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N E H E M I A H,

*Or the Struggle for Liberty never in vain, when
managed with Virtue and Perseverance.*

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

I N

NEWBURY-PORT,

Nov. 4TH, 1779.

Being the day appointed by Government to be observed as a day of solemn Fasting and Prayer throughout the State of MASSACHUSETTS-BAY.

Published in compliance with the request of
some Hearers.

By J. Murray, A. M. V. D. M.

THE HAND OF OUR GOD IS UPON ALL THEM FOR GOOD
THAT SEEK HIM: BUT HIS POWER AND HIS WRATH IS
AGAINST ALL THEM THAT FORSAKE HIM. EZRA.

NEWBURY:

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A SERMON, &c

XX

NEHEMIAH VI. 16

And it came to pass that when all our Enemies heard thereof, and all the Heathen that were round about us saw these things, that they were much cast down in their own eyes ; for they perceived that this Work was wrought of our God.

AT a time when the trial of the community seems brought to the crisis, when hopes and fears alternately swell every bosom which can feel for the greatest interests of mankind, it gives me pleasure to see the Rulers of this State the *first* to step forth and invite their constituents, by the solemnities of this day, to repeat their appeal to the all-gracious Being who hath ever patronized the cause of virtue ; who still continues the just Arbiter of all events, and holds the ballance of universal empire in his hands.

It is a mournful evidence of gross depravity of heart, when religious services of this nature lose their solemnity by becoming ordinary and familiar : and it is a fact which no words or tears can sufficiently lament, nor any man acquainted with the public manners can deny, that our public fasts, so frequently repeated since our present calamities began, are followed with so little which has the shew of reformation, that it is no superstition to indulge a fear that they are not the fasts that the Lord has chosen ; but through frequency degenerated into an unmeaning formality : this I consider as one of the most gloomy symptoms of the times ; and should it be found continuing without abatement after this day, there is reason to dread that, however pious the design of the appointment, our pretence of observing it, without meaning any reformation in those things that have drawn down and still continue the strokes of heaven upon us, will be charged against us as a repetition of a deliberate mockery of the Searcher of all hearts.

I have ever thought it expedient, on occasions of this kind, to accommodate the services of the day to the *special* intent of its appointment ; but the Proclamation which now calls us together has not held up to view any particular purpose as more especially intended ; it seems rather designed to invite us to turn aside, and seriously reflect on the situation of our public affairs, considered in a complex and exten-

five light ; and it is in compliance with this design that choice has been made of the words now read as the motto for a few observations, in which all attention to method shall be studiously waved, and the thoughts which the present hurry of my circumstances have allowed shall be freely laid before you, in a series of Propositions ; requesting only that they may be received with the same friendly disposition for the public weal with which they are now offered as a mite, to the abundance which others are contributing to the saving this distressed country from impending ruin.

THE struggles of an oppressed people for recovering the civil and religious privileges by which God had distinguished them from all the rest of the world—the manner in which their efforts were conducted—the oppositions they met—and the success which crowned their virtuous labours are the subject matter of the whole of that book from whence the text is taken—the scope of the inspired author appears to be the setting up a lasting monument of one of the most remarkable deeds of Providence in favor of the church of old, which shou'd be to the praise of the God of Israel in all succeeding ages.

THIS, like all other parts of sacred scripture, was written for our learning ; and, if not perverted by our own fault, *will be profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*—placing an eye over it with a view to the banners of this day, I was struck

with the similarity between the case of the Jewish church, as it relates it, and that of confederated America at this time, and could not forbear the mention of it to you on the present occasion.

YET, as the story of the grand emancipation of the church of God cannot be fully learnt without joining the accounts of this author to those of the other sacred writers that have treated on the subject, and especially to the transactions related by Ezra, I shall therefore, in the sequel, take the liberty of referring you to the author last mentioned, and to the writer of this book promiscuously, and consider the text as the conclusion to which we are pointed in the whole.

PROPOSITION I. All men are by nature alike—the faculties, powers, and passions of each substantially the same: to the full exercise of these, and to the enjoyments thence resulting they are equally entitled.

SOCIALITY is essential to the human frame—absolute solitude is abhorred by every principle in it. Felicity is improved by communication—and hence from a desire of imparting the pleasure he feels, as well as of sharing in the happiness of others, man is prompted to seek society with man. To this he is urged also by a sense of the dangers to which his dearest enjoyments are exposed from the lusts of his fellows—equally with himself sunk into a depravity that regards no difference between right and wrong: against the encroachments of their ap-

petites his single arm he finds to be too feeble a defence : and hence from a new necessity he is stimulated to seek the protection of others :

THESE principles in like manner operating on the human race in common, easily introduce a social compact among them ; and thus God cements mankind into society for their greater good ; while each, consenting to submit his exercise of the several powers with which he is vested to the cognizance of the whole body, agrees to deny himself such gratifications as are deemed incompatible with the felicity of the rest, though conscious that his personal ability is sufficient separately to obtain them :

THIS may be considered as a resignation of certain rights possessed by each in their state of nature, yet as it is equally the act of every member, their entrance into society is on the footing of perfect equality—and the surrender being freely made for the security of rights esteemed more valuable, no member can be a loser by the compact—the personal privileges resigned being held by the society in trust, may still be said to be virtually enjoyed by the original possessor.

BESIDES these no other rights may be wrested from men by society—the powers vested in its officers are delegated to them as servants of the body, and meant only to secure, to exercise, and improve these to the benefit of the owners.

No man in a state of nature has a right to do wrong—therefore he can lodge no such right

in the hands of society—nor can the body protect any member in a claim of this sort: no man in either state may usurp the rights of another which that other hath not freely conceded, nor any for which, upon concession, he has not received full compensation: no man can concede the rights necessary to his being—or being a moral agent—a subject of moral government; of reward and punishment—the rights of private judgment and of conscience are therefore as unalienable as the faculty of intelligence, and the right of acquiring and enjoying property can no more be bartered away than the natural strength or genius that acquires it, or the natural life which is maintained by the acquisition; partly because the transfer cannot take place, though both parties should consent; as no man can add to the life or faculties of another by resigning to him his own; and partly because, if it could, no equivalent could be repaid in lieu of the concession.

INDEED, when any individual goes on to abuse the rights he enjoys to the destruction of those of others, he thereby threatens and endangers all; it is the plain dictate of the original compact, that the whole power of the community should then be employed to confine and disable him—and this may be continued until he has given full compensation for the injury done, and sufficient security against his future attempts: in no other way may men be reduced to a state of servitude, or retained in it; because

no power beyond this was lodged by society in the hands of its officers—nor could there be, since there was none in the society itself; and this is evident, because none such could be resigned by individuals: all exertions of power then which exceed this line are usurpation, not authority: are rebellion and treason against society, reason, nature and God: and as such, whenever they appear, ought to be resisted, defeated and punished.

THE nations therefore that support or connive at the practice of enslaving the human species, as an article of commerce, ought to be considered in a state of war against all mankind; since none can be thought willing to wear that public brand of the antichristian beast—a traffic consisting of the souls of men, unless they had previously conspired the extirpation of every remain of virtue and humanity from the face of the earth;

To this consideration due attention will, I trust, be paid by all these rising States: for should a toleration of the slave trade be now mingled with our new Constitutions, that heaven will soon corrupt the whole lump: should connivance at the practice of making or retaining slaves amongst ourselves betray a secret envy of the liberties of our fellow men, would it not entail the curse of heaven on all our struggles for the defence of our own?

