

A
DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED,

On the 18th Day of December, 1777, the Day of

PUBLIC THANKSGIVING,

APPOINTED BY THE

HONOURABLE

CONTINENTAL CONGRESS,

By the Reverend *ISRAEL EVANS*, A. M.
Chaplain to General *POOR*'s Brigade,

And now published at the Request of the General
and Officers of the said Brigade,

To be distributed among the Soldiers,

GRATIS.

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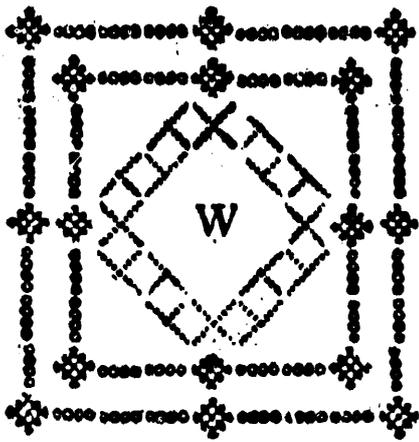
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A DISCOURSE, &c.



WHEN we turn our thoughts inward, and consider the constitution of our bodies, together with all the powers and faculties of our souls: When we extend our views to the various parts of creation, and contemplate the beauty and harmony, as well as the evident signs, which every where appear, of an All-wise and righteous government; we say, for we cannot but say, there is one most wise and omnipotent being, who governs the whole universe, and superintends the actions of all his creatures. To deny this, would be to deny and contradict our reason, and divest ourselves of the honour and dignity of intelligent creatures. The government of mankind, and the preservation of the numerous and various parts of the world, have in all ages appeared so arduous, and so much above the power, wisdom, and fore-sight of finite beings; that even the unenlightened heathens have represented to themselves, one necessary and omnipotent being, seated upon the throne of the universe, giving laws to all his creatures, with infinitely more ease and success, than ever the most wise and exalted earthly monarch could to the most obedient and submissive nation. If this sentiment is not enforced by reason and experience beyond contradiction; let us hear the majestic declaration of the sacred scriptures, which say. “ And I blessed the most high,
and

and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation. And all the inhabitants of the earth, are reputed as nothing : and he doth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth : and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, what doest thou? For the kingdom is the Lord's, and he is the Governor among the nations." The voice of nature and revelation, both assure us, that all things were created for the manifestation of God's glory. " The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." But if the whole creation were left to itself, and all things should run into that confusion and disorder, which must end in their total dissolution ; we are unable to see the glory of God promoted. Therefore the most natural conclusion is, that as God has created all things, he also governs all things : as he is our creator, so he is our preserver, and governor. " For in him we live, and move, and have our being. By him all things consist, and he upholdeth them by the word of his power." It is infinitely easy for God to govern the world, which he has made, and to dispose of all things, agreeable to the utmost wisdom, justice and goodness. And however objections may arise, in the minds of some men, from a partial and short sighted view of the government of God ; so that they may be ready either to say with the fool : " There is no God, or to doubt the certainty of his providence and say. " Doth God know, and is there knowledge in the most high ?" Yet reason and revelation teach us, that " The Lord reigneth, who is wise in heart, and mighty in strength ; and that when clouds and darkness are round about him : righteousness and judgment are the habitation of his throne." This doctrine of
God's

God's providence is carried to the greatest perfection, and is most comfortably established by our Saviour Jesus Christ. "Are not (says he) two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered." Nothing but a prevailing conviction of the truth of this great doctrine, of God's preserving care and governing power, could ever rationally justify and enforce the great and pleasing duties of prayer, praise and thanksgiving. For if God were absent, or disregarded us, in vain should we raise our hearts and our hands, in humble supplications for the removal of approaching danger; and we should in vain joyfully exalt our voices, in united praises, for some remarkable deliverance and unmerited mercy. But why should I any farther pursue this subject? The presence of this assembly seems to confirm this truth more undeniably, than my voice is able.

