

out, 'Men of Israel, help!'" Truly there is cause to make that cry, "Men of Boston, help!" for ignorance, and profaneness, and bad living, and the worst things in the world are breaking in upon us.

And now will the justices of the town set themselves to consider how they may help to suppress all growing vices among us?

Will the constables of the town set themselves to consider how they may help to prevent all evil orders among us?

There are some who have the eye of the town so much upon them, that the very name of "townsmen" is that by which they are distinguished. Sirs, will you also consider how to help the affairs of the town so as that all things may go well among us?

Moreover, may not schoolmasters do much to instil principles of religion and civility, as well as other points of good education, into the children of the town? Only let the town well encourage its well-deserving schoolmasters.

There are some officers; but, concerning all, there are these two things to be desired: First, it is to be desired that such officers as are chosen among us may be chosen in the fear of God. May none but pious and prudent men, and such as love the town, be chosen to serve it. And, secondly, it is to be desired that officers of several sorts would often come together for consultation. Each of the sorts by themselves, may they often come together to consult, "What shall we do to serve the town in those interests which are committed unto our charge?" Oh! what a deplorable thing will it be for persons to be entrusted with talents (your opportunities to serve the town are so many talents), and they never seriously consider, "What good shall I do with my talents in the place where God hath stationed me?"

And will the representatives of the town be considered among the rest as entrusted with some singular advantages for our help? The Lord give you understanding in all things!

God help the town to manifest all that piety which a town so helped of him is obliged unto! When the people of God had been carried by his help through their difficulties, they set up stones to keep in mind how he had helped them; and something was written on the stones: but what was written? See Josh. viii, 32, "Joshua wrote upon the stones a copy of the law." Truly upon those Ebenezers which we set up we should write the law of our God, and recognize the obligations which the help of our God has laid upon us to keep it.

We are a very unpardonable town if, after all the help which our God has given us, we do not ingenuously inquire, "What shall we render to the Lord for all his benefits?" Render! Oh! let us ourselves thus answer the inquiry: "Lord, we will render all possible and filial obedience unto thee, because hitherto thou hast helped us: only do thou also help us to render that obedience!" Mark what I say: if there be so much as one prayerless house in such a town as this, 'tis inexcusable! How inexcusable, then, will be all flagitious outrages? There was a town ('twas the town of Sodom!) that had been wonderfully saved out of the hands of their enemies. But after the help that God sent unto them the town went on to sin against God in very prodigious instances. At last a provoked God sent a fire upon the town that made it an eternal desolation. Ah, Boston, beware, beware, lest the sins of Sodom get footing in thee! And what were the sins of Sodom? We find in Ezek. xvi, 49, "Behold, this was the iniquity of Sodom: pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and the needy;" there

was much oppression there. If you know of any scandalous disorders in the town, do all you can to suppress them and redress them; and let not those that send their sons hither from other parts of the world, for to be improved in virtue, have cause to complain, "that after they came to Boston, they lost what little virtue was before budding in them; that in Boston they grew more debauched and more malignant than ever they were before!"

It was noted concerning the famous town of Port Royal in Jamaica, which you know was the other day swallowed up in a stupendous earthquake, that just before the earthquake the people were violently and scandalously set upon going to fortune-tellers upon all occasions: much notice was taken of this impiety generally prevailing among the people: but none of those wretched fortune-tellers could foresee or forestall the direful catastrophe. I have heard that there are fortune-tellers in this town sometimes consulted by some of the sinful inhabitants. I wish the town could be made too hot for these dangerous transgressors. I am sure the preservation of the town from horrendous earthquakes is one thing that bespeaks our Ebenezers; 'tis from the merciful help of our God unto us. But beware, I beseech you, of those provoking evils that may expose us to a plague exceeding all that are in the catalogue of the twenty-ninth of Deuteronomy.

Let me go on to say, What! shall there be bawdy-houses in such a town as this! It may be the neighbors, that could smoke them and rout them if they would, are loth to stir for fear of being reputed ill neighbors. But I say unto you, that you are ill neighbors because you do it not. All the neighbors are like to have their children and servants poisoned, and their dwellings laid in ashes, because you do it not.

