A

DISCOURSE,

Before

THE *SOCIETY* FOR

PROPAGATING THE GOSPEL AMONG THE

INDIANS, AND OTHERS, IN

NORTH AMERICA.

DELIVERED

On the 1*st of November*, 1804.

By REV. *LEVI FRISBIE, A.M.*
Pastor of the First Church in Ipswich.

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1804.

AT a meeting of the Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians, and others in North America, on the first of November, 1804.

Voted, That the Rev. Dr. LATHROP, the Rev. Dr. ELIOT, and the Rev. Dr. ECKLEY, be a Committee, to return the thanks of the Society to the Rev. Mr. FRISBIE for his excellent Sermon, delivered before them this day, and to request a copy of it for the press.

JEDIDIAH MORSE, *Secretary*.

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

ACTS VIII. 5, 6, 7, 8.

Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Chriſt unto them; And the people with one accord gave heed unto thoſe things which Philip ſpake, hearing and ſeeing the miracles which he did. For unclean ſpirits crying with a loud voice came out of many that were poſſeſſed with them; and many taken with palſies, and that were lame, were healed: And there was great joy in that city.

THE changes, which take place in the condition and character of cities and nations, are wonderful! While the people of Jeruſalem deſpiſe and perſecute the goſpel of Chriſt; the Samaritans receive it with thankfulneſs and joy! They were a people of a ſtrange original, and a ſingular character: memorable for their error and duplicity in religion, for their numerous immoralities, and for various calamitous revolutions. They were, at this time, involved in ignorance, ſinfulneſs, and guilt ; afflicted with demons and diſeaſes, and infatuated with the diſtracting enchantments of Simon the ſorcerer. Philip, by the truth and power of the goſpel, preſented and applied an effectual remedy to all their diſorders. He poured light upon their benighted minds, hope and peace into their guilty hearts ; diſpenſed health and comfort to their diſeaſed bodies, liberty from tormenting demons, and from the deluſions of an impious impoſtor. They had therefore abundant reaſons for tranſports of joy.

BUT were *they* the only people whoſe natural and moral diſorders required the healing power of the goſpel, or who were filled by its ſalutary light and influence with emotions of great joy ? By no means. They were but an epitome of mankind ; an affecting example of the deplorable condition of the whole human race. And their joy was but a ſpecimen of the joy of every perſon, family, and people, who believe the truth, and receive the bleſſings of the goſpel of peace. For GOD has deſigned and adapted this gofpel to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Ifrael. To be glad tidings of great joy to *all* people; to proclaim peace upon earth, and the divine good will to man, to the remoteft ends of the world.

THE fubject, therefore, naturally fuggefted by the text, to our ferious confideration, is this:

THAT the gofpel of falvation muft prove a fource of great joy to all who cordially hear, underftand, and receive it.

THE gofpel is capable of producing great joy, becaufe it is defigned and adapted to deliver us from grievous and complicated evils, and to confer upon us the enjoyment of precious and everlafting benefits. And to illuftrate the truth of our doctrine, it may be ufeful to confider,

Ift. THE evils, from which the gofpel is fuited and intended to deliver us. And,

IIdly, THE bleffings which it promifes and communicates to all thofe, who cordially receive it.

Ift. THE evils, from which the gofpel is adapted and defigned to deliver the finful children of men, are, that ignorance, finfulnefs, guilt, and mifery, which had overſpread all the nations of the earth. They had loſt the knowledge of the living God, of themſelves, of their duty, their dignity, and happineſs, and had ſunk into a deplorable ſtate of ſpiritual deluſion, ſlavery, and death. There was indeed a time, when mankind were acquainted with their Maker ;[a]* when they beheld the face of God in the mirror of his works ; but ſuch was the depraved diſpoſition of their hearts, that when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful, but became vain in their imaginations, and their fooliſh heart was darkened ; and, profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became fools. When we read the firſt chapter of St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Romans, how are we afflicted and diſguſted with the diſmal picture, which he has there given of the human, and eſpecially of the Roman character and condition ? And when we conſult the teſtimonies of contemporary authors, how are we ſurpriſed to find them drawing the ſame picture of deformity with features ſo exceedingly ſimilar ?[b] How ſoon did mankind rebel againſt the voice of nature, of reaſon, and of the gracious and awful diſpenſations of Providence ? The earth was overſpread with wickedneſs ;

* See Notes at the end.

it was overwhelmed with a flood; but the deluge did not waſh away the iniquity and pollution of the human heart! Men rapidly degenerated into error, idolatry, and ſin. The reaſon was, they did not like to retain GOD in their knowledge. The infinite purity and ſplendor of his majeſty were too dazzling for their weak and diſtempered ſight. His laws, and worſhip were too ſtrict and holy to meet the approbation of their perverted minds. Therefore they invented gods more ſenſible, more congenial and indulgent to their imaginations and appetites. And, having transferred to theſe fictitious deities the paſſions and vices of depraved humanity, they honoured and worſhipped them with rites and offerings correſpondent to their characters, and to the corrupted and bewildered ſentiments and propenſities of their own hearts. For the character, the government, and the laws of ſuch gods they could have no cordial veneration. They ſometimes trembled before them, and attempted to appeaſe their anger with coſtly victims and cruel ſacrifices; but how often, when they were not ſucceſsful, was their ſlaviſh terror converted into impious repining, inſult, and contempt? Ignorant of GOD, they neither knew nor reverenced their own natures as ſubjects of dignified, rational, and immortal ſpirits. Having no ideas of an immortal exiſtence, or of future rewards and puniſhments, but ſuch as were confuſed, fabulous, and extravagant, they felt and aſſumed a liberty of plunging into all kinds of injuſtice, treachery, and violence.

