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Wm Dickinson

A
S E R M O N,

P R E A C H E D I N

CHRIST CHURCH AND ST. PETER'S,
P H I L A D E L P H I A :

On Wednesday, May 9, 1798.

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED BY THE

P R E S I D E N T,

A S A D A Y O F

Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer,

T H R O U G H O U T T H E

U N I T E D S T A T E S

O F

N O R T H A M E R I C A.

BY JAMES ABERCROMBIE, A. M.

One of the Assistant Ministers of Christ-Church and
St. Peter's.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Sermon was written without the least intention of its being ever committed to the press. The author did not know that the duty of preaching on the Fast Day would devolve upon him, until a very few days preceding it; which, of course rendered it impossible for him to pay that attention to his style, and the arrangement of his subject, which both the occasion, and a proper regard to his own reputation required. He therefore strenuously resisted the solicitations first offered for its publication, and he would have persevered in doing so, had not the most gross and malevolent misrepresentations of several sentiments in it made it

indispensably necessary for him to appeal to the candor of the Public. He now gives it to them with all its imperfections, not thinking himself, under existing circumstances, at liberty to alter or amend it; at the same time asserting his full conviction of the truth of the sentiments expressed; and giving his assurance that he publishes them exactly as delivered from the Pulpit, without the suppression or slightest alteration of any one of them. To those who condemn the Political part of the Sermon, as foreign to the occasion and the place, the author observes, that as the appointment originated with the Civil authority, and as our civil and religious interests are intimately connected, and *in a most particular manner at the present time*, he thought it his duty to endeavour to excite; as far as his feeble abilities would permit, that spirit of patriotic unanimity, and religious zeal, which he is not singular in conceiving the present

moment requires. “ And surely no warmth can be unseasonable, at a time when all that we account dear or sacred, is threatened with one indiscriminate ruin*.”

’Tis well known to his *congregations*, that he is not addicted to the introduction of Politics in his Sermons, and to his *friends*, that he considers it in the highest degree improper. But, uncommon exigencies require unusual exertions; and as the plan of his present Discourse was to shew the necessity of religion to the support of good government, and the peace and happiness of the community; he thought himself bound to exemplify, in as striking a manner as he could, the truth of his assertion; and in no possible way could he do it more effectually, than by an in-

* Vide, The Rev. Dr. Smith’s letter “ On the duty of Protestant Ministers in times of public danger.”

duction of particulars, however imperfect, of the unparalleled atrocities committed by our present enemy.

He concludes in the words of Dr. Watson, a pious and learned prelate of the Church of England, in a late address to his countrymen.

“ I am not altogether insensible of the danger I may have incurred (should matters come to extremity) by thus publicly addressing my countrymen. I might have concealed my sentiments, and waited in retirement, till the struggle had been over, and the issue known; but I disdain safety accompanied with dishonour. When Hannibal is at the gates, who but a poltroon would listen to the timid counsels of neutrality, or attempt to screen himself from the calamity coming on his country? I am ready, and I am persuaded that I entertain a just confidence in fay-

ing, that thousands of patriotic and honest men are as ready as I am, to hazard every thing in defence of the country.

“ I pray God to influence the hearts of both sides to good-will, moderation, and peace : to grant to our enemy grace to return to a due sense of piety, and a belief in uncorrupted Christianity; and to impress our own minds with a serious sense of the necessity of so repenting of our sins, and so reforming of our lives, as may enable us to hope for his protection against all enemies, foreign and domestic.”

Philadelphia, May 15, 1798.

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S E R M O N.



JOEL, Ch. ii. 15, 16, 17, & 18th verses.

“*Blow the Trumpet in Zion, sanctify a Fast, call a solemn assembly. Gather the people; sanctify the congregation: assemble the elders; gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: Wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.*”

THE institution and observance of FASTS, in times of public danger, are duties which have been often sanctioned by Divine appointment: and the many instances recorded in the Holy Scriptures, of their efficacy in averting the threatened or inflicted judgments of the Deity, were written for our learning.

As an authority peculiarly applicable to the present occasion, I have selected the passage just read to you; in which the children of Judah were exhorted to prevent, by humble supplication and sincere repentance, a great and awful calamity which had been denounced against them.

