

TRUST IN GOD:
EXPLAINED AND RECOMMENDED,
IN A
SERMON,
PREACHED,

WITH SOME SPECIAL REFERENCE TO THE STATE
OF THE PUBLIC MIND, IN THE
PROSPECT OF WAR;

IN THE
Independent, or Congregational Church,
CHARLESTON, SOUTH-CAROLINA,
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S E R M O N.

PSALM CXXV, *Verse 1.*

THEY THAT TRUST IN THE LORD SHALL BE AS MOUNT
ZION, WHICH CANNOT BE REMOVED, BUT
ABIDETH FOR EVER.

IT is a beautiful similitude, which the Psalmist here uses, to describe the safety and happiness by which they are distinguished, “who make the Lord their trust.”

Mount Zion was the citadel or fortress of Jerusalem. It was strong by nature, and it was defended by the strongest fortifications that could be added by the art and labor of man. But what rendered it most important to the ancient people of God, was the circumstance of its being early chosen as the seat of the Ark—the authentic, appointed, and sure pledge of the Divine presence; and afterwards of the celebrated temple, which the Holy Majesty of Heaven, allowed to be honored with the name of “the house of his habitation.”

Thus it was, at once, the seat of strength and beauty, and dignified with the peculiar manifestations of the Divine glory. And thus, as it was strong and permanent, in its own nature, so it was secured by the special protection of Jehovah.

It is to this circumstance, particularly, that the inspired author of the Psalm, with striking propriety, compares the stability, and desirable situation of them that trust in the Lord.

The Psalm probably contains some of those comfortable and encouraging words, which were spoken to the people, by their good king Hezekiah, when Sennacherib's mighty army threatened the destruction of Jerusalem. In this view, the object of it is to assure them, that God would not suffer that formidable enemy, that "rod of his anger," to chastise them long; and that a proper trust in God, would prove an effectual security to them, in the present emergency, and in all future difficulties, distresses and dangers.

What was addressed to them, on that interesting occasion, is no doubt recorded for our instruction and comfort; while it is intended to teach and to engage us to look to God alone for support, relief and deliverance, in every season of trial and perplexity, of distress and fear.

Trouble of one kind or other, is the ordinary portion of the children of men; for "they are born to it as the sparks fly upward."

There are few, who are long exempted from the suffering of various outward afflictions; still more frequent is the anguish which the heart

feels from a sense of guilt, from the fiery darts of temptation, or from the pressure of some secret corroding sorrow: And we are rarely without our fears or apprehensions of some future evils, ready to fall upon our persons, our families, our friends, or the community, which no prudence or power of our own can prevent. In these circumstances, what can console, animate, and fortify the heart, like the sweet voice of Divine truth and grace, assuring us, that if we betake ourselves to God, in faith, and place our trust in him, we shall be no longer moved by these things, but shall, in his support, protection, and favour, find ourselves securely established, and truly happy? If any thing, indeed, can sooth the sorrows of a wounded spirit, or minister relief to the soul ready to sink in despondence, under the clouds of darkness which may hang over it, or the burden of heavy affliction, or painful apprehension, with which it may be oppressed, it must be the exercise of a lively faith, and firm trust, in "the Almighty and only wise God, the God of all grace and comfort," who well knows all the necessities of his creatures, and tenderly compassionates the sufferings of his afflicted people; who is able to avert from us, every evil with which we may be threatened, and ready to be "the very present help" of all who humbly look to him for support and deliverance, "in every time of their trouble:" and who is, in every view, abundantly qualified and sufficient to be "our refuge and our portion in the land of the living."

Safe and happy, then, must they be, indeed, “who *trust in the Lord.*”

As this trust in God, is an eminent branch of piety, and most conducive to our stability, peace, and comfort, in the midst of all our trials, difficulties, and dangers, I would hope, that some who now hear me may be led to, or strengthened in the exercise of it, while I am proceeding in my discourse with a view,

To explain the nature of a genuine and proper trust in God :——And then

To direct our minds to that religious improvement of the subject, which appears to be particularly seasonable and proper, in the present interesting and critical situation of our country.

