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A Sermon  
by  
Dow, S. M. Morse  
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Book 278









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SERMON,  
PREACHED IN BEVERLY,  
AUGUST 20, 1812,  
THE DAY OF THE  
NATIONAL FAST,  
ON ACCOUNT OF  
WAR WITH GREAT-BRITAIN;  
AND AGAIN AT  
THE TABERNACLE IN SALEM,  
APRIL 8, 1813,  
THE DAY OF THE  
ANNUAL FAST IN MASSACHUSETTS.

By MOSES DOW, A. M.

SALEM:

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1813.



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# SERMON.

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LUKE xix. 41, 42.

AND WHEN HE WAS COME NEAR, HE BEHELD THE CITY, AND WEPT OVER IT, SAYING, IF THOU HADST KNOWN, EVEN THOU, AT LEAST IN THIS THY DAY, THE THINGS WHICH BELONG UNTO THY PEACE! BUT NOW THEY ARE HID FROM THINE EYES.

WHEN our Saviour uttered these pathetic words, he was on his last journey to Jerusalem. There he was going to shed his blood and lay down his life for the redemption and salvation of a lost world. It was not a prospect of his own sufferings which thus affected him. These he had always expected, and was prepared to meet, with heroic and divine fortitude. But a foresight of the miseries coming upon that ungrateful, persecuting city, by the awful justice of God, filled his sympathetic soul with the liveliest impressions of grief. He feared not death; but cheerfully led the way to the place of his execution. From the mount of Olives he entered the city Jerusalem, riding upon an ass' colt, amidst the loud acclamations of joy from the whole multitude of his disciples. But when the benevolent Saviour beheld THE DEVOTED CITY, he burst into tears. Pondering upon the Jews' wilful obstinacy—their rejection of all the offers of grace, and the utter ruin which awaited the city, the temple, and its inhabitants, he

wept, with the tenderest compassion. And he exclaimed, "as with a wish, or ardent desire," *If thou hadst known, or, Oh that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace!* The Jews' day, here intended, was the time in which they had been honoured and favoured with the presence of MESSIAH, their King. This was *their* day; for Christ and the first preachers of the gospel had spent all their time and labour at Jerusalem. They had been taught repeatedly, by Christ and his apostles, the things which belonged to their *peace, prosperity and happiness*. But they disregarded their message, would not believe their report, nor follow their instructions. Their hearts were hardened and their minds blinded with a spirit of infatuation. And being left under *strong delusions to believe a lie*, they preferred falsehood to truth. Thus this once prosperous city was judicially given up of God; her day of gracious privilege was then expired,—her doom was passed, and every thing conducive to her welfare was, in righteous judgment, "hidden from her eyes." When Jesus approached this devoted place, a view from the neighbouring hills awakened, in his sympathizing bosom, the liveliest emotions of pity. Though he was about to predict the entire desolation of the city, *he did not desire the woful day*:—he did not delight in the destruction even of such wicked people. And therefore he exclaims, in the language of ardent desire, mixed with regret, "*Oh, that thou hadst known, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes.*"

The propositions, which we conceive deducible from this passage, are the following :

1. Nations and individuals may neglect the things which belong to their peace, till their case is desperate and past all remedy.

2. A prospect of ruin and misery coming upon the despisers of God's mercy, will excite the tenderest compassion of all who have the spirit of Christ.

FIRST. Nations and individuals may neglect the things which belong to their peace, till their case is desperate and past all remedy. Short is the period of human life, even though we linger out threescore years and ten. And shorter still may be the day of God's gracious forbearance, and man's favourable opportunity to secure the divine favour. For numbers, in every age, "despise the riches of the goodness, forbearance and longsuffering of God; not knowing that his goodness leads to repentance: but after their hardness and impenitent heart, they treasure up wrath against the day of wrath." They put far away the evil day, till, by long indulgence, they become seared in conscience, and incurably hardened in sin. "Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, their hearts are fully set in them to do evil." God bears with them from time to time. He tries various expedients to turn them from their wicked purposes, to truth and holiness. He visits them with mercies and judgments—with warnings and invitations—with threatenings and promises. But when they have long turned a deaf ear to all his counsels, slighted his proposals, and undervalued his unspeakable blessings;—when they persevere in resisting, quenching and grieving his Holy Spirit, they are ripening fast for remediless destruction. For the Lord has expressly said, "*My Spirit shall not always strive with man.*" The Spirit of God long strove with men of the old world, by inspiring Enoch, Noah and others to preach and to warn them. He long and patiently bore with them, notwithstanding their rebellions, waiting to be gracious. But, at length, incensed by their obstinate resistance to the

