

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

NEW-YORK,

Before a Brigade of Continental Troops, and a Number of Citizens, assembled in

ST. GEORGE'S CHAPEL,

On the 11th December, 1783;

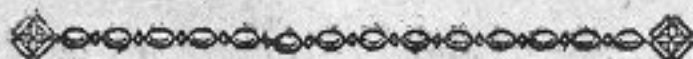
The Day set apart by the Recommendation of

The United States in Congress,


As a Day of public Thanksgiving for the Blessings of

INDEPENDENCE, LIBERTY and PEACE,

By the Rev. ISRAEL EVANS, A. M. Chaplain in the
American Army.



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A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED BY

By the Rev. ISRAEL EVANS, to a Brigade of Continental
Troops, and the Citizens of New-York, in

St. GEORGE'S CHAPEL.

THEN sang Moses and the Children of Israel this Song unto the Lord; and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord: for he hath triumphed gloriously! The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation. Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power! Thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy! The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them: I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Who is like unto thee, O Lord, amongst the Gods? Who is like thee glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou in thy mercy, hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: Thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.

MY Dear Friends and Fellow-Soldiers, the words, which I have just repeated, are a part of that animated song of divine praise, recorded in the fifteenth chapter of the book of Exodus. They were uttered by Moses, at the Red Sea, immediately after the total overthrow of the King of Egypt, and all his numerous hosts.

How well those passages of sacred scripture are chosen, and how justly adapted to the glorious triumphs of this day, I leave the good sense of this assembly to determine. I hasten to consider what is more immediately the design
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of our present meeting. I wish not, for a moment, to suspend the generous sallies of your grateful joy. My intention is neither to spend your time by forced, nor by unnecessary Comparisons between the great deliverance of the people of Israel from their bondage, and the preservation of the Inhabitants of America from oppression. What we ought, on this Occasion, most of all to covet, is, that we may possess a large portion of that pure spirit of joy and lively gratitude, which inspired the breast of the divine Hebrew prophet. With hearts so prepared, we shall have the utmost confidence to hope, that our praises will be neither luke-warm nor unacceptable to our most blessed Benefactor. Following then, as much as we can, the spirit and grateful meaning of the holy text, we will celebrate the praises of the most High, and with cheerful hearts, obey the voice of the supreme power of these United States.

With what exalted pleasure, does the virtuous soldier and patriot venerate this day, devoted as a free-will offering, to him who has caused the Sun of peace to dispel the clouds of adversity and war? Now, the sons of freedom have suspended the common employments of life, and have assumed the garments of joy and gladness. They are assembled in the temples of devotion; they are presenting the offerings of grateful praise. How solemn the scene! How dignified and pleasing the transaction! The prospect has almost tempted me to adopt the prophetic rapture of the holy writings, and to say in that elevated stile, "*From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him! He lay down as a lion, and as a great lion! Who shall stir him up? Blessed is he that bleisseth thee; and cursed is he, that curseth thee:*" Come then my friends, and let us raise our songs of praise to him, whose blessing is happiness, and whose loving kindness is the source of national greatness and personal felicity; and may creation echo back the sounding joy.

If there is glory in the victories of justice; if there is dignity in the possession of freedom; and if there

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is happiness in the enjoyment of peace: Let then this assembly invoke, not only all mankind, but even the powers of Heaven to unite with us, in the warmest strains of benevolence; and rejoice, that so many of the human race, and so large a portion of this world, are rescued from the calamities of slavery and war.

Could the importance and grandeur of these subjects enlarge and enrich the powers of an honest mind, I should appear in your presence, animated with a fervor of praise, and elevated to that sublimity of style, which even angels might not disdain to envy. I should exceed your highest expectations; I should surpass your very wishes themselves. Your gratitude, your praises should, like the holy prophet of old, be carried up in a fiery car of heavenly joy and sublime devotion, to the very throne of eternal Justice, Goodness and Mercy.

