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*Mr. MURRAY's*  
Thanksgiving Sermon.

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THE  
SUBSTANCE

OF A

Thanksgiving Sermon,

Delivered at the UNIVERSAL MEETING-HOUSE,  
in Boston, February 19, 1795.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE HEARERS.

By JOHN MURRAY,  
MINISTER OF THE FIRST UNIVERSAL CHURCH IN BOSTON.

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

*Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and  
praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

PSALM cvii. verse 31. 32.

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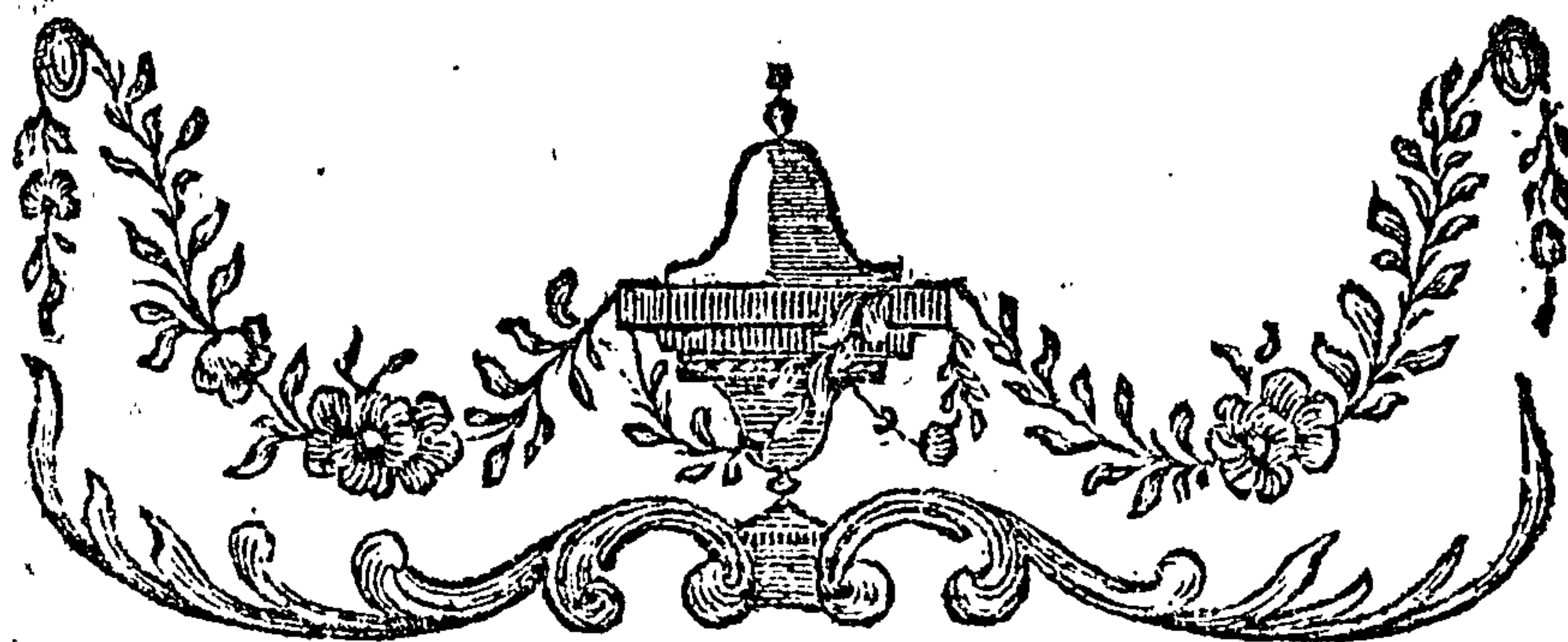
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Mr. C. B. Price  
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## *A Thanksgiving Sermon.*

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PSALM lxi. verse 5.

I WILL PRAISE THE NAME OF GOD WITH A SONG, AND  
WILL MAGNIFY HIM WITH THANKSGIVING.

WHEN we consider the propriety of approaching the God of our salvation with songs of thanksgiving, and of swelling to his name the glad orisons of praise, we confess that our bosoms are fraught with the animating glow of hope, that on such a day as this there are very few who are not impelled, by sentiments fully correspondent with the occasion, to join the general joy. To be called upon by the illustrious head of the United States—to have this call seconded and enforced by the venerable head of this Commonwealth—to be thus invited to celebrate the praises of the august and beneficent Father of our spirits—thus directed to render thanks to him for the manifold displays of his goodness and mercy, vouchsafed toward us, must in truth elevate our hearts, must originate the most sublime and pleasurable feelings, and induce



us to resolve with the royal prophet, *That we will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with Thanksgiving.*