PROP. II. Societies to each other, stand related no otherwise than individuals in a state of nature:

all possess the same natural rights—within the same limitations—and on the same conditions ; and there is nothing in the law of nature or the relation between them to warrant one to invade the enjoyments of another, any more than if they were private persons, utterly unconnected with society and each with other : what though it be granted that when two societies go on in wickedness the one is often found to be let loose for the punishment of the other, and sometimes even to the enslaving it ? This will never weaken the conclusion now drawn until it can be proved that the divine permission excuses the sin of the injurious party.

PROP. III. *God has set up the Jewish church as a sample of his government.* By it he has put a glass into the hands of the world : the conduct of his providence towards that people intervene at once to guide and bound the prospect of other communities in every age. In this light it would be profitable to view their history from first to last : but the business now before us would direct our eye more especially to their freedom in Canaan—their wanton abuse of their distinguishing privileges—the just punishments of this ingratitude, particularly their captivity in Babylon—and wondrous manumission from that state of bondage : and could we now attend to these particulars as they deserve, we might find them fruitful of instruction not unworthy the regard of all America at this juncture. E. g.

PROP. IV. *While the manners of a nation professing religion continue pleasing to God, he secures their liberties against all invaders: the paternal care of his providence is as a wall of fire around them: numerous were the proofs of this in the condition of the people of Israel in the days of Joshua and the Judges; how often do we there behold a weak and inconsiderable handful suffice to chastise the insolence of powerful hosts—one chasing a thousand and two putting ten thousands to flight! Benefits of all sorts are talents entrusted to men for improvement: the enjoyment of temporal good gives new force to the virtues of the virtuous man—as chrysolite looks brighter in the beams of the sun. But through the wickedness of men—the smiles of Providence are often perverted into provision for lust, as the showers that are sweet when distilled from the clouds are turned into salt when they sink in the ocean. Hence prosperity frequently becomes a poison in disguise—the sweeter in taste, the more fatal in effect: nations, as well as individuals, are generally intoxicated by it—the unthankfulness of some proclaims them barren as the sands of Africa—others, like Jethurun, have waxed fat and kicked at the hand by which they were nourished.*

PROP. V. *The honor of divine Government is concerned that national sins meet national punishments: the being of God's law requires that every transgression and disobedience receive a just recompence of reward; the justice of his*

administration necessitates that the penalty be inflicted in the same measures in which it was threatened—less will not be looked for in reason from the hand of the supreme Guardian of the interests of virtue, who by a different conduct would, more effectually than all other beings, encourage the wicked and deter the obedient. This expectation is answered by the fact : no instance of transgression ever did or will pass unpunished—the sinner himself shall pay the debt, or his surety must discharge the uttermost farthing.

There is a fitness in adapting the punishment to the crime, that so the latter might be pointed out by the former : hence it appears congruous to wisdom that they who have sinned together should suffer in like manner—and that the fellow-sinner who has been the occasion—the means or incitement to the crime, should also serve as the engine for the punishment of the criminal. Thus nations combined in a course of transgression must be dealt with collectively when it is punished. Hence we conclude that national sins must be punished in this life ; because nations, as such, exist not in the next ; and so, if not here, cannot at all be made to feel, in their national capacity, the desert of their crimes.

The goodness of God is clearly illustrated in the patience with which he forbears the stroke : the slow gradations with which his people are corrected discover all the father in the corrector's

heart; whilst the rod of correction is in his hand, what bowels! what meltings may be seen in the stripes! every touch seems interrupted with those tender interrogatives 'how can I give thee up O Ephraim! how can I deliver thee O Israel! my bowels are turned within me, my relentings are gathered together.'

THE lenity of divine government, when long abused as an argument for insult, at last is roused to indignation, and tho' judgments on earth are inflicted piece-meal, yet in the issue the incorrigible must be given up to the scourge.

THE higher the rise of national guilt, the greater is the necessity that the punishment be eminent, public, and speedy. The people highest in professions and privileges should therefore be foremost under the rod. The holiness of the Sovereign is publicly displayed when judgments begin at the house of God. In the execution of these, he often employs his worst foes, as men use the meanest slave for the vilest drudgery.

THE end of all, is to humble the sinning people, to bring them to repentance, and reformation, to these the means used will be proportioned by wisdom: not a drop of bitter will be mingled in their cup but what is necessary: not a stripe laid on which their case could dispense with: nor shall their heaviness endure one night longer than their need of it lasts:

THAT the afflictions of a professing people should not fail of accomplishing this end, the most important interests of virtue and godliness re-

quire : partly because the sins which brought them on are more highly aggravated than the sins of others : and partly because the honor of God is most concerned that things be kept *right* amongst such, lest they totally go off, and religion thus be extinct in the world, lest the ignorant and wicked should hence take occasion to call evil good, and religion itself be charged as patronizing the crimes of its professors.

WHEN the proper effect is not produced by such judgments, but the people prove hardened in their vicious ways, they have reason to expect their continuance with additional severities : because there is the same reason for continuing as for commencing them, and similar causes produce similar effects : and over and above the causes past the new degrees of hardness which have withstood the remedy already applied, make perseverance in correcting necessary to vindicate the honor of God's unchangeableness, omnipotence, and infallible wisdom in the choice of means effectual to the end. Thus we see the people of Israel, gradually threatened, and gradually punished ; but discovering an obduracy which was proof against all, they were at last led captives to Babylon, and rivetted on themselves the chain of slavery.

A people thus ripened for the judgments of heaven in vain seek protection from their rulers : the magistrate who has led on the general revolt from the ways of God, seldom fails to prove as active a tool in aggravating the woes that ensue

thereon : so Jehoiakin consents to curry favor for himself, by abetting the tyranny of the Chaldean monarch and confirming the slavery of his own captivated subjects : miserable reward indeed for the unlimited obedience they had formerly paid him !—Poor wages truly for loyalty to a king maintained by a course of rebellion against God ! Thus tyrants falling like falling angels, never choose to suffer alone, their disappointed pride, impatient of any comforts surpassing their own, makes them resolved enemies of all mankind ; and will strain every nerve to pull all down into the same ruin with themselves.

PROP. VI. *When the end of the correction has once been obtained, the deliverance of the afflicted shall suffer no delay.* Neither the depth of their distress, nor the desperateness of the case, nor the want of resources, nor the defection of friends shall retard or prevent the needed release, any more than the multitude of clouds that darken the night can defer the morning-dawn, or postpone the rising of the sun : the time to visit his distressed ones, the set time, shall come : and then the Lord need but speak the word, and it is done : when Israel does evil in the sight of the Lord we commonly see an adversary commissioned to devour his strength, but no sooner is he humbled and cries to the Author of all his help, than lo ! to his own astonishment, and often to the amazement of all around, some instrument is instantly raised up for his rescue, and by a sudden transition from the depth of woe we

behold him emerging into honor and power. Sometimes the great Deliverer chooses a pebble from their own brook to prostrate their most gigantic oppressors, and sometimes he moves the heart of an alien to restore them the liberty which their own kings overthrew. Thus CYRUS a pagan prince, unconnected by nation, and by religion an enemy, monarch of the empire that had persecuted their fathers, that had razed their cities, abolished their ordinances and levelled their temple to the ground.—CYRUS, stirred up by the Lord alone, unsolicited by men, and incapable of detriment from any plot of his prisoners, proclaims the remains of oppressed Israel, *free and independent* in their greatest privileges, those of the religion of the God of their fathers. he rouses every dormant principle of patriotism among them to exert itself on the occasion for the re-establishment of their invaluable liberties, and freely furnishes the undertakers of the work with treasures and all things necessary for the full accomplishment of the purpose. See Ezra i. throughout.

