

10810-

L 350



THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

GIFT OF

Lewis F. Lengfeld

acc. no. 823

Mr. *Adams's*
DISCOURSES

O N

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY.

THE
DISCOVERY

OF THE

REMAINS OF THE

*Religious Liberty an invaluable
Blessing :*

ILLUSTRATED IN TWO

DISCOURSES

Preached at *Roxbury Decr. 3. 1767.*

Being the Day of general

THANKSGIVING.

By AMOS ADAMS, A. M.

Pastor of the first Church in *Roxbury.*

*Pfal. xliv. 1, 2. We have heard with our Ears, O God,
our Fathers have told us, what Work Thou didst in their
Days, in the Times of old; how Thou didst drive out the
Heathen with thy Hand, and planteſt them; how Thou
didst afflict the People, and caſt them out.*

Exod. xv. 2.—My Fathers God and I will exalt Him,

B O S T O N : N. E.

Printed by KNEELAND and ADAMS, in *Milk-Street,*
for THOMAS LEVERETT, in *Corn-Hill.* 1768.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1900

REPRODUCED IN TWO

DISCOURSES

PREACHED AT NEW-YORK, DEC. 3, 1850

BY THE REV. J. H. COOPER

THANKSGIVING.

BY JAMES A. M.

NEW-YORK: PUBLISHED BY J. H. COOPER.

THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY
ASTOR LENOX TILDEN FOUNDATION
1900

DISCOURSES

PREACHED AT NEW-YORK, DEC. 3, 1850
BY THE REV. J. H. COOPER

Daniel William:
His Book

Religious Liberty an invaluable Blessing.

DISCOURSE I.

GALATIANS V. I.

*Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ
hath made us free, and be not entangled again with
the Yoke of Bondage.*

THE Yoke of bondage, which the Apostle speaks of in the text, was the rites and ceremonies of the *mosaic* law. Many, in that day, pretended to embrace the christian faith, but, at the same time, taught and practised circumcision and obedience to the law of *Moses*. This the Apostle considered as an abridgment of christian liberty, and an unreasonable imposition, especially, on the *Gentile* converts. This the Apostles called a yoke—*which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear*; and in this epistle, it is called a being *in bondage, under the elements of this world*. The principal design of this, and of some other of *St. Paul's* epistles,

epistles, is to vindicate the *liberty* of believers from the obligation of the mosaic law, and to show, that by embracing the law, they do virtually renounce Christ and fall from the doctrines of grace. Having thus vindicated the *liberty* of christians from legal impositions, he, in the text, fervently exhorts them to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage*. In discoursing on these words, I shall,

I. SHEW, that christianity is a system of the most perfect and valuable religious *liberty*.

II. NEVERTHELESS, christians have sometimes had this *liberty* abridged, and have groaned under the unscriptural impositions of men.

III. I SHALL take a brief view of the religious *liberty*, which God, in his good providence, hath granted and is continuing to the churches, in *this land*.

IV. SHOW, that it is highly incumbent on us to understand, and praise God, for our religious priviledges; and to *stand fast in the liberty, wherewith Christ hath made us free*.

AND while I am discoursing to you, on this subject, I shall not think, that I have altogether mistook the design of this *anniversary day*, on which, our religious priviledges ought to be one principal article of our joy and thanksgiving.

I. CHRISTIANITY is a system of the most perfect and valuable religious *liberty*. Whoever will be at the pains to consider the genius and spirit of christianity,

christianity, as laid down by Christ and his Apostles, will find, that it is, on every account, a system of the most perfect *liberty*.

NOT that it relaxes our obligations to perfect and universal holiness ; or is, in any sense, friendly to licentiousness : The law of God, in its spiritual meaning, is not set aside, nor toleration, in any single instance, given for sensual indulgence. The Apostles ever disavowed such a doctrine : preaching, that we are *not without law to God, but under the law to Jesus Christ*. They called on christians ; *for brethren, ye have been called unto liberty ; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another*.

BUT yet the gospel breaths the spirit of religious *liberty*—*liberty* from the guilt of sin, and the condemnation of the law. *Liberty* from the dominion of sin, the slavery of satan.—*Liberty* from the elements of the jewish law, and *liberty* from the impositions of men ; conceding to every man, that fundamental right of nature, to examine and judge for himself, in matters of religion ; and to worship God, according to the dictates of conscience, and the institutions of the head of the church, without the *impositions* of mankind. These are *glorious liberties of the sons of God*.

OUR Saviour early intimated, that his was to be a kingdom of rest and *liberty* ; that is, at least, one thing implied in that gracious invitation, Mat. XI. 28. *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest*. And again, Joh. VIII. 36. *If the Son, therefore, shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*. Before Pilate our Lord declared, John XVIII. 36. *My kingdom*
is

is not of this world. Mat. XX. 25. *Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them—but it shall not be so among you ; But whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister ; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*—The Apostles, though divinely inspired, did not pretend to be the lords of mens faith ; they recommended careful enquiry, and desired no means of propagating the christian doctrine and worship, among Jews or Gentiles, but, by *manifestation of the truth*, and giving miraculous witness to the same. They constantly called on men to attend the evidences of truths of such unalterable consequence ; *not*, says an inspired Apostle, *that we have dominion over your faith, but, are helpers of your joy.* They called on men to exercise their own judgment ; and, in points of controversys, gave this advice, Rom. XIV. 5. *Let every man be fully perswaded in his own mind.* Christians are strictly forbidden judging and condemning one another, ver. 4. *Who art thou that judgest another man's servant ? To his own master he standeth or falleth.* Ver. 10. *But why dost thou judge thy brother, or set at nought thy brother ? For we shall all stand, at the judgment-seat of Jesus Christ.* The Apostles knew that christianity, in its facts, doctrines, forms of worship and discipline, could not suffer, by the freest and fullest enquiry. Although they were fully perswaded of its truth and excellency, yet they desired no one to be followers of them, but, so far as they gave evidence, that christianity was from heaven. In short, the Apostle James I. 25. exactly describes the nature of the gospel, and the spirit it universally breaths, when he calls it, *the law of liberty*, and tells us we *shall be judged by the law of liberty.*

II. ALTHOUGH

II. ALTHOUGH *religious liberty* be such an unalienable right of nature, and so fully maintained in the gospel of Christ, yet there have been frequent attempts to deprive christians of this *liberty*. Heathens and christians, Jews and Gentiles have united, in violating the rights of conscience ; imposing, either the worship of *false* gods, or else the doctrines and injunctions of men respecting the worship of the *true* God.

THE first enemies to Christ, and the *liberties* of his kingdom, were the unbelieving *Jews*. As they, all along, set themselves against Christ, and crucified the *Lord of glory*, so, when the gospel was preached, and christianity began to spread, after our Lord's ascension ; especially, when the word was preached to the *Gentiles*, and they received into the church, without circumcision, they aroused, and exerted themselves to oppose the doctrines of the Apostles. Wherever these came, preaching the gospel, those infidels stirred up the people to persecute and destroy them. Almost, if not quite, all the opposition, which the Apostles met with, proceeded from the malice and zeal of the *Jews* stirring up the heathen to persecute the followers of Jesus. The *Roman* government seems to have been less zealous, in the persecution of the christians, than these biggoted *Jews*. Many, who did, in a sense, embrace christianity, were yet extremely fond of retaining the jewish rites, and could not be content without imposing them on the consciences of the *Gentile* converts. Often does St. *Paul* warn christians of judaizing teachers ; much does he say to establish them in their *liberty*. In Gal. II. 4. he speaks of *false brethren, unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty, which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.*

WHEN christianity spread, and became an object of general attention, it alarmed the zeal of the *Heathen* world, and they became the successors of the *Jews* in persecuting the church of God. The Pagans were strongly possessed in favour of their national religion ; of their gods and sacrifices ; temples and altars ; their festivals and sacred ministrations, which, they found, the christian religion was designed to overthrow. They were jealous of the worship of the gods ; and though they did not refuse to admit the saviour of the world into the number of the gods, yet, when they saw the christians abandoning the pagan gods and their worship, they were enraged. When they saw men convinced by the light of truth, and conscientiously turning from *dumb idols, to serve the living God, and wait for his son from heaven*, the aid of the civil magistrate was implored, to extirpate so dangerous an heresy. The *Roman* Emperors, at least many of them, became the furious persecutors of the disciples—the harmless followers of the lowly Jesus ; until the reign of *Constantine*, the first christian Emperor, by whom, christianity received a *civil* establishment, in the beginning of the fourth century. Before this time, thousands of holy Martyrs had sealed the testimony of Jesus with their blood. But so far were these violent and unreasonable persecutions, of quiet and good subjects, who desired only to live in all good conscience, towards God and man, from rooting out the christian religion ; that they served but to propagate it the more ; multitudes seeing the patience and constancy of the Martyrs, under the cruelest sufferings, embraced the religion, for which they dyed. These violent persecutions, doubtless, awakned thousands to examine into a religion, that had so many to dye

dye for it ; and it hath, from that time, been a common saying, that *the blood of the Martyrs was the seed of the church.*

UNDER *Constantine*, the empire became christian. Paganism was abolished by imperial *Edicts*, and christianity became the national, the established religion of the *Roman* empire. The christian emperors heaped many honours and privileges on the evangelic ministry ; dignity and wealth became the temptations to ecclesiastical functions. The purity of the christian ministry was lost ; the simplicity of christian manners was sadly corrupted, an awful example was left, to teach us, how little temporal power can do to advance *real* christianity ; yea, I might say, how contrary the dignities and riches of this world are to the simplicity of the gospel.

