

A N
ORATION

O N T H E

BEAUTIES OF LIBERTY,

O R T H E E S S E N T I A L

RIGHTS OF THE AMERICANS.

D E L I V E R E D

At the Second Baptist-Church in Boston,

Upon the last Annual Thanksgiving, Dec. 3d, 1772.

Dedicated to the Right Honorable the
Earl of DARTMOUTH.

Published by the earnest Request of many.

The Fourth Edition, carefully corrected by the Author,
in which are many Additions, particularly those
four Pages which were left out of the last Editions.
With some Strictures on the ETERNAL RIGHT of
Mankind, LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE. And Re-
marks on the RIGHTS and LIBERTIES of the AF-
RICANS, inserted by particular Desire.

By a BRITISH BOSTONIAN. *M. al*

B O S T O N : N. E.

Printed and Sold by E. RUSSELL, next the Cornfield,
Union-Street, near the Market.
M,DCC,LXXIII.

To the Right Honorable the
Earl of DARTMOUTH.

My LORD,

WHEN I view the original right,
power, and *Charter* confirmed,
sealed, and ratified to the province, or
inhabitants of *Rhode-Island*, and its
standing in full force, and unrepealed
for more than an hundred years ;
surely your Lordship will not blame
them, if they stand fast in the Liberty
wherein they were made free : The
words of their Charter are, “ Be it
“ enacted, that no freeman, shall be
“ taken, or imprisoned, or deprived of
“ his freehold, or liberty, or free custom,
“ or be out-lawed, or exiled, or other-
“ wise destroyed ; nor shall be oppres-
“ sed, judged, or condemned, but by
“ the laws of this colony.—And that no
“ man, of what state or condition so-
“ ever,

vi DEDICATION.

“ ever, shall be put out of his lands
“ or tenements, nor taken, nor impri-
“ soned, nor disinherited, nor BANISH-
“ ED (observe this my Lord) nor any
“ way destroyed, or molested, without
“ being, for it, brought to answer, by a
“ due course of law of this COLONY.”

As a fly, or a worm, by the law of nature, have as great a right to Liberty and Freedom, (according to their little sphere in life) as the most potent monarch upon earth : And as there can be no essential difference between your Lordship and myself in the kingdom of Liberty, but what is political, I therefore, without any further apology, take leave to ask your Lordship, Whether any one that fears God and loves his neighbor as himself, (which is the true scripture-mark of a Christian) will OPPRESS his fellow-creatures ? If he does, where are the beauties of christianity ? Not to be seen in this life, however they may be in the next.

DEDICATION. vii

I HAVE seen an authenticated copy of your Lordship's letter to the Governor of *Rhode-Island*, in which are such DICTATIONS, DIRECTIONS, and positive COMMANDS, to oppress with tyranny, a *free people*, as are inconsistent with a good man or a Christian to have any concern or agency in. The law of God directs us to do unto others, as we would they should do unto us. And knowing that your Lordship is well acquainted with the divine oracles, having had the honor to dine at your Lordship's feat in *Staffordshire*; and being, when in *England*, personally acquainted with Mr. *Wright*, your Lordship's Steward, and with the good and pious character which your Lordship bears, with submission to a person in your exalted station, may I take leave (as a fellow-christian, as one that loves, as the highest happiness of his existence, the *beauties, spirit, and LIFE of christianity*) to ask whether your Lordship would like to have an *Englishman's* birth-right, Liberty and Freedom

viii DEDICATION.

Freedom taken away by his King, or Ministry, or both ? Would not your Lordship immediately say, it is tyranny, oppression, and destruction, by a despotic power ? Would not your Lordship be ready to alarm the nation, and point out the political happiness of the people upon the eve of destruction.

My LORD,

ARE not the Liberties of the free-born *American Rhode-Islanders* as dear to them as those of *Britons* ? Have they not their own laws, judges, and juries to defend and determine their rights ? Suppose a Nobleman had broke the laws of his King and country ; would he not be willing, nay, has he not an undoubted *right* to expect to be tried by a jury of his peers, according to the laws of the land ? How would he like to be fettered with irons, and dragged three thousand miles in a hell upon water (a man of war) to take his trial ? Is not this contrary
to

DEDICATION. ix

to the spirit of the law, and the rights of an *Englishman*? Yet, my Lord, have you not given direction, as the King's agent, or the agent of the Ministry, to destroy the rights and laws of the *Americans*? If great men, and good men, and Christians can do such things as these, when in power, heaven grant that the oppressed may be relieved from their iron yoke and cruel bondage in this world: For, I think, my Lord, that such men, who take away the rights of any people are neither fit for heaven or earth, neither fit for the throne or the dunghill.

YOUR Lordship lets us know that the case of burning the *Gaspee Schooner* has been laid before the Law Servants of the Crown, and that they make the crime of a deeper dye than piracy; namely, "an act of high treason, and "levying a war against the King."

MY Lord, supposing this to be the case, are not the *Rhode-Islanders* subjects to the King of *Great-Britain*?

B

Has

x DEDICATION.

Has not the King his Attorney and Courts of Judicature to decide matters between the King and the subjects ? Why then must there be new Courts of Admiralty erected to appoint and order the inhabitants to be confined and dragged away three thousand miles from their families, from their laws, rights, and liberties to be tried by their enemies ? Do you think, my Lord, this is right in the sight of God and man ? If the *Rhode-Islanders* suffer this infringement of their liberties, granted them by their Charter from the King of *England*, let them never complain of any hardships they may suffer from any tyranny : For was there ever such cruelty, injustice, and barbarity united against a free people before ? and my Lord *Dartmouth* to direct in this matter ! from whom we might have expected mildness, mercy, and a defence of the rights and liberties of the people.

YOUR Lordship's letter frequently
reminds

DEDICATION. xi

reminds us that this destructive authority to deprive the people of their invaluable privileges, is his Majesty's will and pleasure. How far his Majesty may be influenced and dictated by his Ministry I will not take upon me to say ; but surely his Majesty is a person of more tenderness and understanding than to aim of his own heart at such tyranny : Besides, his attempting to infringe the Rights of the people on a bare supposition of offence at once destroys his Right, on revolution principles, to reign over them as their King : For, according to his coronation oath, he has no longer a right to the *British* Crown or Throne, than he maintains inviolably firm the Laws and Rights of the people : For violating the people's Rights, *Charles Stewart*, King of *England* lost his head. I reverence and love my King ; but I revere the Rights of an *Englishman* before any king on earth. I would greatly distinguish between a righteous King and a reigning Despot :

xii DEDICATION.

spot :—The one is the guardian and trustee of the Rights and Laws of the people ; but the other destroys them.

BESIDES, my good Lord, the inhabitants of *America* know as well as the people of *England*, that the right and fountain of power and authority originate in THEM as the seat of Majesty, the authors of laws, and the creators of officers to execute them : And if at any time they shall find the the power they have conferred, abused by their TRUSTEES ; their MAJESTY violated by tyranny or usurpation ; their authority prostituted to support *violence*, or *skreen corruption* ; the laws grown pernicious through accidents unforeseen, or rendered ineffectual through their infidelity : Then it is their RIGHT (and what is their right is undoubtedly their privilege) and duty as their essential Power and Majesty, to resume that delegated authority which they intrusted them with, and call their trustees to an ACCOUNT ;

DEDICATION. xiii

COUNT ; to resist the usurpation, and extirpate the tyranny ; to restore their injured Right and essential MAJESTY, and their prostituted AUTHORITY ; to suspend, alter, or abrogate those laws ; and punish the unfaithful and corrupt officers. Nor is it the duty only of the united body ; but EVERY member of it ought, according to his respective rank, power, and weight in the community, to CONCUR in advancing those glorious designs. This is, my Lord, the happy constitution of *England*, the power, right, and majesty of the people, which has been frequently recognized and established : By which majesty, right, and power, Kings are made and UNMADE by the choice of the people ; and laws enacted and *annulled* only by their own consent ; in which none can be deprived of their property, abridged of their *freedom*, or *forfeit* their lives, without an appeal to the laws and the verdict of their peers or equals. My Lord, as this is according

ing

xiv DEDICATION.

ing to the laws of *England*, the liberty, privilege, and power of his Majesty's subjects in *Great-Britain*, why not then the privilege of his Majesty's subjects in *America* ? Has his Majesty (as it seems to be laid upon him) two kind of laws, one for *England*, the other for *America* ? Your Lordship says it is his Majesty with his Privy Council ; I suppose the latter. Be it who it will, whether the *King*, *Ministry*, or *Parliament*, they have no more right to do it than they have to take your Lordship's life. Has not your Lordship a right to oppose any power that may assault your Lordship's person, right, or privilege, without its being deemed rebellion against the King and State ? Then surely, my Lord, an *American* has the same undoubted right to oppose every usurping power, let it be from whom it may, that assaults his person, or deprives him of his own law or Liberty as an *American*. Has he *offended* ? Yes. Is he willing to be tried by his own laws ?

xv DEDICATION.

laws ? Yes. Then that man, that King, that Minister of State, (be he who he will) is worse than a NERO-TYRANT, that shall assume to drag him three thousand miles to be tried by his ENEMIES.

