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71	2		Even many of

N. B. *The need of some of these Corrections was observed time enough to make them before the whole impression was finished.*

Wardner?
From Deac.



Dr. *Mayhew's*

T W O

Thanksgiving

DISCOURSES

November 23d, 1758.



1871-1872



1873-1874



1875-1876

1877-1878

1879-1880



(6.)

T W O

DISCOURSES

Delivered *November 23d.* 1758.

B E I N G T H E

Day appointed by AUTHORITY

T O B E

Observed as a Day of public

T H A N K S G I V I N G :

Relating, more Especially,

T O T H E

Success of His MAJESTY's Arms,

And those of the

KING of PRUSSIA, the last Year.

By *Jonathan Mayhew, D. D.*

Pastor of the West Church in *Boston.*

B O S T O N : N. E.

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and by EDES & GILL, and GREEN & RUSSELL,
in *Queen-Street.*

OF TWO
DISCOURSES

THE FIRST OF WHICH WAS
DELIVERED AT THE
ANNUAL MEETING OF THE
SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF THE
AFRICAN, AT THE
THEATRE ROYAL, ON THE
10TH OF JANUARY, 1791.


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DISCOURSE I.



The late Smiles of Providence,
represented.

P S A L M C. Verse 4th.

ENTER into his Gates with Thanksgiving, and into his Courts with Praise : be thankful unto him, and bless his Name.

WE are this day called in the good providence of God, and exhorted by our civil rulers, to discharge the duty which the royal Psalmist here inculcates on the people of Israel : I mean, publicly and solemnly to render thanks to almighty God, for his great and undeserved mercies. It does not indeed appear, that either the psalm in general, or the words read in particular, were occasioned by
any

any special or remarkable interpositions of divine providence in favour of the Jews ; but rather, that the psalm has respect thro' out to the goodness of God in general towards his people : So that the admonition in the text may properly be considered as a standing, perpetual exhortation to the people of God in all ages and generations, to pay their public united acknowledgments to him for his mercies. However, tho' the exhortation is in itself thus general or indefinite, you are sensible that there are some particular times and seasons, wherein all such general counsels demand a special attention ; wherein there is a peculiar propriety in observing them ; and in which, it would therefore be doubly criminal to disregard them. And this being considered, I humbly conceive, there will at least appear no impropriety in my choice of these words, for the ground of my discourses on the present joyful occasion : Especially if it be further considered, that the mercies and blessings, for which we are now entered into the courts of our God with praise, are not, all of them, peculiar to the present season ; but some of them of such long continuance, that they may, with respect to us, be looked upon as common mercies ; tho' not the less valuable in themselves on that account, nor the less demanding our gratitude and praise to the Father of lights, from whom every good and perfect gift descendeth.

It is therefore propos'd, by divine assistance,

FIRST, To represent to you, as particularly as the time will well allow, what those blessings are, to give thanks to God for which, we are now assembled in his house.

SECONDLY,

SECONDLY, I shall explain, and inculcate upon you, the duty of religious thankfulness for these mercies, And

LASTLY, I shall press it upon you to live answerably to the obligations which God has laid us under by bestowing them upon us.

I. LET me represent to you, as particularly as is convenient, what those blessings are, to give thanks to God for which, we are now assembled together. For unless we have some just and proper conception of these, it is impossible for us to be duly and rationally thankful, or to give God the glory due unto his name on account of them.

IN speaking of these mercies, I shall not have occasion, nor indeed would it be altogether proper, to go beyond his Excellency's proclamation, appointing this day to be religiously observed, and specifying the occasion, or particular reasons thereof. Now these various blessings may easily be reduced to, and ranged under, the following heads, *viz.*

1st. THOSE which relate to the civil state of the nation in general ; as the preservation of the British government, and of our rights and liberties ; together with the happy prospect we have of their being long continued to us.

2dly. THOSE which relate particularly to the present war ; or the successes given to his Majesty's arms, the last year, and to the arms of his royal and illustrious ally, the King of Prussia. And,

3dly. THOSE

3dly. THOSE which relate more especially to this province; as the fruitfulness of the past season, and the general plenty and health, with which we have been favour'd.

WHATEVER is mentioned in the Governor's proclamation, as a ground for our religious rejoicing and thankfulness to God at this time, may, I suppose, naturally fall under one or the other of these heads. Let us proceed to a more distinct consideration of them: tho' it is propos'd to enlarge chiefly on the second.

1st. LET us consider those blessings which relate to the civil state of the † nation in general; as the preservation of the British government, and of our rights and liberties; together with the happy prospect we have of their being long continued to us.

THE blessings of this class are referred to in the former part of his Excellency's proclamation, where it is observed, that it "hath pleased the Father of mercies to continue us in the enjoyment of many invaluable blessings, — to prolong the important life of our most gracious Sovereign; and to continue to us the prospect of that invaluable blessing, the protestant succession, in his royal house; to support us in our civil and religious rights and liberties." These, tho' mentioned as mercies which we have long enjoyed, are nevertheless, truly great; and ought, from time to time to be solemnly recognized by us as such, especially upon public occasions like the present. The British government and laws, by which the subject's life and liberty, his property and religion, are all so well secured

† By the nation in general, are here intended, all British subjects.

secured to him, are blessings, very extensive in their nature, and will ever be accounted invaluable, by all who have a just conception of what the happiness of civil society consists in; or who have really any religion, which they can reasonably think themselves bound in conscience to practise. Indeed such a free and happy form of government as the British, may possibly be disrelished by abject minds, long tutor'd to servility, or blinded and infatuated by a horrid superstition, the reverse of all rational piety. However, these persons are not exceptions to the above assertion, having neither any proper notion of civil happiness, nor any religion which a well-informed conscience could possibly concern itself at all about, unless it were so far as to discard it with indignation. Whatever, slaves, and the blind votaries to such a superstition, falsely called religion, may think; or however evil they may "speak of those things which they understand not", wise, good and unprejudiced men, will always venerate such a constitution of government, thinking themselves happy if they live under it, and if they do not, envying to those that do, so distinguishing a privilege.

-OF this free government, and of these laws, which, next to those of the gospel, may be justly termed "the laws of liberty", his present Majesty has all along, from his first accession to the throne, been a steady defender; being both a true protestant, and a friend to the natural rights of mankind, especially to those of his own subjects. For which reason it ought to be looked on as a great smile of heaven upon the nation, that his life has been lengthened out till he is now become old, and full of days. And tho' his good subjects cannot, without reluctance, think on that time, now near according to the usual

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course

course of nature, when their royal benefactor and father must submit to the common law of mortality; yet we are in some measure relieved under the melancholly apprehension, by reflecting on his numerous posterity, and seeing the succession to the British throne, made as sure as human laws can make it, in his royal and protestant house. I add protestant house, not only because, by the act of settlement and succession, none but a protestant can reign upon the British throne; but also, because the happiness of the nation, under God, essentially depends on being govern'd by such a king; and this illustrious house has long distinguish'd itself by a well-regulated zeal for the protestant cause, in opposition to papal usurpation.

It were next to madness to imagine, that the nation could ever be safe and happy under a roman catholic prince: Common sense shows, that such a one must needs think his power too much restrained by the laws of Britain; looking on which as an infringement of the royal dignity, he would of course make frequent infractions on them; at least as often, and perhaps oftener, than he could do it with safety to himself. Fact and experience are not wanting to confirm this observation. For the nation has formerly had melancholly experience of its truth, in at least two princes of the Stewart race; whose arbitrary principles and practices, naturally, if not necessarily connected with their religion, plainly shew'd that one of the greatest curses righteous heaven can send upon Great Britain, is a roman catholic King. While such a King reigns, the most fundamental laws of the kingdom are no security to the subject, either with respect to liberty or property, religion or life; unless it be to popish subjects

jects : Who indeed may live, and increase, and flourish abundantly, under that same baleful influence which blasts all good men. And if God, in his good providence, had not delivered the nation from the contemptible, tho' royal race above-mentioned, it is not improbable, that we might at this very time have groaned under the iron scepter of a confirmed, lawless despotism, and the antichristian yoke of religious persecution : Unless, perhaps, before this time all good protestants had been rooted out and destroyed ; and so made a mighty addition to the souls which St. John saw under the altar ; the souls of “ them that were slain for the word of God, and “ for the testimony which they held” : and which he heard “ crying with a loud voice, saying, How “ long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge “ and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the “ earth † !”

THESE things being briefly observed, I may leave you to judge, how great the blessing is, of having the life of a good protestant King, the British government, and with it our rights and liberties, secular and sacred, preserved to us ; and this, while we have had so many enemies, at least foreign ones, who would have rejoiced in depriving us of them.