The apostle James directs those who are merry to *sing psalms*, and David said, “ I will praise the name of God with a song.” The knowledge of God gives peace. *This is life eternal, to know thee, &c. acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace.* The knowledge of God, as manifested in his *name*, has a tendency to fill the heart with joy, which will burst forth in songs of praise. But what is this *NAME*, the knowledge of which inspires the soul with a resolution to celebrate the praise of God in songs ? What is the *name* which contains so much matter for praise, and for thanksgiving ? When Moses the servant of God was appointed to deliver a message to, and be the deliverer of, Gods people, he requested the God who sent him, to inform him what answer he should give the people, when they should ask who sent him ; and on this he was taught to say unto them, *I AM hath sent me, and God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The Lord God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you—this is my name forever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.* After this the prophet was taught to inform God’s people, that the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, was the God of the *whole earth*, and when he bowed the heavens and came down, in order to perform all the rich promises so emphatically made to the fathers : when he took on him our nature, he bore the name of *Emmanuel*, which being interpreted, is, *God with us !* Believing as we do, that God was manifest in the *flesh*, whatever name he sustains in  
that



*that character*, we are to consider as expressive of his nature : thus his name *Jesus* contains salvation, not only from the consequence of sin, but also from *sin itself* ; which by the sacred penman, is styled, the *plague of the heart*—but here it may not be improper to point out a few of the names by which the only wise God our Saviour is called.

ADAM, 1 Cor. xv. 45 : EVERLASTING FATHER, Isaiah ix. 6 : Eternal Life, 1 John v. 20 : Faithful Witness, Rev. i. 5 : FRIEND of *sinners*, Mal. ii. 19 : HEIR of *all things*, Heb. i. 2 : PROPITIATION, John vi. 33 : *For the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2 : REDEEMER, Isaiah lix. 20 : REFINER, Mal. iii. 3 : *The LORD OUR Righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6 : SANCTIFICATION, 1 Cor. i. 30. These and many more names by which the *just God and Saviour* is made manifest unto men, are calculated to inspire the soul with grateful affection, and to make us say in the language of the sweet singer of Israel, *I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with THANKSGIVING. God is love. He is that love which thinketh no evil.* Herein is the love of God, *not that we loved him, but that He loved us, and gave himself for us.* Much is said of the *name* of God in the records of truth. *Be it known unto you, saith the Lord, for mine own name sake do I do this.* The gracious God frequently makes mention of the *honour of his name*, upon which he will never suffer a stain, or even the shadow of an impeachment. As many as *know the name* of God will *trust* in him, and they who trust in the Lord are not easily moved. The minds of those who are staid on the Rock of ages, are kept in peace, and their spirits rejoice in God their Saviour : They sing therefore with the *spirit,*  
and

*and with the understanding also*, and they magnify the Lord with thanksgiving. But there was a time when some of us thought, and there are many who still think, that God is as effectually *praised* by the *lamentations* of *corroding sorrow*, as by *singing* and *rejoicing*. Surely such persons forget that it is not the gloomy, but the cheerful servant, who does honour to his master. Yet it is in vain that we call on any to be thankful, until they are made fully sensible of their obligations to the Saviour of sinners. In order, therefore, that we may upon this auspicious occasion, render unto the Lord unre-served thanks, and thus unequivocally comply with the direction of those who are so deservedly invested with authority ; taking also as our exemplar the exalted head of the Jewish nation. Thus stimulated, and thus sanctioned, we will endeavour to point out under the following heads, a few of the innumerable blessings by which we are so eminently distinguished.

*First*. Natural,—*Secondly*. Civil,—And, *Thirdly*, Spiritual Blessings.

I. *Natural*. We have abundant cause to thank God that *we are*. There was a time that many of us might have been unable to determine whether our existence was *really* a blessing. Is there who could give God thanks for a being appointed to endless sorrow? We humbly conceive it hardly possible for any individual to render to Deity the grateful incense of sincere praise for a life, however eligible its present investiture, which *must*, or *probably may* terminate in *exquisite* and never ending torment. But, for us, when we reflect, that *Infinite Wisdom* could not have produced an order  
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of intelligences without *any design* ; that *Infinite Goodness* could only entertain the *most beneficent design*, and that *Infinite Power* could not be *disappointed* respecting his benignant purposes, purposed in himself concerning the *work of his hands*. When we have the joint suffrages of the writers of Revelation, even *all God's holy prophets from the beginning of the world*, together with the authority of the Assembly of Divines, who in answer to the first question in their shorter Catechism, inform us, that *God's chief end in making man, was his own glory and their good*. When we are moreover made to know that for the *pleasure* of the *Creator*, who taketh no *pleasure* in the *death* of the *sinner*, we are and were created, we cannot but adopt the language of the Poet ; and while gratitude sublimates the spirit, we join issue with him, and reverentially exclaim, surely our *Creator had never created but to bless*. It is thus under the influence of reason and revelation that we joyfully believe, and when *believing*, in the name of our faithful Creator, we spontaneously praise him with songs of triumph, we extol that mercy which endureth for ever, and with the orisons of Thanksgiving we magnify his goodness. But we are blessed with many blessings which serve to render this being, even in the present state, a *well being*.

