

IMPENDING JUDGMENTS AVERTED BY REPENTANCE:

A

S E R M O N ,

AT OXFORD, OHIO,

FRIDAY, AUGUST THIRD, MDCCCXLIX,

THE DAY OF THE NATIONAL FAST:

BY E. D. MAC MASTER.

CINCINNATI:

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1849.

CORRESPONDENCE.

Oxford, August 8, 1849.

REV. E. D. MAC MASTER, D. D.

Dear Sir: Having listened to your singularly able, eloquent and appropriate discourse, delivered at the request of the citizens of Oxford, on the occasion of the *National Fast*, Friday, the 3d instant; and believing that the sentiments contained in the same would be perused with equal pleasure and profit by multitudes who had not the satisfaction of being present at the delivery, we would earnestly solicit, at your earliest convenience, a copy of the discourse for publication.

Very sincerely and respectfully yours,

WM. S. ROGERS,
DAN'L. TENNEY,
THOS. J. MATTHEWS,
O. N. STODDARD,
F. H. PEYTON,
T. BNUDE,
JAMES C. MOFFAT,
R. E. HILLS,
JOHN WALLACE,
T. B. M'LAIN,

EBENEZER LANE,
S. R. MOLLYNEAUX,
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ALEX. YOUNG,
C. R. LOVELL,
G. G. WHITE,
DAVID CHRISTY,
S. A. KENNEDY,
V. J. MURREL,
JOSEPH CLAYBAUGH,

W. H. SMITH,
WM. WALLACE,
ALEX. BEATON,
B. C. SWAN,
ALEX. WALLACE,
K. BROOKS,
W. A. IRWIN,
W. F. ROBERTS,
JOHN FERGUSON.

GENTLEMEN:

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt yesterday of your obliging note of the 8th instant, asking a copy of my Sermon on the day of the National Fast. I, of course, ascribe the favourable estimate you are pleased to express of it, to the high interest of *the subject*; and in a very inconsiderable degree to the manner in which it was handled. I yield to your request for its publication the more readily, that it may remain as a memorial of the friendly relations and intercourse I have enjoyed with the citizens of this beautiful village during my residence here, which is now soon to terminate.

I am, gentlemen, very truly and respectfully yours, &c.,

E. D. MAC MASTER.

To the Rev. Messrs. Wm. S. Rogers, D. Tenney, C. R. Lovell, J. W. Scott, D. D., and Joseph Claybaugh, D. D.; Professors O. N. Stoddard, Jas. C. Moffat, Thos. J. Matthews, R. H. Bishop, Jr.; and E. Lane, S. R. Mollyneaux, R. E. Hills, Alex. Young, F. H. Peyton, G. G. White, T. Boude, Esqs., and others.

TO

THE CITIZENS OF OXFORD, OHIO;

TO A LARGE CONGREGATION OF WHOM

THE SUBSTANCE OF IT WAS ORALLY DELIVERED,

AND AT WHOSE REQUEST

IT HAS BEEN WRITTEN OUT FROM THE ORIGINAL NOTES

AND IS PRINTED;

THIS DISCOURSE

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

AS A MEMORIAL

OF THE MUTUAL GOOD OFFICES OF A FRIENDLY INTERCOURSE,

DURING A RESIDENCE OF FOUR YEARS AND A HALF AMONG THEM, BY

THE AUTHOR.

S E R M O N.

The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel as seemed good to the potter to make. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand. O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them. I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.—JEREMIAH, XVIII, 1-10, 17.

JEREMIAH fulfilled the prophetic office during a period of more than forty years, extending from the year 629 to about the year 587 before Christ; that is, from the thirteenth year of the reign of Josiah, King of Judah, till a date subsequent to the Babylonish captivity. These were times of the general prevalence of apostacy from God, idolatry, and abounding wickedness. Already had the ten tribes of Israel, for their sin, been cast off by God from being a people, and scattered among the nations, till their name was lost and even the place of their exile is unknown to this day. About a century later, and by steps only a little more restrained, Judah was fast hastening toward a similar ruin. The vigorous, resolute, and thorough-going measures of reform taken by the noble-minded Josiah, opposed but a temporary and inadequate barrier to the overflowing flood of corruption by which Manasseh's long

and wicked reign of fifty-five years had filled Judea and Jerusalem, and the very courts of the temple, with idolatry in its worst forms, and all the abominations connected with its observances, and availed only to impose some restraints upon the outward manifestations of their idolatry and wickedness, while the mass of the people remained in their inward life under the power of heathenism to which they were given up. In the succeeding reign, accordingly, of his son, the infatuated and furious Jehoiachim, the former corruption, like pent-up waters, broke forth anew, and, with a terrible proclivity to evil, Judah rushed headlong toward her fate, until the cup of her iniquity being at length full, after several preceding departations of large numbers of her inhabitants consisting of the flower of the nation, in the reign of Zedekiah, the brother of Jehoiachim, who, after the short three months' rule of his son, succeeded him, the temple and all Jerusalem were burned, its walls broken down, and, except a worthless remnant of the lowest of the populace, the whole people was carried away captive to Babylon.

Such were the times in which Jeremiah was set by God, as an iron pillar and a brazen wall, against the whole land of his nativity; against the kings thereof, and against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land; to utter his judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who had forsaken him and burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands; as well as over the nations and the kingdoms round about them, to root out and to pull down, and to destroy and to throw down, to build and to plant. Yet Jeremiah would seem to have been by nature little fitted for this ministration of the denunciation of the judgments of Heaven. It is true, at the command of God, with unflinching firmness and resolute determination he executed the commission given him. But sore was the inward conflict which this cost him. Constitutionally of a retiring disposition, gentle in spirit, mild in temper, of the keenest sensibilities, and the most tender heart, gladly would he have lived in peace and love with all mankind, and especially would he have rejoiced with great joy in the peace and prosperity of his own people and nation. How hard to one of such a char-

acter and temperament to be, in the midst of his own people and to his own brethren, all his life a son of Ishmael; his hand against all, and the hand of all against him; misunderstood, misrepresented, branded as an enemy; and himself as the mouth of God, with the sword of his word slaying his own people, and at length compelled to witness their destruction. At his first call we find him shrinking from this office, and seeking to excuse himself from it, saying, "Ah, Lord God! behold I cannot speak, for I am a child." Even in the comparatively good days of Josiah, he sighs for an escape from his ungracious mission, "Oh, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them!" And yet more bitterly, in the evil days of Jehoiachim, when the sins of Judah were swelling up to their utmost height, and the denunciations of Heaven's vengeance against them, which he was commissioned to declare, were become more pointed and severe, and their wrath against him and the messages of his God was more outrageous, does he bewail his hard case, "Wo is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and a man of contention to the whole earth!" Nay, in the anguish of his spirit, like Job, he even curses the day of his birth, saying, "Cursed be the day wherein I was born, because the Lord slew me not from the womb, that my mother might have been my grave!" I suppose, indeed, that in this extremity of his complaint, the prophet betrays the infirmity of the man, and that he spake unadvisedly with his lips. But methinks, if there had been any heart or any understanding left in Judah, their soul would have been broken and melted within them, if they could have heard the man whom they counted their enemy, and hated and persecuted because he told them the truth, that they might turn from their sins and live and not die, and whom they saw in his public office only as an iron pillar and a wall of brass, thus pouring out in secret the griefs of his heart before God, over the calamities and prospective ruin of his nation and the city of his God. Such is the spirit which breathes throughout the whole series of the prophecies contained in this book of Jeremiah, and which bursts out in a manner most affecting, in that unequalled elegiac poem entitled the Lamenta-

tions of Jeremiah, in which he bewails his people gone into captivity, and, according to Bishop Lowth, in the character of a mourner, celebrates in plaintive strains the funeral obsequies of his ruined country, and represents Jerusalem, that once flourishing city, now sitting solitary, afflicted, widowed, deserted of her friends, betrayed by her own nearest kindred, with outstretched hands imploring relief of the passers-by, and finding none to have pity on or console her;—"urbs illa florentissima pridem et inter gentes princeps, nunc sola sedens, afflicta, vidua; deserta ab amicis, prodita a necessariis; frustra tendens manus, nec inveniens qui eam consoletur."*