“ Blow the Trumpet in Zion;” which was the mode prescribed for calling the people together at the Temple, for the purpose of religious worship. “ Sanctify a Fast :” that is, let the outward expression of penitence and humiliation, by abstaining from food, be rendered a truly *religious* observance, by being accompanied with sincere and fervent devotion. “ Call a solemn assembly.” Let public as well as private addresses be made to the Deity. “ Gather the people, sanctify the congregation :” that is, separate the clean from the unclean ; let none presume to enter into God’s holy temple, without being first purified, according to the law of Moses, from every pollution. “ Assemble the elders, gather the children, and those

who suck the breasts ;” implying, that as the approaching calamity would affect all ages, ranks, and degrees of men, so all should unite in deprecating so severe a punishment. “ Let the bridegroom go forth of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet.” Let every species of festivity and sensual indulgence be then suspended. “ Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar ; and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them : wherefore should they say among the people, where is their God ?” Or, in other words, let those who are, by divine and regular authority, dedicated to the exposition and ministration of God’s holy word and ordinances, plead in their behalf for pardon and forgiveness ; and say, Suffer us not, O our God ! to become the prey, the scorn and derision of a nation who know not *thee*, in whom *we* have declared our confidence, and of whose almighty protection, *we* have made our boast.

Under such circumstances, of general penitence, supplication, and amendment, they were encouraged to hope, that the uplifted arm of the Destroying Angel, would in mercy be withheld ; and that instead of executing the just vengeance of the Deity, upon his rebellious subjects, he would be directed to obliterate from heaven's awful register, the glowing record of their crimes ; their innumerable omissions of duty, and commissions of sin. For, “ then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people.”

That national calamities are induced by national corruption and guilt, is a truth, clearly inculcated by the deductions of human reason, enforced by the history of mankind in all ages, and incontestably confirmed, by the repeated declarations of Holy Writ.

God, the Supreme Creator of the Universe, ruleth among the inhabitants of the earth, as well as among the armies of heaven ; “ upholding all things by the word of his power*.”

* Heb. 1. 3.

Thro' the wise operation of the established laws of nature, our vices, the fruit of our evil propensities, are often rendered subservient to their own temporal punishment; thus leading us to that conviction of their error, which should produce repentance and reformation.

That the Creator of the world is also the Governor of it, is upon *general* principles universally acknowledged, wherever christianity hath expanded and illuminated the mind of man. And even in the obscure ages of Heathenism, the gods, under that imperfect system of theology, were supposed minutely to interest themselves in the transactions of mankind. Yet, the doctrine of a *particular* providence, or the attention and interference of the Deity, with respect to the temporal affairs of individuals, is, though a dictate of reason, and an unquestionable tenet of the christian revelation, too frequently called in question and peremptorily denied. The pride of human nature revolts at the idea of controul. The direction of events

by providence, and the nature and necessity of free-will in man as a moral agent, though perfectly reconcileable, are by superficial observers, supposed to be altogether inconsistent with each other ; and indeed the position may be carried too far, even to the extravagant hypothesis of absolute fatality, which is equally and justly opposed by both.

But independent of the refinements of abstract and speculative reasoning, that a *professing christian* should hesitate to admit the assertion, is indeed astonishing ; when he is so expressly told by the divine author of our religion, that “ not a sparrow,” the smallest and most insignificant of birds, “ falleth to the ground, without the knowledge and permission of our heavenly father*.” And must not *we* his rational creatures, to whom he hath given pre-eminence above all terrestrial beings, be of infinitely more value in his sight, and more worthy of his superintending care ? Nay, are we not assured of such

* Matt. x. 29.

particular attention, that “ the very hairs of our head are all numbered*.” Such knowledge, is too wonderful and excellent for us to comprehend, but of necessity results, from those essential attributes of Deity, Omniscience, Omnipotence, and Omnipresence. Besides, without suggesting any other argument (which neither time, nor the object of our present meeting will permit) does not the converse of the proposition I would advocate, entirely supersede the necessity of *prayer*; a duty so obvious in our imperfect state of being, as to render any proof of it at this time, particularly to this congregation, altogether unnecessary.

You must all likewise see and acknowledge that, by parity of reasoning, the doctrine of a *particular* providence, with respect to individuals, extends, with equal force and propriety, to communities, to cities, and empires. As the crimes of an individual justly deserve, and often manifestly suffer indivi-

* Matt. 10, 30. Luke 2, 7.

dual punishment, so when the influence of vicious example pervades the community, national inflictions, such as war, pestilence, and famine, are sent by the same superintending and omnipotent Ruler, who hath designated them as his “fore judgments,” “to humble his people, and to prove them to know what is in their hearts, whether they will keep his commandments or no.”* And as the remission of sin, and its consequent punishment, is by the individual to be obtained only by repentance and reformation of life, so are punishments to be avoided, and benefits to be obtained by societies, upon the same principles.

