southern and middle states, a vast number of slaves, being in many parts much more numerous than the whites, upon whom no dependence could be placed, and who might become dangerous enemies.

In such a situation, how unprepared were the colonies to contend with such a power as Great Britain? No wonder then that many thought they had better yield the points in dispute, which were at first more about principles than any oppressive acts of the British government, the latter contending that they had a right to impose taxes upon the colonies, which the colonies denied, as they were not represented in the British parliament. And the acts of the latter, at first complained of, would have been submitted to, had they not involved the principle, which was considered so dangerous to the liberties of the country.

But Heaven had ordained that these then colonies should be free and independent, and had fixed the time at that early period. The contest must therefore begin, and terminate successfully for America, notwithstanding all the formidable obstacles in the way. God designed here to begin the emancipation of the nations of the earth from civil bondage, and to give them an example of self government, of the enjoyment of equal rights, and of unexampled national prosperity

and happiness ; to prepare an asylum for the oppressed of other nations, and a people signally to aid in evangelizing the heathen, and accomplishing His great designs of benevolence and mercy towards a lost and ruined world. America, therefore, notwithstanding her weakness, must triumph and be free. For “the Lord of Hosts, the Lord strong and mighty,” had purposed it. And could man, could the most powerful nations defeat his designs, when he could cause “one to chase a thousand, and two to put ten thousand to flight?” Nerved by his almighty arm, the feeble, “out of weakness, were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.”

But “had not the Lord been on our side, when men rose up against us, and when their wrath” was greatly kindled against us, on account of the opposition made to their designs,—“had not the Lord been on our side,” we should have been speedily crushed, and the sun of liberty would soon have set, and left us in darkness, bondage and wretchedness. We may vainly imagine that it was our arm, which had gotten us the victory. But it was manifestly the arm of Jehovah. And to deny it would be most ungrateful and stupid. He inspired the nation with resolution and fortitude to face the most appalling dangers; and, with undaunted courage, to meet the most formidable enemy. And he raised up a man admira-

oly qualified to lead them, through the most trying scenes, to victory, independence, peace and prosperity. Where could another Washington have been found to fill his place, had he been removed? The hand of God was most manifest in raising him up, and preserving his important and invaluable life, when most imminently exposed.

In 1755, at the time of Braddock's defeat, his preservation was truly wonderful. He had two horses killed under him, and four balls shot through his coat; but, to the astonishment of all, escaped unhurt, while every other officer on horseback was either killed or wounded. "I expected every moment," says Dr. Craick, an eye witness, "to see him fall. His duty and situation exposed him to every danger. Nothing but the superintending care of Providence could have saved him from the fate of all around him." An Indian said that he could not be killed with a ball. For he had seventeen fair shots at him, but could not bring him to the ground. God had important work for him to do, and therefore preserved him to be the instrument, in the divine hand, of saving his country. He was often, during the revolutionary war, exposed to imminent danger, but was still always preserved unhurt, and, with great wisdom, prudence, patience, resolution and fortitude, persevered in his country's cause, till he had achieved her independence and secured to her liberty and

peace. And the gracious protection of heaven was often signally interposed for the ultimate success of that cause, and the termination of the arduous conflict in favor of equal rights.

Every one must be convinced that the British were able to have sent a force sufficient to put down opposition, and terminate the contest at once. But the government of Great Britain seemed to hold the power of the colonies to make any effectual resistance to the mother country in the utmost contempt. Before hostilities began, a military commander, who had served in America in the late French war, declared in parliament "that, with five regiments of infantry, he would undertake to go through the country, and drive the inhabitants from one end of the continent to the other." And after the commencement of hostilities, another made a similar declaration. And though others, well acquainted with the spirit and ability of the Americans, assured the government that, in their coercive measures, they would meet with the most serious, determined and persevering opposition, yet a strange infatuation seemed to have seized the British government; and they appeared to act upon the supposition that only a handful of men would be necessary to put down opposition, and enforce submission to all their acts, however arbitrary. And this gave the colonies opportunity

to act with more deliberation; union, decision and effect, to collect and concentrate their forces, and to call into operation their resources; taught them their own strength, and trained them to the art of war, and inspired them with courage and resolution, and the hope of ultimate success.