It is in something of this spirit, I conceive, my fellow Christians and fellow citizens, that we ought to aspire, if it be possible, to fulfil the religious offices of this solemn public fast. First of all, doubtless, our duty is that we call to recollection each one his own personal sins, and with deep humiliation and confession of them before God, turn from them, imploring him in his divine mercy to pardon us, and lift on us the light of his reconciled countenance. But this is not the whole of our duty. Forasmuch as God deals with mankind, not exclusively as isolated individuals, each one separated from and unconnected with others; but as the members one of another and of the same body, bound together by manifold relations and ties, domestic, social, political, and religious; forasmuch as our very being and almost all the good and the evil that we experience come to us in virtue of our connection with others, and as the effects of their conduct; and forasmuch as God does not permit us to seek each one his own good alone, and in the spirit of Cain to say, "Am I my brother's keeper?" it is our duty also to call to remembrance and confess before God the sins of our people and nation, and to make intercession and supplication for *their* pardon at the throne of his grace. Especially does this seem to be incumbent upon us on this great *National Fast*, when, at the very seasonable call of the Chief Magistrate of the nation, along with our fellow citizens throughout the whole land, we are as a people, under the afflictive visitations of God's providence, come into his sanctuary, to humble ourselves under his

* De Sac. Poesi Hebr., Prælect. xxii.

mighty hand, and with confession of our sins to supplicate his mercy. So far then as it belongs to the duties of this day to speak of the sins of others, whether public or personal, social or individual, there are two opposite extremes which, in the spirit of the prophet whose words we have read, we would seek alike to avoid;—the one such a slight, negligent, superficial treatment of the subject, as to fail in that way to acquit ourselves of our duty, and obtain the religious ends of the appointment; the other a style of railing accusation and heartless oburgation, alien alike to humanity and to the spirit of true piety.

The passage which I have read is part of one of the series of prophetic discourses, delivered by the prophet under the wicked and violent reign of Jehoiachim. Without pretending to a minute and full exposition of the whole passage, which would far exceed our limits, I observe that there are three principal points of instruction and admonition prominently presented in it, to which, as appropriate to the business of this day, I invite your attention. First, that when God establishes a people under peculiar advantages, especially in respect to the knowledge and means of the true religion, it is that he may claim a peculiar and absolute property in and dominion over that people, to use them in subserviency to the interest of his kingdom. This is taught us in the symbol of the potter and his vessel, and the interpretation thereof. *Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and behold he wrought a work on the wheels. Then the word of the Lord came to me saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel.*—v. 2, 3, 5, 6. Second, that when a people so favoured, by a departure from God into sin, are failing to accomplish this end, then the destroying judgments of God are impending over that people. *And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again, another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make. Cannot I do with you as this potter, O house of Israel? saith the Lord. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my*

voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them; I will scatter them as with an east wind before the enemy; I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.—v. 4, 6, 9, 10, 17. Third, that the rule according to which God deals with a sinning people in such a case is; that their repentance shall avert his threatened judgments; their perseverance in sinful disobedience to his voice, shall bring upon them the execution of his judgments in certain, terrible, and desolating destruction. *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy; if that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them: and at what instant I shall speak, &c.*—v. 7-10, 17.

As our aim today is wholly practical, we shall endeavour, as we go over these different points, to inquire what, in these several respects, is our own case, and our own duty as a people. You will, however, easily see, that upon a field so wide and various, a full and adequate discussion, within the time of this service, is quite impossible; and will expect no more from me than a hint here and there upon some parts of it, which it will depend upon yourselves to carry out and improve.

I. When God establishes a people under peculiar advantages, especially in respect to the knowledge and means of the true religion, it is that he may claim a peculiar and absolute property in and dominion over that people, to use them in subserviency to his kingdom.—v. 2-6.

God, my brethren, has set up in the world, under Christ, as the Head thereof, a peculiar kingdom, to the interests of which he has subordinated all things in the world. This new kingdom is different from the mere kingdom of nature, which originally belonged to God as the Creator, Preserver, Owner, and Lord of all. It is the kingdom which he has established upon the ruins of the fall. It has pleased God, under the scheme of Christianity, by Christ, having through his sacrifice for sin and the atonement thereby effected made peace, through the blood of his cross to reconcile unto himself all things in earth and in heaven; to gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad; and to establish an everlasting kingdom

wherein dwelleth righteousness. (Col. 1: 20. Jn. 11: 52. 2 Pet. 3: 13.) As the reward of the humiliation and suffering unto death of the Son of God, and in order to the carrying out and executing of the Divine purposes of grace to men, Him God has exalted to be the Head of this whole economy of grace, and given all things in heaven and on earth into his hand; by him to be possessed, ruled over, and used, according to their own several proper natures, in subserviency to, and for the promotion of the ends of this new kingdom. Such, in general terms, is the faith of all Christendom. I need not enter into the details. He is the *Image* of the invisible God, the Πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως,—the First Born, that is, the *Heir* and *Lord* of the whole creation.* And he is the *Head* of the Body, the Church, who is the *Governor*, the First Born from the dead, that he might become among all himself the *Chief*.—ὡς ἐστιν Ἀρχή, Πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν, ἵνα γένηται ἐν πάντιν αὐτὸς Πρωτεύων.

Now a people to whom this is made known by the coming of the Word of God to them, are thereby laid under obligation, in all the different characters, capacities, and relations which they sustain, to recognize and acknowledge this dominion of Christ, and to spend their whole being in subserviency to and for the promotion of this kingdom of Christ. A church as a church, a state or nation as a state or nation, families as families, the various associations of business, of comity, of social intercourse, of pleasure, are bound, each within its own sphere, and according to its own proper nature, so to do.

This, in respect to churches, will be readily admitted. It is what they profess. It is the avowed object for which they exist. In respect to individuals, to families, to associations of business, of social intercourse, of pleasure, I think that, on the one hand, the principle is not in terms denied; nor on the other hand, with a clear, thorough, and practical faith, believed in and acted on. And yet why should it not? In respect to individuals,

*“Hæres apud antiquos pro Domino ponebatur.” See Vinnius’ note on Justinian’s Institutes, Lib. ii, Tit. 19, referred to by Macknight. The Πρωτότοκος is *Heir*; and the *Heir* is *Lord* of all.—Gal. 4: 1. Comp. Gen. 27: 37. Even the sceptre falls to the First Born. But the Kingdom gave he to Jehoram, because he was the first born.—2 Chron. 21: 3. Comp. Heb. 1: 1. See Macknight in loco.

is it not true that they are not their own, but bought with a price; redeemed, not with silver and gold, from their vain course of life transmitted from their forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, that they might be sanctified and holy unto God? As to the family, do not the Scriptures teach that the very constitution of this society is to be *in the Lord*? And has not God ordained that the dwelling place of every family shall be a *Beth-El*, a house of God, where God in Christ shall dwell; and every household a church, by whom he shall be worshipped and served? So as to the various associations of business, of social intercourse, and pleasure. The gold, the silver, the cattle on a thousand hills are the Lord's. The varied products of the soil, the mines, the sea, of manufactures, of commerce, of industry in all its forms; all the wealth of nations and individuals are the possessions of Christ, by him to be disposed of and used absolutely as he will. It is not otherwise with their social intercourse, their pleasures, their very amusements. When that condition of things shall exist in the world which ought to exist, the very children playing in the streets, the young men and the maidens in their pastimes, shall with the old saints and the middle aged, be *all* holy unto God, they shall all live unto him; and not upon the vessels of the Lord's house only, but upon every vessel of every habitation over this redeemed earth, and upon the very ornaments of the houses, shall be written HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD.

