

[The following Essay was wrote and published immediately after the great fire, March 20, 1763, and is now republished as applicable to the late Conflagration.]

THE uncertainty of human life, the transitory nature and continual vicissitudes of this present state of being and of all enjoyments and possessions in it, are truths so well known to every thoughtful person, and have so often been the subject of judicious writers in all ages, that the strongest invention can perhaps scarce find any thing new to offer, and a modest Muse with reluctance undertakes the theme: Yet such is the frailty of human nature, that when a sudden Catastrophe surrounds us the mind is flattered and disconcerted, and does not readily collect those reflections suitable to the occasion, or else by having been used to neglect such reflections, from a conception that they must needs flow naturally from such calamities it should produce them, the mind through disgust, may not immediately conceive them when wanted. It is true, the voice of nature has always been the same, is continually sounding, and understood by all; yet strange to say, what we hear the ofttest, we attend to the least, and what we are the most certain of, we give the least heed to; but there are times when good providence sends a louder summons by the struggles of nature, and proclaims those truths, which though they could not operate by the importance of their nature, yet may force their effect by tormenting the passions; but here frailty again takes place, from extreme thoughtfulness, the passions being roused, we rush on to confusion and error; but still its growing carelessly by a long calm, we steer by the gust of passion, instead of the compass of understanding, heedless of the port of truth, and negligent of those duties, to which the passions were only designed to urge us.

To point forth and familiarise these truths, has been the well handled subject of the best writers; but while nature continues to furnish, and the wisdom of her voice remains in any measure neglected, the theme cannot be truly exhausted, nor the repetition of it needless.

For these ends, this Essay is presented to the public view, if it pass under the judgment of able minds, they will acquiesce in any truth, and at least stray from hence to hunt for nobler thoughts; besides, there is a satisfaction we all feel in giving vent to the throbbings of the bosom, and in collecting to some order, those thoughts which float through the mind on such occasions.

Let this then be the apology; but if still any one should censure me for treading in this unaccustomed path of writing, I must quit the dispute and screen myself behind the horrors of that never to be forgotten night, when the flames broke broke on our houses, and laid so large a part of our capital in ruins: I am sensible that painted horrors will be no real sorrow, and are never to be used but when the passions are sluggish; and therefore passing over that ample field for description, which the late unhappy catastrophe affords, shall confine myself to those thoughts which no body should be ignorant of, and with which every body must needs be affected.

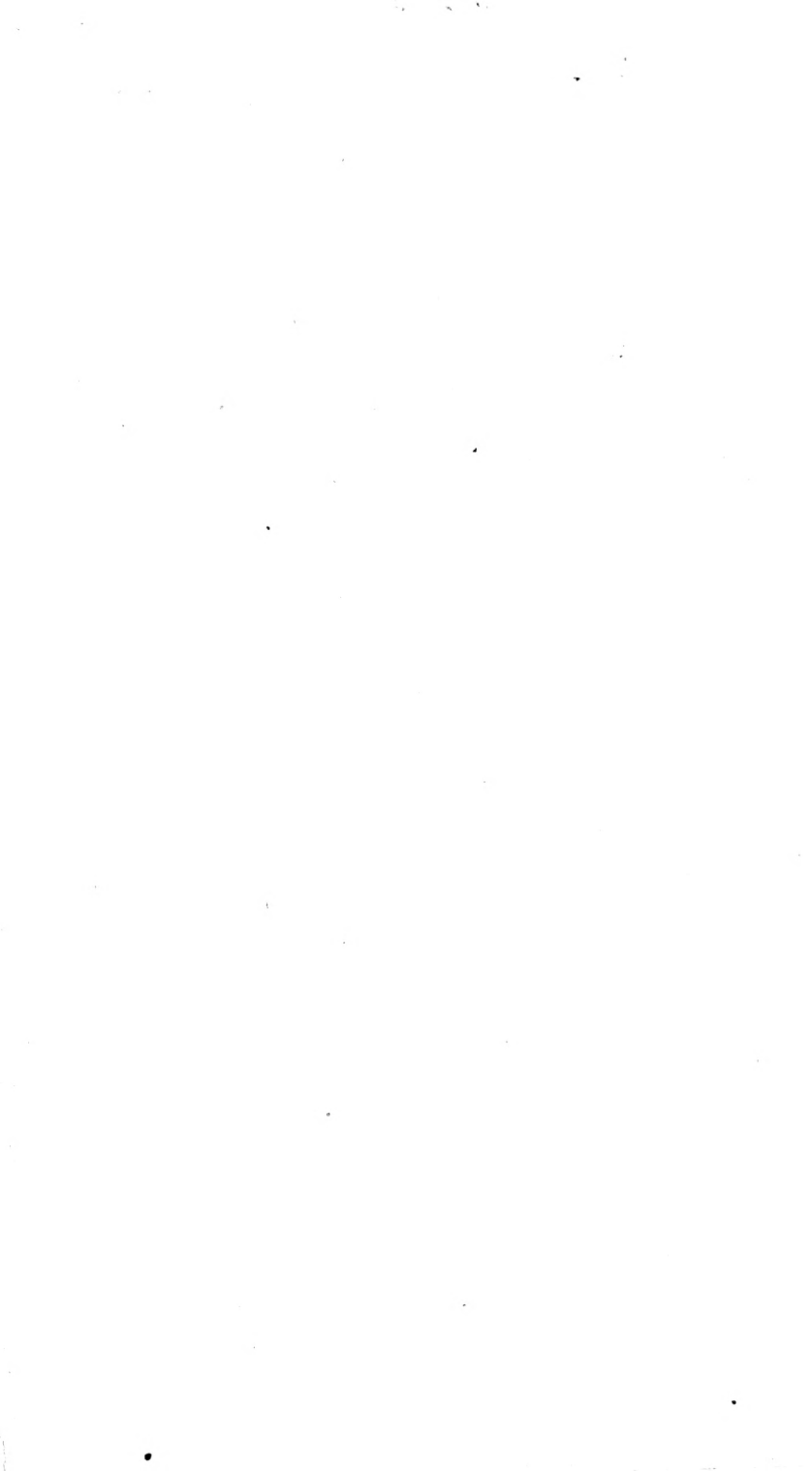
It was then in the first watches of the morning, when our bodies were fast fattered with soundest sleep, that the fire was first discovered, and the town alarmed with an out-cry; the inhabitants were speedily collected, and though the fire was found in the cellar of a brick house, yet it soon eat through its prison; the wind blowing fresh urged on the flames, and with surprising fury they ravaged in spite of all opposition or means to suppress them; the cinders and burning ruins were carried to the leewardmost part of the town, by means of which some who thought themselves in no danger, were the soonest consumed, and the inhabitants of them being gathered to assist at the head of the fire, suffered the greatest losses at their own houses; the like evil happened to numbers of tradesmen, whose shops were so quick fuel for the flames, that their tools and stock were all consumed before they could repair to them; in some places we heard the shrieks of mothers and children roused from their beds by the surrounding flames, and no man to help; here we might behold the aged, the sick and the bed-ridden, whose distance from the seat of the fire gave them hopes of security, driven forth to the inclemencies of the weather, not knowing where to shelter; there we might see those whose least thoughts were placed on their substance, and whose greatest anxiety was to save their lives: Thus raged this fire, forcing its way at the windows of brick houses, whose slated roofs were thought a sufficient defence, thus adding burning to burning, till it left no building unconsumed where the wind would let it pass. The natural horrors of the night added terror to this catastrophe, and at once rendered it more dismal to the eye, more grievous to be born, and more difficult to be vanquished, till the odious night wore out, and with it vanished the height of our fears; but not so the reality of our sorrow, the risen sun assuaged the gloom of the night, but gave us a dismal prospect of its havoc; a spectacle shocking to sensibility! Like the blasted trees of summer, or the skeleton of some delightful body; yet far less ungrateful to the sight than sorrowful to be reflected on. Take a survey then of these extended ruins, here once lived the loyal subject, the tender father, the obliging friend, and a good commonwealths-man; but their habitations, as with one sweep of a scythe, are all cut off, and they thrown on the charity of their friends: And is this all? Alas there are still more heart-piercing scenes; walk through the ruins, and take a more particular account; here lived the laborious tradesman, on whose daily industry depended the sustenance of a numerous family; there lived one whose circumstances were straitened with poverty, and distressed by sickness; here lived one just emerging from indigence, and reaping the first fruits of honest industry; there lived those whose comfortable circumstances afforded a refuge for the needy, and an habitation for the friendless; here lived those whose subsistence depended on their situation for business; there lived those whose all was in their houses, and here those who are still unhappily answerable for all they lost; there lived, and there was the subsistence of the aged and infirm, whose frugal industry in youth, had procured them the merited support of easy old age, when the body unstrung for labor can no longer support itself.—But all cut off, their industry appears no more, and the fatigues of youth overtakes them, when age should be at rest; the children must beg, and the industrious must be dependent, the forehanded repeat his toil anew, and the debtor lay at mercy; the friendless must seek for other patrons, and they who patronized implore compassion; the affluent aged must forget their ease, and too soon lose the benefit of that substance which they could not carry hence.