When we contemplate the nature of a genuine and proper trust in God, if we take the light of scripture and reason for our guide, it will appear to include,

I,—*A sincere reconciliation of the heart to God.*

Man, in his present fallen state, “through the darkness of his understanding, and the blindness of his heart, is alienated from the life of God.” The natural man neither perceives nor loves the true character of God, as exhibited in his word ; and especially, he loves not his sovereignty and holiness, nor does he sincerely approve of, or delight in his holy law and government. “The carnal mind is,” in truth, “enmity against God, which is not subject to his law, neither indeed can be.” Now, under the influence of such a mind, persons are not prepared or disposed, really to trust in God. “Their hearts not being right

with him ;” but conscious of many dispositions, leading to correspondent practices, which are contrary to his holy will, and which, notwithstanding, they still choose to indulge and pursue ; they naturally apprehend his displeasure, “ who is angry with the wicked every day ;” and therefore, fearing to commit themselves, their works, and their ways, to “ this holy Lord God,” they are rather inclined “ to trust in man, and to make flesh their arm ; and thus their heart departeth from the Lord.”

But when He, who, at first “ made man upright, and created him after his own image and likeness ;” and who, in his infinite wisdom and love, devised the glorious plan of recovering him from the ruins of the fall, to holiness and happiness, through the mediation of his beloved Son ; when “ He, who originally commanded the light to shine out of darkness,” pursuing the great design of his love and mercy, towards fallen, ruined men, condescends to “ shine in their hearts,” by the agency of his Spirit, and through the instrumentality of his word, in order “ to give the light of the knowledge of his glory, in the face of Jesus Christ ;” then the moral darkness, in which their minds were involved, is effectually dispersed, and they begin to perceive, that “ God is indeed light, and that in him is no darkness at all ;” that he is “ glorious and amiable in his holiness,” and in all his infinite perfections ; and that, in a word, “ God is love,” and therefore, most worthy of the supreme love and best services of all intelligent creatures, throughout all the

periods of their existence. Now they see, also, that he is in all respects, a suitable portion to their souls, as he alone can be their all-sufficient and everlasting portion, in which every reasonable desire and hope will find a complete and eternal satisfaction.

And now, beholding him, as he is in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, they humbly, and thankfully, and joyfully accept the offered reconciliation; and while, in faith and hope, they look up to him for pardon and justification, for salvation and eternal life, through the atonement and righteousness of his beloved Son, their Redeemer and Advocate, "who has made peace for them, by the blood of his cross," they are led to repose an unlimited confidence in him, as the "Father of their Lord Jesus Christ," and in and through him, "the Father of mercies," to the penitent believer; fully persuaded, that he is as ready as "he is able to supply all their need, according to his riches in glory, by Christ Jesus;" and for his sake, "to do for them exceedingly abundantly above all that they can ask or think."

Accordingly, I observe, that they who are thus prepared to trust in God, are led to place,

II,—*A cheerful, steady reliance on his all-sufficiency and benevolence, for all the protection, provision, and assistance which they may need.*

Under the most condescending and encouraging character, God was pleased to represent himself to Abraham, the father of the faithful, when he said to him, "Fear not, I am thy shield, and exceeding great reward." And it is by

such a view of him, that the inspired writers have been induced to speak the language, in which all real believers, and truly pious persons may, with equal propriety and confidence, address themselves to God, and say, "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God, therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings:" And again; "The Lord is my portion, faith my soul, therefore will I hope in him; the Lord is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him; it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

Without this persuasion of the sufficiency, and beneficence of God, to take care of us, and to provide for us, to defend us, and to deliver us, we can never feel "our hearts fixed, trusting in him." All our confidence in him, and expectations from him, must be encouraged and supported, by the consideration and the persuasion of his ability, and his good will to help and to save those, who take refuge in his power and mercy. And, respecting these properties of the Divine character, who can entertain any doubt, or indulge the least suspicion, that seriously contemplates his works, or really believes his word? Does not the whole well-ordered frame of nature, and the constant administration of Divine Providence, loudly proclaim, that the Lord, the Creator and the Governor of the world, is infinitely powerful, and wise, and good; and that "his tender mercies are over all his works!"