I. *Sight*. This is an inestimable blessing ; for while we are bound to give thanks to him who made the eye, how innumerable the blessings that this blessing serves as an inlet to. With the eye we behold the wonders of God in the heavens above, and in the earth beneath, and, rapt in filial wonder, with the inspired bard, we enraptured cry,

“ These are thy glorious works, Parent of good—  
“ Almighty” &c.

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With the eye we behold the reviving countenances of our much loved friends-giving, while we are receiving ineffable delight.

II. *Hearing.* Is there who can calculate the value of this blessing? How many soul reviving pleasures find admittance through this avenue to the soul!

III. *Speech.* How great the magnitude of this mercy; how innumerable our obligations to the maker of our frames for the organ of speech; how pleasing to talk one to the other, and to make through this medium the *invisible* visible. What music in the modulation of the human voice in speech; how far beyond all instruments which the hand of the most skillful human artist has ever yet constructed. Speech indeed proclaims the divinity of its artist; and it is endowed with corresponding powers. It is frequently the harbinger of peace, and many have been redeemed from the grasp of despair, by the heaven inspired strains which have issued from this distinguishing organ.

IV. *The use of our limbs.* How invaluable this blessing; how much are we indebted to him who has furnished us with these useful members of our bodies, for the strength by which they are nerved, and for that agility, flexibility and ease, with which they are accommodated to the various purposes of life.

V. *Health.* What would the whole world be without this prime good. Health may be compared to the sun in the natural world; it gilds and beautifies every surrounding object, it tranquilizes and soothes the soul, and by its genial influence ex-  
torts,



torts, even from the frigid bosom, the song of praise.

VI. *Reason.* The health of the mind. This is transcendantly great, beyond all utterance ; nor is it possible too highly to appreciate its value. Worthy of all adoration is that Being, who has illumined the mind of man with this heaven-lighted lamp. It secureth to our species an indubitable superiority over every other part of animated nature : It enricheth us by the possession of the first of blessings, and it endoweth us with a rational hope of an ample harvest in reversion.

VII. *The Earth and Waters,* and the treasures produced by both. These loudly call for our grateful and unceasing acknowledgments to that Being, who causeth the earth to bring forth abundantly, who hath furnished it as a garden, liberally supplying it with whatever may serve to treat the taste, or smell, or sight, for food, for medicine, or delight ;—who hath made the treasures of the deep our own, fashioning those seas which seemed to roll their waves insurmountable barriers to all communication between the nations, as convenient paths for those commodious vehicles, which, wafted forward by propitious winds, more effectually produce reciprocal advantages, and disseminate the conciliating and benevolent idea of universal brotherhood.

But how little do we know of ourselves, or our accommodations ;—how very little of the parts that are most obvious. We dwell in a house that is indeed admirably contrived both for ornament and use ; we look out at the windows, and have a confused prospect of the surrounding scenes. But at home—



home—what very strangers ! Yet the most cursory or superficial view, will give us to know that we are fearfully and wonderfully made, that he who made us, upholdeth us in life, that his goodness far transcendeth all description, and that therefore it is our most reasonable service to celebrate his praises, who hath thus fashioned, and who still preserveth us, with the song of gratitude, and to magnify him with thanksgiving.

Let us not say, that the inestimable blessings, which have been thus feebly sketched, are not peculiar to us ; that we have them in common with our kind, and that therefore they do not call for our grateful acknowledgments. Are then the largesses of a benefactor lessened, because his munificences is as extensive as his power ? What ! shall we refuse to give God thanks, because *he is good unto all* ? because *his tender mercies are over all his works* ? Should these blessings appear less valuable because they are enjoyed by others ? Far, very far from every one of us, be such disingenuous, illiberal, and selfish conclusions. But the truth is, that we enjoy many discriminating mercies ; and while it is a fact, that no individual is destitute of a motive for thanksgiving, upon us the calls for gratitude are immeasurably accumulated. *We can see the blind, we can hear the deaf, we can talk of the dumb, we can walk to the lame, we can visit the sick, we can behold with sympathizing concern the insane, that unfortunate being, who, pierced by the barbed arrows of affliction, is doomed to suffer all the tortures which are attendant upon “ moping melancholy, and moon-struck madness.” We can behold many, very many, suffering in the want of those comforts, which we are made richly to enjoy.*  
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How natural the question, Why are we not in a situation similar to that of those distressed sufferers whom we contemplate? The answer should be made with reverential gratitude : It is of the Lord's free mercy alone that we are not ; and we will therefore say with the Psalmist, *I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.*

But, *Secondly.* It is a very pleasing part of our duty, that enjoins us to give thanks to God for the blessings of civil government. Without that order which is produced by government, we should hold the blessings of life on a very precarious tenure.

Mankind from the earliest ages have seemed in some sort sensible of this important fact : the absolute necessity of civil arrangements, is justified by experience, and various are the modes of government which the wisdom of Legislatures hath devised.

The different modes thus devised, have been allowed their respective trials, and have been approved or condemned, as they have been found capable of an accommodation with the circumstances and exigencies of men, and of the times in which they were operative.