Amazing shock! Is this the uncertainty of human life? Is it thus we have no abiding place here? Is it thus that the places that knew us shall know us no more? And do riches thus take to themselves wings? What a gust of passion breaks forth in all our minds? yet let us comp our thoughts, attend the voice of reason, to those palean admonitions so loudly proclaimed by this dreadful catastrophe: What a lesson then is here of the uncertainty of earthly enjoyments! We lay ourselves down to our natural rest possessed of subsistence and assistance, and in a few hours we are awakened to take leave of

all. When shall the mercer bestow his hoards, or the extor-
tioner his ill gotten gains, or how shall the workdly
man, fence his hoard, when flames surround them ?
The fire pillars of smoke which we beheld floating to
heaven were at once our loss and our possessions and
declinative of their lot : But what say these mighty ru-
ins : they show us at how uncertain a tenure we hold our
enjoyment, for next under a sovereign providence we
feem subjected even to the capriciousness of the wind that it did
not vary and roll the flames over the whole town. With
how much ease then can we shift the scene and suppose
ourselves in the situation of the present distressed ; was
it our conduct, or vigilance that protected us ? And if
happily saved, can we fail to melt with sympathy ? and
if even the golden rule was capable of a benevolent appli-
cation the most infernal must now feel it, and the most
hardened put it in practice ; and he who on this occa-
sion do not bestow bountifully to the relief of the imme-
diate sufferers, must either flatter himself with some pecu-
liar infallible protection, or being desperate in
goodness, bid a bold defiance to all calamity. Nor
can any one, though not immediately exposed to this
destruction, or tho' distant from this capital, imagine that
they have no part in its general admonition ; 'tis nature's
voice, that well known herald of the Almighty which
tho' it be now uttered here, yet echoes every where ; 'tis
but one lash of that amazing scourge, brandished by the
hand of vengeance, against a guilty world ; the same fire
may parch up that land which it does not consume, and
earthquake make kind solation worse than the present ;
if therefore we are common tenants of a state variegated
with joy and sorrow, we think 'tis natural we should in
some measure share the good of it which we all want,
being we are equally exposed to the evils of it, under
which we all desire to be relieved.

O, my soul, what a thought arises ! can it with truth be
said, that any in human shape, though their daily support
were robbery, should lurk for the confusion of a public calamity,
and plunder the property of the distressed ; or that any
after consideration, upon whatsoever pretence, should either
publicly or privately discountenance that relief to the
distressed which we may all at some time want, and which hu-
manity suggests ? forbid it heaven !

Alas, we labour in a vale of tears, sorrow on every side
surrounds us, and calls for those duties which we feel im-
pressed in our natures, duties so indelibly engraven, that a
heart can fail, "in nothing do we more imitate the immor-
tal Gods, than in doing acts of kindness," the voice of revela-
tion is still more explicit, and so plain, that he who runs
may read. Possessions take to themselves wings ; to what
purpose is it then, that we distress, perplex and corrupt our
minds in getting wealth, the possession of which is so preca-
rious ? With what face can we swell with the conceit of riches
and assume airs of importance, disdain, oppress, and tyrannize
over those beneath us (perhaps only) in fortune, when a
few hours may set us all on a level ? How much does it become
us while in affluence to demean ourselves with such honesty,
humanity and beneficence, as that if calamity should over-
take us, we may stand confessedly the worthy objects of need-
ful relief ? Methinks this catastrophe is big with instruction,
could any one see the dire havoc produced from so small a
fire, and not feel the obligations we owe to the community in
our removal of this necessary but devouring element, and of
every thing that is apt fuel for the same ? for as our pos-
sessions are not secured by our own single carefulness, the duty
therefore becomes general ; and may I be permitted to take a
hint from this dreadful desolation, and point it forth as an
exemplum of that destruction, which the passions when let loose
produce in human minds ; when the first excess is not sup-
pressed, like the late fire they ravage, increase by running, and
may destroy every thing valuable in the mind ; may entirely
strip us of that reason which only can stand us in stead
when a greater conflagration shall seize this earth, when we
shall be a little anxious to save our lives, as many lately
were to save their worldly possessions.



A

DISCOURSE

Occasioned by the DEATH of

THE HONOURABLE

STEPHEN SEWALL, Esq;

CHIEF- JUSTICE of the Superiour Court of Judicature,
Court of Affize, and General-Goal-Delivery ; as also
A Member of His MAJESTY's COUNCIL for the Province
of the MASSACHUSETTS-BAY in NEW-ENGLAND :

WHO DEPARTED THIS LIFE

On Wednesday-Night, SEPTEMBER 10. 1760.

Ætatis 58.

DELIVERED the LORD'S-DAY after his Decease.

By

JONATHAN MAYHEW, D. D.

Pastor of the West-Church in BOSTON.

“ The sweet remembrance of the JUST
“ Shall flourish when he sleeps in dust. ”

PSALM CXII. 6.

B O S T O N :

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A Funeral Discourse.



I SAMUEL XXV. I.

AND SAMUEL died, and all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him, and buried him in his house at Ramah-----

WOULD to God (if I may so express myself without seeming to blame the sovereign will and wisdom) Would to God, I had not so melancholy an occasion as I have, to desist at present from the prosecution of that important subject, on which I have for some time been discoursing ! But God, who
B doeth

doeth his will in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, hath, in his holy and inscrutable providence, given me this occasion, by the death of an honorable person lately belonging to this society. And altho' I have ever had, rather an aversion to, than any fondness for, the common practice of making long encomiums on the dead, considering how often they are prostituted, so as to pass with many people, even when they happen to be just, for little or nothing more than words of course; yet I thought you would hardly excuse me, and, indeed, I could not easily excuse myself, if I neglected to take a particular notice of the life and death of so distinguished a person as Judge SEWALL; or did not endeavour to lead you into some proper reflections on this dispensation of divine providence. But in truth, tho' I know not well how to be silent on this occasion; yet, on the other hand, I am so deeply touch'd, so penetrated hereby, that I hardly know how to speak ----- For alas! one, indeed the far better part of my heart, seems torn away from me, while the other is left wounded, panting and bleeding. So that if my discourse should appear broken and unconnected, your candor

dor will, I hope, suggest some apology for me. Whatever I shall say of this excellent person's character, will be the genuine dictate of my heart, not the fruit of study or invention; for sorrow, you know, does not aim much at being *correct*, or *methodical*.

I had indeed reason to love and honor him as my father; tho', so great was the humility and condescension of that good man, that had I even call'd him my friend, or brother, I believe he would scarcely have been offended at it. And it would be a just and great reproach to me, if I did not now sincerely love and honor his memory; and shew some public respect to it; especially since the doing this, by recollecting some of his many good qualities, may be a means of exciting us all to imitate his virtues. And since the mouth speaketh out of, and according to, "the abundance that is in the heart;" I must, in justice, forewarn you that my discourse on this occasion, unless my spirits and strength should quite fail me, will be considerably longer than it is usual for me to be. But amidst all my sorrow, and great heaviness of heart, I shall have at least one consolation; that of assuring myself, as I go along, that whatever, almost, I may

say in honor of this excellent man, none of my auditors will think me excessive in his eulogium ; but heartily join with me in paying this public regard to his memory ; which will be some alleviation of my grief.

And, as an introduction to the design which has been mentioned, of making some reflections on the life, character and death of the worthy person lately deceas'd ; it seems not amiss to make a few observations on the life, character and death of SAMUEL, many years the chief judge and magistrate of Israel ; one of the most excellent characters which we meet with amongst those of the ancient worthies ; and therefore, as it is conceived, the more suitable to introduce what is proposed as the main business of this discourse.

It is not designed, however, either to give a large, and very particular account of SAMUEL, or to labour a parallel between these two judges : but only to select such parts of the conduct and character of the former of them, as seem directly pertinent to the present occasion ; or at least, such as may easily be accommodated thereto.

We

We have, in effect, a very honorable testimony to the worthiness of SAMUEL'S character, in that passage of sacred history, on which my discourse is grounded ; altho' nothing is said therein, directly, or particularly concerning it. When he died, "*all the Israelites were gathered together, and lamented him*"; attending his funeral rites with the greatest demonstrations of grief. The unfeigned tears of an whole people, collected together to solemnize the burial of a person of his rank and station, are a strong evidence of his superior merit. Eulogiums falling thus from the eyes of a whole people, (if I may so express it) falling in unbidden tears ; or bursting from the heart in involuntary sighs ; are louder, and more authentic testimonies of real worth in the person, who is the occasion of them, than the labour'd praises of a thousand tongues, however eloquent. Such tears, such sighs, on such an occasion, reveal the real sentiments of the soul ; while a great pomp of words often serves to no other purpose, than to contradict, or disguise, them. Thus it was that SAMUEL was praised when he died ; these were the panegyrics which all Israel bestow'd on him ; or rather, which the remembrance of his virtues, in conjunction with the sad spectacle

spectacle of his venerable remains before their eyes, extorted from them.

