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DISCOURSE

Delivered on the 6th of September,
1772,

In the Dutch Church of
S T. C R O I X.

On Occasion of the Hurricane which happened on the 31st day of August; being the most dreadful known among these Islands, since their first settlement.

By HUGH KNOX, Minister of the Presbyterian Church on this Island.

----- *Ac venti, velut agmine facto, Quâ datâ portâ, ruunt,
& terras turbine perflant Incubere mari, totumque a sedibus imis
Una Urusque Notusque ruunt, Creberque procellis Africus: Et vastos
volvunt ad litora fluetus. Insequitur Clamorque Virum, stridorque
rudentum. Eripiunt Subito nubes Cælumque diemque Virorum ex
oculis: Ponto nox incubat atra. Intonere poli, & Crebris micat
ignibus Æther: Præsentemque viris intentant omnia mortem.*

Virg. Æn. 1. l. 86.

ST. CROIX: Printed by DANIEL THIBOU,
MDCCLXXII.

B.U.H.

To his Excellency ULRICH WILHELM
VON ROEPSTORFF, Governor-General
over the Joint Danish Islands in America.

May it please your Excellency,

NOT only the eminent place you hold as the Chief ruler of this Island, but also, and more especially, your peculiar attention to the best interests of it, in the present calamitous conjuncture of affairs, together with the active part you have born, and are still bearing, in soothing the calamities, alleviating the distresses, and supplying the wants of its suffering, ruined inhabitants, by a series of humane edicts, wholesome regulations, and private charities, which do honour to human nature, and to Christianity itself; will be mentioned to your Honour with heart-felt gratitude, by a generation yet unborn, and will secure to you a monument more durable than brass, so long as the unparalleled Hurricane of the 31st of August, 1772, shall be remembered in these Isles of the sea;---and these render it peculiarly proper, that a discourse delivered publickly on this alarming occasion, to a very considerable audience, and which it has been thought expedient to make yet more public, as a memorial of our distress and deliverance, and as an incentive to the best marks of repentance; a reformation of manners should be dedicated to your Excellency, as its most worthy patron.

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The liberty you have given me of mentioning your name in the front of this imperfect discourse, of introducing it to the public under your patronage, and all the other condescensions of your friendship, claim and have my most sincere and grateful acknowledgments.

That the God, who, in mercy, hath set you over us at a time when he intended to chasten and correct us, may prosper and abundantly reward all your kind designs and benevolent actions to this poor and distressed people;---that he may animate you to perseverance in the good work you have so laudably begun;---That he, who hath the hearts of Kings in his hand, may give you the favour and approbation of your Gracious Sovereign, and by that favour, make you an instrument of still greater and more permanent privileges to this people;---that he would long continue you as a blessing among us;---make your government pleasant and prosperous, and, at the close of your probationary state, reward you with a diadem of immortal glory, thro' the merits of his dear Son; I nothing doubt are the wishes and prayers of all under your government, but of none are they more sincerely and ardently so, than of,

May it please your Excellency,


Your Excellency's

Most Obedient and

Most Devoted Servant,

HUGH KNOX.

ISAIAH XXII. 12. 14. *In that day did the Lord GOD of Hosts call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sack-cloth: And behold, joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep, eating flesh, and drinking wine; let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die. And it was revealed in mine ears by the LORD of Hosts, Surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord GOD of Hosts.*

HE wise man has told us that there is "a time and season for every purpose under the Heaven,"---in particular that there is a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance---and that every thing is seemly and beautiful in his season. (a) And he has marked out, in a very especial manner, the duty of two particular seasons.---" In the day of prosperity (says he) " be joyful;" " but in the day of adversity consider. (b) In prosperous times, we are allowed to indulge to moderate cheerfulness:---The nature of such a season will admit of this;---tho' even in such a season, we should rejoice with trembling;---our joy should be accompanied with strict temperance and moderation---it should be a sober, rational, and christian mirth: And indeed, as the best commentators explain these words, it should be a spiritual, rather than a carnal mirth.---Our joy, in the day of prosperity, should not shew itself in feasting and carousing, in mad and senseless frolick and intemperance. (This is the mirth of Hottentots and Indians, when they sacrifice to their Idol Gods)---But in praising god, and

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rejoicing

(a) Eccl. 3. 1. 4. (b) 7. 14.

rejoicing in his goodness, bounty and indulgence, who is the author of our prosperity, and the giver of every good gift. Thus should we rejoice in the day of our prosperity: Nor will I deny, that we may also indulge ourselves in the chearful, innocent, and temperate use of God's creatures; provided we do this with an humble and grateful sense of the bounty of the giver.