But a powerful naval force to harass the sea-coast, and several armies, landed in different parts of the country, at the commencement of the contest, would have so distressed, distracted, disheartened, divided and weakened the colonies, that the cause of liberty must, to all human appearance, inevitably have been lost. But God "turned their counsel into foolishness," and inspired the friends of their country, and of the rights of man with wisdom and firmness, and by his powerful arm shielded us, and suffered not those, who rose up against us, to swallow us up; and upheld the nation through the long and arduous struggle, and finally conducted it to triumph, to peace, and to independence.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We learn from the subject our unspeakable obligations as a nation to the Most High.

There is no other people under heaven so greatly distinguished as the people of these United States. No other nation enjoys such rich privileges and blessings. And no other nation in the world has experienced such signal interpositions

of divine Providence in its favor: The history of this country from its first settlement, is a history of remarkable providences. Let us look back two centuries, and these United States were one vast wilderness, untrodden by the foot of civilized man: No flourishing cities or villages were then seen; no growing towns, rapidly advancing in population and wealth; no temples erected to the living God, with their lofty spires pointing the devout worshipper to the skies; no voice of prayer and praise ascended like incense to the throne of the Almighty: But all was silence, and darkness, and gloom, except when interrupted by the whoop of the savage, or the howlings of beasts of prey.

Where was *then* the American nation? The founders of this mighty empire, and the fathers of America were then wretched wanderers in a strange land, or groaning under the yoke of civil and ecclesiastical tyranny. And could it be expected that men, placed in such a condition, should found an empire, which would flourish with unexampled rapidity, and become the wonder of the world?

With wonder and admiration may we trace the movements of the little band, who first landed on the rock of Plymouth, and in New-England laid the corner stone of this mighty edifice. They had been driven by persecution from their native land

to Holland, from whence they sailed for the new world, to erect, among savages, an altar to Him, who, to them, was "*The unknown God.*" Their object, in coming three thousand miles into a dreary wilderness, was not wealth or political distinction, but liberty and religion. They could not rationally expect, and did not expect, on these uncultivated and inhospitable shores, to enjoy ease and worldly greatness and grandeur. But they expected to be strangers and pilgrims in this strange land; and came here to suffer and serve God, and enjoy unmolested the ordinances of the gospel, and the consolations of religion; to secure, and transmit to their children, civil and religious freedom, and the uncorrupted institutions of christianity, and train them up for heaven. And their anticipated trials were more than realized. God had a great work for them to do. And he prepared them for it, as his manner usually is, by severe trials. They arrived on the coast in the beginning of a cold winter, without habitations, and without a sufficient supply of provisions. And the hardships, privations and sufferings, which they endured, brought, within six months, nearly half of their number, consisting of one hundred and one persons, to the grave.

Indeed, such accumulated trials as they experienced, would have broken the spirits of men of ordinary fortitude, and induced them to relin-

quish the object of turning such a vast wilderness into a fruitful field, and to return to their native land. But they were inspired with an invincible resolution, and an unyielding perseverance, that no obstacles could discourage them, or drive them from their purpose. And though the infancy of the nation was feeble, and there was a painful struggle for existence, yet it gained strength and firmness from the very evils, which pressed heavily upon it, and gave promise of a vigorous manhood. Though constantly beset with evils calculated to check its growth, and induce weakness and retard its progress, it continued to gain strength, and advance towards maturity. But who could conceive that it would so rapidly, and so soon, grow to such a nation as this? At first a few scattered settlements skirted the Atlantic, and all behind was one unbroken, dreary wilderness, to the western ocean. But now the wilderness, to a vast extent, has been subdued, and become as the garden of the Lord. The American settlements are extending, the tide of emigration is rolling on to the west, and the country is rapidly increasing in population and wealth. Our liberty and independence are secured and established upon a firm basis. We have the wisest and best constitution, and a government organized according to the purest principles of rational liberty. We have numerous,

well endowed and flourishing literary institutions, where our children may be trained for usefulness, respectability and happiness. We enjoy religious liberty, the pure ordinances of the gospel, and the richest means of religion. Very numerous benevolent societies and charitable institutions have been formed, with the design to impart relief to the indigent and distressed; to send the gospel and the bible to the destitute; to disseminate christian knowledge; to promote intellectual, moral and spiritual improvement; to elevate the character, and to save the soul. These societies and institutions are diffusing a benign influence through the country. And, with these various and rich mercies, we enjoy peace, security, general health, plenty, and unexampled prosperity.— And for all these distinguished and invaluable privileges and blessings, we are indebted to the God of heaven. How great, then, are our obligations to the Most High. Hence