NOTHING is more natural to us than a desire to impose our own judgment on our fellow men ; we earnestly wish to bring all men to a conformity to our own judgments and manners. *This* is an instance of the natural pride of our hearts. *This* was the source of pagan persecution, and *this* principle produced infinite mischiefs in the christian world. Pride, working in the hearts of professors, would not long suffer the church to be quiet, in the free enjoyment of the rights of conscience. As christians could not, in every thing, think alike, frequent attempts were made to propagate the opinions of men, concerning faith and worship, by the decrees of *councils* and *synods*—the *secular* arm was soon called in, and employed, to enforce the decrees of councils ; and they, who could not subscribe to forms, of *human* invention, were persecuted, excommunicated, and driven into banish-

ment and death. Thus, in a few ages, we find councils against councils, fathers against fathers, sects of christians embittered against each other, and mutually persecuting one another, as they could engage the majestrate on their side : All sides in their turns commenced persecutors ; nothing seems to have been less understood than mutual forbearance, and the *liberty* of private judgment, in matters of religion. I do but hint at what is fully known, to such as are acquainted with *ecclesiastical* history.

It is needless to point out the steps, by which, the bishops of *Rome* made their way to the *papal* power. The Apostle tells us, 2 Theff. II. 7. that, in his time, *the mystery of this iniquity doth already work*. It then, had its beginning, in the pride and love of pre-eminence, which were, then, discernable in some christians. The aspiring views of the *roman* bishops, the favours of emperors, and the splendor of their *see* ; *Rome*, for ages, having been the capitol of the world, all conspired to advance the power of the *roman* pontiffs ; until, at length, the bishop of *Rome* was declared and acknowledged, *universal bishop* of the church, the successor of St. *Peter*, and the *Vicar* of Christ, on earth. For many hundreds of years, the popes were, generally, acknowledged head of the church ; kings and potentates submitted to their jurisdiction, and held their kingdoms, as gifts of the *roman see*.— They decided controversies ; formed articles of faith, appointed rites and ceremonies in the worship of God ; to all which a blind and absolute obedience was required ; they granted indulgences, pardoned sins, and opened and shut the gates of heaven, at their pleasure ; exactly fulfilling that
 prophetic

prophetic character of antichrist, 2 Theff. II. 4. *so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself, that he is God.* Thus the liberties of the church were given up to the popes of *Rome*; all the rights of conscience were troden under foot.

DURING this grand papal apostacy, christians, not content with the simplicity of gospel worship and discipline, were continually adding their own inventions to the worship of God. Transubstantiation, the worship of images, relics, saints and angels, and all the superstitions of popery made their way into the church: *Rome* christian resembled *Rome* pagan; and the christian resembled the pagan temples; an awful example to what lengths men will go, when they leave the pattern, which Christ and his Apostles have left us, and pretend to decorate the worship of God, with their *own* inventions!—Thus the worship of God was filled with idolatry, the temples of God became the temples of idols: the scriptures were little understood; the senseless decrees of popes and councils were received, with blind submission, as the rules of faith and worship.

THESE were dark ages; a cloud of ignorance overspread the church: superstition and idolatry well nigh extinguished the pure and noble religion of Jesus. The teachers of the people were ignorant and immoral: real learning was in a great measure banished out of the church of God, and the people proportionably sunk into ignorance and superstition.

NOT that God *left himself without witness*, in these times of ignorance. All along, there were some, who saw the corruption of the church, and
 abhorred

abhorred the superstitions and idolatrys of the times. So long ago as the *twelfth* century the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*,* in *France* and *Savoy*, openly declared against the abuses of the church of *Rome*; they boldly preached, that the pope is not head of the church, denied the real corporal presence of Christ, in the Eucharist, the worshipping of saints and images, and separated themselves from the *romish* communion. These glorious witnesses of God's truth became martyrs, in the cause of reformation. The papal bulls raised the zeal of Christendom, to extirpate this unhappy people: all manner of barbarities and cruelties were practised upon them, and multitudes perished in the glorious cause. However, their doctrines could not be suppressed; the dreadful persecution, they suffered, spread their opinions, through most parts of *Europe*: Thousands had their eyes opened, to see the errors of popery; and *then* were sown the seeds, which, afterward, sprung up, and, at length, produced the glorious *reformation*.

God, whose *ways are unsearchable*, and *his judgments pass finding out*, is greatly to be adored, for raising up such a number of great and learned men, in the *fifteenth* and *sixteenth* centuries. The fall of the *eastern* empire, and the extension of the *turkish* dominion into *Europe*, was the revival of learning in the *west*. 'Tis too great a work to tell you, by what means and instruments, the *reformation* opened and advanced. It must suffice to say, learning revived; by the indefatigable labours of divers learned and worthy Divines, the people were enlightened to discern the errors of popery; they were taught that the *pope* was *antichrist*; enquiry

* See Perrin's Hist. of the Waldenses.

quiry and private judgment were promoted, sovereign princes were persuaded to abandon the romish church, and patronize the cause of reformation—a glorious *reformation* was accomplished; and a *deadly wound* was given to papal power.

IN the *fourteenth* century, about 130 years before the reformation of *Luther*, flourished that stout and valiant champion of the truth, *John Wickliffe*, by whom, the seeds of the *reformation* seem to have been sown in *England*. While professor of divinity at *Oxford*, he boldly published against transubstantiation, the infallibility of the pope, the pre-eminence of the church of *Rome*; teaching that the new testament is a perfect rule of faith and manners, and ought to be read, by the people: and further maintained *most* of the points, by which the *Puritans* were afterward distinguished; as, that there are but *two* orders in the ministry; viz. *Presbyters* or *Bishops* and *Deacons*; that all human traditions are useless; that mystical and significant ceremonies, in the worship of God, are unlawful; and that, to restrain men to a prescribed *form* of prayer, is contrary to the *liberty* granted them by God*. This *Wickliffe* was a wonderful man, for the times in which he lived. He was the first, that translated the new testament into *English*; he wrote near 200 volumes; and such was the kind providence of God, that, though his doctrines were condemned at *Rome*, and afterwards condemned, in a *convocation* at *London*, himself deprived of his *professorship*, his writings ordered to be burnt, and himself

* Vid. *Neal's Hist. of the Puritans*. And if the reader would see the principles of *Wickliffe*, he will find them; in the learned Mr. *Pierre's* vindication of the dissenters; p. 45; 46.

himself imprisoned, yet, he followed his ministry, and in an advanced age, quietly departed this life, 1384. His bones, with his works, were, however, ordered to be burnt, by the council of *Constance*, forty one years after his death : But his doctrines remained, the number of his disciples increased, which gave occasion to severe laws against heretics, his followers were vexed with a most greivous and cruel persecution, and some hundreds of them were put to death, before the grand *reformation*.

KING Henry VIII, from the opposition he met with, in accomplishing the divorce of Queen *Katherine*, began and carried into execution a national separation from the church of *Rome*.—He renounced the jurisdiction of the pope ; assumed the ecclesiastical supremacy to himself, declared himself *sole* and *supream* head of the church of *England*, next and immediately under Christ ; and, consequently, he assumed to himself all jurisdiction over the Clergy, with the whole power of reforming errors and heresies, in doctrine and worship ; he suppressed the monasteries and religious houses, took away all authority of the pope, over the church of *England*, and established that separation from *Rome*, which continues to this day.

HENRY, in his younger life, was an obedient son of the papacy, and, for writing against *Luther*, received, from his *holiness*, the title of *defender of the faith*. And still he was a papist, in the main, and persecuted papists and protestants, who did not fully comply with his own injunctions. Under him suffered holy *Lambert*, who was executed in *Smithfield*, in a barbarous manner ; crying out, in the flames, *none but Christ, none but Christ*. Nevertheless there were, in this reign, divers pious and learned

learned men, who longed for a *real* reformation ; among whom was archbishop *Cranmer*, who took this opportunity to attempt a reformation in doctrine and worship. Books were printed, the bible again translated, and set up to be read in churches. But, by means of the rigid temper of the King, who would have nothing taught or maintained contrary to his own instructions, the *reformation* made but little progress in this reign. The most that the church *legally* obtained was, that the King was acknowledged head of the church, instead of the pope, and the sole right of reformation was vested in the crown ; royal proclamations had the force of laws, and the subject was obliged, under severe penalties, to believe, profess and obey according thereunto—as if the King had a right to judge for the whole nation, and impose upon them what religion he pleases, without their consent !

DURING the reign of *Edward VI*, who was a remarkably pious and learned prince, but dyed in the 16th year of his age, the *reformation* went on gloriously, under the direction of *Cranmer*, and other great and excellent reformers. The popish laws against heretics were repealed, by act of Parliament, and new ones enacted in favour of the *reformation*. Images were taken out of the churches, and the rites and ceremonies of popery abolished—the sacrament was ordered in both kinds—private masses were put down—out of the roman *Missals* of *Sarum*, *York*, *Hereford*, *Bangor* and *Lincoln*, was composed the morning and evening service, almost in the same form it stands at present, only there was no confession or absolution ; * from

C

the

* Vid. *Neal's Hist. of the Puritans*, Vol. 1, 4to, p. 36.