But the day of adversity; the evil and troublous day; the day of want, fear, danger, or affliction, calls for another, and a very different duty.---In the day of adversity, we are called to consider! We are called to humble ourselves before God, to mourn for our sins, and to consider both wherefore God afflicteth us, and by what means we may again recover his favour and indulgence.---We are called, not to rejoicing, but to weeping; not to dancing, but to mourning; not to feasting, but to fasting; not to gaiety, but to covering with sack-cloth.---Now our blessed Saviour esteems it a great piece of human and christian prudence for men to discern the signs of the times.---“ O ye hypocrites, (says he, to the Pharisees and Sadduces,) ye can discern the face of the sky, but can ye not discern the signs of the times?”(c)---The book of Providence is held up before the eyes of men, as well as the book of Scripture,---and it is a very important part of the duty and business of Christians to read and study this book; to mark and attentively observe God's providential dealings both to others and to ourselves, and thoroughly to consider to what duty or temper of mind his providence, as well as his word, calls us. Thus the Psalmist, after recounting a number of God's providential dealings to mankind, both merciful and afflictive, in the 107th Psalm, concludes it with this excellent remark, “Whofo is wise, and will
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will observe those things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord." When we see how bountifully God provideth for every living thing, and how wisely he hath fitted every living creature for propagating its kind, finding its own sustenance, and shunning whatever is hurtful to it; we have a most striking and convincing proof, not only of the being of a God, but also of his power, wisdom, goodness and providential care.---When we see mankind endued with such noble powers and capacities, and yet his nature deformed with so many vices and turbulent passions, and his life so full of sorrow, pain, misery and affliction, and death ending the tragical scene, and mixing him with the dust; we have a striking and convincing proof of the dignity of human nature on the one hand, and on the other, of man's guilt, corruption, and degeneracy, and that he is suffering under the just frowns and displeasure of offended Heaven.---When we see such great changes and revolutions in mighty states and kingdoms; some raised up, by surprizing means, to wealth, prosperity and grandeur; and others reduced to nothing, and made desolate; mighty monarchs one day on a throne, and the next in a prison;--rich men suddenly made poor and indigent;---prosperity quickly turned into adversity; health into sickness; strength into weakness; beauty into deformity; honour and credit into disgrace and infamy, and the most blooming life, into death and corruption; these are loud lessons to us of the vanity, emptiness, and changeable nature of all sublunary things---of the uncertain nature and short duration of all earthly comforts and enjoyments---and that life itself is but a vapour and a shadow which passeth away.---When God's providence is smiling upon ourselves in particular; enduing us with a sound and healthful

body, and with a quiet and peaceful mind; prospering our affairs; encreasing our families, our substance, our friends and our credit; giving us all things richly to enjoy, and fulfilling our hearts desire.---In such circumstances, we should well consider the signs of the times;---we are now indeed called to rejoice; but, at the same time, we have abundant reason to watch and pray lest we enter into temptation; lest we wax wanton, and forget our God, and abuse our prosperity, and thereby provoke our God to turn the tide of our fortune!

We should consider, in such circumstances, that God is now trying us, and seeing in what manner we will improve his merciful providences, and what good use we will make of our prosperous condition;---always remembering, that all our happiness is in his hand and at his disposal, and that, if we provoke him, it is infinitely easy for him to take away all our comforts from us: Nay, that he may do this, without any signal provocation, merely to try and exercise our graces, as he did in the case of his servant Job.

When, on the other hand, God is pleased (either in judgment or mercy) to frown upon us; to impair our health; or diminish our fortune; or to strip us of our friends and necessary relations; or to chastize us in our families; or to visit us with pestilence, famine, or the devouring sword; or to suffer our credit to be hurt, or our reputation to be blackened among men; or to visit us with any other sorrow, calamity, or affliction whatever.---Then it is most certainly our duty to observe the signs of the times---to consider attentively the probable causes, nature and design of these providences, and wherefore it is that the Lord is thus afflicting us, or what controversy he has with us. We should carefully hear the voice of the rod, and consider

der to what temper, duty, and behaviour God is calling us by these afflictive dispensations of his providence.---And we should endeavour, with all possible zeal and diligence, to alter what we find amiss in our temper and conduct, and to suit our spirit and behaviour to the providences with which we are exercised.

This, (my friends) so far as I can collect from Scripture, and the reason of the thing, is the proper method of observing and improving the providences of God. And, as on the one hand, all the providences of God, both merciful and afflictive, would be exceedingly beneficial to us, if they were thus observed and improved by us; so, on the other hand, it is the mark of a stupid, and undisciplined mind not to regard the work of the Lord, neither to consider the operation of his hand.---“ Because, says the Psalmist, they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his hand, he shall destroy them and not build them up (d).” “ Let favour be shewed to the wicked says the Prophet, yet will he not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness will he deal unjustly, and will not behold the majesty of the Lord.”---“ Lord! adds he, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see, but they shall see, and be ashamed.---But as for us, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee (e).” The stupidity of the wicked will not suffer them to see the Lord’s hand in his providence, even altho’ it is evidently lifted up to destroy them.---And altho’, on the other hand, he should shew them favour, and deal mercifully and indulgently with them, yet will they not behold his majesty and mercy, nor learn righteousness, from such gentle and engaging lessons.---So that both judgments and mercies are lost upon them. “ Why should they be stricken away more, they will but revolt more and more? and altho’ God
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(d) Psalms 28. 5. Isaiah 5. 12. (e) Isaiah 26. 18. 11.

should nourish them, and bring them up as children, yet will they not consider, but will rebel against him (f).” But as for wise and righteous souls, who observe and consider God’s providential dealings, they will wait for him, even in the way of his judgments; even when he is afflicting and chastizing them, they will seek unto him the more earnestly, and wait for spiritual good from his chastening hand. “Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee;” the desires, &c.

