

A
DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OF

PHILADELPHIA,

Saml. Miller.

On WEDNESDAY, May 9th, 1798,

Recommended by the



PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES

To be Observed as a Day of

FASTING, HUMILIATION, AND PRAYER,

Throughout the

UNITED STATES of NORTH AMERICA.

By SAMUEL BLAIR, D. D.

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etc,

TO

JOHN ADAMS,

PRESIDENT of the UNITED STATES.

SIR,

IN composing the following Discourse, for which I have now the honour of soliciting your Patronage, the prospect of delivering it in your presence was both grateful and animating. It was particularly grateful and animating, not only as, on former occasions, I had experienced your candor and attention, but as I presumed that, the sentiments, which, at any rate, I conceived it to be my duty, on this occasion, to express, were, on the whole, conformable to your own. Had I entertained at the time a different opinion of your mind, or of the minds of the enlightened Audience then present; and had I, in that case, been disposed to accommodate myself to your ideas and theirs, the discourse would very probably have, in some respects, exhibited a very different complexion. With the appearance at least, of much impassioned humanity, I should have expatiated on the numerous atrocities, and deeds of sanguinary cruelty, which, at one time and another, have been committed under the sanction of those,

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into whose hands the powers of the French Republic had fallen. By this means, availing myself, as hath too often been done, of a principle of association natural to the human mind, while I vilified that nation with those who governed them, I might not only have roused the indignation of my hearers, but, in the result, have depreciated that sacred and common cause, for which you, Sir, and every worthy American, had so recently struggled. In addition to this, I should, perhaps, have attempted to demonstrate, that, with all the successes of that nation, the favor of the Almighty could not consistently be supposed to be with them; and that, on account of their crimes, connected with their professed Infidelity, or Atheism, they must needs be devoted to some future very direful inflictions of heavenly vengeance. If all this were not enough, I might have introduced a most alarming description of a class of citizens amongst ourselves, opprobriously denominated Antifederalists, Democrats, Jacobins, Disorganisers, &c. &c.; who are said to speak, even at this day, in terms, which favor of hope concerning that People and their Government; who are said to be opposed alike to measures defensive and offensive, against them; who are said to be enemies of all order and all good Government; nay, who are said to wish for nothing so much as the prevalence of *fraternal* anarchy and confusion.

This, and much more in a similar stile, I might have attempted. But, to say nothing of the impropriety, in many respects, of such representation, and of the pernicious tendency of it, I was well aware that, genuine patriotism, good sense, and sound information will always distinguish between the spirit of national enmity or party enthusiasm, and a real attachment to the cause of liberty, to our excellent Constitution, and to the true interest of this, as yet immature, but highly promising Empire.

If therefore, at a time devoted to sentiments of more becoming humiliation, and religious harmony in our Country's Cause, I did not insist on topics, as to some, so inflammatory, and, as to others, in the present too much unsettled state of the public mind, so irritating, and preclusive of that general conciliation, which hath never been more desirable or necessary, I cannot pretend to arrogate to myself any great share of the merit of prudence, moderation, or piety in the instance. Neither your approbation, nor the approbation of the most estimable part of my Audience, nor the approbation of Him, under whose Auspices you preside, and to whom we all are accountable, could be supposed to occur to any reflecting and well disposed mind, as in any degree attainable by it.

At this trying, this eventful, this awful Period, to You, Sir, peculiarly embarrassing, and to us,

peculiarly interesting and critical, may you be favored with all needful illuminations of that Wisdom, which cometh from above. In your own well-ordered mind, may you richly experience the benefits of conscious integrity. In the defence, in the continued freedom, and in the future prosperity of our Country, may You, with us, long enjoy the fruits of your upright and successful Administration. And in all your laudable designs and efforts for the Public good, may You, to the close of that Administration, be happy in the entire confidence, and cordial co-operation of all your fellow Citizens.

Give me leave, Sir, to add: That the wisdom and firmness, with which you have hitherto steered the National Barque amidst the various storm, which, ever since your assumption of the Helm, hath impelled it, is an Omen, most highly grateful to the virtuous and wise of every description;——and, if in connection with such characters, I may be allowed to speak of myself, to none more grateful than,

Sir,

Your most obedient,

And very humble servant,

SAMUEL BLAIR,

DISCOURSE.

ISAIAH, Chap. I. Verse 6.

Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more
and more.