And, how illustriously are his benevolence and love displayed towards the children of men, in the wonderful scheme of man's redemption, and in the whole system and design of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God!" Let us here only consider "the unspeakable gift of God," even the gift of his eternal, co-equal, and most beloved Son, whom he sent, in our nature, into the world, to seek and to save the lost and the perishing;" and to suffer the awful agonies and death of the cross, to which he voluntarily and cheerfully submitted, that he might thus become a "propitiation for our sins, and the end of the law for righteousness, to all believers." And let us then behold this glorious "Captain of salvation," rising from the dead, and ascending triumphantly to heaven, and there "seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high," and reigning as "Head over all things, to the church, which he has bought with his blood," and "ever living to make intercession for all, who come unto God by him." Let us consider these things, and think, whether they are not sufficient to establish the hearts of all real believers, in the persuasion, that "He who spared not, but delivered up the dear Son of his love, for them, will, with him also, freely give them *all things*!" If any thing more can be wanting to confirm them in the faith and hope of this, it is furnished by "the great and precious promises of the gospel, which are in Christ, yea, and amen," and which assure to all that repent of their sins, and believe with the heart, in this only and all-sufficient Saviour, a complete and eternal salva-

tion from sin and every evil, together with the requisite, seasonable supplies of every thing pertaining to life and to godliness;" even every thing that may be needful, or can be conducive to the promotion and advancement of their real interests, and true happiness, in time and through eternity. If we are only persuaded (and who can resist the persuasive influence of this amazing display of "the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus, our Lord?") "to fly for refuge to the hope thus set before us," then, however guilty, however unworthy, and "less than the least of all God's mercies," or however deserving of his displeasure, indignation, and wrath; yet may we, with a fixed trust, and unshaken confidence, in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, "come boldly to the throne of grace, and expect, through his merits and intercession, to obtain mercy, and to find grace to help in the time of need," and to the utmost extent of all our necessities.

Connected with such expectations from "the goodness and mercy of the Lord," a genuine and proper trust in him, implies

III,—*A cordial submission to his will and disposal, and acquiescence in the events which he appoints.*

The faith of those who properly trust in God, however strong, is always humble; and however confident, is still reasonable in its expectations.

It does not allow us to think, that we must obtain any temporal object, or realize any particular result of our plans and pursuits, because we may fondly and ardently desire it: Nor doe

it permit us to think of prescribing to God, in what manner or season, he shall give us those desires of hearts, or crown with success those undertakings, which may be in themselves reasonable and proper, and conformable to his will. But reminding us, that "He, in whose hands are all our times," knows infinitely better than we do, "what is good for us all the days of this vain life, which we spend as a shadow;" and assuring us, that "He doth all things well, and makes all things work together for good, to them that love him," it disposes us "to commit our way to the Lord"—"to cast upon him every burden and care," and to resign all our concerns and affairs, plans and hopes, wants and wishes, to the direction and disposal of his unerring wisdom, and most faithful love; satisfied, that then the event will be ordered by Him, as shall be most favorable to the promotion of his glory, in harmony with the advancement of the best and most lasting interests of our being.

Some of the things, thus designed and ordered "to work for our good," may, for the present, appear, in the eye of reason, and to the feelings of nature, extremely doubtful, menacing, painful, and trying: Yet through the dark, perplexing scene, faith looks, with a confident, joyful anticipation, of the best issue. Hence, the believer realizes the precious truth of the word, spoken by the prophet; "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee, because he trusteth in thee." And hence, he feels it to be no less his interest, than his duty, according

to the counsel, which is immediately subjoined, “to continue trusting in the Lord; as in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength,” to defend and uphold him, till, “having done and suffered all the will of God, he shall inherit the promises;” the promises of truth and grace, accomplished to their designed extent on earth, and then fulfilled, completely and for ever, in the glory of heaven.