Israel had now a day of adversity, and therefore was called to consider. The enemy was daily expected before the gates of Jerusalem, and God had, an hundred times over, assured them by his Prophets, that, unless they repented and reformed their manners, they should be carried away captive to Babylon.---But, it seems, they observed not, they considered not, the signs of the times;---they did not behold the majesty of the Lord, nor observe the hand of his judgment which was lifted up over them, to punish them.---: They neither considered that it was a day of danger and adversity with them, nor did they (of consequence) suit their temper and conduct to the present dispensations of God’s providence.---“In that day, says the Prophet, did the Lord God of Hosts, call to weeping, and to mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sack-cloth: And behold joy and gladness; slaying oxen and killing sheep; eating flesh and drinking wine; let us eat, &c.” And it was revealed in mine ears, by the Lord of Hosts, saying, surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.

From these words I shall by divine assistance, 1st, observe the call of providence in the day of adversity. ---2dly, Shew you the great guilt of not observing this
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call of providence, and conforming ourselvs to its dictates, and 3dly, make some particular application of the subject, suited to our present distressed circumstances, as a people, in consequence of the late dreadful tempest.

1. Then, I am to shew what is the proper call of Providence, in the day of adversity.---“ In that day, says the Prophet, did the Lord God of Hosts call to weeping, &c.”

Here, my friends, is the proper and genuine voice of want, danger, and affliction ;---or rather this is the message which God sends unto us, his creatures, by these providences. The voice of the Lord now cried unto the city of Jerusalem, and to the inhabitants of Judea,---“ Weep, mourn, lament for your sins, repent and return unto me, and I will have mercy upon you, and deliver you from the power of your enemies.” The Lord called them to a true repentance and reformation of manners, and to all the outward signs of it, which, among the Jews and most other eastern nations, were those here specified, viz. Weeping, mourning, shaving of the head, and wearing of sack-cloth. And indeed this is the duty to which God always called his ancient people, in the day of their danger and adversity ; instances of which are very numerous in the Old Testament, in the Books of Kings, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, and the Prophets ; the general purport of all which is summed up, in the prophecies of Joel 2. 12. 19. “ Therefore also now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning, and rent your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness and repenteth, &c.”

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There are two great rules of duty, unto which it is the indispenfible duty of all Christians to conform themselves---namely the word and the providence of God. And it is very remarkable that thefe two rules never contradict each other.---Whatever duty the word of God dictates, his providence dictates the fame alfo, in the fame circumftances.---And whatever duty the providence of God calls us to, his word calls us alfo to the fame.---And indeed this ought not to feem ftrange, feeing both thefe rules proceed from the fame God, and both lead to the fame end, namely, the perfection and happinefs of mankind. Now, as our temper and conduct fhould be wholly ruled and governed by the word of God;---as our hearts and lives fhould answer to the impreffions of this word, as wax to the impreffions of the feal---So alfo, to the various providences of God which we are under.---It fhould be one of the chief cares and ftudies of our lives, to conform ourfelves to the difpenfations of divine providence---and to put ourfelves in that precise pofture which they dictate.

In order to make you fenfible of the beauty and propriety of this conduct, I fhall make ufe of a representation which is very common and familiar in Scripture, and which, at the fame time, has fomething in it fo endearing and engaging, that it fhould feem furprizing how it comes to have fo little effect upon Christians, and to make fuch flight impreffions on their hearts, and conduct.---As God is the great Father of fpirits, and father of the univerfe, fo the New Teftament has taught us to confider him, in a ftill more peculiar and endearing fenfe, as the father of Christians.---“As their covenant God and father in the Lord.” And they, as his children; as the fons and daughters of the moft high God, who are taught

to call him Abba, father, and to consider themselves, as children, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, &c. (g)."

Let us then look up to God as our father, who altho' we see him not, is yet ever present with us ; and who altho' we regard him not, is yet momently sustaining and supporting us, and watching over us with a most paternal care.

Let us next consider the mercies and afflictions of this present life, as the means by which God our Heavenly father testifies his anger, or his indulgence, to us his children. When the providence of God, our father, brings us mercies, blessings or comforts, whither of a temporal or spiritual nature.---Let us then consider our Heavenly father as fondling, embracing and caressing us ;---as giving us the marks and tokens of his fatherly indulgence, and as trying (if I may so speak) by these endearing and engaging means, to win us over to a chearful and filial love, duty, gratitude, and obedience.

Again ; as to the wants, troubles, dangers, sorrows, afflictions and other calamities we meet with here below, let us consider them (as we ought) as the frowns of our father, and the marks and tokens of his displeasure.---Let us consider them as the rods wherewith he is chastizing us, either to try our graces ; to correct our faults ; to reduce us from our wanderings, or to bring us into a more near and intimate communion with, and a more absolute dependence upon himself. It would be endless to enumerate the various ends, reasons and purposes, for which God uses these rods upon his children.---Sometimes it may be, to mortify and subdue a corruption, such as pride, lust, ambition, or the like.---Sometimes to improve and exercise some particular grace, such as humility,

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patience,

patience, or resignation.---Sometimes to awake the Christian from sloth and security, and to engage him to the renewed practice of some long-neglected duty, such as secret prayer, meditation, self-examination, reading the Scriptures, or the like.---Sometimes it may be to wean the hearts of his children, from too great an attachment to the world, or to some Creature, Idol, or enjoyment.---Or, in general, to purify and sanctify their natures; to shew them the emptiness and vanity of every thing here below; to make them the more thoughtful of their mortal and frail condition, and of that judgment and eternity which is so fast approaching. Now let us for a moment descend from Heaven to Earth, that we may ascend thither again with the greater advantage.---Let us suppose a virtuous and well governed family under the command of a wise, just, and good father.---Let us suppose all his children to be sensible of his wisdom, justice and goodness, and all, at the same time, possessed of a dutiful and obedient temper.---Let us suppose that this father, (after a long course of tenderness and indulgence to these children, after gratifying them in all their desires and requests, and giving them the most sensible proofs of his paternal fondness and affection,) should begin to frown upon them; to shew them an angry countenance; to deny their requests; to withdraw his favours, and actually to correct and punish them; while, at the same time, he continued and encreased his favours towards their brethren and sisters.