IT is not long since, by the Ministry and delegates of our Church, in Synod convened, we were called, as again at this day, to the offices of Humiliation and Prayer. That service, together with the recommendation of the Synod, was occasioned by the views, then conceived, of our manifold offences, as connected both with religious and with national Society; by the view of some, then recent, tokens of the divine displeasure; and of some, to all appearance, impending calamities of our Country. And, although the service, at that time, was but partial, as confined to a certain number and description of religious societies, it was, nevertheless, grateful to observe the serious attention, with which it was by so many regarded; and particularly, the sanction, which it received from the countenance and aid of those, who occupy the first places in the national department. At present, how much soever we regret the occasion, we deem it an instance of public felicity, that a similar call hath issued, by recommendation likewise, from the supreme federal authority.

Happy, my friends, is that nation, in which wisdom united with piety and public affection presideth! And happy in consequence are we at this time in the advantage of indulging a sentiment, at once gratefully and solemnly affecting, in the view of a great nation, at the same time, and with one heart, as we hope, prostrating themselves in penitent and suppliant devotion at the merciful throne of the Supreme Ruler of the World. May our hearts be affected this day in becoming unison with those of our fellow citizens throughout this extended empire; and may our devout acknowledgments and prayers meet with the desired acceptance, and be succeeded by that heavenly favour and deliverance we need.

It is afflicting, however, to consider, how rare the genuine emotions of that penitent and humiliating sense, to which we are called. To the acknowledgement of God in all our ways, how much, alas, are we indisposed! We like not in sincerity to avow our dependence entire upon him; to confide in his providence; to resign ourselves up to his guidance; to confess our unworthiness of his care; or to consent to the wisdom and equity of his administration, when, at any time, he seeth meet to withhold his protection from us, or to prove or correct us by adverse dispensations. Adversity, even the most severe, is sometimes ineffectual to reduce us to that humble, penitent, and obedient temper, which, at all times, becometh us. This is the common fault of the nature of man, the nature of man degenerate and perverse. How many instances are there on sacred record, where the people professing subjection, as we

do, to the government of God, when they have been subjected for their sins to discipline, afflictive even to a very unusual degree, instead of returning to him by a contrite sense and dutiful relinquishment of them, have waxed yet more insensible and forward, and multiplied those very iniquities, for which they were chastised. Such was the conduct of the people of Israel in the days of the Prophet Isaiah. It was at a time, we are told, when, in judicial award of their many and heinous transgressions, their country was desolate, their cities were burnt with fire, and their land was devoured by strangers in their presence. Yet, did they in consequence repent, and correct those transgressions? We have their character described withal, as “a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity; a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters; that had forsaken the Lord; and provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger.” This was the ground of the severe exhortation in our text: “Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more.” An ostensible profession of piety, it is true, they still maintained. We are told that, amidst all their perverse and obstinate deviations, they sought God daily, and, as a nation that did righteousness, delighted to know his ways. They fasted; they prayed; they called assemblies; they multiplied sacrifices and burnt offerings; and made a great shew of ritual devotion, and penitence. But, of what avail was all this without the reformation required? In the eye of heaven, it served only as a proof of their farther departure from God and their duty.

In the 10th verse he, notwithstanding, calls them by his prophet, "the people of Gomorrah; and their rulers, rulers of Sodom;" and then adds: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me? I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts. When ye come before me; who hath required this at your hands? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new-moons, and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting; your new-moons, and appointed feasts, my soul hateth; they are a trouble to me; I am weary of them—And when ye spread out your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear."

With respect to their appointed fasts, he likewise thus expostulates: "Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness. Is it such a fast, I have chosen? Is not this the fast, I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness; to undo the heavy burdens; and to let the oppressed go free? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry; and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thine house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh."

The offences, here mentioned, or referred to, were some of those, which, as before expressed, had "provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger," and brought those, recited, calamities upon them: and, as they had not corrected those offences, nor were

disposed to correct them, all their ostentatious expressions of humiliation, and religious respect, of what kind soever, were considered in no other light, than as solemn mockeries of the Majesty of Heaven, and as cloaks for their unrighteous deeds.