This day, agreeable to the resolution of the honourable Continental Congress, our most worthy General has called us together, to return most humble and hearty thanks, to almighty God, for the many instances of his unmerited goodness, unto us in general, as a nation, and in particular, for the very signal and compleat victory obtained, over a potent army of Britons. And I imagine, in the order for the convention of this assembly, I hear the words of my text repeated, and pointed out to me. Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. And should I forget these words, and the intention of our meeting, and spend your time in hearing military panegyrics on your wisdom and valour, though you are truly entitled to more praise than my feeble tongue can express: were I to invade the rights of heaven, and arrogate to ourselves all the praise of our late signal victory; I foresee that

that I shall draw upon myself the just censure of every wise and virtuous man; disappoint your hopes and expectations, and, as far as my influence will go, turn this day's meeting into a curse. For the glory of all conquests and acquisitions, should be ascribed to God, as due to him alone: therefore we read, that when the people gave a shout, saying, of Herod, "It is the voice of a god, and not of a man; immediately the angel of the Lord smote him, because he gave not God the glory: and he was eaten of worms, and gave up the ghost."

The words of David, in the hundred and fifteenth Psalm, are therefore the words of my text, and a proper guide to lead us to give all praise and glory to God. They were pronounced immediately after a recollection of God's miraculous power and goodness, shewn unto the Israelites; and was intended to shew the dependence men have upon God, and that he is the principal director of all happy and successful events. Time would fail me to enumerate all the reasons which we personally have to praise and glorify God. In order that our praises might keep pace with our mercies, every moment of our lives should be devoted to his service, and all our actions directed to his glory.

The words, which are the ground of what shall be said at this time, were drawn from the grateful heart of the king of the Jews, by public mercies, and were of national concern. I shall therefore endeavour to follow the spirit and intention of them, in a view somewhat similar, and speak of those mercies which have been conferred upon us, and in which this great continent is interested. Let us ascribe unto God all power, wisdom, and goodness, and say, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory given, who hast been pleased with unerring wisdom to direct, with unconquerable power to support, and with never failing goodness to bless the United States of America, in all their wise counsels,

sels, and successful enterprizes, since the commencement of the present war.

I need not inform you, Gentlemen and Fellow Soldiers, that many years past the language of Britain corresponded with the language of Pharoah and his cruel task-masters, who said, "come let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply." But when by the blessing of Heaven, we were enabled to elude all the snares which were so thick planted, both in Britain and America, to deprive us of our freedom; and a corrupt and tyrannical court found that arms alone could promise them any success in their unjust and inhuman designs of subjugating a free people: then we saw the arms of the king of England turned against us, and threatening the ruin and destruction of every thing, worthy the notice of a brave and wise man. Thus we beheld the invincible navy, which claimed the sole dominion of the ocean, invading our country, and distressing our cities. Thus came forth the veterans of Britain, who had been so accustomed to conquer, that victory seemed bound to their arms: and then we saw the boors and mercenary, half-starved Germans, lured, like hungry harpies, and ravenous wolves, by the hope of preying upon the lives and estates, of the innocent Americans. But were all these warlike preparations necessary for the conquest of America, when unprepared for hostilities? Surely it might have been reasonably supposed, that all this pomp and majesty of war, was destined against some powerful nation or army, accustomed to mark their way with destruction, blood and carnage. How then must our thankful amazement be excited, when we reflect upon our happy situation as freemen, and find ourselves able to say, we are not slaves: tho' oppression made such near and dreadful approaches to us, when in our most defenceless state.