BUT let us now proceed to those mercies which were above referred to another class ; *viz.*

2dly. THOSE which relate to the present war ; as the successes given, the last year, to the arms of his Majesty, and to the arms of his illustrious ally, the King of Prussia. Upon these, I shall be something more particular than on the former. They

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hold

† Rev. 6. 9, 10.

hold the second place in his Excellency's proclamation ; where it is observed, That it hath pleased God " to
 " give remarkable spirit to his Majesty's counsels and
 " resolutions ; and in divers instances to crown his
 " wise and vigorous measures with success ; and to
 " prosper the arms of his Majesty's ally the King of
 " Prussia, in support of the protestant cause," &c.

It is manifest, notwithstanding some strange delays, defeats and disgraces ; (with a detail of which, the religious joy and gratitude of this day ought not to be damped) It is, I say, manifest, notwithstanding these delays and disgraces, that the war has been prosecuted the last year, on the part of Great Britain, with uncommon vigour ; and that the advantages gained both by sea and land, have been very considerable : So that, upon the whole, this has been, to us, a successful campaign ; and, in proportion, disadvantageous, and a weakening to the enemy. Let us take a cursory view of the events of the war this year, and of the losses sustained by the enemy, both by land and sea. But minute circumstances would not be thought worthy of a place here, tho' there were room for them.

If we begin with our successes by land ; It is to be observed, that his Majesty's hereditary dominions on the continent have been rescu'd out of the enemy's hands, where they triumphed the year before, and committed such barbarian havock and devastation. They have in their turn been beaten and routed there, with considerable loss both of men, and warlike stores : So that their laurels had but just bloomed, when they were suddenly withered, and the cypress succeeded them : Whereby was verified that antient observation, " That the triumphing of the wicked
 " is short, and the joy of the hypocrite but for a
 " moment ;

“ moment ; tho’ his excellency mount up to the
“ heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds” †.
And there is some reason at least to hope, that the
enemy will not soon be in a capacity to make them-
selves again masters of that country, and repeat their
brutal outrages, loudly complained of even by some
of their own greatest commanders *.

THERE have, moreover, been at least two § suc-
cessful descents made by Great Britain on the coasts
of France. In these the enemy have sustained the
loss of some considerable magazines, several fortresses,
many cannon, and military stores ; all amounting to
a large value : And were likewise obliged, by ano-
ther large sum, to ransom one of their cities, or
fortified towns. These events are not a little in
our favour ; to say nothing of the constant alarms
on the French coasts the last year, with the conse-
quences thereof ; or the security enjoyed on the
coasts of Britain. It may be added, that these de-
scents would doubtless have proved of still more
pernicious consequence to the enemy than they
have, tho’ less honourable to the British General,
had not his noble breast been full of that compassion,
that humanity and generosity, to which some of the
French commanders, under the like circumstances,
have shown themselves strangers ‡.

ON the western coasts of Affrica several forts
have been taken from the enemy, together with one
of

† Job XX. 5, 6.

* Marshal Belleisle’s Speech in Council, is here more particu-
larly alluded to. § At St. Maloes and Cherbourg.

‡ Witness, particularly, the Massacre after the Surrender of
Fort William-Henry to Mons. Montcalm, and the signing
of the Capitulation.

of their important settlements †; whereby, it is said, great treasures have fallen into the hands of the captors. And, by what we have hitherto learn'd, this conquest may probably prove eventually of very great advantage to Great Britain, and at least equally detrimental to the commerce and interest of France.

As to the East Indies; our accounts from thence, seem to be quite vague and uncertain at best, if not contradictory. So that we can say nothing particularly or positively concerning the state of affairs in Asia, with respect to the war; or whether we, or our enemies, have been successful in those distant parts. Let us therefore come to America.

AND here the very strong, and at least equally important city and fortress of the enemy on Cape Breton, have surrender'd to his Majesty's arms, where a prodigious quantity of artillery, small-arms, and military stores of all kinds, fell into our hands. In consequence of which acquisition, obtained with an inconsiderable loss of British troops, all the dependencies of Louisbourg, have been surrender'd; and many thousands of the enemy sent out of America, where their continuance might have proved of very pernicious consequence. I might add, that hereby the enemy have in effect lost, not only their great fishery, but the key of Canada; on which some of their more southern forts and settlements are dependent. It would have been proper to enlarge on the importance of this acquisition, and the very favourable circumstances attending it, had I not lately done this so particularly, on the day appointed by the government to acknowledge the great goodness of God on account hereof.

HIS

† Senegal.

HIS majesty's forces have also, the summer past, taken possession of the river, and adjacent country, of St. John's, in the bay of Funda : Of the great consequence of which to them, and to their views in America, the French were so fully apprised, that according to their wonted policy and good faith, they seized, and fortified thereon, several years ago, in a time of profound peace. They were indeed forced by some British troops, about two years since, to abandon, and, as some say, to demolish the fortress which they had erected there. But till this year we had not fortified, nor done any thing which could well be called taking possession of the place : Both which being now done, it may be reasonably hoped, that the future possession of that important river and fine country, are effectually secured to his Britannic majesty, to whom, of right, they unquestionably belonged before.

IN addition to what has already been mentioned, it must be observed, that a fortress of great consequence, usually called Frontinac, at the entrance of the great river St. Lawrence on the lake side, has been reduced to surrender to a body of his majesty's troops, chiefly provincial irregulars. This acquisition may be reckoned very considerable in divers respects ; in respect of the strength of the fortress itself ; of its situation ; of the vast quantity of stores, provisions, arms, and other riches found therein ; in respect of the little loss of men in making it ; and lastly, in respect of the critical conjuncture wherein it was made. For we are assured, that a considerable body of the enemy were at that time actually in motion, to proceed against the western part of New-York government ; depending wholly upon this place for provisions, and other stores, necessary

cessary for the undertaking. So that their whole design, which, had they proceeded, might have proved of very bad consequence to us, was at once frustrated, by the very opportune reduction of this fortress. Hereby also, it is at least probable, the enemy in several other places to the southward and westward, as well as the savages in their alliance, were disappointed of those supplies, which they very much needed. How favourable, therefore, was the providence, by which this fortress was reduced and dismantled, if not entirely demolished? especially, when we add, that this was effected almost without the loss of any lives on our side; or, as some confidently affirm, without a single one?

These, my brethren, are some of the successes which, by the blessing of God on his majesty's arms, we have had by land, in the course of the year past. As a ballance to which, the enemy can pretend to none against us; I say, as a ballance to them; for some successes they have doubtless had. But they have taken none of our fortresses, that we know of; they have made no descents on our coasts; they have made a conquest of no place; they have obtained no considerable victory. Though it must be acknowledged, that they repulsed, by some means or other, and with loss to us, what might be looked on as a very formidable army in America, coming against them*. It must likewise be confessed that, with the assistance of their good friends and brethren, the savages, they have cut the throats of some men, and of great numbers of poor women and children, on the frontiers of the southern colonies. But how much soever they may be disposed to glory and triumph in these heroic exploits, it may be questioned

* At Lake George, near Ticonderoga.

questioned whether even they could, without blushing, pretend to make them near equivalent to the advantages obtained against them ; tho' they have foreheads, in such respects, inferior to those of no nation under heaven.

BUT, if you please, we will now take a brief view of our successes by sea the last year ; and of what the enemy have suffer'd in their naval power and commerce.

AND, if I mistake not, it is computed that in the Mediterranean, on the coast of Africa, in the bay of Biscay, in the English channel, in the West-Indies, and at the siege and surrender of Louisbourg, the royal navy of France has sustained the loss of about thirty ships, greater and less, the year past : Some of them capital ones, and much the greater part of which, not having been destroyed, have been added to the royal navy of Great-Britain. A heavy loss, indeed, to them, which affects them in the tenderest point ; and of great consequence to us. And under this head of what the royal navy of France has suffered, I may just mention the capture and destruction of all her armed vessels on lake Ontario, in the very successful expedition against Frontinac, spoken of above. The enemy's loss of these vessels of war, and with them, of their usurped dominion of that lake, is not trivial to them, considering the present situation of their affairs in America ; and especially the importance, or rather necessity, of their having a free and safe communication between Canada and Niagara, the Ohio, &c.

BUT what has been already mentioned is by no means the whole, if indeed it may be justly accounted

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counted the greater part, of our maritime success, and of the enemy's losses, the last year. Their private ships of war, taken and destroyed in this time, are vastly more numerous, than those of the king ; so numerous, that I cannot pretend to make any probable conjecture about them.