Under this view, the pertinency, and the force of the minatory address in our text will very plainly and instructively appear. It is, as though he had said: "I have been using various means, and those, at different times, to reclaim you from your perverse and ruinous ways: but to what purpose have they heretofore served? Doth not iniquity, even more than ever, abound amongst you? You exhibit, indeed, the external visible forms of repentance; but, what with the formality, what with the hypocrisy, and variously unsuitable temper attending them, and what with your perseverance in the very evils, which you affect with so much contrition to bewail, I cannot otherwise regard them than as so many specimens of your still increasing degeneracy and rebellion. Wherefore, then, should I continue endeavouring by chastisement to reclaim you? Such principles and temper, as heretofore, continuing, you will continue revolting more and more. Your case, indeed, appeareth almost desperate. I am well nigh provoked to let you alone; to suffer you to go on in your rebellious course, without farther admonition or control, until you shall have filled up the measure of your iniquities, and reached that point in guilt, with which punishment extreme is indispensably connected." This, my hearers, is a result,

alarming indeed ; and much to be deprecated by any People.

How far, in this our infant state, as a nation, we have reason to forebode a dispensation of Providence so awful, it is not for me to say. Thus far, however, we all know ; that, amidst the great, and numerous benefactions of Heaven, with which we have been favored, it hath pleased the Almighty, both in former, and in later times, to prove us by allotments, of various kinds, perplexing and afflictive. The present time, we know also, is a time of public trouble, distress, fear, and danger. And we know that, withal, we have little favor to expect on the score of any general reformation that, as yet, hath appeared. Indeed, without indulging a spirit of weak complaint, or wanton crimination, I may say, we have reason to presume, that, instead of being more reformed, we are, in some respects at least, as reprehensible in the eye of moral law, religion, and our God, as we ever have been ; if we are not really worse than ever.

Our text directeth us, as to its principal point, to a consideration of that result, we have mentioned. But, I mean not to confine myself to it. There are two or three observations, connected with it, and suggested in the place, which, though not new to you, are likewise proper to be attended to on this day of humiliation.

We first observe : That adverse and afflictive circumstances of a People or Nation are, generally,

an indication of their departure from that stated order, and that dutiful regard to God, which He requireth of them. The moral cause of his having stricken his people Israel was their revolting from Him. Affliction, in what form or degree soever, is, indeed, consequentially connected with human depravity. Had there never been sin, adversity had never been known. The Deity, allwise, benignant, and just, never afflicteth, excepting where guilt is imputed. In as much, therefore, as the whole human race are involved in guilt, affliction hath become the common lot of man. But, so far as it is common, it is no indication of any greater guilt, or of any greater displeasure of Heaven, than is proper to them as lapsed degenerate creatures. What I mean is: that, when it pleaseth the Sovereign and Holy Ruler of the World to subject any People to adversity greater than is common, to them, in ordinary times, it is, for the most part, a strong presumptive evidence, on the whole, of their having, in some respects or other, deviated farther from Him than before in the ways of iniquity. This we collect, not barely from the probability of the case, compared with the principle mentioned, but from instances analogous recorded in the sacred scriptures. In those scriptures, wherever we read of the occurrence of any national misfortune unusually severe, we have some intimation of its being the judicial result of encreasing iniquity. For this, I need only refer you to those records; particularly their historical and prophetical pages. And, my hearers, with respect to ourselves: Were we disposed impartially and faithfully, as we ought, to inquire into our own

conduct, in a moral and religious view considered, we should find it; most probably, to be such, as we have here described. Or, if not so disposed, were we only to consider, whether God hath not, at various times, and in different ways, of late, been dealing with us by adverse dispensations more sensibly afflictive than in the ordinary course of his Providence? The answer will easily occur to any one, who, at the same time, will reflect on our national circumstances, in certain respects, which might be mentioned, either foreign or domestic, for the four or five years which are past; especially if he will consider impartially, withal, whether, since the commencement of those adversities, we have become more penitent and reformed than before? Nay, whether any one of them hath been followed, to any extent at least, with this becoming improvement. The suggestion here too shrewdly ariseth to be treated with indifference: namely, that, as a People, we have progressed unto a higher station in iniquity and guilt.

We observe: That one great design of God, when He involveth a people in adverse circumstances, is; that they might not be in want of those disciplinary means, which have the likeliest tendency to lead them into consideration, and thus to reclaim them from their iniquitous ways. Afflictions have been justly compared to furnaces. Their intention is to separate us from our moral alloy; to purify our hearts and our manners from whatever is base, corrupt, and pernicious. If one passage through this furnace doth not answer the purpose, He will cast us in again; and again, if needful. If we are

corrigible, it will be well in the end. If not, it will appear that, the evil is so deeply ingrained in our moral constitution, as not to be dissevered from us. It will appear, that we are fit only to be rejected as reprobate materials; to be cast out of his providential care; and given over to be trodden under foot, and insulted at pleasure.