WHAT is *rebellion*, my Lord ? If I understand it right, Rebels are persons rising up, with an assumed authority and power to act, dictate, and rule, in direct violation to the laws of the land. I believe, my LORD, I am right, for this reason, because your G---F---G, and your G---r T---N, when in *North-Carolina*, thought so ; and like cruel, blood-thirsty *savages*, murdered mankind for uniting to oppose that bloody power who attempted to destroy their LIVES and LIBERTIES. This was, my Lord, a cruel barbarous slaughter of mankind.-- However, if it was deemed rebellion in them, and they were treated as *rebels*, because they (as the ministry said) broke the laws of the government

xvi DEDICATION.

ment of the Province. Then surely it follows, that the K--g, M---y, and P-----t are *Rebels* to God and mankind, in attempting to overthrow, by guns, by swords, and by the power of war) the laws and government of *Rhode-Island*. Have not the *Rhode-Islanders* as much right to the privileges of their own laws, as the King of *England* has to his Crown? Sure they have. Then surely that man must be a Tyrant in his soul that deems it rebellion in the *Rhode-Islanders* if they kill every man that attempts to destroy their lives, laws, rights, or liberties.

It is true, my Lord, the *Gaspee Schooner* is destroyed, and thereby the laws of *England* are violated, as you apprehend, either by *Indians* out of the woods, or by *Rhode-Islanders*, I cannot say who; but it is a query with me, my Lord, whether there be any law broke in burning the *Gaspee Schooner*. If it was done by the *INDIANS* (which is the
current

DEDICATION. xvii

current report) then there is no law broke ; for the Scripture says, *where there is no law, there is no transgression*. And it is well known that the *Indians* were never under any law to the *English*. Did I say they were never under any law to the *English* ? Heaven forgive me ! I mean, my Lord, no other law than *English* tyranny ; the same law that some would fain bring the *Americans* under now. But suppose, my Lord, that this deed was done by the *Rhode-Islanders*, the query is still with me, whether there be any transgression committed, according to the above citation. For the question is, do the *Rhode-Islanders* receive their laws from *England* ? If so, there is a transgression committed against those laws ; but if not, there is no transgression ; for it is said, *where there is no law, there is no transgression*. For my part, I cannot see how any man in *America* can be said to break the laws of *England*. The whole lies here ; the laws of *America* only are

C broke ;

xviii DEDICATION.

broke ; let the offender then be tried by the law which he has broke : What can justice, (I had almost said *tyranny*) desire more ? However, my Lord, there is another idea arises in my mind, (and it is no wonder, for the *Bostonians* are very notional) which is, if there is any law broken, is it not the King and Ministry who have broke it. Some persons would be glad to know what right the King and Ministry have to send an armed schooner to *Rhode-Island*, to take away the privilege of the people, any more than they have to send an armed schooner into *Brest*, and demand the property of *France*. You know that the King of *England* has no right, according to the laws of God and nature, to claim the property of the *Americans* without their consent. Liberty, my Lord, is the native right of the *Americans* ; it is the blood-bought treasure of their Forefathers ; and they have the same essential right to their *native laws* as they have to the air they breath in, or

to

DEDICATION. xix

to the light of the morning when the sun rises : And therefore they who oppress the *Americans* must be as great enemies to the law of nature, as they who would be, if it were in their power, veil the light of the sun from the universe. My Lord, the *Americans* have a privilege to boast of above all the world : They never were in bondage to any man, therefore it is more for them to give up their RIGHTS, than it would be for all *Europe* to give up their LIBERTIES into the hands of the *Turks*. Consider what *English* tyranny their Forefathers fled from ; what seas of distress they met with ; what savages they fought with ; what blood-bought treasures, as the dear inheritance of their lives, they have left to their children, and without any aid from the King of *England* ; and yet after this, these free-born people must be counted REBELS, if they will not loose every right to Liberty, which their venerable Ancestors purchased at
so

xx DEDICATION.

so great expence as to lose their lives in accomplishing ; and shall not their descendants be strenuous to maintain inviolate those sacred Rights, which God and Nature have given them, to the latest posterity. O *America ! America* let it never be said that you have deserted the Grand Cause, and submitted to *English* ministerial tyranny.

My Lord, I hope I need not remind your Lordship of the enquiry that the divine Messiah made to *Peter*, when they required a tax, or tribute from him. Of whom, says CHRIST to *Peter*, do they gather tax ; *of the children or of strangers ?* And *Peter* said, of strangers : Then, says CHRIST, the children are FREE. Now, the *Gaspee Schooner*, my Lord, was a stranger, and they should, if it was in their commission, have gathered tax from strangers ; but instead of which they would gather it from the children. They forgot that the *children were free* : Therefore, my Lord, it must certainly be,

DEDICATION. xxi

be, that the *Gaspée Schooner* has committed the transgression and broke the laws of the freedom of this country. No doubt, my Lord, but they have a right to tax the strangers who come to dwell in their country ; but to tax the children which are free in their own native country, nature forbids it ; the law of God condemns it ; and no law, but that of tyrants can desire it.

THEREFORE, it was, my Lord, that the children (who are by the laws of God and nature FREE) looked upon the *Gaspée Schooner* as a stranger, and as such they treated her : But when the stranger attempted to gather tax of the children who are free, then they looked upon her, as a *Pirate*, who took away their property without their consent, by violence, by *guns*, by *oaths* and *damning* power. This they thought looked so like *piracy*, they did not like it : They thought the behavior of the strangers was very *unpolite* ; as they
could

xxii DEDICATION.

could not so much as pass by them, but must bow to them, and come to them : This the children, who were free, did not like, but thought it best for themselves and the strangers all to be free : And therefore, one night, my Lord, they, it is said, set the strangers (who by the way were all prisoners) free—free upon the face of the whole earth ; and to preserve them free, they burnt their prison. Now, my Lord, would it not be hard to hang these poor men for it ?

HOWEVER, if there is any law broke, the *Gaspee Schooner*, by the power of the *English* Ministry and Admiralty, have broke it, by taking away the Liberties of the *Americans*. And yet must the *Americans* be punished for it contrary to their own laws. O ! amazing ! Some would be glad to know, my Lord, what right the King of *England* has to reign over *America* ? It cannot be an hereditary right that lies in *Hanover* : It cannot be a parliamentary right that lies in *Britain* ; nor a victorious right,
for

DEDICATION. xxiii

for the King of *England* never conquered *America*. Then he can have no more right over *America* than what the people have, by compact, invested him with, which is only a power to protect them, and defend their rights civil and religious ; and to sign, seal, and confirm, as their King, such laws as the people of *America* shall consent to. If this be the case, my Lord, then judge whether the Admiralty or the Ministry are not the transgressors in this affair, by sending armed Schooners to *America*, to take by power and sword the people's property. And if any are to be tried for law-breaking, it surely ought, in justice, to be those who broke them. But the people of *America* act, my Lord, very honest in the affair ; they are willing to GIVE and TAKE ; to give the *English* offenders the liberty to be tried by their own laws, and to take the same liberty, if they have offended, to be tried by their own laws. They surely have as much right to the privileges of their own laws as the
King

xxiv DEDICATION.

King of *England* has to his Crown, or as the natives of *Britain* have to the rights of an *Englishman*. My Lord, how cruel, how unjust, how unanswerable before God and man must it be, by any violence and power to destroy the rights and laws of the *Americans*.