I observe once more, that a genuine and proper trust in God, includes

IV,—*A careful improvement of all appointed and lawful means, to provide for our own safety, and to promote our own welfare.*

The pretence of trusting in God, while the exertion of our own faculties, or the employment of the proper means within our power, or the performance of the duties enjoined upon us by Divine authority, are carelessly and wilfully neglected, is an unwarranted presumption, by which we may justly apprehend, that we shall incur the displeasure, and the curse, rather than reasonably expect to secure the favor and blessing of God; who has commanded his people, “to work out their own salvation, with fear and trembling, because he worketh in them, both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

When persons are resolved to hazard the salvation of their souls, in a state of impenitence and unbelief, and in the course of a life of ungodliness, unrighteousness, and criminal pleasure; and persuade themselves, that, in the mean time, they are trusting in God, in the hope that he will not be so strict and severe, as to mark their in-

iniquities against them, or to inflict upon them the punishment, which he has denounced against all, who do not repent and believe, and obey the gospel, “they only deceive themselves, with the hope of the hypocrite, which shall perish;” “they are building their house upon the sand, upon which they may lean, but it shall not stand; and though they may attempt to hold it fast, yet shall it not endure.”

And when, in any circumstances of difficulty, distress or danger, with the probable means of relief, deliverance or defence, in their power, they refuse to make use of these, and yet presume to say, “Now will we stand still, and see what God will do for us,” and suppose this to be trusting in God; they only affront his wisdom and goodness, and provoke him, in his righteous displeasure, to leave them to themselves, to suffer the evils which they feel or fear, and to lament their own presumptuous folly, when it may be too late to be remedied.

Let us then, while we profess to make the Lord our trust, and our refuge, commit ourselves to him, with all our interests, temporal and spiritual, private and public, in the faithful improvement of all the lawful means, with which he has furnished us; and in that way of well-doing, which he has prescribed. Then let us, without any painful solicitude, but rather with a cheerful confidence, wait on the Lord, trusting in Him, who governs and guides all his creatures, and all their actions; and who orders, over-rules, and sanctifies all events, in such a manner, that they shall be found

finally, most subservient, perhaps, to the temporal advantage, and most certainly, to the spiritual interests, and eternal happiness, of all who truly love him.

“Them, who thus honor God, he will also honor.” “To them the salvation of God shall be shewn; and they shall glorify his name, by shewing forth the praises of the Lord.”

IMPROVEMENT.

THE observations which have been offered, on *the nature of a genuine and proper trust in God*, though particularly adapted to direct the practice, and to promote the comfort of individuals, in their *personal concerns*, will, at the same time, admit of an easy and useful application to *the state of the community*, in which the affairs of individuals, are, as it were, blended and formed into one common interest.

And may not the instruction and encouragement, furnished by this subject, be justly considered, as now claiming, in a peculiar manner, our attention and improvement, with respect to *the present situation of the great community* to which we belong, as citizens of *the United States*?

The agitation of the public mind, which has been lately produced, by an event, deeply affecting our national character and interests, I need

not now attempt to describe. Who can be so destitute of sensibility, as not to feel it? Surely no AMERICAN heart can refuse to feel that spirit of just indignation, which, as far as opportunity has hitherto permitted, has been so promptly, and so unanimously manifested, in the resolutions and proceedings of our fellow-citizens, of this place, and in other parts of the Union, against the late unprovoked and murderous act of hostility, committed by the commander of one of the ships, belonging to the British navy, upon one of the principal frigates belonging, to the navy of the United States! This hostile act, though immediately directed against one of our public ships of war, inevitably involves, in its nature and consequences, the grossest and most insolent outrage of our *national Sovereignty and Independence*. This unworthy deed* of violence and blood—

* “——At length, a deed, transcending all that we have hitherto seen or suffered, brings the public sensibility to a serious crisis, and our forbearance to a necessary pause. A frigate of the United States, trusting to a state of peace, and leaving her harbor on a distant service, has been surprised and attacked by a British vessel of superior force, one of a squadron then lying in our waters, and covering the transaction, has been disabled from service, with the loss of a number of men, killed and wounded. This enormity, was not only without provocation or justifiable cause, but was committed with the avowed purpose of *taking by force, from a ship of war of the United States, a part of her crew*; and that no circumstance might be wanting to mark its character, it had been previously ascertained, that *the seamen demanded, were native citizens of the United States!*”

This

this contemptuous violation of the established laws and customs of civilized nations, as impolitic, as it was wicked and dishonorable, on the part of those who committed and authorized it, must be felt, like an electric shock, in the bosom of every individual, who loves our country, who cherishes its honor, and resents its wrongs, throughout the millions of inhabitants, which fill the vast extent of our land !