Thirdly, We observe: That God is grieved and provoked, if his corrective expedients be not followed by the wholesome effects to which, when properly improved, they tend. This is suggested by the mode of expostulation in our text. It is speaking after the manner of men; who, when they have been using a variety of means to accomplish a desirable end, and are frustrated in all, are apt, with grief and indignation, to reflect on what they have been so ineffectually doing; and to be disposed, as in despair of success, to surcease from any farther attempts. Thus He expresseth himself on occasion of the obstinate perverseness of the Israelites in their wilderness-journey: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation; it is a people that do err in their hearts." The issue was, as you doubtless remember, a judicial Sentence or Oath of the Almighty, that not one of all that generation, Caleb and Joshua alone excepted, should survive to behold the promised land. In such a case of a nation, He, in general, either abandons them forthwith to destruction, from which they are never recovered; or, perhaps, he multiplies his scourges, until he hath reduced them to ruin almost entire; though, it may be, not so entire, as to preclude their reinstatement,

after a long time at least, in their former prosperity. Such was his procedure with the Israelites, who had grieved Him at the time in our text referred to. After the measures of correction which have been recited, He did not at once destroy them; but, some years after, when by their multiplied transgressions they had filled up the cup of indignation, He demolished their temple, their capital and their government; and suffered the prime of their nation to be carried into captivity, from which they were not, until after seventy years, restored.

But sometimes, as, in the last place, we observe: He expresseth his grief and resentment by withholding his chastising hand; and permitting them, without farther restraint or discipline, to proceed in their incorrigible licentious courses. "Why should ye be stricken any more?" He thus gives the Israelites to fear, that He would, in future, resign them to their own illicit and pernicious ways, and treat them as in a desperate case; for that, from all their former behaviour, it appeared, that, what expedients soever he might in future use, they would still continue to "revolt more and more." And what, my friends, would be the most probable consequence of such divine dereliction? In the case of Israel aforementioned we have it exemplified.

The hearts of all men, both as individuals, and as nations, are in the hands of God. It is by his Almighty and most gracious intervention, that they are, at any time, preserved in the forms of order, civil or religious. This is, or ought to be, acknow-

ledged by all who profess to believe in his providence, in his moral government of the world, in the revelations which He hath given us, and in the powerful tendencies of depraved human nature. Such, then, being the case, suppose that intervention once to cease; especially, suppose it to cease at a period of time, when, as at the time referred to, their vicious habits have risen into force, and force incorrigible, and, doubtless, their progress in the ways of iniquity must needs be audacious and rapid indeed; and the effects of that progress must be ruinous, as they are rapid and audacious. At such a time, to say nothing of the combined operation of innumerable other causes, the very reflection, in minds so degenerate, occurring, that, notwithstanding their impenitence, their deliverance hath obtained, will naturally embolden them to greater temerity in their offensive and disorderly conduct. It will, moreover, encourage them to regard such forms of misfortune as only things of course, which, as the passing cloud, will soon blow over, like the past, and leave them as secure and happy as before.—An infatuation it is, the most deplorable! A condition it is, with all its seeming encouragements, most illusive and fatal; and inexpressibly more to be dreaded than any other kind of adversity, whose removal is matter of the greatest joy.

Were this, my hearers, (which God, most gracious and long-suffering, forbid) were this ever to be our condition, we should then be a people, beyond all our present or former experience, or fears, wretched indeed. Were no foreign enemy then to

invade us ; were our commerce to be free from predatory violence ; our cities from fire, contribution, or wasting disease ; our fields from drought or mildew ; our houses of worship from impious abuse ; and religious rites from perversion or restraint : yet, nevertheless, disorder and confusion, in one destructive form and another, would of course arise, and unavoidably prevail ; factions would distract and pervert our councils ; mutual dissensions amongst individuals, families, neighbourhoods, and states, would engender mutual distrust and alienation ; and all combined would at length produce universal derangement and misery ; until having completed the amount of our folly and guilt, we should become, at once, fit and signal examples of the righteous vengeance of Heaven ; and that either in the prevalence of some furious faction, or in the successful usurpation of some ambitious demagogue, or aspiring official character, civil or military, or, perhaps, in our subjugation by some foreign overbearing and tyrannical power, or even, in the utter extinction of our character, or very name, as a Nation.