But who, among the sons of men, can proportion his love and praise to the paternal justice and the unbounded beneficence of our common Creator! Then, instead of wishing to claim the cherub's fervent praise, instead of coveting celestial powers to inspire seraphic songs; and instead of envying Gabriel and his brother Arch-angels their enlarged capacities of pure devotion; let us rather humbly rejoice, that the sincere gratitude of the pious mind is the most acceptable offering to our blessed God! He demands neither thousands of hecatombs, nor rivers of blood, to represent the praises of men, and demonstrate the holy joys of their thankful hearts! With more exalted complacency he beholds the humble and obedient resolution than he does the deceitful parade of pompous hypocrisy, and all the proud ensigns of false grandeur.

But I fear I rather check than animate the passions of joy and thankfulness! I imagine your grateful affections labour to give your tongues an utterance, and forgetting the voice and feeble efforts of the speaker, you are ready to break forth in a transport of holy devotion, and address yourselves immediately to the great Governor of the universe, in such sentiments as these: *Oh! thou eternal and most merciful God!*

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It has pleased thee to cause the wrath of man to praise thee; and thou hast commanded the nations of the earth to be at peace! We adore the manifest displays of thy justice and mercy, and we humbly beseech thee to look, with a merciful and propitious eye, upon us thy servants, whom thou hast redeemed, who are now assembled to pay our homage to thy exalted Majesty, and to invoke thy future care and protection of us! We are thy children most blessed God, though we confess the signs of our duty to our Father in Heaven, have been too few! We are thy children, tho' we have too often, like prodigal sons, departed from the author of our own felicity! But a father's tender care protected us, and the inhabitants of this continent, when our feeble state encouraged the avarice and tyranny of our enemies to attempt to
 BIND US IN ALL CASES WHATSOEVER!

In humble imagination, let every knee bend! Bend ye stubborn knees, unaccustomed to kneel, if there are any such! Melt ye hard hearts, if there are any present, which have never, yet, felt the sweet meltings of gratitude and the joys of Heaven! Let the tears, not of sorrow but of gladness, express those feelings of undissembled thankful hearts, which the strongest human language cannot utter!

Fain would I communicate the joys of my soul, and aid your most lively devotion, but the subjects of our joy are too great for the human mind to comprehend at one view, and represent in all their extensive magnitude; and yet who can be, altogether silent, when blessings so rich and exalted, invite our praise!

The spacious prospects of national happiness, crowd themselves upon our imagination! The great Continent of America, is the widely extended theatre of our contemplations and our future actions. It is now free and independent! The blood and treasure of the sons of freedom have purchased these privileges! For to what part of this Continent, can we turn our attention, and not be informed, that the liberty and safety, now enjoyed, have been obtained at the great expence of sufferings, toil and bloodshed! Where shall we find a city or a village, whose scorched ruins will not shew us some mournful effects o

a desolating war! Much, indeed, you have heard about tyranny and slavery, and once you dreaded those plagues of mankind; but, though you have greatly suffered, yet you have felt so little of the true horrors of those inhuman curses, that you can, with too much coolness and dispassion, hear descriptions of them, and your indignation is neither fired against those enemies of your felicity, nor is your gratitude powerfully excited for your deliverance from them!

How great and marvellous would your mercies appear, were I able to paint slavery with the dark colours of Egypt; or could I bring examples from the brickkilns and furnaces of Pharoah, and present you some wretched slaves groaning in the bitterness of their souls, under a cruel and insupportable bondage; yet when I had done this, you would have but a faint representation of the miseries which have fallen upon the greatest part of mankind in all ages of the world, and which millions of men now suffer!

But you will say, these are gloomy subjects, and do not correspond with the happy events of this day. Perhaps you will inquire why a cloud of distress is drawn over the bright sunshine of your joyful feelings; why are the horrors of slavery and war mixed with the heavenly blessings of peace? In answer to this, my friends, permit me to say, I hoped, by those means, to raise your gratitude the higher. I wished to remind you of the bitter cup of slavery which was put into your hands, that you might with the greater relish quaff the cordial of Independent peace. That cup of slavery you have indeed slightly tasted; but you refused to drink the poisonous draught, and for this virtuous refusal, the cup of blessing is now put into your hands to reward you.