Since then, both reason and revelation combine to establish the assertion, that the Deity regards with uninterrupted observation, the thoughts and actions of his creature man, and often actually interferes in the direction of them: Since it is our indispensable duty to live under a constant sense of the divine presence, and of our entire dependence upon God; and since repen-

* Deut. 8, 2.

tance and reformation are a mean of averting the displeasure and punishment of the Almighty Governor of the world, for our various transgressions, and of restoring us to his favour ; let us apply ourselves seriously to the discharge of the duty now before us. Let us enquire whether our conduct is such, as to afford just ground to hope for the protection and blessings of heaven, or to fear the infliction of its judgments.

Do we in all things act as becomes our profession ; as becomes the gospel of Jesus Christ ? Has his religion that place in our affections, which as “ the one thing needful,” it ought to have ? Or rather, have not the principles and injunctions of christianity become almost obsolete and forgotten among us by general neglect ? Is there not an evident decay of genuine *piety* among Christians of every denomination ; an almost universal prevalence of scepticism and infidelity, in the *higher* orders of the community ; and an open commission of the most flagrant crimes in the *lower* ? Are not our

sabbaths profaned—the blessed sacrament deserted—the public worship of God, either not at all observed by many, or performed with inattention and lukewarmness by those who enter into his holy temple? In how few houses are the great duties of family and private prayer observed? How little do those who are possessed of affluence, of eminence, of conspicuous and dignified stations, consider the irresistible influence which always accompanies wealth and honour—the powerful authority of example? How little do parents, and the heads of families consider the extension of duty which attends upon their character? How few children are really brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?*

In consequence of which, how common the blasphemous oaths and execrations which they are hourly heard to utter in our streets?

If we extend our view to the *moral* character of our country, we shall find it equally degraded. How generally are our youth addicted to gaming, intemperance, debauchery, ex-

* Eph. 6. 4.

travagance, and almost every species of vice ? How rapid the increase of licentiousness ? How extreme the fondness for dissipation, and propensity to luxurious indulgence ? How unprecedented the declension of integrity, and how unrestrained the spirit of speculation and dishonest gain ? These, with many other disorders, which might be mentioned, are certainly unequivocal proofs of individual depravity, and national corruption.

“ Shall I not visit for these things, saith
 “ the Lord, shall I not be avenged on such
 “ a nation as this ?”*

The representation I have given, is by no means an exaggerated one ; and however painful for me to offer, or you to hear, necessarily arises from the nature of the subject to which our attention is this day directed. An inquiry of this kind, at *any time* salutary and proper, is peculiarly requisite *now* ; that by thus contemplating the evil, you may be induced the more earnestly to adopt the

* Joel, 68, 69.

mode prescribed for averting its consequences.

The present, my brethren, is indeed an alarming crisis. We are threatened with hostility by a powerful and enterprising nation, whose exertions have repelled the most vigorous and animated opposition of the combined powers of Europe; whose successes have, in an unparalled manner, surpassed their own most sanguine hopes; whose machinations have defeated the best concerted plans, and baffled the wisest calculations of the most profound politicians; and whose immense armies, invincible in their courage, and inexhaustible in their numbers, spread terror, desolation, and misery wherever they direct their course; evidently executing as a scourge in the hand of Omnipotence, his awful judgments upon the nations of the earth, for their repeated violations of his laws.

Having convulsed and rendered tributary many of the most potent and opulent kingdoms of the *Old* world, subverted their go-

vernments and ravaged their territories, their attention seems now to be directed to the *New*. And their enmity towards *us* is the more cruel and atrocious, from the consideration of that ardent amity and unequivocal attachment, which, before the European war and during its progress, we professed and evinced towards *them*.

War, in any degree, or under any character, ought studiously to be avoided; and when inevitable, sincerely lamented by every friend to religion, to humanity, and to virtue.

'Tis indeed astonishing, that the differences which occur between rational and civilized beings, and especially among such as profess Christianity, cannot be composed by *negotiation*, without resorting to so savage and destructive an expedient: yet, such is the corruption of our nature, so ungovernable the fury of our passions, that neither right reason nor religion have ever been found so thoroughly to pervade communities, as to prevent the causes of war, or counteract their

operation. "It must needs be," said even the divine Author of our religion, "that offences come, but," adds he, "woe to those by whom they come*." The same omniscient Being who originally permitted the existence of evil in our world, for reasons inscrutable to the human mind, wisely permits its continuance: but the *voluntary* agents of the powers of darkness, who act in opposition to the dictates of reason, and the light of *revelation*, though for a time prosperous, shall finally receive the just reward of their iniquity.

That in the war which appears to be upon the eve of commencement, between the republic of France and us, *we* are not the aggressors, must, I think, be acknowledged by every candid, unprejudiced mind.

An impartial review of our uniform conduct towards that nation, ever since the establishment of our Independence, will amply evince, not only our benevolence towards

* Luke 17. 1.

them, upon the general principles of national reciprocity, but our gratitude for their aid in time of need ; which, though not extended from a principle of compassion or affection for us, but through envy and jealousy of our common enemy, was nevertheless beneficial.

Our country has with open arms received her citizens. The richest produce of our soil hath been poured into her bosom. When in want of resources to support her armies, and extend her conquests, we eagerly drained our public coffers to refund, (long before justice could have demanded it,) the loan, which we had but a little time before negociated with her. In opposition to the complaints, and in defiance of the threats of contending nations, our harbours afforded a safe asylum to her ships. We exhibited public testimonies of joy for her victories ; and in every mode which lay within the sphere of possibility, expressed our cordiality.

“ And now, O Lord our God, behold how they reward us,” in threatening “ to

come and cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us*.”

Notwithstanding this enthusiastick regard on our part ; impelled by an insatiable thirst of conquest and of gain, have they not long discovered an unfriendly disposition towards us, and under various pretexts, by insidious policy, as well as by open injuries and insults, sought occasions of quarrel with us ? Have they not committed the most unwarrantable depredations upon our commerce ? Have not our fellow citizens been robbed, imprisoned, and compelled to suffer the grossest indignities ? And tho' remonstrances have been offered ; tho' every effort which wisdom, patriotism, or christian philanthropy could suggest, has been made by our *Chief Magistrate* in our behalf ; yet, have they not turned a deaf ear to our complaints, and scornfully rejected our *repeated* solicitations for harmony and reconciliation ? You are all well acquainted with their insolent conduct

* Chron. 20. 11.

towards our *last* messengers of peace and good-will, and the exorbitant and inadmissible demands which have been made upon them.

I mean not in this statement, to irritate your minds by unjust invective, or intemperate obloquy. My appeal is to truth, to reason, and to experience. And, under such circumstances, such unprovoked and merciless aggressions, such cruel exactions; tho' a Minister of the gospel of peace, I hesitate not to declare, that the most active resistance now becomes a duty.

The security and independence of our country, the possession of our civil privileges and domestic enjoyments, the exercise of our religious professions, and in all probability the lives of our parents, our wives, and our children, depend, under the blessing of God, upon our immediate exertions.

The dignity, the peace and happiness of communities, are to be supported by the ex-

ercise of *national virtues*, such as unanimity, courage, perseverance, a firm adherence to order, and a cheerful conformity to discipline; without which, the bands of society must be dissolved, and the world become one mighty theatre of anarchy and discord, of rapine and confusion.

I trust, therefore, fellow citizens, that in the present distressing emergency, that spirit of patriotic association, which on a former occasion animated you, in defence of your civil liberties, will revive*. That no personal hardship, no restrictions of economy, will be considered too grievous to be borne, in support of our common cause; but, that ye will “be of good courage and play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God†.”

* A pleasing and encouraging prospect of which, is already exhibited, by the late magnanimous conduct of the youth of this city, which has happily been followed with enthusiastic ardor, by those of New York and Baltimore, and will doubtless in a short time be general throughout the Union.

Legislators! Patriots! Heroes! Americans! awake from your lethargic security, and by your wise regulations, vigorous exertions, and intrepid firmness, so incontestably evince your determination to remain unfettered by the shackles of foreign power, as to render any future attempt to invade our rights, a hopeless and desperate undertaking.

But, brethren, I should very imperfectly discharge the duty to which I am now called, did I not direct your attention to a still more important and alarming source of danger, to which we are also exposed, by the incursion of this remorseless foe. I mean with respect to the subversion of our holy religion, and the interests of our immortal souls.

To the dereliction of all religious principle, is to be attributed the various excesses they have committed, in scattering spiritual as well as temporal death, throughout the civilized world; at the same time exhibiting, by their fluctuating modes of government, a shocking attestation of the truth of the *nega-*

tive of that question, which has often excited the disquisitions of both religious and political speculatists—viz. Whether a nation of atheists, can long or happily exist, under the usual forms and regulations of civil society.