Who adds “ it would have obviated many objections, if
“ the

the same materials they composed the *Litany*, differing, in but one article, from that, which is now used—the mass-books were called in—the altars changed into communion tables—the doctrinal articles of the church of England were formed, being 42 in number, but since reduced to 39.—The common prayer-book was, a second time, corrected, and established by act of Parliament. This was a great and glorious work ! Although, it must be confessed, they were mistaken in using severities ; and even *Cranmer* exposed himself to censure, by promoting or consenting to some executions. But yet, they were great and good men ; valiant in the cause of truth, and made as quick advances, in restoring religion to its primitive simplicity, as the circumstances of the times would admit.—These reformers, 'tis evident, would have gone farther, and did not design this as the last standard of reformation ; they left it under their hands, “ that they had gone as far as they could, in re-
 “ forming the church, considering the times they
 “ lived in, and hoped that they that came after
 “ them would, as they might, do more.” * And the King himself lamented, that “ he could not restore the primitive discipline, according to his heart’s desire.” †

KING *Edward* was succeeded by Queen *Mary*, a biggoted papist ; the work of reformation stopped, in an instant, a dark cloud hung over the glorious

“ the committee had thrown aside the *mass book* entire-
 “ ly, and composed an uniform service, in the language
 “ of scripture, — but this they were not aware of, or
 “ the times would not bear it.”

* Vid. *Pierce's* vindication, p. 11. † Vid. p. 12.

rious reformers, who had done so much in the preceeding reign. The foreign protestants, who had taken shelter in *England*, from the storms of persecution abroad, were driven out of the kingdom. Popery was again established, by act of Parliament. The popish ceremonies were established; the kingdom was reconciled to the see of *Rome*; several thousand protestant ministers were turned out of their livings. The penal laws against heretics were revived; multitudes fled from persecution into foreign countrys. The bishops, *Cranmer, Ridley, &c.* with *Rogers, Bradford*, and many others, who had been such glorious reformers, were cruelly burnt for heresy, and sealed their testimony to the *reformation*, with their blood. Two hundred and seventy seven persons * suffered death for religion; innumerable others were imprisoned, and preparing for execution, when God mercifully appeared for *them*, and the *nation*, delivering *them* from death, and the *nation* from popery and slavery, by the death of their merciless persecutor.—*The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation, and to reserve the unjust to the day of judgment to be punished.*

THE accession of Queen *Elizabeth* to the throne, gave new life to the *reformation*. Those, that had fled into other countrys, returned; and those, that had laid concealed, quickly appeared. She was, indeed, a favourer of the *reformation*, but thought it had been carried too far; she was fond of many of the old rites and ceremonies, in which she had been educated: She was naturally proud, affected much state, and, through all her life, set upon a

C 2

uniformity

* Of whom 5 were bishops, 21 ministers, 8 gentlemen, 84 tradesmen, 100 husbandmen, 55 women, and 4 children.

uniformity in the worship of God. The supreme ecclesiastical power was vested in the Queen, by act of Parliament, which she did not fail to exercise, to vex and distress those, who could not, in conscience, conform to all the modes and habits of the established church. In the beginning of her reign, she established the court of *high commission*, which sported itself, in tyranny and oppression, until it became odious to the nation; at *this* time also passed that *act for the uniformity of common prayer, and service, in the church, and administration of the sacraments*, which was the fatal rock, on which, the peace of the church was dashed in pieces.

THERE were some, even *before*, as well as at *that* day, who conscientiously scrupled the *romish habits*, and multitudes, especially of those who had been exiles in Queen *Mary's* persecution, who disliked the *common prayer*, and could not conform to the terms imposed on them, by royal or episcopal authority.

THE Queen had no tenderness for scrupulous consciences, but proceeded, with vigour, to enforce a *uniformity* in the worship of God. Subscriptions were required, promising conformity to the habits, and likewise to the rites of the common prayer, &c. under pain of being deprived, in three months: The consequence was, many were deprived, and, with their wives and children, laboured under great poverty; some were put in prison, and the poor men, who were just returned from exile, found themselves involved in a second persecution. A proud prelate (A. B. Parker) who was the instrument of their sufferings, said, "he did not doubt, "when the ministers had felt the smart of poverty "and want, they would comply, for *the wood is yet "but green.*"—But he found himself mistaken.

DURING

DURING almost the whole reign of Queen *Elizabeth*, who died in 1602, the prosecution of the *non-conformists* was carried on, with vigour. Subscriptions were required, not only to the doctrines and worship established by law, but to rules imposed, by *meer ecclesiastical authority* : Oaths were administered *ex officio* ; the edge of the laws made against the papists, was turned against the conscientious *Puritans*. Multitudes of pious, godly ministers were informed against, pursued, arraigned, suspended from their ministerial functions, turned out of their livings : and all, not for damnable errors in doctrine ; not for immorality of life, but for a conscientious scrupling to conform to impositions, of human authority. “ A fourth part of all the preachers, in *England*, were under suspension, at a time, when, “ not one beneficed clergyman in six was capable of “ composing a sermon.” * It would tire your patience, and too deeply affect your hearts to relate the many instances of cruel sufferings, in those days, under the lash of *episcopal* power.

Nor that there were wanting thousands, who esteemed and pitied them.—We are particularly told, that, when the ministers were silenced, their people earnestly begged for their restoration ; many of the *nobility* and *gentry* received them into their families, as chaplains, and tutors to their children, not merely out of compassion, but from a sense of their real worth. “ For they were men of undissembled piety “ and devotion, mighty in the scriptures, zealous for “ the protestant religion, of exemplary lives, and far “ removed from the liberties and fashionable vices of “ the times, and indefatigably industrious in instruct- “ ing those committed to their care. *Here* they “ were covered from their oppressors, they preached “ in

• Vid. Neal's preface to his history, pag. 8.

“ in the family, and catechized the children, which, without all question, had a considerable influence on the next generation.” Divers of the nobles and gentry, petitioned on behalf of the unhappy sufferers : But crys and intreaties were to no purpose, these persecuting measures were pursued, by two hard-hearted prelates, * under the encouragement of a proud and unreasonable sovereign, thro’ the greatest part of this reign.

WHEN King *James I.* ascended the throne, it was expected that he would put an end to these persecuting measures. His education in the church of *Scotland*, the high regard he had expressed for her worship and discipline, his subscribing the *solemn league and covenant*, and the intercession which he made in the former reign for the relief of the sufferers, raised the hopes of the *nonconformists*, that they should see better times. But they soon found themselves mistaken. It was not long before he published a proclamation to enforce uniformity ; countenanced and encouraged the persecution of the *puritans* ; and in the *second year*, after his coming into *England*, *three hundred* ministers were, either silenced, or deprived of their benefices ; excommunicated, cast into prison, or forced to leave their country and go into banishment. “ A more grievous persecution of the orthodox faith” (says *Mr. Calderwood*) “ is not to be met with in history, in any prince’s reign.”

THE violent proceedings of the bishops, in the latter end of the last reign, drove great numbers of *nonconformists* into *Holland*, where, by leave of the *states*, they erected churches, after their own mode ; some of these were the people, who transplanted themselves into *this country*. — In 1604 the high abuse of church

* *A. B. Parker and Whitgift.*

church power obliged many other learned ministers, and their followers, to leave the kingdom, and settle in *Holland*, where english churches were erected, after the *presbyterian* mode. But the greatest number of those who left their country were the people called *Brownists*, who were rigid seperatists from the church. Mr. *Robinson*, a pastor of one of these churches at *Leyden*, first struck out the *congregational* form of church government, and part of his church in 1620, transported themselves and their form of government to *this* land.

It was a most affectionate parting these adventurers, about 120 in number, took of their minister and the remainder of their friends, in *Holland*, when they embarked for *this* new world. With tender affection, their worthy pastor on his knees, with fervent prayer, committed them to the blessing and protection of heaven. They arrived at *Plymouth* in the beginning of winter—sad was their condition, when they arrived in this howling wilderness. Winter immediately came upon them ; they had no accommodation for their entertainment, and inexpressible were the hardships they underwent. A sad mortality raged among them, occasioned by the fatigues of a long voyage, the severity of winter, and the want of necessaries. The country was covered with woods, their little cottages were not sufficient to keep them warm ; they had neither skilful physician, nor indeed wholesome food ; so that, within two or three months, half their company found their graves.—However, the survivors, as the spring came on, being encouraged by the recovery of their health, and by supplies sent from their friends at home, prosecuted their arduous undertaking, “ and laid the foundation of one of the noblest settlements in *America*, “ which,

“ which, from that time, has proved an Asylum for
 “ the protestant *nonconformists*, under all their op-
 “ pressions.” *

It is needless to hint to you the character of King Charles I, whose arbitrary measures bro't his head to the block. His prime minister was *William Laud*, first bishop of *London*, and afterwards A. B. of *Canterbury*. He was the adviser of most arbitrary measures, and a furious and cruel persecutor of the *Puritans*. Soon after his advancement, he proceeded against the *nonconformists* with great severity. One or other of the *puritan* ministers was, every week, suspended or deprived, and their families driven to distress : there was no liberty of conscience, nor any prospect of relief ; the clouds gathered thicker over their heads, and threatened a dreadful storm. This put our fathers on projecting a settlement in this Province, where they might be delivered from the hand of oppression, and enjoy the liberty of their consciences. They arrived first at *Salem* in 1629, and afterwards, (viz. in 1630.) in much greater numbers in this neighbourhood, and laid the foundation of these flourishing churches ; in which liberty of conscience hath, blessed be God, been enjoyed these 137 years.

WHEN our fathers left their native country, they did not mean to excommunicate the *established* church. They called its members their *reverend fathers and brethren*, and fervently asked their prayers for themselves ; promising to remember them “ when” (say they) “ we shall be in our poor cottages in the wilderness, overshadowed with the spirit of supplication,”

* A particular account of the first adventurers to *Plymouth*, with the characters of several of their leading men, the reader will find in Lieut. Gov. *Hutchinson's* appendix to his history of the *Massachusetts-Bay*.