Now let us consider how these children would, (at least how they ought) to behave in these different circumstances.---I have already supposed that this father is perfectly wise, good, and just;---that all his children are sensible that there must be great and sufficient reason for this change in his conduct.---That they
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all perfectly love him, and are filled with the principles of reverence, duty, and obedience towards him.--- This being once supposed, It is easy to judge how they will respectively behave.---Those who are under the frowns of their father, and the marks of his displeasure, will be immediately struck with an anxious sorrow and concern.---They will immediately reflect upon themselves and say---“ Oh! wherefore does our father thus frown upon us?---By what faulty or undutiful behaviour have we forfeited his love, and lost his favour?---Were he a weak, partial, or capricious man, who blindly bestowed his favours upon those who had no merit; who was governed by prejudice, and could be angry without cause;---we might imagine we were unjustly dealt by: But this is not the case.---Our father would not frown upon us, much less correct us, without sufficient reason.---Oh, then by what bad conduct have we provoked our father's displeasure?---We cannot bear his frowns.---The tokens of his displeasure wound and break our hearts; and yet we know we deserve them. Let us therefore search and try our ways, and see wherein we have done amiss, and return again to our duty and obedience.---Let us humble ourselves before our father, and ask him with tears, what has displeased him, and wherefore he contendeth with us.” ¶ Such children, will find such a season, a time to weep, and not a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and not a time to dance; a time to fast, and not a time to feast; a time to consider, and not a time to rejoice. Their own hearts will easily tell them the signs of the times, and what particular duties they call for and require. In short they will go heavily all the day long, and never find rest, or ease, or comfort, till they are sensible that their father is reconciled to them.

On the other hand, those who still retained the favour and good graces of their father---far from rejoicing in the misfortune of their brethren and sisters, they would pity and pray for them. It would sincerely concern them that their brethren had been so unhappy as to fall under their father's displeasure; and they would heartily wish to see amendment and reconciliation. And, as to their own particulars, altho' they could not but rejoice to see themselves still continued in the good graces of their parent, and under the smiles of his countenance,---yet they would not wax wanton, or give themselves up to mirth and levity on this occasion; but the fall of their brethren would cause them to double their watchfulness and diligence, least they also should offend their father, and fall under his displeasure.

Now, it is easy to apply this to the subject in hand, and to shew how the children of God ought to behave, both in the time of prosperity and adversity.---Does our Heavenly father frown upon us? In that day doth the Lord God of Hosts call us to weeping, and mourning, to baldness and girding with sack-cloth, to sorrow and repentance?---On the other hand, Doth he smile upon us, and prosper us; it behoves us indeed to rejoice in God and in a sense of his goodness; but at the same time, to make a wise use of our prosperity, and to be sober and watchful, as knowing that we have no right to the mercies we enjoy, and that the smallest abuse or provocation, may justly deprive us of them. But I proceed

2. To shew you the great guilt of not conforming ourselves to this call of providence, and obeying its dictates. ¶ God, by his threatenings and afflictive providences called these Jews, to weeping, and to mourning, to baldness, and to clothing with sack-cloth.---

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The whole state of their affairs loudly told them that they were under the divine displeasure.---The Prophets daily told them this from the mouth of God himself, and farther assured them, that if they did not speedily humble themselves, repent, and reform their lives, and seek unto God, they would quickly be carried captive to Babylon, and lose both their civil and religious liberties, and privileges.

Such were the joint calls both of the word and providence of the Lord God of Hosts.---But so far were this unhappy people from regarding this call, or conforming themselves to the present dispensation of divine Providence, that they acted just the reverse, and, by this means, doubled their own guilt, and greatly aggravated the divine displeasure against them. “ In that day did the Lord God of Hosts loudly call them to weeping, mourning, fasting and repenting;---but, instead of this, they indulged to all kinds of vanity and luxury;---they exercised a riotous joy and gladness, slaying oxen, and killing sheep; eating flesh, and drinking wine---And what greatly aggravated this crime, was, that they probably did these things in contempt of the divine threatenings, and in a spiteful opposition to the contrary commands of the Prophets. They probably would not believe, not pay any regard to the warnings of God’s Prophets, and therefore acted thus to shew the sovereign contempt which they had both for God’s word, and his servants.