Who, that is a friend to virtue and liberty, will
a moment

a moment hesitate to give glory to God, for his providential care and goodness, in preserving us out of the hands of the enemy, who seemed ready to swallow us up, when we were without arms or ammunition, without ships of war, and without the skill or love of war. For these and innumerable instances of public mercy, we desire most heartily to praise God, and say, "Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto the wisdom of our counsellors, that their counsels and wisdom have surpassed our most sanguine expectations. Not unto our commanders and armies tho' they have so often behaved themselves valiantly, and conducted wisely ; yet, give glory, not unto them, but unto the name of God ; for he it was who taught our senators wisdom, and girded our soldiers with courage and strength. It is the Lord our God who has fought for us, in every successful battle, and has hitherto supported our righteous cause, against those who hate us without any just reason. Truly we may say, oh sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things : his right hand, and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. The Lord hath made known his salvation : his righteousness hath he openly shewed in the sight of our enemies. He hath remembered his mercy towards us ; all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. What shall we render unto the Lord for disposing a foreign nation, to shew favour unto us, and supply us with such a plentiful apparatus of war ? How much have we acquired by sea, where our expectations were the least ? But more particularly, let the voice of this day continue to ascend, in most hearty thanks, to Almighty God, for his great goodness in qualifying, and raising up so many worthy and wise men, to form the grand council of the United States of America, and be the guardians of our rights and privileges. Oh give thanks unto the Lord our God, for a brave general, the commander

mander in chief of all our armies. A general possessed of such unparalleled fortitude and patience, and not more patient, than meek, virtuous and humane. And if I am permitted to say any thing of a character, which so much outshines the brightest encomiums the writer can offer: I will venture to say, that if you search for faults, in the conduct of that true patriot, and most excellent hero, you will find none, unless you call it a fault to exercise compassion and lenity towards those negligent and guilty offenders, who by their sloth and inattention to the best orders, counteract the wisest plans, and frustrate the best schemes of military discipline and policy. But this humane excess of goodness is found in the most noble and exalted souls. Not to enumerate the various and evident signs of an interposing providence, which enabled us to extricate ourselves out of imminent danger, or to check the enemy's rage, even when our armies have been almost disbanded.

Methinks I see the illustrious Washington, with but two or three thousand men, retreating indeed before 10 or 12000 of the enemy; but yet checking thir progress thro' the country, and when reinforced by the brave militia, turning upon the enemy, killing some, captivating many, and obliging so large an army to retire, and confine themselves, during the whole winter, within narrow bounds. Oh America, give glory to God, for such a faithful hero! Then you saw him greatest when most without your aid. Collected in himself, he greatly resolved, with his few faithful followers, to be the barrier of liberty, or fall in its defence. Oh sons of America, let it not again be said, that you seemed to desert liberty and Washington: But God supported and preserved him and us all; so that instead of being conquered, we gained strength and knowledge, in the art and means of defence, during the two last campaigns: And having now nearly concluded the third

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campaign, although victory has not fully attended us in every enterprize, the prospect is glorious, and far exceeds our former expectations or hopes, and calls us to praise God, and say, blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us to be a prey to our enemies.

Had any one, three or four years past, ventured to predict, that we should have been able to have lived thro' such a tempest of war, and at length arrive within sight of the haven of conquest and peace; we should have called him an enthusiastic prophet of madness and folly, and said he was unacquainted with the swelling billows of British wrath; but having stemmed the torrent of oppression and tyranny, tho' many times with no other hope of success, than that which arose from a view of the mercy and justice of God, and an humble expectation, that he would pity and vindicate a people, who were marked by their enemies for the slaughter of oppression and tyranny, because of their noble defence of the righteous cause of God and mankind. The Lord exerciseth righteousness and judgment, for all that are oppressed. We now look back with pleasing amazement, and say, this is the work of the Lord, and marvellous in our eyes. Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto our wisdom and fortitude, not unto our perseverance, patience, and courage, tho' they have been much greater than we could have flattered ourselves they would be; yet not unto us, but unto God give the glory. I have been unwilling to shew a narrowness of soul, by confining the praises of this day, to the subject of our glorious conquest and finished campaign, in the northern department: When our souls are filled with an overflowing sense of the goodness and mercy of God; we know not where to begin or where to end our ascriptions of praise and thanksgiving. Many have been the streams of mercy, which have refreshed our drooping spirits, since the
beginning

beginning of the present war, and often has our good God put songs of praise in our mouths ; but this day, in the view of our late signal victory, more than all the streams, of past mercy and goodness, seem to be united, in constituting one copious river of goodness and love, and overflowing, and exceeding our highest praise and gratitude. Like the Israelites of old, we beheld the enemy subdued, and in silent and inexpressible admiration, adored the Lord who wrought such a wonderful deliverance, and with them we now say : Thy right hand, oh Lord ! is become glorious in power ; thy right hand, oh Lord ! hath dashed in pieces the enemy.