The feelings with which *the whole American people* must be penetrated, by the news of *this indignity offered to our nation*—of this reproachful act of *open hostility*, perpetrated in a state of *acknowledged peace*, which forbade suspicion, and prevented the requisite preparation for repelling and avenging it, have been already strongly expressed, by the very numerous and respectable bodies of our citizens, who have with a most remarkable promptitude, and as if moved by one instantaneous, patriotic impulse, assembled together, to declare their sense of it, and to adopt the measures that appear proper to be pursued, in consequence of it.

This statement, which is presumed to be as correct, as it concise, is taken from the proclamation of the President of the United States, issued at the city of Washington, July 2, 1807—for the purposes of interdicting to all armed vessels, bearing commissions under the government of Great-Britain, the entrance, &c. of the harbors and waters of the United States: and of prohibiting all supplies and aid being furnished to such of them as may enter the said harbors and waters, &c.

In these instances—while such emotions of the heart have been discovered, as might well be expected to be roused in the breast of humanity, on hearing the too well authenticated tidings of unprovoked insult, injury and bloodshed, a noble spirit of patriotism, has been, at the same time displayed, worthy of *Americâns, determined to vindicate and maintain, at all hazards, those precious rights, and that glorious Independence*, which, by the favor of Providence, they had established, at the expense of so many privations and distresses, of so much toil, and suffering, and blood, as marked the tedious, eventful years of their arduous revolutionary war.

And such a manifestation of this patriotic spirit, at once ardent, temperate, and firm, and glowing in the breast of every good citizen, appears to be highly proper and important at the present crisis; as it tends to absorb, and seems already to have completely absorbed, the subordinate views and contentions of political parties, in a much nobler zeal, and in united efforts for supporting the great cause of our common country, with which the most valuable temporal interests of every one must stand or fall:—As it may serve to convince our enemies, that they must not expect always to triumph, on the ground of our patience, and forbearance, and love of peace, or still to multiply their insults and injuries, at their own pleasure, with impunity:—And as it is well adapted to strengthen the hands of our government, in pursuing the proper course for obtaining ample redress from those, from whom we have suffered grievous wrong.

That our government may be led, by “the wisdom which is from above, and which is profitable to direct,” to adopt for this important purpose, the measures which shall be at once prudent and just, dignified and energetic, should be our earnest prayer, as it is our fond hope. And we would, at the same time, indulge the hope, that the government, by whose agents this flagrant act of hostility has been committed, may be induced to make that reparation for the injury, which justice demands, and which the equity and honor of our nation, may with propriety accept as satisfactory; and which may serve to establish the peace of our country on a more solid basis, and to strengthen our confidence of its being hereafter more respected by those, who have so often, and in so many ways, shewn the disposition to violate it, and bring it into danger. This we may reasonably hope, if we may with reason believe, that the foreign government, with whom this solemn business is to be transacted and settled, is influenced by the principles of a sound morality, or even by the dictates of an enlightened policy;—if we may consider it as actuated by a rational self-love, which would not permit it wilfully, and by unprovoked violence, to drive away, perhaps for ever, its best customer from its door;—or wantonly to fix every remaining, wavering friend, as a decided and unalterable enemy;—or, with the rashness and arrogance of infatuation itself, to add another powerful nation, to the host of mighty nations, with which it is already contending, perhaps for its own existence.

But still we must remember, my friends, that the hearts of kings and rulers, as well as of all other men, are in the hands of Him, who is the supreme Governor among the nations; and that He may, at his pleasure, turn the counsels of politicians, of cabinets, and of senates, into foolishness, when he designs to punish the guilty nations, or to chastise an ungrateful people, by whom his mercies have been criminally abused.

