

180788

Dr. Tucker's
S E R M O N
*On a Day of Prayer,
previous to the
choice of a
Gospel-Minister.*



A
S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT
NEWBURY-PORT,

AUGUST 14th 1788,

ON A
DAY SET APART

BY THE
FIRST CHURCH THERE,
TO SEEK THE
DIVINE DIRECTION AND BLESSING
IN THE CHOICE AND
SETTLEMENT OF A COLLEAGUE-PASTOR

WITH THE
REV. THOMAS CARY: *K*
By JOHN TUCKER, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN

NEWBURY.

NEWBURY-PORT:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY JOHN MYCALL. 1788.



TO THE
FIRST CHURCH IN NEWBURY-PORT,
THIS DISCOURSE,
PUBLISHED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS, WITH ALL DUE RESPECT
INSCRIBED, BY THEIR
AFFECTIONATE FRIEND
AND HUMBLE SERVANT,

J. TUCKER.



At a meeting of the first Church in Newbury-port,
August 17th, 1788.

*VOTED—That NATHANIEL CARTER, Esq. the
Hon. JONATHAN GREENLEAF, Esq. and Deacon NA-
THANIEL NEWMAN, be a Committee to wait on the Rev.
Doctor JOHN TUCKER, with the thanks of this Church,
for his Sermon delivered on Thursday last, observed by them
as a Day of Prayer for Divine Direction in the Choice and
Settlement of a Colleague-Pastor with the Rev. THOMAS
CARY, and desire a copy for the Pres.*

A true Copy.

T. CARY, *Pastor.*

It seems, however, to be most probable that it was composed at the time when the tribes of Israel and Judah agreed and joined together in bringing the king back to Jerusalem, from whence he had been forced to flee by Absalom's conspiracy.

SUCH a sudden change in the state of his kingdom—such a ready and unanimous agreement of different parties and factions, struck the king with joyful surprise, and led him to this poetic composition, in praise of the utility and pleasure of agreement and harmony in societies. **BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS, FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY !**

AN ingenious and learned expositor supposes, that the last word in the text, translated, **TOGETHER IN UNITY**, refers, to their amicably meeting together, for the worship of God, in one place, and gives the sense of the text thus, by way of paraphrase. “ O, consider how beneficial and delightful it is beyond all ex-

“ preſſion, for thoſe that came from the ſame
 “ ſtock, and are of the ſame religion, to have
 “ no differences one with another, but to live
 “ and worſhip God together, in ſuch a friendly
 “ agreement, as if they had but one ſoul a-
 “ mong them all.”

BUT, although the words in the text may
 comprehend this meaning among others, it is
 not, I imagine, the whole of their intention;
 but they may well be underſtood, in a ſenſe,
 leſs confined or limited—that they may be un-
 derſtood as having reſpect to that agreement
 and harmony, which evidently tend to the
 ſtrength, and to the comfort and happineſs of
 every ſociety whether great or ſmall, and whe-
 ther civil or religious.

BUT, farther to illuſtrate the ſubject before
 us, and to enter more fully into the meaning
 and force of the text, in order to ſome practi-
 cal and uſeful improvement of it, it may be
 needful to conſider more particularly and large-
 ly, who are to be underſtood by BRETHREN?—

and what may be intended by their DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY? which will open, and offer to our view, something of that pleasure and advantage which naturally result therefrom.

As to the term BRETHREN, it is of various meaning, and is to be understood according to the manner in which it is used, or the different subjects to which it is applied.

It very often intends persons sprung from the same stock, and so related to one another by blood, as well in a remote, as a proximate degree.

In a large and extensive sense may be understood by it, all descendants from our first parents; for it is said, GOD HATH MADE OF ONE BLOOD, ALL NATIONS OF MEN TO DWELL ON ALL THE FACE OF THE EARTH, which is one reason why we should treat all men with humanity, and do them good as they stand in need of our kind offices.

BUT the word is generally used in a more restricted sense, and intends those of the same particular family, or who are related within a very few generations, and descendants from the same immediate parents; these we most commonly understand by brethren.

THESE stand in the nearest relation, and are justly supposed to have the strongest affection to one another. They are parts and members of the same family—are commonly nourished and brought up together—are connected by the same interests, and united by duty and affection to their common parents. And accordingly these are sometimes proposed as emblems of undisssembled friendship and love. LOVE AS BRETHREN, said an Apostle, BE PITIFUL, BE COURTEOUS.

BUT then, the word is sometimes applied to the members of larger bodies of men, and both of a civil and religious nature, and who are not thus nearly related by blood.