“ tion, through the manifold necessities, and tribulations
 “ which may not altogether unexpectedly, nor we hope
 “ unprofitably, befall us.” But they found their
 consciences oppressed, and the worship of God bur-
 dened with unscriptural ceremonies. For want of
 conformity to human impositions, they found them-
 selves so hunted and perplexed that they had no rest.
 Therefore they quietly withdrew themselves into this
 land, where was granted them *free liberty of conscience*
to worship God in their own way ; where they could
 set up the worship of God, on what, they believed,
 the scripture plan, and enjoyed his ordinances, free
 from useless ceremonies and the impositions of men.

OUR fathers were truly a distressed people, and
 fled hither from the hand of persecution. — It is no
 small thing to forsake our native country, our dear
 friends, our pleasant houses and delightful accommoda-
 tions—to adventure over a wide ocean,— to settle in
 a wild, howling, uncultivated wilderness,— a country
 destitute of every desirable accommodation, and filled
 with numerous nations of barbarous savages. And
 yet, all these our fathers did. Though they were per-
 sons of good rank and circumstances in life, yet they
 bid a final *adieu* to all the delights of their native
 country ; exposed themselves, with their wives and
 children to the dangers of a long voyage ; and to all
 the distresses which they could not expect to avoid
 when cast on a desolate shore, destitute of any kind of
 covering from the rage of the elements, and of most
 sorts of the food on which they fed, in the *garden* of
 the world ; and *all* that they might serve God in his
 ordinances, agreeable to conscience, free from unscrip-
 tural impositions.

OUR fathers were not the scum of the nation, a
 set of indigent wretches, that could not subsist in their
 own country, but many of them persons of figure and
 fortune.

fortune. They left a fair inheritance, or spent plentiful estates to plant themselves in a desolate country. Neither were they an ignorant rabble, but many of them *gentlemen*, of liberal education; men of good abilities, well acquainted with the scriptures, and the discipline of God's house. Among them were divers excellent ministers, educated in the *universities*, and greatly esteemed for their labours in the best parts of *England*. * Their undertaking was bold and hazardous, and they passed through innumerable fatigues in this glorious work. But the good hand of their God was upon them; he wonderfully succeeded their undertaking; and we bless God, at this day, who made tyranny and oppression the cause of liberty and religion; *the Lord thy God turned the curse into a blessing unto thee, because the Lord thy God loved thee.*

THE *Laudean* persecution of the *nonconformists* proceeded in *England*, after the first settlements here. They were harrised in the *star chamber*, the *high commission courts*, and at the *council table*. This engaged many to follow their brethren hither, and several of the

* See the *characters and circumstances* of the principal adventurers, in the Lieut. Governour's Hist. of *Massachusetts-Bay*, vol. 1. p. 14. margin. As also the lives of the ministers, who came over in the early days of the country, in Dr. *Mather's Magnalia*. Of the latter Mr. *Neal* says, they were "the chief leaders of the people into these parts"—"I have before me a list of 77 divines, who became pastors of sundry little churches and congregations in that country, before the year 1640, all of whom were in orders in the church of *England*—and I must say, though they were not all of the first rank; for deep and extensive learning, yet they had a better share of it than most of the neighbouring clergy; and, which is of more consequence, they were men of strict sobriety and virtue; plain, serious, affectionate preachers—and took a great deal of pains to promote christian knowledge, and a reformation of manners, in their several parishes." Hist. of *Puritans* vol. 1. p. 546:

the great champions of the british liberties, such as Pym, Hampden, Sir Arthur Haslerigg, Oliver Cromwel, Dr. Owen, were on the point of transplanting themselves into *this* wilderness, but were detained, in providence, for a greater work ;* and, in the succeeding twelve years of *Laud's* administration, 4000 planters came over to people these *American* deserts.—These violent proceedings did but open the eyes of the people, increase the number of the *puritans*, create an aversion to *prelatical* government, arouse the patrons of *liberty* : And at length issued in the violent death of *Laud*, and his royal master the *King*, the abolishing of episcopacy, and the establishment of another form of church government, under the protection of *Oliver Cromwel*.

UPON the restoration of *Charles II*, episcopacy was restored also.—The terms of conformity were carried higher than before the civil war, †—conformity was required under the penalty of being deprived of their livings. On the black *Bartholomew-day* 1662, about 2000 were obliged in conscience to relinquish their livings and ministry in the church ; “ an example “ hardly to be paralleled in the christian world. It “ raised a grievous cry over the nation ; for here were “ many men much valued (says bishop *Burnett*) and “ distinguished by their abilities and zeal, now cast out “ ignominiously, reduced to great poverty, and provoked by most spiteful language.” Mr. *Lork* calls them “ worthy, learned, pious, orthodox divines. § A nobler set of ministers there never were in any nation. Sad were the calamities of far the greater part of these unhappy sufferers, who, with their families, might have perished, had it not been for the charities of the people, to multitudes of whom they were ex-

D 2

ceeding

* Vid. *Neal's Hist. of the Puritans* vol. 1. p. 622, and vol. 2. p. 739. † Vid. *Neal*, vol. 1. p. 546.

‡ *Neal*, vol. 2. p. 628. § *Neal*, vol. 2. p. 632.

ceeding dear. "Many hundreds of them" (says Mr. *Baxter*) "with their wives and children, had neither house nor bread; the people they left were not able to relieve them, nor durst they if they had been able, because it would have been called a maintenance of schism or faction." Ministers, of gravity and years were rallied in the *pulpits*, exposed in the *play house*, and insulted by ignorant *mob*.—And, as if all these sufferings were not enough, a severe act was made, by which all *nonconformist* ministers, who would not by a certain day swear, "not at any time to endeavour any alteration of government, either in church or state, should not, unless in passing the road, come or be within *five* miles of any city, town corporate, or borough, that sends burgesses to *Parliament*; or within *five* miles of any parish, town, or place, wherein they have, since the act of oblivion, been parson, vicar or lecturer, &c. or where they have preached in any conventicle, on any pretence whatever," under severe penalties. Thus were they cut off from the assistance of their friends, and exposed to the lash of a barbarous law, which was, in abundance of instances, *inhumanly* executed.

Your patience will not hold out, while I trace the persecution of the *nonconformists* through the remaining part of *Charles's* reign. In consequence of cruel acts great numbers of pious ministers and people were laid in prisons, among thieves and common malefactors, where they suffered the greatest hardships and indignities; "an estimate was published of near *eight* thousand protestant *dissenters*, who had perished in prison, in the reign only of *Charles II.* By severe penalties inflicted on them, for assembling to worship God, they suffered in their trade and estates, in the compass of a few years, at least, *two millions*; and a list of *sixty* thousand persons, was taken, who had suffered, on a religious account, between the
"restoration"

“*restoration and the revolution ;*” * i. e. in 28 years. It was by the glorious *revolution* in 1688, an æra ever to be mentioned with joy, when *William and Mary*, of glorious memory, ascended the throne, that a period was put to the exorbitant exercise of *episcopal* power.

KING *William* earnestly desired the *union* of all his protestant subjects ; he was for taking of the *test*, and abrogating the penal laws, as far as related to protestant dissenters ; but could not accomplish his desire. However, the act for *toleration of protestant dissenters*, was passed, in the beginning of his reign ; and it was impossible to hurt the *dissenters*, while he lived. The designs formed against their liberties in the latter end of Queen *Anne*’s reign, † were happily frustrated, by the accession of *George I* ; and, since the dominion of the royal house of *Hanover*, the toleration hath been religiously maintained.

It is frequently said the times are grown better, the principles of religious liberty, and the rights of private judgment are better understood, and a full toleration is, generally, agreed to be best ; to be sure the wanton exercise of *prelatical* power hath, for some years been restrained.—Blessed be God that, on this account, we live

* Vid. *Discenting gentleman’s answer to Mr. White*, p. 77. and *Neal*, vol. 2. p. 759.

† I mean the act against *occasional conformity*, which was formed with design to cramp the *toleration*, and keep under the *dissenters* : And the act to prevent the growth of *schism*, in which the education of children is taken out of the hands of *nonconformists*, and entrusted only with such as are *full and intire conformists* ; and if any schoolmaster or tutor should be willingly present at any *conventicle of dissenters for religious worship*, he was to suffer three months imprisonment, and be disqualified from teaching a school for the future. This last act was to take place, on the very day that the *Queen* died ; but King *George*, being sensible these hardships were bro’t on the *dissenters*, for their steady adherence to the *protestant succession*, in the house of *Hanover*, procured the repeal, of these acts, in the fifth year of his reign.

live in better times.—Blessed be God for the writing of *Lock*, and other learned men, who have so effectually exposed the iniquity and absurdity of persecution for religious opinions. But can it yet be said that the *dissenters* at home are not subjected to temporal inconveniencies, on account of their religious opinions? To say nothing of their being held to support the established worship; as an additional charge to the maintenance of the ministry and worship of God, agreeable to their consciences, which, perhaps, the members of the church of England would think an unreasonable imposition here.* To say nothing of this, yet the *test act*,† which requires a *receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the church of England*, as the condition of serving their *King and Country*, in places of honour and profit, cannot be looked upon, by judicious men, otherwise than as

* This was accounted a grievance *among us*, and, some years ago, an act of the government was made, with universal approbation, releasing the members of the church of *England*, who stately attend the worship of God in that way, from any obligation to support the public worship as *legally established* here. The like liberty was also granted to people of other denominations. Such is the regard we generally have to *liberty of conscience*!

† This *act* was made in 25th of *Charles II*, and obliges, under very severe penalties, “all persons bearing any office or place of trust or profit—to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the church of *England*, in some parish church, on a Lord's day, immediately after divine service and sermon, and to deliver a certificate of having so received it, under the hands of the respective ministers and church Wardens, proved by two credible witnesses, upon oath, to be recorded in the court.” This act is complained of as a grievance by the most judicious part of the nation. And though it is censured with, in many instances, yet why is it kept in being, unless that it may prove an instrument of oppression, when the times will permit?