But we need not be implicit believers in groans and tears, even in those of an whole nation. For if we look into the history of SAMUEL, we shall easily discover the grounds of them; and see how naturally and justly, as well as copiously, they burst forth on that occasion.

We have a particular account of SAMUEL'S birth, and some extraordinary circumstances which both preceded and followed it, in the first chapter of the first book, which goes under the name of that eminent person. But these things are here passed over in silence, as not material, or indeed pertinent, all of them, to the present occasion. It is intimated to us in the second chapter of that book, how early SAMUEL distinguished himself, or rather, was distinguished by God; and pointed out as a person, from whom great things were to be expected in due time. For it is said, "the *child* SAMUEL grew on, "and was in favour both with the "Lord, and also with men." * And in the beginning of the third chapter, we read

* Ver. 26.

read of “ the *child* SAMUEL’s ministring
 “ unto the Lord before Eli ” the priest.
 So that, even in his tender age, he was a
 servant and minister of the Lord ; who
 soon after called him to, and honored him
 with, the sacred office of a prophet. And
 it is observed of him, towards the latter
 end of the last-mentioned chapter, that he
 “ grew, and the Lord was with him, and
 “ did let none of his words fall to the
 “ ground. ” †

It will not be impertinent to observe
 here, that in the time of SAMUEL, there
 were in Israel certain academies, or col-
 leges, usually called the schools of the
 sons of the prophets ; because under the
 immediate direction and government of
 the prophets. In these, youth were in-
 structed in useful learning, especially
 in the knowledge of God’s law ; and
 from amongst them, God usually raised up,
 and chose the prophets, which he sent to
 his people Israel. Nor is there any reason
 to doubt, but that SAMUEL had his edu-
 cation in one of these schools. For one
 of them, named *Naioth*, was in the city
 of Ramah,* the place of SAMUEL’s birth,
 where his father lived, where he himself
 was

† Ver. 19. * Vid. 1 Sam. XIX. 19, 22, and 23.

was brought up from a child, where his own house was afterwards, where he commonly lived, and where he was buried. And we are particularly informed, [1 Sam. XIX chap.] that during the troubles, and public commotions, occasioned by Saul's persecuting David, Saul's messengers being sent in pursuit of David to *Naioth*, "saw
 " the company of the prophets prophesy-
 " ing, and SAMUEL standing as *appointed*
 " over them ;" † he being at this time advanced in years. Now, considering the custom of those days, and that *Naioth*, that truly *illustrious school*, was in Ramah, where SAMUEL was born and brought up ; and that he was afterwards himself appointed an instructor and governor therein ; there seems to be no room to doubt, but that he had his education in it in his youth ; tho' I do not remember, indeed, that this is any where particularly asserted.

But to return : After SAMUEL had been some time cloathed with the sacred character of a prophet, when he was about thirty or forty years of age, he was invested with an high civil office ; that of judge, or the chief magistrate in Israel. For in those days, before the introduction of monarchical

† Ver. 29.

narchical government, the supreme civil ruler in Israel was stiled a judge, or the judge. In the execution of which office, SAMUEL used to travel from one part of the country to another, holding his courts, and distributing justice to the people, in the most convenient places; and then returning to Ramah: which, even in those days, was called going in "circuit". Of these facts we are informed 1 Sam. chap. VII. *Viz.* that SAMUEL "went from year to year in "circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh; "and judged Israel in all those places. "And his return was to Ramah; for there "was his house: and there he built an altar "unto the Lord. †" And we are informed in the same chapter, that he thus judged "Israel all the days of his life. *" From which latter circumstance, as well as from other things, we learn, that SAMUEL held the office of a judge in Israel, when he was no longer the chief ruler therein, under king Saul, when the form of government was changed. For SAMUEL was the person chiefly concerned, and employed, under God, in raising Saul to the throne of Israel; as appears from the particular account of these matters in sacred writ. At present I pass them over with a bare
men-

† Ver. 16, 17.

* Ver. 15.

mention. I also pass over, even without a mention, many signal services which SAMUEL did to the people of Israel ; and many blessings which he was instrumental of procuring for them from heaven.

This renowned man appears to have been an excellent patriot; one of the greatest and best that the world has known. He intirely loved his country ; and was ever properly jealous for its laws and liberties. He not only exerted himself successfully in their defence against foreign enemies ; but did whatever lay in his power to secure them against the equally, or more dangerous efforts of ambition, intrigue, and tyranny within. His great zeal for the laws, rights and liberties of the people, appears not only from his steady and upright conduct in the capacity of a judge, of which more particularly hereafter ; but from his behaviour upon some very signal occasions, which should not be intirely omitted here.

When the people were disgusted, not without sufficient reason, at the conduct of two of SAMUEL's sons, and doubtless had their passions blown up by some evil-minded persons, desirous of novelty and
change ;

change ; they manifested themselves weary of the free and excellent form of government, which God himself had instituted amongst them ; they required a change therein, and requested SAMUEL to set a king, or absolute monarch, over them, “like all the nations §” about them. SAMUEL earnestly expostulated with them on the subject of this mad proposal ; not for his own sake, lest his power should be diminished, but because he foresaw the evils, the oppressions, and the grievous slavery, they would bring upon themselves by such a change of government. But having “ protested solemnly unto them, and shewed them the manner of the king ” ; and when nothing else would appease them, he gave way to their importunate clamours ; he “ hearkened to their voice, ” and anointed Saul to be their king, according to the divine direction. For it seems that God himself would not preserve them a free people, against their own will ; and therefore “ gave them a king in his anger ; ” to scourge them for their folly, and for their rebellion against himself. However, at length, when SAMUEL’s prediction had, doubtless, been sufficiently verified, and Saul’s reign was grown insupportable,

SAMUEL

§ Vid. 1 Sam. VIII. at large.

SAMUEL was a principal instrument of setting him aside ; and he anointed David the son of Jesse, a man after God's own heart, to sit upon the throne of Israel in his stead. Now amidst all this madness of the people, these turns and revolutions of government, SAMUEL still discovered himself to be a true patriot, zealous for the liberties and interests of his country : Equally so, in discountenancing, and entering his protestation against, their first demand of a king ; in complying therewith when nothing else would satisfy them ; in setting aside their king, when his behaviour became intolerable ; and anointing a far better man to reign in his stead. All which, it must be remembered, SAMUEL did, not without the particular permission and direction of heaven ; as appears at large from the remarkable history of these transactions.

It may not be amiss to observe farther here, that while Saul sat upon the throne, SAMUEL did not only continue in the executive office of a judge in Israel ; but was, at least for a time, one of his chief counsellors. We read of his giving him advice from time to time ; and freely reprov-
 ing him for his faults : Tho' he adhered to
 him

him, till God signified his intention to destroy him for his bad behaviour. After which, SAMUEL renounced him, anointed David, adhered to him and his cause ; and was his chief adviser and counsellor, as long as he [SAMUEL] lived.

But having just observed these things, it is now time to speak more particularly of SAMUEL'S integrity in the capacity of a judge : For this is the character under which he is more commonly considered. And to his fidelity in this important trust, we have one very authentic, indeed a very singular, testimony, in sacred history ; one, which is so full, that it will supersede the occasion, at least the necessity, for any others. It is in the 12th chapter of that book which has been so often mentioned already, at the beginning. It appears from the last verse of the foregoing chapter, that all the people were gathered together at Gilgal, to confirm the kingdom to Saul, and to establish him in the throne of Israel ; he having been before anointed king by SAMUEL. And they being thus gathered together, SAMUEL, already grown old in their service, took this most public, and solemn occasion, to appeal to their own consciences
for

for the uprightnefs of all his conduct towards them ; when he alfo challenged all, or any of them, to bear witnefs againft him before the Lord, and before Saul his anointed, who had now power to punifh him, if they could alledge any thing againft him.