BUT it is poſſible that the dreary picture which has been drawn of the gentile ſtate and character, however warranted by ancient hiſtory and modern obſervation, will not be permitted to paſs for a juſt likeneſs of the whole heathen world.

LET it then be acknowledged that the learning, the policy, the patriotiſm, liberty, and virtue of the Greeks and Romans have been admired and celebrated, by the hiſtorians, poets, and orators of all ages; yet in the enlightened view of true philoſophy and religion, how greatly is their glory obſcured and degraded? Their boaſted patriotiſm and love of liberty, what were they better, except in a few inſtances, than a reſtleſs, inſatiable luſt of advancing and eſtabliſhing their own perſonal and national wealth, grandeur, and glory, upon the ſubjection and ſlavery of all ſurrounding nations? If, in the early ſtages of their republics, they were diſtinguiſhed by more liberal and generous ſentiments, yet in proportion as they roſe in power, riches, and greatneſs, they ſunk in probity and virtue; until, by their pride, licentiouſneſs, and faction, they had ſacrificed their liberty and independence to emperors and tyrants, and exhibited to all nations and ages an example of a ſtill more wretched ſlavery to the ſordid and imperious paſſions of riot, luxury, cruelty, and wickedneſs. Nothing leſs had been ſufficient to ſatisfy their ambition than abſolute dominion over all the nations of the earth; and, by their attempts to accompliſh this extravagant project, and the improvement they made of their conqueſts, they deluged the world with blood, and tormented its inhabitants with infinite miſchiefs and miſeries.

And what was their philoſophy but an incoherent ſyſtem of pompous ſpeculations, embelliſhed indeed with ſome ſcattered rays of truth, but corrupted and obſcured by predominant ſhades of error, ſophiſtry, and arrogance?

Their virtue was a ſtranger to humility; an alien from true love to God and benevolence to man; it was the offspring of pride, ſubtilty, and a thirſt of glory. It had not, even with the aſſiſtance of all their philoſophy and refinement, either the will or the ability to enlighten and reform the body of the people, to purify their religion, or amend their hearts, but left them under the full dominion of polytheiſm and idolatry, and ſuffered their ſervices and rites of worſhip to remain corrupted and deformed by all the deteſtable extravagance, impurity, and ſuperſtition, of the moſt barbarous pagans.

If we attend to the nation of the Jews; they had received from heaven the lively oracles of God, which taught them his perfections, his worſhip, and his will, and the principles and benefits of private and public wiſdom, virtue, and happineſs; but they deſerted their God, corrupted their religion, and became ſlaves to the power of their crimes and their enemies; and, having loſt all juſt ideas of the character and deſign of their long predicted Meſſiah, they expected him, not as a Saviour from the bondage and miſery of ſin, but as a prince and a hero, who would conduct them to liberty, conqueſt, and glory above all the nations of the earth. When therefore the Saviour appeared, detected and condemned that ignorance, pride, hypocrify, and wickednefs, which had polluted and degraded all ranks and ages of people, they were exafperated to rage, and malice againft him; they vilified, perfecuted, and finally murdered him by a moft painful and ignominious execution. And now the fun of righteoufnefs feemed to have fet forever, and all mankind to be involved in a gloomy night of ignorance, delufion, wickednefs, and death; from which it was impoffible, they could arife into light, liberty, and happinefs, without the interpofition of the infinite power and mercy of GOD. Thefe divine perfections *did* interpofe for the inftruction and falvation of a perifhing world. Which leads us to confider, in the

IId PLACE, the bleffings which the gofpel, the medium of this divine interpofition, promifes and communicates to all who cordially receive it, and fo proves to them, as our doctrine afferts, a fource of exceeding great joy. And it proves fuch a fource, becaufe, in the

1ft PLACE, it reveals to them the LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Son of GOD, who came into the world to heal the diforders, and expel the miferies of mankind; to give light to the gentiles, life and falvation to the ends of the earth. To accomplifh this great and benevolent end his incarnation, doctrines, miracles, fufferings, refurrection, and afcenfi on into glory ; the effufions of his Spirit, the preaching of his apoftles and minifters, were all defigned and adapted : they declared, they exemplified, the adorable perfections and government of GOD, that affemblage of majefty and mercy, dignity and condefcenfion, holinefs and grace, which unite in the divine character and works. They taught mankind the knowledge of their relation and obligation to GOD, as their creator, benefactor, and friend. They inftructed them in the knowledge of the dignity and deftination of their immortal natures, the depravity and ruin to which they were degraded by fin, their accountablenefs to God, the refurrection of their bodies, their appearance at his righteous tribunal, and their final confignment to endlefs happinefs, or mifery, according to their works.