AND still vastly more numerous than both these together, have been the captures made of the enemy's transport, store and common merchant-ships ; especially if we include those taken and destroyed in the descents made on the coast of France ; in one of which only, considerably more than a hundred sail fell into our hands ; at least, were wholly lost to the enemy.

IN these, almost innumerable captures, the enemy have lost immense treasure and riches, which have been brought into Great-Britain and her colonies. The effects of which in France are visible enough, in the multiplied bankruptcies of her merchants ; in the scarcity of money, even in the royal funds and coffers ; in the height of interest and insurance ; in the stagnation of trade and business, and in the consequent discontent, and murmurs, and discords of the people. The effects hereof are also apparent enough in Great-Britain, and most of her colonies and plantations, in the wealth of her merchants ; in the plenty of money found for public uses ; in the lowness of interest and insurance ; in the flourishing state of trade and business ; and the consequent general easiness, contentment, unanimity and spirit, of the people of all ranks. It must in short be acknowledged by all, who are not sceptical to a great degree, that the commerce of France, on which depend her chief strength and resources, is
reduced

reduced to a low ebb, and daily decreasing. For not being able to secure and defend her trade, it is either blocked up in port, or falls into the hands of the royal navy, and private cruisers, of Great-Britain and her dependencies. On the other hand, by reason of the great superiority of our naval power, and our late maritime successes, our trade in general is in a very flourishing condition ; and both the private merchant, and the public, enjoy almost all the advantages of a free, extensive and gainful commerce.

It is not, however, pretended that Great-Britain and her colonies have sustained no losses by sea the year past, especially of merchant-men. Many of them have fallen into the enemy's hands ; and even two or three of the King's smaller ships, I think, have had the same destiny ; which, without a miracle, could hardly have been otherwise. But (which is the only thing insisted on, and which will not, I presume, be denied) our maritime losses still bear no proportion, or but a very small one, to those of the enemy. And it is probable that the naval power of Great-Britain, and the number of her merchant-ships, are now, both absolutely and relatively greater, than at the beginning of the year : Absolutely, as their strength and number are increased on the whole, instead of being lessened, notwithstanding her losses : And relatively, as there is now a much greater disproportion between her shipping and navy, and that of France, than there was at that time. The latter is indisputably true : And the former is equally certain, at least so far as it concerns the royal navy.

FROM this cursory and imperfect review of the military events of the last year, (for it is with events

that I chiefly concern myself) it appears that God, whose dominion extends equally over the mighty waters, and the dry land, has prospered the British arms on either element ; and to such a degree, all circumstances being considered, that our prospects with regard to the present war are now much more favourable and promising, than they have ever before been since the commencement of it.

HOWEVER, we cannot so well form a judgment respecting this point, considering the present close connexion between the courts of London and Berlin, without taking into consideration the successes, with which his * Prussian majesty has been favour'd the last year ; which, you are sensible are partly the occasion of our present rejoicing ; so that in speaking of them, I do not deviate from the proper business of the day ; and therefore need make no apology.

INDEED if we only compared his Prussian Majesty's dominions, and the number of his troops, with those of his confederated enemies, who seem to have jointly vowed his destruction, it might appear as if he had been sufficiently happy and successful, not to say triumphant, merely by defending himself against them, and not falling, long ago, a sacrifice to their resentment. But not so, if we consider either the character of this Prince, or the righteous cause, partly the cause of religious liberty, wherein he has drawn
his

* However various the opinions of people may be respecting the advantage or disadvantage of continental connexions, to Great-Britain ; yet there is certainly one thing wherein they must all be united : That while such connexions actually subsist, Great-Britain is nearly concerned and interested in all the successes of her allies.

his sword. These things, under the providence and government of God, might seem to promise other successes and triumphs, than merely those of not being swallowed up & destroyed, even by such numerous and potent enemies. And had we formed very sanguine hopes of this sort, we see by the event, that heaven would not have frustrated them. For God has, in divers instances prospered the arms of his Prussian Majesty the last year past. To pass over his other less considerable, tho' not inconsiderable successes, you are sensible he has obtain'd a very signal victory over the Russian army, much superior in number to his own, and commanded by a general, inferior, perhaps, to but few of the present age. This conquest, according to our latest accounts, was so decisive and compleat, and attended with such a prodigious slaughter of the mercenary and uncivilized, the rapacious, bloody, and almost barbarous enemy, that it is not so properly called a victory over the Russian army, as the total ruin and destruction of it.

In consequence of this decisive victory, (if I do not seem to lessen the event by calling it by that name) his majesty [the King of Prussia] was left at liberty and leisure to turn his arms against his other enemies, particularly the French and Austrians; and to reinforce his generals with victorious troops, or rather with his own royal presence, more powerful and efficacious than many thousands. His enemies still remaining in the field, after this memorable success, were indeed very numerous and powerful: Nor do we know how the year's campaign ended with this great Commander, if it be yet ended. For we are speaking of a Commander, to whom all seasons seem to be alike, and with whom the beginning and end
of

of a year, and of a campaign, are almost the same thing. And what may not be reasonably expected, at least hoped for, from a Monarch so truly *Great*; not by the united suffrages and senseless adorations of 18 million slaves, long disciplin'd to crouch, and annihilate themselves before lawless power; but *Great* by his own personal actions and virtues? What may not be hoped for from One, who possesses almost all human accomplishments, especially the virtues military and heroic, in the highest degree of perfection? What may not be hoped for from a Prince, so visibly upheld by providence, to vindicate the rights of mankind against the invasions of tyranny, and the usurpations of the papal see? What, not hoped for from One, by whom heaven has, for a course of years, not only wrought wonders, but seemed to delight therein, tho' still without miracle? In fine, What not hoped from a Prince, whom God seems to have raised up, on purpose that in him he "might make his power known, and that his name might be declared thro' out all the earth"? tho' in a far different sense than this is said of Pharaoh, the great Egyptian monarch, and oppressor of the people of God.—Not, that he might shew his power in his down-fall and destruction; but in his salvation, in his victories. and triumphs over such numerous and potent enemies, leagued against him, and that righteous cause of maintaining the "liberty wherewith Christ has made us free", which he has asserted in opposition to antichristian usurpation. It would have some affinity to infidelity and atheism, not to hope from such a Prince, engaged in such a cause, and hitherto supported and succeeded by divine providence in such a wonderful manner, what it might be criminal presumption, or at best foolish credulity, to expect from another, of different talents and designs, or to whom,

if I may so express it, God had not given similar attestations and credentials of his approbation, and presence with him.

BUT not to digress too far ; and to come more directly to the business of the day, we may justly look upon all the successes and victories of his Prussian Majesty as our own, considering the alliance subsisting between our own Sovereign and him, and one common cause (tho' not the only) wherein they have unsheathed the sword. The advantage is truly ours, for this good reason ; his Prussian Majesty's enemies are, in effect, ours. But tho' the benefit redound to us in part, the honour is his own ; or rather it belongs to God, whose is the " victory and the " majesty". However, the more Heaven favours the designs and enterprizes of this illustrious Prince, the more cause of thankfulness we have ; and the better prospect of seeing the present war brought to a happy conclusion. And if the same right hand of the Most High, which has hitherto been revealed, and made manifest in his protection and conquests, should still be made bare for him ; and unless affairs should take a very different turn from the present, with respect to the British councils and arms, we may, I humbly conceive, after another campaign, rationally hope for peace with France on more advantageous terms than we have long enjoyed it, even than we had it by the treaty of Utrecht.