And that *we, as a people, deserve chastisement*, none will pretend to question, who seriously compare, with the favors of Heaven, by which we have been distinguished, the returns which we have made for the manifold, and great, and precious benefits of our God.

Raised by his good hand, and by a series of most wonderful and remarkable dispensations of his providence, to an honorable rank among the nations of the earth;—blessed with a government and laws, founded on the great principles of equal right, and the most rational liberty;—favored with a long continuance of peace, and with a rich abundance, not only of the necessaries, but of the conveniences and luxuries of life, produced by a widely extended and prosperous commerce, and by a successful cultivation of a kindly soil, and of the most useful arts and sciences;—and “exalted even unto heaven,” by the light and privileges of the gospel of God our Saviour;—we have indeed been “made to ride on the high places of the earth,” and to us may be applied, the language in which Moses, speaking of Israel, the ancient chosen and beloved people of

the Lord, "What nation is there so great, who hath God so nigh unto them, as the Lord our God is, in all things that we call upon him for?"

But what has been our conduct towards him? Is it not justly described in the language used by Nehemiah, confessing the sins of that same highly favored people?—"Nevertheless, they were disobedient, and rebelled against thee, and wrought great provocations."

As in Israel indeed, in a time of extreme degeneracy, the Lord had reserved to himself some thousands, who had not joined in the general apostacy, from his pure and holy worship and service, to the abominations of idolatry; so among us, he has reserved, in like manner, a considerable number (which from time to time, has been happily increased, in various parts of our land) of those who have continued to worship, serve, and honor him, and to support his cause, with a laudable zeal, and acceptable fidelity; while among the vast majority around them, "iniquity has greatly abounded." Small however, appears to have been the number of those, who have courageously rallied round the standard of *the Cross*, and faithfully adhered to the worship and service of the God of their salvation, and of their mercies—with those who have shewn themselves to be the votaries of *Mammon*, and "lovers of pleasure, rather than lovers of God." Too many, alas! are found among us, who, with a hardened, presumptuous heart of unbelief, reject the revelation of the will and grace of God, with which he has favored us in his word! Too many, also, there are, who, while they pro-

self a speculative faith in divine revelation, habitually neglect the institutions of the gospel, and of the sanctuary ; who irreligiously pervert the solemn, delightful season of the sabbath, from its proper, sacred uses, to the purposes of worldly business and amusements, of licentious festivity and pleasure ; and instead of devoutly reverencing, impiously profane “ *this glorious and fearful name, THE LORD THY GOD !*” How many, too, impelled by the love of money, are, with determined purpose, and unabating ardor, pursuing the acquisition of riches ; not solicitous to obtain them always by right, but frequently sacrificing conscience, honor, justice, and humanity, to the sordid desire of gain !

And, who can estimate the number of those, who, instead of consecrating their possessions, with themselves, to the service and honor of their Divine Benefactor, are prodigally wasting their money, their time, their health, and all their noble powers of reason, and capacities, and advantages for religious improvement, for promoting the welfare of the community, and securing their own immortal happiness, in the scenes of frivolous amusement, and pernicious dissipation, in the low and criminal indulgence of appetite and passion, and in the practice of vices, as mischievous to society, as they are ruinous to the soul !

When we seriously consider the lamentable prevalence of these manifold impieties and immoralities, may we not justly fear, that to our country the Lord speaks, in the alarming language which he addressed by the prophet Jeremiah, to

his ancient guilty people ; “ Shall I not visit for these things, saith the Lord ; and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this ? ”

Has he not indeed already, at different times, and in various ways, visited us with his righteous judgments ? Has he not particularly, severely scourged our principal cities, with mortal disease, by which the inhabitants have been, in great numbers, swept down to the grave, “ as with a flood ? ” And has he not, also, often frustrated the favorite and fairest hopes of the mariner, the merchant, and the planter, by tremendous, desolating storms ; and by formidable hosts of destructive reptiles and insects, which, as if purposely “ to stain the pride of all human glory, and to bring into contempt all the honorable of the earth,” with all the boasted self-sufficiency of man, are called “ the great armies of the Lord of Hosts ! ”