But let us now turn our attention to what may be considered the more immediate subject of this day's praise, namely our conquest over the northern British army. Behold the enemy leave Canada, ten thousand in number. Our strong fortresses are evacuated. The enemy take possession of them, and afterwards pursue our little divided army, tho' not without a spirited opposition. Our army being so much inferior to the enemy, were not able to protect the country, and stop the progress of the British army, now flushed with success, and tempted to believe, that where ever they turned their arms, submission must meet them, or opposition be turned into flight. Nothing then seemed to hinder them from suddenly taking possession of the state of New York, from one end to the other. In this extremity of our public affairs, it was the season of Jehoyah's merciful appearance ; and the God whom we this day adore, turned their counsels into foolishness, and set bounds to their rage. When the language of the enemy was, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil : my lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them : God secretly said unto them

them, as he did to the waves of the sea, hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther.

That the hand of God, was in this, has been acknowledged by the most profane, in common with the wise and virtuous. For what but the providence of God could dispose a commander, of sense and experience, to divide his army, and leave the grand object which he first had in view, when there appeared nothing to prevent him, from forming a junction with another army of Britain. Who inspired the inhabitants and militia of Bennington, with resolution to oppose the enemy, with such incredible bravery, and to kill and captivate so great a number of them? Who inspired the garrison and militia to the westward, to make so bold and resolute a defence, to defeat the enemy there, stop their incursions, and save that part of the country from savage barbarity? Courage and resolution are as much the gifts of God, as any qualifications whatever; for without him the greatest natural courage may be turned in fear. At that time, when our army were few in number, why did not the enemy improve the opportunity they had, of marching thro' the country, before we had time to collect, and oppose their progress, as we have since done? Under the checks and influence of divine Providence, the opportunity, which was so precious, being past, they suffered our army to collect, under the command of the brave and honourable general Gates. And when we had so increased in numbers, as to be able to advance, and meet the enemy in the field of battle, did not the Lord teach our hands to war, and our fingers to fight, so that many of the enemy fell down slain and wounded. Nor was the bravery of officers or men less in the second conflict, when the dead of the enemy were strewed over the field, and the living chased to their strong holds. There you saw the intrepid Arnold, like the thunder bolt of war, hurling confusion,
 fear

fear and death, among your terrified flying foes: and then fearless, and impatient of delay, you followed your hero, and forced the strong lines of the enemy. Oh noble ardour for victory! brave contempt of death, where American liberty was the prize contended for! In vain did the enemy attempt to escape, tho' they might have said, as the Egyptians did, let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them, against us. However not to enter into more particulars, save that by the wisdom and perseverance of the commander, and the vigilance and bravery of the officers and men, the enemy were neither able to flee from our army, nor yet dared to risk a battle, nor able to subsist themselves; thus the final grand result of all, was, that they were by the good providence of God, delivered into the hands of our army, and that without the loss of more precious American blood. And so manifest has been the hand of God, in all these transactions, that I have met with none, whose sentiments do not very fully correspond with the language of the text. Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth's sake. Behold, I am this day happy enough to remind you, of what history has scarcely a parallel. A potent army and five generals, either cut off, or totally subdued in one campaign. How great the addition which is made to our ordnance, our arms and military stores; all these are acquisitions not unworthy our most grateful acknowledgment.