BUT still I must remind you, tho' you are probably aware of it, that there is almost infinite uncertainty in all judgments formed on such-like matters, tho' formed on present appearances. They are grounded at bottom on precarious hypotheses ; on suppositions that some things will continue as they

they are, or have been, without any material alteration; or that they will be so and so; which things being quite contingent as to us, all opinions grounded on them, especially respecting remote events, must of consequence be infinitely precarious, amounting to scarce more than conjectures, or guesses in the dark. Many things may intervene, before the conclusion of a peace, which may put another face on affairs, and intirely frustrate our hopes respecting it, tho' they should not be wholly without foundation. There may possibly be a sudden change in the administration, as much for the worse, as a late one was for the better; than which there can scarce be a greater or more apparent. The Spaniard may quite forsake his neutrality, of which, by some things, he has indeed seemed a little weary already. Our old money-loving friends, the Dutch, may perhaps act more openly and avowedly against us, tho' they cannot do it more really than they have long done, by supplying our French enemies with provisions and military stores, and treacherously carrying on their trade for them, in their own bottoms and names: Or other nations may rise up against us, and join our enemies. Famine, or pestilence, or both, may be sent to scourge us. Our fleets and navies may suffer shipwreck in a storm of God's indignation, like the formidable Armada. Our armies may be wasted with mortal disease; and become less terrible to the enemy, in respect of their strength and valor, than of the contagion attending them: Or they may possibly, hereafter, have traiterous, weak, or pusillanimous commanders; by whose authority, enforced by the most powerful motive, their own example, they may "flee when no man pursueth them". I say, there is a possibility of this, hereafter; for it might perhaps give offence to some, if I said that any thing

similar

similar to it had actually happened during the present war. But I cannot but just mention it as an happy omen, that there is a gentleman † appointed to the chief military command here in America, the chief seat and object of the present war; whose military qualifications and character are so well established; partly, by his prudent and successful conduct in the late siege of Louisbourg. Nor would you, I am persuaded, think me enthusiastic, if I added—a gentleman who, as some reports, has merited, and thereby had an opportunity of improving in the art of war, under the heroic and wonder of his age, the King of Prussia: For who can help conceiving the highest expectations from a great military genius, cultivated in the school, and amid scenes of war, under a master, on whose standards victory has been so long accustomed to wait? However,

FROM the hints above you will all see, and the most would doubtless see without them, how very uncertain all the events of war are, tho' we should ground our opinion and hopes on present appearances, and the most rational probabilities. And now, leaving future events with Him, who only knows, as He only determines them; and acknowledging with gratitude what he has already done for us, respecting the present war; let us proceed, according to the method proposed under the first general head of discourse,

3dly and lastly, To mention very briefly, those mercies and blessings which relate more particularly to this province; the fruitfulness of the past season; the general plenty and health, with which we have been favour'd. For, as it is expressed in his Excellency's

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proclamation

† His Excellency Major General Amherst.

proclamation, “ The summer past has been remarkably fruitful, and the productions of the country have been so greatly increased, that not only our own wants have been supplied, but we have been enabled to furnish his Majesty’s forces, both by sea and land, with necessary provisions and refreshments : And in most parts we have been blessed with health.”

WE could never with more, probably never with so much propriety, as we may at present, adopt the language of the Psalmist, saying in humble and grateful acknowledgment of the divine goodness—
 “ Thou hast visited the earth, and watered it ; thou
 “ hast greatly enriched it with the river of God
 “ which is full of water. Thou hast watered
 “ the ridges thereof abundantly : thou hast settled
 “ the furrows thereof : thou hast made it soft with
 “ showers ; thou hast blessed the springing thereof.
 “ Thou hast crowned the year with thy goodness,
 “ and thy paths have dropped fatness. They have
 “ dropped upon the pastures of the wilderness ; and
 “ the little hills rejoiced on every side. The
 “ pastures were cloathed with flocks ; the valleys
 “ also were covered over with corn ; they shouted
 “ for joy, they also sung”*.

THE country, (I mean in contradistinction from the maritime towns, and particularly from this capital) The country, I say, has not only been supplied, but even enriched, by the plentiful produce of this year. It has enjoyed an abundance within itself ; which, at the same time, has overflowed to distant places. Great quantities of provisions have been sent to his Majesty’s fleet and armies : by which
 means,

† Psal. 65. 9.—

means, we have not only been enabled to help forward the military operations, and common cause, in which we have a very particular interest ; but considerable wealth has been brought into the country ; I might properly say, into the community. Because this is really a common benefit ; especially in a time of war, a proportionable part of the expence of which we ought doubtless to bear, and have always, to say the least, done that. For this purpose, to say nothing of any others, monies must be levied and raised from time to time ; and what is brought in by the exports of the country's produce, will of course circulate ; at least a considerable part thereof, however desirous many individuals may be of hoarding. In this respect, a plentiful produce of the earth ought to be accounted a common benefit. Besides ; this of course causeth a plenty, not only of bread, the staff of life ; but also of animal food, and many other things to the advantage of all in general, and not only of the husbandman. For tho' the husbandman primarily reaps the benefit hereof, and perhaps principally ; yet you know that all others, from the highest to the lowest, are " served by the " field". The citizen, the merchant and tradesman, all find the advantage of a plentiful season, in the proportionably lower price of provisions, and the necessaries of life. This is at least generally, if not universally, true. For tho' the maritime towns, and this in particular, have not, perhaps, so fully and clearly perceived this advantage of the last year's plenty, by reason of the great exports ; yet a little reflection would show them, that under the like peculiar circumstances calling for such exportation, a year of scarcity must needs have raised the necessaries of life to a price, far beyond what they have been at the summer past, or are at present. So that

it is certain, whether they clearly see it or not, that they actually reap the mentioned advantage of a plentiful produce ; tho' probably, not in so great a degree as the husbandman. All of us therefore, without exception, are bound in reason to acknowledge the goodness of God to us in this respect.

As to the general health enjoyed thro' the province ; this is so evident, and so manifestly a great blessing, that it were needless to enlarge upon it. Health is the foundation of all other natural enjoyments in general ; so necessary in order to our temporal felicity, that without it we must be unhappy, even in the bosom of plenty. Sickness disqualifies for action ; not only for bodily labours, but those of the mind also, by reason of this strange union and sympathy between flesh and spirit. It palls every sense and appetite ; and if we consider ourselves only in our worldly and temporal capacity, leaves a man joyless and unblest'd, tho' possessed of all the other means of enjoyment. What obligations are we therefore under in this respect, to Him who is the only " health of our countenance, and our God" ?

Thus I have done with the first thing proposed, having represented to you, under three heads, and as particularly as was convenient, what those mercies are, for which we are this day called upon to render our united praises to our great Benefactor. And if God has conferred these blessings upon us, while so undeserving of them, surely it becomes us, as we do at least in appearance, to " enter into his gates with " thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise ; to " be thankful unto him, and bless his name." But the explaining and inculcating this duty, and shewing how we ought to conduct ourselves in consequence
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of these great obligations which God has laid us under, will, by his permission and assistance, be our employment in the afternoon.

IN the mean time let me only add, that if you are duly thankful for these mercies, so as christians ought to be; if your hearts are properly engaged in the present duty, in opposition to your offering a mere formal sacrifice to God, I may address you in the language of Solomon, (speaking, I suppose, neither ironically, nor in the person of an Epicure, but seriously in his own, as a wise, pious and good man) “Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; *for God now accepteth thy works*†”.

† Ecclef. 9, 7.

Discourse



Discourse II.

THE Duty of religious Thankfulness explain'd and inculcated : What Influence the Mercies of God should have on our future Lives ; with some particular Reflections on those represented in the foregoing Discourse.



PSALM C. 4. *Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise : be thankful unto him, and bless his name.*

IN the morning I recounted to you, as particularly as the time would well admit, those mercies and blessings, on account of which we this day enter into the courts of our God with praise. These mercies were considered in the order following ; *viz.*

FIRST, Those which relate to the civil state of the nation in general.

THEN

THEN, Those which relate particularly to the war ; or the successes granted, the last year, to his Majesty's arms, and alto to the Prussian :

AND LASTLY, Those mercies which relate more particularly to this Province ; as the uncommon fruitfulness of the past season, and the general plenty and health, with which we have been favour'd.

It doubtless becomes us to make a grateful return to almighty God for these great and manifold expressions of his loving-kindness : It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and " praise " is comely for the upright, "

I AM now therefore, in the second place, by divine assistance, and according to the method proposed,

II. To explain, and inculcate upon you, the duty of religious thankfulness for the mercies which have been represented to you. And this presupposes and implies in it various things ; more especially these which follow ;

THAT we have a proper sense of their greatness and importance, considered in themselves ;

THAT we acknowledge God, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and whose providence governs all things, as the author of them :

THAT we are sensible, they were undeserved by us, and therefore flow from His mere favour, or free grace :

THAT

THAT our hearts are raised up to God, on account of them, in the exercise of devout affection, or internal blessing and praise : And lastly,

THAT we express these grateful sentiments of our hearts, by the external acts of blessing the name of the Lord, and singing his praises.