THE close of your Lordship's letter is enough to make nature shudder and stand *stagnated* as a testimony against ministerial bloody power. It not only gives a right to every *American* to be angry, but to be exceeding angry with your Lordship, wherein you tell the Governor of *Rhode-Island*, that it is his Majesty's pleasure, that General *Gage* hold the troops in readiness to assist this assumed Court of Admiralty to destroy the rights of the people. What, my Lord, are bloody *Bonner's* days so near *America*? O *America*! O *America*! What the bloody power of the sword and death to aid Civil Magistrates to destroy the people's rights? Stay a little, my Lord,
give

DEDICATION. xxv

give a little breathing time, for it is a solemn thing to die. What man—what good man, more especially what Christian can he be, that can give and seal a testimony as an agent, not only to destroy the rights of a people, but oppress them with the military power of blood and death, is enough to make the Earth to reel, and all Heaven to mourn. Be astonished, O ye Heavens at this ! I hope, my Lord, never to see that bloody, barbarous assassination in *America*, which I saw the *Scotch barbarian troops*, through the orders of Lord *B———n* and Lord *W——b* spread in *St. George's* fields. Remember the blood of young ALLEN cries to Heaven for vengeance in their face ; and a louder voice than that of *Abel's* blood, which cried to Heaven for vengeance, is still heard in *Boston* streets, against a bloody military power ; and though the murderers escaped by a scene well known to some, but too dark to explain, yet the God of truth and justice stands at the door. Sup-

D

posing

xxvi DEDICATION.

posing, my Lord, that the *Rhode-Islanders*, for the sake of the blood-bought Liberties of their Forefathers ; for the sake of the brithrights of their children, should shew a spirit of resentment against a tyrannical arbitrary power that attempts to destroy their lives, liberties, and property ; would it not be unsufferably cruel for their doing what the law of nature and nations teaches them to do to be butchered, assassinated, and slaughtered in their streets by their own King ? Consider, my Lord, that we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST ; that it would be a *cold cordial* for your Lordship, at the bar of GOD, to have thousands of *Americans* rise up in judgment : Yet I would rather this should be the case, though I suffer death with them, than they should lose their essential rights as *Americans*.

BUT it may be meet to let your Lordship know, that if the *Americans* unite (as there seems a good prospect) to
so

DEDICATION. xxvii

stand, as a *band of brethren* for their Liberties. They have a right, by the law of God, of nature, and of nations, to reluct at, and even to resist any military or marine force. But surely the exile troops in their Castle, and the marine force in their harbour must be intended in readiness for the *French*, not for *Americans* ; for can it ever enter into the heart of a mother to murder her children ? of a King to kill his subjects ? of an agent to destroy the rights of the *Colonies* he represents ? But suppose, my Lord, that it should be the bloody intent of the Ministry, to make *Americans* subject to their *slavery* ; what can the Ministry expect but *blood* for *blood*, *life* for *life*, and *death* for *death* to decide the contention. This bloody scene is infinitely far from being desired, nor can it ever be executed but at the expence of the destruction of *England*. And you will find, my Lord, that the *Americans* will not submit to be SLAVES : They know the use of the gun, and the millitary art

DEDICATION. xxviii

as well as any of his Majesty's troops at St. *James's* : And where his Majesty has one soldier, *America* can produce fifty free men, and all volunteers ; and raise a more potent army of men in three weeks, than *England* can in three years. But God forbid that I should be thought to aim at rousing the *Americans* to arms, without their rights, liberties, and oppression call for it. For they are unwilling to beat to arms : As loyal subjects they love their King : They love their Mother-Country : They call it their HOME, and wish nothing more than the prosperity of *Britain*, and the glory of their King. But they will not give up their rights, nor be slaves to any power upon earth. Therefore, my Lord, as a peace-maker ; as their agent ; as their friend, lay their grievance before their King. Let the *Americans* enjoy their birthright blessings, and *Britain* her prosperity. May there be a mutual union between the mother and her children, in all the blessings of life, trade,

xxix DEDICATION.

trade, and happiness : Then, my Lord both *Britons* and *Americans*, will call you blessed.

WISHING from my heart, the inviolable preservation of the RIGHTS and LIBERTIES of the AMERICANS, and the growing happiness of ENGLAND. For this end, the following ORATION on the DIVINE RIGHTS of the People, is, with permission and reverence, put into your LORDSHIP's hands,

By your Lordship's most obedient,
humble Servant,

A BRITISH BOSTONIAN.

INTRODUCTION

T O T H E

O R A T I O N.

LIBERTY, my dear Hearers, is the life of life, it is the soul of man, the breath of the divine Being—Liberty, it shines with the light of the
the

30 INTRODUCTION

the morning—the rising Sun, as the herald of Heaven proclaims it—Angels adore it—sun, moon, and stars in their course praise it. The Heavens sing of it—the worm seeks it—fire and hail, snow and vapour, stormy winds and raging seas, waves and billows, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and cedars, beasts and the cattle upon a thousand hills, the waving corn and flying fowl, in the Heavens aloud declare it, and all the trees of the field, says the Prophet, clap their hands. LIBERTY ! who would not prize it ? Who would not adore it ? It is the finished work of Heaven ! the glory of omnipotence ! the majesty of a God ! the display of his power, wisdom, and perfection. All nature bespeaks it ! and the whole Creation, in its primeval state celebrates its praise. *The Heavens declare thy glory, O God, and the firmament sheweth thy handy work.* The Heavens—as the word denotes to expand, open, or spread abroad. O this is Liberty divine,

TO THE ORATION. 31

divine, the unoriginated glory of the Deity. What is Liberty in all its beauties? Is it not the image of JEHOVAH? the resemblance of the God whom we adore? The brightness of his power, and the first blessings of love to mankind, from the womb of the morning. Hence that phrase among the Poets, *the goddess Liberty*; from its being so near a-kin to the Deity, as the eternal right of nature, and breath of every being. Where is the man that would not spread her banner, shout her victory—reside beneath her wings, and proclaim with the *Gentile* Champion of the LORD of Host, *Stand fast in the Liberty wherein CHRIST hath made you free, and be not entangled in the yoke of bondage*. What are the *wings of the morning*, the glories of the creation, the beauties of redemption, but the expansion of Liberty? *If I take*, (says the Prophet) *the wings of the morning*. How grand the thought! How sublime the expression! What are these wings but the chariots

32 INTRODUCTION

chariots of Liberty—the kingdom of the mind—the path that Angels walk—the way that man desires ; the blessing that the God of Heaven has given. Therefore nature put forth her hand, and took it as her right : *God said, Let there be light and there was light ; let the dry land appear and it was so : And he breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul.* The beauties of redemption—Here let me make a solemn pause—The word redemption denotes it, the Prophets declare it, the Apostles preached it, and CHRIST has sealed it. This is the subject, my dear Hearers, of our present meditation—the theme of our thoughts—the orb of our bliss—the hemisphere of our happiness. LIBERTY, it invites me, nay it more than invites me, it commands me with her *dying looks*, languishing in your arms to speak, however little I may say for her before she dies—from the words of the inspired Prophet.

MICAH VII. 3.

That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the Prince asketh, and the Judge asketh for a reward; and the great Man be uttereth his mischievous desire : SO THEY WRAP IT UP.