HAD a Jew refused the benefit from educational prejudice against the hand that offered it, or superstitious scruple about the lawfulness of accepting the friendship of a *power* that disowned his religion, who could have avoided charging him with atheism who would not acknowledge the hand of God in producing this happy event by means so unlikely, so contrary to the policy of nations, and so far without the line of proba-

bility ? May God punish by what hand he will ? And may he not deliver by an instrument that none but himself would have thought of ? The conduct of the man who would not embrace the joyful opportunity with humble adoration of the sovereign wisdom that brought it to pass, and cordial gratitude to the generous instrument, is a complication of iniquity : —it is hard to say whether the impiety or stupidity, the pride or ingratitude of such a demeanour has the ascendant.

PROP. VII. *When a public restoration of God's people from the calamities of oppression is to be effected, he usually inspires them with zeal proportioned to the work*—the edict for enlarging the captive tribes no sooner issues from the court at Babylon, than the joyful news is rung through all the stations of their confinement—the drooping spirits of that forlorn people, enervated by a servitude of seventy years, are animated at once, the languishing spark of patriotism is instantly rekindled in every breast, and our eyes are immediately saluted with the sight of forty two thousand and upwards determined at all hazards, at the risque of life and fortune, to regain the enjoyment of their country and liberties against whatever opposition may stand in the way : this was the work of the finger of God, Ezra i. 5. by which he prepared his way, for the still more marvellous one that followed.

THE cause of liberty is the cause of God : reason, truth, justice, religion mutually support and are supported by it : of this cause heaven has been

the patron in every age : he is incapable of changing his mind ; the cause he has been wont to plead he will never desert, he will work for it, and who shall lett him ? when this stone is at the foundation, nothing shall hinder the building to rise.

BUT the works of providence are done by means : they are ordinarily fitted before they are used—in a work of this kind every man is concerned, and it is the duty of each to do what he can : no class or station is uninterested in the matter—and none is exempted from the strongest ties to exert his utmost to have it accomplished.—resolution and fortitude are necessary to the task, and unanimity strengthens the hands that perform it : therefore when God means to bring about so great an event, he usually stirs up those principles among the people for whose behoof it is designed : the contest among them is not who shall endure the least difficulties—face the fewest dangers—or sustain the smallest loss in the public cause ; not who shall perform the least services for the community, and reap the greatest emoluments from it—not who shall realize the greatest fortune, or secure the chief honors to himself and his friends. No ! detested be the principles of conduct like this ! shall the company be respected as virtuous or wise, who all embarked in the same bottom, and perceiving themselves on the point of foundering at sea, cease every endeavour for saving the ship, and get by the ears about sharing the cargo ? then, and then only, will reason and virtue agree to espouse the

narrow pursuits of a private spirit in seasons of public distress and danger.

WHAT a contrast to this was the spirit of the Jews in the struggle described in this sacred book ! their only emulation appears to be who shall display the greatest exertions in the public cause—who shall contribute the most effectual aids—who shall offer the richest sacrifice to the security of the common weal.

SEE ! with what unanimity they pursue their plan ! how cordially each works to the hand of the other ! nor watching—nor building—nor fighting is shunned when the common cause requires it. Every man exerting his utmost for the good of the whole—and influencing all within his reach to join their endeavors for effecting the purpose. Let the coward in America's quarrel—let the backward and lukewarm in the cause of the day—let the willing subject of tyranny, and the servant of self, read over this history until the conscious blush redden his cheek, and the line of his conduct be abandoned with shame.

MAGISTRATES, and persons of rank and trust, ought to go foremost in asserting the people's freedom—these are appointed as fathers of the State, and guardians of the rights and privileges of all its members : and should such men as they flee ? Should they wink at the attempts of the evil doer, who invades any right of the people for whom they rule, and neglect or refuse to pluck from their bosom the folded

and lazy hand of their power to strike due terror on the impious aggressor—then do they renounce the chief part of their trust: whenever they decline to put forth all their powers to encourage and assist the exertions of their people in repelling the attacks of those who would injure them, the very office they sustain is the censure of their conduct, and the honors heaped on them are become the reproach of the men who wear them: no longer should they be regarded as the ordinance of God, than they endeavor to be terrors to such evil doers, and a praise and encouragement to them who, by defeating their wicked intent, deserve the character of having done well.

NOR should the ministers of religion imagine themselves excused by their office from bearing their part of the burden of the people in struggles of such importance as these: as watchmen set on the walls of Zion, it is incumbent on them to give the alarm on the approach of every danger: as heralds from God we justly expect that, in times of public trial, they will not fail to blow his trumpet and proclaim his mandates—that they will cry aloud and not spare to shew to their people and to the world, yea to all ranks of men therein, where lies duty on the one hand and sin on the other. Should magistrates withhold from their people protection against the injuries of lawless persons or States, and ministers delay bearing testimony against them—or should the people refuse obedience to

the just calls of their rulers in matters indispensable to their own defence; and their public teachers by silence appear to connive at, or countenance their crime, do they not then make the transgressions of the rest their own? and may not the consequences be charged to their account?

PROP. VIII. Between civil liberties and those of religion there is a near and necessary connexion; when the one expires, the other cannot long survive. When earth and hell conspire against the former, their ultimate purpose is to stab the latter through that side: as religious reformation must generally open the door for the removal of civil distresses, so every step in the struggle for liberty should be measured and governed by the rules of piety: success in measures which virtue abhors must not be counted a blessing—we cannot conclude the Lord on our side when we have avowedly joined his enemies.

WHEN restoration of liberty has been obtained, the first thing to be attempted, is a total reform of every practice contrary to the laws of religion: this is the end of the people's deliverance—and when it is neglected, their foundation totters: to this the Jewish adventurers were immediately led on their return home by the same inspiration that stirred them up to engage in the journey: no sooner have they regained their city than we find them unanimously employed in rebuilding the altars and temple of God—

clearing away rubbish—laying foundations—restoring the worship, and reinstalling the officers of religion : See Ezra-iii. throughout.

WORKS of this sort therefore go heavily on unlets magistrates and ministers go hand in hand in it : when restoration is to be completed, God ordinarily spirits up both these classes with fervent zeal for the cause of religion, thus Moses and Aaron acted in concert—Zerubbabel and Joshua strengthened each other : thus Ezra and Nehemiah co-operated in the work when the Lord was about to render it perfect. See Neh. iii. 3, 28. and chap. iv. 16.

SOMETIMES indeed there are found amongst the first ranks men of the same turn with the nobles of Tekoa Neh. iii. 5. who decline to put their necks to the work of the Lord. They cannot resolve to risque the frowns of the great—endanger their posts of honor—their riches and possibly their persons too for the sake of liberty which they never prized—or to defend religion whose sweets they never tasted : their honors and profits they can better secure by the ruin than the recovery of the one, and their pleasures might meet with disturbance from the other. Such men become a heavy clog to the wheels of society in perilous times : what damps will be cast on the spirits of the people within the sphere of their influence ? but the example recorded in the text last cited, has pointed out from heaven a way to get rid of this dead-weight ; the people with whom the original of all civil powers does

still reside should not scruple to recur to the original principles of their constitution—and by virtue thereof discard the unworthy incumbents from office—proceed in the work of the Lord without them—and record their crimes to the lasting infamy they have deserved.

PROP. IX. *The struggles for liberty seldom succeed unless under the direction of some patriot-head :* in a multitude of co-ordinate leaders—a multitude of opinions often distract, sometimes divide, but ever retard and weaken the operations necessary for the defence of the whole. To the energy and effect of the wisest plans the grand requisites are dispatch and secrecy : and of both of these popular councils are for the most part destitute : happy is that people for whom Heaven has reserved at such a crisis the services of a **NEHEMIAH** indeed. Rarely indeed has our depraved world beheld the rising of so glorious a star in the midst of a storm : seldom can the annals of history record the appearance of an heroe of this class—who with wisdom to plan and courage to execute, joins an assemblage of virtues equal to the task of vindicating the rights of oppressed Israel, against the force and policy of invading powers : the man who like him has patriotism enough to forego the sweets of a palace and the presence of a king, with the certain prospect of every honor and profit he wishes—for the fatigues of a camp, and the dangers of the field—to take by the hand a people oppressed by one power and despised by the rest—with-

out prospect of emolument to himself or his family—and renouncing all claim to fee or reward : See Neh. iv. 23. chap. v. 14, 19.

