

MERCY REMEMBERED IN WRATH.

---

A

S E R M O N,

THE SUBSTANCE OF WHICH WAS PREACHED ON

THE 19th OF FEBRUARY, 1795,

OBSERVED THROUGHOUT THE UNITED

S T A T E S,

AS A DAY

OF THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER.

---

By JOHN M. MASON, *h*

PASTOR OF THE SCOTCH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,  
IN THE CITY OF NEW-YORK.

---

---

NEW-YORK:

PRINTED BY J. BUEL, N<sup>o</sup> 152, WATER-STREET,  
M, DCC, XCV.



---

A Sermon, &c.

PSALM CIII. 10.

*He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor  
rewarded us according to our Iniquities.*

MY BRETHREN,

**T**HE Providence of God, which threatened the speedy punishment of our crimes, lately called us to humble ourselves under his mighty hand. We came to his sanctuary in the character of penitents; we professed to afflict our souls for the evil we had done in his sight; we addressed his throne in the language of contrition; we implored respice; we implored pardon. Abstinence from bodily food, in the self-denial of fasting, we employed as the symbol of inward bitterness, and as an aid in the mortification of sin.

B

For purposes of a different nature do we this day tread the courts of the most High. "The Oil of Joy" succeeds to "Mourning;" and "the garment of praise" to "the spirit of heaviness." We come to "offer unto God thanksgiving:" We come to celebrate his recent benefits: We come to kindle on the altar of common gratitude, the mingled incense of our praise.

But where, may some ask, where is the propriety of bringing, at this time, "the sacrifices of joyfulness?" Is Jehovah's controversy with our guilty land completely removed? Is "his anger turned away, and his hand stretched out" no longer? Have our citizens, "breaking off their sins by repentance, returned to him from whom they have deeply revolted"? From his Judgments which are abroad in the earth, do they appear to have learned righteousness? And has the spirit of grace shed down the large effusion of his quickening and purifying influence? Would to God, my brethren, that facts could warrant a prompt and exulting affirmative. But truth obliges us to confess, with blushes, that we have little reason to boast of rectified principle, and new obedience. We are still a "sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters; we have forsaken the Lord; we have provoked the Holy



One of Israel to anger; we have gone away backward.\*" "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed.†" But this cannot supersede the necessity, nor lessen the propriety, of thanksgiving. It is rather one of the most cogent reasons for singing aloud of his mercy. Besides, we are to consider, that within a short time, the procedure of holy providence, contrary to our most distressing fears, hath, in matters intimately affecting our happiness, assumed a more favourable aspect. Therefore, although we are not authorized to conclude that the Lord is pacified towards us for all that we have done; yet we may, and ought to utter abundantly the memory of his goodness; we may, and ought to thank him, and thank him publicly, that "*he hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.*"

The text, which significantly describes our condition, asserts, that God hath not treated us according to our desert; and strongly implies that this dispensation is replete with singular kindness—subjects which lead to discussion profitable in itself, and obviously corresponding with the design of this day.

I. Let us endeavour to be deeply impressed with the *fact*, that the Lord hath not dealt with us

\* Isaiah i. 4.

† Lam. iii. 22.

after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our to our iniquities.

How numerous our sins are: how black their atrocity: how peculiar and malignant their aggravations: it is neither my intention, nor my business to state. This would lead us again over the ground of which, not long ago, we had occasion to take a sorrowful review. That we have merited those varied plagues by which the Eternal scourges a rebellious and stiff-necked people, we may not deny, for we have already confessed. The symptoms of their approach startled the most thoughtless; our hearts throbbed with painful apprehension; and we hastened to the mercy-seat to deprecate those evils of which even the remote appearance filled us with terror. That he *hath* had compassion; that in wrath he *hath* remembered mercy, we are all witnesses; for we all are living monuments of his forbearance. The gathering darkness hath not been permitted to concentrate, and pour down, its tempest. It hath ceased, in part, to overcloud our sky; and, in some degree at least, hath yielded to brighter prospects.