FIDELITY, zeal, and faithfulness for the inviolable preservation of the beauties of LIBERTY, both civil and sacred, when tyranny reigns by authority, is what every man of soul and sentiment will admire : This the Prophet *Micah* appeared to be replete with, as one who revered the laws of his God, the rights of the people, and the liberties of his brethren, above any arbitrary authority of the King, or despotic power of the Senate. LIBERTY has in all ages had her friends, her votaries; the law that binds KINGS *in fetters*, protects her kingdom as her strength and power in the face of death and dangers. For this end was the Prophet *Micah* raised by God

34 A N O R A T I O N on

in the days of that wicked King, *Ahaz*, 2 Chron. xxviii. 1—19, 22. *And Ahaz was twenty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned sixteen years in Jerusalem; but he did not that which was right in the sight of the LORD, like David his father. Ver. 19. For the LORD brought Judah low, because of Ahaz; King of Israel; for he made Judah naked, and transgressed sore against the LORD, ver. 22. And in the time of this distress did he trespass yet more against the LORD—this is that King Ahaz.*

HENCE it was that the Prophet, like a Son of LIBERTY in the day of adversity told the oppressors of the people, *That the best of them was as a brier, and the most upright of them sharper than a thorn hedge.* By this figure the Prophet makes the people feel as well as hear. That those Princes, Rulers, and Judges who destroyed the Rights of the subjects were as great a curse to the STATE, and likewise to the

the

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 35

the people as briars and thorns are to the earth. Behold with what majesty and command the Prophet speaks ! As an herald of the LORD of Host, who had received his commission from the God of Heaven. His words command attention ; he speaks with energy divine, *Micah i. 1. The word of the LORD that came to Micah, the Morasthite in the days of Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah, which he saw concerning Samaria and Jerusalem.* And in ver. 2, with what spirit, power, and pathos, like an Orator in *Israel*—like a Poet as well as a Prophet does he deliver himself to the people. Methinks I see the Prophet as it were take the wings of the morning, the free unbounded thoughts of his soul, and survey the distant globe, brings the inhabitants of the earth before him, and place them as his audience at his feet. Then, like a Master, a Prophet, a sweet singer in *Israel*, he said, *Hear all ye people, hearken O earth and all that therein is.* How poetical

36 AN ORATION on

poetical and sublime ! How solemn does the Prophet declare the message of Heaven to the people ! Where is the ear that can now be deaf ? Where is the heart that does not feel ? *Behold, says the Prophet, the LORD cometh !* ~~With~~ may the universe move, and all the earth obey, when JEHOVAH comes, before whom all nations are as nothing, who supports all nature with his ARM ! and commands Heaven with a look, and worlds unnumbered with a word. Here we may borrow the grand ideas of the royal Prophet, *Psa. cxiv. 7. Tremble thou earth at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the God of Jacob !* How grand and majestic, how heavenly and sublime does the inspired Penmen of *Israel* speak ! Their oratory is divine ! their words are omnipotent ; the figures they use are transcendent,—their ideas are like those of Angels. *Hab. iii. 3, &c.* Here *Homer's* thoughts, and *Virgil's* ideas, so much admired, perish with poverty, coldness, and death, before the majesty
and

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 37

and sublimity of the Orators in *Israel*. These are the *Chariots* ! These are the horsemen thereof ! Hence, says the Prophet *Micah*, *Hear ye now what the LORD saith : Arise, contend thou before the mountains, and let the hills hear thy voice.* This is language divine ! and confirms the BIBLE to be a revelation from Heaven : Hence the Prophet proceeds to deliver his embassy in such lofty images to the people, *Hear O mountains the LORD's controversy.* And what this controversy is, that the mountains, and the hills, that the earth and all therein are called to hear, the Prophet expresseth in the words preceeding our text, *The good man is perished out of the earth, and there is none upright among men ; they all lie in wait for blood ; they hunt every man his brother with a net.* How beautiful a description is this of mankind. Is the good man perished ? What is he in the grave ? Yes. Then you see the reason why mankind are so miserably mistaken in seeking

38 AN ORATION on

seeking for the good man. *The good man is perished*, says the Prophet : But mankind are seeking the living among the dead ; and it seems nothing will prevent them, (it may be with a good desire) if the irony has not too much steel in it. The words of a rich man in a very unhappy place, occurs at this time, *Luke xvi. 30. And he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went to them from the dead they will repent* ; nothing less than this can excuse them. Does not the Prophet tell them, that *there is none upright among men* ? Why will not mankind then believe ? Does the Prophet speak a word more than men and mortals daily find, and feel, either religiously or politically, that there is no man of *perfection*.—Therefore he adds, *they hunt every man his brother with a net*. By this metaphor the Prophet beautifully describes the surrounding, entangling snares, and catching designs of mankind, of Priest and people, that it is hard to escape the
net ;

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 39

net ; but it is much harder to get out of it. Take it politically, How is the *net* spread ? Does not an *arbitrary* M——y, a pensioned G——r, a block-ed up Harbour, a Castle secured, with a voice like an Arch-angel, tell you ? If not, let the voice of the blood of your brethren in King-street speak. But it said, *in vain is the net spread in the fight of any bird* ; which gives a cheerful hope that the eagle-eyed *Americans* will prove, by their love to Liberty, that it is in vain, notwithstanding the united powers against them, as they are expressed in the words of my text ;

THAT they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the Prince asketh, and the Judge asketh for a reward ; and the great Man be uttereth his mischievous desire : SO THEY WRAP IT UP.

WHICH words are the subject of our present thought, and, in their natural branches, are as follow ;

THAT they may do evil.

EVIL

46 AN ORATION on

EVIL is the essence of sin, and the dismal consequence of it : It is *asham* guilt, or the ponderous weight of guiltiness before GOD and man. Hence we see the beauty and blessing of that direction in our LORD's Prayer, *deliver us from EVIL*, and the happiness of our LORD's intercession for us, *Job. xvii. 15. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the EVIL*. Likewise we now see the important request of *Jabez*, who was more honourable than his brethren, who prayed to the LORD and said, *Keep me from EVIL that it may not grieve me, and GOD granted him the thing that he requested* ; and likewise the beauty of *David's* petition, *Let not any sin or EVIL have dominion over me*.

THIS shews if EVIL be the essence and guilt of sin, how wicked must it be to commit it—to do it with both hands. And yet how much more to do it earnestly. To do evil then is dreadful to mankind.

42 AN ORATION on

regardless of every remonstrance from the people. What are their hearts adamant? their breasts brass? their nature iron? What, can nothing awaken them? Does not the kingdom tremble, the Crown shake, while the pillars of Liberty totter? What, do they want an *Alexander* to move them? a *Cæsar* to conquer them? Are not the prayers and petitions of the people, especially the united millions of *America*, and *Great-Britain*, more powerful to persuade than the arms of the universe to conquer? Are the beauties of nature, safety and security, left the bosom of the King? Or are the guardian Angels of honour, feeling and fidelity left the Senate? What do the people ask, that their King will not hear them? Is it any thing unreasonable? Does it exceed the bounds of the prayer of inspiration? *And they spake unto him, namely King Rehoboam, saying, If thou wilt be a SERVANT unto this people, and wilt serve THEM, and answer THEM, and speak good words to THEM, then they will be thy servants forever.*

IF

43 the Beauties of LIBERTY.

IF they ask no more, they have the same right to be heard as the King has to the dignity of his Crown—and what may not the King fear, if he has *Rehoboam's* heart, by the advice of his young Counsellors, he will surely find the same revolution in his people that *Rehoboam* did. *So when they saw that the King hearkened not unto them, the people answered the King, saying, What portion have we in David? Neither have we inheritance in the Son of Jesse, &c.* For as it is the people's power that gives the King a right to reign over them, so the same power binds him upon oath to redress their grievances. Knowing this, that he receives all his power and majesty from them, and that he is only the appointed or royal Guardian of their Laws, Rights, and Liberties—called by some great Lawyers, the *nation's Chief Judge*. This makes those sayings of the pious Bishop *Burnet* (the man who turned the key of nations, and brought Kings to the throne) worthy the remembrance of the best
of

44 An O R A T I O N on

of Princes, “ There is not any thing
“ more certain than this, that Kings
“ are made for the people, and not the
“ people for them : That perhaps
“ there is no nation under Heaven
“ more sensible of this than the *En-*
“ *glish* nation ; so that if the Prince
“ does not govern by this maxim, the
“ people will soon grow very unkind
“ to him : That a Prince who would
“ command the praise and affection
“ of the nation should not aim to
“ stretch his prerogative. This will
“ lay such a degree of confidence in
“ him that he will ever be safe in the
“ PEOPLE while they feel they are
“ safe in HIM, and no longer.” This
Charles Stewart severely felt, who
instead of ruling by the royal stan-
dard (the laws of the people) destroy-
ed their Rights ; for which he fell
into the hands of such men who cut
off his head. In this case how striking
is the Prophet *Micah*’s speech, *Hear*
this, I pray you, ye-heads of the house of
Jacob, and PRINCES of the house of Is-
rael, that abhor judgment and pervert
all equity. BUT