Thus far I have endeavoured to follow the spirit of the text, and, as much as possible, imitate the psalmist, in the enumeration of many instances of God's goodness, and in humbly acknowledging that his hand has been in all. As far as I have succeeded in this way, so far, I trust, I have not done amiss. David, who was as great a warrior, and as valiant a prince, and as eminent a saint, as ever
lived

lived or filled a throne, ascribed all his success to the over-ruling providence of God. Never had a man more reason to boast of his wisdom and success in war. In all his wars, success waited upon his courage, and victory paid homage to his sword; yet he says, "I will not trust in my bow, neither shall my sword save me. Thou art my king, oh God! through thee will we push down our enemies; thro' thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us. It is God that girdeth me with strength, and maketh my way perfect. Some trust in chariots, and some in horses; but we will remember the name of the Lord our God."

For less success than we have obtained, the ancient Romans and Grecians said, let us hasten to the temples of the gods, and thank them for all their goodness and favour. And happy am I this day, when I consider, that the continental congress have so publicly shewn their wise, and humble acknowledgment of the superintendence of the king of kings, and lord of lords, and have invited every friend of virtue and liberty, throughout this vast continent, to adore the one living and true God, and praise him for every merciful interposition of his providence; to be submissive to every stroke of his righteous hand, confessing that his judgments are lighter than our sins have deserved, and that in the midst of deserved wrath, he has been pleased to remember mercy.

Happy am I also to find, that we are pleased to be seen uniting with our brethren, in praising God for that success which you have been so instrumental in gaining. Oh happy victory which gives new life to the friends of liberty every where. This will raise the dignity and importance of our ambassadors in Europe, and make us more and more respectable in the eyes of the world: and shall I not hope, that this is a happy prelude to victory over all our enemies in America. Among the many blessings

blessings which God has bestowed upon us, I must not forget to take notice of the happy union, which subsisted in the army, between the troops of the different states. All discord and animosity departed, and made room for courage, friendship, and the united love of our country. Oh happy union, where all strove to excel in bravery, and the service of our common cause and interest. United we stand, divided we fall, is a truth, which reason and the sacred scriptures both support. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand. We are brethren, we have the same God to worship, and the same cause to defend. The happiness of the one state, is the happiness of the other; and as we have seen the good effects of that perfect harmony which has prevailed among us; let us cultivate it more and more, and may that man, who attempts to sow the seeds of discord and contention among us, be accounted our greatest enemy, and be banished from our society.

For a moment reflect on the divisions of the German and British troops. Nothing, under God, so much contributed to their defeat, as their internal animosities and discord: but the hand of God was in this, and set them against one another, as he did the swords of the Midianites against their fellows, throughout their whole camp. Therefore let brotherly love and friendship cement us together; let a wise and patriotic zeal fire us with true courage; May a nobleness of soul, and a love of true honour, run thro' all our actions, and may a generous emulation inspire us to excel in all the duties of the brave soldier, and the accomplished gentleman.

Hear how sweetly the Psalmist describes the beauty and happiness of union. Behold, how good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to dwell together in unity. As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. And let me add, how good and how pleasant was it,

it, for the troops of the New-York and the New-England states to dwell together in unity. And let me go farther, and say, how necessary, useful, and pleasant is it, for the brethren of the united states, to dwell together in unity. Surely for all these mercies, none will be backward to praise God.

I now enter upon a less joyful subject than the triumphs of victory; but it is to some the sure attendant of conquest. Suffer me, my dear fellow soldiers, to check, for a moment, the current of joy and gladness, and blame me not for doing honor to the memory of the brave heroes, who fell in battle, honourably defending their country. They well deserve the tribute of a tear, and are justly entitled to the honour of being recorded in our breasts, among the saviours of our country: For us and posterity they bravely fought, and bled, and died, and fell in the field of glory, and the arms of victory. With us they were acquainted, and to us they were dear. Neither officers nor soldiers shall be ungratefully forgotten by us; for they have done honour to their country, and made a generous sacrifice of their lives, to the rights and liberties of mankind. Such bravery is worthy of imitation, and gives a dignity to human nature. Follow therefore, ye men of war, their noble example, and to all your innate bravery, join love to all the friends of liberty, and true love to God, who covered your heads in the day of battle, and shielded you from death, when you saw his arrows fly so thick around you, and so many were slain. I beseech you, let not your near escape from death, harden you against God, and dispose you to forget and neglect him. He is continually doing you good; why will you offend him, and disregard the innumerable obligations you are under, to be obedient to his laws, and submissive to his will. Behold, how tenderly the Psalmist represents the care and kindness of the Lord, unto all those who put their
trust