Without dwelling minutely on that kind interposition which hath checked the ravages of disease, hath calmed the tumult of the presaging breast, and recalled to languishing multi-

tudes the glow and the vigours of health.—  
 Without expatiating on the successes which  
 have attended an enterprize against the Western  
 foe : Successes that make some amends for the dis-  
 honor and loss of former defeats ; and encourage  
 us to hope for a solid and permanent peace, which  
 may prevent the effusion of blood hereafter.—  
 Without insisting on any of those things which,  
 however estimable, occupy a middle or inferior  
 place in the scale of national benefit, allow me to  
 direct your attention to two distinguishing blessings  
 —Preservation from foreign war, and Deliverance  
 from domestic discord.

It is a mysterious arrangement of the govern-  
 ment of God, by which he makes one sin the  
 corrective and the punishment of another. If na-  
 tion rise against nation, and kingdom against  
 kingdom—If dissensions grow into animosities ;  
 and animosities, inflamed by mutual irritation,  
 break out into open and destructive hostility ;  
 let it not be supposed that such deplorable events  
 proceed merely from the jarring interests, and jar-  
 ring passions, of men. Ambition of power ; the fas-  
 cinations of grandeur ; or the lust of fame, often set  
 the world on fire, and swell the huge catalogue of  
 human miseries. “ Wars and fightings come from  
 our lusts.” But in these disasters a higher agency  
 is concerned. God, who “sitteth upon the floods,”

God, "whose kingdom ruleth over all;" God, who causeth even "the wrath of man to praise him," marks out the path of the warrior; selects the objects of his prowess, and fixes the bounds of his triumph. *His* design may be evil: *His* aggressions unprovoked, and, from *him*, unmerited, by those against whom they are directed; every step of *his* procedure may be scored with crimes; and yet God, unimpeachably righteous, brings light out of this darkness; by such evil instruments accomplishes wise, and good, and holy ends: and when he has accomplished them, he visits the iniquities of the instruments themselves, and breaks them to pieces with his rod of iron. This truth is painted in strong colours by the Prophet Isaiah; "O Assyrian, the rod of mine anger, "and the staff in their hand is mine indignation, "I will send him against an hypocritical nation, "and against the people of my wrath will I give "him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the "prey, and to tread them down like the mire of "the streets. Howbeit, he meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so; but it is in his "heart to destroy and cut off nations not a few.— "Wherefore, it shall come to pass, that when the "Lord hath performed his whole work upon "Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish



" the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Affy-  
 " ria, and the glory of his high looks. For he  
 " faith, ' By the strength of my hand I have  
 " done it, and by my wisdom; for I am prudent:  
 " and I have removed the bounds of the people,  
 " and I have put down the inhabitants like a  
 " valiant man. And my hand hath found, as a  
 " nest, the riches of the people: and as one ga-  
 " thereth eggs that are left, have I gathered all  
 " the earth, and there was none that moved the  
 " wing, or opened the mouth, or peeped.' Shall  
 " the axe boast itself against him that heweth there-  
 " with? Or shall the saw magnify itself against  
 " him that shaketh it? as if the rod should shake  
 " itself against them that lift it up, or as if the  
 " staff should lift up itself as if it were no wood.  
 " Therefore shall the Lord, the Lord of Hosts,  
 " send among his fat ones, leanness; and under  
 " his glory he shall kindle a burning like the  
 " burning of a fire,—and it shall burn and de-  
 " vour his thorns and his briars in one day."\*

This is one of those "terrible things in righte-  
 ousness," by which, when he "cometh forth  
 out of his place," "God punishes the inhabi-  
 tants of the earth." Thus sinners become to  
 each other angels of cursing; and thus he de-

\* Isaiah x. 7—17.

legates one guilty nation, as ministers of his quarrel to another; and sends them to execute his threatenings upon their brethren in transgression. The sword never comes to devour, but when he appoints it; for every fatal thrust, it hath his high commission; and with the blood which rushes through the portals of death, does he write the crimson history of his wrath.