Now, let us observe the manner in which the heinousness of this sin is expressed.---They would not hear, nor conform themselves to the call of God’s providence;---they would not weep, and mourn, and humble themselves, and repent when God called them to these duties;---but, as tho’ they would pour as much contempt as possible upon the divine warnings and
 messages,

messages, they turned the season of sorrow, humiliation and repentance, into a season of carnal mirth, wantonness, and carousing.---“ Therefore (says the Prophet) on account of this unseasonable mirth and jollitry, and this disregard and contempt of the call of God and the duties of the season, it was revealed in mine ears, by the Lord God of Hosts; surely this iniquity shall not be purged from you, till ye die, saith the Lord God of Hosts.”---There is a peculiar force and emphasis in these words, which a sensible reader or hearer cannot but observe.---This iniquity is pronounced by the Lord God of Hosts, to be of such a deep die and crimson colour; to be so extremely aggravating and provoking to the most High, to the God of mercy; that he would never purge it from this wicked people; but that the sad penal effects and consequences of it, should follow this wicked generation, even to their dying day! and how dreadfully was this threatening fulfilled in the famine and captivity which they soon after suffered, and in the sad bondage and oppression they underwent in Assyria!---And indeed, my friends, if we rightly consider things, there can scarcely be any thing more provoking to God, than for his people to despise the call of his providence, especially when it is joined with the voice of his word; as it certainly always is, where his word is read and preached.---For instance; when the wants, dangers, miseries, and afflictions of a people, are loudly calling them to the duties of reflection, consideration, and self-examination;---to fasting, and mourning for their sins; to prayer and supplication for God’s mercy, and to personal, and general repentance and amendment:---When such a people are already under the rod, and still dreading greater calamities;---and when the voice of God’s word, as well as the voice of his providence,

providence, is urging and pressing them to the performance of these seasonable and necessary duties.---I say, when such a people, in such circumstances, not only seem to shut their eyes against these tokens of the divine displeasure, and stop their ears against these calls; ---not only neglect the duties to which they are called, and seem quite insensible of, and indifferent about, the signs of the times; but when they even indecently indulge themselves in the very contrary practices; giving themselves up to light and vain amusements; to carnal mirth and luxurious living, to banquetting and carousing.---Or (as the Prophet there expresses it) "To joy and gladness, slaying oxen and killing sheep, eating flesh and drinking wine."---What is this but committing the very iniquity against which the Lord here denounces such heavy judgments?---The Lord calleth (on such a day) to weeping and to mourning, &c. and if, instead of this, there is joy and gladness, &c. Can we offer a greater indignity to the voice and call of God, and shall he not be avenged on such a people as this?

So much for the doctrinal part of the discourse. So much for the call of Providence in the day of adversity; and the guilt of not conforming ourselves to this call, and disobeying its dictates.

A P P L I C A T I O N.

WE are now come to make some particular application of the subject to ourselves, under a lively review of the late desolating judgment with which it hath pleased God to visit us, and that new and unexpected scene of adversity which it hath introduced among us.

I freely submit it to my intelligent hearers, whether the present day with us, as a people, is not a day of adversity. Let the loud cry of poverty; let the number

ber of those who are really poor and necessitous in the land; the deadness of trade, the scarcity of money, and the dearth and scarcity of provisions, bear witness to this truth. I speak only of public calamities, and meddle not with those private and personal ones, which every person best knows and feels for himself.

But more especially, O! let the ruins, the multiplied ruins, the dreadful and almost universal desolation of this lately blooming, fertile, flourishing, but now poor, distressed, miserable, helpless Island, bear witness whether the present is not a season of adversity* .---Whether it does not call us to consideration and repentance---And whether the Lord God of Hosts
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* The dreadful storm which gave occasion to this discourse, began, at this Island, about dusk, on the 31st August. From seven o'clock till about ten it blew violently from the North, raising the sea on the South side of the Island, about 12 or 14 feet above its usual standard, parting all the vessels in the harbour from their anchors, throwing them far above common water-mark, and sweeping many houses contiguous to it, from their foundations. Some have estimated the losses of this Island, by land and by sea, at a million Sterling. They are indeed inexpressibly great; but this estimation, I would fondly hope, is a little beyond the truth.

From about 10 o'clock there was a nearly total intermission of the tempest, till near eleven, when it began to blow with redoubled violence from the West to the South, for the space of about two or three hours, and then abated by degrees. This last gale is thought to have done more damage than the first; and had it continued but a very little longer, in all probability not one dwelling-house would have been left standing on the Island.

The lives of white and black lost during the tempest here, are believed to exceed thirty; and it is truly amazing, all things considered, that ten times that number were not destroyed. Numbers, however, are much wounded, and bruised, and some have died, and are still dropping off the mortal stage, by the effects of that night.

We hoped that we were the chief, if not the only, sufferers by the late judgment; but, by accounts from the Windward Islands,
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(who has his way in the storm, and whose word the stormy wind fulfilleth; who commandeth and raiseth a storm, and who again maketh the storm a calm;

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it appears that we have been more favourably dealt with than some of them. Antigua, we hear, is almost totally laid in ruins, all the King's ships in English Harbour, the Admiral only excepted, and all the other vessels, driven from their moorings high and dry on shore. The damages at St. Christophers can scarce be computed: They are even estimated at more than those of this Island. Nevis and Montserrat are sadly shattered. The houses on the Bay of St. Eustatius, it is said, have escaped pretty favourably; but those on the Hill are generally demolished; several of their vessels lost, and those who have escaped shipwreck, much damaged. Out of about 180 dwelling-houses on Saba, it is said, only about 30 stand, and these much injured: Their Church, a strong stone building, we are told, is levelled with the ground, and the inhabitants in great distress for every necessary of life. We have not yet heard the numbers of lives lost in these Islands.