THE people that are blessed with a helper like this deserve to sink into the abyss of contempt, if their conduct shall ever give ground to conclude that they have forgotten that, as his duties are great and his dangers many, he has a right to their compliance in every lawful demand—and ought to be supported with their lives and fortunes.

PROP. X. *Restorations of this sort ever find opposition proportioned to their extent and importance :* they all look favorably on the cause of religion, and since the day of the commencement of the enmity between the seed of the woman and that of the serpent, no great event tending to advance the interest of the Church has ever been accomplished without opposition : of this we may find abundant proof in the history of every age : was Israel to be delivered from the house of bondage, and put in possession of the land of promise ? behold the fury of Egypt is to be faced on the one hand, and all the powers of Canaan opposed on the other ! were the Jews to be released from Chaldea, to rebuild their ruined city and temple, and receive the ancient worship of God ? see the multitudes of adversaries assembling from all quarters, like swarms of locusts rising from the pit, Ezra iv. 9, 10. Was the world to be illumined by the Sun-beams of the gospel ? to defeat this purpose the whole world

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combines—the enmity of mankind against this cause collects ~~and~~ ascends as smoke—is condensed into clouds, which darken the whole horizon, and pour down the hurricane of ten general persecutions over all the Roman empire. When the long night of antichristian darkness is come to an end, and the sun of righteousness is to arise with salvation in its rays, in the dawn of the reformation from popery; what tempests of war and destruction are spread in every land where the light shines out?

Was there ever a general revival of the power of godliness in any land that did not find its mocking Ishmaels—its murdering Cains—its blaspheming Rabshakehs—or persecuting Herods?

This arises not from any perplexity in divine counsels—nor absurdity of the plans of infinite wisdom—nor evil in his designs—nor error in his means—nor weakness in the execution: every objection against this procedure will vanish when we consider this life as a state of probation—and remember that by the superintendence of heaven it has ever been effected that religion, like the palm tree, grows by being pressed. Opposition has helped, but never hurt the truth; persecutions have spread the knowledge of religion—the blood of the martyrs has been the seed of the Church—errors have occasioned the truth to be confirmed by arguments which otherwise might have been concealed—in each public calamity that has befallen the church we have

a fresh confirmation of the truth of religion : as the prophecies that had predicted the storm could not without it have had their accomplishment—and all these convulsions have been subservient to the purpose of purging God's temple, as thunder-storms tend to purify air.

CONTRARIES always illustrate each other—this opposition is a foil to let off the glory of the divine power that defeats it ; the justice of destroying God's enemies at last is magnified through the patience whereby he bore with them till then—hence the distresses of the people of God are often permitted to come to extremity before he appears for their relief—Isaac is bound to the engine of death, the knife is taken, and the stroke drawn, before the angel arrests the descending fate—the bricks are doubled e'er Moses is sent—and the disciples are sinking when the Sovereign of the elements enters the ship : this enhances the mercy that helped at such a time, and the goodness that supported through so great distress.

OPPOSITION cannot then be said to prove the badness of a cause nor the certainty of its failing : the want of opposition demonstrates both : great oppositions betoken some great event in the birth—and in the cause of God the encouragement rises as the violence that obstructs it : since himself has assured us that all shall be overthrown at last—all made subservient to the good of his Church—and turn out to be means of obtaining it too : and in the confidence of this, the

friends of America need not be discouraged at the numbers, the power, the rage, or the deeds of the enemies of the great cause they plead—since they all preach the deliverance, the security and future glory of the land.

THIS cause has ever been the great eye sore of hell—the malice and power of internal legions have ever been bent against it : Satan's party are ever ready at his beck—hence wicked men of all classes naturally seek its overthrow : and when any such are accidentally employed in favour of it, we need never be at a loss to discover by their conduct, that they are pressed into the service by other motives than love to the cause itself—or any honest zeal to have it promoted.

THE more effectually to obstruct the work of restoration, it is usual for Satan to collect his tools from different ranks—and different lands see Ezra iv. 4, 9, 10. The returning Jews soon found themselves called to conflict with a colluvies of emigrants from various countries planted by the Babylonish tyrant as colonies of his vassals to support his prerogative in every part of the land around them : the inferior herd of conspirators against liberty are generally found to move on as they are spirited by the dependents on the throne—thus the Danites, Elamites, and the rest of the nations transported by Ashnapper into the Samarian territories acted against Israel according to the instigation of the officers of the king : thus in all the plots for crushing that people we find the Sanballats,

the Tathais, the Tobiahs whom the tyrant had made Governors in the land of Canaan, ever bearing a leading part. This may generally be expected when Governors are dependent for their office and support on the mere will of a monarch; for then it is not unnatural to suppose the appointments will, of course, take place among such as are known to have less zeal for the freedom and welfare of the people, than for the smiles of their master and the security of their place:

UNDERSTRAPPERS never fail to ape the manners of their superiors in office; when the Governors of the Provinces conspire the ruin of the people under them, the Rehum's and Shimshai's—the Commissioners of Customs, and Secretaries of the Province, think they can never be too forward in their efforts for executing the project. Ezra iv. 7 8.

ENEMIES *without*, receive their chief advantage from the secret manœuvres of foes *within*, as a traitor in the city will open the gates with twice the facility that the besieger can force them: hence it is the policy of those who attempt the destruction of the liberties of a people, if possible, to secure a party among themselves who, under the mask of friendship, will forward their measures, and embarrass every step taken in order to protract them: these, Proteus like, will put on various shapes according to times: they will work themselves into churches and councils—into armies and courts,

and pretend to enter with spirit into all the measures of the people, while they mean to frustrate the design of the whole, or to spy out and divulge what they cannot suppress; thus, Jaddas like, they still dip in the dish, and pretend to embrace whom they mean to betray: Such was the policy of Israel's foes, Ezra iv. 2. 'let us build with you (say they) for we seek your God as ye do.' But a little acquaintance with mankind will lead us to discover, that they enter into councils with Hushai's intent: and the people of God, if guided by prudence, will boldly remove them from all share in the matter, and will not scruple to tell them, even to the face, as the fathers of Israel have set the example, Ezra iv. 3. 'Ye have nothing to do with us to build an house unto our God.'

WHETHER this precaution is taken or not, the conspirators will leave no stone unturned to obviate every scheme for the public safety, and will alter their measures as the matter requires, as quickly as the Polypus changes its colour for that of the substance to which it adheres.

It will not be unprofitable to trace the windings of this serpentine brood as we see them practised in the case of the Jews. At first they set out with evil surmisings and advices to court, these are backed with bribes to the Counsellors and other officers in power, see Ezra iv. 4, 5: Then follow letter upon letter replete with their venom—false informations multiply apace, accusations to the king stuff every packet, see ver.

6—16. They forget not to trumpet their own loyalty to their master, and set up their zeal for his honor as their motive in all, see ver. 14. ‘because we have maintenance from the king’s palace, and it was not meet for us to see the king’s dishonor, therefore have we sent and certified the king’. They plead that his interest and revenue is at stake, and all must be lost if their tales be slighted, see verse 13. 16. ‘if thou sufferest the scheme of this people to succeed, then they will not pay toll, tribute, nor custom, and by this means thou shalt have no portion on this side the river.