The mode of government which either by force or fraud hath most generally prevailed in our world, is monarchical. Writers of distinguished eminence and great celebrity have conceived, that the mode of government which is the most simple, is the best calculated to promote the true interest of society ; and they have not hesitated to pronounce, that an absolute monarchy being the least complex, would undoubtedly be the most beneficial,



cial, supposing the prince a *good man* ; but as man in *his best estate is vanity*, and there is no one good but God,—No one save the monarch of heaven being good enough to be entrusted with *unlimited power*, men of reason and reflection have thought the interest of society greatly ameliorated, by substituting in the place of *absolute*, a *restricted* monarchy ; but this not fully answering the purposes of civil government, some have adopted an aristocracy, where destroying one tyrant, they establish a government administered by a combination of tyrants ; and a few great men imperiously divide among themselves the spoils of royalty, by which they are enabled still more to aggrandize themselves, and their descendants by the labours of the many.

The next mode of government, if it is entitled to so regular an appellation, is that of a simple democracy. The children of Israel dazzled by the pageantry which is an appendage of royalty, envied their proud neighbours the possession of these gew gaws ; they sought to imitate them, and became clamorous for a king ; the prophet of the Lord laid before them the dreadful consequences that would assuredly result from the indulgence which they so ardently solicited, and he expatiated in language the most emphatic, upon the glaring impropriety, and God dishonouring impiety, of rejecting the reign and equitable domination of the only sovereign, who wore the crown for the general benefit of his subjects. The pride however of the Israelites got the better of their piety ; they rushed into the snares which were laid for them, and by obtaining a king, fatally realized the prophetic prediction.

One of the greatest nations that ever flourished  
upon



upon the face of the earth for a long succession of years, have groaned under the yoke of an absolute monarchy, until unable any longer to bear the accumulating evils, attendant on that mode of government, urged by the influence of the lamentable consequences of oppression, embodying their forces, they have overturned the throne, and buried under its ruins perhaps the best man that ever filled it. Naturally dreading the effect of that power which their experience taught them to shun, they fled for protection to a simple democracy ; but in the centre of their new arrangements, the black and bloody standard, erected by Robespierre, (who seemed to combine in himself the essence of every species of tyranny) had nearly threatened to extirpate from that favoured nation, whatsoever was praise worthy and of good report, among persons and things. The nation roused once more to a sense of their danger, appear determined to recede from this worst, this most desolating species of tyranny ; and now that they have erected the banner of fraternal affection, we breath a fervid prayer that they may allure their brethren to take refuge under its protecting shadow. Allied as we are to this nation, both by interest and inclination, we cannot help giving thanks to God for them ; and we cordially repeat our prayers, that they may ultimately be as blessed and as happy, as we ourselves are.

Perhaps no nation under heaven, at any period of time, hath had so much reason to *praise the name of God with songs, and to magnify him with thanksgiving*, as we have. Planted here by the hand of the Most High, and even Kings for a *time*, rendered by that Being in whose hands the hearts of all are, protecting fathers, our increase was rapid.  
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The nation under whose shadow we grew, regarding with envy our growing greatness, devised means to make our prosperity subservient to their ambitious purposes. But that sovereign disposer of events, whose purposes are not to be defeated, and who still frustrates the artful devices of designing men, raised up among ourselves men divinely inspired, and endowed with that wisdom and true heroism, which enabled them to make a vigorous stand against the encroachments of arbitrary power. Threatened with the vengeance of incensed Majesty, whose ministers prepared to execute his sanguinary decrees, and whose military veterans swarmed in our capital, our people, nevertheless, left themselves at home : and they were, almost universally, strangers to fear. It was at this period, in the time of the greatest danger, that the arm of the Lord was *especially* revealed, in the choice made by infinite wisdom, of that illustrious character, who headed the virtuous band of patriot heroes. He, like the celebrated Roman chief, made it his study to gain the victory over his own and his country's foes, not by *taking*, but by *preserving* their lives. With *more* than Fabian virtue, the breast of the patriot warrior was *uniformly* nerved, until at length under the auspices of the protecting arm of the Almighty, a period was put to a lengthened scene of sorrows, by the commencement of peace. At this period let us stop, and take for a moment a retrospective view. Without money which hath been called the sinews of war ; without military materials, without internal strength or external aid : the people, strange to tell, were inspired with resolution to go forward : the humane monarch of the French nation beheld us with sympathizing concern ; he lent us timely aid ; his armies, his navy appeared on  
our



our land and on our coast, and *we sang praises to our God*. On the conclusion of the war, they returned to their own country again, and *we magnified his name with thanksgiving*.

I am aware my friends, that these are subjects upon which I can give you no information ; but upon such a day as this, we may be allowed to retrace the splendid events which illumine our annals. It is becoming to summons the power of recollection, to dwell upon the distinguishing goodness of him who presideth in the heavens, that thus we may feel ourselves impelled with grateful joy, to *Praise the name of our God with a song, and to magnify him with thanksgiving*.