In respect to Christ's property in and dominion over states or nations as such, and their obligation to acknowledge and obey and serve him, I fear that even in this Christian land the great mass of its inhabitants do not so much as think of it, or even understand what the doctrine means. Nay, peradventure not a few even of serious minded and Christian people, were the doctrine clearly stated and pressed, would be stumbled, and doubt, and scarcely know what to believe or to think about it. The abhorred idea of "the union of Church and State" immediately rises up as a spectre before their excited imaginations and alarms them. And truly the combinations, utterly unlawful and in violation of Heaven's ordinances, of corrupt and despotic Powers, political and ecclesiastical which, under the great Anti-christian system, has for twelve centuries and more oppressed,

and spoiled and wasted the nations of the Old World, are justly enough an object of execration and abhorrence. Certainly, of all men, the truest and purest Christians have had most cause in all times to deprecate *such unions*; and to pray God speedily to overthrow this Babylon, to judge the Bestial Powers of the earth, and the Mother of harlots, with her harlot daughters, who sits thereon, holding in her hand the cup of her abominations, and drunk with the blood of the saints, and to cast them together into their own place. True, too, it is, that the blindness and corruption of our nature by sin create difficulties many and great enough among all men and in all times, in keeping from perversion and abuse the best and most necessary institutions of God: and specially, from the evil condition every where in many respects, of both the church and the state, this question of the proper relations between the church and the state and of *both* to the Kingdom of Christ, as a practical question, is one encompassed on all sides by such embarrassments as preclude the hope of our seeing very soon the proper adjustment of these relations. Certainly no intelligent Christian will seek to precipitate a settlement of these, before the way of the Lord is prepared; and thus involve the Christian world in the old blunders, with their far-reaching, and disastrous, and wretched consequences.

I have no time now to go into a full discussion of this great subject; to develop the doctrine with all the explanations, and qualifications, and limitations necessary to a right understanding of it; to show that "A UNION" of church and state by which they shall be blended or confounded, or there be any interference whatever of either with what appropriately belongs to the other, is no doctrine of ours, but the object of the detestation and abhorrence of ourselves, and of our fathers before us; and to point out how, in such a condition of things as ought to exist, the church and the state might be kept each within its own proper and appropriate sphere, and all the rights of conscience and all true liberty, civil and religious, not only be made consistent with, but be in the most effectual manner *secured*, by the express and acknowledged subjection of the state, as well as the church, to the dominion of Christ. But, begging that I may not be misunderstood on a subject exceedingly liable to misapprehension, and which I have not time fully to explain and guard, I wish

here merely to assert the general principle, and show from God's own word the proof, that *states* and *nations* as such, according to their own proper nature, in their own proper sphere of action, and in the discharge of their own proper functions, are, along with all other things, given by God to Christ, to be by him possessed, ruled over, and used, in subserviency to and for the promotion of his kingdom; and that states and nations as such are bound truly, explicitly, and practically to acknowledge and obey him who is thus constituted *King of kings and Lord of lords*.

Is it not so? Are not the terms universal and unlimited in which this grant of dominion is made to the Messiah? *All power*, said he himself, when, having vanquished death and spoiled Satan, leading captivity captive he ascended on high to enter into his kingdom and sit down on his throne;—*All power* is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Mt. 28: 18. I saw, says the prophet Daniel, in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him. Dan. 7: 13, 14. So David in the eighth psalm; Thou hast crowned him with glory and honour: thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet. Ps. 8: 5, 6. Comp. Heb. 2: 7-9. What the prophets thus represent in prophecy the apostles describe as fulfilled in the event. Christ Jesus, says Paul to the Philippians, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God; but made himself of no reputation, and took on him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross: wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of things in heaven and in earth and under the earth, and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Phil. 2: 5-11. And yet more specifically the same Apostle to the Ephesians;—Christ he raised from the dead and set at his own right hand in

the heavenly places, far above all principality,—mark the terms,—far above *all principality*, and *power*, and *might*, and *dominion*, and *every name* that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come, and hath put *all things* under his feet and gave him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all. Eph. 1: 20,—23 In accordance with this the Apostle John designates him as *the Prince of the kings of the earth*. Rev. 1: 5. As he himself says of himself in Solomon;—*By me kings reign, and princes decree justice; by me princes rule, and nobles, all the judges of the earth*. Prov. 8: 15, 16.—That is, under his appointment, by his authority, in his name, according to his law, do these rulers of the nations bear rule.—Hence we read in Isaiah, that when he shall sit in his throne on Mount Zion and appear in his glory there, the Gentiles shall come to his light and kings to the brightness of his rising; Isa. 60: 3. *The Gentiles and kings*;—the *nations* and their *rulers* with them at their head. And in the seventy-second Psalm; *Yea, and all kings shall fall down before him; all nations shall serve him*. Ps. 72: 11.

Why then do the nations tumultuously rage and the people meditate vanity? Why have the kings of the earth determinedly set themselves and the rulers plotted together against Jehovah and against his Anointed, “Let us break their bands asunder, and cast off their yoke from us?”—He that sitteth in the heavens will laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision; he shall speak to them in his wrath, and pour his terror upon them in his burning indignation. Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve ye Jehovah with fear, and rejoice with trembling. *Kiss the Son*. *Kiss*;—the act of homage, of the acknowledgment of allegiance, of subjection, of obedience. *Kiss the Son*, lest he be angry and ye perish from the way when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed all they that put their trust in him!

Pre-eminently is it true, that when God establishes a people, whether as a Church, or as a nation, or as an aggregation of individuals bound together in the various relations of the society of comity, and associations of business and of pleasure,

under peculiar advantages, especially in respect to the knowledge and means of the true religion, he claims a peculiar property in and dominion over them, that they shall subserve the interest of his kingdom. This was so in the case of Israel and of Judah. Them, in Abraham their head, God separated unto himself to be a peculiar people. He brought them with a mighty hand, and an outstretched arm, out of Egypt, cast out the heathen before them, planted them, as a nation and as a Church, in the land which he had promised to Abraham to give it to him and his seed for a possession, gave to them his law, and his statutes, and his ordinances, and established his dwelling-place with them, and dealt with them in a manner peculiarly gracious. To them pertained the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service, and the promises; theirs were the fathers, and of them, as concerning the flesh, Christ was to come. And all this was that he might, as the case required, and as it pleased him under that dispensation, rule over and use them to subserve his kingdom;—that of them Christ might arise and salvation come forth from them to the Gentiles—to the world.