1st. RELIGIOUS thankfulness for these mercies, supposes that we have some proper sense of their greatness and importance, considered in themselves. As no person can, in the nature of the thing, be thankful, or even joyful, on account of what he does not esteem as a real good, or benefit ; so neither can any one be thankful or joyful to the degree which he ought to be, unless his sense and esteem of the supposed benefit arises in proportion to the greatness, or is adequate to the true nature thereof. As far as he undervalues any blessing ; as much as his esteem thereof falls short of being commensurate to its proper worth ; so far he must necessarily fall short of that gratitude which he owes to his benefactor. For that good which is not perceived by us is, to us, as nothing, however great it may be supposed in itself. And of consequence, the author of it will be defrauded, in part at least, of those grateful returns from us, which are due to him. This will hold equally true, whether we speak of an human, or of our Divine benefactor.

You ought therefore, my brethren, seriously to revolve in your minds the several benefits and blessings which have been enumerated to you ; to consider how manifold, how great, they are ; and to gain a proper idea of their value. Without
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thus meditating upon them, till you perceive their true worth and importance, you will at best only offer the sacrifice of a crude, unruminated praise ; at least as unworthy as “ the lame or the blind. ” And in order to your having a just sense of the greatness and value of these mercies, one of the most certain and effectual ways will be, to reflect how unhappy we should have been without them ; or if instead of enjoying them, the contrary evils had befallen us. Consider, for example, how miserable we should have been, if instead of having the life of a good protestant King preserved to us ; if instead of having the British laws and government, and our civil and religious liberties, continued as they are ; that good King had been taken away, and a bad one succeeded him ; (especially the worst, a thorough Roman-catholic, whose evil conscience, whatever he might swear to the *contrary*, would still oblige him to distress, if not to destroy, his protestant subjects — for the good of their souls !) if the free and happy government of Great-Britain had been overturned, and arbitrary sway, and papal tyranny, had been established in its room. Had this been the case, you must needs be sensible how wretched we should have been. And this reflection will help you to form a just idea of the greatness of the beforementioned blessings, which are still continued to us ; and of the future enjoyment of which, we have so favourable a prospect in his Majesty’s royal House.

AGAIN : If we had obtained none of those military successes by sea or land, which have been enumerated ; but these advantages had all been on the side of our enemies ; if the enemy had made several successful descents on Britain, and taken divers

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of our fortresses ; if our magazines had been destroyed with prodigious stores ; had we lost one of our valuable settlements, and some place of as much importance to us, as Louisbourg was to France ; had his Prussian majesty been swallowed up, instead of being victorious ; had our marine suffered as much as the enemy's has done ; had the royal navy of Britain sustained so great a loss ; had her private ships of war been taken and destroyed in such numbers ; had her merchant-ships been destroyed by the score, or the hundred, in her ports, and such vast numbers besides, taken in different parts of the world ; had such immense treasure been taken from her, as she has taken from the enemy ; were near twenty thousand of her seamen prisoners, without any prospect of a speedy redemption ; in fine, had her commerce been almost ruined, and that of France in the same flourishing condition with ours ; if these events had taken place, I say, surely you cannot be insensible of the melancholly, distressed situation we should now have been in ; and consequently, cannot but see what a great mercy it is to us, that things have been otherwise ordered ; and that the British arms have been prospered to the degree they have.

AGAIN : If instead of so fruitful a season as the past, this had been a year of drought ; if instead of the great plenty of most of the necessaries of life among us, there had been scarcity and famine ; if instead of the general health enjoyed, pestilence, or other mortal diseases had prevailed ; if these events had taken place, I need not say, but only leave you to judge, how unhappy our condition had been. Which reflection, will at the same time shew you, how great the beforementioned blessings are ; which
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is the first thing necessary in order to your being duly thankful for them.

Now it is plain, that we might have been left destitute of all the mercies which we have enjoyed; and not only so, but have experienced all the evils and calamities which are the reverse of them. And the ultimate, if not the only reason, which can be assigned why these evils, instead of those blessings, have not come upon us and the nation, is, because God was pleased to order events to be as they are. Which brings me to the second particular mentioned above; namely,

2dly. THAT in order to our being religiously thankful for these great blessings, we must be sensible that they are bestowed on us by God, who ruleth in the kingdom of men, and whose providence superintends all things. That gratitude which is properly called religious, has God alone for its object, and terminates on him in distinction from all means and instruments, as the supreme Author of the good, for which we are thankful. It implies a contradiction to suppose, that we can be duly thankful for any blessings we enjoy, unless we firmly believe the over-ruling providence of God, by which events are brought to pass; and unless, in our thoughts, we refer them ultimately to him. Nor, indeed, is there any reason why we should be thankful to him, even for the greatest blessings we enjoy, on any other supposition than this, that his kingdom ruleth over all; that he is truly and properly the author of these blessings. If he were not, you would be under no more obligation to be thankful for them to Jehovah, than to the Ægyptian bull, or the golden calves set up in Dan and Bethel. All religious gratitude supposes in the very notion

of it, that the good for which we are thankful, is the effect of God's goodness and power, and that it accrues to us by the dispositions of his providence. From hence it is apparent, that tho' you have ever so just and thorough a sense of the value of those mercies which have been represented to you ; yet unless you are fully persuaded that God governs the world, and all things that are therein, and that he has bestowed these mercies on us, you can, in no proper sense, be thankful to him for them. You may indeed, without this, be glad, and heartily rejoiced on account of them, or thankful to those persons who have been instrumental of good to the public, wherein you have a share : But neither of these things is religious gratitude ; neither thankfulness to man, nor joy on account of any prosperous events ; tho' the former of them may, and the latter of them necessarily must, attend it.

BUT not to digress : Let me inculcate it upon you as a most certain truth, demonstrable, if any thing is so, by human reason, as well as the plain doctrine of divine revelation, and a truth which should ever be in our thoughts ; that this world is under the government, not of blind chance, or fate, or men, or good, or evil spirits ; but of that eternal, infinite, and omnipresent Spirit, to whom it owes its existence. It is God's world ; he upholds, he rules, he controuls it, and in some way or other, perhaps inconceivable by us, actually orders and determines the events of it ; and that with such precision, that neither a "sparrow falls to the ground, nor a "lot is cast into the lap," without him. All subordinate beings or agents, who are concerned in bringing about any events, any changes or revolutions in this lower world, whether prosperous or adverse to us, are his agents, his instruments,

ments, all “fulfilling his pleasure.” He is therefore to be acknowledged as the supreme, ultimate cause of all these events. By him, his power and wisdom, kings reign, and princes decree justice : He pulleth down one kingdom, and setteth up another. The horse is prepared for the battle, but safety is of the Lord. He giveth rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness. — “Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, “and the power, and the glory, and the victory, “and the majesty : for all that is in the heaven “and in the earth is thine ; thine is the kingdom, “O Lord, and thou art exalted as head above all. “Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou “reignest over all, and in thine hand is power and “might, and in thine hand it is to make great, “and to give strength unto all.” Unless we sincerely assent to the truth and propriety of these words of inspiration, we cannot, whatever blessings we enjoy, properly adopt those which immediately follow, — “Now *therefore*, our God, we *thank Thee*, and praise thy glorious name *.” It is mere trifling and impertinence, not piety in us, to appear in this place upon this occasion, unless we firmly believe the governing providence of God, according to the representations of scripture : because it is impossible we should be religiously thankful for the mercies we enjoy, however great they are in themselves, without thus referring them all to Him, “of whom, and thro’ whom, and to whom are all things.” But

3dly, It is requisite in order to our being duly thankful for these mercies, that we are sensible we were undeserving of them, and consequently that they flow from the free grace, and mere bounty of God towards us. And indeed, if you consider the

* 1 Chron. 29. 11, 12, 13.

the matter with any attention, you will perceive that gratitude, whether to God, or any other being, in the very nature of it, supposes him to have done a favour to us, some act of kindness or grace, as distinguished from justice. For we cannot, properly speaking, thank any one for doing an act of mere justice, however advantageous it may be to us ; or be thankful to him any farther than he has dealt by us in a way of bounty, and done what, in point of mere equity, he was under no obligation to do. Thus far, and only thus far, we may, in propriety of language, be thankful. So that it is not sufficient for us to acknowledge God as the real, supreme author of the before mentioned blessings, in order to our being grateful to him ; it is moreover necessary that we are sensible, they flow from his bounty ; that we had no claim to them, founded in righteousness and equity, but that they might have been withheld from us without injury or injustice. And that this is true in fact, cannot be denied on the principles of religion, or even on those of reason and common sense : “ For who hath first given unto him ? and it shall be recompensed to him again. ” Not even the innocent and holy angels of heaven have done so ; and therefore, are under obligation to thank God for their being, and all the happy circumstances that have attended it from first to last.