2. We ought to distinguish ourselves by our obedience and fidelity in his service.

As God has exalted us “in name and in honour,” and by our superior privileges above every other nation under heaven, we ought to be an eminently devoted and pious people. We ought gratefully to acknowledge Him as the bountiful giver of all our mercies, and sincerely enquire “what we shall render to Him for all His bene-

its?" We should avoid, and decidedly discountenance, all those immoral practices, by which God is dishonoured and provoked, which are a "reproach to any people," and ruinous to their prosperity and true interest. And we should conscientiously, sedulously and unitedly practice that "righteousness, which exalteth a nation." And we should, especially, endeavour to extend the blessings and privileges, which we enjoy, to others; and more particularly to the Africans and Indian tribes on our own continent, and within our borders. We owe to them a heavy debt; and a heavier debt to divine justice for our criminal treatment of them. And payment will most surely be demanded by a holy God, unless we endeavor to cancel the debt, by repairing the injuries done them.

Our conduct, in relation to the Africans, has been most inconsistent, absurd, and criminal.— While earnestly contending for the principle, that all men ought to be free and equal, and risking every thing in opposing the claims of Great Britain to tax us, we were, at the same time, holding in abject slavery hundreds of thousands of our fellow beings, who, upon our own principles, had an equal right with ourselves to enjoy the sweets of liberty. Will it be said, that they could not with safety be emancipated? It will be admitted, that it would not have been safe to have

given them, their freedom, when they had been kept in total ignorance, and were wholly unprepared to exercise, or enjoy, the rights of freemen. But were any measures adopted to prepare the way for their emancipation? Instead of this, with all our boasted regard to equal rights, the slave-trade was still carried on, and slaves continued to be imported, without restraint, till 1808, more than thirty years after we began to contend so earnestly for our *own rights*. When the Federal Constitution was framed, the northern members contended for an immediate abolition of the odious traffic in human beings and human blood, but could not obtain it. And so tenacious were the slave-holding states of the privilege of enslaving their fellow beings, that they would not yield it, unless they could be permitted to represent their slaves in the national legislature, or, in apportioning the representation to the number of inhabitants, to include three fifths of their slaves. And though they denied their slaves all the rights of freemen, and considered them merely in the light of beasts of burden, yet they claimed the right to vote for them in this proportion, and on this principle, or with this compromise, consented that no more slaves should be imported after the year 1808.

Their slaves have, however, not only been viewed, but often treated, as beasts of burden—

have by some been treated with great cruelty—
 been punished and even murdered at the will of
 their masters. How great guilt, then, has been
 contracted by enslaving, and holding in bondage,
 and maltreating the poor negroes. And what ef-
 forts ought to be made for their intellectual, mor-
 al and religious improvement, the elevation of
 their character, and their emancipation and enjoy-
 ment of the rights of freemen. And as a socie-
 ty has been formed for the colonization in Africa
 of the free people of colour, and whose ultimate
 object is the emancipation and removal of all the
 blacks to the land of their forefathers, we ought
 to give it our most cordial countenance and sup-
 port.

And we ought likewise to encourage those be-
 nevolent measures adopted for the civilization and
 christianizing of the Indian tribes, and the amel-
 ioration of their wretched condition. We have
 taken possession of the land of their fathers, and
 have driven them from it into the remote wilder-
 ness, and have continued to drive them farther and
 farther; and seem disposed to allow them no
 rest to “the sole of their feet.” For though
 they begin to lay aside their wandering habits,
 settle down and cultivate their lands, and seek
 for instruction and improvement, yet many are
 inclined to drive them, contrary to their wishes,
 farther into the wilderness. But let us enquire

how we should feel to be compelled to leave our lands, our dwellings, and "the place of our fathers' sepulchres," and go far into the wilderness. Let us consider that the Indians have as good a right to *their* lands as we have to *ours*, and feel our obligation to do to them as we would have others do to us. And let us strive, not to destroy them, or make them wretched, but to extend to them the blessings of civilization and christianity, and the rights of man; to raise them from their state of degradation and wretchedness, and to make them "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God."