And is not this equally true of *us* as a people? Has not God established us under peculiar advantages? I cannot wait to recount all his gracious dealings toward us, in our origin, in all the circumstances connected with our planting as a people, the achievement of our independence as a nation, the establishment of our institutions, political, ecclesiastical, and social, and the manifold blessings which, with so bountiful a hand, he has poured upon us through our whole unexampled career of prosperity. Is it not true that God has signally marked us out by the bestowment of peculiar advantages, physical, intellectual, moral, social, political, and religious; especially in the possession of Christianity in its truest and purest forms, untrammelled by the commandments and ordinances of men? Surely must we say, he hath not dealt so with any other people. And is not all this that he may claim a special and peculiar property in and dominion over *us* as a people, as a nation and as a Church in the nation, that in all the different characters, capacities, and relations which we sustain, we shall exist, shall live, shall spend our being and be spent, in carrying

through our own land and over the earth the triumphs of that heavenly reign by which the world shall be reclaimed to God, and to true happiness, honour and glory? Confused and mistaken ideas about the peculiar nature of the Israelitish Theocracy, so common even among writers of reputation, may perplex the minds of the ill-instructed and indiscriminating, and strengthen the hands of the wicked in seeking to deny and cast off the dominion of God and his Anointed. Other men will do as they choose, will believe as they choose, about this. For one, I believe and assert, that God's Christ is as truly this day king of Ohio as he was ever the king of Judea; as truly the king of this whole Confederacy of States as he was ever the king of the twelve tribes of Israel. Say who will, "Who is Jehovah, that we should serve him? who lord over us?"—who will, "We will not have this man to reign over us:" *Jehovah, he is God; and this is the will of the Father, that all men honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*

II. When a people peculiarly favoured of God, especially in respect to the knowledge and means of the true religion, by a departure from God into sin are failing to accomplish, in the promotion of his kingdom, the end for which he has raised them up, then the destroying judgments of God are impending over that people. v. 4, 6, 9, 10, 17.

Unquestionably there is in their whole nature, character, and design, an essential difference among the afflictive dispensations of God's providence which fall upon men. Some of these are designed by God as means of reproof, of correction, of instruction in righteousness; disciplinary means used to turn men from sin to God; the chastisements of a Father's rod, the pledges of a Father's love to his children, the evidence of their filial relation to him, secured to them by his promise and his covenant, and administered in fatherly mercy and kindness, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and made meet for his fellowship here and for the inheritance of the saints in light. Ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he

receiveth." If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons. We have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Heb. 12. 5-10. Hence, to the people of God, along with peace through Christ, introduction by him to a state of grace, and joy in hope of the glory of God, is classed afflictions, as one of the blessings of a justified state. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also, knowing that tribulation worketh patience, (*υπομονήν*, an abiding,) and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. Rom. 5. 3-5. And so the Apostle James; My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers trials; knowing that the trial of your faith worketh patience; (*υπομονήν*,) and let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1. 2-4. And so in the eighty-ninth Psalm; I have made a covenant with my Chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant;—if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod and their iniquities with stripes: nevertheless my loving kindness I will not take from him; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips. Ps. 89. 3, 30-34.

Other calamities and afflictions can be regarded in no other light than that of the execution of judgments by God, as the righteous Judge of the earth, the earnest of the wrath to come, and beginning of endless sorrow. Son of man, prophesy and say, Thus saith the Lord, A sword, a sword is sharpened and furbished: it is sharpened to make a sore slaughter, furbished that it may glitter: I have set the point of the sword against all their gates, that their heart may faint and their ruins be multiplied: it is made bright, sharpened for the slaughter. Thus saith the Lord God, This Jerusalem! I have set it in the midst of the nations and countries round about her: and she hath changed my judgments into wickedness more than the nations, and my statutes more than the countries that are round about her; for they have refused my judgments and my stat-

utes, they have not walked in them : Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I, even I, am against thee, and will execute judgments in the midst of thee, in the sight of the nations. I will do in thee that which I have not done, because of thine abominations : I will execute judgments in thee, and the whole remnant of thee will I scatter into all the winds. Ezek. 21. 9, 10, 15 ; 5. 5-10.

It is of these calamities, which are the execution of Heaven's vindictory justice, God's destroying judgments because of sin, that we here speak. These, we say, are impending over a people, who, peculiarly favoured of the Lord, turn away from him, transgress his law, refuse his dominion, and so are failing to accomplish, in the promotion of his kingdom, the end for which he has raised them up. Much more is this so, if such a people are, not failing merely to accomplish the end for which God has planted and built them up,—but acting in opposition to that end ; setting themselves to counterwork, to thwart, as much as in them lies, to defeat that end. These destroying judgments may not be such as are absolutely decreed, and carry with them a delivering over to judicial blindness and obduration of heart, because of foregoing sins obstinately and irreclaimably persevered in. Such was the case, in the end, of apostate and rebellious Judah, finally rejected of God for their rejection of Christ. And such, in our own days, is the case of Antichrist, so like apostate Judah, in his sin and in his doom. Him, it is absolutely and unconditionally declared, the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth and destroy with the brightness of his coming. 2 Thess. 2. 8. It is not of such judgments we speak ; but of judgments deserved, threatened, actually impending over a people, as was the case with Judah in the days of the prophet whose words we are considering, and as must and will, unless the Divine mercy be interposed to turn them away, in the end fall upon every sinning people, in their utter overthrow and ruin.

The plain and obvious principle upon which God proceeds in this is, that Jehovah is God the Lord ; he has made all things for his own glory ; and he will have service of his creatures, or he will reject and cast them away ; he will have fruit

of the work of his hands, or he will destroy it. So we are taught in the parable of the fig-tree; If it bear fruit, well: if not, cut it down; why cumbereth it the ground? Such is the method in which God deals with a sinful people. Let me, I pray you, sing of my Friend, greatly beloved, my Friend's song of his vineyard. My friend had a vineyard in a high hill of great fertility. And he digged it up, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the vine of Sorek, and built a tower in the midst of it, and hewed out in it a wine-vat, and waited for it to bear grapes; and it bore wolf-grapes! And now, O inhabitant of Jerusalem and man of Judah, judge, I pray you, between me and my vineyard. What is there to do more to my vineyard and I have not done it? Why did I wait for it to bear grapes, and it bore wild grapes? Come now, let me tell you what I am about to do to my vineyard;—remove its hedge, and it shall be devoured,—break down its wall, and it shall become a place overrun and trodden down. I will make it a waste,—not pruned,—not dressed,—overgrown with briars and thorns,—and I will command the clouds that they rain no rain upon it. For the vineyard of *Jehovah of Hosts is the House of Israel*, and *the man of Judah is the cherished plant of his delight*; and he waited for judgment, and lo! blood; for righteousness, but lo! the cry of the oppressed. Isa. 5. 1-7.* So did God to Israel and to Judah of old. The people whom he had chosen as his own peculiar treasure;—(for when the Most High distributed the nations, as he spread abroad the sons of Adam, he appointed the boundaries of the nations according to the number of the angels of God, and his people Jacob became the portion of *the LORD*, Israel the allotment of his inheritance;†)—the people whom he had chosen as his own peculiar treasure, and separated unto himself to be a holy people; whom he set in the midst of the nations, high above them all; to whom he gave his law, and his statutes, and his ordinances; whom he instructed continually, sending unto them all his servants the prophets, rising up early and sending, and dealt with as he dealt not with any other nation;—when this people re-

* See Rosenmüller, Lowth, and Alexander, in loco.

† So Deut. xxxii. 8, 9, in the LXX.

belled against him and sinned ; first he scourged them with the rod of his displeasure ; and then, laying upon them the plumb-line of judgment, gave them up to destruction, sore breaking them by the hand of Egypt, and Tyre, and Chaldea ; till at length he delivered them into captivity to their enemies, and at last finally rejected and cast them off from being a people,—a monument of his righteous judgments, as they had been of his peculiar and distinguishing mercies. So before, he dealt with the old world, sending to them Noah, a preacher of righteousness, warning them of the coming ruin, and when they would not hear, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly and destroying them with an utter overthrow. So he has since dealt, and is still continuing to deal, with sinful churches and nations. I went down to the potter's house, and behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel was marred in the hand of the potter ; so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in my hand, O house of Israel. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant, if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them : I will scatter them as with an east wind ; I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity. v. 3, 4, 6, 10, 17.