BUT WE are in a further and higher sense obliged to acknowledge that all the blessings we enjoy, flow from God's free Grace, or undeserved goodness. For we have not only, not merited them by any thing we have done ; but were obnoxious to his just displeasure, and the effects thereof, by sinning against him. So that he might in perfect consistence with equity, not only have withheld all these

these blessings from us, but visited our iniquities with all the opposite evils ; yea, with far more terrible ones, not only in this world, but in another. Surely, neither we, nor the nation in general, are so righteous before God, that he was bound in justice to confer these blessings on us : Would to him ! we were not so unrighteous, that he might, without any imputation on the equity of his providence, have brought on us the most grievous calamities, as he might unquestionably have done. Since, therefore, God has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities ; but bestowed on us so many invaluable mercies, we are obliged in all sense and reason to own, that they are the effects of his mere grace and favour. Nor is it possible we should be duly thankful to him for these blessings, as sinful creatures ought to be, without taking into consideration our unworthiness of them. And in proportion to the sense we have of our unworthiness, and the grace of God in conferring any mercies on us, will ordinarily at least be the degree of our gratitude to him.

LET me therefore, as a necessary means of raising your gratitude to a due height, and proper fervour, exhort you to reflect seriously on your own sins in particular, on the sins of this land, and of the nation in general ; on the impiety and infidelity, the prophaneness and sensuality, the pride and luxury, the selfishness and venality, the injustice and oppression, which have been in the midst of us. Without this, tho' you may possibly have a deep sense of the worth and importance of these blessings, and may firmly believe that God is the author of them, yet you cannot

not be so thoroughly thankful for them as you ought to be ; not having a just idea of our unworthiness of them, and of the goodness and grace of God in bestowing them. But such reflexions will have the most direct, and, by God's blessing, an effectual tendency, to awaken in you the warmest sentiments of gratitude to him: I say, the warmest sentiments of gratitude to him : for you are to remember, that religious thankfulness does not consist merely in speculation ; in having right notions and conceptions of the blessings we enjoy, of their greatness and value, of our unworthiness of them, and the mercy of God in bestowing them ; but in corresponding operations of the heart and mind towards our almighty, and most gracious Benefactor. This introduces the fourth particular mentioned above, *viz.*

4thly. THAT religious thankfulness implies in it the exercise of devout affection towards God, or the internal acts of blessing and praising him for his goodness. Hereby it is intended to ascertain the true and proper nature of religious gratitude, by distinguishing it from two things, which may possibly be mistaken for it. First, from the mere sensation of joy, or gladness of heart, on account of the blessings which we enjoy. This is common to good and bad men ; atheists themselves may possibly rejoice even more than the most pious men, in having the means of worldly and temporal happiness ; because their only portion being in this world, they of consequence set an higher value on these worldly goods than they, whose chief treasure, and whose hearts are in heaven. Religious gratitude is quite a different thing from this joy and rejoicing, which terminate in the good things possessed, or enjoyed by us. God, as was observed above, is the object thereof ;

thereof ; and it consists in devout affection towards him ; in the emotions of the heart, in blessing and praising him, as the author of these benefits. And both these things together, I mean the perception of good, in conjunction with the internal act of blessing God as the giver of it, make up the true scripture idea of “rejoicing in the Lord.” But by the definition above, religious thankfulness is distinguished, not only from the mere sensation of joy on account of the blessings received ; but also from a mere speculative notion in the head, and all the operations of that which is peculiarly and strictly called, the intellectual or rational faculty in man ; the heart or affections, as distinguished therefrom, being the proper seat of it.

SOME may perhaps think this, at best, a needless refining, if not an unintelligible subtlety, or unmeaning distinction, like many others which, first and last, have darkened religion, under the pretence of explaining it. For it may be asked, if a man is fully sensible of the worth of those blessings which he enjoys ; if he is fully persuaded that God is the author of them ; if he knows his unworthiness of them, and therefore is rationally convinced that they flow from the divine grace and bounty, is he not therefore truly thankful to God for them ? What is there still wanting to make him religiously thankful ? I answer, nothing—but the thing itself ; that which is the very essence and substance of this duty, or virtue : such a man has all those just and rational conceptions of things, which are necessary in order to his being duly thankful, and are a proper foundation for the exercise of gratitude towards God. But still no opinion, no judgment which the mind, or rational faculty, forms concerning the
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goodness

goodness and mercy of God, however true and just, is itself religious thankfulness. That consists, as before observed, in certain operations of the heart, corresponding to these rational and just conceptions of the head, or intellectual faculty ; in devout and warm affection, ascending to God like incense from the altar, in an internal ascription of blessing and praise to him on account of those mercies, for which a man was before convinced by his reason, that he was indebted to the divine goodness and grace.

THAT religious gratitude implies such affection of the heart, distinct from all the operations or judgments of the intellectual faculty, will appear no mystery, but plain truth, if you only reflect on what passes in your mind when a friend has laid himself out to serve you, and obliged you in a high degree. On such occasions you find in yourselves, not a mere cold assent of the mind to the truth of the fact, that your friend has done thus ; but a warm affection towards him as your benefactor, in consequence of your knowing that he is so ; resulting from that knowledge, or the sense you have of what he has done for you, and therefore distinct from it. This will hold equally good, if applied to the case in hand. For religious gratitude, and gratitude to a friend, do not differ in the nature, but only in respect of the object, or the degree of them. The object of one is man ; the object of the other is God ; both of them presuppose a knowledge, or sense of favours received, or some obligation laid upon us. And if we are as sincerely thankful to God, as we usually are to a generous benefactor, we shall experience as much warmth of affection towards him, in the inward return of blessing and praise ; or rather, abundantly

dantly more, in proportion to his greater bounty, and the superior value of the blessings which he bestows upon us.

IMAGINE not, therefore, my Brethren, that you are this day properly thankful to God for his manifold mercies, merely because you highly esteem, and are rejoiced on account of them; nor yet, merely because you are rationally convinced of your unworthiness of them, and that they flow from the free grace, or unmerited goodness of God. All this you may be sensible of, and yet have an ungrateful heart; one that is a stranger to all devout affection, to all the internal acts of praising and blessing God, from whom cometh down every good and perfect gift. Nor is this only possible; it may be justly feared that many who have just speculative notions concerning the divine goodness, agreeably to what has been said above, are nevertheless actually destitute of thankful hearts; as destitute perhaps, almost, as mere sceptics or atheists. God forbid, there should be in any of us, an heart so evil; for it is mentioned as one of the blackest sins even of the heathen, whom God had not laid under so many obligations as he has us, that “when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, *neither were thankful.*†” But if you are possessed of truly grateful hearts for the blessings conferred on you, be assured that this is, in God’s account, “more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices”, or “the cattle upon a thousand hills”. But

5thly. Tho’ the heart is what is to be primarily and chiefly regarded, our gratitude ought, sometimes at least, to be expressed in the outward exercises

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† Rom. I. 21.

44. *What Effect the Mercies of God*

cises of piety ; in extolling the name of God, and singing his praises ; and this, in a public, social manner, agreeably to the text : “ Enter into his gates “ with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise ; “ be thankful unto him, and bless his name.” However, it may be taken for granted, that those of you who are here present on this joyful occasion, do not need any arguments to convince you of the propriety hereof, tho’ it is probable that many others need them. I shall not, therefore, enlarge upon this point ; for it is to you, and not to them, that I am speaking.

BUT there is one thing more, which it will not be amiss just to remind you of, before we proceed to the last general head of discourse. As all the blessings which God bestows on the sinful children of men, whether temporal or spiritual, are bestowed on the ~~same~~ plan of evangelical grace, thro’ the great “ mediator between God and men, the man “ Christ Jesus” ; and as all our prayers are to be offered up to God in his name, in order to their acceptance ; so also ought all our thanks and praises for blessings received, to be rendered thro’ him, to the “ One God and Father of all” ; in conformity to the apostolic direction & admonition ;—“ Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks “ always for all things unto God and” [or even] “ the Father, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ*†.”