Since therefore, this distinguishing blessing of freedom is bestowed on us, what bounds shall we set to the gratitude of our souls! And if, in the words of a celebrated writer, *one day, nay one hour, of virtuous liberty, is worth more than a whole eternity of slavery*; what then is equal to the treasure

sure you now possess? Who can estimate the mighty value and give the sum total of your national happiness? Is not this the day you have so long wished to behold; is not this the transporting day for which you have suffered, and fought, and bled? Let the tide of joy rise high; let all the sources of gratitude pour themselves out before you, and make glad your hearts.

Could I obey my own inclination, and were I able to make the transactions of eight years pass before you, within the short time you are to spend under this roof: What generous love of the rights of mankind; what patriotic attachment to the liberties of our country and the happiness of posterity; and what unshaken perseverance and victorious fortitude would be exhibited in your presence! From the nineteenth of April, on Lexington plains, through all the unutterable trials and vicissitudes of a perilous and unequal conflict, until, at last, on this joyful day, in this sacred temple, we praise that God who has triumphed gloriously, and has commanded the rage and tumult of war to cease and be still.

Oh blessed day which brings to us the possession of all we have been contending for, and enables us to erect the standard, of liberty and glory, upon one of the four great divisions of the earth! Hail auspicious morning of the rising empire of this Western world! Hail arts and sciences, America is the new theatre of your improvement, and will, perhaps, be the last concluding scene of your perfection. Commerce and trade shall spread their sails and waft the riches of distant lands through this extended continent. Now, without the fear of an insulting enemy, the industrious husbandman shall sow his enlarged fields, and reap his rich and joyful harvests. Here the oppressed shall find a secure retreat, from all the poverty and misery of merciless tyranny. Religion and learning shall raise their drooping heads and flourish again. Now shall the brave soldier claim the honor of being a free and independent citizen of the United-States of America. The blessed soil of independence shall strive

to reward him for his persevering valour. Plentiful harvests shall rise and crown his toils, and spacious fields shall offer their growing wealth in grateful tribute to the victorious Hero.

Nor can we believe that a happy people will be less grateful than the earth itself: Oh! Americans think not YOUR PROMISED REWARDS are greater than should be given to the soldier's courage, and the soldier's arms! Give not sparingly to the generous saviours of their country! They ask but a small portion of that wealth which their valour saved, and their toils and blood have purchased! They only look for the hard earned pittance of justice, and say, what eternal rectitude has taught them, that *the labourer is worthy of his hire!* Suffer not injustice or ingratitude to invoke the frowns of Heaven, and bring some direful curse upon this Land of Freedom! Never let your sun set under the clouds of national guilt and dishonesty! I pray that the citizens of America may be as famous for their justice and generosity, as their army are renowned for their patience, fortitude and valour; and I most ardently wish, that the interest of the citizen and the hero, may always be the same.

On this glad day, we will not forget to be thankful for the faithful alliance and the unwearied services of the generous nation of France. She has served the cause of America, with large fleets and a gallant army. With us they have fought, with us they have bled, and with us they have conquered! This pleasing name shall call up all that is grateful within us; & we will recollect our lasting obligations to the humane PROTECTOR OF THE RIGHTS OF MANKIND! For when the vengeful sword of Britain, made such near approaches to the vitals of America, the magnanimous Louis, like an Angel of mercy commissioned from the skies, flew with rapid haste, and snatched the devoted victim from the tyrant's wrath. So Heaven sent the mighty Angel and smote the armies of the proud Assyrian King! So when the Hebrew nation fled from the Egyptian tyrant's rage; the sea saw it, and opened a pas-

sage of safety for the oppressed people, but overwhelmed Pharoah and all his embattled hosts, in the very moment of their expected victory.