THE Israelites or Jews, as a nation distinct from all others—as having one common interest, and governed by one and the same code of political and religious laws, are often stiled BRETHREN. Thus they are in that particular direction respecting their setting a king over them. * ONE FROM AMONG THY BRETHREN SHALT THOU SET KING OVER THEE: THOU SHALT NOT SET A STRANGER OVER THEE, WHICH IS NOT THY BROTHER, that is, not an Israelite.

BUT, this term seems to be most frequently used, and with great propriety, with respect to Christians, as it becomes them, above all others, to treat one another as Brethren.

‡ ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, said our blessed Lord to his disciples, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN. And how often do we meet with this expression, as refering to Christians, in the epistolary writings of the New-Testament? And Christians may very fitly be

* Deut. xvii. 15.

‡ Mat. xxiii. 8.

filed brethren, as by their profession they are distinguished from the rest of the world—professing faith in the same divine Instructor and Saviour—allegiance and submission to one common Head and Lord—being under the same divine precepts and laws—enjoying the same glorious hope, and connected by the same bonds of charity and love.

AND although the principles of that excellent religion they profess, are fitted for, and designed to expand and enlarge their hearts, and to inspire them with sentiments of general benevolence to mankind, yet they seem to press upon them, some special and distinguishing warmth of affection to one another, as disciples and servants, in common, to the same divine Master.

AGREEABLY we meet with this advice and exhortation of the apostle Paul to his christian Brethren. ¶ AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY, LET US DO GOOD UNTO ALL MEN, ESPECIALLY UNTO THEM WHO ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH,

¶ Gal. vi. 10.

AND particular churches, or christian societies, as distinguished from christians at large, may claim this appellation of brethren, in some peculiar manner. For, while they wish well to the whole household of faith, and seek the prosperity of Zion in its whole extent, it seems natural and becoming, that they should cherish and exercise some particular and special concern for the happiness of that little family, or smaller body of which, in a nearer, or more immediate and close connection, they are parts and members.

THEIR particular relation and connection as a distinct society—their frequently meeting together for the worship of God and to receive the instructions of their common Lord and Saviour—their joining together in imploring the same important blessings of heaven—that intimate communion and intercourse they naturally have with one another, and that common interest they have in the welfare and happiness of the same society, of which they are members, all directly

and powerfully tend to conciliate their affections—to warm their hearts with every benevolent and friendly disposition, and to influence them to live together in unity and brotherly love.

BUT this is the next thing to be considered, viz. What is intended by brethren dwelling together in unity? And by this every one will readily conceive must be meant, their living together in peace and harmony. This is the beauty and felicity of particular families; and it is no less so of larger societies.

THERE may be, indeed, an agreement among brethren, which is far from being good and commendable; and as far from what is intended in the text.

BRETHREN of the same family may be united in schemes of wickedness, and this may sometimes be the case with larger bodies of men. They may be so under the power and influence of corrupt and vicious principles as to agree together

gether in projecting and prosecuting measures, very wicked and abominable.

THIS was the case with the Sodomites, as a body, when they assaulted the house of righteous Lot, who dwelt among them. So Joseph's brethren were, in general, agreed to take away his innocent life, to gratify their foolish resentment.

BUT, this is an unity among brethren, which every good and virtuous man will abhor, and of which he will be ready to say, as Jacob did of the agreement of Simeon and Levi, in an action of deceit and cruelty. † O, MY SOUL, COME NOT THOU INTO THEIR SECRET; UNTO THEIR ASSEMBLY, MINE HONOR, BE NOT THOU UNITED. But, by the thing meant in the text, we understand an agreement in societies, whether greater or less, in things lawful and good in themselves, and their managing affairs in which they are jointly interested—in which their com-

† Gen. xlix, 6.

mon prosperity and happiness are concerned, in a peaceable and friendly manner.

IN christian societies, this must imply that they are possessed of some good degree of candor and liberality of mind—that they are lovers of peace, and can readily condescend to one another, in a reasonable degree, in order to preserve it, or to prevent its destruction among them.

It must imply, that they can bear with one another in some smaller differences, in their particular ways of thinking and judging, and even in religious matters.

FOR, scarcely any society is so small, but the members of it think and judge differently in some things; and, if they are stiff and unyielding, and will not bear with, or condescend to one another at all, they must immediately disband,—they must separate, as a society, or live together in that state of contention and quar-

relling, which must be their disgrace, and greatly ruinous to their common welfare.

BUT men of candid and generous minds, will be solicitous to avoid and prevent such an unhappy state of things in the society to which they belong. They will not suffer small matters greatly to disturb them, and to alienate their affections from their brethren. They will be ready to bear with the ignorance and weakness of some, and with the prejudices and bigotry of others—to make every reasonable concession, and by friendly and gentle measures, to lead them into juster views, or to soften and meliorate their tempers.