The Islands lying to the Northward and Southward of the East and West range already mentioned, are said to have received little or no damage, comparatively speaking; where it appears that the furious violence of this unparalleled Hurricane, run in an East and West direction, and was confined to a very few leagues in latitude. Indeed it appears that, where this Winged Dæmon raged, it run in streams or veins; as some of the strongest buildings were torn to pieces, while old and crazy houses, at the distance of but 50 to 100 paces, stood firm and unmolested.

It is remarkable that this storm begun its attack, among the Windward Islands, about 8 or 9 o'clock in the morning, and had compleated its ravages among them, before it paid us a visit at St. Croix. The air, it was observed by many, had a suffocating, sulphureous smell during the storm, and almost all the butt and cistern water on the Island tastes so strong of sulphur and nitre, that it is scarce fit for use.

The canes are much damaged, especially those that were most forward; fruit and fruit trees destroyed, and almost all kinds of Indian provision torn up by the roots. On the whole, it appears evidently, by the havock made in the wood-lands, and the extirpation of many of the largest and stoutest trees, that the late storm has not had its equal among these Islands, for two centuries past.

The solemn, striking appearance on the morning after this dismal

who is the sovereign Lord of universal nature; who exercises an absolute dominion over all the elements of this lower world, and employs them for mercy or judgment, as seemeth best unto him.)—Whether, I say, this Lord God of Hosts, who is terrible in majesty and abundant in mercy, is not calling the inhabitants of this and the neighbouring Islands, to weeping, and to mourning, to the most speedy and effectual review of their ways, and reformation of their lives and manners, by the voice of this alarming judgment?

When we look around us and survey the ruinous effects of the late tempest;—When we behold the face of a whole Island covered with devastation and rubbish by its merciless ravages;—when we look back and reflect but for a moment, on the report of our senses, the feelings of our hearts, the images of horror, alarming apprehension, and gloomy despair, which crowded on our imaginations in the never-to-be-forgotten hour of its furious onset.—Images which beggar all description, and which the power of language is too feeble fully to express!

When we figure to our imagination—the dash of impetuous waves, sweeping houses from their foundations, with all their inhabitants—the roaring and howling of the tempest—the perpetual glare of lightening and lambent meteors, amidst the burst of pouring clouds, and the gloomy horrors of ten-fold darkness
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mal night; the deep gloom of the weather (as tho' the sun had forgot the time of his rising, and nature were sinking under her last pangs)—the dead bodies dug out of the ruins—the streets, covered with piles of ruin, crowded with an astonished multitude of lame, maimed, and distressed, of every age, colour, and sex, (sorrow, terror, consternation, and dismay painted on every face) formed such a distressful spectacle, as I never expected to have seen before the final dissolution of all things.

---the crash of houses---the shrieks of women---the cries of children---the groans of persons expiring under the ruins of their own houses---Others, and some of these the most delicate of both sexes, without shelter, perishing by the inclemency of the weather---The stateliest piles of building (a few hours before, the pride and glory of the Island---perhaps of the West-Indies) laid level with the ground---Whole plantations stripped of every shelter, both for man and beast, and all their buildings (formerly like spacious villages) laid in one confused, undistinguishable heap of shattered ruins, together with all their costly furniture, and every implement and utensil both for husbandry and domestic use. ---Our ships wrecked, or thrown high above water-mark; their valuable cargoes (late, the labour, the sweat and reward of the industrious planter) destroyed, and their crews dashed to pieces by the merciless waves. ---The community robbed of some of its most useful members, by violent and premature deaths; some of them, alas! among the number of my beloved, and much lamented friends!---Others surviving to see, perhaps, still greater miseries than death itself; to feel themselves perish, or rot in goals---And, what is still worse (if any thing worse can possibly be imagined) the hope of the husbandman cut off and his expectation perished---A scarcity of all the necessaries of life, and little hope of a supply, from the equally distressed circumstances of all our neighbouring Islands. †

If we thus reflect on the by past scene of consternation and dismay---If we next look around us, and behold attentively its effects in the present scene of almost

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universal

† It hath pleased an indulgent providence, since the late storm, to send us supplies of provision, beyond what we could have reasonably expected.

universal desolation † ---If we then look forward to the gloomy and disconsolate prospects which naturally open upon our distressed minds---We will be easily convinced that this is a day of adversity.

And if each of us will next attentively consider and know the plague of his own heart, and the by-past errors of his own life ; if we will take an impartial review of our multiplied abuses of God's mercies ; how long we have been provoking him by a continued series of the most audacious rebellions, against the light of our own reason, and the dictates of our conscience--- (For I will not, on this occasion, confine my address to Christians alone, who profess to acknowledge and submit to the Gospel revelation---I may extend it, with the utmost propriety, to all in general; who admit the being of a God, and his providential government of the world)---Then we must allow that the present calamity bears every mark and character of a judgment from the Almighty. I say, of a judgment from the Almighty : For, whatever agency evil and malignant spirits may be supposed to have in such calamitous events (from the Devil's being called, in Scripture, the prince of the power of the air) yet we are well assured that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth---that he sitteth supreme and unrivalled in the throne of the Universe ---that these malignant spirits are only chained slaves--- and that they cannot exert the smallest act of power to the prejudice of mankind, without express permission from the Universal King---Who can, and indeed does, when it seemeth good to him, employ them, and the elements of this lower world, which are also his servants, to try his people, or to execute judgment on the guilty children of men. What