Brethren, need I remind you, that this dreadful plague was at our doors? Have ye forgotten the chilling anticipations which lately obtruded themselves, unfought, on your minds? Already did the frenzied imagination re-display those scenes of horror of which the remembrance will live with our memories! Already did we hear the burst of hostile thunder; already did we see our temples desolated; our dwellings sinking in the flames, and our families fugitives from the burning ruin!

But the storm has blown over, and done no harm. The sound of alarm, retreating from our shore, grew fainter and fainter, till it expired on the listening ear. No angry banner waves in our eye; no cruel foe ravages our possessions. All is serene; all secure. This day is witness that peace dwells in our land, and enjoys the quiet

exercise of her confirmed reign. Give glory to him who hath commanded the deliverance ! “ O blefs our God, ye people, and make the voice of *his* praise to be heard ; who holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.”\*

Tremendous as foreign war is, it is yet preferable to domestic discord. Internal union is the bond of social strength. When mutual confidence hath fled ; and coldness, and jealousies, and opposition come in its place ; when professed anxiety for the public welfare, degenerates into the strife of partial policies ; and unanimity of measures gives way to the violence of faction, the firmest sinews of the national energy are cut, and the richest veins of national prosperity, sluiced.

It was a serious thing, my brethren, for our country, to see, in a neighboring State, four large counties, including great numbers of inhabitants, throw off submission to the law, and rise in the contumacy of revolt. The season at which this ominous event happened, was peculiarly unfavorable. Pressed on one side with savage depredations ; vexed, on another, with daring and shameless encroachment ; fretted and soured

\* Psalm lxvi. 8—9.

with maritime insult and plunder; torn, at the same time, with intestine feud; and ill provided with the means of defence, we invited the assaults of any adversary who was in a condition to improve our disunion and perplexity. Nor was it easy to calculate what would be the extent of the calamity, or what its issue. Men of similar habits, and in similar circumstances, readily unite in similar undertakings. Cherished by the wicked assiduity of those sons of Belial, who had been industrious in creating it, the dissention, spreading like a flame through the dried leaves of autumn, might have divided the children of America, not into the parties of opinion, but into the armies of civil war. Despots would have exulted in this consequence; as it would have ruined the fairest experiment which the sun ever beheld, of a government reared on the equal rights of men. But, to their confusion, and our triumph, the tumult has subsided. The temperate, yet firm; the vigorous, yet unbloody manner in which this rebellion was subdued, is fraught with delight to ourselves; and furnishes an useful lesson to mankind. It is the victory of principle over passion, of order over confusion, of laws over licentiousness.

Such a joyful issue of such an afflictive commotion, has filled united America with ad-



miration and applause. To those patriots who, to enforce the sovereignty of the law, exchanged the comforts of domestic life for the rigors of military service, the tribute due to their spirited exertion, is cheerfully paid. Above all, our eyes involuntarily fasten on **THAT MAN**, whose timely application of the severe, but salutary discipline intrusted to his prudence, was the happy mean of restoring peace.—On **THAT MAN**, whom God hath honored to be the instrument of countless blessings to this land; whose name will live, and whose memory will be revered, when the blighting eye of malignity is sealed up in darkness; and the tongue of calumny fettered with the irons of death.