And, oh! that the drinking-houses in the town might once come under a laudable regulation. The town has an enormous number of them; will the haunters of those houses hear the counsels of heaven? For you that are the town-dwellers, to be oft or long in your visits of the "ordinary," 'twill certainly expose you to mischiefs more than ordinary. I have seen certain taverns, where the pictures of horrible devourers were hanged out for the signs; and, thought I, 'twere well if such signs were not sometimes too significant: alas, men have their estates devoured, their names devoured, their hours devoured, and their very souls devoured, when they are so besotted that they are not in their element except they be tipping at such houses. When once a man is bewitched with the ordinary, what usually becomes of him? He is a gone man; and when he comes to die he will cry out, as many have done, "Ale-houses are hell-houses! ale-houses are hell-houses!"

But let the owners of those houses also now hear our counsels. "Oh! hearken to me, that God may hearken to you another day!" It is an honest, and a lawful, though it may not be a very desirable employment, that you have undertaken: you may glorify the Lord Jesus Christ in your employment if you will, and benefit the town considerably. There was a very godly man that was an innkeeper, and a great minister of God could say to that man, in 3 John 2, "Thy soul prospereth." Oh, let it not be said of you, since you are fallen into this employment, "Thy soul withereth!" It is thus with too many: especially when they that get a license perhaps to sell drink out of doors do stretch their license to sell within doors. Those private houses, when once a professor of the gospel comes to steal a living out of them, it commonly precipitates them into an abundance of wretched-

ness and confusion. But I pray God assist you that keep ordinaries, to keep the commandments of God in them.

There was an inn at Bethlehem where the Lord Jesus Christ was to be met withal. Can Boston boast of many such? Alas, too ordinarily it may be said, "There is no room for him in the inn!" My friends, let me beg it of you, banish the unfruitful works of darkness from your houses, and then the sun of righteousness will shine upon them. Don't countenance drunkenness, revelling, and misspending of precious time in your houses; let none have the snares of death laid for them in your houses. You'll say, "I shall starve, then!" I say, "Better starve than sin:" but you shall not. It is the word of the Most High, "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed." And is not peace of conscience, with a little, better than those riches that will shortly melt away, and then run like scalding metal down the very bowels of thy soul?

What shall I say more? There is one article of piety more to be recommended unto us all; and it is an article which all piety does exceedingly turn upon, that is, the sanctification of the Lord's Day. Some very judicious persons have observed that as "they sanctify the Lord's Day, remissly or carefully, just so their affairs usually prospered all the ensuing week." Sirs, you cannot more consult the prosperity of the town, in all its affairs, than by endeavoring that the Lord's Day may be exemplarily sanctified. When people about Jerusalem took too much liberty on the Sabbath, the ruler of the town contended with them, and said, "Ye bring wrath upon Israel, by profaning the Sabbath." I fear — I fear there are many among us, to whom it may be said, "Ye bring wrath upon Boston by profaning the Sabbath." And what wrath? Ah, Lord, prevent it! But there is an awful sentence in Jer.

xvii, 27: "If ye will not hearken unto me, to sanctify the Sabbath Day, then will I kindle a fire on the town, and it shall devour and shall not be quenched."

Finally, let the piety of the town manifest itself in a due regard unto the institutions of him whose help has hitherto been a shield unto us. Let the ark be in the town, and God will bless the town! I believe it may be found that in the mortal scourges of heaven which this town has felt there has been a discernible distinction of those that have come up to attend all the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ in the communion of his churches. Though these have had, as 'tis fit they should, a share in the common deaths, yet the destroying angel has not had so great a proportion of these in his commission as he has had of others. Whether this be so or no, to uphold, and support, and attend the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ in reforming churches, this will entitle the town to the help of heaven; for "upon the glory there shall be a defence!"