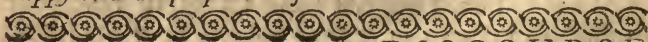
as a *degree* of legal imposition ; it is, at least, depriving a great number of *legal* subjects, of the common privileges of *british* subjects, for acting up to their own consciences. And, for what, do they deserve this hardship ?—Have they not ever been steady to the government, as established at the *revolution* ? Have they not ability and will to serve the publick ? Have they not a natural claim to the privileges of *Englishmen* ? When, therefore, they are, by law, excluded from all places of honour and trust, unless, upon such conditions as they cannot in conscience comply with, what is this, but a stripping them of the privileges of society, and keeping them, to a certain degree, in a state of oppression and persecution ?

It is not without pain at heart, that I review the sufferings of the conscientious *nonconformists* through a long course of years. Some of the best men—many of the best christians—hundreds of the best ministers, that ever were in the nation, have felt the rigors of persecution for conscience sake. They endured silencing, fines, imprisonments, and lingering deaths. Who can read, without a bleeding heart, the unrelenting cruelties of *Parker, Whitgift, Bancroft* and *Laud*, under whom, *hundreds* of godly ministers, were either loaded with fines or shut up in filthy jails, or obliged to fly their countries. What mistaken zeal was it that ejected 2000 ministers in *one* day, excellent pious divines, whose writings will be highly esteemed, as long as there is real piety in the nation ?—Abandoned to poverty and death ; inhumanly banished from the places of their ministry, least those, who had tasted the sweet of their labours, should afford them any relief ?—May God forgive this mistaken zeal, and let not the sin be found charged upon them in the *great day*.

My Brethren, I say not these things to raise your unchristian resentment, but to enlarge your gratitude;
that

that you live in a better age, and in a land of *liberty*. Thousands in former days, doubtless, abhorred those persecuting measures, and thousands of their successors, in the church, abhor them in the present day. Much of the blame was owing to the *times*, as well as the men. *Liberty* of conscience, the rights of private judgment, and the absurdity of advancing the kingdom of Christ, by penal laws, were not so well understood, among any denominations of christians, as they have been *since*. It seems to have been, through the *special* interposition of heaven, that our fathers obtained, from the Crown, a grant of *this* country, with such full *liberty* of conscience ; and what a kind providence is it, which, through all the changes and revolutions of our mother country, in the 130 years past, hath suffered no durable change in our religious *liberties*. *Here* we dwell in a land of light, a region of *liberty* : We worship God according to the order of his sanctuary ; a happiness, that thousands of the best men have not enjoyed.

THESE things, to men wholly indifferent to religion, and strangers to serious impressions, may seem to be trifles. One way of worship is to them as good as another, *any* or *none* may be, to them, alike ; but to men who are seriously concerned to secure the divine acceptance, and enjoy the word and ordinances in gospel simplicity, religious *liberty* is one of the most precious jewels on earth. The rights of conscience are sacred ; and what is there worth enjoying here, if we are deprived of the free enjoyment of the word, ordinances, and worship of God, in conformity to our own consciences ? Let it become an article in your *daily* thanksgivings ; let *this* be a principal subject of our unfeigned praise on this *anniversary* and joyful day. *Happy is the people that is in such a case, yea happy is that people whose GOD is the LORD.*



DISCOURSE



Religious Liberty an invaluable Blessing.



DISCOURSE II.

III. **I** PROCEED, as was proposed, to consider the nature of that *liberty* wherewith, we apprehend, Christ hath made us free; the religious *liberty* which we, through the wonderful providence of God, do enjoy, in this land. And

In general : It is the *liberty* of worshipping God, in his ordinances, in gospel simplicity, without the *unscriptural* impositions of men. This is the *liberty* for which our fathers came into this land, and this is the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free.

It may not be amiss, now we are upon this subject, nor unprofitable, especially to our youth, to shew *particularly* what were the *unscriptural* impositions, under which our fathers groaned; what were the things, with which they could not comply; and, for the non-compliance with which, they drew on themselves those difficulties, which occasioned their remove to this land. And here;

THOUGH I will not pretend to relate every thing that was matter of grievance, yet I will give you the *principal* exceptions they made to the established government, worship and discipline ; and that, very much, in the manner, in which, I find them summed up, by an *able* and *faithful* historian. *

THEY complained of the *bishops* affecting to be thought an order superior to *presbyters* ; and claiming the *sole* right of ordination, and the *sole* exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, as having no foundation in scripture, nor primitive antiquity ; and being contrary to the judgment and example of all the protestant churches abroad.

THEY also disliked the *temporal dignities* annexed to their office, and their engaging in *secular* employments, as tending to exalt them above their brethren, as not agreeable to their character, as ministers of Christ; not consistent with the due discharge of the sacred ministry.

THEY excepted to the titles and offices of *Archdeacons*, *Deans*, *Chapters*, and other *officials*, belonging to *cathedrals*, as having no foundation in scripture, or primitive antiquity.

THEY complained of the cruel unreasonable exercise of church-power ; and that the highest censures in the church were in the hands of *laymen*, and not in the spiritual officers of the church.

THEY also lamented the want of a godly discipline, and were grieved at the *promiscuous* access of all sorts of persons to the Lord's supper, when the church, in her own articles, is described to be " a congregation of faithful persons."

ALTHOUGH

Neal's Hist. of the Puritans vol. I. p. 157.

ALTHOUGH they did not dispute the lawfulness of set forms of prayer, yet they desired a *liberty* for prayers of their *own composure*, in the public worship ; and they disliked some things in the public liturgy. As, the frequent *repetition* of the Lord's prayer ; the interruption of the prayers, by the *responses* of the people, which is practised in no other protestant church in the world. They also excepted to some passages in the offices of *burial* and *marriage* ; as *thee with my body I thee worship*, in the former ; and *thee, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to everlasting life*, to be pronounced over the worst of men, except in a few cases.

THEY likewise disliked the reading the *apocryphal books*, in the church, while some parts of *canonical* scripture were omitted ; they also thought no man ought to be ordained a minister in the church, who was incapable of preaching and expounding the scripture. This was a frequent grievance in *those* days. One of their common complaints was, that there were so many *unpreaching* ministers, *pluralists* and *non-residents* ; and that men were presented to livings in the church, by royal authority, bishops, and lay patrons, when they ought to arise [from the *election* of the people.

THEY also disapproved of the observation of fundty of the *festivals* and *holidays* of the church, as having no foundation in scripture, or primitive antiquity.

THEY disallowed of the *cathedral* mode of worship, of *singing* their prayers, and of the *Antiphons*, or chanting the psalms by turns ; nor did they approve of *instrumental* music in the church, which was not in ule in the church for above 1200 years.

after Christ, but was, consequently, brought in, in the depths of popery *

THEY also scrupled conformity to certain *rites* and *cereemonies* which were enjoined by the *rubrick*, or the royal authority : And would not be despens'd with, in compliance with tender consciences. As,

THE *sign of the cross in baptism*, which is no part of the institution in scripture, and of whole use, in baptism, there is no express mention made, until the 5th century ; and had been abused to superstition by the church of *Rome*. They also disallowed of the baptism by *midwives* ; and of the *manner* of churching women, which they thought look'd too much like *jewish* purification.

THEY also excepted to the use of *god-fathers* and *god-mothers*, to the *exclusion* of parents, from being sureties for the education of their own children.—To giving *beathenish* names—and the *answer* given *in the name* of the child. They likewise disapproved the *time* and *manner* of confirmation. They excepted to the *injunction* of kneeling at the sacrament of the Lord's supper, as not agreeable to the example of Christ, and his Apostles ; which, they believed, hath no foundation in antiquity, for many hundred years after Christ, and hath been practis'd by the papists in their worship of the elements : At least, they thought, *kneeling* at the communion ought to be left *indifferent*. They disliked the bowing, at the name of Jesus, as grounded upon a false interpretation of scripture, and favouring of superstition. As also, the giving the *ring* in marriage, derived from the papists, who make marriage a sacrament,

* See Dr. *Edwards's*, a divine of the church of *England*, *Theologia reformata*, vol. 1. p. 658. — *Pierce's* vindication, p. 391, &c. — *Homily* 2. of the place and time of prayer.

crament, and the ring a sacred *sign* or *symbol* : As also the *forbidding* of marriage at *certain* seasons.

THEY also disliked the wearing the *surplice*, and other ceremonies in divine service, of which the church says, in the preface to her *liturgy*, that, *tho' they were devised by men, yet they are reserved for decency, order and edification* ; but our fathers saw no decency in these vestments, and, as they had been abused to popery, they thought them absolutely unlawful, and supposed the use of them a giving encouragement to the church of *Rome*, and that there were no foundation for them, in scripture or primitive antiquity. *

THESE were the things imposed on our fathers, by human authority, contrary to the judgment of their own consciences : These grievances they laboured for the redress of, many years ; but, all that time, could obtain no relief. They saw the *reformation* stand still, and could obtain no nearer approach to the simplicity of gospel worship and discipline—at length, as it were, guided by a divine direction, they resolved on transporting themselves to

* And if we add but one article more, though indeed that is a capital and fundamental one, we have the chief heads of controversy, between the church of *England* and the protestant *dissenters*, at *this* day ; and that is our exception to that part of the 20th article of the church, viz. *that the church hath power to decree rites and ceremonies ; and authority in matters of faith*. We know of no authority that Christ hath delegated to his church to add to, or diminish from the form of worship, which is already given us, in the new Testament. And if the church of *England* hath such a power, we see not why the church of *Rome* hath not the same privilege. Instead of the churches having authority in matters of faith, we believe, the natural right every man hath to judge for himself, without being determined, by the laws of the civil magistrate, or the judgment of any church under heaven.

to this new world ; where they founded churches, and set up God's worship, in a nearer conformity to the gospel of Christ, and carried the *reformation* from popery to a much greater perfection. The form of worship and discipline, on which they erected churches *here*, was the same, in substance, which we preserve unto this day. A form approaching, as we believe, very near to the plan of the new testament, which we are not ashamed of ; but glory in, and hope in God will be the order of the *New-England* churches, until the *head* of the church shall appear.