There is at once fuch a noble boldnefs, fuch a fimplicity, and fuch a dignity, in this appeal and challenge of SAMUEL, that I queftion whether the repetition of it at large, will feem tedious on this occafion, to any who have a true tafte and judgment : I rather think it will be agreeable and entertaining. It is as follows : “ Behold, I have hearkned to your voice in
 “ all that ye have faid unto me, and have
 “ made a king over you. And now behold the king walketh before you :
 “ and I am old, and gray-headed ; and
 “ behold, my fons are with you ; and I
 “ have walked before you from my childhood to this day. Behold, here I am,
 “ witnefs againft me before the Lord,
 “ and before his anointed. Whofe ox
 “ have I taken ? or whofe afs have I taken ?
 “ or whom have I defrauded ?
 “ whom have I oppreffed ? or of whofe
 “ hand have I received any bribe to blind
 “ mine

“ mine eyes therewith? and I will restore
“ it to you * ” We may see, in this chal-
lenge, that inimitable kind of boldness
which a good conscience inspires; such a
boldness, as surpasses all the power of art,
and the deepest hypocrisy, to counterfeit
so exactly, but that some difference might
be discovered by a penetrating eye. And
you will be pleased to observe, that this
appeal and demand are general. Tho’
SAMUEL here speaks with particular refer-
ence to his conduct in the capacity of a
judge; yet he refers the people to his
manner of life in general, even from his
childhood to that day. His demand ex-
tends to his whole conduct towards them.
He does not only acquit himself of cor-
ruption, or receiving bribes; but, “ Whom
“ have I defrauded? ” says he; “ Whom
“ have I oppressed? ” i. e. in any respect
whatever, from my youth to old age, not-
withstanding my opportunity and power
to oppress, in the high station which I have
filled? Let my accuser now stand forth;
and freely bear witness against me before
God and the king. This is the evident
purport of his words.

Alas!

* 1 Sam. XII. 1, 2, 3.

Alas ! how few judges, or other persons in high stations, wherein they have opportunity to oppress, and to do iniquity, are there in most countries, who would dare to make the like demand in the face of a whole people ? Or, if they presumed to do so, how many mouths would, probably, be at once opened against them, to testify their iniquity to their faces, before God and the king ?---I say, “ in most countries ; ” for I would, by no means, be supposed to speak thus of all without exception ; which might be a very injurious reflection ; and, at best, a great indecency. ---But was there a tongue in the whole congregation of Israel, tho’ there were doubtless many false and unruly ones therein---Was there a tongue, so intemperate and slanderous, as to lisp a word against SAMUEL, or his integrity ? No ! All the people answered as one man, “ Thou “ hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, “ neither hast thou taken ought of any “ man’s hand. And he said unto them, “ The Lord is witness against you, and his “ anointed is witness this day, that ye have “ not found ought in my hand. And they “ answered, He is witness.” * ---O happy ! O venerable man ! so long the chief judge
and

* Ver. 4, 5.

and magistrate in Israel, with so much opportunity and power to do iniquity ; yet steady in the practice of all righteousness, till thy reverend head was covered with the snow of age ; and then approved by the united voice of thy own conscience, thy country, and thy God !—Happy, venerable SAMUEL !—

It might naturally have been expected, that at the death and burial of such a judge, such a patriot in Ramah, there would be “ a voice heard, lamentation “ and weeping, and great mourning, [like that of] “ Rachel weeping for her children”, when she “ would not be comforted * ” : Or like that, when the bloody tyrant, Herod, commanded the children to be slain. It would have been indeed strange, if all Israel had not lamented when SAMUEL died ; when they were assembled to bury him, and his venerable remains were before their eyes, to be reposed in the silent tomb, not to awake till the last day ; tho’ then to arise all glorious, “ mortality being swallowed up of “ victory ! ”

C

Their

* Matt. II. 16. 17. 18. Rama and Ramah were the same city*

Their lamenting him thus, was but the natural consequence of that high and just veneration which they had for him while living; which was so great, that on a certain occasion we find it expressed in the very remarkable manner following: All the people greatly feared the LORD “ and SAMUEL. † ” And let me here just remind you of two or three other passages, wherein he is mentioned with the highest honor, in company with the most renowned persons of antiquity. So in Psalm XCIX. “ Moses and Aaron among the priests, “ and SAMUEL among them that call up- “ on his name ”. And in Jeremiah XV, at the beginning, God seems to express his anger against his people for their iniquities in the strongest manner possible, almost, by saying, that “ though Moses “ and SAMUEL stood before him ”, [as intercessors for them] “ yet his mind “ could not be towards this people : Cast “ them out of my sight, and let them go--! Thus also SAMUEL is mentioned, Hebrews XI, amongst those, “ of whom the world was not worthy. ”—“ The time would “ fail me,” says the apostle, “ to tell of Gi- “ deon, and of Barak, and of Sampson, “ and of Jephthae, of David also and “ of SAMUEL ;—who thro’ faith subdued “ kingdoms,

† Sam. XII. 18.

“ kingdoms, wrought righteousness, &c.” These all obtained a good report thro’ faith ; and died therein ; even in the hope of “ obtaining a better resurrection.”

BUT it is time for us to make a transition (indeed a very easy one) from SAMUEL, the renowned judge of Israel, to that most worthy judge, whom the last evening we attended to “ the house appointed for all the living ” ; at least, whatever was mortal of him.— And since, upon similar occasions, people usually expect some short historical account of the deceased, especially if a person of such eminence ; rather than disappoint any, I will begin with a few words concerning the birth and parentage of this excellent person ; tho’ these are matters of much less importance than most others which I have to say of him ; and which, in the mean time, are pressing, as it were, to be the foremost.

The late chief justice SEWALL was *honorably descended* ; to use a common phrase, tho’ one hardly applicable, in strictness, to any of the degenerate race of mankind. He was of a family of distinction in New-
C 2 England.

England. Nor was he the first of the name of SEWALL, who sustained the same titles and offices. The honorable SAMUEL SEWALL, Esq; his uncle, had before for many years, been chief justice of the province, and a member of his majesty's council; a gentleman, eminent in his day for his learning, piety, and great probity. † The father of the late judge SEWALL, was STEPHEN SEWALL, Esq; of *Salem*; on all accounts a very worthy, respectable gentleman; and universally so esteemed in his time *. His mother was a daughter of the Rev'd and celebrated Mr. JONATHAN MITCHEL, pastor of the church in *Cambridge*; a gentlewoman of great virtues, and uncommon accomplishments. His parents were blest with seventeen children; divers of whom, besides the late judge, were persons of distinction, and of great worth in public life. § He was the youngest

† Since delivering this discourse, the author has been informed that the late Rev. Mr. *Prince* chose the character of *Samuel* to be the ground of his funeral sermon on that venerable gentleman; which discourse was published - but which the author of this, has not, so far as he remembers, had the pleasure of reading.

* He was the county-register, a very noted justice of the peace - a major in the militia, and captain of the fort at *Salem*: all which posts he sustained with great reputation and honor.

§ Particularly the late Major *Samuel Sewall*, Esq; of *Boston*, and *Mitchel Sewall*, Esq; late of *Salem*.

youngest, except one, of many brethren ; and was born in *December* 1702. Being duly prepared, he was admitted into Harvard-College in *Cambridge*, in the year 1717, when he was in the 15th year of his age.

He was a “ plant of renown ” in that seminary of learning, even from the time of his being transplanted into it from an inferior school. He was early distinguished by the sprightliness and brilliancy of his genius, and by the rapid progress which he made in academical learning : which, in conjunction with an agreeable person, a cheerful, affable disposition, and singular delicacy of manners, render'd him at once the delight, and the admiration, of that society. And altho' he was, of the two, rather of a gay than of a grave turn, yet this was never indulged to excess ; but always restrained within the rules of virtue, and a strict decorum. His morals were still unblemished ; and his life, not only inoffensive, but exemplary. This is not said at random, or as a thing of course ; but upon the authority of those who were contemporary with him in that society. So that there is reason to think, he truly feared God from his youth.

On

On his leaving that school of the sons of the prophets, soon after receiving the first public honors of it at the usual time, anno 1721, when he was consider'd as one of the brightest scholars it had ever produced, he took up his residence in one of our seaport towns*. Here his fine talents were for some time very usefully, tho' humbly employed, in keeping a school. For, besides that his patrimony could not be great, as may easily be supposed, he never thought himself above doing any thing, by which he might be serviceable in the world. And he was in high esteem amongst the gentlemen of that town; who, as all wise and good men have ever done, considered rather the person and his accomplishments, than the sphere in which he acted.

However, at the expiration of about three or four years (for I do not exactly know the time) he returned to *Cambridge*, and betook himself to a collegiate life; where he pursued his studies with great success, and a growing fame: For while he was thus a student at the college, he was esteemed one principal ornament and honor to it.

After

* *Marblehead.*

After residing therein a suitable time ; and when, besides other very valuable acquisitions in the literary way, he had made great proficiency in sacred learning, and the study of theology, he became a preacher of the gospel, ministering before the Lord and his people ; tho' not while " a child," as SAMUEL did, and as some others since, without SAMUEL'S extraordinary call, or qualifications, have presumed to do.—It were almost needless to observe, that his public performances as a preacher of the gospel, were truly excellent : For such a genius, so cultivated and matur'd, join'd with a good, devout and warm heart, like his, could, certainly, produce nothing but what was so. He was, without doubt, one of the most accomplish'd preachers of his time ; and was acknowledg'd as such by all competent and unprejudiced judges, especially by the best. It was indeed his felicity in every station and capacity, a felicity almost peculiar to him, to be most esteem'd and honor'd by the wisest and worthiest men, while all others, even the common people, could not but see and acknowledge his superior merit.