There were the victorious forces of Alexander, that in going backward and forward passed by Jerusalem without hurting it. Why so? Said the Lord in Zech. ix, 8, "I will encamp about my house, because of the army." If our God have an house here, he'll encamp about it. Nazianzen, a famous minister of the gospel, taking his farewell of Constantinople, an old man that had sat under his ministry cried out, "Oh! my father, don't you dare to go away: you'll carry the whole Trinity with you!" How much more may it be cried out, "If we lose or slight the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, we forego the help of all the Trinity with them!"

Extraordinary equity and charity, as well as piety, well becomes a town that hath been by the help of God so extra-

ordinarily signalized. A town marvellously helped by God has this foretold concerning it, in Is. i, 26, "Afterward thou shalt be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city." May the Ebenezers of this town render it a town of equity and a town of charity! Oh! there should be none but fair dealings in a town wherewith Heaven has dealt so favorably. Let us deal fairly in bargains; deal fairly in taxes; deal fairly in paying respects to such as have been benefactors unto the town. 'Tis but equity that they who have been old standers in the town, and both with person and estate served the town unto the utmost for many years together, should on all proper occasions be considered.

For charity—I may indeed speak it without flattery—this town has not many equals on the face of the earth. Our Lord Jesus Christ from heaven wrote unto the good people of a town in the lesser Asia (Rev. ii, 19), "I know thy works and charity." From that blessed Lord I may venture to bring that message unto the good people of this town; "the glorious Lord of heaven knows thy works, O Boston, and all thy charity." This is a poor town, and yet it may be said of the Bostonians, as it was of the Macedonians, "their deep poverty hath abounded unto the riches of their liberality." O ye bountiful people of God, all your daily bounties to the needy, all your subscriptions to send the bread of life abroad unto places that are perishing in wickedness, all your collections in your assemblies as often as they are called for; "all these alms are come up for a memorial before God!" The Lord Jesus Christ in heaven hath beheld your helpfulness, and readiness to every good work; and he hath requited it with his helpful Ebenezers.

It was said in Is. xxxii, 8, "The liberal deviseth liberal things, and by liberal things he shall stand." There are some

in this town that are always devising liberal things, and our Lord Jesus Christ lets the town stand for the sake of those! Instead of exhorting you to augment your charity, I will rather utter an exhortation, or at least a supplication, that you may not abuse your charity by misapplying of it. I remember I have read that an inhabitant of the city Pisa being asked why their town so went, as it then did, unto decay?—he fetched a deep sigh, and said, "Our young men are too prodigal, our old men are too affectionate, and we have no punishment for those that spend their years in idleness." Ah! the last stroke of that complaint I must here sigh it over again. Idleness, alas! idleness increases in the town exceedingly; idleness, of which there never came any goodness! idleness, which is a "reproach to any people." We work hard all summer, and the drones count themselves wronged if they have it not in the winter divided among them. The poor that can't work are objects for your liberality. But the poor that can work and won't, the best liberality to them is to make them. I beseech you, sirs, to find out a method quickly, that the idle persons in the town may earn their bread; it were the best piece of charity that could be shown unto them, and equity unto us all. Our beggars do shamefully grow upon us, and such beggars, too, as our Lord Jesus Christ himself hath expressly forbidden us to countenance. I have read a printed sermon which was preached before "both Houses of Parliament, the Lord Mayor and Aldermen of London, and the Assembly of Divines," the greatest audience then in the world; and in that sermon the preacher had this passage: "I have lived in a country where in seven years I never saw a beggar, nor heard an oath, nor looked upon a drunkard." Shall I tell you where that Utopia was? 'Twas New England! But they that go from hence must now tell another story.

May the changes, and especially the judgments that have come upon the town, direct us what help to petition from the "God of our salvations." The Israelites had formerly seen dismal things, where they now set up their Ebenezer: the Philistines had no less than twice beaten them there, and there taken from them the Ark of God. Now we are setting up our Ebenezer, let us a little call to mind some dismal things that we have seen; the Ebenezer will go up the better for it.