BUT could thefe folemn truths prove a fource of joy to guilty criminals ? No ; they were intended primarily to roufe their attention, to alarm their confciences, and to imprefs their minds with an effectual conviction of their finfulnefs and guilt ; and of that gulf of darknefs and perdition into which their fins were plunging them headlong. Such a conviction alone can render men duly fenfible of their abfolute need of an Almighty Saviour. For if they are not fufficiently convinced of the greatnefs and malignity of their moral diforders, and their want of all merit to atone for them, or power to remove them, how can they poffibly be fenfible of the neceffity of an all perfect Phyfician ; or perceive, in the provifion of fuch a Phyfician, the difplay of divine wifdom, holinefs, and grace ? And if it contains no difplay of thefe perfections, it bears not the fignature of God, it is not diftinguifhed from a fyftem of impofture and deceit. Thofe, therefore, who would effectually examine the divine original of the gofpel, muft bring to this examination a mind impreffed with a fenfe of fin, and of the neceffity of a method of falvation by unmerited grace ; otherwife, it is a wonder if their prejudices, and their pre-attachment to the deluding enjoyments of the world, do not impel them to view this gofpel with fuch doubt and indifference, as will finally degenerate into infidelity and contempt.

THE pagans were not totally destitute of this kind of preparation for the belief and reception of the gospel of peace. For, however deeply they were involved in the gloom of ignorance and wickedness, yet they derived from nature and tradition some gleams of salutary light, by which they were made partially and painfully sensible of the disorder and misery into which they had fallen. Their consciences did not wholly forbear to reproach them for their unnatural and atrocious crimes, and to assure them "that those, who commit such things are worthy of death." For that sense of the intimate connection there is between the works and wages of iniquity, which the God of nature has implanted in the human breast, is seldom totally obliterated by all the stupifying power of ignorance and vice. Hence their strange and costly offerings, their human victims, their sacrifice of friendly and filial blood, to appease the anger of their gods. But when the gospel shone upon them, it discovered to them in the strongest light, their sin, their danger, and their remedy; and caused them at once both to tremble and rejoice. While it unveiled to their view that threefold chain of ignorance, wickedneſs, and guilt, by which they were bound, it revealed the hand, which was both able and willing to burſt it aſunder; the hand which was ſtretched out to give ſight to the blind, healing and liberty to the wounded, broken hearted, captive. By the energy of its light and power it diſſipated their darkneſs and deluſion, expelled their idols and demons, ſilenced their lying oracles, confounded their magicians, and diſcovered to their deluded votaries the falſehood and arrogance of their impious devices and presumptuous pretenſions; and thus exhibited with the brighteſt evidence, the dignity, excellence, and glory of him, who was indeed the mighty power of God.

And if the operations of the ſpirit and truth of the goſpel have been leſs powerful, rapid, and wonderful in ſucceeding ages, yet they have been ſubſtantially the ſame, and have produced ſimilar effects among the ignorant and deluded pagans and ſavages both in Aſia and America. Witneſs the teſtimonies of an Eliot, a Mayhew, a Brainard, and of many others, who have laboured with pious courage and zeal in theſe wild and ſtubborn regions of God's huſbandry. As all have ſinned and deſtroyed themſelves, and the whole world, both barbarous and civilized, is become guilty before God, therefore to *every one*, who effectually underſtands and believes the goſpel, it muſt become a ſource of powerful conviction and contrition, and of pure and ſubſtantial joy. How is it poſſible it ſhould be otherwiſe? For, while it diſcovers to them their deplorable ignorance, their aggravated offences, the wrath of God revealed from heaven againſt their unrighteouſneſs, and ungodlineſs, and fills them with awful apprehenſions of endleſs darkneſs and perdition, it does, at the ſame time, reveal to their admiring view the boundleſs compaſſion of God, and the perfect ſuitableneſs and all-ſufficiency of his Son Jeſus Chriſt. It offers him to their acceptance as a Saviour and advocate of infinite dignity, merit, and mercy; who, by his obedience and death has obtained for ſinners a complete and everlaſting ſalvation: a ſalvation conſiſting in the full pardon of numerous and aggravated offences; in peace and acceptance with God, adoption into his family, deliverance from the dominion and pollution of ſin, and an intereſt in all the grace and aſſiſtance neceſſary to a ſteady perſeverance in faith and holineſs to the end of life: a ſalvation commencing with hope, peace, and purity, and terminating in the final enjoyment of everlafting bleffednefs and perfection, in the kingdom of glory.

We obferve 2dly, that when chriftians confider the evil principles and propenfities of their nature, and feel their total inability to maintain a courfe of lively faith and obedience in oppofition to that numerous hoft of enemies and temptations, which furround them, and watch for their deftruction, they muft greatly rejoice in that ample provifion, which is made in the gofpel for their direction, fupport, and prefervation : a provifion, which propofes and promifes the Son of God for the all-powerful and gracious captain of their falvation, engages to give and continue to them the inftructions and influences of his holy Spirit, to guide, defend, and comfort them in their wearifome and dangerous pilgrimage through the wildernefs of this world; and to conduct them to a crown of life, a manfion of reft, and a triumph of glory in the heavenly Canaan.

3dly. What affiftance and fatisfaction do they derive from divine ordinances ? Thefe are the clouds which diftill the heavenly manna ; precious mediums of fpiritual intercourſe with God, of the manifeſtation of his perfections, the communications of his grace, and of offering up to him the ſacrifices of holy worſhip and heavenly affection. Theſe ordinances, they are perſuaded, are of the higheſt importance to propagate truth, to promote virtue and holineſs, and to maintain a ſenſe of God and religion in the hearts of their children, their friends, and their fellow-citizens; and that nothing can, therefore, aim a more deadly blow at the civil and moral purity, dignity, and happineſs of a people, than a bold or inſidious attempt to render their religious inſtitutions and ordinances, objects of neglect, contempt, and rejection.