III. LET me now, as was proposed in the last place, exhort you to live answerably to the obligations which God has laid us under, by bestowing these blessings upon us. For surely you cannot suppose, we shall have balanced our accounts with him, or
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† Eph. V. 19, 20,

made him all the returns which his manifold goodness and mercies claim from us, only by the religious observation, and the thanksgivings of this day ; even tho' we should not be deficient in any of the duties of it, whether internal or external, private or public. If we are properly thankful, and give to God this day " the glory due unto his name", thus far it is well ; much better, I fear, than some, and perhaps than most of us, can pretend to have done. But however this may be, still you are to remember, that all the blessings which we receive from God, not only demand our thanks and praises for the present ; but are an additional obligation laid upon us to do, what we were all obliged to do before ; I mean, to devote our whole lives to his service and glory. Since therefore he has thus " crowned us " with his loving-kindness and tender mercies", we shall be doubly criminal if we do not keep his commandments ; our sins will be aggravated to a great degree. We should have been really without excuse in living wickedly, tho' God had bestowed none of these mercies upon us : For no sin whatever does, in the nature of it, admit of any excuse, properly speaking, tho' it may be attended sometimes with certain alleviating circumstances. But our guilt is greatly enhanced, when our sins are committed under the distinguishing smiles of heaven ; under many and great expressions of God's goodness to us, and manifestations of his concern both for our temporal and spiritual welfare ; such as we have been considering.

ALL these are designed, either to lead sinners to repentance, or to excite good men to greater fidelity and diligence in the service of God. If therefore there are any present, who have hitherto lived in the violation of his holy commandments, let me admonish them

46 *What Effect the Mercies of God, &c.*

them by these mercies of God, now to forsake their sins; to cease to do evil, and learn to do well. For “thinkest thou this, O man,—that thou shalt
“escape the judgment of God? Or despisest thou
“the riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and
“long-suffering, not knowing that the goodness of
“God leadeth thee to repentance?” Happy will it be for thee now, happy forever, if instead of despising the goodness of God, and counteracting its tendency, thou art awakened thereby to a sense of thy duty, and brought to a thorough compliance with it. But miserable wilt thou be, both now and hereafter, if still, “after thy hardness and impenitent
“heart, thou treasurest up unto thyself wrath against
“the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous
“judgment of God; who will render to every man
“according to his deeds*.” Yea, on this sad supposition, which I do not make without reluctance, these very mercies and blessings will, in some sense, rise up against thee another day, and aggravate thy condemnation; and so, in the issue, be turned into the heaviest curses! Flee, therefore, from the wrath to come, and lay hold on the hope still set before thee, that so iniquity may not be thy ruin!

By these same mercies of God, let good men, his faithful servants, be admonished to persevere in well doing, and to be still “followers of God as
“dear children”: and not only to persevere, but to perfect “holiness in the fear of God”. For doing thus, an entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into that eternal kingdom and glory, to which he has called you by Jesus Christ. God has far greater blessings laid up in store for them that love him, than those for which we are this day praising him; such as
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† Rom. II. 3, 4. * Ver. 5, 6.

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, even to imagine, in this dark estate; “this present evil world”. For “God who
“is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he
“loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath
“quickened us together with Christ; (by grace ye
“are saved)—that in the ages to come he might shew
“the exceeding riches of his grace, in his kindness
“towards us thro’ Jesus Christ †.”

BUT there are divers things, of which I would more particularly remind you all in common, taking occasion for it from the particular nature of those mercies and blessings, which were represented to you in the morning under several heads. Each of these will afford some remarks and reflections, most or all of which, will tend to promote christian piety and virtue. Let us begin

I. WITH the mercies spoken of under the first head; such as the preservation of the life of our gracious King, and of the British government, of our civil and religious liberties, &c. The consideration of which blessings, naturally suggests the following reflections. It may serve to remind us, in the first place, of the duty of loyalty, and of submission to that government under which we have the happiness to live; not only of submission to the government established, in general, but to “every ordinance of
“man, for the Lord’s sake: Whether it be to the
“King as supreme; or unto Governors, as unto
“them that are sent by him for the punishment of
“evil-doers, and for a praise to them that do well‡.” Surely it becomes us, as we may well do under so excellent a form of government, and under the reign

† Eph. II. 4—7.

‡ 1 Pet. II. 13, 14.

reign of so good a King, to “ lead quiet and peaceable lives”; to obey the laws, and all the legal commands of our civil rulers, not being sinful. It would be very inconsistent and incongruous for us, who pretend to be thankful for the above-mentioned blessings; to be turbulent, or seditious, or bad subjects in any respect. Yea, it would be highly criminal, not in us only, but in any other persons, who have the happiness of living under such a free, mild government as the British, and a King, with whom the laws are so sacred as they have ever been with his present majesty, either to raise or countenance any kind of rebellion, or sedition in the state. It becomes us all in general to be, not only peaceable, and content with the privileges we enjoy, but thankful for them; to honour the king and pray for him, and for the continuance of so good a government.

ANOTHER reflection, no less naturally arising here, is, that the privileges we enjoy under the British government, being so precious and invaluable, we are bound in reason and duty, if there should ever be occasion, to stand up in the defence of them against any illegal encroachments or usurpations, whether as to things spiritual or temporal: For our legal privileges extend to both. It would be highly criminal in us tamely to suffer them to be wrested from us, if it was in our power to prevent it; or to give place, even “ for an hour”, to them who should have the hardness to attempt it. This would infer a contempt of God’s goodness in giving, and preserving to us, these privileges, amidst so many perils and dangers as they have been in, first and last; particularly under several inglorious, not to say infamous reigns of the Stewarts. In short, we cannot be true, hearty friends to the free English government, to the principle

ples of the revolution, to the present Royal Family, or to the protestant religion, without detesting tyranny ; and opposing in our several places, and to the utmost of our power, if ever there should be occasion given for it, all arbitrary, illegal proceedings, whether in church or state, whether of great men or little ones. This is scarce less the duty of every British subject, than submission to the legal * commands of their political superiours.

BUT let me finish my reflections under this head, by cautioning all not to abuse, or pervert the design of their religious liberty, by affronting and contemning all religion, and living as without God in the world. A man that “ throws firebrands, arrows and death”, and thinks to vindicate such destructive sport, by saying that he is a free-born Briton, you will allow, has no proper idea of British liberty ; but ought rather to be accounted a madman than a civilian. But mad, at least to the same degree, is every man who sports with God and religion under the same pretence. I say, at least, because the laws forbid such impiety to God, as truly as they do, burning your neighbour’s house, or murder. So that the great freedom even of the British government, were that the only thing to be considered, is no good excuse for irreligion

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* The term legal is preferred here to lawful, because it is less equivocal, and so less liable to be perverted to a wrong sense, to countenance the arbitrary conduct of those that are in power. Lawful is often opposed to sinful, or what God has forbidden : In which sense it is not true, that we are bound in conscience to obey all the lawful commands of the civil magistrate. If the command is not also legal, or such as the laws of the land authorise him to give, it may be innocently disregarded. British subjects are to obey the laws, not the capricious will of any magistrate, whether supreme or subordinate.

and impiety. But I have no great opinion of enforcing religion by human laws, any further than to keep men from hurting and destroying one another, (if that may be called religion) it being evident that such laws have, upon the whole, but very little, if any good effect. We will therefore suppose for the present, that there were no such laws in being. Does it from hence follow, that you are “without law to God”? or that you are not “under the law to Christ”, who came into this world to “redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works”? You will not say, it does. Take heed then, that you do not abuse your religious liberty; throw not all conscience aside, because you have liberty of conscience. For tho’ you live under a free government; yea, which is much more, tho’ “Christ has made us free” from every yoke of bondage, you ought to live in the faith and fear of God, and in obedience to his commands, under a sense of your being accountable to him; remembering the apostle’s admonition,—“as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servant of God. Honor all men. Love the brotherhood, Fear God. Honor the king†.” In short, the true and only use we ought to make of our religious liberty, is this: To exercise it in a free, impartial and serious inquiry into religion, that we may learn “what is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God”; and having found‡ what that is, to practise

† Pet. II. 16, 17.