He was at length, upon a vacancy, in the year 1728, chosen a tutor of the college,

lege, where he was still a resident: A station, for which his talents were uncommonly adapted; and which he continued to fill several years, without laying aside that sacred employment wherein he had before been engaged. However, after some time, he laid that wholly aside; devoting himself to the discharge of his trust as a tutor of the college. And, as may easily be concluded, he, who was so bright an ornament of that learned society, even during the time of his own pupillage, and before his years of puberty were past, shone with a very distinguish'd lustre in the capacity of one of the governors and instructors of it; when he had attained to such a maturity of age; when he had been all along adding to his great stock of learning and knowledge, and had also gained considerable experience. †

His genius and talents, as before observed, were wonderfully adapted to this employment. And it was in this capacity, that some of his excellent endowments, both natural and acquired, appeared to more advantage than they had ever done, or could, in any other, wherein he had acted before. It was in this station, that
his

† *Ætat* 26.

his learning, before indeed well known, became still more conspicuous; and not only his learning, but his great happiness and facility in teaching, and communicating knowledge: Both, now display'd themselves to the full, there being proper scope for them; while he took a pleasure, not in an ostentatious discovery of his own superior talents, but in making them useful to others. It was in this capacity, that his admirable spirit of government became manifest to all. It was in this capacity, that his exquisite prudence and discretion became more apparent, by his manner of conducting towards the youth of that society, in the happiest medium between too much austerity and rigor on one hand, and remissness, or familiarity, on the other. In this station he, at least continued to discover a great, inviolable regard, to religion and virtue. I say, "at least continued" to do so; because it was, perhaps, hardly possible to discover that particular quality in this station, more plainly than he had done before. However, he now made it one principal part of his care, to guard his pupils against the snares of vice; and to form their minds, as far as this was in the power of man, to the love of piety and virtue. In doing which, he neglect-
ed

ed neither the most kind, serious and pathetic counsels on one hand, nor the exercise of his authority on the other, whenever there was a proper occasion and call to employ it. In this station he shew'd, in a way almost peculiar to himself, how consistent the most resolute and vigorous exertion of authority is with the most courteous, condescending temper of mind, and the most gentle, complacent manners. For I believe he had hardly a pupil so abandon'd, as not at once to love him as his best friend, and to revere him as a father; I had almost said, as his guardian angel! Vice turn'd pale, trembled, and fled at his frown; or even at the cast of his countenance without one. Virtue approach'd, exulted, and was improved at his smile: while learning and arts flourish'd under his eye in that seminary, like the goodly flowers in *Eden* under the warm, all-enlivening beam of heaven. And there are now amongst us many persons, great blessings both in the church and state, as well as in more common life, who had the happiness to receive their education immediately under him. In one word, I believe there is no person, however worthy, who would think his own merit impair'd, or his honor touch'd, if it should be added,
that

that considering his station in the college, and the time he continued therein, that learned society never enjoyed a greater blessing and ornament in any one man, than in Mr. SEWALL. And I can hardly think of him in this station, without having my thoughts carried back to SAMUEL at Naioth, amongst the sons of the prophets, as one "appointed over them." †

While Mr. SEWALL was a resident at the college, more especially towards the latter part of the time, he applied himself to the study of the law, as much as he well could without neglecting the proper duties of his station; in the discharge whereof he was ever diligent and faithful. This he did with a view to changing his manner of life, and betaking himself to the bar. And only to have mentioned his applying his mind in any measure to this study, is equivalent to saying, that he soon acquired a very considerable knowledge in the law. For his genius was so piercing, and his natural penetration at once so deep and quick, that no science, however crabbed, intricate or involv'd, could long make opposition thereto. In whatever he engaged, he became

† The author of this discourse did not indeed enter into the college, till the year after Mr. *Sewall* left it: But nothing is said above, but upon good authority.

came a considerable proficient therein, as it were at once : so surprisngly quick was his apprehension of things ; so clear his head ; so acute and deep his discernment.

Being thus qualified, he was, in the year 1739, called from his collegiate, into an higher sphere of life ; viz. to take a seat on the bench of the superiour court of judicature for the province. This was done without his making any interest for it.— And it was well for his country that many persons, and amongst them, gentlemen of authority and influence in the government, were acquainted with his great abilities and merit ; to which he himself ever appeared more a stranger than any other person, who had any knowledge of him. And SAMUEL'S being cloathed with a civil character, after being some time in other employments, is here brought to mind—

In this new station he became more generally known, and therefore more generally esteemed ; as well as, perhaps, more extensively useful. His wisdom and integrity were so conspicuous herein, and gave him such an acknowledged pre-eminence, that on the death of the honorable and learned chief justice DUDLEY, he

he was, in 1752, appointed to succeed him in that important office; to the general satisfaction, and even joy of the province; altho' he was not the senior of the then worthy surviving judges.

This promotion, which was not only unfollicited, but even oppos'd by himself, without altering his mind or manners in the least, still enlarged the sphere of his influence; that influence, which was ever useful just so far as it extended; being never employed, but in doing good, or preventing evil; which is in effect the same thing. He sustained this high office with the reputation of great wisdom, and of strict fidelity. He also supported the dignity of it, by his conduct in it. For, tho' he was truly a most humble and modest man; yet he well knew what was due to his station. Nor did he, by any means, want the resolution to maintain, and to vindicate the honor of it, as occasion required. He had indeed the quickest, as well as the exactest sense, of true honor: And he discovered in this capacity, from first to last, that admirable spirit of government which was mentioned before on another occasion. He preserved a great decorum in the court: He moderate^d

rated the debates with a becoming calmness and dignity, in conjunction with a strict impartiality : Shewing himself at once the man of honor and spirit, the knowing lawyer, and the upright judge.

Altho' his reputation was great, even at his first coming upon the bench, it was daily growing till the time when heaven was pleased to take him from it. He was both " a terror to evil doers, and a praise to them that did well," in the administration of justice ; in which he went from one part of the country to another, like a second SAMUEL. And, where " his return was," we all know. Nor is there the least reason to doubt, but that he might to the very last, have appealed to the whole province, as SAMUEL did to all Israel, boldly challenging them to witness any wrong, or unrighteousness in him, in the very language of that good judge : — " Whom have I defrauded ? whom have I oppressed ? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith ?" — And had he done so, this whole people in general, unless they had been less grateful and just than the Israelites (who were not, however, very remarkable for those virtues) would doubtless have answered as they did—

did— “Thou hast not defrauded us, nor
“oppressed us ; neither hast thou taken
“ought of any mans hand.” Yea, it may
be question’d, whether ever any person a-
mongst us, was so impudent as to make
an attempt upon his honor, by the offer
of a bribe. For his heart was not only
incapable of admitting the least venality, or
corruption of this sort ; but universally
known to be so ; and more immutably
fixed to the love of justice, than the nec-
dle to the pole : For even that varies and
deviates ; and may, at any time, be shaken
from its proper point to a contrary direc-
tion : While his justice appear’d as un-
moveable as the “everlasting hills ;” or
rather, pursu’d its appointed course in his
circuit, like the undeviating sun in the fir-
mament of heaven.—Justice must, how-
ever, be here understood, only in contra-
distinction to wrong, injury, or positive
injustice ; and not, as it is some times, in
opposition to mercy and compassion. For
in criminal matters, I believe he always in-
clin’d to the side of clemency and mercy,
where there was legal room for the exer-
cise of them ; and whenever severity was
not apparently necessary for the common
good, which he still kept in view : Herein
imitating the supreme governor of the
world,

world, who does not “willingly,” much less wantonly, afflict and grieve the children of men; but, either for their own profit, or for the preservation of order, and public good; that others may “see and fear, and not do so wickedly.”

It must not be forgotten here, that soon after he was promoted to the important trust of chief justice, he was elected a member of his Majesty’s council for the province; and continued to be so elected every year successively to the last. He had indeed been in nomination for a seat at that honorable board several years before; and many worthy persons were very pressing and urgent in the affair. But he himself made opposition to it; and this, partly at least, because he doubted the expediency of his being at once a judge of the court, and at the council table; thinking that, hereby, he might be brought “into temptation and a snare;” or, in plain words, subject himself to some *undue influence*. This may be depended on as a certain fact. So extremely tender, so delicate was his conscience; so nice his sense of honor; and so great his diffidence of himself! He therefore utterly declined all proposals of this sort, and persisted therein,

therein, that he might keep himself as independent as possible. However, his friends, who knew him incapable of being unduly bias'd by any means or circumstances whatever; and were satisfied, he would be very serviceable at the board, would not desist: And he was accordingly elected a member of the council, against all the opposition he could well make. Nor was it without considerable difficulty, that he was finally prevailed upon to drop his objections, and to accept, after he was chosen.