Therefore, 4thly, the goſpel muſt be a ſource of joy to all ſincere chriſtian patriots, on account of its powerful influence to promote and ſecure the order and happineſs of ſociety. Virtue, conſiſting in juſtice, integrity, and benevolence, is the ſoul of an harmonious, and well regulated community; the vital, attractive, principle, which animates and unites all its members. But it might be as wiſely expected that grapes would grow upon thorns, as that virtue would flouriſh on any other ſtock, than that of religion. And is it poſſible to find a religion, which contains a collection of laws, a syſtem of truths, and ordinances ſo friendly to virtue, and ſo powerfully efficacious to cheriſh and extend it, as the religion of the goſpel? Even infidels acknowledge the ſuperior purity and perfection of goſpel precepts, the mildneſs and liberality of that virtue, which they enjoin, and the majeſty and energy of thoſe motives, by which they enforce it.[c] Theſe precepts and motives operate powerfully to purify the ſprings, and to ſoften the rigor of civil government; they perſuade and impel the heart of the magiſtrate to the love and practice of wiſdom, juſtice, and chriſtian patriotiſm, by raiſing his attention to an all-perfect Sovereign, in whoſe preſence all earthly diſtinctions are equalized; in whoſe view, pride, injuſtice, and cruelty, are infinitely odious and criminal; righteouſneſs, purity, and lenity, exceedingly amiable and laudable, and at whoſe tribunal they ſhall finally receive an everlaſting recompenſe. At the ſame time the precepts and motives of this religion allure and conſtrain the heart of the ſubject to that reverence for the laws and miniſters of government, and to that juſtice, fidelity, and benevolence toward his fellow-citizens, which moſt effectually promotes ſocial harmony and happineſs : they guard him in public, they watch him in ſecret, to deter him, not only from the *deeds* of covert wickedneſs, but even from thoſe *paſſions* and *imaginations*, which, if indulged, might terminate in works of impiety and unrighteouſneſs.

THE mild influence of chriſtianity ſoftens the horrors of war, and humanizes the ferocity of courage ; while it animates the virtuous warrior to purſue the bloody conflict with invincible ſpirit and bravery to the point of victory, it there ſets bounds to his career, diſpoſes him to ſpare the vanquiſhed enemy, and to conſole the calamity of defeat and captivity with the meek and generous language and treatment of ſympathy and beneficence.

THAT a contrary ſpirit of licentiouſneſs, diſcord, and perſecution, has frequently and greatly deformed the beauty, and ruined the happineſs of chriſtian ſocieties and nations, is acknowledged and deplored. The corrupt and reſtleſs paſſions of mankind, which too often pervert the beſt things to the vileſt purpoſes, have proſtituted the moſt pure and benevolent religion, which the world ever beheld, to a cloak of covetouſneſs and hypocrify, to an engine of ambition, impurity, and revenge. A falſe and fiery zeal has imagined it was doing GOD ſervice by haraſſing and tormenting every ſect, which differed from its own. A ſpecious and prepoſterous charity indulgent to men of looſe and dangerous principles and practices, has been eager to exclude from ſociety, and brand with infamy thoſe whom it ſtigmatized as puritans and fanatics, becauſe they were not as liberal as itſelf. But ſuch events, as they verify the truth of goſpel predictions, ſo they furniſh no ſolid objection againſt its divine original, or the purity and benevolence of its genius, its doctrines, or precepts. For will any preſume to aſſert, that the goſpel gives the ſmalleſt encouragement to licentiouſneſs, intolerance, or cruelty ? No ; it forbids and oppoſes them with all the energy of divine authority, juſtice, and love.

WE add 5thly, that the goſpel is adapted to prove a ſource of joy to mankind under that heavy burden of want, diſeaſe, and ſuffering, to which ſin has ſubjected them.

ARE we then to expect that it will exert, as in the days of its firſt promulgation, a miraculous power to ſatisfy their deſires, and to heal their ſufferings and diſeaſes ? No ;

but we are warranted to expect effects, in ſome reſpects, ſtill more ſalutary and ſubſtantial : to expect that it will eradicate, or reſtrain thoſe vicious principles and paſſions, which are the inexhauſtible ſprings of human wants and miſeries. That it will mortify that covetouſneſs which impels the avaricious to worſhip the world, and to ſacrifice their health, liberty, happineſs, and ſalvation to this inſatiable idol. That it will crucify thoſe unbridled luſts and affections which conſume the property, enfeeble the bodies, and deſtroy the ſouls of thoſe who indulge them. That it will humble that pride, and correct thoſe falſe and dangerous principles of honour, which are the cauſes of endleſs vexation, diſcord, and diſtreſs ; and will impreſs the hearts of men with a full conviction that it is infinitely more noble and generous to forgive injuries and affronts than to revenge them ; to deſpiſe the reproaches of a miſjudging world, than, by attempting the vindication of character, and the acquiſition of glory in ſingle combat, to brave the laws of their country, pierce with exquiſite anguiſh the tendereſt ſenſibilities of nature, ſpurn the love, and defy the vengeance of their SAVIOUR, and their GOD.