The facts now mentioned are luminous events, which, at present, absorb in their lustre all other political incidents relating to us. They cannot but fix, in astonishment, the gaze of the most careless; and impress the hearts of the most hardened. How powerful obligations to gratitude to our God, are created by such benefits, will appear from contemplating the *singular mercy of that providential dispensation from which they flowed*. The illustration of this mercy is the

II. Second branch of our subject.

Sources of illustration are numerous and fruitful—You will all acknowledge in the

1. place, *The divine clemency which has distinguished us from other nations.*

Several countries on the Eastern shores of the Atlantic, have scarcely time to breathe, much less to recruit, from the wounds and sufferings of one war, before they are precipitated into another. It is a foul stain on the civilization of Europe, as well as an awful judgment for her sins, that she is almost continually weltering in blood. Her infatuated sons fly to arms, and slaughter each other, as the caprice or the politics of their tyrants ordain. Besides two rash and formidable preparations\* which began in bravado, and ended in expence; the present† are two of six‡ wars which,

\* The Russian and Spanish armaments in Britain. The former of which was equipped to aid the Turks against Russia, and the latter, to fight the Spaniards for the privilege of killing “whales in the South Seas, and wild cats at Nootka Sound.”

† The war of France against the combined Powers; and of Poland against Russia and Prussia.

‡ In addition to the wars mentioned in the preceding note, there have been

1. The war of Sweden with Russia. 2. That of Russia and the Emperor with the Turks. 3. That of the Emperor with the Netherlands. 4. That of Poland and Russia, in 1792—all within the short space of eight years; viz. from 1786 to 1794! besides the troubles in Holland, and some other disorders of less importance.

more generally or partially, have flooded their curses on Europe, in less than ten years. Wars, all of them wicked; most of them mad; and none of them necessary. At this moment, some of the fairest fields that ever rejoiced the eye, or repaid the labour, of man, instead of being cultivated by the husbandman and the vine-dresser, are trodden down by the martial steed, and strewed with the bodies of the slain. "Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He cuts off the spirit of princes: He is terrible to the kings of the earth."\*

How preferable, my brethren, is our condition? How gentle the dispensations of God towards us? It is now above one hundred and sixty years since the chief settlement of this country; and, excepting Indian hostilities on the frontier, we have not been engaged in war more than three or four times at farthest; and have never been compelled to it, but either by foreign connection, or the rigor of foreign exaction. Why do we prosper whilst other lands are covered with desolation? Why does not the sword thin our families, and hew down our gallant youth, their parents' pride, and their country's hope? Why are we permitted to till our grounds without molestation, and to eat the fruit of our industry?

\* Psalm xlvi. 2: lxxvi. 12.

Why, through the medium of commerce, to keep up an amicable and lucrative intercourse with distant places? Why to foster the arts of peace, which refine the manners, and improve the mind? Why to assemble, without interruption or fear, in the house of God; to sing his praises, to supplicate his favor, to learn the words of everlasting life? Is it because we are better than others? No, in no wise. We merit a harsher lot: But the Lord hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities.—It is undeserved mercy; therefore, Hallelu-Jah!

2. The *imminent danger* in which we lately were, highly exalts the mercy of our deliverance.

However imagination might depict the horrors of war, before they had a real existence; yet the strong apprehension of their approach was not chimerical: Affairs, both abroad and at home were fast verging to a dreadful crisis. Various indignities and spoliations, by land and sea; unprovoked, in the midst of painful exertions to maintain our tranquility, bespoke, too evidently, designs unfriendly to our happiness. It is an agreeable dream of benevolence to suppose that if the plans of confederated oppression had succeeded, we should have been unmolested. When we consider the grudge



entertained by most of the establishments of the old world against these States, for breaking the political spell, by which, for ages, man had been enchanted; and shewing him what he *is*, and what he *ought to be*, in society; it is a more probable conjecture, that the conquerors, flushed with victory, would have turned their arms hither; and endeavored, by one mighty effort, to crush the nursery of freedom, and extirpate from the globe its generous plants.