Were it not a subject which has employed every tongue and almost every pen, I might with pleasure, rehearse some of the principal battles which have been fought, and some of the glorious victories which France and America, have obtained: but to you they are all familiar; they are printed upon your hearts, and cannot be forgotten. We then pass over, in haste, the fields of an eight year's war, where materials might be collected in greater abundance than can be exhibited on this day of general joy and festivity; fields where you have gathered some rich harvests of victory, and where hope sprung up and has grown to enjoyment. But I say we must pass on to observe, that enough has been done within eight campaigns, to engage the attention, and raise the admiration of many ages to come; and so astonishing will a true history of the interpositions of Providence be, and the efforts of this country in accomplishing this mighty revolution, that within one hundred years, there will be as little credit given to the history of the United States, as some persons, in the present day, choose to give to the history of the Jewish deliverance from the bondage of Egypt. They will undertake to prove, very wisely to be sure, that a revolution of such a magnitude, could not possibly be accomplished in so short a time by such slender means, and by such an infant people; but their assertions will be as destitute of truth, as the prophecies of some who would have prophesied us into the fixed fate of slavery before this time, had not America placed more confidence in God, than in their predictions of our conquered fall at the feet of Britain. Indeed, however astonishing this revolution may now appear, I will venture to believe, that a just history of the American war, will unfold many things, at present of a secret nature, which will raise the astonishment almost to the summit of unbelief. Imagination itself cannot paint the horrors and calamities of this war

in their proper colours; it cannot present you a just description of what you have dreaded or passed through; or if it could, the mind of humanity would not be able to bear the prospect; the shock would be too great of misery so unmixed. To recollect the dangers to which we have been so often brought; to consider, if it were possible, with cool & dispassionate minds, on what an awful precipice we have so often stood, and by what a slender support we have been suspended over the gulf of slavery; the mind cannot forbear trembling, even when blessed with peace and safety. Like the distressed mariner in a feeble bark, unable to contend with the violence of raging winds and overwhelming seas; but when, after being long on the very verge of death, he is at last conveyed into a haven of safety, he rejoices with amazement, he considers the mighty billows of the ocean, and scarcely believes he has escaped their fury! So great and amazing are the blessings of peace, which at this time we celebrate! So marvellous our deliverance from the unexampled cruelty of Britain. The mind comprehends our great salvation only in small portions at the present moment. We seem like the children of Israel, after their return from captivity; we seem rather to dream our felicity, than to realize the riches of the blessing. And indeed we may say, that although we have not beheld seas divided, nor the sun and moon arrested in their courses, nor food descending immediately from Heaven! Yet, we have seen those things come to pass, which were equally beyond our power to accomplish, or our wisdom to contrive. When we began to oppose *one hundred* ships of war, and the force and discipline of *fifty-five thousand* veterans, we had no more reason to expect victories over those numerous forces, than the Israelites had, whose only weapons of defence were the instruments of their labour, and their only armour was their slavish uniforms. This war has therefore overturned many of the fond maxims of tyrants, and has forced them into a conviction of this great truth, that *the battle is not always to the strong!* And
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it is devoutly to be wished and expected, that there will be fewer wars in the world, than there have been; and that the enemies to the peace of mankind will more cautiously commence unprovoked hostilities, when they are informed that multitudes can avail very little on the one side, when Omnipotence is on the other.

Should any one be disposed to call this sentiment into question, let him only carefully examine the pages of history, and he will be convinced that the greater number of victories have been obtained by smaller armies, over those which were much superior to them in multitude.— But rejoice Oh! Americans and be glad! For although your own strength has not saved you, and procured you the inheritance of freedom and peace; yet that merciful God of justice, to whom you fled at the very entrance of this bloody contest; to whom you appealed when you fled from the scourge of the oppressor, to the protection of the deity; whose aid you most solemnly invoked: He who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works, who executeth judgment for the oppressed, but the way of the wicked he turneth upside down, he has fought for you and has given you the victory. Oh! sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things; his right hand and his holy arm hath gotten him the victory. The words of Almighty God, addressed to the people of Israel, are on this occasion, applicable to the Americans, with the alteration of only a name. Ye have seen what I did to the Britons! and how I bare you on Eagle's wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure to me, above all people; for all the earth is mine.