We are moreover to expect that the gofpel of Chrift will prove a fource of fupport and confolation to the pious believer, under all the inevitable exigencies and calamities of life, by giving him juft conceptions of the glory and government of God, and a cordial acquiefcence in all the manifeftations of his will and difpenfations of his providence: that it will give him the joyful teftimony of a pure, approving confcience, and a comfortable affurance that all his trials and fufferings are the merciful corrections of a moft wife and gracious Father, who will blefs them for the advancement and confirmation of his faith and holinefs, and for increafing his preparation for the enjoyment of complete and everlafting bleffednefs : that however he be poor and deftitute, yet he is rich in the poffeffion of all things in the fulnefs of God through the all-fufficiency of Chrift, and in the unfearchable treafures of his grace and glory. How often have the deftitute, the dejected, and heavy laden fled for refuge to their gracious Redeemer, and found reft and peace to their weary fouls ? Under the fierceft ftorms of affliction and perfecution the hope of the gofpel is an anchor of the foul. The depth and darknefs of an horrible pit and a miry clay are not ſo profound and impenetrable as to exclude from the humble ſuppliant every glimmering proſpect of deliverance, or forever to debar his eyes from the light of liberty, or his lips from the ſong of joy! For if the high and the lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity, will deſcend and dwell with the humble and the contrite, is it poſſible that they ſhould not be revived and comforted by the preſence and communion of a friend and Father ſo infinitely all-ſufficient in power, wiſdom, tenderneſs, and love?

WE have only to add, that the goſpel is a ſource of joy to the ſincere believer under the proſpect, the approaches, and the pangs of death. However the philoſopher may affect, in the pride of his wiſdom, to deſpiſe it; however the warrior may loſe, or brave its terrors in the fire and tumult of conflict, or the proſpect of victory and glory; or the martyr be tranſported above the dread and feeling of its formidable aſpect, and cruel tortures by a conſciouſneſs of the rectitude and dignity of his cauſe, the preſence of his GOD, and the expectation of a crown of heavenly bleſſedneſs; yet, to the retired and contemplative mind, death is naturally clothed with forms of darkneſs and diſmay. From the dread of which to what can we flee for deliverance but to that goſpel, which brings life and immortality to light? Are we oppreſſed by a conſciouſneſs of ſin with the apprehenſion of appearing in the preſence of a ſpotleſs Judge? The goſpel preſents the moſt animating hope of acquittance at his righteous tribunal. Are we diſtreſſed with a painful idea of being torn away from all our precious relatives and friends? The goſpel encourages us to expect a bliſsful union with angels and the ſpirits of juſt men made perfect; to find a friend and a father in God; to ſee his face in peace, and drink in the moſt raviſhing pleaſures from the light of his countenance. Is it painful to bid an everlaſting farewell to all the enjoyments of life? The goſpel promiſes an inheritance incorruptible, a manſion, a crown, a throne, a life of endleſs reſt and glory in the preſence of Jeſus Chriſt. Are we mortified with the apprehenſion of committing our bodies to the deformity and corruption of the grave? Our hearts may be cheered with the bliſsful proſpect of their reſurrection to a ſtate of heavenly ſtrength, honour, and immortality; of their transformation into a likeneſs to the glorious body of our Redeemer, and ſhining like the brightneſs of the ſun forever in the kingdom of his Father. And are not theſe exalted and everlaſting benefits amply ſufficient to counterbalance all the wants, labours and ſufferings of life and death, and to evince the truth of our doctrine, that the goſpel is adapted and deſigned to be a ſource of great joy to all who cordially believe and obey it ?

MAY we not then juſtly conclude the diſcourſe with this general inference, which applies the ſubject to the preſent occaſion, That if we are ſatisfied from knowledge, from faith, and eſpecially from our own experience, that the goſpel is indeed ſuch a ſource of joy as has been repreſented, then it is our duty, our intereſt, and happineſs, to diffuſe the bleſſings of it, by all ſuitable means and exertions, through every diviſion and habitation of the human race ? Such exertions muſt be highly pleaſing and honourable to GOD our SAVIOUR ; for there is joy in heaven, joy in the preſence of the angels, over one ſinner who repenteth ; and if the converſion of *one* produces ſuch joy in heaven, what gladneſs would reſult from the converſion of a multitude ? And if chriſtians cordially unite in the execution of a defign which employs infinite power, wifdom, and love, have they not great reafon to hope they fhall be ultimately fuccefsful ? The defigns of God muft prevail, and become finally triumphant. Happy thofe who have co-operated in the promotion of their fuccefs ; they fhall ultimately fhare in the honour and bleffednefs of their perfect accomplifhment.

Should we not therefore catch that fpirit of heavenly compaffion, which the gofpel breathes toward human creatures, perifhing in ignorance and wickednefs, and zealoufly exert it in every warrantable method for their deliverance ?