Connectively with symptoms of disaffection abroad, we must view the unruly and turbulent dispositions of many at home. In every community there are multitudes who have a much greater share of good intention than discernment. Their honest credulity, unguided by judgment and untempered with caution, draws them into the plots of others whose less upright principles take an eager advantage of their simplicity. An appeal to popular prejudice, calculated to inflame popular passion, is an engine which craft always employs, and generally, and effectual, for enlisting both under the banners of intrigue. There will ever be some, in all parts of the world, to whom, from natural unhappiness of mind, or from less venial causes, order will be imprisonment, and peace a torture. Some who sicken to see the gallant vessel riding securely at anchor, or sitting before the favoring

gale; and who pray for an adverse blast to dash her on the reef, that while the crew perish in the waters, they may pillage the wreck. The mischievous projects of such as these, aided by the imprudent zeal of others, are sufficient, in ordinary cases, to force almost any nation into war. And when we add to their machinations the external exasperating treatment which gave union to their counsels, and color to their pretents, it seems little short of a miracle that we have escaped. We stand astonished at the precipice over which we were nearly hurried—a precipice that would have plunged us into evils for which their immediate authors could never have atoned: No, not though they wept in sackcloth the remainder of their lives. No, not though their heads were waters, and their eyes fountains of tears; tears streaming in perpetual succession, and every drop imbittered with the gall of heart-wringing penitence. It was God's unspeakable mercy that interfered to save us: and the greater our danger, the more beneficent was the interference; and the more precious the salvation. Surely he hath not dealt with us after our sins.—Therefore, again Hallelu-Jah!

3. The *complicated evils which attend war*, whether foreign or domestic, shew, in an amiable and affecting light, the mercy which has prevent-

ed them. These evils, both political and moral, it would require a volume fully to enumerate and to display. Nor, were it possible, would it be improper here to unfold them. I might call your attention to its pernicious influence on the population of your country, not only by increasing the difficulty of comfortable subsistence, but by the shocking waste it occasions of human life.—I might remind you, (for you would not demand proof) that it breaks up the happiest arrangements of society—that it arrests the progress of the arts—that it retards and ruins the improvements of science—that it weakens, and often destroys, the efforts of commercial, manufacturing, and agricultural genius—that it creates perplexing revolutions in the state of property—that it impedes, if it does not frustrate, the regular administration of civil and criminal justice—that it frequently subjects many of the citizens to the stern jurisdiction, and the summary proceedings, of martial law—that while it puts a stop to national improvement, it dries up the ordinary streams of national resource—that it oppresses the community with odious, but necessary exactions, in order to maintain their military establishments, and give energy to their hostile operations—and that it generally entails upon them

a burden which the wisdom and exertion of ages may be unable to throw off.

The moral evils which spring from war, are neither fewer nor less baneful than the political. As it nurtures all the fierce and violent passions, it wrests from society the benefit of many advances in civilization, and drives it, in a retrograde motion, back towards barbarism. By interrupting the quiet pursuit of enlarged and generous education, it keeps the young in ignorance, and withholds from them the means of respectability and usefulness. In hindering general and uniform attendance on the social worship of God, it suspends the benign influence of the Christian sabbath—relaxes the bonds of religious duty—deadens the acute sensibilities of conscience—and tends to subvert the steady dominion of moral principle. Standing armies, moreover, and navies are seminaries of vice. There are some examples, glorious examples, of men who hold fast their integrity even here. But in general the predominance of iniquity is so great, that the virtue of most is quickly contaminated, and blended with the common mass of corruption. Here the profligate and profane tutor each other in the arts of impiety and debauch. Infrequency of pure example lessens its