Thus, like SAMUEL of old, after having been many years a judge, he became one of the king's council. And at that honorable board, as in every other capacity, he shew'd himself the wise and upright man: And not only so; for he was one of eminent distinction amongst others of the same character. This was more especially the sphere in which his patriotism discover'd itself. For while he was strictly loyal, and attached to the present royal family on revolution-principles (which were also the principles of SAMUEL;) while he was steady, on one hand, in asserting the rights of the crown, and of his Majesty's governor; he was, on the other hand, a most zealous friend to his

D country,

country, its laws and liberties. If at any time things were in agitation, as they sometimes were, which he apprehended inconsistent with, or hazardous to, the just rights and liberties of the people, or prejudicial to them in any other respect; he had always the integrity and magnanimity to oppose such measures, whoever appear'd as the first promoters, or compliant fautors, of them. Nor did he fear to give his negative to the nominations to civil offices, whenever he conceived the persons nominated, to be wholly unsuitable for, or unworthy of them. In one word, he used, "to the best of his judgment at all times, freely to give his advice to the governor, for the good management of the public affairs of this government."† This he ever gave in the integrity of his heart, without fear, favor, or criminal prejudice. And though it might be too much to say of any man, that he was never, in any respect, mistaken in his judgment; yet there have probably been but few men in the world, less incident to such mistakes, than the honorable person of whom I am speaking.

It

† The words of the oath taken by the members of his Majesty's council for this province.

It should be remember'd here, that, as a member of his Majesty's council, he was one of the overseers of the college: At which board he was eminently serviceable, by his superior knowledge in literary matters; and by what experience had taught him concerning the best methods of instructing and governing that society, while he was a tutor in it.

But, if you please, we will for the present take our leave of the excellent scholar, the accomplish'd, upright judge, the wise and faithful counsellor, the loyal subject, and zealous patriot; provided we can, for a moment, separate these ideas and characters from this extraordinary person; and consider him only in his private capacity. And here we have presented to our view, the most agreeable companion, the accomplish'd gentleman, the warm, discrete and faithful friend, a good master and neighbour, a person of uncommon candor, and an exemplary christian.

He was the most agreeable companion, and an accomplish'd gentleman. He was the most remote from all appearances of vanity and affectation. He was of a very social and courteous make; and his manner of

address was particularly engaging. His conversation was often instructive, always sprightly and entertaining ; and indeed never failed to charm. He “ honor’d all men ;” treated every one with due respect, and never gave cause of offence or uneasiness to any, whether present or absent, by words or actions : of which he was very singularly cautious. His behaviour was polish’d, his manners refin’d ; and had in them that peculiar delicacy, which all can see and admire, but none can exactly describe. His countenance, his whole air and mien, *struck at once*, if I may so express it ; and attracted the esteem and regard of the spectator, by telling even his eyes, what kind of soul informed the body which he saw before him : While he conversed with people, both of the lowest and highest ranks, without the least tincture of haughtiness on one hand, or of meanness on the other.

He was a warm, discrete and faithful friend. He could never be prevailed on to discard, or even to neglect, any one, for whom he had professed a regard, on mere suspicion, or rumours ; or without examining things to the bottom. Nor was he backward to advise on occasion, especially

ly when his advice was asked ; for otherwise he was far from being forward or officious. Nor indeed do I doubt, but that he was as willing to hear, as to give advice, tho' no man less needed it; he being a kind of oracle to himself, tho' less so than he was to others. He was extremely kind and obliging in his temper ; and, in short, discharged all the offices of friendship in general with the utmost punctuality, and the most nice precision.—It were needless, after saying thus much of him in the capacity of a friend, to say any thing of him as a relation ; only, that if any should imagine he was not the very best and kindest, it would be a proof that they knew but little of him——

He was a good master ; no ways morose or austere ; but as kind and indulgent as was consistent even with the good of his servants ; not to say, with the duty and service which they owed to him ; which were superfluous in speaking of so reasonable and just a man. He treated all his domestics in a proper manner ; who must indeed have been very bad ones, had they not thought themselves happy in such a master, as they doubtless did.

He

He was the best of neighbours ; ever courteous and obliging. None of those who liv'd near him, could help looking on it as a part of their felicity, that they were in the neighbourhood of such a person, even though they had no particular knowledge of him : While those who knew him better, had proportionably an higher sense of their happiness in this respect.

He was a person of uncommon candor. He did not only, not allow himself to detract from the merit of any persons of real worth ; but would not speak contemptuously, or reproachfully, of the capacity, the accomplishments, or the behaviour of others, however just a foundation there might be for it. He apparently took a pleasure in thinking and speaking well of all worthy persons ; and often found something to commend even in those, in whom others could find nothing deserving commendation. But if there were any, the subject of conversation, in whom he could find nothing praise-worthy, he would at least be their apologist ; striving to extenuate their faults by some means or other, while others could hardly think of any thing but what seemed to be an aggravation of them. This was really his temper and disposition,

And

And this brings me to what all truly wise and good men will acknowledge to be the best part of his character:—He was an exemplary CHRISTIAN. This, indeed, is implied in what was said before, concerning the great regard which he all along manifested to religion and virtue, while a student, and tutor at the college; while a preacher of the gospel; and by his strict fidelity both as a judge, and as a counsellor. But it seemed proper to speak more particular of his religion here, where we are considering him in his private capacity.—He appeared to have an habitual and deep reverence of almighty GOD upon his mind. And I have more than once heard him speak with great pleasure of that circumstance in the character of Sir MATTHEW HALE, chief justice of the king's bench; That he was never known to mention the holy and venerable name of GOD—without making a pause at it in his discourse.† He was a firm believer in JESUS CHRIST, the son of GOD; and in that religion which bears his name, as contained in the holy scriptures.

He was none of those who are too wise to be taught of God; too great to worship

† The same is said of Sir I. Newton.

ship and bow down before him, or too good and gracious to need the means of grace. He constantly attended (as you, my brethren of this society, are witnesses) He constantly attended the worship of God, and the ordinances of the gospel, with great reverence, gravity and devotion: Which, tho' he was an enemy to ostentation in every thing, and especially in religion, were sometimes so apparent in his countenance, that one could not observe it without having his own devotion raised and improved, if he had any: and hardly, if he had none before, without catching thereby something of the same spirit from him. And as he was exemplary in his attendance upon the public worship of God, I have some particular reasons to assure myself, that he also worshipped God in his family; having as it were, like SAMUEL, an altar at his own house,* on which to offer up spiritual sacrifices to the Lord: Tho' I have indeed never made it my business to "creep into houses;" or to pry curiously into peoples domestic concerns, like the heathen priests of old. †

He

* See as above 1 Sam. VII. 17.

† Scire volunt secreta domûs, atque inde timeri. Perf.

He was a firm and zealous friend to the principles of religious liberty, and the sacred rights of conscience. No man was more free from all superstition, or from the fordid, illiberal spirit of party. No man was more catholic towards christians of different denominations; or farther from a spirit of bigotry, contention and censoriousness. It was before observed, that he was a firm believer of the christian religion in general; and he was so in particular, of the atonement made by the death of CHRIST for the sins of the world; and of that "life and immortality, brought to light by him thro' the gospel;" in which he expressed an humble hope, in my hearing, a few hours before he expired.

He appear'd to have a great concern for the interest of christianity in the world. And, by repeated conversations with him on the subject, I know he had very much at heart the coming into some scheme, or method, for propagating the gospel amongst the natives of these northern parts of *America*: Often expressing his great sorrow that a certain SOCIETY beyond sea, had done nothing, or but very little, to this important end; important, not only in a religious view of things, but secondarily, in a civil and political.

But

But not to digress: His whole life in general was apparently conducted under the influence, and according to the precepts, of our holy religion: Which is the most authentic evidence, at least to others, of a person's being a thorough christian. For men do not "gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;" and "by their fruits we are to know them." But if there was any one virtue more conspicuous in this good man, than another, it seems to have been the charity and bountifulness of his heart. And, "by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples," says our Lord, "if ye have love one to another." A more soft and tender, a more sympathizing, or more bountiful heart, no man, perhaps, ever had. He appeared, in reality, to "love his neighbour as himself." His heart seemed, not only always open, but expanded wide; even wider than the earth, and "broader than the sea." And had his fortune been of the same dimensions with his soul, he would have been the common, public almoner, even without being appointed by any, under God, to the discharge of that office; distributing, not only to the necessities of the saints, but to every proper object of charity, far and near. Great riches
in

in his hands would indeed have been a common blessing; and, by being thus dispersed abroad, and “given to the poor,” like incense continually ascending to heaven: And we know, that “with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

That this would have been his manner of employing riches, is sufficiently evident by the use he made of what he had. For tho’ his income was very moderate, or, to speak more properly, quite scanty; and such as almost any other person in his station, would have thought insufficient for his own support in a manner suitable to it, even with the best œconomy; yet it is well known, that of that small income he spent a large proportion in deeds of charity and beneficence, from time to time. Often did the blessing of the poor, and of him that was ready to perish, come upon him. Even in his narrow circumstances, he was like Job in the days of his prosperity, “eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame.” And how often has he caused the “widow’s heart to sing for joy!”