trust in him. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flyeth by day. In the strength of God, therefore, go on ye heroes, who, in two battles with the enemy, bravely fought, and have survived those conflicts, and are happily before me this day, employed in the most reasonable and dignified service, of praising and adoring the Lord of hosts, the God of battle, who with infinite ease disposes all the events of war, and guides the seemingly casual revolutions of kingdoms and states, to his own appointed purposes. Walk in the road of glory, and the pleasant path of true virtue, and gather fresh laurels in every enterprize. Regret not your removal from the late successful command of the honourable general Gates, for here is his excellency general Washington. Look on him, and catch the genuine patriot fire of liberty and independence. Look on him, and learn to forget your own ease and comfort; like him resign the charms of domestic life, when the genius of America bids you grow great in her service, and liberty calls you to protect her. Look on your worthy general, and claim the happiness and honour of saying, he is ours. Like him love virtue, and like him, reverence the name of the great Jehovah. Be mindful of that public declaration which he has made. "That we cannot reasonably expect the blessing of God upon our arms, if we continue to prophane his holy name. Learn of him to endure watchings, cold and hardships, for you have just heard that he assures you, he is ready and willing, to endure whatever inconveniencies and hardships may attend this winter.

Are any of you startled at the prospect of hard winter quarters? Think of liberty and Washington, and your hardships will be forgotten and banished. Let Europe, nay let the world hear, that

the American army, in the defence of their country, cheerfully submitted to the inconvenience of having no other houses of accommodation, than such as their own hands reared in the depth of winter. Be encouraged, therefore, to undertake all that has been proposed to you, in the general's orders. And let me assure you, from some little experience obtained, in three campaigns, that what has appeared hard and impracticable, at a distance, has been found tolerable and easy, when the worst that could be imagined has arrived.

Surely you, who have carried the war to the very walls of Quebec, and supported it through the whole winter, will not complain of the winter's cold, in the state of Pennsylvania. But there are few of this brigade, who are not inured to war, who are not veterans in hardships, and losses, as well as in the service of their country. Let us be firm and exact in the discharge of our several duties, as soldiers and officers; and by our ardour in the common cause, by our patience and obedience, render ourselves respectable, and honourable, in the sight of our leader, and make it seem a pleasure to command us.

Allow me to say, my dear gentlemen officers and fellow-soldiers, I cannot be satisfied that we should be only as good as others; I earnestly wish to have the honour of saying, This is the best brigade in the continental service: and such a one we may be, if we will seriously consider, how much we can possibly do to serve the public, without going out of our proper sphere of action.

Base is the man, whether in the civil, ecclesiastical or military department, who contents himself with doing only so much, as will preserve him from the reproach of gross and visible neglect of duty. An army consists of many parts, and if some parts move either too slow, or not at all, the great whole will be thrown into confusion and disorder,
and

and consequently suffer. Uniformity of motion in all the parts, gives strength, and ease, and beauty, and expedition, which is so absolutely necessary in every enterprize. Not an individual person in the army, but may contribute so much, in the regular and strict discharge of his duty, to the good of the whole, that, were he separated from the army, it would suffer some real loss. Let every one therefore consider how useful, important, and honourable he may render himself, in the army and in the service of his country : and on the other hand, how mean and contemptible he must appear, if he is either unacquainted with his duty, or negligent in the performance of it.