‡ It is here taken for granted, that every such free and unprejudiced inquirer, will, sooner or later, be a believer in Jesus Christ, and that religion which bears his name; agreeably to his own words—“My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do” [desires to do] “his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.” Joh. VII. 16, 17.

practise agreeably to it ; to worship God, and serve him in holiness and righteousness according to his word, without regarding what are the vulgar, prevailing opinions and practices ; which, by the way, have generally been wrong, at least in some points. But

2. LET us proceed to those mercies which were referred to a second class, in the foregoing discourse ; viz. the successes given the last year to the arms of their Britannic and Prussian Majesties : On which we may make a few brief reflections. It appears from hence, that those who are compelled to engage in a war for their own defence, having a good and just cause, may reasonably hope for success, even tho' their enemies are far more numerous, and to human appearance much stronger than they. The French are generally considered, and may perhaps be justly looked on, as the most potent nation of Europe. They compelled his Britannic Majesty, by their repeated encroachments and hostilities, to engage in a war for the security of his American dominions. But tho', all circumstances considered, they may be the stronger, it is manifest the battle, the success, has not of late been to the strong ; nor indeed has it been so on the whole, since the war began. God in his providence has apparently given success to our righteous cause against superior numbers : For at least as to numbers, there is no dispute ; nor would there be any room for doubt in other respects, were it not for the superiority of the royal navy of Britain. But the present remark is grounded chiefly on the successes and victories of his Prussian Majesty : Who, tho' hemm'd round with many enemies mightier than himself, closely united and leagued for his destruction, has hitherto cut his way thro' them, has baffled their designs, and triumphed over them thro' God, who has

“taught his hands to war, and his fingers to fight.” So great is the disparity between him and his enemies, and so extraordinary his victories and triumphs over them, that we seem almost to be carried back to the age of Joshua, wherein “one chased a thousand, “and two put ten thousand to flight.” And if we should consider this hero of his age as fighting, in part, for the support of true religion, or christian * liberty, against the antichristian persecutors of the church of God; we could hardly forbear ranking him among those renowned warriors, “Gideon and Barak, and “Sampson, and Jephthae, and David—who thro’ faith “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness—stopped “the mouths of lions—escaped the edge of the “sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed “valiant in fight, and put to flight the armies of the “aliens.” The conquests and successes of this monarch show, in the clearest light, the power of God, and the weakness of man independently of him. They shew us that if God be for us, we need not “fear what man can do against us”; and that
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* It must be acknowledged that religion is, at most, but a secondary motive of the war in which his Prussian Majesty is engaged. However, his abhorrence of persecution, and strong attachment to the principles of religious liberty in their utmost extent, appear in part from the following quotations. After speaking of the religious sects in his dominions, he concludes with these words, at once so becoming a noble mind, a great prince, and a good christian: “All these”, says he, “live here in “peace, and contribute alike to the prosperity of the state; “for there is never a religion that differs greatly from the “rest, in respect of morality. Hence they may be all alike “to the government, which of course leaves every man at “liberty to go to heaven which way he pleases. All that is “required of them is, to be peaceful and good subjects. “False zeal is a tyrant that depopulates provinces; tolera- “tion is a tender mother that makes them flourish.” *Dissertation on superstition and religion, added to the Memoirs of the House of BRANDENBOURG. By the present King of Prussia.*

wherever there is a righteous cause, whatever disproportion, almost; there may be in numbers, or apparent strength, there is ground to hope for success: For “there is no restraint against the Lord, to save
“by many or by few.”

WE are moreover taught from hence, both where to place our trust and dependence for a happy issue of the present war, and where not to place it. “Cursed be the man that trusteth in man”, saith the prophet, “and that maketh flesh his arm, and
“whose heart departeth from the Lord”.— “It is
“better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence
“in princes.” Tho’ we have hitherto been successful in general the year past, we have not yet
“put off the harness”; the war is not yet brought to a conclusion, and possibly may be far from it. Perhaps it may soon take as different a turn, as it did about the beginning of the present year; a turn, as calamitous to us, as that was favourable. This depends not on any man, or number of men, “whose
“breath is in their nostrils”; and who have no wisdom, nor courage, nor power, independently of Him, who worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will; who governs winds, and waters, and seasons, and health, and disease, and all things, according to his pleasure; before whom “all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing.” We cannot therefore be at any loss, in whom it becomes us to place our hope and dependence, with respect to a continuance of our successes. If God arise, his enemies shall be scattered: all they that hate him shall flee before him; and the eagle of victory, like the martial hawk, † will “stretch her wings” and fly, only by his wisdom and command, whether
toward

† Job XXXIX. 26.

toward the north or “toward the south”, alighting where he has ordained a place for her.

To finish our reflections on this heard : Since our whole, or, which comes to much the same thing, our ultimate dependence, is on almighty God, this admonishes us, by humble prayer and supplication, to seek his farther blessing on the British counsels and arms, and military operations ; And, at the same time, shews us the importance of reforming our ways, and working righteousness. For tho’ the prayer of the upright is God’s delight, he heareth not sinners ; but even the prayers of the wicked and hypocritical, tho’ the most holy and sacred of any thing which belongs to them, are said to be “sin”, and an “abomination unto the Lord”.

3dly. LET us now proceed to the blessings which were referred to the last head ; viz, those which relate more particularly and immediately to ourselves ; the fruitfulness of the past season, our plenty, health, &c. On which the following reflections may, I hope, be proper and useful—How incongruous would it be for us to consume upon our lusts, those bounties of divine providence, for which we at least pretend to be religiously thankful ? Doubtless, if we are so in reality, we shall make conscience of observing the exactest rules of reason, sobriety and moderation, in the use of them from time to time ; and whether we eat or drink, or whatever we do, do all to the glory of God, on whom “all eyes wait, that he may give them their meat in due season”.

MOREOVER ; from a consideration of the goodness of God to us, those of us who have ability, should be excited to the exercise of charity and liberality towards

wards the poor and necessitous. For even in times of general plenty, there will be some such unhappy persons. "The poor", says our Saviour, "you have always with you". Nor is there any better or more substantial way of outwardly manifesting our gratitude and love to God, than that of shewing mercy to the proper objects of our charity. "If any of you have this world's goods, says the Apostle, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him"? Wherefore, while we ourselves bless God for the care he has taken of us, let the blessing of him that is ready to perish come upon us" for our alms, and seasonable relief. This will have a tendency to draw down further blessings on ourselves. "He hath dispersed abroad, he hath given to the poor; his righteousness remaineth forever"; and "the liberal soul shall be made fat." We ought to account ourselves honoured by God in being made, as it were, his almoners, to distribute his bounty to the needy. And, which will be a farther motive to the truly pious, this will cause, in many persons, thanksgiving to God as the supreme author of the reliefs and supplies which they receive from us, the instruments of his munificence.

To conclude: While we bless God for our health, let us be admonished to improve it aright, by making preparation in season for another world, instead of neglecting this preparation till a time of sickness, in many respects unsuitable for such business, at least to begin it. The body being disorder'd, generally disorders and enfeebles the mind in some degree; and often quite incapacitates it for any rational acts, and most of all for religion; which being altogether a
"reasonable

“reasonable service”, peculiarly requires the exercise of the rational faculties. For I am speaking of the christian religion, not the religion of that antichristian church, wherein ignorance is both the mother and nurse of devotion; and whose usurpations are chiefly supported by the blindness and infatuation of the people.

BUT waving this consideration, you cannot be insensible that man, even in his best estate, “is altogether vanity”; and that you may be suddenly taken out of the world, without any previous warning, or time for preparation. There have lately been several remarkable examples hereof in this town; and one, in a person† of such distinction as has naturally attracted a general attention. How loud, how vocal, is such a dispensation of providence? How plainly, even like the heavenly ray and words of inspiration, does it “charge them that are rich, not to trust in uncertain riches?” them that are strong and healthy, not to trust in uncertain health; “but in the living God, who giveth them all things richly to enjoy?” It is like the voice which the prophet heard from heaven, crying, “All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth,—surely the people is grass”. It may be justly apprehended that many people have been taken out of the world as suddenly, tho’ far less prepared, than the person alluded to above; who was generally esteemed an upright man, and a sincere friend to religion. However, it is God’s prerogative to judge men. My view in reminding you of this instance of sudden death, is to show you how very precarious
both

† Charles Apthorp Esq; a merchant of the first rank on the continent.

both your health and lives are ; and hereby to excite you, by the blessing of God, so to number your days, that you may, in season, apply your hearts unto wisdom ; not to rely on your present health and strength, but to improve them in working out your salvation ; that so, how soon or unexpectedly soever “ the earthly “ house of this your tabernacle may be dissolved, “ you may have a building of God, an house not “ made with hands, eternal in the heavens”. Blessed, thrice blessed are all the dead, who die in the Lord, whenever they die, and whatever circumstances may attend their death : “ Yea”, saith the spirit, for they rest “ from their labors, and their works do follow “ them.” They shall surely have a part in the resurrection of the just, thro’ Him that hath “ abolished “ death, and brought life and immortality to light “ thro’ the gospel” ; while others, however great or honourable in this world, shall arise to shame and “ everlasting contempt.” And He that both died and rose again, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living, hath said, “ Behold, I come quickly, “ and my reward is with me, to give to every man “ according as his work shall be”.——“ Blessed are “ they that do his commandments, that they may “ have right to the tree of life, and may enter in “ thro’ the gate into the city. For without are dogs, “ and forcerers, and whoremongers, and idolaters, “ and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

A M E N.



Leptocarpus