REPRESENTATIONS like this obtain easy credit in the ears of monarchs——seldom do they fail to stand as sufficient proof of the charge—and the accused, without trial or hearing, are easily sentenced; and ancient acts and obsolete statutes are lugged into the cause to condemn the guiltless and dictate their doom. See verse 15, 19. The stories of such men are generally deemed sufficient to produce new edicts from the reigning power, to cut off the people from every remaining privilege at once, ver. 21. 22.—eagerly will the arbitrary mandates be put in execution by such officers as procured them, so Rehum and Shimshai posted to Jerusalem and stopped the work by force and power ver. 23. And what pity is it, that it must be confessed that the bulk of men are aptest to shrink in the noblest cause, are easily prevailed on to drop their exertions and quit the work with which all is at stake. See ver. 24.

THE prophets of God ought not then to be silent—faintfulness to their trust will oblige them to engage with the openest boldness against such tame submissions, as idolatrous worship of arbitrary power : and these are the men whom God often has chosen to rouse and keep up among mankind the spirit of liberty and just defence. See Ezra v, 1, 2. chap. vi. 14.

WHEN the people are thus animated to proper exertions, it is usual with enemies of their cause to raise the cry of rebellion—breach of law—opugnation of authority ; and sometimes they will proceed to take black lists of names obnoxious and unpardonable who must be reserved for proscriptions, imprisonments, gibbets and racks : thus the ministers of slavery dealt with the Jews Ezra v. 3, 4.

BUT the friends of restoration will not thus be daunted ; they can vindicate themselves by law and argument and are ready to meet all their opposers on that ground, see verse 11—17, and chap. vi. and vii.

AT the entrance on a work so new and untried, the first efforts of the people appear feeble and vain—the want of resources, of experience and skill, the deficiency of forces for their defence, the difficulties of raising and maintaining their armies, and the impatience of subordination, of fatigues and dangers natural to levies when first collected—these, and a thousand other incidents that, at first setting out, the most wary community could not foresee nor

prevent, will necessarily occasion many blunders, delays, discouragements, and disappointments in their most capital efforts :

DISASTERS owing to any of these causes the enemy is no less eagle-eyed to discover, than cunning to paint in most fearful colours,—then shall we see them diffusing their poison in every corner—ever buzzing in the ears of the timid—their manifest weakness—the number of difficulties—and greatness of dangers before them—their want of virtue and ability to persevere—the length of time the contest must last—the power—numbers—and allies of the foe, &c. &c.—the minions of power will call them rebels—the parasites of the tyrant will affect to ridicule their measures and look on their efforts as childish and contemptible : in this strain proceeded the oratory of Sanballat, Neh. iv. 3. ‘What do these feeble Jews ? will they fortify themselves ? will they sacrifice ? will they make an end in a day ? &c. Thus Tobiah and Geshem keep each other in countenance, and raile the laugh at the pitiful efforts of the sons of liberty, Neh. ii. 19. and please themselves with the conceit that with an army of foxes they can storm their fort, Neh. iv. 3.

Feeble minds, with whom ridicule stands for a test of truth, may perhaps be dismayed by the haughty tone in which court-sycophants commonly talk, and some by indulging their gloomy fits may be led to give out, and sit down in despair ; even among the children of Judah

could be found some little souls whom the loud laugh of their foes thunder-struck : hark the moan of those weakling creatures, Neh. iv. 10.

Nor so the truly patriotic mind ; every sneer will be a mean to whet his zeal to a keener edge—these spurs will stimulate him to greater diligence and unwearied perseverance that the cause may rise into a light too respectable to be overset by a puff of gasconade ; so did the Jewish patriots make advantage of the mirth of their foes, Neh. iv. 6.

WHEN experience has convinced them that the wise are not to be bantered out of their wits, nor the virtuous brow-beaten into vicious compliance with the lust of power, more serious measures will be taken by the enemies of their liberty : the works of darkness are the most kindred means for their dark designs, adepts in the school of wiley deceit are the tools best fitted for a tyrant's purpose—practices of this complexion will soon be attempted : secret plots will be laid to surprise and kidnap honest abettors of the cause of God. Treacherous conspiracies will be formed to deprive the people of the means of defence, see Neh. iv. 7, 8—11. But prayer and caution, religion and industry, will effectually counterplot them and frustrate their schemes, see verse 9—13—16.

THE influence of religion being the greatest weight in the scale of restoration, the enemy's gall will overflow on every occasion they find of touching that subject—preachers will be railed

at as having deserted their post, when they meddle with politics—as having abandoned the gospel of peace when they justify defensive war, as ceasing to preach Christ, and preaching up NEHEMIAH : and through the powerful persuasives in the hands of the great, some pulpits may be prostituted to the venal drudgery of abetting a tyrant and promoting his cause. Neh. vi. 7, 10——14.

Bribes will be tried to buy off the nobles, and it is not every one that has nobility enough to be proof against gold—showers of that metal have found their way through the strongest roots—soaked in this, the honor of some, even of Judah's chiefs, dissolved and evaporated. The intelligence conveyed by their traitorous correspondences would have proved fatal to all plans of defence, had not the eye of Omniscience detected their plot in the fittest season for saving his people, Neh. vi. 17,——19.

THE leaders who disdain fetters of gold as much as of iron, must not expect to escape the arrows of slander—all arts will be used to weaken their influence—sly suspicions will be instilled into the minds of the people, that their leaders are driving some evil design—that they only mean to raise themselves into a degree of importance, and then mount the saddle and grasp the reins, or sell the country and join the foe, Neh. vi. 6. To sift these calumnies to the bottom would employ much time which cannot be spared from the great work in hand: to turn

the people aside to this, and divert the main business, was doubtless one of the enemy's ends—therefore if the wisdom of heaven is the guide of our steps, we shall not stay to parley with the serpent, but answer his hints with a 'get thee behind me : ' and, stopping our ears, we shall go on with our work. Neh. vi. 8.

WHEN underhand measures will no longer avail, the gentleness of the lamb will soon be exchanged for the rage of the lion—the ruddy flag is hoisted, and every sentence breathes nothing but carnage and blood. The horrors of war are thundered in the ears of the people who are found too determined to barter their invaluable rights away. See Neh. iv. 7, 8—11. But, if the genius of virtue inspire the contest, tho' far from thirsting for enemies blood,—and deeply deploring the necessity that drives them to have recourse to arms, yet the people will remember that such rights as man cannot resign he is bound to defend at every hazard—that not to resist is to join issue with the aggressor—is to partake in his guilt—and deserve to share in the doom that follows it :—that if the cause is God's, so also is the sword that he puts in their hands for its defence, and so is the battle that decides its fate : and remembering these things, they will be convinced that in such a case, to shun the dangers of the field is to desert the banner of Christ—and that the duties of the camp, at such a season, are as truly religious as those of the Church,—therefore undaunted by numbers, unmoved by

threats, the christian patriot girds on the buckler, and with his life in one hand, grasps the sword in the other, and thus calm and determined he enters the field and makes the last appeal to heaven.

THOUGH the cause is the Lord's he will have it asserted by ordinary means—walls and towers—gates and bars—forts and armies are not less indispensable than temple and sacrifice, and when this work is begun it should go on without pause—whilst one breach in the rampart remains unrepaired—or one mean of defence is yet left uncried Neh iv. 6.

NOT one, however, nor all these means are to be considered as objects of trust

The name of Jacob's God defends

Better than shields and brazen walls

In that name alone must be reposed all the confidence of those that fight : as well as of those that called them to the field, the advantages reaped by the best instruments are to be considered only as helps from the fountain of might—conveyed down to us in the channel of means that were appointed by himself :—therefore to the vigorous use of these must be joined constant prayer and trust in God Neh iv. 9, 16—23.