It might be reasonably expected, that the mercy and goodness of God, would be the most powerful arguments to work upon the gratitude and ingenuity of every generous mind, and make us abhor the very thought of displeasing the author of all good, when he is lavishing his blessings upon us. What can be more ungenerous, what
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more ungrateful, than to sin against the mercy of God, when it shines so gloriously in our deliverance? The best improvement of the mercy and goodness of God, is to learn to fear him. Therefore it is written, there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared. But if men, either in their personal or national characters, should be more bold in sinning, because they were delivered from their calamities, and from their enemies; and should determine that their sin and presumption should increase in number and greatness, in proportion as the mercy and compassion of God was boundless and unmerited: What can all this represent, but the baseness and unfeeling hardness of a most ungrateful nature? Nothing can so soon provoke the judgments of Heaven to return, and make punishment doubly just and doubly heavy! But I forbear to address you in this stile of severity. This is a day of mercy and joy. I will wish and hope that both the personal and national mercies of God will reach your hearts, in the sweetest and most powerful ways of persuasion; and that you will be drawn by the cords of love, and will obey the goodness of God, which invites and even courts us to obedience and our own happiness: And if you are not happy, Oh! Americans, it must be your own fault; you have no charges to bring against God, for his want of goodness and care towards you! He has not only given us the common blessings of life; he has not only this year given us the fruits of the earth in abundance; but he has given us liberty, that charter of all the blessings of life.

Here blessed liberty is thy resting place: Come and raise thy temple, of national justice and glory, in this rising empire: Come from the bloody contests of barbarous and contending nations, and crown the toils of heroes and patriots, and reward them for teaching mankind, how far, under the auspices of Heaven, the exertions of a brave and virtuous nation can extend; and what mighty revolutions can be effected by a few men, determined to be free and independent.

Time and fame shall be ashamed of the barbarous records of the past nations of the earth. The names of France and America shall make the page of history glorious, and their deeds of renown shall inspire future ages with the love of national prosperity. Posterity, through all the long periods of time and futurity, shall open the mighty volume of the American independence, and applaud the unexampled bravery and fortitude of the armies of the United States: Their examples of humanity and just defence, shall instruct mankind in the necessary use of war: And while their fame glides with a full and strong tide, through the annals of time, nations shall be taught lessons of heroism, and grow great by our example. This revolution, finished in so short a time, will encourage the oppressed vassals of petty tyrants, to trample upon the chains of slavery.

Millions yet to exist, will wish to have lived in this age, and to have seen what you have beheld: Nay they will envy you the honour of living when time was most dignified, and boasted the unrivalled glory of giving birth to THE MOST BENEVOLENT GUARDIANS OF HUMAN RIGHTS, THE FOREVER FAMED LOUIS, AND WASHINGTON, ILLUSTRIOUS AS THE GENEROUS FRIENDS OF MANKIND.—This is that age of the world, in which, I thank God, that it was my happy lot to be born.

An age, which I believe, every patriot would have preferred to any other, had the choice been offered to him. What a rich consolation is it then, to every good man of the present age, and to every man of a patriotic and public spirit; to every generous, honourable, and suffering officer; and to every persevering and intrepid soldier in America. I say what a rich consolation shall it be to those characters, to reflect, that their past exertions have met with the smiles of Heaven; and that their intentions and the designs of Providence, have not been at war with one another, however much they have both been opposed to the enemies of mankind. It shall be a farther consolation, if any is necessary, that some
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of the most potent kingdoms in Europe have aided us ; and our just defence has been approved of, by almost all the rest of the world : And lastly, in my opinion, every man of principle, next to the salvation of his soul, will rejoice, even in his last gasp, that he has done something for the liberties of his country, and has contributed to secure the freedom of America, and introduce that peace which we are this day blessed with. A peace not only honourable, but rich with public advantages. A free and unshackled trade with all the nations of the world ; the treasures of the sea—the freedom of the ocean—an immense addition of territory—and to crown all, we are an independent nation. Heaven has given us a name and a title among the nations of the earth. These are some of the advantages we derive from that peace we have contended for, and for which we have not contended in vain. Hail blessed peace ! heaven born friend to man ; deign to forgive the madness of mankind, and dwell once more on earth : The humane and compassionate mind shall be thy fair seat of bliss ; and Oh ! forever bar from that habitation, the hostile enemies of thy happiness. May peace and love, and humane affections, be once more planted in the human mind, and there grow and flourish till time shall be no more !