Let me here just mention one thing more, which amongst innumerable others, plainly shew’d the goodness of his heart.

In

In the exercise of his office as chief justice, he had repeated occasions to pronounce sentence of death upon malefactors. In doing which, tho' he did not forget, or lose, the firmness becoming a judge ; yet he always did it with such a visible concern for the unhappy criminal, join'd with such moving, pathetic counsels and admonitions, as hardly ever failed to force sighs, and draw tears, from almost every person present.

But there is not time to be more particular on the character of this excellent and amiable man. These are the outlines of it, truly, tho' very imperfectly drawn. To sum up all in a few words : Altho' I have known some very savage and brutal persons ; some very ignorant and stupid, and some very wicked and abandon'd ones ; yet I never knew one so savage and brutal, as not to be charm'd, as it were, with the polish'd manners of judge SEWALL ; so ignorant and stupid, as not to see and acknowledge him to have been a wise man ; or so wicked and abandon'd, as not to reverence him as a good one ; for I know a bad man cannot really love a good one, as such. And the better title any had themselves, to these characters of polish'd, wise and
good,

good, the more ready, proportionably, they always were to give *him* the praise of them. Some other persons of great abilities and merit, in different parts of the world, have not been generally esteem'd and belov'd, because people did not know their true characters ; and had conceived some unreasonable prejudices against them. But it was his felicity, or rather his country's, that he was known, and therefore esteem'd from the first, and still more at the last ; so that the public had the benefit of his superiour talents. Many others in such eminent stations as his, have had some to envy, and speak evil of them, to the lessening of their usefulness. But it was his, and his country's felicity, that his abilities and virtues were at least as conspicuous as his station: So as to exempt him from envy and detraction, and to make the sphere of his influence very extensive.

Some, however, will perhaps curiously inquire, " Whether this man had no faults ?"—If he had any, habitual to him, they were very *uncommon* ones for this age of the world ; for they consisted in the *excess* of these two virtues, *liberality* and *self-diffidence* ! And if, by the former, he seemed
to

to injure himself ; yet at the same time he resembled the poor widow in the gospel, who “ of her penury cast in unto the offerings of God, all the living which she had :” being commended by HIM who taught, that “ it is more blessed to give than to receive ;” and who, “ altho’ he were rich, yet for our sakes became poor.”—By the latter of them, he may indeed have done a negative injury to others. For had he had this quality of self-diffidence in a less degree, he might, possibly, have been more of a *leader* than he seems to have been, in the affairs of the public ; from which, some additional advantages would probably have accrued to it.—But how many persons, at least in *other governments*, have done almost irreparable damage to the public, on the other hand, by their excess of rashness, self-conceit and officiousness ; by their presumption, and driving, as it were, all before them ?—If *that* may be call’d a *fault* in him, which yet admits of some doubt ; *this* is, without any doubt, a *crime* in them ; and will not so readily be excused. But amongst all the various woes denounced against different persons in scripture, there seems to be none which so much concerned

cerned him, as that pointed against those, of whom every one speaketh well. †

It appears, I suppose, not to have been wholly without reason, that SAMUEL'S conduct and character were pitched on by way of introduction to the character and conduct of that distinguish'd and eminent person, of whom I have been speaking. For, was the former a fearer and servant of God even from his early youth? We have reason to think the latter was so likewise. Was the former brought up in the school of the sons of the prophets? So, in effect, was the latter. Did the former, even in his youth, bid fair in due time to become a signal blessing to his country? So did the latter. Did the former minister before the Lord and his people in the sacred offices of religion? So did the latter. Did the former become in time, an instructor and governor in that college wherein he had received his education, and prove a great blessing to it? So did the latter. Was the former at length cloathed with the important office of a judge? So was the latter. Did the former travel from place to place in the discharge of this laborious trust? So did the latter. Did the former worship the

Lord

† Luke VI. 26.

Lord in his own house, as well as in public? So did the latter. Did the people “fear the LORD and Samuel?” But many of those who did not fear the Lord, yet feared the latter, who was a terror to their evil works. Was the former eminently faithful and upright, in the exercise of his authority? So was the latter. Was the former at length one of the king’s council? So was the latter. Was the former a true patriot; a lover of his country, its laws and liberties; and an enemy to all tyranny and tyrants? So was the latter. Was the former in all respects a worthy, good and amiable person? So was the latter. Were the great merits, and public services of the former, acknowledged by all the people in general? So were those of the latter. Did the former continue all the days of his life in the faithful discharge of his important trust? So did the latter. Was the former justly and universally lamented at his death? So is the latter—

Thus far the parallel seems to hold in general, without using any unnatural violence; tho’ it will not do so in some other respects. SAMUEL, for example, had children, who gave him trouble by
their

their ill behaviour ; but the other had none. And yet how many persons have in him lost a father! while he has obtained a “name better than that of sons or of daughters”; far better indeed, than that of such as some of SAMUEL’S §.

SAMUEL was, moreover, a prophet of the Lord, being immediately inspired by him. Such was not the latter. But yet he saw, heard and believed those things, of which many prophets and righteous men, and kings in those remote ages, understood but little at most. And indeed the father of spirits gave him such a genius as, I had almost said, might supply the place of inspiration! But this would be extravagant.—However, his great knowledge can hardly be said to have been acquired by little and little, in the ordinary way, and by much pains: It was rather a kind of immediate intuition; such as we may suppose in some beings of an higher order. It was so quick, clear and piercing, that, like the lightning, it extended in a moment to all parts under heaven, the origin and source of both.

But there is another thing, wherein the parallel fails: For SAMUEL lived till he

E was

§ Judge SEWALL died a Bachelor.

was far advanced in years ; and died in old age, when, as we may naturally suppose, the common infirmities of it had render'd him almost incapable of serving the public any longer—But the other, alas! died at an age, * when he might probably have been a great public blessing for many years longer, had heaven spar'd him to us—However, in what does honorable old age consist? Does it “ stand in “ length of time?” or is it only “ measured by number of years?” Does it not rather consist in piety, virtue, and doing many and great public services? In short, is not “ wisdom the gray hair un- “ to men ; and an unspotted life, old age?” If we measure the life of that excellent man, whose death we now mourn, by this standard (which we find in the *Wisdom of Solomon*;) tho' we cannot say, perhaps, that he lived so long as SAMUEL, yet we may justly say, that but few persons have lived so long in the world as he, at least in this country ; or died in such “ a good “ old age.”

However, we justly lament him dead ; because, had his life been preserved, he might have probably continued a great public blessing many years longer. And the

* *Etat.* 58.

the manner in which his funeral rites were attended the last evening, is a sufficient proof that what has been said of him, is, in general, the sense of the public— But the will of heaven is done; and “ shall not the JUDGE OF ALL THE EARTH do right !”

If he who has been “ faithful over a few things, is to be made ruler over many things,” how highly must we suppose this eminently faithful servant of God, will be exalted, entering into the joy of his Lord at the last day? Yea rather, how happy? how highly exalted, may we suppose him to be already? All that was mortal of him (an inconsiderable part) is indeed repositied in the tomb, not to arise till the heavens shall be no more. But his righteousness shall endure, when they are “ folded up and changed !” Methinks I saw him, when the law of death was once satisfied in him, convoy'd by those “ ministring spirits, who are sent forth to minister to the heirs of salvation”, to the paradise of God; himself no more a frail man, but an angel; a bright, glorious and immortal spirit, even “ as a flame of fire” ! And this, without any great change IN HIM. There was little more

needed, than to set such a soul at liberty from it's incumbrance and prison, the body.

Hail then, *Immortal Spirit!* (whether man or angel, the difference is not great) *Immortal Spirit*, hail! No longer incumber'd with mortality, or confin'd to earth and darkness : But introduced among the spirits of just men made perfect ; to the innumerable company of angels ; to the general assembly, and church of the first-born in heaven ; to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to God the judge of all ! In his light to see light, and to drink joy and immortality, not at the shallow streams, but at the fathomless fountain thereof !— And thou, Precious dust ! or lifeless body, soon to become dust, “ rest “ thou in hope ” ! For even thou shalt in due time hear the voice of the Son of God, and live ; “ fashioned like unto his “ own glorious body : ” When, at furthest, ALL they that have died in the Lord, shall also be “ equal unto the angels ; and shall “ be the children of God, being the children of the RESURRECTION ! * . ”

They who had no very particular knowledge of judge SEWALL, may perhaps suspect that I have spoken of him in a style

* Luke XX. 36.

style extravagantly hyperbolic. But I am in no pain lest others, who had the happiness of a thorough acquaintance with him, should think me chargeable with this. The memory of such eminently wise, just and good men, ought indeed to be blessed ; not in the frigid language of indifference, but in all that ardor of expression, which naturally flows from an heart truly sensible of their worth, and deeply touched by their loss. And it seems but equitable and congruous, that HE, who never spoke evil of any one, but honour'd all men, and delighted in giving all their due share of praise ; should, at least when he is dead and gone, be praised by all in his turn ; and so much the rather, because he would not willingly suffer any one to commend him while living ; which was the truth as to this excellent person.