It is of great moment to inquire *when* a people is in this case,—that the destroying judgments of God are impending over them. We mean not, when a people actually delivered up to destroying judgments, so that the evils they suffer are to be regarded as the mere execution of judicial wrath. But, when is there reason to apprehend concerning a people, established by God under peculiar advantages, especially in respect to the knowledge and means of the true religion, that because of their failing of, and opposition to, the end for which God has raised them up, the destroying judgments of God are actually impending over and threatening to fall upon them.

I cannot enlarge upon this subject. But I think that all, at least all who are here present to-day, will agree that there are strong reasons to apprehend that this is the case with any such

a people, where there are found concurring in respect to them these four things. First, where there is with a vast majority of them an utter disregard of that which is the proper end for which as a people they have been made to exist. Second, where there is a general prevalence of an atheistic spirit of ungodliness, and of abounding wickedness of all kinds. Third, where there is a wide-spread and great corruption of the true religion, and much loss of its life and power even among those who profess it in its purest forms. Fourth, where these evils prevail against much of light and knowledge; and of mercies, and warnings, and patience and forbearance and long-suffering, on the part of God.

And now the great question for us is, what in this respect is the case of ourselves as a people. By these *four criteria* let us try this question.

First, where there is with a vast majority of a people individually, and with them collectively as a people, an almost utter disregard of that which is the proper end for which as a people they have been made to exist. How is this with us? I have adverted to the end for which God has manifestly raised us up and designed us as a people,—to bear a prominent and great part in that vast revolution going on through all the earth, by which the nations are to be blessed, and the kingdom of God and his Anointed is to be established among them; and to the obligation binding upon us as a people, in all our relations, individual, domestic, social, political, ecclesiastical, explicitly, truly, and practically to recognize both God and his Christ, and to enter into and prosecute that which is the appointed end of our being as a people. Have we as a people understood and done this? What proportion of the whole people of the land, as individuals, families, private associations, do you judge, have been, or are now doing this? What proportion have understood it?—have even so much as thought of it? How far have all the business and other social relations, pursuits, and interests of the country been made subservient to this end? The several States of this land, and the Confederacy of States, in their capacity as such, and within their own respective spheres,—have they been accomplishing the will of God concerning them in this behalf? Even the Church, as a body, as a whole,—has

it been fulfilling the counsel of God, and entering into and doing the work to which it is called of God? I leave the question to your consideration.

Let us try it by the *second* criterion,—a general prevalence of an atheistic spirit of ungodliness and of abounding wickedness of all kinds. How is it with us in this respect as a people? How with us as a nation in our public, national capacity?

How as to piety toward God? The men, my brethren, who planted the first colonies in this land, and laid the foundations of these States, were men who feared God, and even in their political affairs, as in other things, were not ashamed to honour his Son. In the days, too, of our weakness, and fear, and perplexity, when struggling to throw off a foreign dominion, and to gain a place as an independent nation among the Powers of the earth, the Fathers of our country made in her name, an explicit, formal, and solemn appeal to God in the heavens, as the righteous Judge and Governor of nations, to own the justice of her cause, and vindicate her rights. He heard, and answered; gave victory to our arms, and independence to us as a nation, and peace in all our borders, and great prosperity and blessing to us as a people. But oh! how changed is all the scene since that! In the Constitution, which is the bond of union of these States, under which they have grown up from thirteen to thirty great commonwealths spread and spreading over the whole continent, and the medium through which so manifold benefits have flowed to us as a people, there is not found the name of God, nor any reference, direct or indirect, express or implied, to his law, his providence, or his being, unless it be in the ambiguous term “I swear,” in the prescribed oath of office, and the formal designation of the era of its establishment, as that of “our Lord.” Even this is not enough: but the Constitution contains an express and positive provision, that “no religious test shall ever be required as a qualification for any office of public trust under the United States.” So that the public official may swear either by heaven, or by earth, or by Jerusalem, or by his own head, or whatever else he will; and the open and avowed worshipper of Ormuzd, or Zeus, or Jupiter, or of Ahriman, or Pluto; of Jehovah or of Satan; and he who alike denies them all, may alike possess the highest

honours, hold the highest trusts, and exercise the highest functions, legislative, judicial, or executive, under the government. Mr. Luther Martin, a distinguished member of the Convention of 1787, from Maryland, in his report of its proceedings to the Legislature of that State, remarks, that "there were some members *so unfashionable* as to think that a belief of the existence of a Deity, and of a future state of rewards and punishments, would be some security for the good conduct of our rulers, and that in a Christian country it would be at least decent to hold out some distinction between the professors of Christianity and downright infidelity and paganism."* But most thought otherwise, and the provision was adopted by a great majority. Mr. Madison, in his papers, containing full memoranda of the Debates and Proceedings, tells us that in the Convention, at a time when God seemed likely to pour confusion into their councils, and bring their deliberations to nought, a venerable and distinguished member rose in his place, and, referring in terms very appropriate and impressive, to the dependence of States on the God of nations, and to their own manifest need of wisdom from on high, proposed that thenceforward daily prayers should be offered. Various frivolous objections were urged by different members, and after several ineffectual attempts to that end, the question was shuffled over by an adjournment, and not again resumed.† Dr. Franklin, who was the member that made the motion, says, in a note found in his published works, that "except three or four persons, the Convention thought prayers unnecessary." Almost, if not quite, from the origin of the Government, the Sabbath has been constantly profaned over the whole land, by the transportation of the mails, and other postal arrangements of the mail service. When some twenty years ago petitions were sent by large bodies of Christian citizens to Congress, praying that the Government might not continue to be thus the corruptor of the public morals, and the insulter of the Lord of the Sabbath, they were told in the Report of the Committee of the Senate, to whom the subject was referred, that "legislators, as such, are not under obligation to know what

*Secret Debates and Proceedings of the Convention, p. 87, Albany, 1821.

†Madison Papers, vol. ii, pp. 984-5.

the law of God is." And the man who had the front to make this declaration, the people not long after took and put into the second office in the government, to preside over that Senate. Of the drunken and pugilistic Sabbath day dramas, of which the Senate Chamber was lately the scene, or of the exhibitions of moral character, at the capital, by the last Legislature of our own State, I need not speak. These things are fresh in the recollections of all. But tell me, if the Heavens do rule, will God be so rejected, contemned, insulted with impunity? Is there not reason to apprehend that his judgments may be impending over us, that even now already the fire of his indignation may be burning, and he saying within himself, Shall I not visit for these things? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