I now pass on, having already taken notice in some instances, of your valour and success, to recommend to you the caution, which is recorded in the word of God. Let not him that girdeth on the harness, boast as him that putteth it off. The war is not yet at an end, the enemy are not all conquered, tho' so large an army has been totally subdued. We have yet an army to oppose ; but our prospect of success is glorious. How soon it may please God to deliver them into our hands, or call them away, would be rash in me to venture to tell ; but I however look forward, with an inconceivable pleasure, and view, not far off, American liberty established upon a sure and honourable foundation. Be therefore undaunted in battle, and modest in prosperity ; these dispositions of mind belong to the character of a brave and great man. But I had little reason to exhort you in either of these respects, for you have been culpable in neither. Such a generous spirit of candour and modesty, as you discovered after so signal a victory, has scarcely been known in any army. Our enemies themselves acknowledge, that when they marched in prisoners of war, none of our troops insulted them, or shewed any signs of contempt, or disrespect. Happy
was

was I to hear this from the mouth of an enemy. Your conduct, my friends and countrymen, was truly characteristic of brave and noble spirited men. Cowards insult those who fall into their hands; but the brave are compassionate, and fight no longer than there is an absolute necessity. Let general Burgoyne, and his officers generously speak the truth, and bear witness that nothing was wanting, on the part of the noble spirited general Gates, and his officers, to render them as happy as possible, and even make them forget that they were conquered. Glad have I been to find that our generous and kind treatment of prisoners, has been such, that it extorted, even from Britons this confession; that we treated them much more mildly, than we should have been treated in a similar situation. Not so have our most unhappy brethren been treated, who have fallen into the hands of general Howe. Let the mean insults which Britons have so liberally offered to officers of rank and note; officers who might have justly disdained to associate with men, who had neither principles of generosity nor humanity, and yet men who had many of them received unmerited favours from the Americans, whom they dared to insult. Let these mean and unmanly insults, let the wanton cruelties of stripping helpless women and children of the very means of subsistence, destroying their houses, and burning our towns, in a manner which nothing contributed to finish the war; let all these things convince the world that we fight with men, who are neither gentlemen, nor honourable soldiers, nor yet men possessed of the common feelings of humanity. May the dying groans, of famished soldiers, be lodged in the merciful ear of him, who hears the prisoners cry, and will be avenged upon cruel, hard hearted, and bloody men. Oh! tell it not in America, that her sons perished for want of a morsel of bread to eat; and let proclaim thro'

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the world, that Britons tortured their prisoners, even to death, by the lingering torments of hunger. And still do my ears hear of the same cruelties exercised upon those who are so unfortunate as to fall into their hands. The blood of so many already murdered, has not satiated those cruel men. Alas ! too many are now unhappy victims to their relentless rage. Oh ! merciful God, if thou hast permitted that nation suddenly to fill up the cup of their iniquity, that thy vengeance may be executed upon them ; let not, we beseech thee, their cup be filled with American blood.

Be assured my friends, that under God, the only means to procure you good treatment, are the sharpness of your swords, and your skill in war, and your invincible courage in battle. May the groans of the hunger-starved, may the griefs and indignities, sorrows and afflictions of our suffering brethren fire your minds, and spur you on to military revenge and universal conquest.

I leave the painful gloomy subject, and return to consider what improvement we shall make, of the many instances of God's goodness and mercy, which have been the subjects of this day's praise and gratitude. The improvement which Joshua, the heroic and pious leader of the Israelites made of all the victories and triumphs which they had obtained, was, that they should love the Lord their God. Take good heed therefore unto yourselves, said he, that ye love the Lord your God. All public mercies are bestowed for this very purpose, that they may be improved for the honour and glory of God. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and all thy soul, is the first, and great commandment of the law : And God in all his providential dealings with us, whether merciful or afflictive, enforceth what his law demands. David, after receiving great success, said, I will love thee, oh Lord ! my strength. Let us imitate that worthy
hero

hero and eminent saint, and manifest the thankfulness of our hearts, for the unexpected and unmerited favours conferred on us, by loving the Lord our God, and fearing to offend him in any respect. It is because the compassions of the Lord fail never that we have not been consumed. His judgments sometimes appear, and with a stern and severe voice command our obedience unto his laws, and say, "Turn ye, turn ye, for why should ye be stricken any more." But how much more frequently, do his mercies address us in the mildest accents, and invite our return unto him.