But when “ the Lord’s hand has been thus lifted up,” has it been duly seen or acknowledged ? Or has “ the voice of his chastising rod been heard ” with becoming attention and reverence, as calling to repentance, to reformation, and obedience ? “ Were not our transgressions still multiplied before the Lord ? ” and did not our “ continued and increasing ” sins testify against us, that “ when these judgments of the Lord were in our land, the inhabitants thereof did not generally learn righteousness ! ”

Hence there seems to be the stronger ground for the apprehension, that the Lord, our offended God, may at length be provoked to visit us with *the more awful scourge of WAR.*

With this surely, he might most righteously chastise a people, who have so little acknowledged and glorified, and so greatly dishonored the God of their mercies, in the enjoyment of the high privileges, and most desirable blessings, by which they have been so long distinguished, in a state of peace.

But, though he may be pleased thus to *chastise us*, and he has certainly a right to chastise us, by whatever instrumentality he may choose, yet may we, with humble confidence, encourage the hope, that it will be *in mercy*, and *in measure*, and *not to our destruction*.

So far as the success of the war, with which we seem now to be threatened, may be considered as depending on human agency and means, we have certainly no cause to fear the result. With a redoubled population, with resources increased in a still greater proportion, and with the constitution of our national government, now for a length of time established in the hearts of the people, and well adapted to call forth all their energies, in their country's cause, on those just and equal principles, which naturally promise the greatest promptness, cordiality, and efficacy to their united exertions;—what shadow of ground can appear, even to the most timid or cautious, for the apprehension that we should *now* fall in the contest with a power, against which, in the *infancy of our nation*, and under disadvantages, so many and so formidable, that nothing but the heaven-inspired love of liberty and of our country, could have animated us to

encounter them, our struggle for our just and precious rights, though indeed arduous, and sometimes doubtful, was yet, in the event, completely successful !

But, let it be remembered, that our reliance is not to be placed on *the arm of flesh*. While exerting to the utmost our own powers—while making the best use of all the lawful and promising means which we can command, “*our trust must be in the Lord alone, from whom must come our help, and our salvation.*”

And has he not, in his *past favors* to our country, given us *the pleasing, the assuring pledges of his continued favor and protection?*

“His good hand upon us”—“his strong, and mighty, and glorious arm, which always getteth the victory, and bringeth salvation” to those whom he pleases to favor, has been scarcely, if at all, less evidently displayed, in raising *us* from the smallest and feeblest beginnings, to our present great numbers, strength, and prosperity, than it was in delivering *the Israelites* from their servile, oppressed, and afflicted state in Egypt—conducting them through the formidable difficulties and terrors of the wilderness, and advancing them to that eminence in wealth, power, and honor, which they at length enjoyed, in their own land, “the glory of all lands.” And having “shewed us all these things,” and “done such great things for us,” is it to be believed that he can now “be pleased to kill us,” or to deliver us into the hands of any of our enemies that would most willingly, “if the power were only given them from above,”

destroy our national existence, or check our growing greatness, or lessen our increasing weight and consequence in the scale of nations : *Now*, when we have, as it were, but just begun to taste the fruits of his paternal goodness—the benefits of his bountiful hand : *Now*, when prospects are opening before us, the most pleasing and animating, and daily brightening, and in every point of view, adapted to inspire the belief, or to strengthen the persuasion, that *our country* has been destined, in the wise and gracious counsels of Heaven, *to be a more extended and lasting scene of human happiness*, under the benign influence of the principles of *rational liberty*, and of *pure and undefiled religion*, even the holy and benevolent religion of the Gospel, *than has ever yet been realized on earth !*

No ! No ! The supposition cannot for a moment be admitted, by any intelligent, reflecting mind, that humbly and devoutly consults the word of God, and studies the ways of Providence ; and that has in any desirable measure, learned, on the principles of scripture, reason, and experience, *how to estimate the future by the past.*