efficacy ; while freedom from pious restraint gives the rein to the more worthless propensions of the heart. Wickedness generates infidelity, and infidelity emboldens wickedness. Hence, as from a root, unbelief in speculation, and immorality in practice, are propagated in every direction, and scatter their poison to a prodigious extent. Besides all this ; with men who are accustomed to works of death, the life of man loses its value. And this is one of the chief causes of that inexcusable, that atrocious, that detestable crime, the murder of single combat—a crime which bids equal defiance to laws, human and divine ; and which spills the blood of a friend, to maintain a point of frivolous honor, or to gratify the impulse of diabolical revenge. To add no more ; an army is almost as dangerous when disbanded, as it is expensive and troublesome when organized. Men who live in idleness when they are not called to the activity of military duty ; who are provided for without any thought of their own ; who have acquired habits of plunder as well as of sloth ; can with difficulty apply to laborious occupations. These render us unsafe in the midst of prosperity : These furnish the street, with thieves ; the high-way with robbers ; and the dungeon with criminals. It is the ignominy of not a few who escape the perils of the

field, to fall under the stroke of the executioner; and the laurels which the soldier won, are entwined by the ruffian round his gibbet.\*

Such are some of the evils common to all wars; but war among brethren has peculiar miseries. Experience, that faithful monitor, had shewn that the wounds inflicted by civil war are far deeper, and of more difficult cure, than any that can be received from the hand of foreign violence. The murderous tempers which, in other wars, are indulged; in this, are wrought up to the height of fury. Resentments are more keen, revenge more implacable, and hatred more lasting. The aggressor is more injurious; and the injured more unforgiving. Amidst mutual reproaches and accusations of violating the most sacred ties, they appear to each other wretches unworthy of esteem, and incapable of faith. Reconciliation is hard to be effected; and when effected, is scarcely ever sincere. The body politic may, indeed, reassume its healthful complexion; but the poison, rankling within, is ready to burst out with renewed violence: for we find, in fact, that when men have once broken the cords of amity, they are easily impelled to repeat

\* From this general censure, the body of the late revolutionary army of America, are entitled to an honorable exception.

the sacrilege. It is, moreover, a melancholy reflection, that it makes little difference to the community at large, how the quarrels of its contending parties are decided. Whoever is victorious, or whoever is vanquished, all suffer. While they struggle against each other, they rend the vital system by which all are nourished; and the triumph of any over the rest, is but the success of a mad conspiracy against themselves. Nor does the mischief end here. In silent ambush the common foe marks the origin of disunion, its progress, and its consequences. He patiently waits for the moment of opportunity; and when the combatants, exhausted and fainting, are incapable of resistance, he springs from his concealment, and seizes them for his prey. We cannot be sufficiently thankful, that the mercy of God, in keeping the great body of our citizens united, has kept us from self-procured ruin.

4. The divine goodness, which to-day we celebrate, is rendered still more affecting, *by contrasting it with our own stubborn and rebellious conduct.*

In the course of his providence, God has given us "line upon line, and precept upon precept;"

but line upon line, and precept upon precept, were in vain. Alternate judgment and love, neither awed into submission, nor allured to penitence? Hardened in transgression, we persisted to provoke him; to defy his threatenings, and trample on his bounties. Nor have we any reason to believe that his former dispensations, whether of terror or of joy, have been really sanctified. Guilty, but not abashed; afflicted, but not reformed; neither humbled by chastisement, nor softened by kindness, we were entitled to no favor at the hand of God. Pregnant with great futurities, the phænomena of his providence bid us to prepare for their developement; and each succeeding day, bringing with it new discouragements, led us to contemplate an issue as mournful as it was near. But while at a distance the thunder rolled: while our Heavens blackened, and the woe-fraught clouds stretched over our heads: while our citizens, some in trembling, and others, in sullen suspense, were expecting their fate, God—for surely it was the work of no created wisdom or power—God sent help from his holy hill. The arm of vengeance, raised to hurl its wrathful bolt, he suddenly arrested. Through the opening gloom, the light of his deliverance beamed; and so brilliant was the interposition, that