Have the Powers that be shown more regard to justice toward men, than of respect for the fear of God? Their course upon two subjects shall furnish our evidence on this point. *Slavery*.—It has been our boast that our whole political system is essentially based upon ethical grounds, founded upon the universal and immutable principles of justice; and that it is the glory of our political institutions that they recognize and provide adequately to protect the natural and inalienable rights, personal, political, and religious, which by the gift of God belong alike to all mankind. We, at our origin as a nation, when our own rights were infringed, asserted this; we proclaimed it; we dissolved our political connection with the nation from which as a people we are sprung, and waged a long, and bloody, and often apparently hopeless war, to maintain it. How now? Three millions of human beings born on our soil are, by the laws under which they live, declared to be "taken and held to be, to all intents and purposes whatsoever, goods and chattels personal in the hands of their owners;" are trafficked in as such; by the statutes of most of the Slave States are forbidden so much as to be taught to read the Word of God; and are held in law to be incapable of sustaining any relation or possessing any rights of moral persons, political, social, or domestic. As to the part of the General Government in the matter, its Founders showed at least some remains of that last natural grace that hangs by the wrong-doer,—a sense of shame; and the Conven-

tion that formed the Constitution sedulously excluded the terms *slave* and *slavery* from that instrument. Mr. Martin of Maryland, in his Report to his State, says, "They anxiously sought to avoid the admission of *expressions* which might be odious in the ears of Americans; although they were willing to admit into their system *the things* which those expressions signified." "I found," says he, "*the Eastern States*, notwithstanding their aversion to slavery, very willing to indulge the Southern States, provided the Southern States would in turn lay no restriction on the navigation acts."* And so they wrapt it up. The Committee to whom the subject had been referred soon agreed, and the provisions designed to cover the case were adopted by the Convention. Under terms vague, equivocal, and ambiguous, but well understood, the Government was denied for twenty years the power to prohibit, and during that period the flag of the nation protected the *foreign slave trade*, which at the expiration of this period, thus sanctified to its gains, Congress declared to be *piracy* punishable by death. How far the administration of the General Government has been made to bend in its whole course into a subserviency to that interest, is known to those who have looked into its history, and observed events in their progress. This may be judged of by all from the significant fact, that at the close of the present Presidential term, out of the *sixty four* years which will have elapsed from its organization, the office of Chief Magistrate will have been held by men from the Slave States, much inferior in the number of their population to the free, *fifty-two years*; by men from the free states *twelve years* and *one month*.†

*Secret Debates and Proceedings, pp. 63, 64, &c., where see the very strong grounds on which the provisions on this subject were opposed in the Convention.

†On this topic of *Slavery*, the subject of a controversy often so wretchedly managed on both sides, I feel it to be a duty to speak with precision, and even with circumspection. It will be observed that the slavery spoken of in the Sermon is *not any system of mere servitude*, which recognizes the servant as a *moral person*, though in an inferior relation, and *protects his rights as such*; which servitude may be right or wrong according to the circumstances of the case. But the slavery spoken of is that system which declares human beings to be, *not moral persons*, but "*goods and chattels*," incapable of sustaining personal relations or possessing personal rights, with all that legitimately flows

War furnishes us with our other evidence on the question of our justice as a nation. I pass over the gasconade, in former years, of both Government and people about war with France and with Britain. They found a *safer* foe on whom to show their prowess, in a feeble, and abject, and unprovided people. I cannot here go into the question of the Mexican war. But now that the events are past, and with them all mere party feeling, I trust, past also, I ask you carefully to read all the public documents, to examine the evidence, and to come to an impartial, just, and truthful conclusion on the question. If you do so, I think that you will find to be true, what some of the most distinguished statesmen of both the great political parties at the time said was the fact, that according to the well known law of nations and the principles of natural justice on which that law is founded, no *casus belli*, no case justifying hostilities, had taken place when our troops invaded the Mexican territory; and that the war was, from beginning to end, on our part one

from this the fundamental principle of the slavery with which we have to do. This distinction is vital to the whole question of the moral character of slavery. It is a distinction which a child, who chooses, can perceive. And yet a poor play upon the ambiguity of the terms *slave* and *slavery*, confounding the well known meaning they have among us with that of *servant* and *servitude*, lies at the foundation of no small part of the confusion of ideas brought into the discussion of the subject and of the unprofitable controversy about it. *Slavery*, as the term is here used, and as it is defined by the laws creating the institution, no honest man will defend or say to be right. Why then should there be any controversy about it? As to the means of its removal, among reflecting men there is a like agreement. All believe that this is mainly the moral power of the gospel, aided by political and economical considerations. But, trusting in the spirit of Christianity in the heart of the master as the only power that can be relied on to induce him to give to his bondman that which is just and equal, and to the same spirit to influence the servant to fulfil his duties, whether as bond or free, it is the business of the church, and specially it is the business of the ministers of God's word, in fit time and place, with discrimination and right temper, to expound the Divine Law in its application to the whole subject, and to point out the moral character of the existing institution of slavery as judged by that law. This, if done with discretion and sound wisdom, can interfere with no right and put in jeopardy no interest. The great and complicated difficulties in the way of right-minded men doing what they would are well known. And while the noble efforts made on the political field for the removal of the evil invite the respect of all, the self-sacrificing exertions of not a few Christian masters to extend to their servants the influence of the gospel,—the best emancipation measure after all,—must command the profound sympathy of every true friend of God and man.

of aggression, of spoliation, of plunder. I charge this on no party exclusively. One party made the war. The other said the war was unnecessary; it was unjust; it was very wicked;—but eagerly lent themselves,—shall I say *sold* themselves?—to prosecute it. Both parties, as if in emulation of each other to see who should go farthest in the wrong, rushed to the battle fields: both united in pouring through the whole land the shoutings of triumph,—of the triumph of might over right: the party of the opposition, that said the war was wrong, unjust, wicked, took one of the champions of the war, and avowedly for no other reason than the part he had borne in its prosecution, made him the Chief Magistrate of the nation; and now all parties, and all alike, seem with a most satisfied air to think, Well, really—perhaps the war *was* not just right;—but this great domain we have gotten is a valuable acquisition, and the gold mines *are* a very profitable gain! Now if these things are so, and there be a God in the heavens that judgeth among the nations, I think that this nation, however it may have for the time seemed to triumph in the wrong, has an unsettled case in controversy, upon which judgment is yet to be rendered by the righteous Judge of all the earth. He looked for judgment, but, lo, blood!—for righteousness, but lo, the cry of the oppressed!

If from the public affairs of the nation we descend to those of private life, what do we find? What shall I say of the prevalent ungodliness and irreligion in the land? What of the blasphemous profanation of the name of God and of his Christ which sears the lips of such multitudes? What of the widespread and general desecration of the Sabbath in all the avenues of business, and the pursuits of pleasure and of vice? What of the extensive disrespect to parental and other just authority? What of the disregard of human life, the spirit of violence and blood, the savage rencountres and duels, the murders of “honour” and of dishonour, that defile the land? What of the vile impurity that does not even as ashamed hide its head; but, past shame, comes forth in printed publications in our streets and even to our very doors? What of the violation so extensively and in forms so manifold of the rights of property? What of the spirit of detraction, and defamation, and lying? What of the hearts of men filled with all evil

passions and covetous desires? Which of God's commandments have we not broken? Which of all his laws have not we and our people transgressed? When we remember all our privileges and think of all these our sins and our iniquities, public and personal, social and individual, have we not reason to apprehend that God may be saying of us; I have spread out my hands all the day unto a rebellious people which walketh in a way not good, after their own thoughts; a people that provoketh me to anger continually to my face? Lo! it is written before me, I will not keep silence, till I recompense, till I recompense into their bosom your iniquities and the iniquities of your fathers together, and pour into their bosom the full measure of their deeds from the beginning. Isa. 65: 2-8.*

Let us try this question of impending judgments by the third criterion,—a wide-spread corruption of the true religion in the land, and a great loss of its life and power even in those who profess it in its purest forms. And here what shall we say of the countless Protean forms of soul-destroying error, usurping the abused name of Christianity, which on all sides so abound? What of the monuments of idolatry and superstition with which an apostate church, as Pagan and more wicked than old Heathen Rome, is every where filling the land? And, if we come to the Protestant Reformed Church as it exists in its various departments among us, what shall we say? Is it the Vine with the blessing in it, of which God saith, Destroy it not; and because of which he will spare the land in which it is planted?—the salt preserving the mass?—the light enlightening the world? God forbid that I should speak lightly of his Church; for I do think it is the hope of the land and of the