THe assembly has been detained so long already, that I must be much more brief than I intended in those reflections, with which this discourse is now to be closed.

We may justly consider the death of this truly worthy person, as a common, public loss ; and a great frown of divine providence

providence upon the whole province. The loss of such a person in such a station, is doubtless a *public calamity* ; and great, in proportion to the extensiveness of the blessing once enjoyed in him ; who was such a friend to learning and religion ; such a lover of his country, it's liberties and laws ; who scattered the wicked with his eye ; who stopped the mouth of iniquity ; and, under God, caused judgment to flow down as a river. In short, in what one person among us, could the republic of letters, the law, the courts of justice, the common-wealth, the church of God, have sustained a greater loss † ? Nor are we, I hope, so degenerate as the people of Israel were, at the time when it was said, —“ The righteous dieth, and no man layeth it to heart.” No ! we all in general lay to heart the death of this one righteous man, at least. And it may be questioned, whether ever a person died among us, before him, at once more universally, and more sincerely, lamented. There is not, I believe, an heart but what feels this loss in some degree : For, indeed, that man who is wholly insensible of it, if there be such an one, cannot be said to have any *heart* at all ; at least not an “ heart of flesh, ”

† Persons of a *superior rank* ought always to be supposed excepted, when this manner of expression is used.

flesh", but only an "heart of stone", or of iron; an heart insensible to every thing worthy, great and good.

But we ought not only to consider the loss it self; we should, as was intimated before, consider the holy hand and providence of God therein. God, by the prophet Isaiah, amongst some other sore calamities which he brought, or threatned to bring, on his people of old for their sins, speaks of taking away such eminent persons; and leaving their places to be filled up by those who are wholly unequal to them: "Cease ye from man whose breath
 " is in his nostrils: for wherein is he to
 " be accounted of? For behold, the Lord,
 " the Lord of hosts, doth take away from
 " Jerusalem and from Judah—the judge,
 " and the prophet, and the prudent—
 " the honourable man, and the counsel-
 " lor—and the eloquent orator. And I
 " will give children to be their princes,
 " and babes shall rule over them*." We have now before us a very striking example of the judgment expressed in the former part of this passage. God, of his great goodness, grant that the latter part thereof may never be verified in Us! May He in mercy return to us, and heal the breach
 which

* Isai. II. 22.

which his hand has made : For with him is “ the residue of the spirit ; ” the spirit of wisdom and prudence, of justice and judgment, and of a sound mind. Our suitably considering his holy providence in this grievous visitation of it, may be a means of conciliating his favour. And if gracious heaven shall please hereafter to give us such judges and counsellors *as the last* deceased, I think we need not pray for such as were *at the first* : Which is said, however, without the least intention to reflect on the memory of any of the worthy fathers of this country.

There are, to be sure, but very few persons, equally qualified in all respects to fill that important station, which is now left vacant by the death of judge SEWALL. Nor will saying this, I am persuaded, give the least offence to any ; particularly, not to the honorable, and very worthy SURVIVING judges of that bench, who have all along manifested the greatest regard for their dear brother deceased ; who are amongst the sincerest mourners for him ; and who are now paying a public honor to his memory, by their presence here, on this occasion. THEY will doubtless be excited, by this dispensation of providence,
to

to great fidelity in the discharge of their important trust ; pursuing the steps of their departed brother with zeal and vigor : Being thus reminded of their own mortality, and of an HIGHER TRIBUNAL, to which all who are judged here below, have a right of appeal ; and the judgment of which will be DECISIVE !

The college, as well as the general assembly, and the superior court of judicature for the province, is particularly concerned in this visitation of divine providence ; considering how long the Deceased was a great blessing and ornament to it, while he resided therein ; the great concern which he always manifested since, for the interest of learning and religion there ; and his great abilities, and equal zeal to serve it, in the capacity of one of its overseers.

The relatives of the Deceased, those of them that are present, will allow me to exhort them while they sorrow, not to “ sorrow as those that have no hope :”— And also, while they mourn the Dead, to live as he lived ; in expectation of a joyful meeting with him another day ; when the times of refreshing shall come from the
presence

presence of the Lord. "For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." In which thrice glorious day, *that* will be in a measure applicable to each one of Christ's faithful followers, which he once spake of himself, and indeed still speaketh to us all from heaven:—"I am HE that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am ALIVE FOREVERMORE, Amen"!*

We, my brethren of this assembly, have some particular reasons to lay the death of this excellent man to heart; and to attend to the voice of providence therein. He, for many years, came up to this house of the Lord in company with us, to worship at his footstool. We have in him lost, not only an hearty friend to this society; but a wise and prudent adviser on all occasions, a principal ornament and pillar of it. But you will remember that a "pillar," and the "foundation," the "head of the corner," or "chief corner-stone," are not the same thing, or of equal importance to a building; whether a material or "spiritual house." The former mentioned, tho' indeed a noble "pillar," while it stood erect, was yet a decaying one: It

* Rev. I. 18.

is now, alas! fallen quite down, soon to moulder away, and be reduced to powder and dust; so as never to afford us any farther support! But the "foundation," the "head of the corner," still remains unshaken, unimpaired, an ever "living stone," able to bear up the whole building. For WE, I trust, were not built, neither did, or do we depend, for our main support, on any mortal man. We were built on a broad and firm foundation; even "on the foundation of the prophets and apostles, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF "being the chief corner-stone:" To whom coming as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God and precious, we also as lively stones shall be built up in HIM, a spiritual house, an holy temple in the Lord, for an habitation of God thro' the spirit; that we may offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. And, I trust, "the gates of hell shall never prevail against us:" For other foundation [or better] can no man lay!

Let us therefore, my beloved brethren, take encouragement to ourselves under this bereaving stroke of divine providence; and "stand fast in the Lord." Let us neither despise this chastening of the Lord,
nor

nor yet faint, being thus rebuked of him. Let us not despond ; let us not be weary or faint in our minds, while we look unto Jesus, the AUTHOR and FINISHER of OUR FAITH ; whom “ God hath made “ head over all things to the church.” And let us live in the observance of all his commandments : For, as you well know, he compares those that hear his sayings, and do them not, to a foolish man that “ buildeth his house upon the sand ;” which will fall at last, and great will be its fall ! But those that hear and do them, he likens, on the contrary, to a wise man that “ buildeth his house upon a rock ;” which defies all rains, and winds, and storms, and floods, from whatever quarter they come, and shall never fall ; “ for “ it is founded upon a rock :” And, to apply the words of the apostle, spoken with particular reference to another point — “ That rock is CHRIST.”

To conclude : While I was speaking so particularly above, of the character and virtues of that good man, whose loss we all deplore, I considered myself, not merely as paying a small part of that tribute and honor which are justly due to his memory ; but as reminding you, my brethren,

thren, and this whole assembly, of your duty ; thinking you would, of course, be excited to imitate the virtues which were so conspicuous in him. For you will remember, that altho' we are not all judges, or counsellors, and do not act in the same spheres of life that he did ; yet we are all bound, in our own, to practise the very same virtues, which he did in his ; the same piety towards God, by a due regard to his house and worship, and in other respects ; the same justice, beneficence and charity towards man ; the same humility and courtesy ; the same condescension and goodness to all. For though our blessed Lord is our primary, and great, and most perfect example ; yet we are admonished to follow others also, wherein they followed him ; and to be followers of all them, who thro' faith and patience inherit the promises. This good man is taken away ; possibly from the evil to come on us who survive : We know not. But certainly the warning voice of this providence to us all, is, " Be ye also ready : " — " Boast not yourselves of to-morrow ; for ye know not what a day may bring forth. " — If we truly fear God, and serve him in holiness and righteousness, as this good man did, his late departure from us will not prove a *final* adieu ! We shall see him again ; not indeed

deed in this state of darkness, affliction and trial; but we shall be presented together with him before the presence of God with exceeding joy, and with crowns of glory from his hand. But as there is “one
 “glory of the sun, another glory of the
 “moon, and another glory of the stars;”
 and as even “one star differeth from ano-
 “ther star in glory: So also is the resur-
 “rection of the dead.”—When therefore
 God himself, who is light, and in whom
 there is no darkness at all, shall shine on all
 the blessed in heaven, we may well suppose
 that his servant lately deceased, will ap-
 pear with a distinguished lustre and glo-
 ry; even tho’ all “the righteous shall
 “shine forth as the sun in the kingdom
 “of their Father.”

Now unto HIM, the GOD, the
 JUDGE, the FATHER OF ALL,
 who only hath immortality; dwel-
 ling in light that mortal men can-
 not approach unto, whom no man
 hath seen, or can see, and live;
 of whom, and thro’ whom, and
 to whom are all things:—Even
 unto HIM be given all glory and
 honor, dominion, and blessing, and
 praise, thro’ JESUS CHRIST our
 Lord, AMEN!