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 45

BUT this leads us to the second branch of the text, which is,

[*The Prince asketh.*]

THE character of a *Prince* is very exalted, majestic, and superlative among men. Some say it is sacred : Hence you have that phrase, his SACRED MAJESTY ; but however majestic or sacred the name of the King may be, it is well known, that he derives and enjoys as King all his majestic character from the majesty of the people. How beautiful to this purpose is that poetic description of the sweet singer in *Israel*, Psal. lxxviii. 27. *There is little Benjamin with THEIR Rulers, the Princes of Judah with THEIR council, the Princes of Zebulun, and the Princes of Naphtali* Hence we read, *of the Princes of Israel, Heads of the house of their fathers, who were Princes of their tribe.*

[*The Prince asketh.*]

WHAT is the request of the Prince ?
If it be the love, duty, affection, and
loyalty

46 An O R A T I O N on

loyalty of his people, they are ready to dedicate their persons, lives, and fortunes for his Majesty's safety, dignity and crown, and to say, *O King live forever!* if their King will restore their injured Rights, and preserve inviolably sure, the enjoyment of their Charter Liberties. Let them but pay their Governor and their Judges—make their own laws—settle their taxations—fix their own courts—have their Castles free—and their harbour open—then the Prince may ask, and it will be given him, to the half of the kingdom, until the *British* streets are paved with *American* gold.

BUT if the *Prince asketh* an authority over the government of *Rhode-Island* to fix a new court of *Admiralty*, authorized to seize and confine suspected persons, guilty or not, and drag them away three thousand miles—the husband from his wife, his children, his home, his friends, his all, through a scene more dismal than *Pluto's* horrid kingdom, to be confined and tried
for

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 47

for life by a jury of strangers, if not enemies, on the accusation of a Negro. The law of God, the law of nature, and the soul of man forbids it—justice cannot desire it—it can only be tyranny that can assume it.

Is it not all that equity can ask, if they have broke the law, to be tried by their own law, and a jury of their own peers ? This particularly is the *Charter Right* of the *Rhode-Islanders*, whereby the Governor of the province, the Judges of the Superior Court, the House of Representatives, are solemnly bound by *oath* to maintain, to rule, govern, decide cases, and determine ONLY by their own laws, and will the *Rhode-Islanders* lose this Right, the standard of their Liberties ? This leads me to the third branch of the text, which is,

[*The Judge asketh for a reward.*]

THE character of a Judge is a very exalted one, and in some respects it is more solemn and sacred than that of a King, and ought therefore to be held

48 An O R A T I O N on

in high esteem, reverence and respect, as it bears such a figurative resemblance of the Judge of all the earth, *who will do right.*

BUT, as the text says, *The Judge asketh for a reward.* If it be for his fidelity in his high office, for his honorable support, according to the dignity of his character, you are bound in duty, in affection, and in obedience to let him have it. Shew your affection and gratitude to your Judges by a readiness to reward them as the Guardians of your Rights, as those who from their hearts should protect and hand forth the Liberties of their brethren to them. This is the way to become a *band of brethren*, from the Governor, to the meanest subject. Is not the whole of your complaint in this respect owing to your not taking an earlier opportunity to settle such salaries as their merit labour, and expence deserve.

BUT if the Judge *ask for a reward* from the Crown of *Britain*, let them not have it by any by any means: For if once the Judges of the courts of *Judicature*

ture of this province become dependent on the favour of the Crown or Ministry at Home for their support or salaries, you will become a nation of slaves to ministerial power. For thereby you submit the key of all your essential Rights as *Americans* to be in the hands of your enemies. If you suffer the Judges to become dependent for their pay upon the Ministry of *England*, what are they then but the *Ministry's* servants? If so, it is natural to suppose, they must act as the Ministry directs them: If not they will be unfaithful servants; and if faithful to the Ministry, where then are your Rights? Where then is the security of your lives or your property? For a more bold, daring innovation upon your right of power, decision and determination by your own laws, respecting your liberty and property between man and man, between the Crown of *England*, and the Rights of *America* cannot possibly be made, or attempted to be made, than to make your Judges dependent upon the *British* Ministry. It is in effect, giving up your right to all you have, to all that you

50 An O R A T I O N on

or your children can ever possess. For the possession of a person's right, whether hereditary, or by purchase, depends much upon the determination of the Judges. And if the Judges are wholly to be dependent upon the Crown of *England*, for nomination and support, then you may easily judge whose servants and slaves you are to be : *His servant ye are*, says St. Paul, *whom ye obey*.

THE Judges have the key of the laws, the hearts of the *Lawyers*, and the power of *Juries* much in their own hands. But the lives of the people, the rights of the subject, and the disposal of their property was originally intended to be determined by *Juries* ONLY : And as the Judges have assumed by custom, a power of dictating to Lawyers even at the *bar*, and directing the *Jury* ; it then becomes them the more to be *men fearing God and hating covetousness* ; *for he that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God*.

THIS leads us to the third branch of the text, which is,

[*And the Great Man he uttereth his mischievous desire.*] THIS

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 51

THIS great man must be some *Ahitophel* ; but are there no *Davids* in *America* ? Or are you not all *Davids*, 2 *Sam.* xv. *And David said, O LORD, I pray thee, turn the council of Ahitophel into foolishness.* It is a self-evident observation, that when the Rights and Liberties of a people are destroyed, it is commonly by the mischievous design of some GREAT MAN ; I do not mean by this Great Man, a man of a great soul. No ! So far from it, that I rather think as to greatness of soul, ten thousand such may dance a minuet or a country dance on the point of a cambrick needle, and not jostle each other. I remember a story, but whether it was in *Europe* or *America*, I cannot say, but think it was in *America* : However the purport of it is this, A Tradesman brought in a bill to a great Gentleman, so called ; the Gentleman found, as the Tradesman said, a thousand faults with the bill. This was too much charged ; that was too much, and he would not pay it. The Tradesman says, Sir, I will never wait upon you more, and I believe the D—I will

52 AN ORATION on

will not, for you are a man of so little soul, that he will be at a loss where to find you. Is not this mischievous man such a one? But who this GREAT MAN is, whether Lord *B—e*, the Duke of *G——n*, Lord *H——b*, or Lord *N——b* is not so material; it is not the man, but the actions of the man which are said to be *mischievous*: This is what the *Americans* feel, as the text says.

[*He uttereth his mischievous desire*]

OR as the words import the mischief of his soul—That his soul, time, thoughts and talents are intensely engaged to promote, secure, and establish his mischievous design, either by bribing the Ministry with pensions, the Majority with places of profit, the ears of the King with bad advice, the closet and the cabinet councils with arbitrary directions: Thus he uttereth his *mischievous desire* to establish in the King's mind a divine right of authority to command his subjects, and the obligation of the people passively to obey, with this great authoritative argument, *It is his Majesty's will*
and

53 the Beauties of LIBERTY.

and pleasure, with the advice of his Majesty's council, when in reality it is only the great man uttering his *mischievous design*, if not of overthrowing the state, yet of destroying the Rights of the people. This attempt in *Charles's* reign roused the people to arms, to recover those Charter Rights they first obtained sword in hand.

WHAT design can possibly be more mischievous than this to his Majesty's person, family, crown and dignity. His Majesty's person can only be safe in the hearts of his people, while the people find their Liberties are safe in him : His family's safety is the people's affection to them, and their royal supply is the people's generosity : His crown is in the hands of his people, therefore to be continued or removed only by their authority and power : His dignity can only be maintained by them, as their rights and priviledges are maintained by him. O then what a *mischievous design* must it be in this Great Man to alienate the affections of his Majesty's subjects, by assuming with the King or
in

54 An O R A T I O N on

in the Ministry, a despotic power over the Rights of the people. This is the great cause of all our national misery, the bane of our distress, and the source of unhappiness both to the King and the people—a people who are remarkable for their loyalty, and are willing to make their King the most happy Monarch upon the earth, provided he will but prevent this Great Man's, or the Ministry's mischievous design of the ruin of their essential Rights and Liberties ; then the King may chuse his own happiness and enjoy it. Therefore, it must be the most mischievous design that can possibly be known or heard of, that carries in it such plain aspects of distress to the King and State, as well as destruction to the people, to find that by this *mischievous desire*, neither their lives, liberties, or properties are safe which is always the case when an arbitrary Man or Ministry rule over the people. Would it be uncharitably kind to leave this Great Man, for his *mischievous design* against King and State, a dying legacy, if not he may have mine, which is, “That
“ he

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 55

“ he may be ten thousand years in pas-
“ sing through space—to pass ten thou-
“ sand times swifter than the rays of
“ light—to be ten thousand years in
“ going—live there ten thousand years
“ on bread and water, and when he
“ comes back to be ten thousand times
“ thinner than the edge of a razor.” It
is rather a hard legacy I own, but not so
hard as to send a soul to Hell to all eter-
nity, which you know good men fre-
quently do. It is only fifty thousand
years punishment for uttering his *mis-*
chievous desire ; by that time I hope that
all mankind will forgive him, and let
the Great Man go free.