BUT some may demand, *wherein* consisteth the real valuable *liberty*, and perfection of our churches ; wherein consists our *nearer* approach to gospel order, and the *liberty* with which Christ hath, in his providence, made us free ?

I ANSWER : In the first place we disclaim all *human* authority, in matters of faith and worship : We regard neither pope nor prince as *head* of the church ; nor acknowledge that any *parliaments* have power to enact articles of doctrine, or forms of discipline, or modes of worship, or terms of church communion. We utterly deny the power of any *national* church, or even of the church *universal*, to decree rites and ceremonies, in the worship of God, or to have authority in matters of faith. Or to make new terms of ministerial or lay communion, which are not already made, in the new testament. * We utterly disclaim,

* See the iniquity of requiring subscriptions to articles, of human composition, fully exposed in a book intituled *The confessional*. Said to be written by a dignified clergyman, of the church of *England*. It is an *absurd*, I had almost said, an *impious* representation, that Christ and his apostles settled no determinate form of worship and discipline

disclaim, and enjoy a *liberty* from all *civil* and *ecclesiastical* authority in matters of faith and worship. Christ, and Christ alone, we acknowledge and submit to, as *sole* head, king, and lawgiver, in his church; as *alone* having authority, by himself, and by his inspired Apostles, to give us articles of faith, and to institute rites and forms of worship and discipline, in the church which is the *house of the living God*. We *here* assert, maintain, and enjoy the *liberty* of judging and acting for ourselves, in matters of religion; God alone being the *Lord of conscience*, and his people accountable to him *alone* as their *only* sovereign. These churches are founded on the natural right of private judgment; they are voluntary societies of the faithful, for the worship of God, in the manner, that they find prescribed in God's word; without the least impositions of human authority, temporal or spiritual. *Liberty* is the *fundamental* principle of our establishment; we are accountable to none but Christ. This *liberty*, blessed be God, we have fully enjoyed, from the beginning. It is a darling privilege, which we cannot be too unwilling to give up. While we retain this *liberty*, we hold the door fast shut against spiritual tyranny and impositions on conscience. Indeed our churches, on important occasions, ask advice and direction of their brethren, but even here all authority & coercive power is wisely guarded against—to their own master every church; and every christian, standeth or falleth. Christ *alone* is head of the church; to his injunctions we pay an implicit obedience, but from every other spiritual jurisdiction; whether in popes,
in

discipline in the church, but left these things to the civil magistrate; as if Christ left his church a weak and helpless infant, to be nursed, and formed by *human* authority; which seems to be the sense of a *late essay on establishments*, wrote in answer to the *Confessional*:

in kings, in parliaments, synods or councils, we claim and actually enjoy a total exemption : Oh blessed privilege !

WE enjoy a *liberty* from the power of *unscriptural* officers and ministers, in the church of God ; we have but *two* orders of the ministry, *elders* or *pastors*, or *presbyters* or *bishops*, or *overseers*, (for, by all these names, are the ordinary ministers of Christ called, in the new testament, from the several views of the nature of their office) and *deacons*. As for *arch* and *diocesan* bishops, *arch-deacons*, *deans*, *chancellors* and other officers ; we, after the example of the protestant churches abroad, reckon them quite unscriptural, and useless, and a vast and needless charge to the people of God ; a *yoke of bondage*, that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear ; we see no ecclesiastical tribunals erected among us : This we take to be an invaluable *liberty* ; may God enable us to stand fast in this *liberty*, that this *yoke of bondage* may never be *imposed* upon us !

ANOTHER of our ecclesiastical privileges, is the liberty of *choosing our own ministers*. This is a right founded in reason, in scripture, and the undoubted practice of the church, in the primitive ages. When an apostle was to be chosen, the whole number of disciples were applied to, who appointed *two* as candidates for the office. The church was likewise directed to look out among them seven men for deacons. The primitive bishops, or pastors, were undoubtedly *elected* by the suffrages of the churches, to which they ministered. This *liberty* is yet preserved in these churches, and is one of the best means of preserving a pious and painful, laborious and heavenly ministry ; and of making a religious people. Our ministers are never imposed upon us by royal authority, by bishops or lay patrons. We call to
the

the ministry-men that, we know, are approved of God; furnished with gifts and graces for this work. Nor can it be supposed that the people, who have so much regard for christianity as to desire a ministry *at all*, will become ever so corrupt, as to prefer vicious and immoral men to take the care of their souls. This is a liberty of inestimable worth. Again,

THE ordination of our ministers by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, or ordinary pastors of the church, is another part of the *liberty* wherewith Christ hath made us free. And if any should, on this account, reproach us, with the want of a *regular* and *valid* administration of the word and ordinances, they would do well to consider, that the ministers of *almost* all the foreign protestant churches receive no other than *presbyterian* ordination. The illustrious protestant churches of *Scotland, France, Holland, Switzerland, Germany, Poland, Hungary and Denmark*, have had only this ordination. They who object a want of valid administrations *to us*, on that account, would, therefore, do well to remember, that thereby, they do *virtually* excommunicate, almost all the foreign churches in the world, except the church of *Rome, that mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.* * Besides,

F

WHEN

- * “ The *Danish* church is at this time governed by *bishops*,
 “ but they look on episcopacy as only an *human* institution;
 “ and the first protestant prelates of that kingdom
 “ were ordained by *Bugenhagius*, a meer presbyter—” see
 the *dissenting gentleman's* answer, p. 84.

It is incontestably evident, that the first reformers in *England* held the identity of scripture presbyters and bishops; and looked on episcopacy in *England* only, as a meer civil appointment.— Dr. *Bancroft*, in a sermon in 1588, *first* maintained, that the bishops of *England* were a distinct order from *priests*, and had superiority over them *jure divino*,
 and

WHEN our ministers are ordained, and take upon them the oversight of the flock of Christ, they do not spend their time at a distance ; in secular employments, in the courts of princes, in parliaments; or in foreign embassys ; but they constantly reside among the flock ; and, as far as their circumstances permit, they give themselves to reading, to meditation and prayer ; preach the word, visit the sick, comfort the sorrowful, and diligently employ themselves in those holy ministrations, which may edify and comfort the people of their charge. We have no example of a non-resident minister, or of several ecclesiastical livings given to one man, to enrich him, while he is living at ease ! A practice loudly complained of by the best men, and scrupled by the best ministers at home, and doubtless an awful hindrance to the salvation of souls.

THE *discipline* and *censures* of our church are not in the hands of *bishops*, or *lay chancellors*, or other officers; and the admonitions and censures of the church administered by them ; but every church, according and directly from God. “ This was new and strange doctrine to the churchmen of these times. It had been always said, that the superiority of the order of bishops, above presbyters had been a *politic human* appointment, for the more orderly government of the church, begun about the 3d or 4th century ; but *Bancroft* was one of the first, who, by the arch-bishop’s direction, advanced it into a divine right.” His sermon gave great offence ; but this doctrine was afterward promoted by *Laud*; and others, as fixing the *episcopacy* on the surest foundation. However, it is doubtful, whether there has been in England, to this day, properly any *public* express assertion of the divine right of *prelacy*, either by *parliament* or *convocation*. Can any such thing be found in the 39 articles, or in the Homilies, or in the form of ordination, or in the common prayer-book ?—Vid. *Neal*, vol. I. p. 330—and Dr. *Chauncy*’s excellent discourse on the *validity* of ordination by *presbyters*.

according to apostolic example, claims it, as a gospel appointment to maintain the holy discipline of Christ in his church. As members one of another, they maintain a holy watch over one another ; reprove, admonish or cast out from their communion, according to the power given his churches, by our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE *communion of the body and blood of Christ* is not, in our churches, enjoined by civil authority, to be given or received as a qualification for secular offices ; our ministers are not obliged to administer the elements to *any* that come. We are not obliged to see wicked and profligate men around the Lord's table, demanding the holy supper as a qualification for the profitable employments of this world. *

THE *government and censures* of our churches are not carnal, but spiritual. Our Saviour declared that his *kingdom was not of this world* : Agreeably, we disclaim all right to inflict corporal pains and punishments ; or to deprive men of their money or estates. When we excommunicate an unworthy member, and cut him off as a rotten branch, we only judge him unworthy of fellowship with us in holy ordinances. We dare not pretend to the sword, lest we perish by the sword. We know no such thing here as an ecclesiastical censure's, disabling a man from asserting his natural rights, from being a witness, bringing an action against a trespasser, or making him liable to imprisonment for non-compliance ; the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but spiritual.

WE are not confined in the worship of God to set forms of prayer, established by human authority ; but according to the example of Christ and his apostles,

F 2

and

Vid. *Dissenting gentleman's answer*, pag. 21.

and the primitive church, we offer our religious services in a more free and liberal manner ; in a language expressive of the fulness of our hearts, and suited to the various occasions and subjects of prayer ; by which we find our hearts affected, and our spiritual edification promoted.