We read in 1 Sam. vi, 18, concerning "the great stone of Abel." Some say that Adam erected that stone as a grave-stone for his Abel, and wrote that epitaph upon it, "Here was poured out the blood of the righteous Abel." I know nothing of this; the names, I know, differ in the original; but as we may erect many a stone for an Ebenezer, so we may erect many a great stone of Abel, that is to say, we may write mourning and sorrow upon the condition of the town in various examples. Now from the stones of Abel we will a little gather what we should wish to write upon the stones of our Ebenezer.

What changes have we seen in point of religion! It was noted by Luther, he "could never see good order in the church last more than fifteen years together in the purity of it." Blessed be God, religion hath here flourished in the purity of it for more than fifteen years together. But certainly the power of godliness is now grievously decayed among us. As the prophet of old exclaimed, in Joel i, 2, "Hear this, ye old men, and give ear, ye inhabitants! has this been in your days?" Thus may I say, "Hear this, ye old men, that are the inhabitants of the town: can't you remember that in your days a prayerful, a watchful, a fruitful Christian, and a well-governed family, was a more common sight, than it is now in our days? Can't you remember that in your days those abominable things

did not show their heads that are now barefaced among us? Here then is a petition to be made unto our God: "Lord, help us to remember whence we are fallen, and to repent, and to do the first works!"

Again, What changes have we seen in point of mortality? By mortality almost all the old race of our first planters here are carried off; the old stock is in a manner expired. We see the fulfilment of that word in Eccl. i, 4, "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh." It would be no unprofitable thing for you to pass over the several streets, and call to mind who lived here so many years ago? Why? In that place lived such an one. But where are they now? Oh! they are gone; they are gone into that eternal world, whither we must quickly follow them. Here is another petition to be made unto God: "Lord, help us to number our days, and apply our hearts unto wisdom, that when the places that now know us do know us no more, we may begone into the city of God!"

Furthermore, What changes have we seen in point of possessions? If some that are now rich were once low in the world, 'tis possible more that were once rich are now brought very low. Ah! Boston, thou hast seen the vanity of all worldly possessions. One fatal morning, which laid fourscore of thy dwelling-houses and seventy of thy warehouses in a ruinous heap, not nineteen years ago, gave thee to read it in fiery characters. And an huge fleet of thy vessels, which they would make if they were all together, that have miscarried in the late war, has given thee to read more of it. Here is one petition more to be made unto our God: "Lord, help us to ensure a better and a lasting substance in heaven, and the good part that cannot be taken away."

In fine, how dreadfully have the young people of Boston

perished under the judgments of God! A renowned writer among the Pagans could make this remark: there was a town so irreligious and atheistical that they did not pay their first-fruits unto God; (which the light of nature taught the Pagans to do!) and, says he, they were by a sudden desolation so strangely destroyed that there were no remainders either of the persons or of the houses to be seen any more. Ah, my young folks, there are few first-fruits paid unto the Lord Jesus Christ among you. From hence it comes to pass that the consuming wrath of God is every day upon you. New England has been like a tottering house, the very foundations of it have been shaking; but the house thus oversetting by the whirlwinds of the wrath of God had been like Job's house: "It falls upon the young men, and they are dead!" The disasters on our young folks have been so multiplied that there are few parents among us but what will go with wounded hearts down unto their graves: their daily moans are, "Ah, my son, cut off in his youth! My son, my son!" Behold then the help that we are to ask of our God; and why do we, with no more days of prayer with fasting, ask it? "Lord, help the young people of Boston to remember thee in the days of their youth, and satisfy unto the survivors the terrible things that have come upon so many of that generation."

And now as Joshua, having reasoned with his people a little before he died, in Josh. xxiv, 26, 27, "took a great stone, and set it up, and said unto all the people, Behold, this stone shall be a witness unto you, lest ye deny your God;" thus we have been this day setting up a stone, even an Ebenezer, among you; and I conclude, earnestly testifying unto you, Behold this stone shall be a witness unto you, that the Lord Jesus Christ has been a good Lord unto you, and if you seek him, he will be still found of you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever.