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A

Discourse,

DELIVERED

AT DUNBARTON, NEW-HAMPSHIRE,

ON

Thanksgiving-Day,

NOVEMBER 12, 1812.

BY WALTER HARRIS, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN DUNBARTON.

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1812.

Discourse.

LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH, III. 39.

"Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?"

Dunbarton, Nov. 17, 1812.

Rev. Sir,

AGREEABLY to a request of a number of your parishioners, we express to you the high satisfaction with which they heard your candid and sentimental Discourse, delivered on the late Thanksgiving; and request the favor of a copy for publication.

With sentiments of high respect and esteem,

JOHN MILLS,
WM. BAYLEY, } Committee,
THO. HAMMOND,

Rev. Walter Harris.

THE only apology which I shall make for any difference that may appear between this and the Discourse delivered in public, is, that some of that Discourse was never written; hence it is probable, that, in making out the Discourse, there will be some omissions, and some additions.

THE AUTHOR.

THE prophet Jeremiah was divinely commissioned to be the bearer of evil tidings to the backsliding Jews, who had greatly corrupted their ways before God. He was sent to reprove them for their sins, and to forewarn them of judgments coming on the land, for their multiplied iniquities. These messages of divine wrath, which were so unwelcome to a rebellious people, excited a strong opposition against the prophet; and they spake all manner of evil against him; and persecuted him, with unrelenting fury. They reproached him, as one prophesying lies; opposing the rulers; dividing the people; weakening the hands of the men of war; an enemy to his country; seeking not the welfare of the people, but their hurt: And would have put him to death, had not the Lord, by a special providence, delivered him out of their hands.

Nevertheless, that holy man of God lived to see many of his prophecies fulfilled, upon that miserable people. He saw Jerusalem in ashes, the temple of God demolished, the king, the princes, and chief of the people, carried away by their enemies, and doomed to a long captivity in a strange land, subjected to all the cruelty and insults of an haughty foe.

In view of these distressing scenes, the prophet's heart brake with grief, and tears of sorrow ran down his cheeks; while he expressed the afflictions of his soul, in doleful lamentations for Jerusalem, for Zion, the people of God, and for himself. But while he was indulging himself in the effusions of his grief, he was not unmindful of the procuring cause of all their troubles; he had a lively sense that they had greatly sinned against God, and justly deserved all these calamities; yea, that they were still dealt better by, than their iniquities deserved; and that they had no reason to complain of God; for they were yet alive, and enjoyed some good. They were yet in a state of probation: and God's dealings with them were calculated to make them see their wickedness, and amend their ways. Why then should they complain of the punishment of their iniquities? They had no reason for complaint, but had much reason of thankfulness.

DOCTRINE.—Living men, though they may be in the deepest afflictions, have no reason to complain ; but have always reason of thankfulness.

This doctrine will equally apply to nations, to families, and to individuals. They all have their prosperities, as well as adversities ; and in the midst of judgment, they have always reason to sing of mercy. Though the instruments of our troubles may often be to blame, because they are criminal instruments, meaning evil by what they do ; yet the hand is God's, and we should always look, beyond the instrument, to the Almighty Agent. " Shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it ? " * " I form the light, and create darkness ; I make peace, and create evil ; I the Lord do all these things. " † " So let him curse, because the Lord hath said unto him, Curse David. " ‡ And in our troubles, be they ever so great, and the instruments ever so criminal, still we should remember that we are sinners ; that we deserve punishment ; and that life is much better than we deserve ; that we have no reason to complain ; but have much reason of thankfulness, that our case is not so bad as it might be ; for we are yet prisoners of hope, and may obtain mercy.

It is sometimes difficult to determine, who are under the greatest obligation of thankfulness, those who have been plunged in the deepest adversities, or those who have always sailed on the full tide of prosperity.

There were two ships set out together for the East Indies, both very richly laden. One of them made a very safe voyage, and unusual profits in trade ; and every individual on board, when they sailed from home, returned alive, and in health. The other vessel was cast away upon a certain island, and suffered shipwreck ; the vessel and all the property was lost. The hands escaped to land ; where they suffered the extremities of hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness. When almost exhausted with suffering, they were providentially relieved by a ship, which touched at the island, and were all brought home alive ; having escaped the dangers of the sea and of famine. When these two ships' crews met in their native land, which were under the greatest obligations of thankfulness ? Surely those who had suffered shipwreck had no reason to complain, but had great reason of thankfulness ; they were yet living men, and prisoners of hope. So had those abundant reason of thankfulness, who prospered in their voyage ; but undoubtedly those who had escaped, with only

their lives, would be the most likely to feel their obligations of gratitude.

I shall here take occasion, at this time of national troubles, and great complaint, to enumerate some of the national evils under which we labor ; and shew that, we have no reason to complain of the punishment of our iniquities ; but that in the midst of our afflictions we have yet many favors, for which we have abundant reason to be thankful.

1. With regard to the evils, that are inflicted on our nation, we are first called to reflect upon the great evil of the war, in which we are involved.—War is an evil at any time, and under any circumstances ; an evil always to be dreaded ; and an offensive war, is always to be avoided, as we would avoid a great curse. " Whence come wars and fightings amongst you ? come they not even of your lusts ? " The men of this world, who lust after honor, and riches, and power, and dominion, may offer national honor, and wealth, and dominion, as sufficient inducements to fight and butcher their fellow men ; but Jesus has taught his disciples to be humble ; to suffer wrong, rather than do wrong ; and as far as in them lies, if it be possible, to live peaceably with all men. Awful indeed is the consideration, that brethren, of one common parent, and the same great family, should lift up the sword against one another ; and, to gratify their wicked lusts, hurry thousands of their fellow men, unprepared for death, into the eternal world. There must be great blame somewhere ; on the one side, or the other ; here is murder, upon a large scale ; and this practice is sanctioned only by the custom of wicked and apostate men ; but forbidden by the law of God, which says, " *Thou shalt not kill.* " Great guilt then is contracted by every war, and an awful account must be given by its promoters ; though we may lawfully fight an invading foe, in our own defence.

But without saying any thing with regard to the rectitude of this war in which we have engaged, there are certainly many unhappy circumstances attending it, which are very unfavorable to us. We are a young nation, but just beginning to live ; and have not yet learnt how to manage our own domestic affairs with prudence and economy. We are destitute of veteran troops, and experienced generals. (Washington is dead, and he left no son.) We have no powerful navy to defend our extensive sea coasts, and against the enemy. Our apparatus for war is in every respect scanty, and very inadequate.

* Amos iii. 6. † Isaiah xlv. 7. ‡ 2 Sam. xvi. 10.

But notwithstanding these, and many other embarrassments, we have actually waged war with one of the most warlike and powerful nations on earth, and who are always prepared to meet war at any time, and in any shape.

They have armies of well disciplined troops; they have many experienced generals. They have far the most powerful navy in the world. And their stores of every necessary for warfare, both by land and sea, are almost inexhaustible.

Yes, under these circumstances, we have attempted, in several instances, to invade one of their provinces; and what has been the consequence? Success? No, repulsion, disappointment, and loss, in every instance. The cry was immediately heard, "There was a want of provision, a want of ammunition, a want of more disciplined troops."

But all this ought to have been known before; somebody ought to have first sit down, and counted the cost. But it is now too late. Much precious blood has been spilt to no profit; hundreds of our fellow countrymen have been hurried to eternity; and many more are now in captivity. Not a foot of the enemy's territory have we yet gained: nay, the enemy are now much more able to defend those very points of attack, than they were when we first assailed them. Why is all this so?—

I am not disposed to lay all these disasters neither to the treachery of our generals, nor to the cowardice of our soldiers. Deists and atheists may say, "It was the fortune of war; it was luck and chance;" but I do not acknowledge any of these false gods, as having any control in these affairs. —I would recognize the hand of JEHOVAH in it; and humbly submit to it, as a solemn chastisement upon us for our sins. His Word teaches us, that "the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong;"* but that "God giveth the victory."

Another circumstance, which we ought to notice as against us, is, that the savages are collecting for war, in unusual numbers, and appear armed with unusual courage and fury. Whoever may have been the means of their collection, and however unfair the measures, the fact is undoubtedly true, that this savage force is levelled against us, and will render this war both bloody and cruel. Here we must acknowledge the hand of God again. "The Lord mustereth the host of the battle."†

* Ecclesiastes ix. 11.

† Isaiah xlii. 4.

Another thing, which we ought to remember with solemn anxiety, is, that this war was entered upon without publicly asking counsel of God. Whether individuals asked counsel, or not, we cannot say; but this we can say, we did not as a nation.

In the most prosperous days of ancient Israel, they were accustomed to ask counsel of God, whether they should go up against their enemies to battle; and if God said, "Go up," they always eventually prospered. Had we forgotten this? Or did we think that our own arm could gain us the victory?

Another thing, worthy of our serious regard, is, that a very great proportion of the pious people of this land, so much doubt the necessity or lawfulness of this war, that they do not, yea, dare not, pray for its success.—Perhaps the infidel will sneer at this; but I speak to those who fear God. When God promises his people deliverance, he says that he will be sought unto, to do this for them.—

Now if the good people in this land dare not pray for the success of our arms, because they doubt the justice of the war, especially in molesting and invading an innocent colony, who have done us no harm; and if the good people of Great Britain are praying against us, as an unjust invading foe; we are then in an evil case indeed.

It is said, that in the time of our revolutionary war, many of the good people in Great Britain used to pray for our success, because they believed that their government were oppressing us; but it is much doubted whether they will pray for our success in the present contest. Prayers often do more than arms.

It is reported, that a member of the British Parliament, when lately addressing that body, said, "You, my lords, may boast of your armies, and fleets of war; but for myself, I put more confidence in the prayers of the good people of this land, for our safety, than I do in all your strength of arms."*

*Reader, I have no attachment to the British nation: my attachment is to my own country: for its peace and prosperity would I ever pray. I know that the haughty court of G. Britain have greatly injured us heretofore; and I make no doubt but that they have injured us in some later acts; but every injury will not justify a war; and especially when there is no probability of gaining any redress by it: such a war must be but a rash, prodigal waste, of blood and treasure. I have as little reason to regard any British alliance, or British interest, as

2. We must notice, with sorrow, the violent political dissensions in our land, as a sore judgment upon us. Men do not think alike with regard to political characters, and political measures; and on account of this division in sentiment, men of the same neighborhood have become the most virulent enemies to one another; they cannot speak peaceably to one another; nor enjoy that neighborly intercourse which once

any man whatever. In their late war with us, which was so unjust on their part, but just on ours, I took an active part.... Yes, more than three years did I serve in our beloved WASHINGTON's school. Repeatedly did I expose my life, in the field of battle, to gain that liberty which my country now enjoys--- Ah! more than all this, my nearest blood, except that which flows through my own heart, was shed to gain our freedom.... my only brother fell in battle....he went from time to eternity in the twinkling of an eye. Ah! beloved youth, may I now record thy fate with my tears, and engrave thy memory afresh on my heaving heart!-----I have now the same love for my country, and the same attachment to the principles of liberty and freedom which first led me to take up the sword, in my youth, against an invading foe: and should the same nation attempt anew to invade and subjugate us, I have the same spirit of opposition to them still.-----Ever attached to our Republican Federal Constitution, I have never deviated in my political creed, from the beginning to the present day. Through all the convulsions of contending parties, WASHINGTON's views, respecting the best good of our country, have ever been my guide. O that another WASHINGTON might arise to hold the helm of State!-----Am I become a fool in glorying? Yet bear with me a little in my folly; for many have compelled me. I have stood as a soldier under the banner of my country, endured hardships, struggled and fought, for liberty and freedom. I have now taken my stand under the banner of Christ, to plead and defend his cause: And I am told, that no minister of Christ has a right to interest himself in, or speak his mind on, the great political concerns of the nation. What! have I lost all my dear-bought rights, by becoming a minister of Christ? Am I no more entitled to the common privileges of a common citizen? May I not say what I think would be for the best good of my country, which is dearer to me than life? May I have no voice in choosing the rulers of my people? May I not say what I think would be the best measures to promote the prosperity of our country, without incurring the odious epithets of being a monarchist, an opposer

used to constitute one great source of their happiness.---These divisions forebode approaching ruin.---The ancient Jews, just before their national ruin, and final dispersion, were given up to the most violent contentions among themselves, and were left to bite and devour one another, till they finally became an easy prey to their enemies. And this has likewise been the melancholy fact, of late, in Europe, in those States and Kingdoms which have been subverted.---First of all, divisions

of a republican government, an enemy to the liberties of the people, an enemy to my country? Is this the boasted liberty of our land?----No....I despise these restrictions upon an order of men who are entitled to better usage; and I esteem the base instigators of such sentiments meaner than the dirt under my feet. [Job xxx. 8.]----I know that the Constitution of the United States gives to the Ambassadors of Christ every right and privilege which it gives to every other class of citizens, and promises them equal protection to their good name, estates, and lives; and I glory in the blessing, and will ever repel the tyrant who attempts to deprive me of it.-----Here I feel myself constrained, by the love which I bear to many well-meaning but misinformed people, by the love which I bear to Truth, and to the credit of the Gospel ministry, to counteract a most disingenuous and wicked insinuation made against the standing order of ministers---namely, that they are desirous of a national establishment in religion; and that exclusive privileges should be conferred on one particular denomination of Christians. This is a totally false declaration, concerning the ministers of the Gospel; and those who have made and circulated it, are either notoriously wicked, or profoundly ignorant, or both.---I have had opportunity to know, and I certainly do know, that there is not the least foundation for such a base insinuation; and I consider, that infidelity and a warm party spirit are the fabricators of it, with a malicious design to injure the Clergy, and destroy their influence among the common people; and I now defy the whole host of infidels to advance the least proof of what they have alledged against the Clergy in this respect; and I feel safe in doing it, because I know that a thing cannot be proved to be, which has no existence. Besides, every man of reading and common sense knows, that the Constitution of the United States has perfectly guarded against the establishment of any national religion, or giving any exclusive rights to any denomination of Christians; so that, it would not be in the power of men, at the head of Government, to do this, without

were fomented among themselves; and in many cases did as much towards their subjugation, as the arms of their foes.

The parties in our country, which are pulling in different directions, are so nearly balanced, that our real strength, to accomplish any important end, has become very small: the experiment has been tried, and our energies could not be concentrated to bear on any one given point. It is a wonder, if all parties do not find themselves greatly deceived on this sub-

first destroying the Constitution. And here it is a duty which I owe to my brethren, and the common people, whose interest I would ever serve, to declare, that I have all reason to believe that there is no class of people, in our land, who are more firmly attached to the Constitution, than the standing order of ministers; and none who would more strenuously oppose any national establishment. They are pleased with that mode of calling and settling ministers, which has been the custom from the first settlement of this country; and that is, by the free and voluntary choice of their hearers; and that every individual should have perfect liberty to covenant with whom he will, and worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience, without molestation. And whenever any thing contrary to this is alleged against the ministers of the Gospel, until their sentiments and characters are entirely altered from what they now are, the public may rest satisfied that they are false allegations of wicked and designing men; and I affirm this with more confidence, as I have travelled much in all the New-England States, and in the course of my life have resided for some time in every one of them, and do know, from one source or another, the sentiments of a great proportion of all the regular ministers in these States; and likewise many of our brethren that are further south.—And so far as my knowledge extends, they all have one faith, and speak the same things, with regard to what has been stated above.—The standing and employment of the ministers of the Gospel, put them in a situation to be the most impartial judges of what would be for the best good of the people at large: They expect no office, no honors, no emoluments, from Government: They are upon a level with all the private citizens: And their life, as it were, depends upon the union, peace, and prosperity of those whom they serve. They wish to be governed by the laws of Christ, which forbid them to seek for great things in this world. They esteem it their duty, their greatest privilege, and highest happiness, to promote holiness, peace, and happiness, among all men; and whatever influence they may have, it will be ever exerted to advance the temporal and eternal interest of their fellow men; notwithstanding all that the enemies of the Gospel, and of pure religion, may say to the contrary. And let them always take shelter, and consolation, under the promise of Him who is greater than all, and who has said to his ministers, “Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the world.”

ject; calculating that we, as a nation, have a physical power, which does not in reality exist.—The strength of a divided people, is but weakness: Yes, while I am yet speaking, our divisions, like a destructive vermin, are gnawing asunder the cords which first united us, and gave us our strength and national importance. A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, but hath an end.

3. We must notice, with solemn awe, the immediate hand of God, in the past unfavorable seasons, by reason of which, the hopes of the husbandman have been greatly disappointed. We have perhaps never before witnessed so light a crop of Indian corn, which, in New-England, is one of the main supports of life. In many places the English grain has been much damaged, by the long rains in the time of harvest. And in a word, I may say, that almost all the fruits of the earth are unusually light. God has been shewing us how easy it is with him, to cut us all off by famine. And when we consider that the last long and severe winter consumed the old stores, we have reason to fear that the scarcity will be very sensibly felt by many.

4. We ought to view, with deep concern, the general stagnation of business, and decrease of property, through the country. In proportion as the people of various occupations are thrown out of business, or their business retarded, in the same proportion is the country actually growing poorer. It is said, by men of information, that our great mercantile towns have been growing poorer, for several years past, faster than they ever grew rich in better days: and a great part of the people find themselves growing in debt, and cannot obtain the means of paying them. Indeed, every thing seems to go heavily with us, like the chariots of the Egyptians, in the Red Sea, when the Lord took off their wheels.

5. What adds a poignancy to all our troubles, and fills the mind with almost total despair, is the astonishing blindness and insensibility of a great part of the people, in regard to the occasion of their troubles, and how they might remedy many of them. They seem to choose darkness rather than light, both in civil and religious concerns.—Eyes have they, but they will not see; ears have they, but they will not hear; and hearts have they, that will not understand: it appears, that a fatal delusion has fallen upon them; and that the things of their peace are hidden from their eyes. They are fixed on their purposes, and are determined to effect them at any hazard. Reason, and argument, and light, and truth, have no weight with them.

And now, though our afflictions are many and great, we have no reason to complain of God ; we deserve them all, and infinitely more ; our sins have procured them, and why should "a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" But, say you, What have we done so much against God, that he should so deal with us? I answer, every thing that you could, to provoke God to pour out his judgments upon the land, and consume us in his high displeasure. At the head of the awful catalogue of our sins, I would set the sin of profaning the Sabbath. This is the great inlet to innumerable other sins. In bold defiance of the laws of God and man, behold our highways crowded with travellers, and traffickers, and all manner of merchandize, upon the Sabbath ! and all passing with impunity : though hundreds of informing and executive officers have lifted their hand to Heaven, and sworn by Him that liveth forever and ever, that they would, to the best of their ability, support the laws, which forbid the breach of the Sabbath. And it is perfectly in the power of such officers to support those laws, if they would. They are God's ministers ; and let them not think that they can escape punishment from him, if they neglect their duty, and let the guilty go unpunished.—Next to the breach of the Sabbath, is the criminal neglect and abuse of the Gospel, and Gospel ordinances. It were at too great expense that the provisions of the Gospel were made, by our heavenly Father, for him to view them neglected and despised, as they have been, by very many in this land, without his high resentment, inflicted upon the guilty.—The sin of intemperance is prevailing in our land to an alarming degree, working the temporal and eternal ruin of thousands and thousands of old and young. It has been found, by late calculations, that the property consumed in spiritous liquors, in this country, in a year, is more than is paid for the support of our National Government, all our State Governments, the support of the Gospel, and support of all our schools, for the same term of time.

Profane swearing, lying, defaming, defrauding, and supplanting, are prevalent and notorious sins in our land. Like ancient Israel, "Every brother will utterly supplant, and every neighbor will walk with slanders ; they will deceive every one his neighbor, and will not speak the truth."—And a crime prevails, which is too brutal to obtain among the heathen, and too vile to be mentioned among Christians.—A neglect of family religion and family government, parents neglecting to restrain their children, and keep them from the paths of the destroyer, must be reckoned among our nation-

al sins. Covetousness, and the greatest ingratitude, under our many past favors, are very provoking in the sight of God.

But I forbear : our sins are too many to be enumerated, too great to be described, and too provoking to pass with impunity. Will not God's soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

But, though our sins are many and great, and we are now punished for them ; yet why should we complain? We are punished less than our iniquities deserve ; and we have much more good than we had any reason to look for : hence, in the midst of our troubles, we have much for which we ought to be thankful.

1. We ought to be thankful, that our enemies have not been permitted to do their worst upon us. It has been in their power to have done us damage beyond calculation.—Before this time, they might have laid all our sea ports in ashes. We are by no means prepared to repel the force of the British navy. The recollection of one single fact is sufficient to convince a candid mind of the truth of the above statement. I refer to the burning of Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, a few years since, by British men of war.—That was a place, first strong by nature, then strongly fortified by castles and forts, and defended by a number of men of war ; but notwithstanding those strong means of resistance, the British soon laid it in ashes.—What then could our feeble force and means of defence do for our safety? We are wholly indebted to God that he has kept our enemy from a spirit of retaliation, and our sea coasts from destruction.

What but the hand of God has kept back the savages of the wilderness, that they have done us no more damage on our frontier settlements? A vast extent of country has lain open and entirely exposed to them. Why have they not been instigated by the British, to lay all those countries waste, butchering and scalping men, women, and children? It seems that God has set the bounds, and warned the enemy not to come over our lines. Though from every thing which has yet taken place, it appears that the enemy were much better prepared to invade us, than we have been to invade them. Let us then be thankful for the protections of the Almighty.

When our army first entered the territory of the enemy, they incautiously threatened to give no quarter to those who should arise and arm themselves against the invaders. We have reason to be thankful, that when they themselves fell into the hand of the enemy, they did not retaliate, and give

no quarter. But they were preserved from the rage of the savages; the militia were immediately sent home to their families; and the regular troops were very humanely treated. If we are not willing to attribute this to the honor and clemency of the enemy, let us most heartily ascribe it to the beneficence of God, who has the hearts of all men in his hand, and can turn them and dispose them as he pleases.

2. We have abundant reason to be thankful, that our political dissensions have not yet grown to civil war. A civil war, is the most dreadful of all temporal calamities that ever befel a nation. When this takes place, God appears pouring out his wrath upon that people, to the uttermost. Who can describe the horrors of seeing a neighbor plunging his bayonet into the bowels of his neighbor, or his brother, wreaking his vengeance upon him! when no one can know that he is safe when he lies down at night; for he knows not but he shall be assaulted by his neighbors before morning; his property destroyed, and his life taken!----A small specimen of these horrors have been given in those violent riots at Baltimore and Philadelphia. Although many threats, of the nature of civil war, have been given out, and the coals of passion have been violently blown by wicked and designing men, to kindle them into devouring flames; yet, blessed be the tender mercy of our God, they have not been suffered to break out; and we hope and pray, that some complaints, in a late public communication, were not designed as a signal for civil war; and that the debates which may arise upon them, may be overruled for good, if they were meant for evil.

3. We have reason to be thankful, that no political party, in this country, have yet been suffered to invite the armies of a foreign power to assist them in subduing their political opponents; for should this ever be the case, it would be the end of all liberty in this country; that power, so invited, would conquer all for itself: All parties would fall under some military despot, who, like the tyrant of Europe, while professing friendship, would fix the chains of degrading vassalage on every individual. In such a case, I might apply the words of Mordecai to Esther, to that party who should invite a foreign power to overcome their opposing brethren, "Think not with thyself, that thou shalt escape more than all the Jews."

4. We have reason to be thankful, that there is yet even the appearance of liberty to the common people, of choosing their rulers; though there is, indeed, but little more than appearance, if they must choose those for rulers, who have been nominated to them by men already in power; for such will

be very apt, regardless of the common good, first to make provision for themselves.* And we have reason to be thank-

** We have the name of a Democratic Republic; but, in practice, we have already become an Elective Aristocracy. Congressional and State caucuses nominate all our principal rulers, both State and National; and the people vote according to their nomination: for these tickets of nomination are so wonderfully contrived, and supported, that a man, let his judgment and choice be what it may, is driven to the necessity of voting according to the nomination, or else throw his vote away. Who then do choose our rulers? The people at large? No, but the few, who are already in power; they put the ticket into the people's hand, and the people have the liberty to put it into the box. My countrymen, these things ought not so to be. By means of this door, already open, designing men may, by and by, intrigue you out of all your precious privileges. There is a safe, sure, and honorable way of remedying this evil; and that is, laying aside all party spirit, and all party purposes; look to the general good; and from henceforth and forever reject such nominations; and assume your right, once more, of choosing your rulers without being dictated by others.-----We have seen what caucuses can do; what slight of hand, what legerdemain, they can practise, to carry party purposes. When the great luminary of heaven, which discloses the works of dishonesty, has gone down beyond the western ocean, and all nature is wrapt in silent darkness, and the honest farmer and tradesman are enjoying midnight repose; then, behold, the precious few, the great friends and guardians of the liberties of the people, are in private session, deliberating, and making out lists for the next election of civil rulers. Whom they will, they put down; and whom they will, they put up. After this, there is no more to be done, only for the people to sanction it-----and the work is finished.-----Who gave them this power? Nobody; they assumed it; and a great power it is: let the people look to it, in season; it may soon grow too formidable for them.-----I know of no quarter from which the liberties and freedom of the people are so immediately threatened, as from these clandestine nominations of rulers.-----I do therefore most sincerely beseech my fellow citizens, of all denominations, to unite in this one point, to destroy this monster, this disturber of the public peace, this enemy of freedom, and the father of tyranny: And if you do not destroy him, you have all reason to fear that he will soon devour both you and your children.-----I have seen the enemy; I have given the warning; I have cleared my skirts from blood.*

ful, that we have yet among us a goodly number of men of talents, of integrity, and of true patriotism, who will continue to exert themselves in preserving the people from deception, from division, and from destruction.

5. Let us be thankful, that notwithstanding the scarcity of the present year, we have reason to hope that there is a competency of the fruits of the earth to support alive both man and beast. Let us all remember to be very prudent and frugal in the use of the good things which God has sparingly given us; and impart a portion of them to the poor and destitute, for moderate prices. Should the rich take the advantage of the poor, in this time of scarcity, God will notice it, and he will requite it.—“He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord: that which he hath given, will he pay him again.”

Though sickness has, in some individual towns, been very distressing and mortal, by reason of a new and unknown disorder; yet we have great reason to be thankful, that its spread was no more extensive; but that the voice of health has generally been heard throughout the land. Health is among our choicest blessings: Too rich to be purchased, and too good to be passed over with silent ingratitude.

6. Above all, let us feel and express our gratitude and thanks to the God of all grace, for the continuation of the Gospel, and the various means of instruction, with which we are favored, both in things natural and spiritual.

The Gospel is called “God’s unspeakable gift.”—Without it, we should soon be reduced to all the wretchedness and misery of the heathen. We should soon lose the knowledge of the true God, and of the way of life by his Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.—Notwithstanding all the exertions of heretics, infidels, and antichrist, to discredit and destroy pure and undefiled religion; yet it has remarkably prospered among its friends. A spirit for propagating the Gospel was never more awake and zealous than at the present time. Contributions for the aid of Missionary Societies, Bible Societies, and Religious Tract Societies, have been very liberal, the last year. All these Societies have but one object in view, and that is to spread abroad the knowledge of the Savior, and to promote his gracious kingdom in the earth. While antichrist and infidels of every name are spreading blood and carnage through the earth; the friends of Christ, the sons of peace, are engaged to promote that kingdom which consists not in worldly pomp and greatness, not in costly meats and drinks for a dying body, but in “righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

By the word of prophecy we are assured, that the Gospel temple shall be built in troublous times. Surely those times have come. Was there ever a time of such universal commotion? Wars, and rumors of wars, and earthquakes in divers places; the sea roaring, and the waves thereof; nations rising against nation, and dashing one against another in mad confusion.—And what do we behold on the other hand? Lo, the friends of Zion all awake to the subject of sending the Gospel to the heathen nations; the angel, having the everlasting Gospel to preach, beginning his flight; the messengers of Gospel grace flying in every direction under heaven, proclaiming peace on earth, good will to man; the Bible translating into the various languages of the world, so that the Words of eternal life may reach every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.—This I consider as the brightest spot in the dark cloud hanging over the earth: and it gives me the most lively hopes, that the cloud will ere long be dissipated; that the Sun of Righteousness will arise with healing in his beams; that he will rebuke the nations, cause them to beat their swords into ploughshares, their spears into pruning hooks, and learn war no more.

And now, in view of this subject, and these eventful times, I would exhort my hearers to several things.

1. To be still, and know that the Most High reigneth: and be very thankful for all our national privileges that still remain; for all our family blessings yet conferred; and for all the individual happiness we are permitted to enjoy: for if we should repine and quarrel against God, he may be provoked in his jealousy to send more grievous judgments upon us. Why should a backsliding people, ungrateful families, and wicked individuals, complain for the punishment of their sins?

2. That you most solemnly regard the judgments of God that are abroad in the earth; but especially those upon our own country; and be ye humbled under them. The language of Divine Providence is plain, the meaning cannot be mistaken.—“The Lord hath come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity.” And while this dreadful work is going on, and God is treading the wine-press in his anger, and trampling the wicked in his fury, let the redeemed of the Lord hearken to the whispers of his grace, saying, “Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast.”

3. In view of the alarming divisions among the people; which are already so extensive and pernicious in their operations, I would most ardently entreat all my hearers to cultivate a spirit of candor, moderation, and forbearance, towards one another. This party-business must be done away, or the nation must be ruined. "A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand." Let each one be willing that his neighbor should enjoy all the rights and privileges which he claims for himself. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor, and evil-speaking, and malice, be put away: and let all kindness, and tender-heartedness, towards one another, come in the room of those evil passions which render society so wretched and miserable. Let all the wise and good unitedly disapprove and condemn the bitter and provoking language of rash party-men. Let us be true patriots, in whom there is no guile; ever opposing all unlawful combinations, or undue measures taken to supplant brethren who are of the same nation, and entitled to the same rights as ourselves. Let all our conduct be open and honest, such as will bear the light of the meridian sun; while we exert ourselves to promote the peace, prosperity, and salvation of our beloved country.....Then shall we enjoy peace of conscience, the approbation of God, and the blessing of all good men.