How happy the exchange of war for peace ! The most sanguine expectations could not have looked for this day so soon : And the most critical observer of human nature could not have thought that this war, attended by so many marks of British inhumanity, would have ended with so much dignity and mildness, on the part of America.

Our enemies, as if they thought the uncommon distresses of war, which our particular situation subjected us to, were too light for a people who were doing no more than what they believed God and their consciences approved, have contributed all in their power to make this of all wars, the most calamitous ! Suppose we had been wrong, upon those honest principles which induced us to suffer so much in this contest, for the benefit of posterity,

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ty, for we should not have suffered so much distress, in our day, as we have already done, even if tyranny had enjoyed its full sway: I say, if we had been honestly wrong, our enemies should have known, that humanity is the best policy, and was most likely to recover us from our errors, and have brought us back to our duty. But why did Britain banish mercy and humanity from civil society, and send them to seek refuge among the very Savages of the wilderness! And yet this was not enough; insults and contempt have never failed to bring up the rear of all their cruelties! Could America speak this day and give us the crimson narrative of the unprovoked murders, and the inhuman and unnecessary shedding of captive blood: That blood, which by the law of nations, and the voice of humanity should always be sacredly preserved. What a tale of horror would be unfolded! Or could this city inform us what our brother soldiers and fellow-citizens have suffered in the most horrid prison-ships, in the dungeons, in the gaols, and in prisons of every other kind, where cold and famine, and death, like merciless tyrants, reigned over the miseries of men! Or rather, could I call up the patriotic dead, who in this city, have fallen martyrs in the cause of liberty, whose dignified souls could never submit to the solicitations of their enemies, to oppose their country, even though this compliance might have saved their lives. They, I imagine, though they could give you a description of their sufferings, which would torture humanity, and fill your souls with an agony of grief, they would notwithstanding, forget them all, amidst the general joy of this day, and they would congratulate you on the glorious conclusion of that war in which their lives were sacrificed. How would they applaud your past conduct, and remind you of the rich price of their blood, which they paid down for that liberty and peace, which you now celebrate. They would exhort you to be united as a band of brothers; they would beseech you to be wise, to be public spirited and nobly generous in the improvement and enjoyment of your liberties;

erties; they would ardently pray you to forgive your, and their enemies, rather than to indulge any ignoble passion of resentment or revenge, which could any ways be injurious to the dignity of the American character, or to the credit and reputation of the confederated States. But had that noble band of suffering patriots appeared before you and the citizens of this State, and exhorted you to be great, dignified and merciful, your conduct could not have been more honorable and glorious than it has been. For who, my friends, ever saw human nature so long distressed, and so long insulted, and yet so free from the spirit of revenge! Who ever saw a conquering army, and a victorious people, treat their cruel enemies with such lenity and tenderness? This noble generosity of spirit has finished the American character. This war is now closed with greater honour, if possible, than it was began and prosecuted. Of all our glorious days, none have been more pleasing to the dignified, and generous mind, than those which have followed the departure of our enemies from this city. The humanity towards those who were once our enemies; the regular and good discipline of this part of the army, and the peaceable and humane conduct of the citizens, since the establishment of American government in this city, has amazed our enemies; and must make the most pleasing impressions upon the mind of every friend to the American character. Thus have we seen the difference between the cruel, and the brave enemy! The cruel enemy tormented and tortured even beyond the common pangs of death, when he had it in his power. The American, when victorious, sheathed his sword and forgot that he had an enemy! Like the truly brave man, who uses his sword no longer than his enemy opposes him with his arms. He is great in mercy, as well as brave in the field of danger! Thus have we gloriously finished this war, on which the fate and happiness of millions depended; and now the dire spirit of discord and contention, glutted with bloodshed, has ceased to plague mankind; and war itself, wearied with bloody triumphs

triumphs over heaps of slain, and moved to some small pity by the agonies of the dying captives, and the groanings of the military sick, and mangled limbs of the wounded, has made a pause: Oh! that it may be a pause, lasting as eternity itself! Then no more shall man be prepared by profession, to destroy the image of God, and to make war against the peace and happiness of his fellow creatures! No more shall a ravaged country exclaim against man, and condemn him for destroying the bounties of Heaven, and the means of human comfort and happiness! No more the distressed widow, or the helpless orphan, or the weeping maid, desponding, mourn their slaughtered friends, and curse the unjust authors of an unprovoked war!