That frantic and licentious spirit of disorder and desolation, which after executing the most flagitious crimes and impieties in *their own* country, burst like an overwhelming torrent upon the surrounding empires, originated in the *Infidelity of their Philosophers*. The publications of a Voltaire, a D'Alembert, a Diderot, a Helvetius, a Rousseau, and a multitude of anonymous writers; by flattering the pride of human reason, and encouraging the domination of the passions, gradually weakened in the minds of the people that sense of *religious* obligation, which is essentially necessary to the support and well-being of society, and prepared them for the commission of every outrage and enormity. Hence naturally resulted, that wild and exterminating principle, which commenced its destructive operation in the sudden and total

disorganization of their established constitution of government, and continued its profligate and sanguinary progress, by the premeditated murder of their monarch and his helpless family—by the indiscriminate slaughter of princes, nobles and legislators—by the ferocious sacrifice of unprotected women and innocent children—by inhumanly butchering defenceless prisoners—by deliberately drowning by hundreds at a time, men, women and children—and, in impious ridicule of one of the most solemn ordinances of the christian religion, calling it *Republican Baptism*—Nay, (inflamed with the hope of utterly extirpating a religious principle of action, and extinguishing even the most latent spark of true piety,) by immolating at the very foot of their Altars, the Priests of the Most High God.

But I forbear to excruciate your feelings as *Men*, by a further detail of their horrid refinements of cruelty, at the recital of which, humanity sickens; or to shock your ears as *Christians*, with their derision of your *Reli-*

gion—their mockery of your *Saviour*, their blasphemous rejection of your *God*—and, their denial of a future state of existence, its rewards and punishments.

I am well aware, that this censure is not applicable to the *whole* nation, many individuals of which, are, I doubt not, unpolluted by the general frenzy, and amiable in private life; but, as a *majority* of the people, guided by those in power, constitute the national character, I think myself authorized, thus to speak of them in *general* terms.

Let it not be said, that such enormities are not *now* committed---that a milder policy hath succeeded, and that order and happiness will soon be re-established. By no means.----The operative cause is still in being, and tho' the activity of the poison is in some degree deadened, by the extravagant violence of its late exertion; yet, its implacable virulence still exists. The Demon of Licentiousness, which then enforced her mandates by massacre and destruction, now awes into submiss-

ion, arrayed in all the terrors of military Despotism ; equally demonstrating, in every form she can assume, the misery and wretchedness of those devoted mortals, “ whom God hath given over to a reprobate mind.*”

That their depravity *still* remains, and that they *still* cherish the desire (tho’ by more gradual, yet not less certain means) of altogether obliterating the impressions of christianity from the mind, and confirming those of Atheism, the hideous parent of every evil---every vice, is evident ; from the continuance of their Heathenish Calender, by which the christian Sabbath, and even the terms and appellations peculiar to that system are abolished ; and, by their institution and celebration of Festivals, in honor of *Reason* which they have so grossly debased, of *Liberty* which they have so notoriously violated, and of *Patriotism* which they have so flagrantly dishonored.

* Rom. 1. 28

Wretched substitution indeed, for the sublime and animating worship of the *One True God*; for the soothing confidence in an all-sufficient *Saviour*; and for the rapturous and invigorating influence of the celestial *Comforter*; which Christianity inculcates and inspires!

The pen of faithful history, and the memory of many now within these sacred walls, must trace with pleasing recollection, the purity and simplicity of manners, the ardor and unanimity of political sentiments, and the zeal and sincerity of religious profession, which once prevailed among us.

By that great and illustrious nation, from whom we derive our origin, we were nourished in the principles, of true religion and virtue; from her we imbibed those pure elements of political wisdom, which, as far as the infant state of our country would admit, taught us to form *our* constitution on the model of her own, justly considered, upon

abstract principles, by the wisest politicians*, the perfection of civil government; and, without a firm and cordial connection with whom, (pointed out by *Nature*, from a similitude of language, laws, manners, and religion; and by *expediency*, from her resources and her strength) we may perhaps, in the

* Blackstone, Burlamaqui, De Lolme, &c. among the Moderns.

Tacitus, universally allowed to be the best judge of all the writers on Civil Polity among the Ancients, considered a government thus uniting all the advantages of the simple forms, and rejecting their evils, tho' "devoutly to be wish'd for," yet from the natural imperfection of the human character impracticable. "Cunctas nationes, & urbes," says he, "Populus, aut Primores, aut Singuli regunt: delecta ex his, & constituta Republicæ forma, laudari facilius quam evenire; vel si evenit, haud diuturna esse potest." TAC. ANN. Lib. 4.