SUCH men will not forget that apostolic direction to christians. IF IT BE POSSIBLE, AS MUCH AS LIETH IN YOU, LIVE PEACEABLY WITH ALL MEN. §

UNITY among brethren, is sometimes destroyed, and all the amiable and happy fruits of

it rendered abortive, by the vanity of some contracted and narrow minds among them, who set themselves up as supreme arbiters of all that is just and right.

SUCH men, on meeting with opposition, are apt to be restless, impatient and factious ; and, from an intoxicating warmth of zeal for their own opinions and judgment, to throw all into confusion, and to seek a kind of pious revenge, by sacrificing the common utility—the peace and happiness of society, to their own vanity, bigotry or ill humour.

CHRISTIANS should watch against this in themselves, and against the unhappy effects of it from others, endeavouring to maintain and preserve the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.

AGREEMENT, and friendly affections, upon principles of reason and virtue, are of high importance to the good of all societies, and especially to those who assume the christian character.

WHILE such agreement is their strength and support, it does, as it were, spread a beauty, and a glory over them, pleasing and delightful to every benevolent and virtuous soul.

Good men will be ready to boast of such a society—to point it out to others, and to say, with the enraptured psalmist, **BEHOLD HOW GOOD AND HOW PLEASANT IT IS, FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY!**

MUTUAL condescension, in the members of a society, and a generous regard for the common good, are the foundation of its peace, and of the exercise of all those social and friendly offices, which will render it flourishing and happy.

A general agreement and harmony in a society, are like a good constitution in the natural body. While the solids are firm, the blood and juices sweet, and their circulation unobstructed and free, the operations of nature will be regular, vigorous and salutary: Whereas, an alienation of affections—separate and divided views, and opposite exertions, are like bad ha-

bits, and four corrosive humours, which will soon marr the principal organs of life, and bring on terrible convulsions and death. Our blessed Saviour has observed, that † A KINGDOM DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF IS BROUGHT TO DESOLATION; AND THAT A CITY OR HOUSE DIVIDED AGAINST ITSELF, SHALL NOT STAND.

As union is the strength of all societies, so opposition to one another in the members of such a body—contentions and divisions must directly tend to its dissolution: Hence the unhappiness and even ruin of some particular families—hence the crumbling to pieces of some larger bodies, both civil and religious, and even the ruin of some great and powerful states and kingdoms. And the enemies of any particular society, can contrive nothing more likely to render it unhappy, and even to destroy it, than to sow discord among these brethren—to get them into parties, and to excite and promote their opposition to one another.

† Matt. xii. 25.

It must therefore, be of great importance to all, and especially to every christian society, who wish their own comfort and prosperity, to watch against the baneful influence and effects of discord and contention,—to shun, as much as possible, the just occasions thereof, and to avoid or counteract, the probable causes of such evils. Of high importance it must be, that they cherish and cultivate the love of peace, and a warm and animating love to one another.

THESE noble and generous principles, will powerfully attract, and cement them together as a band of brothers, who mutually and tenderly feel for each other, and will lead them vigorously to pursue their common interest.

AND then, how beautiful and amiable, as well as useful and advantageous, is this unity among brethren? It is not only GOOD, but it is PLEASANT.

To all virtuous and benevolent minds, this harmony among the members of particular societies, must appear right and fit, considering

their special relation and connexion. It must be viewed and contemplated by such with high complacency and delight.

Good angels must rejoice in it, as resembling their more perfect society in the world above; and the glorious God himself, who is the God of peace and love, will highly approve of it, and bless such a society.

It is part of the beauty and glory, as well as of the happiness of heaven, that all its inhabitants dwell together in perfect unity, peace and love; and to bear a likeness to them, must be eminently the glory of Christians here upon earth.

If then they appear in their true and distinguishing character, as disciples and followers of the benevolent Son of God, their gracious Lord and Master, and to be influenced by his divine precepts and example; in this they appear, not only as brethren united among themselves, but as united with the celestial inhabitants; with

faints and angels, and as hastening forward, to join the general and blessed assembly above.

WHAT good man will not be pleased, and feel a flush of heavenly delight, under such conceptions and views; and while he deprecates the evils of contention and strife, be ready to join the psalmist in fervent wishes and prayers, and especially for that particular society to which he belongs? * PRAY FOR THE PEACE OF JERUSALEM: THEY SHALL PROSPER THAT LOVE THEE. PEACE BE WITHIN THY WALLS, AND PROSPERITY WITHIN THY PALACES. FOR MY BRETHREN AND COMPANIONS' SAKES, I WILL NOW SAY PEACE BE WITHIN THEE. BECAUSE OF THE HOUSE OF THE LORD OUR GOD, I WILL SEEK THY GOOD.