And is not the condition of great numbers of our fellow-countrymen truly dangerous and deplorable ? Removed into the uncultivated regions of our extenfive country, fubjected to labour, hardfhip, and, in a meafure, to the want of thofe means of knowledge, piety, and happinefs which *we* fo abundantly enjoy, are they not in danger of degenerating into ignorance, vice, and barbarity, of becoming irreligious, diforderly, and miferable among themfelves, ufelefs, not to fay peftilent, members of fociety, and finally outcafts from the kingdom of God ? If then our hearts are melted and expanded with the precious doctrines and bleſſings of the goſpel, we ſhall be zealous and active to diffuſe its light, purity, and happineſs, among our diſtant brethren.

And may not the members of this ſociety, inſtituted for the propagation of the goſpel, among the Indians and others, congratulate themſelves on the honour and happineſs of being engaged in a deſign, ſo dignified and benevolent ? May they not expect, with a proportionable degree of confidence, the countenance and patronage of government, the aſſiſtance of the influential and opulent, and the good wiſhes and prayers of all, who acknowledge, who experience the truth, the joy, and the charity of the goſpel ? What though the evidences and proſpects of ſucceſs may not be ſo numerous and promiſing as fully to ſatisfy the wiſhes of the pious and the munificent, yet they ſhould conſider that former exertions for the converſion of the ſavages have not been wholly unavailing. If the harveſt of converts has been comparatively ſmall, yet has it not been ſufficient to compenſate all the expenſe and labour, which have been beſtowed upon it ? If the *value* of one ſoul is far greater than of all the treaſures and glories of the world, ſurely the *ſalvation* of *one*, and eſpecially of a number, muſt be an ample recompenſe for all the arduous and expenſive means, which have been employed for its accompliſhment.

AND from the meaſure of civilization, knowledge, and religion, ſtill retained by our brethren in the new and diſtant parts of our country, and from the cheerfulneſs and gratitude with which they appear to accept and ſecond the attempts, which have been made to increaſe the diffuſion of chriſtian knowledge and piety among them, the proſpect of ſucceſs is ſtill more promiſing. But whatever the degree of this ſucceſs ſhall finally prove to be, thoſe who are ſincerely engaged in the promotion of it will experience the ſuperior pleaſure of gratifying their own charitable affections, and a high ſatiſfaction in the conſcious ſincerity of their intentions to honour their GOD, their SAVIOUR, and his religion, and to advance the temporal and eternal happineſs of their human brethren. Theſe pious and benevolent intentions, and the animating proſpects of extending the bleſſings of ſalvation to millions of the human race, may be vaſt and unbounded. For theſe bleſſings are not limited to any period of time, or defcription of people. The divine commiffion : "Go teach all nations ; go preach the gofpel to every creature," ftill retains its gracious and facred authority. The declarations, the promifes, the benefits of endlefs life and happinefs may be proclaimed with perfect fincerity not only to the learned, the opulent and the polifhed inhabitants, of civilized countries, but to the fwarthy African, the plundering Arab, the roving Tartar, and the wandering Savage who traverfes the wilds of America, from the defert plains of Patagonia to the dreary mountains of the frozen pole : and if they will but liften to the joyful found, embrace its propofals, and comply with its prefcriptions, their hearts fhall be melted and moulded to a fpirit of meeknefs, piety, and love, and finally bleffed with the enjoyment of everlafting peace, purity, and glory in the kingdom of God.

How elevating and delightful muft be the reflection to the hearts of all, who are fincerely engaged in this benevolent defign, that their efforts may ultimately fpring up into fuch an exuberant harveft of bleffings to their fellow-creatures, and be finally crowned with an immeafurable reward ?

For if the holy and munificent Judge of all human creatures and actions, will, at laſt openly applaud and recompenſe thoſe who have miniſtered relief to the natural wants and ſufferings of their neighbours, with what an emphaſis of ſuperior applauſe will he ſay to thoſe who have been liberal and active in contributing ſpiritual food and conſolation to the hungry and periſhing ſouls of ſinners, "Come ye bleſſed of my Father inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry, thirſty, naked, ſick, and in priſon, and ye viſited me, and granted me comfort and relief; for in as much as ye did it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me."

AMEN.

NOTES.

NOTE [A.] p. 6.

THE time especially intended, was immediately after the flood, when mankind were not perverted and corrupted with error, and idolatry; but it is probable that the apostle intends to suggest that the perfections of GOD are discoverable by his works, and that all might, from this source, obtain some just ideas of them, if they were disposed to attend with a humble, impartial, and fixed application.

NOTE [B.] p. 6.

THOSE who have been conversant with Roman authors will readily recollect, or easily find, the testimonies referred to by the preacher; but the author principally intended is Seneca. Those who are able to read the works of this philosopher in his own language, and are disposed to examine the description which he gives of the human and the Roman character, and compare it with that of the apostle, may consult Seneca de brevitate vitæ, Chapts. 2d, 12th, 14th, and 16th; and de beneficiis Libr. 3d, Chapts. 15, 16, Libr. 5th, Chapts. 15th and 17th.