Cicero was of the same opinion. "Statuo esse optimè constitutam Rempublicam, quæ ex tribus generibus illis, regali, optimo, & populari, modicè confusa."

CIC. FRAG.

The progress of Science and Civilization, at length happily effected it.

present exigency, find it difficult to preserve
OUR LIBERTY AND INDEPENDENCE.

How so infatuated an attachment to French politics and principles, should so long have captivated the affections, and imposed upon the understandings of enlightened, virtuous Americans, is truly surprizing. For my own part, I cannot but acknowledge, that in some points of view, I consider the late political insults they have offered us, as a blessing rather than a misfortune ; since nothing short of so violent an assault upon our patriotism, could, in the common operation of causes, have torn from our eyes the film which covered them, or have awakened a just sensibility to our spiritual danger.

Such is the character of the enemy, who now clearly evince their hostility towards, and their desire to “ reign over us.” Against their rapacious encroachments, we fly for protection to the Almighty Arbiter of Nations.

Come then, my dear fellow Christians !
With sincere contrition for our past errors,

and stedfast purposes of future amendment, let us invoke his aid and protection. “The God whom we profess to serve, is able to deliver us, and he will deliver us*,” “if we stand fast in that liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free †.” We have indeed sinned, and have done wickedly : we have slighted the warnings we have from time to time received ; such as the wasting *insect*, which hath threatened us with famine ; the raging *pestilence*, which hath swept off such multitudes, and left so many bleeding hearts to mourn : with many *other* awful indications of divine displeasure ; which, as the judgments of the Lord, have been mercifully sent to teach us righteousness. These, I say, we have heedlessly disregarded. Nor have the innumerable *blessings* we have received, been more efficacious. “What return have we rendered unto the Lord, for all his benefits towards us ?”* For granting us the light of his blessed Gospel—for the comforts, and advantages of a healthy and a

* Dan. 3, 17. † Gal. 5, 1.

* Ps. 116, 12.

temperate climate—for a rich and fertile soil ---for raising up for us a MIGHTY DELIVERER, in an hour of danger and alarm; who, like the leader of the children of Israel, illuminated by a ray of celestial wisdom, hath placed us in full possession of this land, “ a land flowing with milk and honey. § ”—for the singular blessing of our free and happy Constitution of government---for hitherto defending us from the miseries of war, which have so long afflicted other nations—for banishing the monster *Civil Discord*, who but a little time ago, reared her horrid crest, and darted her poisonous sting, with threatening aspect—for disposing the uncivilized tribes upon our Frontiers, to peace and friendly intercourse* —and, for various domestic, and personal favors.

§ Josh. 5. 6.

* The protection of Providence, with respect to our forefathers in their first settlement of this country, is very remarkable. They remained above half a century undisturbed by the surrounding Savages: nor was their quiet interrupted by them, until they were instigated and assisted by the French Nation.

Let this day record *for each of us*, the commencement of a better life, remembering, that a partial compliance with the institution under which we are assembled, by a mere abstinence from food, during a certain limited time, without that contrition for sin, that humiliation of ourselves before God, that ardent gratitude, and that fixed resolution of amendment, which the *spirit* of the appointment requires ; is only a superstitious, and a criminal abuse of it.

This is indeed a day of *unusual solemnity*. As the Jews of old, were solemnly required by their divinely inspired prophet Joel, to prostrate themselves before the High and Mighty Ruler of the Universe, and implore his remission of the penalty denounced against their guilt ; *we* are in like manner now called upon by THE FATHER AND GUARDIAN OF OUR COUNTRY, who, as he hath hitherto been, so I trust he will continue to be, “ the minister of God to us for good*.” Justly elevated,

* Rom. 13. 4.

by the gratitude of his country, under the indulgent guidance of a superintending Providence, to the honorable station of CHIEF MAGISTRATE, the reiterated tributes of applause, which now resound thro' our immense Continent, incontestibly prove, that during his administration of the adopted government, "he hath done all things well†." And certainly, in no instance have the wisdom, piety, and patriotism of his character been more conspicuous, than in his present appeal to Heaven, and to the sincerity and efficacy of our christian profession.

May God, therefore, grant, that you may avail yourselves of the advantages of time and opportunity, and that you may "see and pursue the things which belong to your eternal peace, before they are for ever hid from your eyes‡!"

Now to God the Father, &c.

† Mark, 7. 37.

‡ Luke, 19. 42.