These observations, my friends, compared with our present national predicament which hath occasioned them, are truly interesting ; and call for our most serious and religious attention. Numerous and distinguishing have been the favours of Providence conferred on us both before and since we have become a free and an independent people. Those favors too, in order to restrain our presumption, and correct our ingratitude, have in wisdom been blended on occasion with disciplinary frowns of Heaven,

For some time past, however, the clouds and the darkness have been gathering thick, and assuming a more permanent and menacing aspect. Of late, as portentous of speedy storm, they have been rapidly increasing. We have already felt, in no small measure, their destructive impression; and now at length they seem, as if, in all their forms of devastation and horror, they would burst forth upon us.

To us, as citizens of the American Republic, this state of things, under several views, is peculiarly afflicting. The revolution in favour of Liberty in one of the most potent nations of the world, with whom we were allied, was an event, in which every friend of humanity amongst us sincerely rejoiced. And when the coalition of the opposing powers took place, and the troubles of Europe commenced, we not only flattered ourselves, that the cause of needful and well-adjusted freedom would nevertheless prevail; but, that, during the contest, we should be suffered to enjoy the benefits of that neutral station, which we had, in policy alike humane and laudable, assumed. With views so generous and just, whatever, from other quarters might be apprehended, we little suspected that inimical measures would be suggested against us in the house of our friends.

But, so it hath been. Inimical measures have, even there, been suggested against us; and, not only suggested, but wantonly and violently carried into effect. And although, as becometh us, we ultimately refer the procedure to the sovereign permission or appointment of Heaven: yet, as devised

by men, and by men, professing to support the same common cause with us ; and devised by men, without provocation, adequate at least, on our part ; and by the government of a nation with whom we were strictly and cordially allied ; it is a circumstance, on which we cannot reflect without feelings alike regretful and indignant.

Besides that, in the yet immature condition of our young and growing country, a state of war with any foreign power must be to us peculiarly injurious ; and, as injurious, peculiarly undesirable. Were I to enlarge in explanation of this subject, I should, not only insult your understandings, and impose on your patience, but deviate, perhaps, too far, from the limits of this sacred office. I therefore only add ; that, how pleasing and advantageous soever, a state of continued peace might be, it was much more reasonably, on account of the justice of our claims, to be conceded by the powers at war, than expected, on account of our deserts, as subjects of the moral government of God,

Heaven-favored, as we have been, we have withal been a Heaven-offending people. As such, at this awful crisis, it is doubtless highly becoming, that we should make, as at present, a solemn and religious pause. In such a day of ill-boding appearances, it behoveth us well to consider our ways. As part of the national community, it behoveth us to ask ourselves, by what iniquities we have provoked the Righteous Ruler of the world thus to menace and thus to smite us with the rod of adversity ;

with contrition unfeigned to confess those iniquities before Him; deeply to humble ourselves in the view of them; and to deprecate an exposure to his yet higher resentment by our continuance in them.

Let us, my friends, accordingly inquire, and that, as in the presence of God, with all due faithfulness and impartiality, what returns we have made for all the goodness he hath heretofore shewn us? How far we have improved the bounties of his common beneficence? How far we have improved the blessings of former deliverance; the blessings of national freedom still continued unto us; the blessings of a form of government, on the whole, the wisest and best constituted of any now existing on earth; and the blessings of those good laws, and that well-adjusted administration, with which we are favored? Let us inquire how far we have endeavoured to promote order, peace, and mutual concord in the spheres of society respectively allotted us? How far we have endeavoured to second, and, as our power extendeth, to support the well-meant measures of those, to whom, under God, we have committed our national affairs? Let us especially inquire, how we have improved the privileges and means of religion; what respect we have paid to its holy revelations; and to the several duties and ordinances in the Christian system enjoined? How far we have been careful "to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God?" Whether we have been disposed to acknowledge him in all our ways; and to confess our entire unworthiness of all that favor and protection, he hath extended unto us? And

finally : how we have conducted under those chastisements of various kinds, whether private, domestic, or more public and national, with which he hath, at any time, seen meet to afflict us? Have they issued in a relinquishment of those ways, in which we had gone astray? Or, have we hardened our necks the more against God, and revolted more and more?