WE do not observe days and times ; the *fasts*, *festivals* and *holidays* in honour of Christ, or the saints, which have no foundation in the new testament, nor in apostolic antiquity ; but were invented in the times of popery. The *Lord's day alone* we esteem as sacred, and, this day, after the example of the apostles, we religiously observe, in honour of our Lord Christ :—The rest, though they have a shew of humility and piety, yet, not being the institutions of Christ, but the inventions of superstitious ages, we dare not impose or observe.

A DECENT and reverend order we observe in our public worship, but the nearer we come to the simplicity of gospel times, we account it the better : We allow to no man, or body of men, nor to any authority, civil or sacred, any power to *decree* rites, or ceremonies, or forms of worship, or administration of sacraments, which are not found in the gospel. It is enough to engage us to reject them, not that they are not expressly forbidden, but that they are not enjoined. We have no power to add, or observe the inventions of men, for decency or ornament, let the pretence be ever so plausible. Hence our administration of the word sacraments and prayers is stripped of all human adornings ; of those ceremonies, &c. which we account the relics of superstition, and which were once subservient to that idolatry, which deformed the house of God.

IN fine : We claim and exercise the *liberty* of a still further reformation, and a nearer approach to gospel order, when we shall receive further light. We do not pretend that our churches are perfect, and that no change could, in any respect, be made in our discipline, for the better : In some respects, I am perswaded, we might come nearer to gospel order. But where is there perfection, in this world ? Where is the church, in this world, that is perfectly, in all points, conformed to the gospel ? Some things needed to be *set in order*, in the churches planted by the apostles, and watered under their eye. We pretend not to infallibility ; we seek further direction, and nothing hinders our improvement in the worship and discipline of God's house. We are not obliged to ask the liberty, or wait the motion of our superiors whether we shall reform what is amiss. We are not liable to an interdiction from authority, civil or ecclesiastical, when we would embrace what, appears to us, agreeable to the will of Christ, and for spiritual edification.

THESE are the sacred *liberties* in which we glory ; we are not ashamed of our profession, or afraid to defend our gospel order. In the peaceful enjoyment of these *liberties*, and the maintenance of our gospel order, for several generations past, we have experienced the spiritual presence of Christ, in his ordinances. God hath blessed his word and ordinances, to the edification and comfort of thousands, already, as we believe, gone to glory. And though no church can boast of universal piety in its members, yet, blessed be God, we have great multitudes *obedient to the faith* ; our churches have *rest and are edified* ; and, *walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost*, they are multiplied. And, while the purity of divine worship is maintained,

maintained, we doubt not of the fulfilment of the glorious promise of the head of the church : *Lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen.* Be it unto thy servants according to thy word.

THERE are not wanting, even in *our day*, those, who adventure to represent the planters of these colonies, and their posterity, in the very worst light ; as though they had lost their *native* religion, abandoned the worship and lost the knowledge of God, are become heathens themselves, are found living in many places in *dissolute wickedness*, and the most *brutal profligacy of manners*, and *laughing at the bible*.*

But

* Reference is here had to the two last sermons preached before the *incorporated society for the propagation of the gospel, in foreign parts* : In the *former* of which, preached by the *bishop of Gloucester*, is this unkind, and we think, injurious reflection upon us. “ Thus it came to pass, “ that the very people, whose fathers were driven for “ conscience sake into the waste and howling wilderness, “ is now as ready to laugh at that bible, the most precious relict of their ruined fortunes, as at their ruffs “ and collar bands.”

In the *latter* of these discourses, preached *this* very year, by the *bishop of Landaff*, are such expressions as these : “ To the adventurers, what reproach could be cast heavier than they deserved ? Who, with their native soil, “ abandoned their native manners and religion, and e’er “ long were found, in many parts, living without remembrance or knowledge of God, without divine worship, in dissolute wickedness, and the most brutal profligacy of manners. Instead of civilizing and converting “ barbarous infidels, as they undertook to do, they became “ themselves infidels and barbarians,” &c.—The *injustice* and *cruelty* of such reflections, as pointed at the *New-England* colonies, are *judiciously* exposed by Dr. *Chauncy*, in a letter to a friend, published since the preaching of these (MY) discourses.

Not

But God knows how unjustly these things are said of *us*, in *this land*. More was never done by a people, according to their ability, to uphold religion: Our churches are numerous; scarce any part of these settlements is destitute of a settled ministry; our churches are adorned with worthy and respectable pastors, who feed the people with knowledge and understanding: And as much of the form of religion is found amongst us, as in any part of Christendom. We are obliged to such as are not ashamed to vindicate our reputation, and plead for our sacred *liberties*.

We freely confess, that, however uninviting a worship, quite simple in its nature, a ministry stript, like ours, of secular honours and emoluments, may appear to others, yet to us, who embrace religion as the way to heaven, and not to the great things of this world, our gospel order and worship is exceeding dear.* We rejoice; we bless God for these *liberties*;

Nor can we comprehend what can be the design of such repeated misrepresentations of us, unless it be to shew the necessity, and to help forward the great design of extending *episcopacy* over the colonies; which business accomplished, his Lordship (of *Landaff*) declares, “then the
“business of this society will have been brought to the
“happy issue intended.”

* The general regard, that this people have to our present religious *liberty*, is justly set forth by Dr. *Chauncy*, in his aforesaid remarks on the bishop of *Landaff*'s sermon.—
“We (says he) in these parts, not only know the errand
“of our fore-fathers into this country, but have been
“well indoctrinated in the principles of christian liberty.
“We prefer our own mode of worship and discipline, to
“that of the *English* church; and we do it upon prin-
“ciple, as really believing that it comes nearer to the
“purity and simplicity of gospel direction. And, as
“these

liberties, as one of the principal glories of our land. If there be any who would gladly see our spiritual freedom taken away, and these *American* churches subjected to *episcopal* jurisdiction, we hope their numbers are comparatively small : And we trust in God, and the King, that all attempts to wrest our *liberties* from us will prove ineffectual. We have had kings, the fathers of sacred *liberty* : Such was the glorious *William III*, such was the illustrious *George I*, such was *George II*, than whom, a more amiable and happy prince never sat on a throne ; such a sovereign, is *now* on the *british* throne ; with such princes may the kingdom be blessed *so long as the moon shall endure*.——I come in the last place to shew——

IV. THAT it highly becomes us to understand and be thankful for our privileges, and to *stand fast in the LIBERTY wherewith Christ hath made us free*. God, my brethren, *hath called us to liberty*——in a wonderful manner did he bring our fathers into this land of *liberty*, and now, for more than an *hundred*

“ these are the generally prevailing sentiments in *New-England*, and their conduct has all along been generally conformable hereto, we have no fearful apprehensions of a departure herefrom ; but are rather fully persuaded, they will stand fast to their principles, and closely adhere to that mode of worship, which has hitherto been in use among them, whatever attempts may be made to turn them aside,” p. 53.

And again, p. 47. “ It may be relied on, our people would not be easy, if restrained in the exercise of that *liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free* ; yea, they would hazard every thing dear to them, their estates, their very lives, rather than suffer their necks to be put under that yoke of bondage, which was so sadly galling to their fathers, and occasioned their retreat into this distant land, that they might enjoy the freedom of men and christians.”

dred years, hath he continued us in the full and perfect enjoyment of our religious liberties—no weapon formed against us hath prospered. Let us understand our liberty, let us prize it, as one of the greatest blessings ; let us improve it to the noblest purposes, and *stand fast* therein.

FAR be it from me to encourage a spirit of bitterness, or censoriousness towards such as differ from us ; the religion of our common master forbids all anger, malice, judging, and censuring one another. We should walk in love with all that call on the Lord Jesus Christ with a pure heart. Among all denominations of christians, there are to be found serious men and women, the true children of God. We are not to wonder that persons commonly prefer the mode of worship in which they were educated. The church of *England* we honour as an illustrious branch of the *reformation* (altho' we think there is room for a still further reformation). Many of her ministers of this, as well as of former ages, we honour, as divines of great learning and piety ; and many of her members we sincerely respect, as persons of sincere piety, goodness, candour and moderation. Religion is never a proper occasion of strife and angry contention. We should do good to all ; wish grace, mercy and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to all that love the Lord Jesus in sincerity.

It seems to be an infelicity, inseparable from our present imperfect state, that *wise* and *good* men cannot always think alike. This is doubtless permitted, that there may be place for the exercise of mutual candour and forbearance : It is an unhappiness that God's children deeply lament ; hereby their longing desires are led forth after that land of light & love,

G

where

where the mists of ignorance and mistake will be done away ; where they shall be of one mind, and unitedly worship the Father, in that *house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*.—In the mean time, it is greatly to be wished, that good men of all denominations, might rightly consider the infirmity of the present life, love as brethren, living in the exercise of candour and forgiveness. *Whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing*. But this notwithstanding, we may know and esteem our privileges ; we may hold them fast as one of the richest gifts of God : Oh ! *liberty* of conscience ; the *purity* of God's worship and ordinances, is one of the greatest blessings on earth.

PARENTS, aged persons, and persons of superior understanding, should be particularly careful to recommend our sacred liberties.—It might be of great service, to tell your children of the great design of our fathers coming over the wide *atlantic*—the difficulties which brought them from their native land—the hardships they underwent in settling this howling wilderness—the patience with which they endured them, while they had rest and freedom in the worship of God—with the excellency of our worship and discipline, and its agreement with the word of God.