* Note the apparent enallage personæ in the change from *their* to *your*, v. 6. "It is possible, however, that the change is not a mere grammatical anomaly, but significant, and intended to distinguish between three generations. I will repay into *their* bosom (that of their descendants) *your* iniquities and the iniquities of *your fathers*. Supposing his contemporaries addressed, there would then be a distinct allusion to *their progenitors*, the measure of whose guilt *they* filled up, and to *their children* upon whom it was to be conspicuously visited." *Alexander*. "The consequences of your own sins and of the long defection of the nation from virtue and pure religion shall come rushing upon you as accumulated floods. This is in accordance with the Scripture doctrine every where, that the consequences of the sins of ancestors pass over and visit their posterity." *Barnes*. Comp. Ex. xx. 5, et al.

world. But two questions here I will suggest for your consideration. Our shameful, disgraceful divisions,—what shall we say of these? The Body of Christ rent by schism;—party organized in separation from and opposition to party; altar set up against altar and ministration against ministration; and oftentimes emulations, strife, envy, wrath, bitterness, in the household of faith! My brethren!—these things ought not so to be. This is not the place to inquire who are to blame, or who most so; nor how these evils are to be remedied. Peradventure if God by and by lets the fires of persecution burn upon his people, until he purge away their dross and take away all their tin, their hearts may then be melted and flow together in one, and they be cast in the mould of a purer faith than any of the parties now holds, and there be breathed into them the spirit of a purer life than any of them is animated by, and so there become *one body* and *one Spirit*. The other question I wish to ask, without even by implication adventuring any judgment of my own upon it, is this;—Whether there be with Christians in the different branches of the Church the intimate and thorough acquaintance with the various truths of God's word, the habit of feeding upon it, and the deep experiences of the inward life and power of godliness, which belonged to at least some classes of the godly in former times? Or has our religion in becoming diffused over a wider surface, at the same time become more superficial; in becoming outwardly in some respects more active, become inwardly less deep and vigorous in the springs of its interior life? Is the Church among us such, and so doing her work, as that Mount Zion stands fast in the midst of our land, the joy of the whole earth; Zion's walls and bulwarks are salvation; and God is known in her palaces for a refuge? Oh! Christians and fellow-citizens, *here* if any where is the hope of our country and of the world. Walk about ZION, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof; mark her palaces; that ye may tell to the generation following, that *This God is our God forever and ever*.

Let us try the question of impending judgments by the last criterion I have mentioned. Are departure from God, sin against him, disobedience to his voice persevered in against much of light and knowledge; and on the part of God much

of mercies and warnings, of patience and forbearance and long-suffering? How is it with us as a people in this respect? What opportunities and means of knowing the will of God and our own duty have we enjoyed! From us the key of knowledge has not been taken away by a wicked priesthood, who will not themselves enter into the kingdom of heaven, and hinder them that would enter in. With us the word of God is not bound; but free and going freely over the whole land, seeking entrance with its light to every house and every heart. To us the Scriptures are not a sealed book,—but open, that every man may read in his own tongue wherein he was born the wonderful works of God. To us the gospel has from the beginning been preached; and, with all the imperfections which have marked its ministration, preached more fully and faithfully than by the great body of the ministry of perhaps any other land. Other means of light and knowledge have abounded to us. And of God's *mercies* to us as a people, what shall I say? I cannot recount them. If I would declare and speak of them they are more than can be numbered. And of his *warnings* and patient long-suffering forbearance, what? Have we been without warnings? Turn your thoughts back over the last seventeen years, to go no further in our retrospect. Seventeen years ago the Angel of Death in the pestilence stalked over our land, slaying his thousands; and this year, scattering wider and thicker his fatal arrows, he has, through cities, and villages, and country, been slaying his tens of thousands; and has come through our own streets and into our own doors; and, even now while I speak, his footsteps are heard and his poisonous breath is felt in our dwellings. Have you forgotten the conflagrations, that in one December night of 1835, consumed property to the value of from \$17,000,000 to \$20,000,000, in the great commercial capital of our country; and within a period of two years about the same time \$20,000,000 more in other cities and towns;—three or four years ago \$5,000,000 more in Pittsburgh;—a few weeks ago \$3,000,000 in St. Louis;—and in other places I know not how much more? Do you remember the universal prostration and deep embarrassment of business, beginning in 1837 and extending through the next five or six years, over the whole length and breadth of the land, involving pecuniary

losses to be computed, not by millions, but by hundreds of millions? Do you consider how this very year, by fire, and flood, and frost, and rain, and rust, and worm, God has been blowing upon the industry in its various forms of our people, blasting its fruits, and diminishing the means of living? Within the period which I have designated, once we were menaced with a war with France; thrice with Great Britain; and three times we have been actually involved in its horrors,—once with Mexico, and twice with the savages on our frontiers. In '32 and '33 we were on the verge of a civil war over the Tariff controversy: and at this moment, in the same quarter, unprincipled and vaulting ambition, which has overshot itself, is seeking to soothe the chagrin of its disappointment, by plotting treason, because these free States and some of the slave States with them hesitate to enlist in a propagandism of slavery to new territories of this continent where its polluting foot-print has not yet been set. And when and how that dark cloud that overhangs half our land, in lurid gleams of portentous fires and muttering thunders, giving tokens of the anger of a righteous God who sitteth in the heavens, beholdeth the actions of men on the earth, heareth the cry of the oppressed, and judgeth among the people and kindreds of the nations, may break and descend in desolating judgment upon our guilty nation;—or whether the Father of mercies will turn away from us our iniquity and with it his righteous indignation, the Omniscient himself alone can tell. I pray that his visitations to us may be in mercy and not in judgment.

Now, my fellow-Christians and fellow-citizens, let us lay all these things together;—our peculiar privileges and advantages, our high calling as a people, and the manner in which we are answering all this; our ungodliness and sins, public and personal, social and individual; and our perseverance in these against light, and knowledge, and mercies, and these warnings of God's providence of which I have just spoken; and, tell me, do they not furnish reasons to fear that worse afflictions than we have yet suffered,—even the destroying judgments of a righteous God, may be hanging over and ready to descend upon us as a people? At least is there not cause to apprehend that if we still continue, after all these things, to go on to sin yet

more and more, despising the goodness and forbearance and long-suffering of God, it will henceforth be to treasure up to ourselves wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God?

My brethren, I take no delight in saying these things. Oh! surely it is no pleasure to me to accuse mine own nation; to set in order and speak of the sins, and crimes, and guilt, and exposure to impending wrath, of mine own country and mine own people. Its great errors and derelictions of duty notwithstanding, this country is the asylum of the oppressed of other lands; the home of the free: its political institutions, in the essential justice of their fundamental principles and the admirable wisdom of their structure, are such as there are, and have been, none like any where else on the earth: on this fair domain, too, extend some of the noblest streets, and stand some of the most stately and goodliest of the tabernacles of the city of our God: and out of our Zion, we do verily believe, that in no small part salvation is to go forth to the nations.—And oh! how much more gladly would I, if it were the time, speak of all *these* things. No; my country, with all thy great faults, there is none other like to thee! I will bind thee to my heart; and say, If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its cunning—my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy. I am no prophet of rebuke. Unfeignedly would I have preferred that the offices of this hour had been discharged by some of the pastors of the churches here assembled, to whom indeed I think that they more appropriately belonged. But when, at their and your solicitation, I consented to undertake the service, you did not expect me, in the midst of providences such as those by which we are surrounded, with death on every side, and standing here on this day of solemn, public, national fasting, humiliation and prayer to God, in his sanctuary to speak to you out of his Oracles his word—you did not expect me to act the holiday orator, or to prophesy to you smooth things;—a part as alien to your wishes, as it would be to the solemnities of the occasion, and to my own dispositions. Standing here, at such a time, and in such a service, I hear a voice saying to me,—Now therefore go to; speak to the men of Judah and to the inhabi-

tants of Jerusalem, saying, Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I frame evil against you, and devise a device against you:—return now every one from his evil way, and make your ways and your doings good.