These, my fellow Citizens, and Christian hearers, on the present occasion especially, are proper, interesting, and, it may be, if answered aright, humiliating enquiries. And the more humiliating, when we consider the present dispensation as succeeding others alike corrective, and, yet, alike ineffectual in producing the reformation intended. Such being the case, judge ye for yourselves, whether there be not reason to apprehend that, our Maker at length may be grieved with us? And, moreover, whether there be not reason to fear, that, should we, with the removal of the present dispensation, still remain unreformed, whether, I say, there be not reason, and I add great reason, to fear, that, *in wrath*, he may cease from farther correction, and thenceforth leave us, unbridled and at large, to our own unrighteous courses, until, in one way and another, we shall, either have irrecoverably ruined ourselves, or become a prey to some intriguing, or some violent invader? Of all the dreadful remonstrances of Heaven against a corrected but unreforming people, that of our text is most to be dreaded; and, of all denunciations most to be deprecated, is that we have recorded respecting Ephraim of old in a

similar case : " Ephraim is joined to his idols ; let him alone."

My friends of this society ; Shall it not be our care, that *our* penitence, at least, be such, as that, neither the denunciation, nor the remonstrance be incurred by any future reprehensible conduct of ours ? With the view to this happy effect, it is our most earnest desire, and pleasing hope, that the offices of this day may be, by *us*, acceptably performed ; and that they may successfully issue in the fruits intended. Perhaps, on the whole, a more instructive specimen of successful humiliation and prayer cannot be given than that of ancient Nineveh, on occasion of the alarming message and admonition of Jonah. Nineveh was a great and splendid city ; the royal capital of the Assyrian empire ; whose wickedness, on account of its exceeding enormity, is said to have " come up before God." Jonah, by a divine extraordinary notice, was commanded thither to repair ; and, traversing streets, to proclaim with a loud and confident voice : " Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown." Though a heathen city, the inhabitants of Nineveh believed God ; they proclaimed a Fast ; they put on sackcloth ; and, with their monarch from his throne, they indiscriminately seated themselves in ashes, agreeably to the custom of the times on such solemn occasions ; and cried mightily to God ; and turned every one from his evil way. This they did, as encouraged by that well founded suggestion, expressed in the proclamation aforesaid : " Who can tell, if God will turn, and repent him ; and

turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not?" And what was the issue of this awful scene of penitent devotion? "God," it is said, "beheld their works, that they turned from their evil way: and God repented of the evil, that He had said, He would do unto them: and did it not.*" Let us, my friends, avail ourselves of the wholesome example, which that people, unenlightened, as they were, hath set us. Let us mourn sincerely, as they did, for our past transgressions. And, as they did, let us prove our sincerity by turning every one from the evil of his doings. "Who can tell, if God will turn his fierce anger," likewise, "from us." At any rate, such repentance becometh us both as individuals, and as part of the national society. And, without such repentance, we may well be persuaded, we shall neither be prepared for the deliverance we need, nor, with all the other means, which may be resorted to, shall we have reason sufficient, with any degree of confidence at least, to expect it.

And now, having adverted to means of defence, I cannot help, in the conclusion, adding one, which indeed belongs to the purpose of our present religious

* The Prophet, very probably intimated to the Ninevites, that repentance was the only possible method of escaping the threatened destruction. Yet it seems that, the Almighty saw it proper, in the present case, to be upon the reserve on this point; that He did not reveal to Jonah his design of pardoning them on their repentance; and that Jonah, of consequence, did not reveal it to the Ninevites. This appears from the aforementioned words of the Proclamation, which speak of the event as dreadfully uncertain even though they should repent.

engagement; which is part of that proof of sincerity we have mentioned; and which, as it dependeth, so is incumbent, on every individual: I mean, prudence, candor, and well directed moderation in our political differences; together with a firm and steady union in the measures of defence which are, or may be provided, and prosecuted by the powers of government. Here, allowing the reference in this place, the fable of the bundle of rods will be apt to occur to our minds. Separated, the rods are easily broken: united, they will resist almost any force. Differ, my friends, on political questions, we may; provided always, that we differ from judgment, not prejudice; in charity, not with ill-nature. Nevertheless, where questions have been constitutionally decided, and measures accordingly pursued, *by our union* in those measures, it behoveth us, as good citizens, to strengthen the hands of those, in whom we have confided for the national defence; and *by our union* it behoveth us, if we would act with political or religious consistency, to avoid all that kind of disagreement, which is productive of any of those evils we this day bewail; and which, of course, precludeth that order and reformation, with which is connected the heavenly favor we solicit.