For our good, our offended Divine Benefactor, may see it necessary to correct and afflict us ; for the promotion of the salvation, peace, and happiness of our souls, and for our great benefit, even in a political view, he may be pleased to scourge us for a time, *even with the distressing calamities of WAR* ; unless the grounds of his controversy with us, should be speedily removed, by our humiliation, repentance, and reformation. But when we behold the menacing aspect of his Pro-

vidence, “if we turn to Him, whose hand seems to be lifted up to smite us;” or if, when we are in any measure chastised by his righteous judgments, we “humble ourselves under his mighty hand,” and with penitent hearts “accept the merited punishment of our iniquity”—then will he, assuredly, be still “favorable to our land,” he will “forgive the iniquity of the people, and take away all his wrath”—“he will shew us his mercy, and grant us his salvation,” and “in due time exalt us” high in honor. And then, the enemy, that was perhaps ready to say, “My lust shall be satisfied upon them, I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them”—disappointed in his plans and expectations, shall *see our triumph*, “*and be ashamed of his envy* at the people, whom the Lord compasses about with his favor, as with a shield.”

Let us then, my dear brethren and friends, with penitence, confession, and prayer, earnestly beseech “the Lord our God, who is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from us, if we return unto him,” that he may be pleased “to turn us unto himself, and to cause his anger towards us, to cease. Let us, through the mediation of his dear Son, “whom he heareth always,” daily present our fervent supplications, at the “throne of grace,” humbly and importunately entreating “the Lord our God, to whom belong mercies, and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him,” to avert from us the dire calamities of WAR, which we do not wilfully provoke, or rashly and confidently court, but

which we sincerely deprecate and deplore ; and to deliver us from the mischievous designs of every secret or open enemy, and from every other evil, which for our sins, we may have too much reason to fear.

Or, if it shall appear to be the will of God, that *WAR cannot be much longer avoided* by us, without *national dishonor, and other consequences still worse* than the usual calamities of war, then let us be resolved and prepared to “quit ourselves like men, and be strong,” in our country’s cause. Rising superior to our local attachments and prejudices, and burying in eternal oblivion, that spirit of party, which, in the excess to which it has been indulged, and the virulence with which it has been expressed, had become a reproach and a curse to our country, and a ground of exultation and hope to our enemies :—let us now cordially embrace, and henceforth treat each other as fellow-citizens, and brethren of the same great family ; and, with *united hearts and hands*, let us co-operate in every wise and energetic measure, that the solemn, momentous occasion demands, for *supporting that great standard of our liberties, the constitution of our national government, and for maintaining inviolate, the sovereignty of our nation.*

Thus humbled, penitent, and reformed ;—and thus united and determined, let us, with the calmness and dignity of genuine fortitude, *meet the crisis, and await the event.* For then we may well hope, that *they who will be for us, will be more and better than those who may be against us ;*

then may we, with good reason expect, that while *the many hundreds of thousands of our citizens* “who draw the sword,” will be girded with courage, as well as with their armor, for the field, and *all the righteous in the land* will be found engaged in *praying for their safety and success*; we shall have with us, also, *the hearts and the prayers* of no small proportion of the wise and the good, the pious and the worthy, the industrious and the oppressed, *of the very nation, with whose government we shall be contending* for those rights, which must be ever dear to every virtuous heart. And what is of unspeakably greater importance, we may then cherish the humble, confident persuasion, *that the Lord of Hosts himself will be on our side*, to maintain the righteous cause, in which we shall be engaged; to avenge the wrongs, which we have suffered; to deliver us from the great and lasting evils, with which we are menaced; and to give us cause, in due time, for saying to our presumptuous adversaries, “As for you, ye meant evil against us, but our God meant it unto good, as it is this day, to save much people alive,” “and to encrease them, more and more, even them, and their children.”

Thus feeling, resolving, and acting for ourselves; and for our country, we may surely venture to “encourage ourselves in the Lord our God,” and thus becoming “strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might,” we shall then find, to our unspeakable consolation and advantage, that

“They who trust in the Lord, shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.”

A M E N !