But perhaps I have attempted to follow the glory of America, and describe the blessings of peace! Vain attempt to strive to bring within a few moments, what is sufficient for whole ages to claim.

I call back my imagination: I suppress the too bold design! I acknowledge all that has been said or attempted, on those subjects, falls far below their dignity. The blessings, bestowed upon us, are so great and numerous, that only length of time, and steady contemplation, can enable us to comprehend them in their magnitude and importance. Praise, joy and gratitude, shall then rather employ our present moments. Reason, and the customs of all virtuous nations, direct us to this pleasing duty of praising God: But we are prompted by motives more generous; our gratitude, our own lively feelings, constrain us to offer the best and the purest offering we can; to collect all the animated powers of our souls together, to form one general, one united Hallelujah to God on high! Believe me, my friends, not a nation on earth, can help applauding your past conduct; and they must approve the intention of this meeting. Every virtuous citizen of America, and all your worthy friends, will admire the transactions of this day, with a pleasure little less than rapture! And since, my friends, you were once deter-

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mined to pay down your lives and fortunes, for the preservation of your freedom; can you now think it too much to pay the tribute of the warmest and most sincere praise and devotion, for the full enjoyment of life and liberty, and peace! These are most pleasing considerations; they should make your hearts sincere and obedient; your praises should now ascend up on the sweet incense of undissembled gratitude; and then you may expect that they will be received by our merciful God!

Oh! our blessed God, with our praises we also offer up our prayers, and humbly beseech thee, with the same goodness and liberality, to bestow a lasting and unchangeable gratitude of heart, as well as the blessings of freedom and peace. May thy good spirit direct and govern this nation, and never leave them to forget thy blessings, or abuse thy mercies! May it please the Almighty, to accept this public acknowledgment of our dependence upon his wisdom and power! May it be recorded in the books of Heaven, that on this day a part of the American army, joined in solemn worship with these citizens; and that heroes, and statesmen and patriots, have united in bringing the offerings of thankful praise to the altars of the deity, and have declared that, by the help of God, they have triumphed, and are free and independent. We join with the inhabitants of America, To celebrate with grateful hearts and united voices, the praises of their supreme and all bountiful Benefactor, for his numberless mercies and favours! Is it imagination, or do I really hear them ascribe glory to God, saying, Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for their truth's sake!

I will hope that the solemn and extensive worship of God, on this day, will be the means of procuring national blessings, not only for yourselves, but for your children's children. I wish and pray, in the name of Jesus Christ, that as much power and energy of devotion, may be felt this day, as some of you felt and enjoyed near the beginning of this war, when your first national appeal to Heaven, was solemn and greatly devout, as if your conduct

duct at that time, was to decide, in the council of Heaven, whether you were to be cursed with slavery, or blessed with freedom! And, without indulging enthusiastic flights, I will venture to believe, that if our freedom was not decreed until that day, it did, on that memorable occasion, receive the great, the unchangeable FIAT. If you are then truly desirous of obtaining national and personal happiness, you may be assured that they are to be procured only by our steady dependence on God, and faith in Jesus Christ. It is an unchangeable truth, that *righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people!* And if the guardian Angels of America were to sound their trumpets, so loud that they could be heard from the one end of the continent to the other, they could not communicate a more weighty and seasonable admonition, to all the inhabitants, than to be VIRTUOUS AND UNITED! *United we flourish, divided we fall!*