It is not for me to explain the grounds, or to trace the progress of those differences, which have so unhappily subsisted both in our public councils, and in our more private and fortuitous intercourse. Whatever they may have been, we most devoutly hope they have, in a measure at least, subsided.

Yet, it is afflicting in no small degree to observe the means, which, by many, are inconsiderately, and, by some, even wantonly used to keep alive the pernicious spirit. Not to mention the uncandid constructions, and irritating reflections, which are indulged in private discourse; or instances of speech, alike reprehensible in one of the most august ———
 But I forbear; I venerate the wisdom and dignity of my Country in her high Delegation.—Not to mention, I say, these things, I cannot help remarking, as in this place I have formerly done, on the factious and highly inflammatory publications, which are daily diffused throughout this City and every department of the Union; and on the blameworthiness, to use no harsher term, which is contracted by aiding with our custom or otherwise the Editors of such poisonous ebullitions; whichever political party they may have espoused.

My friends, I say not these things as assuming a political character. I speak as a minister of religion. They are infractions of the laws of religion, of good morals, and of social obligation, I mean to reprobate. They are infractions, likewise, whose baleful influence on the interests of our Country, and on our hopes of heavenly protection, are even incalculable. On this occasion therefore, and in this hour of religious sentiment and contrite reflection, I am persuaded, you will admit the freedom, with which I speak.

With respect to union in the national defence, and, I add, in affection for the honour and real interest of our Country, though we cannot vouch for the

views of some individuals on both sides of the political arrangement which seems to have been formed, we are, nevertheless, happy in the entire persuasion, that there are good men, and real well-meaning Patriots on both; and that, on neither side they merit the opprobrious imputations, and opprobrious names, with which either ignorance, factious design, or malevolence, hath attempted to brand them. We are also happy in observing that, notwithstanding the party-provocations, which have been given, to the contrary effect, so many have discovered their good sense, integrity, and fortitude of mind in acceding to measures, of which they had previously disapproved; and disapproved, chiefly, if not altogether, for want of farther information; without which information, they could not, with honesty, as they conceived, give them their express and cordial consent. How many more of our good fellow-Citizens might have thus acceded, had it not been for that party-licentiousness, of which we speak; and how many more, were it to subside, might yet accede, we cannot pretend to assert. But of this we are well convinced, that, the same licentiousness continuing, the same injurious effects will continue to follow. And how far its progress may affect our safety in the present alarming state of our Country; how much farther it may yet vitiate our morals, and our national character; and how much farther it may expose us to the resentments of Heaven, the God of Heaven only knows.

For us, my hearers, in our proper character, whether civil or religious, the path of duty, on the whole, I presume, is plain before us. As good

Christians, it is our bounden duty to consider, and to treat, with charity and candor the political opinions of those, who may differ from us: and, as good Republicans, it is our bounden duty to accommodate ourselves to the decisions, in form approved, of those, who legislate for us; and to the measures of Executive Government, which accord with its constitutional powers, and the exigence of existing times. To this accommodation we are called in correspondence with our professed sincerity in the offices of the day, and in the reference which we make of our Country's Cause. By this accommodation, connected with real contrition for, and conversion from our evil ways, we may hope for the blessing of God. With this accommodation, we need not despair of the deliverance we solicit: and deliverance, as we believe, in the most seasonable time vouchsafed; and vouchsafed, not in wrath, as it, otherwise, justly might be, but in great mercy and beneficence, and abounding with well-founded premonitions of future national security, prosperity, and honour.

With these views impressed, let us, in truth, humble ourselves under the mighty Hand of God. With these views impressed, let us, in truth, turn every one from the errors of his way. And, in the integrity of our hearts, let us cordially and confidently refer to Him our dearest interest, our Country's Cause.—He will defend us: Blessed be his Name! He will, in due time, exalt us.

I conclude with that pertinent Confession and Prayer of the Prophet: "O Lord, Great and

Dreadful God, We have sinned, and committed iniquity, even by departing from thy precepts and thy judgments ;—O Lord, Righteousness belongeth unto Thee ; but unto us confusion of faces, as at this day——Nevertheless ; O Lord, hear : O Lord, forgive : O Lord, hearken and do : Do, and defer not, for thine own Name's sake ; O my God : For thy People are called by thy Name.

THE END.