OUR young people also should learn to know our *liberty*. The pure worship of God, for which your fathers gave up their native land—abandoned the land of their fathers sepulchres—ventured over a tempestuous ocean—expended their substance—settled themselves amidst savages and wild beasts, and maintained dreadful wars with the natives—the pure worship and gospel *liberty*, for which our fathers did *these* things, doth, at *least*, deserve a serious regard. Should we, or any succeeding age, despise our *liberty*,

so dearly bought, what do we, but trample upon our fathers dust, and disturb the ashes of our godly ancestors, who purchased this land for us at so great expence? Surely, the religious *liberty*, and gospel order, which they purchased for us, at so dear a price, deserves our *serious* respect, and is not, *vainly* and *inconsiderately* to be given away.

THESE churches, from the beginning, have been furnished with as able and useful ministers, as any churches in the world; and such, I hope in God, they are supplied with at this day. It will therefore be one means of retaining our liberties, to encourage their hearts & strengthen their hands. While they labour in the word and doctrine, it is the wisdom of the churches to esteem them highly in love, and to make their circumstances easy unto them. Under the present *ecclesiastical* constitution, your ministers have not the prospects of rich benefices; of amassing riches; of sumptuous tables and stately equipage;—our stations are not places of ease and profit; but of labour and diligence. We seek not the great things of this world; we gladly renounce all hopes of these temporal emoluments, that our ministry may be useful to your souls, and your *liberty* may be preserved. All we expect, all we desire for ourselves, and families, is a decent support, a freedom to attend the duties of our office, and the means of making such provision for our families, as our neighbours, in common, are able to do, in secular life. It would be cruel hard to deny this, and more we do not expect nor desire. Some *other* establishment might make us rich and independent, but we desire no other, we seek no other; we seek not yours, but you; you find none more solicitous to preserve your sacred priviledges than your ministers,

sters, who alone could form expectations from a change. Gratitude and love will then engage the people of this land, to comfort their ministers hearts; to afford them a respectful subsistence; to place them out of circumstances of distress, that they may make full proof of their ministry; save their own souls, and them that hear them.

MAY I be allowed, with all humility to add;— that it highly becomes our *civil rulers*, especially the representatives of this people, to watch over our *sacred*, as well as our *civil liberties*. Far be it from me to desire that the civil arm should be stretched out to punish heretics; human decrees are not the means to propagate the religion of Jesus: For this, we desire but the weapons of light and truth, the sword of the spirit, and the liberty of free enquiry. But yet the magistrate is to be the minister of God for good; by upholding mankind in their christian liberty; by defending christians from exterior violence, by supporting *schools* and *colleges* for training up our youth for the work of the ministry; and by giving due encouragement for men of ability to undertake the sacred employment. We wish never to find authority invested in men, unfriendly to the sacred liberties of their country; that would discourage a serious ministry, or would meanly sacrifice our sacred rights for any temporal advantages to themselves. *

STAND

* May I be permitted to add; It was an evidence of the noble and liberal spirit of our fathers, not only that they so early founded a *seminary of learning*, for the education of youth for the ministry; but also that they, by a *law*, obliged every *town* to keep a *grammar school*. This hath proved of excellent service, not only for fitting children for the *college*, with very little expence, by which means

STAND fast, may brethren, stand fast in your sacred liberties : Understand your freedom ; honour your noble ancestors, keep close to Christ, and preserve his institutions in their purity : Be discreet and steady in the exercise of your *liberty*. *Brethren, be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

OUR liberties, both civil and sacred, are truly our *own* ; they are what our fathers *dearly* bought ; they descend to us as a *patrimony* purchased at their expence. They were driven by spiritual tyranny from the land of their fathers sepulchres. Encouraged by the Royal Grant of full liberty of conscience, at a vast expence they transplanted themselves and families over the extended ocean, they subdued the wilderness, built them houses, planted them orchards, defended themselves against the savages, and widely extended the *British* dominions, at their *own* expence, without any charge to the country, from which they came. They for more than an *hundred* years, defended their own settlements, and waged defensive wars with the barbarous Indians, in which, some *thousands* of our brave inhabitants have perished.

means a greater number have been educated ; but also as it hath afforded a suitable employment for young men, after they have passed through the *college* ; and they have been able to maintain themselves, while following their studies for the ministry. And without this provision the churches would never have had the services of many, who have been burning and shining lights in this country. If therefore any of our people do, or shall, desire to obtain a repeal of this *excellent law*, we must either suppose them to be deceived by the artful insinuations of ill designing men, or they betray an insensibility of the interest of their country, and an *illiberal* spirit, quite unworthy of their noble *ancestors*.

ed. It is computed, by an author of superior *station and abilities* among us, * “ that from 1675, when “ *Phillip’s* war began, to 1713, *five or six* thousand “ of the youth of the country had perished, by the “ enemy, or by distempers contracted in the service ; *nine in ten* of these would have been fathers “ of families, and, in the course of *forty* years, have “ multiplied to near an *hundred thousand* souls.” And in our own days, two or three thousand young men perished at, and after, the siege of *Louisbourg*, in 1745. And perhaps the loss of the *New-England* colonies, during the last war, in battles, sieges, and by sickness, could not fall much short of *ten thousand* men ; yea the aforementioned Historian supposes, “ it is probable, there would have been *two hundred thousand* souls more, than there are, at this time, in *New-England*, if the *French* had been driven from *Canada* an *hundred* years ago.”

To God almighty we have forfeited every blessing : But of man we hold our liberties as an *hereditary* right ; as the inheritance of our dear ancestors, dearly obtained with their blood and treasure. We have ever been a loyal people ; we think our selves happy under the *British* government ; we have never forfeited our privileges ; we have enlarged the kingdom, and are yearly enriching our mother-country ; and should any attempt be made to restrain us in the exercise of our liberty, we should be deeply grieved, and think ourselves very hardly dealt by : Despised be the base soul who shall, *like Esau, for one morsel of bread, sell his birthright.*

As our numbers increase, it may be expected they will increase, who are indifferent to things of a
spiritual

* See Lieut. Governor *Hutchinson’s* hist. of *Massachusetts-Bay*, vol. 2. p. 201, and 202. margin.

Spiritual nature, and *liberty* of conscience will proportionably be despised : But it is with the greatest pleasure, we see, at *this* time, our numbers increase, numerous churches rising in the wilderness, firmly united, with us, in the same mind and judgment, and our *Colleges* supplying them with able and promising Pastors ; so that to them is applicable that of the Prophet, *Isai. 35. 1, 2. The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them ; and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose. It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing. The glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Sharon and Carmel ; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.*

THIS is one of the first Towns, which our fathers planted in the wilderness ; it hath ever enjoyed a safe protection from the barbarians. The preaching of the word, and administration of ordinances was early set up, on *this spot* of ground. No churches have enjoyed more excellent advantages than *this*, under the able and long ministry of the renowned *Eliot* and *Walter*, assisted by the worthy *Weld*, *Danforth* and others.. * Under their long and

* The church in *Roxbury* was gathered in July 1632, and then the Rev. *Thomas Weld*, invested with the pastoral office ; but in 1639, he returned to *England*.

In Nov. 1632, the Rev. *John Eliot*, was made a teacher of this church— he died May 20, 1690.

Sept. 24, 1650, the Rev. *Samuel Danforth*, was ordained pastor ; and died Nov. 19, 1674.

Oct. 17, 1688, the Rev. *Nehemiah Walter*, was ordained pastor ; and died Sept. 17, 1750.

Oct. 19, 1718, the Rev. *Thomas Walter*, was ordained co-pastor ; and died Jan. 10, 1725.

Nov. 7, 1750, the Rev. *Oliver Peabody*, was ordained pastor ; he died May 29, 1752.

and eminent ministry, we believe, many were made *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*; whom we expect to meet in heaven. To their instructive ministry it is, under God, to be ascribed, in some measure, that *this* people have been so remarkably steady to the principles of our *puritan* fathers, and that we walk in gospel order, with so much unity and love; *behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

OUR fathers where are they, and the prophets, do they live for ever? They are long since fallen on sleep; and gone to Christ, and have left their fair inheritance to us their children. Let us not forsake the God of our fathers, now the *wilderness* is become a fruitful field. They had their failings, but their virtues were eminent; they loved God, they loved his ordinances, *here* they found rest and pleasure. A new country, the bare necessities of life, a land full of savages, where they had undisturbed communion in gospel ordinances, was dearer to them than the garden of the world, while they wanted the food for their souls. Thus saith the Lord, *I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou wentest after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* Oh let us remember from whence we are fallen, and repent and do our first works. Let us love the word and the ordinances of Christ, as they loved them. Let us strive to revive primitive religion, and approve ourselves the worthy children of such virtuous ancestors. *The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you.*

BRETHREN, ye are called unto liberty, only abuse not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve

serve one another. Let us, by no means, turn the grace of God into licentiousness ; let us steadily attend the word of God ; devoutly observe his institutions.—Let us abound in the fruits of righteousness ; in that piety, honesty, love and goodness, which will recommend our worship to all that behold our *good conversation in Christ*. Let us not rest in the form of godliness, denying the power thereof. Let us see that we have that heart-purity, which is more than any external form ; for unless we are real, hearty, devout christians, who *worship God in the spirit*, we may perish from the purest church in the world, and all these sacred liberties will avail us nothing to our salvation.

BLESSED be the Lord, that hath given rest unto his people—the Lord our God be with us, as he was with our fathers, let him not leave us, nor forsake us.

A M E N.



The HYMN, sung after Sermon.

“ **A**RISE, O King of grace, arise,
“ and enter to thy rest,
“ Lo ! thy church waits with longing eyes
“ thus to be own'd and blest.

“ Enter with all thy glorious train,
“ thy spirit and thy word ;
“ All that the ark did once contain
“ could no such grace afford.

“ Here, mighty God, accept our vows,
“ here let thy praise be spread ;
“ Bless the provisions of thy house,
“ and fill thy poor with bread.

EX-100
A3153

W-1747

123