THE subject which has now engaged our thoughts, might naturally lead to several reflections, important and useful to christians in general.

BUT, as this discourse was composed, and is now delivered, with some peculiar view to the

* Psalm cxxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

present circumstances of the christian society usually meeting in this house for the worship of God, and with sincere and fervent wishes for their welfare and happiness, there seems a propriety in my addressing myself more particularly to them, and especially, considering the occasion of our being assembled at this time.

AND, besides exhorting you, my much respected, and beloved friends and brethren, agreeably to the important subject we have been contemplating, to study the things which make for peace, and the things whereby you may edify one another in love, suffer me to suggest a few thoughts, a proper attention to which, may, I conceive, be of advantage, in preventing your falling into contentions and divisions respecting the interesting object you have in view, the choice and settlement of a Colleague with your Reverend Pastor.

ONE great unhappiness which often attends these transactions, and particularly the choice of

a candidate for the ministry, arises, I apprehend, from wrong conceptions of necessary qualifications of a candidate, and too illiberal and contracted a way of thinking and judging, in some of the people.

ALL wish to be perfectly pleased, by having a minister exactly of their own religious sentiments; and some are apt to be too obstinate and unyielding to the general voice, and not to act with that charitable forbearance, and condescension towards others, which become them as brethren, and in a matter, in which they are equally concerned.

It has long been the misfortune of the protestant world, not merely that christians have been of differing opinions respecting some religious subjects (for this may be the case, as to many matters, and yet honest and good men live together in perfect peace and love) but the misfortune has been here, that on account of differing opinions, some christians, and even protestant christians, however inconsistent with the

essential principles of Protestantism, which claim the right of every one's understanding and judging for himself, have been led to distinguish themselves, by forming and adopting particular systems of religious doctrines, which they have made so many criteria of a true and right faith, and according to which they have uncharitably censured, condemned and reproached one another.

THESE particular systems, have not only been many, but very different as to some of their contents,—so different that it appears impossible to reconcile them among themselves, and as impossible to reconcile some things in them, to sober reason and common sense.

Now, it certainly ought not to be expected of candidates for the ministry, much less to be insisted on, as a necessary qualification of their election, that they have adopted some one of these systems, exclusive of all different ones, into which the ignorance and weakness of some, and the prejudices and bigotry of others, have split the noble and catholic system of christianity.

IT ought not to be supposed of candidates, who are generally young, and have but lately finished their course of study at the university, where their attention was divided by various subjects, in the pursuit of general science; and who have had but a short time to apply themselves more particularly to the subject of theology——It ought not to be supposed of such, that they have critically examined the various systems into which Divines have parted out the christian doctrines—the different senses in which they have taken these doctrines,—that they have carefully compared all with the inspired writings, and so fully digested the weighty and difficult subjects, as to be determined, from just and rational conviction, what is the truth in all points, and ought to be adhered to as such.

THE most accomplished and judicious Divines are but learners in the school of Christ; they are not perfect in knowledge; and with greater propriety may candidates be viewed in this light.

ALL things, indeed, absolutely necessary to be believed and practised, in order to salvation,

are undoubtedly sufficiently clear and plain in the sacred scriptures, and adapted to the capacities of men in general, but not so, all the decisions and dogmas of weak, prejudiced and fallible men.

It must therefore be unreasonable and absurd, to determine a candidate's fitness for the ministry, by his agreeing or not agreeing, with some of these systematic compositions.

THE Bible, if we believe it, contains a Revelation from Heaven—the Bible, as the source of divine light and knowledge, ought to be regarded by all, as the supreme standard of religious truth ; and candidates, as well as others, are to make this their guide, in forming both their opinions and practice.

ALL assistance, indeed, within their reach, from the labors and disquisitions of others, they, with every body else, have a right to make use of ; but these are not to supersede, but only to assist their own enquiries ; for after all, they are to see and understand, and judge for them-

felves, and ought to be indulged in full liberty for this, without being fettered or controuled by any human decifions.

AND it would contribute greatly, I conceive, to the peace of focieties, and efpecially in their choice of a candidate, and not caft any reflection upon their good fenfe, or be at all difhonorary to their christian character, if, waving matters of a diftinguifhing nature, and refpecting which, learned and good men have greatly differed in their judgment, they would, with candor and generofity of mind, content themfelves with fuch general qualifications, as are manifeftly effential to, and constitute the character of a good man, and a ufeful minifter,—if they would content themfelves with reasonable evidence, that the object of their choice was a real christian—A christian, not only by profefion, but practice—that his moral character was fair, and unblemifhed—that he was poffeffed of valuable literary accomplifhments—that he was a man of good understanding, and appeared, from their acquaintance with his private con-

versation and public performances, capable of discharging, with becoming dignity, and to useful purposes, the important duties of the ministerial office.