Surely when God confers mercies and favours upon us, who are not only unworthy of them, but have deserved to be severely punished: our hearts must be hard and void of every grateful feeling, if they are not melted into love and thankfulness for such great goodness. If we give ourselves time to reflect upon our past conduct, either as a people, or as individuals, we must confess that the smallest instance of God's goodness and mercy, has been truly unmerited, and far beyond any thing we could reasonably have expected. We have most basely offended our most merciful and gracious God, and that even when he has saved us out of the hands of our enemies, and loaded us with his benefits. During the present year in particular, men have too commonly lived as if there was no God to take notice, and they were not accountable creatures. Alas my friends, you cannot be ignorant that the name of the great Jehovah, has been commonly prophaned by the profligate swearer, in bold and open defiance of his laws and authority. Here might I avail myself of the tremendous curses of God's holy law, and thunder out the denunciations of heaven against wilful offenders, and say, "*Cursed shall ye be if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God: and the Lord your God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.*"

But

But I forbear, the gentle voice of mercy this day calls upon you ; I therefore pass by every thing dreadful and harsh, and beseech you to suffer yourselves to be subdued by the overflowing, diffusive goodness of God. The way to obtain greater blessings, is to be truly thankful for those we have already received.

We have this day been praising God, but, believe me, praise cannot ascend acceptably to God, unless it rise upon the wings of love and obedience. Come then, my friends, consecrate yourselves to the service of the Lord our God, humble yourselves on the account of past sins, and sin no more. Let the world know that the man who loves and fears the living and the true God, fears not any danger, in the road of his duty. For the man who puts his trust in his God, and engages in his service, is in the surest way of protection and safety ; or if it should please the Lord, to call him, by death, from the field of battle, it would only be a removal, a little sooner, from the foot stool on earth, to the throne of glory, in heaven. Learn then to endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. And, oh I beseech you ! as on my bended knees, reverence and obey the words of that Saviour, who has done and suffered so much for the salvation of such guilty sinners as you and me.

SWEAR NOT AT ALL. Think how horridly ungrateful it is to offend and affront that God, who is continually doing us so much good. Since God has so remarkably smiled upon the arms of the United States, let the sincerity of our gratitude be seen by taking heed to fear and love him ; and let me assure you, that to live soberly and righteously, is the only way to shew the thankfulness of your hearts, and the high esteem you have of all our mercies.

May

May we never forget the transactions of this day, nor the occasion of our meeting. Oh! that the united praises and prayers of this great continent, may this day meet at the throne of divine mercy and justice. May brigades of angels guard our commander thro' all the toils and dangers of war, until peace, liberty and independence are established; nor let them leave him thro' life, nor at death, but safely convoy him to the regions of eternal liberty and happiness, and seat him high, as the most renowned heroes of liberty and religion. May angels look down upon us with pleasure and approbation, while we are contending with our enemies, and grappling with every difficulty in the defence of the blessings of heaven. But above all may our adoring praise ascend up to God, so pure and sincere, that it will please him to say, concerning us, I will bless this people yet more, I will add unto them blessings tenfold more. "Your enemies shall fall before you by the sword. And I will walk among you, and will be your God, and ye shall be my people.

Let us, my friends and fellow soldiers, unite in earnestly praying, that God would engage our hearts, in sincere love and holy obedience to himself. Then may we hope and expect, that the Lord of hosts, the God of battle, will go with our armies, and lead them to new and greater victories, until at length the horrors of war, shall be terminated in a safe, honourable and lasting peace.

May God grant this, for the sake of Jesus Christ, the Son of his love; to whom with the Father, and Holy Ghost, be ascribed, as is most due, all might, majesty, and dominion, forever, Amen.