FOR the satisfaction of the English reader, I will take the liberty to transcribe a passage or two from an abstract made by Sir ROGER L'ESTRANGE, in which he affirms, "that he has reduced all Seneca's scattered ethics to their proper heads, without any additions of his own, except such as were absolutely necessary for connecting them together." He introduces Seneca, declaring that, "*Some* are ungrateful to their own country; and their country no less ungrateful to *others;* so that the complaint of ingratitude reaches all men. Doth not the son wish for the death of his father; and the husband for that of his wife? But who can look for gratitude in an age of so many gaping and craving appetites, where all people take, and none give? In an age of license to all sorts of vanity and wickedness; as lust, gluttony, avarice, envy, ambition, sloth, insolence, levity, contumacy, fear, rashness, private discords, and public evils, extravagant and groundless wishes, vain confidence, sickly affections, shameless impieties, rapine authorized, and the violation of all things sacred and profane; obligations are pursued with sword and poison; benefits are turned into crimes; and that blood most seditiously spilt, for which every honest man should expose his own. Those who should be the preservers of their country, are the destroyers of it; and it is matter of dignity to trample upon the government. The sword gives law, and mercenaries take up arms against their masters. Among these turbulent, and unruly motions, what hope is there of finding honesty or good faith ; mercy, modesty, or religion ?" L'Estrange's Abstract, Boston edition, of 1792. If the reader wishes to see the sable picture completed, he may consult the same abstract, pages 132, 133, and 327.

NOTE p. 15, *(two lines from the bottom.)*

THE ministers of Boston, Doctors Cotton Mather, Colman, Sewall, Prince, and others, in what they call an attestation to Mr. Mayhew's account of pious Indians at Martha's Vineyard, given at Boston, June 14th, 1726 ; assert that "twice seven years had not passed away, after the beginning of the Massachusetts Colony, before the renowned ELIOT, a good man, full of the holy Spirit, and moved by him, set forward the good work, "*and the hand of the* LORD *was with him,*" and with a victorious labour he became master of the Indian language, and in that language preached to many villages of the savages ; until, by the blessing of God on his laborious diligence, many believed and were turned unto the Lord. The Indians being so successfully instructed in the word of truth and gospel of salvation, soon had schools erected among them ; and learning to read and write, this indefatigable servant of GOD, first of all, translated the Bible into their language ; and added a version of the Psalms in Indian metre, whereof they became skilful and graceful singers." They further assert that the consequence of all this was, the forming of congregations, the collecting and establishing churches, and administering ordinances, in several villages of Indians, who attended upon them with apparent sincerity, constancy, and devotion. In this account of pious Indians, by Mr. MAYHEW, the reader may find such an history of the conversion, the pious and exemplary lives, and peaceful deaths of many of those people of both sexes, and of all ranks and ages, as will afford him a satisfactory conviction of their having imbibed the Spirit, enjoyed the comforts, and practised the duties of christianity, with a truly evangelical sincerity.

THOSE who have read Mr. David Brainard's journal of the rise and progress of a work of grace among the Indians in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, will recollect the account he gives of the powerful and surprising influence of the gospel upon the minds and hearts of those savage people ; especially upon one who had been a noted conjurer, [pow wow] drunkard and murderer ; and who, like Simon Magus, "gave out, that he was some great one, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, this man is the great power of God ;" but who became, not a pretended, but, apparently, a real subject of the faith and holiness of the gospel ; a zealous defender, and practical preacher of the truth which he once attempted to obstruct and destroy. See Brainard's Journal, page 154, and 221.

NOTE [C.] p. 19.

LORD Bolingbroke, in the 5th vol. of his works, page 188, as quoted by Dr. Fuller in his "*Gospel its own witness*," acknowledges that, " the gospel is in all cases one continued lesson of the strictest morality, of justice, of benevolence, and of universal charity."

VOLTAIRE, quoted by the above author, in page 69 of his " *Gospel its own witness*," asserts that " wherever Society is established, there it is necessary to have religion, for religion which watches over the crimes that are secret, is, in fact, the only law which a man carries about with him ; the only one which places the punishment at the side of the guilt ; and which operates as forcibly in solitude and darkness as in the broad and open face of day." This cannot be affirmed with exact truth of any other religion but that of the gospel.

LORD Shaftsbury observes, that " whoever by any strong persuasion or settled judgment, thinks in the main, that virtue causes happiness, and vice misery, carries with him that security and assistance to virtue which is required"——or, " if he believes a GOD, dispensing rewards and punishments to virtue and vice in a future" life ; " he carries with him still the same advantage and security ; whilst his belief is steady, and no ways wavering or doubtful." And although he labours to prove that this hope of reward and fear of punishment, has too great an influence on the mind, tends to increase the power of self love beyond all due bounds of proportion, and to swallow up all generous and benevolent principles and motives, yet he acknowledges, that, " if by the hope of reward be understood the love and desire of virtuous enjoyment, or of the very practice and exercise of virtue in another life ; the expectation or hope of this kind is so far from being derogatory to virtue, that it is the evidence of our loving it the more sincerely, and for its own sake." Characteristics, vol. 2, page 67 and 65.

Now if his Lordship would have conceded, as may be presumed he would, that the christian religion presents to the minds of men the clearest and strongest views and evidences of future rewards and punishments, and that the nature of these rewards and punishments, and the hope and fear which they excite, are such as he requires, and even admits to be conducive to the sincere and constant practice of virtue, then he acknowledges, implicitly at least, that this religion has a powerful influence to promote safety, order, and the happiness of society.

APPENDIX.

A PARTICULAR account of the Society for Propagating the Gospel, of its operations, and funds, was given at the close of the Discourse, preached before them by Dr. LATHROP, the last year. It is not necessary that it be here repeated.