In such a course there is hope: for we are taught in our text—

III. That the Rule according to which God deals with a people in such a case is; that Repentance shall avert his threatened judgments; perseverance in disobedience to his voice shall bring upon them his judgments in sure and terrible destruction. v. 7-10, 17.

That upon which turns the Divine procedure toward a people in such a case, is *their* REPENTANCE. The nature of this Repentance which we preach, its relations to *the judgment* and *the mercy* of God, and its influence on the sinner's safety, I need not here wait to expound. It is the turning of the whole being of sinful men, under a true sense of sin and an apprehension of the Divine mercy in Christ, from sin and all ungodliness, with contrition of spirit on account thereof, back to God, with a full purpose of heart and a corresponding endeavour after a course of new obedience in all things to his will. Being a return to God in Christ, through faith in his name, by whom we have the atonement, peace with God and access to the Divine favour, it turns away from the penitent the Divine judgments impending over them because of sin. This is the duty and the means of safety to a sinful people, over whom hang the threatened judgments of God on account of their departure from him. To such a people it will bring safety and peace; for God waits to be gracious unto them, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Therefore saith the Lord God, Repent and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away all your transgressions whereby ye have transgressed, and make you a new heart and a new spirit; for why will ye die? For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God; wherefore turn and live ye. Ezek. 18: 30-32.

This turning of a people to God must be by them in all the different characters, capacities, and relations which they sustain, and in which they have sinned in departing from him.

Individuals in concerns private and personal, families in concerns domestic, churches in concerns ecclesiastical, states and nations in concerns political and national,—all,—all, in their several places, capacities and relations, must return unto Him whose they are, and who claims an absolute and unlimited property in and dominion over them, and yield themselves in their whole being to receive the law of God in Christ, and to promote the ends of his kingdom. In this course there will be safety. It is no where else to be found. God is, indeed, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and of great kindness. But he is God, and his honour he will not suffer to be taken from him. He will be glorified by the willing subjection of men to him; or he will glorify himself in their destruction. If they will not hear his voice, if his instructions be disregarded, his mercies abused, his warnings unheeded, his threatenings despised, his long-suffering patience exhausted, then he will come out of his place in the execution of judgment terribly to punish those who thus rebel against him. He will say of them; Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord; they have contemned the Holy One of Israel; they are gone away backward. Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more. Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof, therefore your destruction cometh as a whirlwind. For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord; therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the turning away of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them. But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.

Friends, countrymen, brethren, to you is this voice of God addressed. You are under his frowns because of sin. His hand presses you sore. You feel that it lies heavy upon you and upon the people of your land; and therefore are you come to-day into his house, even unto his seat, to inquire wherefore he contendeth with you. From his Oracles, from your own annals, from what is passing before your own eyes and in your

own lives, known and read of all men, I have endeavoured to tell you this in part. Peradventure, in a particular point here and there, I may in your judgment have erred in the view I have taken of some of the subjects of which I have spoken. But, as to the main argument, I trust that, not handling the word of God deceitfully, by manifestation of the truth we have commended ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. And now, come, hear the rod, and who hath appointed it. The voice of God calls you, calls your people,—calls *his* people, for we will believe that *your* people are *his* people, a chosen generation, a holy nation, a peculiar people, called in his purpose and by his providence to a high ministry in showing forth the praises of his glorious truth and grace to the world—the voice of God calls upon you and your people, who are also *his* people, to return unto him. This return to God must be, I repeat, in all the different characters, capacities, and relations, in which as a people we have departed from him and have been failing of the end for which he has raised us up and distinguished us by advantages so great.

Some of the ways in which we have so departed from God and sinned, I have endeavoured to point out. I cannot go over these points again. But the practical question brought home by the providence and by the word of God to you this day, is, Will you, in all these ways whereby as a people we have departed from God, return unto him? Will you turn from every evil way, and earnestly seek to perform every duty, in a constant, uniform, consistent, and universal God-fearing endeavour to fulfil all your obligations, public and personal, social and individual, to God and to man? Will you, in your respective places, as officers in the church or in the state, as church members, as citizens, as men, by all proper means, labour to engage our whole people in a like endeavour after reformation and obedience in all things, ecclesiastical and political, social and personal, religious and secular, to the will of God concerning them? Will you in all the various relations in which you stand, exert yourselves to bring this whole people, in all the different characters and capacities they sustain, into a willing subjection to God in Christ and subserviency to the kingdom of Heaven among men? Then, in the re-establishment of the

union of Earth with Heaven, men shall be blessed. Accomplishing the end for which God has raised us up, we shall be secure from all evil in his favour, and our happiness be that of the people whose God Jehovah is. Better this than to trust in vain confidences. We cannot hide ourselves from God, nor contend with him when he arises to judgment against us. If we say we have made a covenant with Death and formed a league with Hell, the overflowing flood, when it passes through, shall not come upon us,—God saith, Your covenant with Death shall be annulled and your league with Hell shall not stand; when the overflowing scourge shall pass through, its waters shall overflow the hiding-place, ye shall be trodden down by it. Against the dangers that threaten us as a nation, vain is all trust in human refuges, if we make not God our help. However prone we are to lean to these, neither the wisdom of the statesman, nor the prowess of the soldier, nor all the wealth of the land can save us, if God stretch forth his hand against us. Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord which exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. Not even in our outward church state and relations and privileges may we trust. Thus saith the Lord, Trust ye not in lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these. For if ye thoroughly amend your ways and your doings; if ye thoroughly execute judgment between a man and his neighbour; if ye oppress not the stranger and shed not innocent blood; neither walk after other gods; then will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land that I gave to your fathers, forever and ever. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself, and let Him be your fear, and Him be your dread; and He shall be for a Sanctuary.

Friends, fellow-citizens, brethren; shall this be the fruit of our Fast? Without this what do we here? Would we mock God? Can we impose on him? Why then impose on ourselves? Judah hath not turned unto me with her whole heart, but feignedly, saith the Lord. Let us not do so foolishly.

To all *such* worshippers God saith, When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination to me; the calling of assemblies!—I cannot away with *iniquity and the solemn meeting!* When ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; when ye make many prayers I will not hear; your hands are full of blood. Wash you; make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well. Is not this the fast that I have chosen? Thus saith the Lord, Turn ye to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend 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 him of the evil: who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him? O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity: take with you words and turn unto the Lord; say unto him, Take away all iniquity and receive us graciously; so will we render the calves of our lips. Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily: thy righteousness shall go before thee, and the glory of Jehovah shall be thy rereward. Then shalt thou be blessed in Jehovah; and I will make thee ride upon the heights of the earth, and eat the heritage of Jacob thy father; for the mouth of Jehovah hath spoken it. At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to pluck up and to destroy; if that nation against whom I have pronounced turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom to build and to plant; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them; I will scatter them as with an east wind; I will show them the back, and not the face, in the day of their calamity.