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Government and Liberty.

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AAS copy.

GOVERNMENT

A N D

LIBERTY

DESCRIBED;

A N D

Ecclesiastical

TYRANNY

EXPOSED.

BY ISAAC BACKUS,

PASTOR OF A CHURCH IN MIDDLEBOROUGH:

Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage;

GAL. v.—i.

MASSACHUSETTS-STATE: BOSTON;

PRINTED BY POWARS AND WILLIS,

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IN UNION-STREET,

T O T H E P U B L I C .

AS the affairs of GOVERNMENT and LIBERTY, are the greatest points of controversy, now in the world, it certainly is of great importance, that our ideas be clear and just concerning them. Permit me therefore to offer a few thoughts, upon a familiar metaphor, which the holy Ghost has used to illustrate their true nature. In Amos, v. 24. he says, "Let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream." From whence we may observe,

First. That judgment and righteousness are essential to freedom. When we would represent any thing as quite free, we say, it is as free as water. And not only the flow of mercy and grace from God to men, but also its effects in them, in producing obedience unto him, are often compared thereto in the word of truth—John, iv. 14. and vii. 38; Titus, 2. 11, 12. and 3, 5—8. This is most certain, because

Second. Freedom is not acting at random, but by reason and rule. Those who walk after their own lusts, are clouds without water, carried about of winds; or raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; while the true SONS OF LIBERTY are like streams, which run down in a clear and steady channel. David says, *I will run the way of thy commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my heart. I will walk at liberty, for I seek thy precepts.* Streams and rivers must have steady channels to run in; but they that promise liberty while they despise government, are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest. 11 Pet. 2. 10—19.

Third. Though tyranny and licentiousness often make a great noise, yet government and liberty are much stronger than they are. The former, like raging waves, dash themselves against the rocks, and die upon the shore; or like a tempest, after making sad waste and devastation, their strength is gone, and their force is over. While the latter, like a mighty stream, carry all before them, and never rest till they can get through or over all obstacles, which are put in their way.

Fourth.