nothing but Atheistic impiety could forbear exclaiming, "This salvation is from the Lord!" Towards other nations he hath exercised less patience. Their sin, in itself, was no greater than our own; their means of knowledge were inferior; nor were they so often admonished with solemn and pointed rebuke; yet they have perished by the frown of the Eternal, and their memorial is blotted from under heaven. But *we* are spared, are protected, are prospered! Americans, the lenity is divine! Because the Lord delighteth to do us good, is he thus indulgent. He prevents us with his mercies. He surrounds us with his compassions: He loads us with his benefits. "Nay," said his repleving sentence, "slay them not. Let grace be magnified in their preservation. Though they have richly merited the punishment which hangs over them, and merited a thousand fold more; though they have hitherto set at nought my instruction; let the dispensation of love heap coals of fire upon their heads."—My brethren, that heart which is not, in any degree, melted by such goodness, must lie under the curse of triple hardness; and if it have no influence in leading to repentance, every possible excuse will be taken from us; and when God arises to judgment, we

will stand, without an extenuating plea, before the bar of his righteousness.

Finally, by the continuance of peace, *numbers have access to the privileges of the gospel, who, otherwise, would not only have been deprived of them, but would have fallen a sacrifice to the sword of war*: And this is a display of the mercy of God which, on the present occasion, we may not overlook.

A sinner receives a boon for which he cannot be sufficiently thankful, when he is permitted to have "a nail in God's holy place," and to attend on the ministrations of life: when his days are lengthened out in the enjoyment of those precious means by which pardon is communicated to the guilty, and purity infused into the vile: by which the slaves of Satan are made Christ's free men; and felons of the pit, constituted citizens of heaven, and heirs of God. Had the removal of providential restraint left us as ready to wage war, as the intemperance of some, and the wickedness of others, were to urge it, many who now worship in the house of prayer, would have been numbered with the dead. Many to whom the redemption of the blessed Jesus, and all the glories of

his covenant, are freely offered, would have been this day writhing in the place of torment—Unprepared to die, multitudes would have gone to death; and in one hour, been swept, by hundreds, into the world of spirits; all their hopes of mercy blasted, and their immortal souls undone forever.

AND Now, my brethren, since “the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad,” how shall we express our gratitude? What shall we “render to him for all his benefits?” Taking that “cup of salvation” which his own hand hath tendered to us, let us “call upon his name.” This, beyond controversy, is an immediate and essential part of our duty; *to pay him explicit and public homage; to recognize, by devout and marked acknowledgement, our dependence on his favour, and the blessings we have reaped from his protection.*

There is a religion of society, as such; a tribute of reverence which it owes to the living God. Formed under his auspices, and nurtured by his care; preserved by his power, and replenished with his bounty; he requires from it on these accounts, social worship and the social vow.

The honor of his sovereign rule, he cannot relinquish; and the confession of it we may not withhold. It is true, that our excellent chief magistrate, in those critical circumstances into which he was thrown, by the danger of foreign war, and the madness of insurrection among ourselves, displayed, in a conspicuous manner, those governmental virtues which are at once the duty and the glory of his official pre-eminence. The other magistrates, who acted in concert with him, imbibed the spirit of their station, and shewed themselves "a terror to evil doers." The citizens, by whose military co-operation, their patriotic efforts were carried into complete effect, brought into splendid action, the principles of men, who enjoy true liberty, and know how to value and defend it. They have all deserved well of their country. But their exertions, sublime and heroic as they were, would have been utterly fruitless without the countenance of HIM, who is the "governor among the nations." Let us not, therefore, rest in second causes, nor limit our praise to human instruments. Let us not disregard them, but look beyond them. Let us make our boast in God, who, in the day of trouble, covered us with the shield of his omnipotence. "If it had not been the LORD who was on our side, now



may Americans say, if it had not been the LORD who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: Then the waters had overwhelmed us, the stream had gone over our soul: Then the proud waters had gone over our soul. Blessed be the the LORD, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we are escaped. Our help is in the name of the LORD who made heaven and earth.”\* Therefore, “Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts. O worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth!” †