The illustrious chief who lead our patriot bands through all the rugged scenes of military life, conducted the victorious troops to a triumphant close, nor separated himself from the embattled hosts, until enwreathed with the blessings of peace, they were at liberty to seek her calm retreats ; and it is with superior pleasure that we mark the celebrated warrior combining the sublime wisdom of the legislator, with that skilful valour which directed our soldiers in the most successful paths : while thus qualified, at the head of the civil department he points our citizens the *surest way to secure the advantages contemplated from returning peace*.

Peace attained, we *fancied* ourselves at the *end* of our labours, that we had already obtained the summit of that for which we are this day to *praise the name of God with a song, and to magnify him with thanksgiving*. But many revolving months rolled on, before our wishes were crowned with a government, at once the boast and envy of the world.



OUR government is not monarchical, it is not aristocratical, it is not democratical ; but it is infinitely preferable to all, *It is Federal.*

Our Federal Constitution being a collection of constitutions, is on earth, what the galaxy, or milky way, is in the heavens, where the combining lustre of the stars form one glorious splendour, which, instead of diminishing the light of any particular luminary, adds to the transcendent brightness of the whole. How greatly are we indebted to Divine goodness for inspiring the same men with abilities to plan this government, to whom he had before given that intrepid valour and dauntless bravery, which procured and guaranteed our Independence. Blest above the nations of the earth in our local circumstances, more than three thousand miles removed from bad neighbours, from those whose interest it would be to embarrass; and from all the interruptions derived therefrom. No sooner were our arms laid by, than we were enabled calmly to attend to the important business of legislation, well knowing that good government was the only sure means of ascertaining the enjoyment of the blessings of peace. Our government was not formed under the eye or influence of aliens, of open or secret enemies : It was formed by ourselves ; and fraternal confidence was the order of that auspicious era.

Perhaps no period in the annals of time, hath marked a group of such illustrious characters assembled for deliberations replete with consequences so truly interesting, so extensively important. In the fore ground, with ineffable delight we recognize a WASHINGTON, a FRANKLIN, an ADAMS, &c. &c. &c. The Federal government, the result of the  
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the united wisdom of these heaven taught sages, with all its excellence, was not, either by force, or ingenious devices, pressed upon the people. The inhabitants of every State, in their several capacities, were summoned to deliberate thereon. Wisdom dictated every step, and like every other work of God, the closer the survey, the fuller the investigation, the stricter the scrutiny, the more its beauties and excellence were discovered ; until being found to possess all the good of every government, without the evil, the true ore being separated from the dross, it was received with grateful transport, as heavens last best gift to a world, which had long contemplated the mighty blessing: *For this we will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.*

But such, alas ! is the nature of man in its present depraved state, that either through weakness or wickedness, *some* will endeavour to raise themselves on the ruin of others ; thus, as far as they are able, interrupting the order of things, and break the peace of society. It was with deep regret that we witnessed, even in this enlightened State, something of this sort, with a very alarming aspect, manifesting its pernicious and innovating influence ; but the wisdom of a BOWDOIN, and the lenient measures of a HANCOCK, (names which will be for ever dear to the citizens of this Commonwealth) not only checked the progress, but we trust, wholly eradicated the prolific evil.

The body politick has frequently been compared to the natural body. Our Federal government contains the head and heart of this body, the State governments may be considered as the members in



in their various description, and as the blood, which is said to be the *life of the creature*, comes from the heart, and circulating to the extremities, returns to the heart again ; so ever since the establishment of the Federal government, the life of the body hath appeared in this direction, and it is to this, under God, that we owe the health and vigour of the body. But as the head and heart would be useless without the rest of the body, we are to give God thanks for the CONSTITUTIONS of government, which unite, and by their union establish liberty with order. Without this order, it is obvious that the existence of the FEDERAL Government would be no more, and hence the necessity of paying attention to the parts, for the preservation of the whole.

“ When,” saith our illustrious President, “ we  
 “ review the calamities which afflict so many other  
 “ nations, the present condition of the United  
 “ States, affords much matter of consolation and  
 “ satisfaction. Our exemption hitherto from for-  
 “ eign wars—an increasing prospect of that exemp-  
 “ tion—the great degree of internal tranquility we  
 “ have enjoyed—the recent confirmation of that  
 “ tranquillity, by the suppression of an insurrection,  
 “ which so wantonly threatened it—the happy  
 “ course of our public affairs in general—the un-  
 “ exampled prosperity of all classes of our citizens,  
 “ are circumstances which peculiarly mark our sit-  
 “ uation with indications of the Divine Benefi-  
 “ cence towards us.” How pleasing this enumer-  
 ation, how animating to find the Head of our Fed-  
 eral government, after a review of the foregoing  
 state of things, calling upon his beloved fellow citi-  
 zens throughout the Union, to *acknowledge with*  
*devout reverence and affectionate gratitude, their ma-*  
 ny