If the efforts of the foe are baffled in war—their hopes disappointed—their plots frustrate—and their fears confirmed that the business of restoration will at last be perfect, they will then make proposals of negotiation—flattering will take place of threats—complaisance will try

to recover what force could not achieve : but if God is with them, the people will see the design of all to be their ensnaring—and that the kisses of Joab have daggers concealed—when with arms in their hands they call for a treaty, who can doubt that they mean to dictate the terms : so the fisherman curiously dresses his bait, whilst a hook is concealed that ever proves fatal to the heedless fish that is pleased with it, the practice of Israel in a case like this, should guide the conduct of ages to come : Nehemiah was repeatedly tried on this score—and Nehemiah answered as patriots ought. See Neh. vi. 1—4.

PROP. XI. *When the struggle for liberty is on the point of a happy conclusion, it sometimes happens that the selfish conduct of pretended friends has gone near to effect that ruin of the cause which the open violence of avowed enemies never was able to accomplish.* When all are embarked in one bottom—for some to oppress and ruin the rest is the shortest way to undo the whole : to defeat the community in every effort for its defence no means are so powerful as the practice of monopoly and extortion : as nothing else so certainly sinks the public credit, depreciates the medium of trade and commerce, and cuts the only sinews of war, so nothing more readily destroys mutual confidence in society and turns the edge of every sword against the brother of him who wields it : when this Pandora's box is opened—the pestilence spreads far and wide—it becomes epidemic—the whole community is threatened with instant destruction,

—there is no going forward until the evil is removed—every wheel is invincibly clogged—every movement is brought to a stand.

THUS Israel's efforts were almost defeated by selfish engrossers that called themselves friends ; the poor reduced to the hard dilemma of starving or mortgaging their all for bread, cried aloud in the ears of God and man—our children are many and we take up corn that they may live—our houses and lands we pawn for it—and the dearth will quickly consume them all, our sons and our daughters are gone into bondage—nor is it in the power of our hands to redeem them—are we viewed by the public as bone of their bone—are our children considered as flesh of their flesh ? Neh. v. 1—5.

AGAINST this baneful spirit the rulers of the people should be the first to make head by all their influence power and example—it is truly discouraging when these are found first in the crime : but whoever is foremost among the infected—the distemper is fatal—delays are dangerous—without speedy remedy death stands at the door !

BUT when men of this cast are no longer awed by public interest—or public danger—when they will not be influenced by personal honor—or personal shame—corrosive remedies must be applied—For shall the public smile to see wretches flourish who owe their greatness to their country's ruin ? There is a power in the public which no individual is able to withstand—to

that power recourse must be had when all other fails. But in what manner shall we use it?—this—this is the Gordian knot! He merits the wreath who unties it right.

NEHEMIAH was led by the Spirit of God. And what were his measures in so great a tryal? They are kindly recorded for our example—you may hear them related in words of his own, Neh. v. 6—13. The patriot's anger was kindled against them—their crimes were censured by public rebuke, but his authority failing to influence them to their duty, the assembly of the people was called on the case—modern language would say *Nehemiah headed a Mob!* See ver. 7.—this remedy was a desperate one it is true, but it was reserved as it ought for a desperate case.

MERE promises coming from unprincipled tongues could not appease the popular fury: they were bound by an oath to surcease the crime, ver. 12. yea, compelled to restore their ill-gotten gains, ver. 11, 12. and the men who refused compliance with this, were disfranchised and held up as inveterate foes, ver. 13. This measure, though seeming harsh and severe, is not less the dictate of nature than one which the reason of all men ever approved—where amputation separates from the endangered body the mortified member which cannot be cured. *

* *Cuncta prius tentanda ;*

Sed immedicabile vulnus

Ense recidendum, ne pars sincera trahatur.

OVID.

kindly

PROP. XII. *What virtue begins, perseverance must crown.* Not more justly applied to the private conflicts of every soldier in Emmanuel's camp, than to the public struggles of christian societies, is that restrictive promise of our blessed Captain 'he that endures to the end shall be saved.' Backsliding is equally fatal in both cases. *Remember Lot's wife*, is a motto fitted for the christian's colours in his efforts in the public cause, as well as in his personal war with hell: So long as the church is in a militant state, he who puts his hand to the plough and looks back, is unfit for any service in it: and we are assured by the mouth of its Head, that his Soul shall never take pleasure in such. A cause thus important is not to be deserted on account of a few repulses in our way of supporting it: to enhance our esteem of established liberty, the raging billows of some red sea of danger, or the swelling waves of some Jordan of difficulty must commonly be passed in our way to it: thus Israel must march forty years in the desert before they obtain the promised inheritance—and the Jews must encounter the arduous conflict for twelve years under Ezra's guidance, and as many more under the administration of Nehemiah before the work of defence was finished: but when the people of God are refined as silver, he will bring them from the furnace without losing any thing but their dross: when their virtue is proved and their patience tried, and their long tribulations have an-

swered their end, the Lord in mercy will finish the conflict; and in such ways as wisdom appoints, and often by means we least regard, the common enemy will be repelled, the efforts of his people will be crowned with success, and then LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE FIRMLY ESTABLISHED. Neh. vi. 51.

PROP. XIII. *When the great object is at last secured, even the enemies of it will be constrained to acknowledge the whole to be the work of God: even heathens would own a superior power in compassing an end which no opposition could frustrate, by means most unlikely in reason's eye, and from great part of which human prudence would preface a contrary effect.*

THIS will highly glorify the irresistible power that supported the weak and vanquished the mighty—the *wisdom* which discovered the plots of the foe, and by men less versed in politics than they, did timously turn their counsels into foolishness—the *goodness and mercy* which freed his church from a Pharaoh's power; and the *justice* that brought pride and wickedness to the ground—that let tyrants fall into their own pit—shows Haman's gibbet to be the tool of his fate, and beheads Goliath with his boasted sword.

PROP. XIV. When a work like this is brought to an end, the effect described in the words of the text, unavoidably ensues to the enemies of it. How must they be confounded at the conviction that all their exertions were fighting against God? How must their countenances fall and

their hearts throb with vexation and disappointment, when all their utopian schemes have failed and themselves, abandoned even by the partners of their guilt—despised by all, and unpitied by most, are exposed as the objects of universal detestation—and while the living vulture gnaweth within them, they outwardly furnish the most contemptible instance of fallen pride, the most instructive spectacle of defeated ambition that can be beheld on this side of the pit.

PROP. XV. *Of a people delivered by the arm of the Lord the first care should be to establish government.* Where this is wanting there can be no stability in the peace and liberty thus dearly bought. No right, no privilege is enjoyed secure : like a ship without rudder the community floats at the caprice of every wind that blows : the contending passions of individuals, like jarring elements without a ballance, will soon reduce all to a state of anarchy, and instead of a system we behold a chaos. Tyranny itself is better than this : and whatever dangers they have escaped in avoiding that Scylla—the Charybdis of confusion into which they are falling will not be less fatal to all that is dear : Israel groaned loudly under Pharaoh's sway—yet they had not gone far in their journey from Egypt, till by the persuasions of a murmuring party they were on the point of electing a leader to pilot them back to that house of bondage.

If religion and virtue being on their side engaged divine Providence to effect a people's de-

liverance from the jaws of slavery—virtue and religion should not be forgotten when the power of the enemy can hurt them no more : yet the interests of both, without a miracle, will languish and die in any nation where government sets no guard upon them :

To set up the judgment of the magistrate as a test of truth in matters of conscience and religion—this is an event we heartily deprecate—the very idea we consider with horror : from this fruitful womb have sprung all persecutions—the most monstrous births that have astonished mankind—and this principle admitted will justify them all. Truth has legs of her own on which she travels, without any crutches of human establishments. Religion has never been in more danger of degenerating into a raree-show than when it submitted to be modelled to the taste of the state.