9. We may learn that we ought to hold the fathers of New-England in high estimation. Though we ought to be careful not to idolize any fellow mortals, however great, eminent, useful or good, yet we should give "honor to whom honor is due." And it is eminently due to our pious and venerable ancestors. For to them, under God, are we indebted for all our privileges and blessings. They laid the foundation for our present greatness, prosperity and happiness. Some of their posterity, who are enjoying the richest privileges, which are the fruit of their toil and sufferings, very ungratefully load them with reproach. It must be admitted that they did not well understand the principles of religious liberty and toleration. But who at that time

did? Their want of a right understanding of these principles sometimes betrayed them into the adoption of measures, which cannot be justified, though their conduct has been much misrepresented. A writer, speaking of these things after the commencement of the American war, when liberty was the great topic of discussion, says, "the cruel charges of peculiar bigotry, and a persecuting spirit, wantonly alledged against them, are founded on facts not truly stated." They had a deep sense of the importance of religion, and of the truth, and of the danger of error; and came into this land, and endured the greatest hardships and privations, that they might enjoy religion without disturbance or interruption, and might train up their children in the knowledge of the truth, and in the fear of God. They therefore considered that none had a right to come and disturb them. They were however greatly molested, especially by the Quakers, who went into their houses of worship, and interrupted their worship, and made great disturbance. The magistrates in Massachusetts therefore ordered them to quit the province, and not to return on pain of capital punishment. But returning they inflicted on some the punishment, which they supposed they deserved, and which they thought they had a right to inflict. They viewed the adoption of great and dangerous errors very crim-

inal, and "to be punished by the judge." And though it is to be lamented that they did not better understand the principles of religious freedom and toleration, yet it may be much doubted whether their principles and conduct were so offensive in the sight of Heaven, as is that spurious liberty, which will now tolerate, under the garb of religion, the most gross immoralities.

Though the fathers of New-England were but men, they were men eminent for learning and piety. And they used great care to promote learning, morality and religion. Amidst all their poverty, hardships and sufferings, they early adopted measures for the establishment of literary institutions, and, only sixteen years after they first landed at Plymouth, they founded the College at Cambridge.

They laid the foundation of our literary, religious and civil institutions. To their wisdom and integrity, firmness and resolution, patience and perseverance, are we indebted, under God, for our correct moral habits, our noble institutions, our liberty, prosperity and rising glory. We ought therefore to hold them in high estimation, and remember them with gratitude.

4. The subject teaches us how to celebrate our national independence.

Our deliverance was wrought, our independence achieved, and our liberty secured by an Almighty arm. For "had not the Lord been on our side, when men rose up against us, they would have swallowed us up quick." When therefore we celebrate our national birth day, we should remember that God has given us our national existence, and all our precious privileges, and should

with gratitude commemorate his divine goodness.

The Jews observed feasts and fasts unto the *Lord*. And if we are indebted to him for independence, and all our rich civil and religious privileges, then it is perfectly consonant to the dictates of *reason*, as well as revelation, that we should keep the day in honor of our glorious heavenly benefactor, and in celebrating his praises. Hence we may remark

5. That any way of celebrating the day, which would be dishonorary to God, or offensive in his sight, must be highly improper:

To spend it in rioting, in intemperance, or in dissipating amusements, which are calculated to banish all serious reflection and sense of the divine goodness, and of obligation to the Most High; must be peculiarly offensive in the sight of Heaven, and altogether unreasonable and improper. Such things may now be justified, and pleaded for, but, in the great day, will appear in their true light, and will then find no advocates.

Though God has granted us liberty, he has given us no liberty to sin against him, and abuse the rich expressions of his bounty. We should remember that he is a holy and jealous God, and not, by our ingratitude and sins, provoke him to "remove our candlestick out of its place," but strive to please and honor him, that he may continue to shed upon us his choicest blessings, and prosper us, that our "peace may be as a river, and our righteousness as the waves of the sea," and may continue as long as the moon endureth, and till the orb of day shall cease to shine, and illuminate this western world.