ny and great obligations to Almighty God, and to implore him to continue and confirm to us the blessings we experience. How inexpressibly delightful to behold the heart of this truly great man suitably and deeply impressed with sentiments so proper and so becoming. How alluringly persuasive his patriotic voice, thus in the language of parental affection, inviting *all religious societies and denominations, and all persons whomsoever within the United States, although they may belong to no religious society or denomination, on this day to meet together and render their sincere and heart-felt thanks to the great ruler of nations, for the manifold and signal mercies which distinguish our lot as a nation.* Can we forbear persuading ourselves that each individual attending to *such* precepts, and under the influence of *such* an example, will naturally and spontaneously call upon his spirit to bless the God of his salvation, crying with holy transport, *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.* To remember all the manifold mercies of Jehovah would be impossible; they are more in number than the hairs of our head; they are the coevals of our existence, and every breath we draw is an added proof of immeasurable goodness. But it is indeed true, as has been frequently observed, that the most acceptable way of improving the mercies of our God, is to receive them with thanksgiving; and it is undoubtedly incumbent upon us to engrave upon the memory, as *many* of the innumerable benefits which we derive from the inexhaustible source of divine munificence, as the limited conception of frail mortality can grasp.

Among the first of our temporal blessings, upon this occasion, with heart-felt gratitude we cannot  
but



but trace that divine interposition which hath so graciously wrought for us the preservation of our peace, foreign and domestic. Inestimable are the blessings of tranquillity. Our sympathizing hearts have suffered from wars, although we were afflicted only by the hearing of the ear. How dreadful then to be drawn into the vortex of this desolating calamity ; and how much are we indebted to the object of our filial reverence, who in the hands of our God and Father, hath been made an instrument of preserving us from this great evil, and all the direful consequences that follow in its train. But although foreign war is a calamity ever to be deprecated, domestic or civil war involves a series of yet greater ills : many of us have had an opportunity of forming some faint idea of this desolating evil among ourselves. But very faint indeed must be the idea we can form from any thing which we have ever witnessed in this highly distinguished nation, when compared with what we have been informed of in other countries, both in ancient and in modern times.

We were alarmed sometime since, by the dread apprehension of the contagious spread of this desolating and truly shocking ravager ; but the timely suppression of this insurrection, as well as the *manner* in which it was suppressed, inspires us upon this auspicious occasion with unceasing gratitude. How must the patriotic mind, the federal bosom have swelled with conscious pleasure, to view so large a collection of virtuous citizens leaving their calm retreat, and marching on in a cool dispassionate manner, with the bright example of their beloved chief in their eye, and a measure of the same philanthropic benignity, that he in so great a degree  
(we



(we had almost said without measure) possessed in their hearts, determined to preserve the constitution, the laws, and *if possible*, the people who had violated them. See with what tender pity, with what mild compassion this father of his country views this deranged part of the family. See how like the parent of the universe, he conquers the refractory by love. See how under the benign influence of true patriotism, the political storm subsides, the sunny beams of serenity are restored, and the halcyon days of internal peace and conscious security, consequent thereon, have commenced. Mark with what ineffable delight our virtuous citizens return to their homes, now more than ever endeared unto them, while their hearts glow with secret satisfaction, in the consideration that the earth over which they have passed, hath not *drank in their brother's blood*.

Is there who can behold the elevated and impressive scene, without exclaiming with the Psalmist, *I will praise the name of God, with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving ?*

We have already observed that the body politic has been compared to the natural body ; and as the natural body is subject to diseases, so also is the body politic ; but if any part of the natural body is diseased, this gives pain to the whole ; so that if one member suffers, all suffer ; yet the suffering parts *hate not their own flesh* ; they will endeavour to remove the complaint, but not the member disordered. Passions too, it is said, are the *elements of life* ; and perhaps these partial evils may indeed be productive of general good. Were it not that the sea is frequently thrown into a tempestuous state by the  
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the force of the winds, it would become a stagnate mass of corruption ; and although some evils take place in consequence of their storms and tempests, yet the evils which would result from their perpetual absence, would be of infinitely greater magnitude.

Although our constitution of government may be, in the judgment of the wise and virtuous of both hemispheres, the nearest perfection of any ever yet formed for the benefit of human nature, yet, though the *nearest* to perfection, it may not be *perfect* ; and although the men who are by divine Providence placed at the head of our government, may be as near perfection as any *men* in such circumstances ever were, yet they are not *perfect*. *Perfection* in the present imperfect state, is not the lot of humanity. These considerations may give rise in the bosoms of many individuals, to feelings that a judgment of charity may denominate a *Godly jealousy* ; they may admire and love our constitution so much, that their apprehensive minds may suffer in the dread of any change taking place in it ; and agitated by these painful apprehensions, their consequent fears may form conjectures that may exist nowhere but in their own imaginations ; and as the evils apprehended, are in the nature of things *possible*, persons of this description, while they *do no more* than act the part of vigilant watchmen, are certainly excusable. It would be well, however, as we suffer through life almost as much from imaginary as from real evils, if such persons could dismiss their fears, and serve their country and their God, *without fear* and in newness of life : at least it would be well if they could avoid inoculating their brethren with this infection.