BUT, if things more particular and distinguishing, in the character or qualifications of a candidate, are required and insisted on, it seems, at least, next to an impossibility, that a society should ever agree, or be united in their choice. There are very few, if any societies, of considerable magnitude, who perfectly harmonize in all their religious opinions: And, if they all insist on a candidate's being of their distinguishing sentiments (and one has as good a right to insist upon this, as another) the consequence must be, their dividing and splitting into parties; and, if they are stiff and obstinate, into as many parties, as there shall be differing opinions among them.

AND, how often has this been the unhappy cause of hot contention and strife among christians?—of alienating their affections from one

another, and dividing them in funder, when, waving matters of a disputable nature, and respecting which, it must be of comparatively small moment, on which side the question the truth lies, and the exercise of a moderate degree of a catholic disposition, would have preserved them from such evils.

MAY you, my brethren of this society, be possessed of greater wisdom and prudence.— May a liberal and charitable way of thinking, with mutual forbearance and condescension, prevent such unhappy contentions and breaches among you, and strengthen the bands of unity and brotherly love. You will suffer me to mention another thing which may be of importance to the preservation of your peace and union : And that is, to be upon your guard, against the influence of any, who may be tempted to take advantage from your present circumstances, to make inroads upon you.

THERE have been some in all ages of the christian church, infected with an unhappy dis-

ease, dishonorable to themselves, and hurtful to the peace of societies, and that is the itch of popularity; an insatiable desire, and indefatigable zeal, to gain followers and applause, from all parts, and from all parties.

THE zeal of some, may not be so much to make sober christians, as to proselyte them to their particular and distinguishing sentiments, as if in these, and in these only, existed some sovereign spiritual catholicon, which would rectify all the disorders, and heal all the maladies of the soul, and carry men to heaven, without the least danger.

PERSONS of this cast, are interspersed among most societies, and may be ready to insert, and busy themselves in your affairs. They imagine they are the best judges, both of principles, and of preachers, and qualified to form and guide the judgment of others.

THEY may endeavour to excite among you jealousies and suspicions, and to influence and

divide your minds, by greatly commending one candidate, and as greatly reprobating another, as they appear to coincide or not to coincide with their particular way of thinking.

FROM this quarter, many and great evils have sometimes arisen. Societies who had long experienced HOW GOOD, AND HOW PLEASANT IT WAS FOR BRETHREN TO DWELL TOGETHER IN UNITY, have, when in circumstances similar to yours, had their minds alienated from one another, been divided and broken. And it may be of great importance to you, to be on your guard against dangers of this nature.

CHERISH a love to one another, and a warm concern for your common interest,—for your common peace and happiness, as a society.

LONG have you been blessed with friendly agreement and harmony among yourselves, and appeared honorable among the daughters of Zion: may no root of bitterness now spring up among you, to trouble you, and defile your glory.

ONE thing more you will permit me to add, which I esteem, indeed, of very considerable consequence, and greatly conducive to the continuance of your peace and happiness; and in this, I doubt not, I shall have your general concurrence, viz. that in your choice of a candidate for settlement, whenever this interesting affair shall come on, you will endeavour to fix upon one, who (being in other respects equally eligible) appears most likely to be agreeable to your present worthy and beloved Pastor—one, who, in addition to other accomplishments, is possessed of a benevolent and amiable temper—one, who is likely to be a support and comfort to him, in his infirm and broken state—one, who will be willing to be advised and counselled by him, and to pay proper deference to his greater experience and ripper judgment.

You have given such convincing, and honorable testimony of your esteem of, and affection to the Rev. Mr. Cary, that I cannot doubt

of your friendly wishes, that he may be fully gratified in this matter ; nor would I doubt that your love, and the beneficent fruits of it, will be continued to him and his family.

INDEED, my brethren, he has deserved highly of you, both by his diligent, and arduous labours among you, and by his unsolicited generosity to you ; and you have been deeply sensible of his merit.

AND you will not be offended, I trust, if I say, and say it in the fulness of my heart, that I rejoice, and will rejoice in all your kindness to him. In your kindness to the man, in near connection with whom, I have now lived for something more than twenty years ‡—with whom I have lived in the greatest intimacy—with mutu-

‡ MR. CARY began to preach to his people on the decease of the Rev. Mr. Lowell, their first and much esteemed Pastor, who died May 15th, 1767. From that time, he continued with them, and was ordained on May 11th, 1768. And, on Lord's day, March 9th, 1788, after having preached in the morning, he was seized with a disorder, supposed to be of the paralytic kind, which, to the great grief of his affectionate people, rendered him incapable of farther prosecuting his public ministry.

al confidence, and have enjoyed, without interruption, the tender endearments of friendship, and brotherly love.