THE permanent funds of the Society remain as stated by their Treasurer in his Report, published in the discourse just mentioned.* The General Court, willing to increase the means and usefulness of the Society, added *five hundred* dollars to their usual grant, making it a *thousand*, for the current year. This addition was made specially with a view to enable the Society to establish and support schools, in Maine, in places where the inhabitants are unable to educate their children. Beside this grant, *two hundred and fifty five* dollars, *twenty seven* cents, were collected after the delivery of the preceding Anniversary Discourse.

SUCH have been the means of the Society. They have employed them in supporting Mess'rs. MAYHEW, HAWLEY, and SERGEANT, who minister to Indian congregations, at Martha's Vineyard, Marshpee, and New Stockbridge. Five Missionaries also have been sent the past season to preach the gospel among that part of the inhabitants of Maine, who are either wholly destitute of, or but sparingly enjoy, the means of religion. *Four hundred* dollars have been expended in promoting school education for children, in new plantations; and the same sum in books, for distribution; such as Bibles, Testaments, Psalm books, Primers, Spelling books, Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Token for Children, Divine Songs, and a variety of other religious books and tracts; a great part of which have been distributed by the Missionaries, and others, to whom they have been committed for that purpose.

FROM the Journals of the several Missionaries, and information received from other authentic sources, there is reason to believe that the efforts of the Society have been crowned with an encouraging degree of success. The labours of the Missionaries have been gratefully acknowledged; the books have been received and read with avidity, and hopeful improvement, and the aid and encouragement given to schools has been peculiarly acceptable, and evinced that this method of benefiting that hardy and enterprising class of people, who are extending the settlement of our country, may be pursued on a larger scale with eminent advantage. Among the good effects of these exertions of the Society, are the preservation, as far as they have influence, of the good habits of these emigrants, formed in the places of their nativity, the advancement of christian piety, civil

* Total amount of funds, 23,417 Dolls. 36 Cts.—Annual income, 1,145 Dolls. 83 Cts.

order, morality, and the establishment of churches, forming congregations, the administration of the ordinances of baptism, and the Lord's Supper, and exciting and cherishing dispositions and wishes among the people, permanently to enjoy the benefit of these and other good institutions.

The Society learn with pleasure from their Missionaries, that there exists a general disposition among the people in the new plantations, according to their ability, to support schools and religious institutions; but their means are yet so inadequate, that the aid of the Society is peculiarly acceptable. A continued and increased attention to these hardy and useful citizens is so obviously promotive of the religious, moral, civil, and social interests of the Commonwealth, and so much for the pecuniary advantage of the proprietors of lands in this part of the State, that the Society confidently hope for the continued aid of the Legislature; and that the gentlemen who hold here large tracts of unsettled lands, will be induced, from the double motive of interest and benevolence, to contribute liberally to a purpose so laudable. The Society hold themselves pledged to a faithful use of all funds deposited in their Treasury. It is their pleasure to be the stewards and almoners of the Commonwealth, and of pious and wealthy individuals.

OFFICERS *of the* SOCIETY *for the year ending* MAY 1805.

Hon. James Sullivan, Esq. *President,*
Hon. Oliver Wendell, Esq. *Vice-President,*
Ebenezer Storer, Esq. *Treasurer,*
Rev. John Eliot, D. D. *Vice-Treasurer,*
Rev. Jedidiah Morse, D. D. *Secretary,*
Rev. Abiel Holmes, *Assistant-Secretary,*
Rev. John Lathrop, D. D.
Rev. Joseph Eckley, D. D.
William Phillips, Esq. } *Select Committee.*
Mr. Samuel Salisbury,
Rev. Jedidiah Morse, D. D.

The following is a List of Members living, January 1st, 1805.

Rev. Thomas Barnard, D. D.
Alden Bradford, Esq.
Rev. William Channing,
Hon. Richard Cranch,
Hon. Francis Dana,
Hon. John Davis,
Hon. Thomas Dawes,

Rev. Joseph Eckley, D. D.
Samuel Eliot, Esq.
Rev. John Eliot, D. D.
Rev. Nathaniel Emmons, D. D.
Rev. Levi Frisbie,
David S. Greenough, Esq.
Rev. Abiel Holmes,
Mr. David Hyslop,
Rev. John Lathrop, D. D.
Hon. Benjamin Lincoln,
Rev. Joseph McKean, D. D. President of Bowdoin College,
Rev. Jedidiah Morse, D. D.
Samuel Parkman, Esq.
Rev. Elijah Parish,
Eliphalet Pearson, L. L. D. Hancock, Professor of the Hebrew and Oriental Languages, and the English Language,
William Phillips, Esq.
Rev. Eliphalet Porter,
Daniel D. Rodgers, Esq.
Mr. Samuel Salisbury,
Ebenezer Storer, Esq.
Hon. James Sullivan, Esq.
Hon. Cotton Tufts, Esq.
Hon. Dudley A. Tyng, Esq.
Hon. Oliver Wendell,
Rev. Samuel West, D. D.
Mr. James White,
Ebenezer Wight, Esq.
Samuel Williams, L. L. D.
Mr. William Woodbridge.

FORM *of a* BEQUEST, *or* LEGACY.

Item.—I give and bequeath the sum of   to the *Society for Propagating the gospel among the Indians and others in North America*; to be applied either to the general objects of the Institution, or to such particular purposes, consistent with those objects, as the donor may think proper.