Yet



Yet as the rights of man are the *rights* of every man, so every man has a right to think for himself; and if he will cloath his thoughts in decent language, he has a right to exhibit *them* before the public. But blessed be God we are as a people well enough acquainted with the rights of man, to know that they give *no man a right to do wrong*. On the whole, as difference of opinion marks the character of mankind at large, and as our free *constitution admits of this*, what have we to do but mutually to agree to differ, well knowing that while we keep within legal bounds, that admirable constitution, like an indulgent parent, will spread over us its protecting wings. Let us then my friends, however we may feel ourselves disposed to censure men or measures, leave it to the *uninfluenced* determination of the majority of free citizens, to approve or disapprove, agreeably to the direction of their best informed judgment. Yet as strength is established by union, and nothing can be more desirable than unity of spirit in the bond of peace, it is *every man's duty*, it is every man's *interest*, to exert himself for the promotion and establishment of peace. Blessed are the peace makers, they shall be called the children of God. But as opposition always begets opposition, so the mild influence of peaceful measures are the best calculated to beget and preserve peace; and it is a truth, that soft answers turneth away wrath, while grievous words stirreth up anger.

As our Constitution is the boast of the unprejudiced part of the world, so it is the envy of the malignant, the ambitious, and the designing, both abroad and at home. Distinguished and highly blessed as we are, we cannot be without external and internal foes, and it is difficult for any but him

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who trieth the reins, sometimes to determine who they are ; but a lover of his country, when he beholds American citizens contending, *acrimoniously* contending with each other, feels as did Moses, when he beheld his countrymen striving with each other in Egypt, and impelled by his feelings, he will involuntarily adopt the language of the Hebrew patriot, “ *Sirs, why do ye thus, are ye not brethren?*” Little do these contending parties know how much gratification they afford to the worst part of their species by this conduct.

Yet it is with inexpressible pleasure, that we are enabled to indulge the pleasing hope, that in this most respectable branch of the Union, these contentions will never be carried to any very injurious lengths. The good sense and *amor patria* of the citizens at large, will always oblige them to sacrifice private interests, and what is sometimes more difficult, to sacrifice private resentments also to the public good. The virtuous mind gathers great consolation, while beholding men of every description, mixing together on public occasions, and looking with a benignant aspect upon each other. This is the Lord’s doings, it is marvellous in our eyes, and we will, therefore, *praise his name with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.*

Blessed as we are, considering the uncertainty of human affairs, we cannot forbear humbly and fervently to beseech the kind Author of these blessings, *that he would vouchsafe graciously to prolong them to us—that he would imprint upon our hearts a deep and solemn sense of our obligations to him for them—to teach us rightly to estimate their immense value—that he would preserve us from the arrogance of*



*of prosperity, and from HAZARDING the ADVANTAGES WE ENJOY, BY DELUSIVE PURSUITS—that he would dispose us to merit\* the continuance of these his favours, by not abusing them, by our gratitude for them, and by a correspondent conduct, as citizens and as men—that he would render this country more and more, a safe and propitious asylum, for the unfortunate of other countries—that he would extend among us true and useful knowledge—that he would diffuse and establish habits of sobriety, order, morality, and piety ; and, finally, that he would impart all the blessings we possess, or ask for ourselves, to the WHOLE FAMILY of MANKIND. How elevating to reflect, that at this hour the individuals, who, in the aggregate, compose the most favoured nation, on the face of our globe, with their beloved chief at their head, are thus with grateful hearts, looking over the rent-roll of their inheritance, acknowledging to whom they are indebted for all, and with one voice, saying, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name, O Lord, be all the glory*, praying at the same time with fervour of devotion, not for themselves only, but for the residue of mankind. Surely no day like the present, ever exhibited such an epitome of that state of being, which is only more blessed than ours.*

But while we contemplate with grateful transport our *natural* and *civil* rights, and all these attendant blessings, which, by Divine favour, we so richly enjoy, let us not pass over, in silence, our *religious* rights and privileges ; these are, of all others, the most valuable and best established RIGHTS OF MAN : without these, all our other blessings would

\* Though we may not *merit* ought from *Him* to whom we stand indebted for all we possess, yet we may from each other.



would only serve to make life wretched, in the dread apprehension of death. The Father of mercies hath blessed the sojourners in the present world with a rich inheritance, but it is defiled, and it fadeth away ; but in *Abraham's seed* we are blessed with an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. Here, our peace is liable to be broken, but the peace made by the blood of the cross, is that peace which passeth all understanding, and, being the covenant of God's peace, it shall never be removed.

This state of things cannot be our rest, for it is defiled ; but there is a rest remaineth for the people of God, where nothing that defileth, can ever enter. As citizens of this world, with all the blessings that we enjoy, revelation and reflection teaches us to expect tribulation ; but as fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of faith, we look forward to uninterrupted pleasures for evermore.