BUT this leads me to the last branch
of the text :

[SO THEY WRAP IT UP.]

THESE words are figurative, and are
taken from a Merchant or Tradesman's
wrapping up of parcels, or goods he
sells, by way of safety, completeness, or
satisfaction to the buyer : Or it may be
a metaphor taken from wrapping or
folding up a letter by way of secrecy.

56 An ORATION on

[*So they wrap it up.*]

TAKE it in a political sense by way of safety—The Ministry admires the Great Man's mischievous desire—"It will do they say—it will be very safe for us—let us keep our power and make the people obey, and then nothing can hurt us—let us keep our place and pension, and let the people know our authority : If they will not submit, we will make them ; What is the King's army for ? What are his Majesty's fleets for ? What is all the military force of the kingdom for ? We will order General Gage to be in readiness with his troops at *Rhode-Island*. The people of *America*, say we, have no right of power to tax them, or appoint Judges and their salaries—we will let them know, that the King has a right to appoint Judges, Courts of Admiralty, impose revenues, lay taxes upon them, send military forces, block up their harbours ; let us command them, compel them, and get the key of their laws and power of their Rights and Liberties into our own hands, then all will be safe." *So they wrap it up.*

BUT

BUT if we take it for completeness—
or a thing well done, then it completely
sets forth the design of the Ministry to in-
slave the *Americans*? It completely an-
swers, say they, every end. By this de-
sign the King's power is maintained, the
prerogative of Parliament is kept up,
our authority is preserved, our interest is
secured, and our power in *America* will
be enlarged, only let us establish this
design of making the provinces of *Ame-*
rica submit to the power and taxation of
the *English* Parliament, this will do
completely : *So they wrap it up.*

OR if we take the words wrapped up
by way of satisfaction to the Seller—
that the purchaser is pleased with his
bargain—what metaphor can more nobly
describe the satisfaction that an arbi-
trary MAN or *ministry* take, in compel-
ling the people, as it were with a rod
of iron, tamely to submit to their arbi-
trary measures. “ This, say they, is a
“ pleasing, satisfactory plan—we have
“ brought them to pay duties for teas—
“ to submit to custom-house officers to
“ search their vessels, to make seizures,
“ to pay *imports, clearances, and entries*, so
H “ that

58 AN ORATION on

“ that they cannot import a hat, nor
“ carry a pound of wool across a bay,
“ nor take a box of *Lisbon* lemons, nor
“ a pipe of wine, nor a puncheon of
“ rum, nor any sugars or molasses to
“ *America*, without our leave, and their
“ paying duty for it ; this will do ; this
“ is agreeable, and gives us satisfaction.” *So they wrap it up.*

BUT if we take the words, from the similitude of a letter being folded or *wrapped up*, as it contains a secret. This idea of the words no doubt will open the whole Arcana of the *mischievous* design ; at present it is wrapped up, like a letter, and remains a secret ; but when it is open, then your Gentlemen, Farmers, and Landholders will know the secret it contains, however unfeelingly insensible many of them now are, that every acre of land they enjoy must pay a tax of one, two, or three shillings sterling annually--every apple they rear--every barrel of cyder they make--the soap they use--the candles they burn--the shoes they wear--the light of Heaven they enjoy must all pay tax quickly to the King of *England*. To tax your
blessings

59 the Beauties of LIBERTY.

blessings you may think it is hard, but when they come to tax the only CURSE of the land, NEW-ENGLAND RUM, what will you then think of that ?

BUT I close with an address.

FIRST, this shews, that an arbitrary despotic power in a Prince, is the ruin of a nation, of the Crown, and of the subjects ; therefore it is to be feared, abhorred, detested and destroyed, because the happiness of the King, and the prosperity of the people are thereby not only in danger, but upon the brink of destruction. Every age and every history furnishes us with proofs, as clear as the light of the morning, of the truth of this. And was not this lately the case in *Sweeden*, when the King with a few of his Senators and ministry about him destroyed the Rights of the people, by the power of the sword, and established his despotic will as the law of the land, by the tyranny of death ? And has not an unjust arbitrary power over the Rights of the people been the cause of shedding so much blood, and of the distresses in *England*, since the conquest of *Julius Cæsar* ?

BUT

60 An O R A T I O N on

BUT it is the singular happiness of the *Americans*, according to their own laws, not to be in bondage to any power upon the earth. The King of *England* has no power to enact, or put in force any law that may oppress them; his very attempting to do it, at once destroys his right to reign over them. For the brightest gem which the King of *England* wears in the *British* Crown, is that majesty, trust, and confidence, which the *Americans* invest him with, as the King and Guardian of their Rights and Liberties.

THE Parliament of *England* cannot justly make any laws to tax the *Americans*; for they are not the Representatives of *America*; and therefore they are no legislative power of *America*. The House of Lords cannot do it, for they are Peers of *England*, not of *America*; and if neither King, Lords, nor Commons have any right to oppress or destroy the Liberties of the *Americans*, why is it then that the *Americans* do not stand upon their own strength, and shew their power and importance, when the life of life, and every Liberty that is dear to them is in danger? THERE-

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 61

THEREFORE, let me advise you with all the power of affection, with all the pathos of soul, (as one who esteems the full possession of Rights of the *Americans*, as the highest blessing of this life) to stand alarmed. See your danger—death is near—destruction is at the door.—Need I speak? Are not your harbours blockaded from you? Your castle secured by captives—your lives destroyed—revenues imposed upon you—taxation laid—military power oppressing—your CHARACTER *violated*—your Governor pensioned—your constitution declining—your Liberties departing, and not content with this, they now attack the *life*, the soul and *capitol* of all your Liberties, to create your Judges, and make them independent upon you for office or support, and erect new Courts of Admiralty, to take away by violence, the husband from his family, his wife, his home, his friends. Such cruelty and tyranny ought ever to be held in the most hateful contempt, the same as you would *a banditti of slave-makers on the coast of Africa*.

HAS not the voice of your Father's
blood

62 An O R A T I O N on

blood cried yet loud enough in your ears,
“ Ye Sons of *America* scorn to be Slaves ? ”
Have you not heard the voice of blood
in your streets, louder than that which
reached Heaven, that cried for vengeance.
That was, saith the LORD to *Cain*, the
voice of thy brother's blood, but this is
of many brethren. Therefore, if there
be any vein, any nerve, any soul, any
life, or spirit of Liberty in the Sons of
America, shew your love for it ; guard
your freedom, prevent your chains ;
stand up as one man for your Liberty ;
for none but those, who set a just value
upon this blessing are worthy to enjoy it.

SECOND Remark, *That it is not rebellion.*
I declare it before GOD, the congrega-
tion, and all the world, and I would be
glad if it reached the ears of every *Briton*,
and every *American* : That it is no re-
bellion to oppose any King, Ministry,
or Governor, that destroys by any vio-
lence or authority whatever, the Rights
of the people. Shall a man be deemed a
rebel that supports his own Rights ? It is
the first law of nature ; and he must
surely forget the laws of nature, in
his own conscience, who will not
do

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 63

do it. A right to the blessing of freedom, we do not receive from Kings, but from Heaven, as the breath of life, and essence of our being? Do not the birds of the air expand their wings? The fish of the sea their fins? and the worms of the earth turn again when they are trod upon? And shall this be deemed rebellion? Heaven forbid! Shall *Naboth's* disputing with King *Abab*, respecting his vineyard, be deemed rebellion? Or the people sending home their Goverour in irons some years ago, be deemed rebellion? It is no more rebellion for the people to stand up for, and maintain their rights than it is to breath in the free air.