Another becoming expression of our gratitude to God, for the goodness which we are met to commemorate, is to *keep at a cautious distance from the “arrogance of prosperity.”*

If we are elevated to a dignified rank among the nations of the earth; if our “goodly heritage”

\* Psalm cxxiv. † Psalm xcvi. 7—9.

contains a larger proportion of freedom and happiness, than has fallen to the lot of others: If our privileges, civil, religious, and political, secured "under the shadow of the Almighty," have hitherto repelled the weapons of every assailant, and have received recent and strong confirmation, let us beware of "dealing foolishly," and vaunting away our mercies. To communities not less than to individuals, insolence is the forerunner of shame. "Pride," saith the wise man, "goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."\*

Interest combines with duty, to enforce compliance with the injunction of inspired prudence, "Lift not up your horn on high: Speak not with a stiff neck. For promotion cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South: But God is the judge; he putteth down one, and setteth up another."† The rebellious who exalt themselves, he will teach to bend before his authority, by the sad experience of his displeasure. Without HIS direction, the sagacity of the profoundest politician is but another name for stupid infatuation. He "turneth wise men backward,

\* Prov. xvi. 18.

† Psalm lxxv. 5-7.

and maketh their knowledge foolish.\* Without HIM, the most intrepid “bow down under the prisoners, and fall under the slain.”† Abandoned by HIM, the most stable fabrics of earthly contrivance totter on their bases, moulder into dust, and become the sport of every wanton breeze. Let us not flatter ourselves, that however others suffer, we may safely walk after the imagination of our own hearts. We have no charter of immunity in sin. Without discrimination, “The haughty shall be humbled” and the froward cut off; “for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.”

Once more: If we would demonstrate our gratitude to God for averting those evils which we could not have shunned, let us *study to be holy in all manner of conversation.*

Sincere profession is best evinced by the simplicity of pure obedience. Genuine gratitude will be ever accompanied by an unaffected desire of pleasing, and a fear equally unaffected of offending, our benefactor. Be not deceived. If men love God, they will keep his commandments; if they are thankful for his benefits, they will respect his

\* Isaiah xliv. 25

† If. x. 4.

law. Sins of enormous turpitude are still chargeable upon us; and sooner or later, the day of visitation will come. More than once or twice we have confessed our guilt, and vowed amendment. On this very subject does the most High expostulate with us. He calls us by his providence, to realize our confessions; to pay what we have vowed. Let us implore the grace, and attempt the duty, of penitence, while space is given us to repent. The Holy One of Israel will not be mocked with empty promises. When the hour of judgment arrives, his ear will be deaf to intreaty, and the pleadings of mercy will end. Those floods of ruin, which are now held back by his forbearance, will pour in their waters with augmented fury. Heaven will call upon earth, and earth reply to heaven, in conspiring the destruction of irreclaimable transgressors. Improve the means of obtaining present peace, and of insuring final salvation, while ye have opportunity. Before the season of acceptance expire, flee to that Lord Jesus who is the "hiding place from the storm, and the covert from the tempest;" and prove that ye receive the Saviour, by walking in him.\* HE HATH SHEWED THEE,

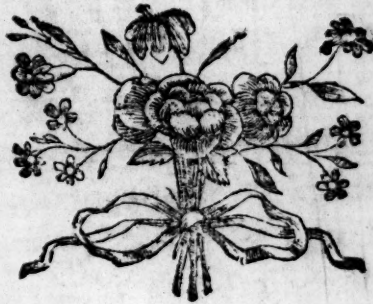
\* Col. ii, 6



O MAN, WHAT IS GOOD; AND WHAT DOTH  
THE LORD REQUIRE OF THEE, BUT TO DO  
JUSTLY, TO LOVE MERCY, AND TO WALK HUM-  
BLY WITH THY GOD.\* *Amen.*

\* Micah vi. 3.

F I N I S.



[ 2 ]

THE NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES  
OF THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20560