† Perhaps, to a stranger, a good painting of the ruins of Palmyra would give the most lively and striking, as well as just, idea of the ruinous face of things on this once beautiful Island,

What then, my dear hearers, can be the meaning of such a providence as this? What can be the probable design of the Almighty in visiting his human offspring with such alarming, such desolating judgments? Can the Almighty, (all-wise, all-good and all-gracious) either suffer such events to fall out in this world of his fortuitously, as it were, beside his design, ---or sport himself with human misery and distress?--- Is it any pleasure to the father of mercies to raise causeless pannicks in the hearts of the children of men; to strip them of every comfort of life, or to see them overwhelmed and dashed to pieces in the billows of affliction?-- No---In him compassions flow---He delighteth in mercy---Judgment is his strange work; his last remedy to a guilty world---long doth he shake his glittering sword; numberless are the friendly warnings he gives, the gentle chastisements he inflicts, before he strikes the last, the fatal blow, which consigns to remediless misery.---“ He afflicteth not willingly, neither grieveth the children of men.” His mercy flows spontaneously, as the prime attribute of his nature; whereas punishments are inflicted, as with reluctance, and if need so requires; either to reclaim the delinquent, or as a warning to a guilty world.

What then should be the design of such judgments? Can God be careless? Can he be unmindful of that world which he hath made?---Does he give it up as the sport of blind chance, ungoverned elements, or malignant Devils?---Has he made us after his spiritual and moral image; has he placed us here, and written a moral law on our hearts, thereby teaching us that we are accountable to him for all our actions, yet after all forsaking the rational workmanship of his own hands, and left them exposed to the unbridled rage of furd and jarring elements?---Where then is his wisdom

dom and goodness?---Where, his providential care of the world?---Where, his paternal care of his human off-spring?---Is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear; his arm shortened that it cannot save, or the bowels of his mercies shut up, that he cannot have compassion?---His infinite power, his every-where presence, and the benevolence of his nature, forbid us to entertain such suspicions as these. His providence is universal, it ruleth over all and careth for all the creatures he hath made. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground, without the permission of our father in Heaven, and the very hairs of our head are numbered. Not a life hath been lost; not a vessel wrecked; not a house demolished; not the smallest loss or injury sustained by the late desolating judgment, but by express permission from the King of Heaven, from him whose kingdom ruleth over all. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away---killeth and maketh alive---bringeth low and raiseth up; and doth all things, both in the armies of Heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of this earth according to his Sovereign pleasure. Is there natural, is there physical, evil in the city, and the Lord hath not done it?"

So Scripture, and, indeed, so right reason, teacheth us to conceive of the providence of God, and the manner of his government, in the natural as well as moral worlds.

What then is the voice of the Lord; and what his design, in these desolating judgments?---Are they not the just and righteous punishments of our iniquities, and loud (O! that they might prove effectual) calls to repentance? God spoke to us, as he did to his servant Job, out of the midst of the whirlwind. In this day the Lord God of Hosts calleth to weeping, and to mourning, and to repentance.

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The Lord's voice crieth to the city---crieth to the Island of St. Croix, and to her sister Islands, her fellow sufferers under the same awakening judgment; he shall be known by the judgment which he executeth; and the man of wisdom shall see his name, his power and his justice in the desolations which surround us. And what is the voice of the Lord in the tempest? "Hear ye the rod and him who hath appointed it.--- How long ye simple ones will ye love simplicity, and scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? How long will ye abuse my goodness, and blaspheme my name, and prophane my Sabbaths, and neglect my ion, and resist my spirit, and violate my laws, and despise the Gospel of my grace? Turn ye at my reproof, lest I smite you with breach upon breach, until I have made an utter end---lest I rain upon you snares, fire and brimstone, an horrible tempest, and make you as guilty Sodom, and destroy you as impenitent Jerusalem. To day, if ye will hear my voice, harden not your hearts. If ye will not be reformed by me, by these things, and will not hearken to me for all this, but will still walk contrary to me, saith the Lord; then will I also walk contrary to you in fury; and I, even I, will punish you yet seven times more for your sins. Are there yet the treasures of wickedness in the house of the wicked, and the scant measure which is abominable? For the rich men thereof are full of violence, and the inhabitants have spoken lies. Therefore also will I make thee sick in smiting thee, in making thee desolate, because of thy sins. For when a land sinneth against me grievously, then will I stretch out mine hand upon it. Tho' these three men Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness. Turn ye therefore, at my reproof, O ye ends of the earth,

earth, and the isles of the sea!---Hear ye the rod, and who appointeth it, lest I make you desolate, without inhabitant (h)!"

Yet amidst all our calamities and distresses, my brethren, numberless undeserved mercies are still continued with us, which, upon this occasion, demand our unfeigned thanks to Almighty God. He hath still spared a remnant, both of forfeited lives and forfeited comforts. It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not utterly consumed. We who are here present, are the spared monuments of his wonderful patience and forbearance; witness for him that he is good, that he is God and not man; for therefore it is that we are in the land of the living and place of repentance---that we have a place on his footstool, and a place in his sanctuary.---" We cried unto him, in the time of our trouble, and he delivered us from our distresses, that we might shew forth his praise in the land of the living. Wherefore then should living men complain, men for the punishment of their sins? The grave, O Lord, cannot praise thee, death cannot celebrate thee, they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth: The living, the living, they shall praise thee, as we do this day. The Lord was ready to save us, therefore we will sing praises unto him as long as we live, in the house of the Lord.---O that men---O that we would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men: Let us sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing: Let us exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the Elders. Bless, then, the Lord, O our souls, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all our iniquities, who healeth all our diseases, who
redeemeth

(h) Micah 6. Ez. 14. 13. Levit. 26. Ps. 11. 95. Prov. 1.

our lives from destruction, and who crowneth us with loving kindness, and tender mercies (i) !”