FINALLY. Let all lovers of Liberty, truth and justice now unite as one man in recovering and firmly establishing the Liberties of *America*: That the *American* Parliament may enjoy every power and privilege the *English* Parliament enjoys: This will invigorate and brace up all the sinews and nerves of the state, while every joint member is held to its proper place by the indissoluble bond of interest.—In this way the *British* nation may become the
most

64 AN ORATION on

most glorious that ever existed since time began, and continue increasing in glory and triumphing in the arms of freedom, and be matter of THANKSGIVING until time shall end.

A few STRICTURES ON LIBERTY of CONSCIENCE, part of which was delivered at a Public School in *Boston*, and were left out in all the former editions, but is inserted in this by particular desire.

[*Liberty of Conscience.*]

WHAT is it ? Is it not the most noble blessing of life, the birth-right of Angels, the morning of mercies, and the happiness of mankind as the eternal-right of nature. Liberty, is it any thing less than salvation ? Did not the silver trumpet, under the *Mosaic* law, proclaim it ? the year of *Jubilee* sounds it ? the day of atonement sings of it ? and the feast of tabernacles feast upon it. Shall man then be ashamed of it when Angels proclaim it—all nature seeks it, and the
Messiah

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 65

Messiah has divinely sealed it as the grand embassy and message of his love to mankind, which was, *to proclaim Liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.* Liberty ! how noble the thought ! How grand the idea ! It is the kingdom of Seraphs, the sublime felicity the Gospel declares. *If the Son make you free, then are you free indeed.*

LIBERTY, it is *coeval* with the Sun, its birth is the dawn of the morning—its happiness are the beauties of creation—its blessings are unnumbered like the drops of the morning dew—it is a kingdom to itself—and but few dwell therein ; O mournful happiness ! What shall I call it, a happy misery, to be almost alone in love with Liberty of Conscience in all its beauties and branches ? Solemn solitude this indeed ! How few are the minds that are inspired above fear : Where are they that do not couch beneath a frown ? Where is the man that dares to feel every piercing dart in his bosom for Liberty of Conscience ? that

I

will

66 A N O R A T I O N o n

will venture to make a vigorous stand, and dare the enemy boldly to the face, until death shall put a period to his existence ? O who is it that makes this Liberty his care ? Which ought to be the concern of all men, as it is the benefit of all. For myself, rather than give it up, I will stand single in its defence, I can but lose my life, with my resolution to maintain Liberty of Conscience, even for those, who, according to nation, are my brethren, my kinsmen, according to the flesh, and they are welcome to every sacrifice, to every power, and every talent. I look upon them, having it signed by many witnesses, that they are distressed in their *Persons*, in their *Properties*, and in their *Consciences*, by the laws of the province, for which reason I have represented their distresses feelingly and plainly, and have spoke boldly for their Liberty ; * for as the consciences of mankind are only answerable to God, they ought to have no other ruling power but the word of God : Though they are a distressed people, yet
so

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 67

so dark are mankind, in general, respecting Liberty of Conscience, that *there are but few who see any beauty in it*, and I expect no thanks for what I have said on this head, but am sure of ample satisfaction arising from having discharged my *duty*. Why should I expect any more reward than the Prophets in *Israel* had? *Moses*, the great deliverer of the people, found what others feel; "LORD, says he, *these people are ready to stone me.*" And *Elijah*, the man who found the nearer way to glory, said, when he had exerted himself for the divine and sacred Liberty of Conscience, *I only am left, and they seek my life.*

SOLOMON has a beautiful similitude to this purpose, *Eccl. ix. 24, 25*; and the prophet *Isaiab* says, though in a more sublime sense, *Who hath believed our report*. But O the power of prejudice! the blindness of the mind! the misery of mortals, especially those who lately, not contented with the pollution of their own consciences, would not suffer others to be refined, but have stretched the rules of honesty to bar the door of Liberty, and
would,

68 An O R A T I O N on

would, had it been in their power, have locked up the whole creation from the blessings of salvation : Let them see *Luke xi. 52.* And yet O amazing ! these persons have the ignorance to impose upon the authority of the word of God, upon mankind and their consciences, by calling themselves **CHRISTIANS**, to take away their reproach. Such men, according to the present mode of making **Christians**, may do for Saints in this life, but I think, if *Paul* is right, they would do much better for Devils in the next ; for it is far better for us to have no Devil at all, if he does not take all such envious beings as these home to himself. But if such men, Ministers or Members are **Christians**, then *Paul's* Gospel must be a *Fable*, his preaching vain, and mankind are yet in their sins : *But shall, says Paul, their unbelief make void the faith of God's elect ? No ! God forbid.*

But this leads me to the

REMARKS taken from the first Liberty Sermon, preached at the Public School, from *Judges v. 9.* *My heart is towards the Governors in Israel, that offered themselves*

69 the Beauties of LIBERTY.

*selves willingly among the people : Bless
ye the LORD : Inserted by desire.*

REMARK I. That it is the duty of Kings Governors, Judges and Ministers, to offer themselves willingly among the people—to take charge of their persons—to preserve their rights—stand boldly against every danger—secure their privileges—restore them when they are lost—be affectionate to the people—redress their grievances—and convey to them every blessing of life and liberty.

SECONDLY. The dignity of the King, the safety of the Governor—the honour of the Judges—and especially the beauty of Gospel Ministers is to offer themselves willingly among the people : Says *Peter, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.*

THIRDLY. That only such Kings, Governors, Judges, and Ministers, who thus offer themselves willingly can expect to engage the hearts of the people—This only will engage them to honour their King—to obey their Governor—to reverence their Judges—to love their Ministers.

70 An O R A T I O N on

nisters, and esteem them highly for their works sake—but Ministers are not to give them chaff for wheat—a stone for bread—a remedial law for the gospel—works for rich grace—terms for promises—conditions for absolute salvation ; for this is taking away the sacred rights of the people, and true Liberty of Conscience from them. *O that they were wise, that they understood this.*

FOURTHLY. This shews that a purified mind, or perfection of Liberty of Conscience, can only arise from, and be only enjoyed by what the LORD JESUS CHRIST has done, as their King and Governor in *Israel* : He only has engaged his heart to GOD for them ; and has offered himself willingly among the people, to become their *Surety, Sufferer, and SAVIOUR*, to live and die for them, to take the charge of their persons, as his portion, his inheritance, and treasure, saying, *The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places, and I have a goodly heritage*—to face every danger for them, even when sin, death, wrath, and hell were in the way of their peace of mind and Liberty

berty of Conscience, he removed it for
 them : *Mine own arm*, says he, *has brought*
salvation. He trod the wine-press alone,
 and has thereby secured, firmly secured
 every blessing of life, liberty, and salva-
 tion, peace with God, pardon of sin,
 righteousness and redemption for the
 people ; although they have lost by sin
 their original perfection of nature, their
 enjoyment of paradise, and their perfect
 righteousness by creation, yet the LORD
 JESUS CHRIST has restored *that which*
he took not away, namely, a more glorious
 righteousness for them--a greater per-
 fection of nature to them--a nearer union
 to GOD--a more exalted enjoyment--
 higher obligations of praise--and a more
 glorious inheritance than ever they lost
 by sin. Likewise the LORD JESUS
 CHRIST has by his person and promise--
 by his oath and power--by his death and
 righteousness--by his resurrection and
 intercession, for ever secured these blef-
 sings for the people who love his NAME ;
 nor is there any danger of the loss of them
 while Jesus lives to maintain their right
 unto them ; it is the *Magna Charta* of the
 heavenly

72 An O R A T I O N on

heavenly kingdom, the rights of the citizens of *Zion*, and royal gift of the the King of glory, who is tender over the people, for his laws are LOVE ; he is kind to them, as their friend and brother, who loves them as his brethren, as his flesh and as his bone. O who would not but honour this King, obey his laws, adore his name, and give him all the glory, by whom we have peace and liberty of conscience, access into the grace wherein we stand—liberty to enter into the holy of holies—by whose precious blood our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God in righteousness and true holiness all the days of our lives. This is sacred to Liberty—or the Christian's life.