I sincerely sympathize both with him and you, and feel myself deeply wounded by the stroke which has fallen upon him.

BUT, blessed be God, he yet lives; and may he still live to pray for and to bless you.—May his health be farther restored, and he be able, in some measure, to serve you in your best interests, and to be a comfort and a blessing to his family and friends.

AND now, my beloved hearers of this society, we heartily wish, that the God of the spirits of all flesh, may, in proper time set a man over the congregation. One who shall walk in the steps of your present pastor—One who shall imitate him, by zeal and diligence, in the service of God, and of your souls—who shall equal him in that wisdom and prudence, with which he hath conducted himself among you, and towards

you—one whom you shall have reason, equally to esteem and value, and who shall, for many years, prove a rich blessing to you and your offspring.

I conclude with the words of the apostle Paul, addressed to his Corinthian brethren. **FINALLY BRETHREN, FAREWELL: BE PERFECT, BE OF GOOD COMFORT, BE OF ONE MIND, LIVE IN PEACE, AND THE GOD OF LOVE AND PEACE SHALL BE WITH YOU.**

A M E N.



A P P E N D I X.

*THE following Letters, from the Rev. Thomas Cary to his parish, together with some brief account of their proceedings upon them, and also their address in answer to them, are here published, at the desire of many of the Society, and will doubtless be acceptable to all; more especially as it will afford them and their families the pleasure and advantage of frequently perusing, in private, the excellent and affectionate advice of their worthy and beloved Minister, as some consolation for the loss of those his public instructions from the pulpit, of which God, in his holy, though afflictive providence, has seen fit to deprive them.**

AT a meeting of the parish July 14th, 1788, called at Mr. Cary's request, the following letter from him was communicated by the Moderator, viz.

Newbury-port, July 14, 1788.

My beloved Friends and Parishioners,

AFTER having been employed many years in preaching to you the Gospel of our blessed Saviour, it has pleased God to afflict

* See note, page 36 of the preceding Sermon.

me with a grievous disease, which has rendered me unable to continue my labors among you. From the nature of my disorder, concurring with the opinions of my physicians, I cannot reasonably expect for many years, if ever, to have my health so far restored as that I may again discharge the important duties of a Minister.— Thus circumstanced, I have anxiously contemplated your situation, as fully as my ill health would permit me; and I conceive it for your interest to settle a Colleague with me, rather than to trust to a temporary, and perhaps, precarious supply of the pulpit. I however feel, with great concern, the additional burthen you would thus take upon you, in having two ministers to support; and from your long and uninterrupted attentions and goodness to me, and from my sincere affection for you, I am induced to adopt any reasonable expedient to relieve you from this embarrassment. I have for some time been revolving this subject in my mind, and not prevailing on myself to suffer my interest to preponderate over yours, I have at last concluded to submit to your consideration, advice & determination, the following propositions.

FIRST. That I will discharge you from all demands which I may hereafter have against you for any salary—and

SECONDLY. That, although I continue your minister, you release to me all claims you may have, for any future ministerial or parochial duties and services.

If these propositions should meet your approbation, you will, I doubt not, take the necessary care to have such votes passed and instruments completed, as may be proper to carry them into execution——If, afterwards, you should conclude to comply with my wishes and settle a Colleague with me, who may discharge all the ministerial functions, I pray God to give you one after his own heart, who may faithfully labor in the service of our Great Master, and be able successfully to promote your best and eternal interest.—And, permit me earnestly to recommend to you, in the pursuit of this important object, a continuance of that union and christian candor which has so long honorably distinguished you as a parish.

WHEN I finally concluded to propose to you to release my future salary, that I might not continue a long and useless burden upon you, I knew I should be greatly pressed in providing for the comfortable support of my family and the education of my children; but your present

and future interest prevailed over any personal private considerations.

IF, however, in my past labors among you, I have so conducted as to entitle myself to your esteem and affection, and if your bountiful spirit should thereby be induced to grant me some pecuniary assistance to be paid by such instalments as you should judge convenient to you, it would be gratefully received by me.

BUT whatever may be your determination on this subject, or however it may please God in his providence to dispose of me in this world; my earnest and constant prayers to him will be, for your peace, prosperity, present and everlasting happiness.