Nor let us, my brethren, deem it amongst the smallest of our mercies, for which we are, this day, in a particular manner bound to thank God ; that he hath been pleased, by his providence to set over us, at this calamitous juncture of affairs, a General and Commander in Chief, who, like an Angel of God, goeth about doing good---Who hideth not himself from his own flesh---Whose heart is possessed of the tenderest feelings---and who is doing every thing which benevolence, humanity, and generosity itself can suggest for relief of the poor, needy, wretched sufferers.

Such examples of humanity, generosity, and public spirit, deserve to be brought into the most public point of view, and recommended to universal imitation. May the Lord reward him an hundred fold. May the blessing of them who are ready to perish, come upon him. And, O ! may he not only be preserved from the displeasure of his Royal master---but also meet with his favour and approbation, in the present humane and Christian measures he is taking for the good of this people ! Amen.

Let the amiable example of our chief ruler, animate those who are able, “ to go and do likewise.” Charity and repentance are the two great duties of the season. “ Charity covereth the multitude of sins ;” and to be charitable, thank God, is still in the power of many. While many have lost their little all, some have still a superfluity. Let such remember what duty calls, and humanity prompts to, on such an occasion as this ; and amidst such a throng of helpless indigents, their beneficence cannot fail to meet with proper objects. Let them cast their bread upon these waters of affliction, and after many days they shall

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find it. By giving to the poor, let them lend to the Lord, who will not fail to repay them with abundant usury.

But to return; we have had, I think, in the late unparalleled tempest, a most lively and striking emblem of the final dissolution of all things---the funeral of nature---the wreck of matter and the crush of worlds both in its sudden and unexpected onset; in that listless security in which it found us; in the commixture and confusion of the elements, and in that gasty horror and consternation which filled every heart, and was painted on every face---of that awful and terrifick day of the Lord, I mean, "which will also come as a thief in the night," and surprize a guilty, sleeping, secure world, buried in carnal pleasures and sensual indulgences.---That day, "in which the Heavens shall pass away with a great noise, the elements melt with fervent heat, the earth and the things therein be burnt up, the last trump shall sound, and call both the quick and the dead to judgment.

To what numbers, indeed, of our fellow creatures, of our fellow citizens, has the late storm been actually a summons before the tribunal of God! And yet are we, who have been spared, still unalarmed, unawakened? Are we spared, but to increase our condemnation, by treasuring up unto ourselves wrath against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?

Ought not such a thought, such a possibility alone, to awaken the most careless and libertine soul amongst us to consideration, to an immediate and diligent preparation to meet our God by an unfeigned repentance, before the great day of his wrath comes, wherein no impenitent sinner shall be able to stand?---What then, my dear friends, can nothing awaken us from our
sinful

sinful security, but the flames of Tophet, and the wailings of wretched spirits? Can no present calls of God's word or providence alarm us, and cause us to flee from the wrath to come? Is there no help, no remedy for our immorality and wickedness? Are our hearts past all feeling, past all fear? Is not this a day of adversity? Are not the tokens of the divine displeasure evidently upon our land? Can we not yet see his chastening hand lifted up over us? What then are the proper duties of this day and season? What are the signs of the times? What is the language of God's providence?---“ Surely in this day doth the Lord God of Hosts call us to weeping and to mourning, to faith in his son, to repentance and amendment of life.”

But, have we heard his voice? Have we obeyed his call? Hath the uplifted hand of God caused us to behold his Majesty, and return at his reproof? Are our hearts changed? Are there any signs of a real and general reformation amongst us? Isaiah says of the wicked Israelites, “ Lord, in trouble have they visited thee; they poured out a prayer when thy chastening was upon them (k).”---But have our afflictions and God's chastenings ever had even this effect upon many of us, to cause us to pay God an extraordinary visit, and pour out a prayer before him in secret?

O then let us no longer turn a deaf ear to the powerful and gracious call of God. “ Let us hear the rod, and him who hath appointed it.” Let us prostrate ourselves before our offended father, as returning prodigals, who have forfeited his favour, incurred his displeasure, and are not worthy the very least of all his mercies. Let us render him thanks, on the bended knees of our souls, that he hath been pleased still to spare a remnant of us, and to give us a farther space for repentance; while many of our fellow-creatures

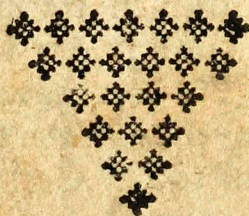
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(k) II. 26. 16.

have been snatched into the world of spirits, unexpected---Alas! perhaps, unprepared for their great change! ---And let us, from this precious moment, return from our sins unto God, thro' Christ; let us employ our spared lives in his unfeigned service, and in a diligent preparation for that better world, whence all sin, sorrow, want, calamity, and terror shall be forever excluded; that we may be found thus doing, may God of his infinite mercy grant us grace, and to his name be the praise. Amen.

F I N I S.



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