Glancing over our spiritual blessings, I am induced to pronounce them innumerable : in them we have, the free gift of God, everlasting life ; and for this we thank him most sincerely. We are bound also to give thanks on behalf of all mankind, inasmuch as he, who is our life, is also the life of the world. God so loved the world, that he gave them his Son, and this Son, thus given, gave himself a ransom for all—he died for the sins of the whole world ; he tasted, by the grace of God, death for every man ; he was delivered up to death for us all ; and it is therefore that he is the Saviour of all men, to be testified in due time. Is sin the source of sorrow ? He was manifested to take away our sins, to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify us to himself. Is the knowledge



knowledge of God necessary to the enjoyment of God? *They shall all know him, saith the LORD, from the least unto the greatest.* Can no man know the things of God, but by the spirit of God? *It is written, they shall be all taught of God.* Are the people unwilling to come to God for life? *They shall, saith the Lord, be willing in the day of my power.* Have they made a covenant with death, and an agreement with hell? Thus saith the Lord, *Your covenant with death shall be broken, and your agreement with hell shall not stand.* Have the people sold themselves for nought? *They shall be redeemed without money.* Does death and hell hold many, very many wretched captives? *Death and hell shall deliver up the dead—the first shall be swallowed up of victory, and the second shall be cast into the lake of fire.* O death, saith the Lord, *I will be thy plague,* O grave, hades, or hell, *I will be thy destruction.* Do the kingdoms of the world wander after the beast? do they worship this beast in the Church, in the State? *The kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of God and of his Christ.* Does the whole creation groan and travail in pain together? *They shall be brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; and there shall be no more pain, for God, even our God, shall wipe away every tear from every eye.* Thus speaks the oracles of God, thus spake the Faithful and True: And is it possible that we can attend to such soul-satisfying sounds as these, than music in it its softest strains more sweet, without joining with the royal prophet, without adopting his language, and from the abundance of the heart, exclaiming—*I will praise the name of God with a song, and magnify him with thanksgiving.*

But



But while we contemplate the blessings secured to us by our Saviour God, we should not be unmindful of the privileges of a religious nature, by which we are distinguished in this present world. We have now no imperious dogmatizing creed-makers, availing themselves of their influence over the secular power to enforce their opinions. Precisely according to the dictates of our own consciences, we can now worship our God. We can now, in our way to public worship, intersect each other's paths, without the smallest dread of censure, without encountering the malignant glance or the supercilious sneer. We can now confess the ties of amity, although we do not worship in the same place, or entertain the same ideas of the object of our adoration. The philosopher of Varnefe, speaking of Pennsylvania, pronounced it the Paradise of the globe; and rendering a reason for this decision, "There," said he, "every man thinks for himself, and without terror he can publish his thoughts.—In that happy country, there are such a variety of sects, that no one party can ever accumulate a number large enough to trample on the rest." Blessed be the God of our salvation, this signal advantage is not now confined to that favoured state, but this vast indulgence is now the inestimable privilege of the *United States*; and right happy are we to find, that certain characters, having lost the power to oppress, have also, in a very great degree, lost the inclination.

How astonishing the change which hath taken place in this country, and how friendly to the interests of society this change; and should we progress in the way of peace, what may not be our future improvements? Surely, from the present appearances,



pearances, it is natural to indulge a hope, that our ministers will be ministers of peace, that they will approve themselves workmen who need not be ashamed; that *as followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises*, they will from the abundance of their believing hearts, declare the ministry of reconciliation, assuring every creature, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing unto them their trespasses*, and calling upon them in the language of unfeigned affection, thus *beseeking them in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God*, assuring them, as a further inducement to their being thus reconciled, that the Saviour although *he personally knew no sin*, was *made sin for them*, that they may be made the righteousness of God in him.

May we not rationally cherish hope, that under the influence of the spirit of the meek and lowly Master, whom they profess to serve, they will not only *preach peace by the blood of the cross*, but that they will, both by precept and example, lead their flocks into the *way of peace, which is the way everlasting*. May we not encourage hope, that under the constraining influence of the love of Christ, they will lead their hearers to *love God, who first loved them*, and, as the chosen of God, to love one another, with pure hearts, fervently. And thus shall the religion of our Saviour God *appear to be what it really is—worthy of all acceptation*. May we not, without being too sanguine, entertain an expectation, that the era approaches, when, instead of the odious distinctions of, orthodox and heterodox, of democrat and aristocrat, of federal and anti-federal, we may, as the *children of one Father*, as members of the same community, find it as much  
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our interest as our duty, to do good unto all, and thus approve ourselves the children of our Father who is in heaven.

Under such benignant auspices, may we go on our way rejoicing, saying, Not on this day only, but on every future day of our lives—I will praise the name of God with a song, and I will magnify him with Thanksgiving. And that this may be our mutual felicity, may God, of his infinite mercy, grant, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory, now, henceforth, and forever. Amen.

F I N I S.