Whether civil government may be permitted to intermeddle in the affairs of the Church at all—and if so how far it may go—and where it must stop—are questions which fall not within my present province—and if they did, would be better referred to the more judicious decision of the honorable Convention who have it in charge to determine the matter.

It seems not unreasonable however to expect that some line of distinction should appear to be drawn between the duties of a body considered merely as a *civil society*—and those of a *civil society of christians* : if men are christians while in a

state of nature, they will not cease to be such when they enter into the connexions of members of society—their religion is a portable thing—they must carry it with them into every relation they sustain in the world—religious men will therefore be found, religious magistrates and religious subjects, religious legislators, and religious executors of laws: the cords of love to God and man will equally bind them in every condition: the suppression of vice and impiety, and the encouragement and support of religion and virtue will be their grand aim in every character: if a number of individuals of this temper were to associate into one community, and form a constitution for the government of it in the present and all succeeding ages—and in that platform should discover no symptom of difference between them and a society of pagans or infidels—not a mark of distinction between them and atheists, generations to come would be led to suspect that on entering society they had laid down their profession.

NOR can such a measure be reconciled to the principles of sound policy more easily than to the genius of the christian religion: virtue and piety are nearly connected—married by heaven, no man can divide them—where impiety reigns virtue is banished, and when she takes her departure the community has lost the surest guardian of public safety. the security of the body is the government's charge—that can never be had where the reins are laid on the neck of

men's lusts, and immoralities are under no public restraint —the system of laws that affixes no penalty to theft, adultery, murder, and the like enormities, is justly regarded as designedly opening the widest door for undoing the State: nor is it easy to say why these should be punished whilst blasphemy and profaning the name of God—whilst public mockery of his word, his day and his worship, enjoy the sanction of a public licence; and for ought that appears, may plead the shelter of legal establishment. It is hard to investigate any ingredient in the acts restrained more truly pernicious, than is the whole nature of those that go free, unless we conclude that the first table of God's law is not as binding and authoritative as the second—or that obedience to the one exculpates the breaches of the other, or that killing the body is a greater crime than destroying the soul; or in a word, that every member may be ruined and the community safe.

How far the conduct of Jews should pass for a precedent in civil concerns, I presume not now to enquire or determine: I am not insensible that the coming of the substance has freed us from obligation to observe the shadow—things that were typical of Christ and his work must needs expire when that work was finished, but whether the civil and judicial departments were, no less than the religious, filled up with matters purely typical may perhaps admit of some debate: if the inspired examples recorded among

them are, not only the language of revelation, but the plain dictate of the law of nature too, I see not why in similar cases they should not be adopted in every age ; and if they may in the case before us they will enforce the establishing of a government whose aim shall be to guard the public safety Neh. chap. xi. by securing the observance of the law of God—and maintaining the worship and ordinances of religion in all the purity of their first appointment see chap. i. 7, 8, 9 — by breaking off for ever all connexion with secret and open enemies alike chap, xiii. ver 23 —28 and bringing all traitors to condign punishment Neh xiii. 4—9. and the execution of the plan shall begin with a public thanksgiving for the good obtained—a solemn dedication of our all to God—and the erection of monuments of our deliverance which shall remain undefaced in ages to come. See chap xii.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

THE length to which this subject has drawn itself out, makes it unseasonable now to pursue one half the improvement which it might afford. He that is versed in the history of the State we live in, will not need to be told that the privileges mentioned in prop. 4. were enjoyed by its inhabitants from their first settlement, under fifteen Governors, down to the memorable days of Andross——that, intoxicated by prosperity, we sadly declined in every attainment of religion and virtue ; and that, though this declension

received a check by a remarkable effusion of the Spirit of Grace, and was frequently threatened with partial strokes, yet the defection begun made alarming progress until general calamity burst on our heads in that entering wedge of tyranny—the American Stamp-Act. From that day to this we have clearly seen that the design of the Court was to crush and enslave: for even the Act which prohibits the exercise—is succeeded by another which asserts the right of the British legislature to bind the Colonies in all cases whatsoever:—to get this claim recognized by ourselves, some trifling duties were at first demanded: and it was the astonishment of all the world—to see a people so divided in interest and prejudice so generally united in a firm resolution to mar, at all hazards, the chain in the forge.—We were challenged to dispute on the merits of the cause—we found a champion in the respectable **FARMER** who routed our foes on their own ground: and when the Sanballat of the time renewed the onset—the General Court took up the gauntlet and out shot that Rabshakeh in his own bow.

It cannot be denied that many of the chief characters in every State have followed the example of the Nobles of Tekoa—and hence the people, deprived of the counsel of their former guides, were compelled, in many places, to throw themselves into the arms of leaders equally unexperienced in the arts of policy as in the science of war: hence it will not be wondered if our

first efforts were weak and fumbling; and it some low minds fainted at knowledge thereof :—the means of defence seemed far out of reach—till the dust of the earth supplied ammunition—the sinews of war appeared totally wanting, till worn out rags became silver and gold—when our fisheries were cut off we anxiously saw our staple demolished, but to our surprize the same power that brought shoals to Peter's net conducted the fish to our harbours and wharves, and turned the waves that lashed our shores into salt when we needed it, to preserve them—the statutes which menaced a general famine by stopping the access of foreign supplies were unable to bottle the clouds of heaven—or divert the kind influence of the beams of the sun.

BLIND to the interposals of heaven in our favor, our enemies made shift to buoy up their hopes from every imagined mistake in our measures; while the name of Hutchinson is remembered it will not be doubted that we have had our Sanballat—our Tobiah was furnished in a boasting Burgoyne—insidious Tatnai's were never wanting whilst Carlton's and Tryon's possessed the chair—Geshem confesses himself outdone in the hostile manœuvres of Clinton and Howe: and secretaries and commissioners from amongst ourselves can shew letters and plots—that in nothing need yield to the Rehun and Shimshai of the Jewish day; whilst the scorn of the nations, whom the British Asnapper transported hither for reasons of state, joined the rous-

mouthed pack in a general yell for hunting American liberty down.

By these have the arts already described (prop. x) been tried with like spirit and like effects—they have cried out rebellion—they have taken black lists—have proscribed and executed in idea the men they imagined to stand most in their way.

THE ministers of religion have been generally hearty in the public cause : our enemies were not insensible that their faithful testimony put life in the measures used in its support—and therefore their persons—their names—and religion—and the sacred places where God's worship was fixed—became the principal butt of the keenest malice of America's foes :

WHILST a Eugene and Marlborough—a Gustavus and Frederic—an Alexander and Cæsar as a constellation of heroes, have conspired to join their brightness together to illuminate the hemisphere of the eastern continent—the singular care of Israel's God has reserved it for the glory of this western world to give rise and motion to a star of her own whose lustre eclipses the beams of them all. Commanders that need not fear comparison with the heroes of antiquity, we see to be the produce of every State. But the American NEHEMIAH is an illustrious work of creating skill destined to grace the most glorious cause—on the last stage where it can be pleaded : what dangers he has faced—what fatigues endured—how much he had to forego, and how little

to gain the future historian will honestly tell, and therefore I willingly pass in silence what it might now seem flattery justly to celebrate.

WHEN the enemy's hopes were in their zenith—that the cause of freedom was crushed in embryo—that our spirits were sunk, and our nerves unstrung—and all our resistance was come to a period : He who sitteth in heaven did laugh and by one touch of his finger, at Saratoga, did dash the presumptuous joy to the ground.