I am,

with unfeigned Respect,

your Affectionate Pastor

and humble Servant,

THOMAS CARY.

*To Nathaniel Carter, Esq.
Moderator, to be communicated to the Parish.*

THE propositions contained in the foregoing letter having been taken into consideration, the parish, at a new meeting held for that purpose on the 21st of the same month, passed the following votes, viz.

THAT they would accept of the Reverend THOMAS CARY's release of all demands he might have against them for salary, excepting for such salary as had theretofore been voted him.

THAT, upon his executing such release, they would release to him, and excuse him from, all future Ministerial and Parochial duties and services; he, however, to remain their minister, and his pastoral relation to the church and parish, to continue, any thing above voted, notwithstanding; and the parish committee were authorised and directed, in behalf of the parish, to execute such release.

THAT in consideration of the Rev. THOMAS CARY's executing to the parish, a release of all demands for salary (excepting for such as had been theretofore voted him,) the parish would, and thereby did, grant to, and engage to pay him, the sum of six hundred pounds lawful money, on or before the 25th March 1790, with lawful interest for so much of said sum as should

then remain unpaid, from that time, till paid. The manner of assessing, collecting and paying of which, was also agreed upon :†

AND that they would settle a colleague with the Rev. Mr. Cary, but that the time when, and the measures to be taken for that purpose, should be left to the future determination of the church and parish.

THE Clerk of the parish, having, by their direction, furnished Mr. Cary with a copy of the above votes, mutual releases, agreeably thereto, were executed and exchanged between him and the Committee.

AFTERWARDS, at a meeting of the parish on the 11th August, 1788, again called at Mr. Cary's request, the following letter from him was communicated by the Moderator,

† THE parish, at their annual meeting in March, 1788, had voted Mr. Cary £200 salary for 1788, payable in March 1789, of which they did not now accept a release from him : and as the next year's salary would not have been payable till March 1790, the payment of the £600 was, for that reason, fixed to that time.

LETTER II.

Newbury-port, August 11, 1788.

My beloved Friends and Parishioners,

I HAVE been notified by your clerk, of your proceedings on the subject of some propositions I took the liberty a few days past to lay before you, for your consideration: and I feel myself deeply penetrated with your affection and generosity to me.

I AM apprehensive the raising of the money stated in your vote, in addition to my salary for the current year, and the charge of supplying the pulpit, may, in some degree, be inconvenient to you during the present scarcity of cash, and stagnation of business; and my wish is, to lessen this inconvenience on your part, by sharing with you in the difficulties of the present day.

FROM these considerations I request your acceptance of one hundred pounds, part of my salary voted me for the current year, and also of another hundred pounds, part of the six hundred pounds, you had the goodness to grant me, in consideration of my releasing to you all demands for future salary.

As you doubtless fully considered my situation and circumstances when you were pleased to

make me that grant, it would be useless to suggest, that, although a prudent attention and rigid œconomy in the management of my affairs, may, in the present state of my family, (my children being now quite young) enable me to part with a portion of your bounty, yet, when my domestic expences shall increase, the discharge of them will require the aid of all the provision you have had the goodness to make for me. But, from your past and recent kindness to me, I feel myself compelled to trust to your future generosity and justice, to give me such further assistance hereafter, as the exigencies of my family, or the education and support of my children, (if God should continue them to me) may require ; rather than to omit any thing on my part, which may diminish the weight of your present burdens.

It gave me great pleasure to find your determination of settling a colleague with me ; and may God in his good pleasure, grant you one, who, by his life, may adorn the doctrines of our SAVIOUR, and be a rich blessing to you and your children.

AND now, my friends, before I finish, bear with me, while I say, that, as I humbly hope my

general conduct, for the many years I was enabled to discharge the important duties of a minister, (though I confess my great imperfections) as well as what I have now done, will convince you, that I have fought, not yours, but you; that I have aimed to promote your peace, interest and happiness; so, I doubt not, you will do all that in you lies, to cultivate the same spirit among yourselves.—I trust I have been willing to impart unto you the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST; and, not only so, but my desire was, and still is, not to make a gain of you, not to distress, or be a burden to you, because ye have been dear to me.

LET me then beseech you, for GOD's sake, and for CHRIST's sake; let me intreat you, by the mercies of our heavenly FATHER, and by the gentleness of our compassionate REDEEMER, as you have a regard to the welfare of this church and society, to the reputation of religion, and the success of the Gospel, that you let the peace of GOD rule in your hearts, to which ye are called in one body. Maintain that harmony which has been frequently noticed by others, which has been so grateful to all who have wished and prayed for your prosperity, and which, you also know, has been, and must still be, of the greatest advantage to you.