A few words more, will bring this discourse to a conclusion. What inward pleasure would it give me to see our mode of rejoicing differ from those customs, of celebrating the greatest blessings of Heaven, which are too often adopted. I need not inform you, my friends, that there should be harmony, and uniformity in our whole conduct! For, although there is a beauty, and a dignity in the praises of God; and although you have this day, both by your presence and your actions, called Heaven and earth, God and Angels, to bear witness that with pleasure you offer up your grateful homage to Almighty God: Yet suffer me to remind you, that the most splendid outward acts of rejoicing will indeed be found, at the seat of Omniscience, to be no more than shining hypocrisy, unless obedience to the laws of God, and the dignity of an honorable decorum, mark your whole conduct, as well after your songs of praise have been offered up, as at the present moment. Rejoice then, my friends! But rejoice in the fear and love of God! Let us no more offend him, after all *the great things he hath done for us!* Nothing can be more unreasonable, and nothing more wickedly

wickedly ungrateful, than to suppose that a just and holy God, has delivered us, from our enemies and our chains, only to allow us more time, and greater liberty to sin against him: Therefore, in the words of Joshua, that heroic warrior and pious patriot, I beseech you, *Take good heed unto yourselves, that ye love the Lord, your God!*

In the same stile of benevolence, in his last advice, and pathetic benediction, THE FATHER OF HIS COUNTRY, OUR MOST BELOVED GENERAL, has prayed the United States to be great and prosperous!

But I return to say, in the language of the Apostle; *Rejoice in the Lord alway; and again I say rejoice!* My friends, rejoice then like men of reason: Rejoice like heroes and patriots of honour: Rejoice like gentlemen: And last of all, rejoice like christians!

Were I permitted to say any thing, which should be addressed more immediately to the citizens of this audience; I would entreat you to pay a sacred regard to the faithful instructions and entreaties of your worthy ministers, whom you have so often heard with pleasure and spiritual advantage. They have wisely and eloquently directed you to the best improvement of your present mercies and privileges; and have shewn you the way to national glory and personal happiness: And while I take the freedom to call myself their brother patriot, I also wish to join, the best aid I can, with their unwearied labours, to support the justice and glory of America, as well as the cause of religion and virtue!

Having made so much progress, in the business of the day, nothing now remains, but only to make this one observation. Upon recollecting what has been said, in some parts of this discourse, I am well aware, some expressions have been used, which, if examined with severe prejudice, may seem to flow from a vindictive, or revengeful spirit. But, my friends, I wish you to be assured, it was not so: I found it difficult to enhance the blessings of peace and safety, without sometimes, having a retrospect view, to the calamities and dangers we have

so providentially escaped. In taking notice of those things, I supposed I could, with justice, condemn the inhumanity, and vice of men, without either losing my own compassion, or destroying the tender feelings of humanity.

Now blessed be God, he has heard our prayers, and has caused the destroying sword to return into the scabbard! And there may it rest, until the Prince of peace, the blessed Jesus, shall once more visit this world of war; this aceldama; this field of blood; this theatre of human woe; this theatre of human woe made so, by the folly, by the ambition and vice of men!

Now gentle mercy, and heavenly blessings, offer themselves to mediate between us and those, whose sentiments or intentions would, in the event, had they unfortunately succeeded, have ruined themselves and their country. But the sword is now sheathed and all resentment should die. We are at peace with the world, and our benevolence should be universal. Divine Providence has taught our enemies that they were wrong; and they have submitted, or certainly, if they believe that God governs the world, they ought to submit to the Almighty decision. And from the hands of Jehovah we ought never to *snatch the balance and the rod*. The blessings of this day, are so great and so affecting, that with pleasure, I indulge myself in believing that our hearts will be so warmed, so softened, and so filled with love and gratitude to our most merciful God, that passion and revenge will find no place of accommodation in our generous bosoms. Let the great and merciful soul of an American, above base revenge, only for a moment consider the meaning of those compassionate words of our blessed Saviour, *Father forgive them, for they know not what they do*; and he will wish to have enemies, for no other purpose, but to have the superlative dignity, and the unutterable pleasure of forgiving them. I will not suppose there are any present, who have not often said, in a most serious manner; *For-*
give

give us our debts as we forgive our debtors. For if we forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. How tenderly is this pious disposition expressed by the poet;

*Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the fault I see,
That pity I to others show,
That pity show to me!*

GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST,
AND ON EARTH PEACE,
GOOD WILL TO-
WARDS MEN.