[*Bless ye the LORD.*]

THE obligations we are under to bless and praise the name of the LORD are many, as well for his providential mercies, as for the blessings of salvation ; more especially when the people enjoy the sceptre of such a King, the happiness of such a Governor, the blessings of such Judges, and the priviledges of such Gos-
pel

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 73

pel Ministers as are described, then let every thing that has breath praise the LORD. In order to enjoy this blessing—in JEHOVAH's name set up your banner—unite in prayer—walk in peace, and through God you may yet do valiantly, for the secure enjoyment of all your Rights and Liberties.

WHICH brings me to the
REMARKS on the RIGHTS and LIBERTIES of the AFRICANS.

[*Personal Liberty.*]

HERE let me claim your attention. Every tie of nature, every sensation of humanity, every bowels of pity, every compassion as a Christian, engages me to speak for the Personal Liberty and Freedom of those, who are the most distressed of all human beings, the natives of *Africa*. Were they thus distressed by *Indians*, *Mahometans*, or *Turks* with respect to their Liberty, they would have a right to be redressed and set free ; but for mankind to be distressed and kept in Slavery by Christians, by those who love the Gospel of CHRIST ; for such to buy their Brethren (for *of one blood he has made all nations*) and bind them to be Slaves to them and their heirs for life. Be astonished, ye Christians, at this !

K

And

74 An ORATION on

And what is more shocking even to the tenderness of nature, is to *export them*, for filthy lucre into the hands of Men-tyrants. But what is more alarming yet, and exceeds all bounds, is, for one Christian, and Member of a Church, to EXPORT another, and banish her to be a Slave, when in full communion in the Church.* Was ever such a thing heard of in the house of GOD before ! Tell it not in *Gath* ! Publish it not in the streets of *Boston* ! Shall no plea be heard ? Shall no argument prevail to *let these oppressed ones GO FREE*. Have Christians lost all the tenderness of nature, the feelings of humanity, or the more refined sensations of christianity ? Or have the Ministers in silence forgot to shew their people this iniquity ? O could they bear to see—to see did I say ? nay to feel their children rent from their arms, and see them bound in irons and banished to be *Slaves* ! O killing thought ! But for Christians to encourage this bloody and inhuman Trade of *Man-stealing*, or *Slave-making*, O how shocking it is ! while it may be, their nearer kindred want employment, if not bread to eat. This unlawful, inhuman practice is a
fure

* PHILLIS, an African Christian, who is a member of Dr. COOPER'S Church.

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 75

sure way for mankind to ruin *America*, and for Christians to bring their children, and their children's children to a morsel of bread. Much has been wrote, and well wrote to dissuade the *Americans* from the practice of so great an EVIL ; many begin to listen to the laws of humanity and the force of the argument : But surely what the Prophet *Isaiab* says will be sufficient with every true Minister of the Gospel, and with every Christian and Son of Liberty in *America* ; *Ija.* lviii. 6. *Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, that ye break every yoke.*

What follows is desired to be published with the Oration, having been offered to one of the Publishers of a News-Paper, but was refused a place ; but as the Printer is determined, even at the hazard of his life, to maintain inviolable, that inestimable Priviledge of mankind, LIBERTY *of the* PRESS, which can never be wanted more than at this time, when near one sixth part of the inhabitants of *America* are held in REAL *Slavery*, under the different pretences of interest and religion, however well grouded the former may be, sure I am the latter must

76 A N O R A T I O N o n

must be very vague, as the conduct of the Buyers of these People serve daily to confirm every thinking person in this opinion ; For reasons above, shall comply with the request of an Advocate for a multitude of these distressed People, who are unjustly held in *Bondage* by those who profess to act on principles of Liberty and Religion, by inserting the following Piece, with the Circular Letter which was sent with the same.

Christian Brethren,

SHOULD I attempt to delineate the dire effects which the iniquitous and cruel Trade of *Slave-making* has occasioned, both in *Africa* and *America*, I should paint out such scenes of distress, havock, and detestation, as must not only serve to shock human nature, but would swell my piece to a volume much larger than ever was published in the universe. Let it suffice, kind Reader, (and may I be permitted to address myself in particular to you, my Reverend Fathers and Brethren, who are employed in preaching the *glorious Gospel of Liberty*, and who must shortly give an account of your Stewardship) to lead you to the distant clime
of

the Beauties of LIBERTY. 77

of *Africa*. Look ye into the native country of the distressed *Africans* ! Who would not shudder at viewing the tender parent weeping for the loss of a favorite son ! A daughter whose plighted vows, perhaps, have been given in the conubial state ! Dutiful children, with a filial piety bewailing their irretrievable misfortune by losing an affectionate, tender, and loving father, brother, sister, neighbour, or companion ! These being torn from the bosoms of each other must certainly break the strongest bonds of nature and friendship. Think ! O think of this ! if not totally lost to all sense of feeling, you whose hearts are adamant ! I mean the Buyers and Sellers of *Africans*, however you may gloss your practice with the *pretence* of *christianizing* these People. I need not mention the recent proofs we have of the ill consequences arising by peopling our Islands with these *Africans*, as their frequent revolts so often occasion streams of blood to be shed, as well on the side of the Whites as Blacks. But may it not with truth be said, these revolutions are occasioned by the cruel treatment they meet with from their Masters ? But allowing they were used in the kindest manner, is it reasonable to think they
can

78 An O R A T I O N

can be satisfied with their condition, as their minds must ever be embittered with the melancholly reflection, that let their behaviour be what it may, they and their children are to be held in *Bondage* so long as they live ! Nature trembles at such a thought, much more to experience it ! What Christian, in this practice, who would not shudder at viewing our Saviour's eternal rule of righteousness !

CONSCIENCE.

The following Circular Letter, accompanied with Mr. *Swan's* Piece, entitled a Diffuasive to *Great-Britain* and her Colonies from the *Slave-Trade*, were lately presented to the Gentlemen who are chosen *Representatives* for this Province.

B O S T O N, APRIL 20, 1773.

SIR,

THE efforts made by the Legislative of this province in their last sessions to free themselves from *Slavery*, gave us, who are in that deplorable state, a high degree of satisfaction. We expect great things from men who have made such a noble stand against the designs of their *fellow-men* to enslave them. We cannot but wish and hope, Sir, that you will have the same grand object, we mean civil and religious *Liberty*, in view in your next session.

session. The divine spirit of *Freedom* seems to fire every humane breast on this Continent, except such as are bribed to assist in executing the execrable plan.

WE are very sensible that it would be highly detrimental to our present Masters, if we were allowed to demand all that of *right* belongs to us for past services; this we disclaim. Even the *Spaniards*, who have not those sublime ideas of *Freedom* that *English* men have, are conscious that they have no right to all the services of their fellow-men, we mean the *Africans*, whom they have purchased with their money; therefore they allow them one day in a week to work for themselves, to enable them to earn money to purchase the residue of their time, which they have a right to demand in such portions as they are able to pay for, (a due appraisment of their services being first made, which always stand at the purchase money.) We do not pretend to dictate to you, Sir, or to the honorable Assembly, of which you are a member: We acknowledge our obligations to you for what you have already done, but as the people of this province seem to be actuated by the principles of equity and justice, we cannot but expect your House will again take our deplorable
case

80 An O R A T I O N, &c.

case into serious consideration, and give us that ample relief which, *as men*, we have a natural right to.

BUT since the wise and righteous Governor of the universe has permitted our fellow men to make us slaves, we bow in submission to him, and determine to behave in such a manner, as that we may have reason to expect the divine approbation of, and assistance in, our peaceable and lawful attempts to gain our freedom.

WE are willing to submit to such regulations and laws, as may be made relative to us, until we leave the province, which we determine to do as soon as we can from our joynt labours procure money to transport ourselves to some part of the coast of *Africa*, where we propose a settlement. We are very desirous that you should have instructions relative to us, from your town, therefore we pray you to communicate this letter to them, and ask this favor for us.

In behalf of our fellow Slaves in this Province, and by order of their Committee,

PETER BESTES, SAMBO FREEMAN,
FELIX HOLBROOK, CHESTER JOIE.

F I N I S.