“IF, therefore, my beloved brethren, there be any consolation in CHRIST, if any comfort of Love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; let nothing be done thro’ strife or vain glory, but, in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves; look not every man on his own things, but every man, also, on the things of others; let this mind be in you which also was in CHRIST JESUS; and walk in universal love, as CHRIST also hath loved you and given himself for you, an offering to God of a sweet smelling favor.”

WERE these evangelical precepts complied with, what a happy revolution would there be among us? All men would be as brethren, and different churches and societies, as one family. A continued series of good offices would make life pass away with great pleasure, though we are liable to so many changes and afflictive events, and earth would bear some resemblance to heaven.

MAY GOD then, of his infinite mercy in JESUS CHRIST, pour down a spirit of light, love and peace upon you all; that ye may grow up in him, who is the Head in all things; and may

this God of love and peace ever delight to dwell
among you, and to bless you.

I am,

with great Respect,

your Affectionate Pastor

and Humble Servant,

THOMAS CARY.

*To the Honorable Benjamin
Greenleaf, Esq. Moderator, to
be communicated to the Parish.*

THE parish thereupon voted to accept the
sums therein relinquished, and that the follow-
ing address, containing the reasons inducing
them to do so, should be presented to Mr. Ca-
ry: A Committee was chosen for that purpose,
who presented the same accordingly.

Newbury-port, August 11th, 1788.

Reverend and Dear Sir,

YOUR parishioners have considered the several propositions you have had the goodness to lay before us, for our advice and determination; and the result is contained in the votes of the parish, with copies of which the clerk will furnish you.

WE feel ourselves strongly impressed with a grateful sense of your regard for us, manifested in your very generous and affectionate conduct towards the parish upon this melancholy occasion: and your recent benevolent proposal of relinquishing to us part of the grants heretofore made you, is a continuance of that sincere and disinterested attention to our interest, preferably to your own, which your whole conduct has evinced from the hour that God in his mercy was pleased to give you to us as a minister.—Nor could we have prevailed upon ourselves to have accepted any part of your proposals, but from a firm conviction that the parish will hereafter cheerfully make you such compensation as the exigencies of your family and the education of your children, on your part, and as equity, honor and justice, on our part, may demand.

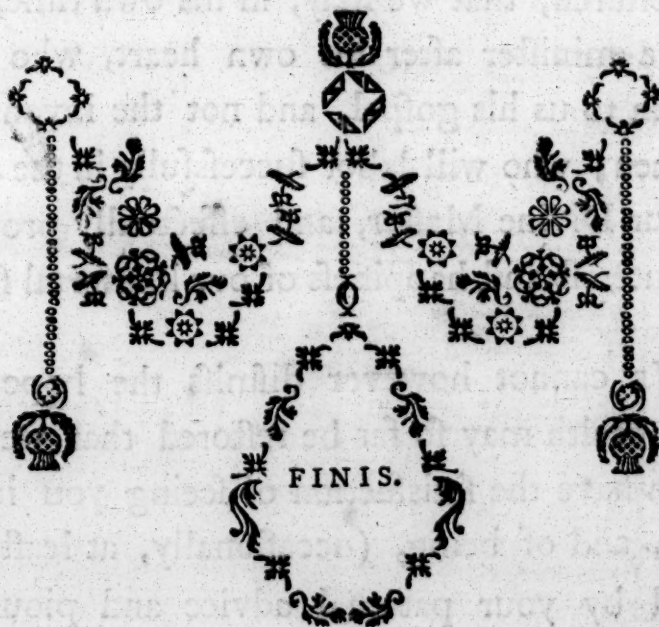
To us it is exceeding painful to reflect, that our warmest wishes for your long continued services among us, are probably disappointed, by the unhappy disorder with which you are afflicted ; and that the true interest of the parish requires that we comply with your advice, and settle a colleague with you. In the prosecution of this important affair, we earnestly request your advice and assistance ; and we trust it will be your constant prayer, to the great Head of the Church, that we may, in his own time, obtain a minister after his own heart, who will preach to us his gospel, and not the inventions of men ; who will labor successfully in the cause of our Divine Master, and effectually promote the interest and happiness of our immortal souls.

WE cannot however dismiss the hope that your health may so far be restored that we may again have the satisfaction of seeing you in the desk, and of being, (occasionally, at least) assisted by your paternal advice and pious instructions.

AND may that God, whom you delight to serve, take you under his special protection ; may he remove your disease and restore your health, and long may he continue you a blessing

to your family and people, until that solemn period, when his good pleasure shall translate you from this abode of pain and sorrow, when he shall pronounce you his faithful servant, and receive you into the fullness of his joy.

To the Rev. THOMAS CARY.



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