THE chief wonder of all is yet to be told—In the magnanimity of the generous MONARCH OF FRANCE Heaven has brought on the stage the CYRUS of the church in gospel-tim'es—alike his rise—his inspiration alike—the same his conduct and the same its effect : whilst the rest of the world stood aloof and looked on—and Protestant powers, once in the same case, like the priest and Levite shunned our cries—behold the Samaritan hastes to our help—our wounds are softened by his wine and his oyl, whilst his treasure is lavished to finish our cure : does the bigot give credit to the tory's tale—and dream it unlawful to accept such aid ? so might Israel have spurned the Persian's offer and the temple of God still remained in rubbish ! gratitude and piety will not stand and gaze—both will unite to improve the favor—while the example of each prompts the other to cry 'this is the Lord's doing and wondrous in our eyes.'

STRUCK and astonished at this unusual phenomenon our foes thought it best to shift their

flag and hoist friendly colours—negociations have been feigned—and the imagined omnipotence of English gold has in vain been tried to its ne plus ultra—proposals of accommodation were pompously made—but the Rubicon was passed—their terms were inadmissible now—the hostile and barbarous doings of their hands; at the very time when the olive branch was painted on their lips, were sufficient to rend the thin veil that disguised their intent. America's feelings soon testified largely that if they spake with Jacob's voice their hands were truly the hands of Esau.

THE spirit of Sanballat breathed in all their overtures—to amuse the world and gain time for their preparations—and thereby to draw us into a snare, at a time when no earthly friend should be near enough to stretch forth a hand to pull us out: that these were the insidious designs of their parliamentary concessions—ministerial motions—phantastic commissions—and ‘flying rolls’ we may easily see, if with them we compare the other manœuvres practised, at the same time, to give them success:—the bribing the Savages of the wood to butcher the naked inhabitants of our frontiers—and hiring the negroes of our families to embrue their hands in the blood of the households that gave them their food—that the gold, designed to be freely lavished in seducing our patriots from their duty, might not return like the men who brought it, despised and rejected by all sorts of mankind here:—the counterfeiting our medium, and dispersing in every part of the coun-

try, emissaries according to their own heart, employed in debasing and destroying his credit :—these, conjoined with the deeds of heroism whereby the British arms were signalized in the various parts of the land through which they passed, and by which too their brave commanders reaped laurels immortal—in the sack of defenceless villages—the reducing to ashes every building they could find that was dedicated to the worship of Israel's God—in the plundering of houses—stealing of live-stock, and in abusing and frightening the child and the mother who could not escape—all—all conspire to assist us in spelling out the meaning of their language of love.

THROUGH the merciful hand of our God upon us the arms and the arts of our open foes have been hitherto baffled and defeated—the little checks we have sometimes met with in a sanguine hour—were but just enough to keep us awake—as cautions from heaven of the same kind which Israel of old had from the Amorite, that, for that very purpose, were continued in the land—lest the people should forget, or be exalted above measure—every one of them has been reasonable and serviceable too—and whenever they threatened to proceed too far, the finger of God has turned the scale :

Thus have we been carried by unthought of steps, through difficulties which would never have been faced if they had been foreseen, in near sight of the prize for which we have run—to rise to a rank among the nations on earth—and the bough that

bears the golden apple seems, at this crisis, to bend gently down, and its fruit to be dropping into our hand—but—tell it not in Gath!—what triumph and joy will it afford to our foes! and what tears of our own can lament it enough! my tongue falters, and my heart akes whilst I give it vent,—the grand enemy of mankind has put off the skin of the roaring lion——and in the tamer habit of *selfishness and extortion* now stalks about undisturbed through town and country seeking whom he may devour! he has taken the keys of our stores and garner—the fruits of our fields are locked up in his keeping—and by forbidding the due use of the blessing of one year, is preparing to inflict the old curse on the ground in another, for sake of the sinful hand that tills it:—the proceeds of our voyages are laid down at his feet—our warehouses given in charge to his agents—whilst their needful contents are rendered useless by ungrateful denial of the kindness of heaven that has preserved and defended from foes and storms their interests when floating on the face of the deep—and has wafted to our shores the riches of other climes in greater abundance than has been seen in any other year since the sword was drawn: and thus the scourge is a plaiting that, by the means of arms or elements, shall correct the owners in a future attempt:

AND shall America be left to fall on her own sword when that of her enemy is broken to pieces? shall we fight the battles of Britain with our own hands which all the mercenaries of Eu-

rope could not fight for her? yes! it must be
 so if this spirit continues: Our country is be-
 trayed! her liberty—the price of the blood of
 a long list of patriot heroes, must be at last
 thrown down in the common highway, to be
 seized by the first who passes by! Should each
 member of a human body refuse its labor in
 supplying the whole with food, merely because
 its fellow members share in the profit, and this
 one cannot monopolize all to itself, full dearly
 they must pay for the extravagant wish, when
 too late they repent the unnatural practice by
 which each finds itself sinking in the ruin of all.
 Equally unnatural is the spirit of oppression
 that is become the epidemic disease of the times
 —and equally pernicious are its effects: The
 cries of the orphan and the widow's moan, the
 just complaints of the soldier and his house
 (which if not timely removed, do seriously
 threaten to leave our lines unmanned and our
 GENERAL deserted)—the groans of the poor
 who, in the midst of plenty, are left to perish—
 the blood of our brethren spilt in our fields, all,
 all cry aloud for the vengeance of heaven---all
 preach remediless ruin to the ungrateful people
 who refuse the relief they have in their power.

Yes, Sirs, thank heaven, it is yet in the pow-
 er of the people to remove this alarming dis-
 ease, if town and country will at last awake to
 the exercise of their senses and reason, no longer
 envy each other's advantages, but join hand in
 hand in exerting their utmost to retrieve the

credit of our expiring currency, to strengthen the hands of government, support its just laws, and vigorously pursue the work begun——if they continue to build whilst any breach remains in the wall; and whilst with one hand they use the tool, with the other keep hold of the weapon of war :—cheerfully contribute what is *just* to the support of the Soldier, and to the discharge of the expence of the war, and if they turn out with spirit when the public safety needs the help of their own arms; if, to unanimity in the use of such means, this people will join reformation of manners, especially in the extortions of the present day; if, humbled before the Lord, they repent of their sins which have drawn down and prolonged their public distress; if the prayer of faith is perseveringly offered, and the eye of this Continent is to God for help——RESTORATION is not far off; LIBERTY is near to be established—INDEPENDENCE is fixed on a basis immoveable—heaven has pronounced the firm decree, not all the powers of earth and hell combined can hinder it to be executed.

New England thus shall see once more her halcyon days; her Judges as at the first, her Counsellors as at the beginning; even tyrants shall own the REVOLUTION to be of the Lord—and ashamed of their feeble oppositions to it, shall give over kicking against the pricks—the shade of our fig-tree shall give us repose—we shall worship when none shall make us afraid—the work being finished in the manner already marked out—

and the improvement made which (as in Prop. XV.) even Christians might learn of a Jewish School—America will be IMMANUEL's land—the seat of his kingdom till the sun shall fade.

If you my brethren, or your dear posterity expect to share in this blissful prospect, remember it must be on the same terms on which it is offered to the land in general—equally active in the guilt that brought down the judgments of heaven—you must be equally active too in the repentance and reformation that must pave the way for the removal of them—family religion, and personal piety, must lead on the efforts in the public cause, by which you have heretofore at least kept pace, and I hope will from henceforth set the example of patriotism and public virtue to Town and Country in your vicinity.—But Newbury-bar must not be set up as Newbury's God,—nor must it be trusted as her grand defence; the protection it gives is faint and precarious—by how many methods can slighted heaven blast the creature-confidence, and convince the most stupid of the sons of men of the folly and madness of the common practice of forsaking the fountain of living waters—and hewing out cisterns that can hold none.

F I N I S,