

unpropitious seasons, commercial depression and embarrassment; and latterly sanguinary violence. Are these evils sent without cause? are they the offspring of chance or are they of such common and every day occurrence, as not to call for serious reflection? Such dispensations certainly present a threatening aspect, and when we take into account abounding depravity our apprehensions are confirmed. To such an extreme has this depravity proceeded that at length it has become its own punishment; for to what are our present troubles mainly owing, but to the diabolical passion of men spurning the restraint of all laws human and divine, and hurrying them on to every excess? What benefits then, it may be asked, have resulted from divine chastisements while they have been abroad? have men learnt righteousness? does not the infliction of recent calamities afford evidence that former ones have been in a great measure unavailing, otherwise there would not have been the addition of others still more severe?—The combination of mercy with severity in recent evils is well calculated to soften the heart. The kind interposition of providence has been so manifestly displayed in our deliverance on repeated occasions as to call forth the acknowledgments both of the people and their rulers. How signally have the unprincipled and insolent disturbers of our peace hitherto been frustrated! how gracious a preservation have we enjoyed from the horrors of bloodshed! what reason have we to be thankful that none who are near or dear to us have been snatched away by the hand of violence, that sweet and heaven born peace has with a few slight interruptions presided over our land. Are there any evidences, then, that these dispensations so well calculated to reclaim men have in any degree had the proper effect? And, in regard to this, we would hail as a favourable omen the disposition which has been manifested, especially by our rulers, to acknowledge divine providence in recent judgments and also the appointment both by them and the respective churches, of repeated seasons of thanksgiving and humiliation (which for aught we know to the contrary have been generally observed); and here we feel disposed to express our sincere and cordial approbation of the christian feeling and sound judgment which characterized the late proclamation of our respected Governor on the last of these occasions, a proclamation which may be pronounced an excellent directory for every minister of the gospel in adapting his spiritual instructions to so important a season; and if the spirit of this proclamation has been rigidly adhered to in the manner, in which that day has been observed, we doubt not but the most happy results will flow from it to the land. It is well for

a people when their rulers excite them to the culture of that righteousness which exalteth a nation, and the opposition which some affect to shew to such christian interference on their part, as if it were an undue exercise of authority, is as senseless as it is impious. It is not an exercise of authority so much as the exertion of a moral influence. Rulers are the guardians of the people's welfare; and knowing, as if intelligent and christian they must know, that it is most effectually promoted by religion, they appoint such appropriate seasons not with the view of constraining men, but of affording them an opportunity of simultaneously offering up to the Almighty those expressions of gratitude for public mercies and those penitential confessions for public sins which are, when sincere, so well calculated to conciliate for a community his favor and protection and to avert from them his anger. We sincerely hope that they will never be deterred by an opposition at once so unchristian and irrational from so salutary an exertion of their power and influence*. But while the circumstances, now adverted to shew, that there has not prevailed an utter and universal insensibility amid divine judgments, it is still much to be lamented, that there are not more evidences of their having produced their proper effect. We apprehend that the respect

*The following extract of a proclamation of a general fast, has lately been issued by the Governor of the State of Massachusetts. Surely the pious spirit of the pilgrim fathers has not altogether departed from their descendants.

The people of the Commonwealth are requested to lay aside their accustomed occupations on that day, and, assembling in their usual places of public worship, unite in appropriate acts and expressions of penitence and supplication.—Let us on this occasion make humble confession of our aggravated sins, as individuals, and as a community, and supplicate forgiveness of a merciful God, through Jesus Christ our Saviour.—And while, by sincere penitence, we seek to obtain the pardon of our past offences, let us implore the continued mercies of our Heavenly Father; more especially,—That he would vouchsafe to us the accustomed blessings of Providence through the year that is opening upon us, and direct to the supply of our wants the wonderful elements and agencies of the world which, touched by his omnipotent hand, is again starting into life;—Let us supplicate His blessings upon our beloved country, that He would be pleased, notwithstanding our unworthiness and ingratitude, to continue to us the privileges which have hitherto distinguished us as a people;—That He would in an especial manner watch over our ancient Commonwealth;—That he would prosper the people in all the branches of honest industry;—That he would give efficacy to all the means and instruments of reformation, benevolence, and knowledge;—And that He would increase the influence of Divine Truth over the hearts and minds of men, and make it powerful to correct, purify, and elevate the character of the people, so as to render them more worthy of their blessings, as the heirs of an immortal hope through Jesus Christ.—Ed.