warnings of his prophets and the remonstrances of their own consciences, he solemnly resolved to leave them to be hardened in sin, and to ripen for destruction. In like manner the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, by their filthy and abominable wickedness, provoked the Lord, not only to withdraw his restraints, but to make them the monuments of his eternal vengeance. The most astonishing forbearance the Lord manifested also toward the Israelites in the wilderness. Forty years long was he grieved with that generation. At length, grown indignant by their incessant murmurings, ingratitude and rebellion, he swore in his wrath that they should not enter his rest. Their short and limited season of probation was then closed, and their state of eternal retribution commenced.

If we trace the history of the several kingdoms of Judah and Israel, we find them subject to frequent and alternate changes from prosperity to adversity. They were taught, by experience, the truth of that divine aphorism, "WHEN THE RIGHTEOUS ARE IN AUTHORITY, THE PEOPLE REJOICE; BUT WHEN THE WICKED BEARETH RULE, THE PEOPLE MOURN."

When such men as DAVID and JOSIAH were their kings, their times were times of reformation, and Providence smiled upon all their concerns. But when such as AHAB, JEROBOAM and MANASSEH ruled over them, Providence frowned, wickedness increased, and the land mourned. In consequence of the great wickedness of the people, their day of gracious visitation was generally short—their sun of prosperity was soon covered with a dark cloud of adversity.

If we descend to later times, the glory of empires, kingdoms and nations appears still more transitory and fading. On the page of history many of them suddenly arise to view, exhibit a temporary splendour, and then quickly disappear, and are seen no



more. By various massacres, famines, pestilence and revolutionary scenes, an immense multitude of governments has arisen, since the dispersion of the Jewish nation. But their prosperity and glory have been like "the morning cloud and the early dew." Where righteousness has abounded, the nation has been exalted; but when sin has prevailed, it has quickly sunk in reproach and ruin. This has ever been the course of providence toward nations; and such will ever be its course to the end of time. Those, who make his laws their model, and his word their guide, God will bless and prosper; but those, who forsake his ordinances and the light of his word, he will leave to certain destruction—to perish without remedy. Where now are the once flourishing governments of Asia—the birth-place of man, of prophets, apostles, and the Saviour of the world? Alas, they are crumbled to ruins. Once they were the theatres of mighty works—the residence of many holy men, and the scenes of remarkable divine interposition. Jerusalem, that city of solemnities, that cradle of God's antient church, where resided the symbols of his presence, is now a heap of ruins. It was often and alternately rebuilt and destroyed by contending parties; but finally, according to the express prediction of our Saviour, it was utterly demolished by TIRUS. In exact fulfilment of the prophecy, about forty years after it was uttered, the city was razed to the ground; and its inhabitants destroyed. Indeed, so complete was the destruction of this renowned city, that not one stone was left upon another; but turned up by the Roman plough, in quest of plunder. This was in righteous judgment—for their crying sins; BECAUSE THEY WOULD NOT REGARD THE THINGS WHICH BELONGED TO THEIR PEACE.

GREECE and ROME, once the seats of arts and sciences, the most powerful empires and mistresses of

the world, corrupted, debauched and divided, have long since fallen a prey to savage invaders. A deluge of ignorance, barbarism and superstition has effaced the monuments of former learning and magnificence. Their proud ambition, enormous cruelties and abominable wickedness provoked Heaven to blot them from the list of nations. A new race have sprung up, to inherit their territory, who have formed governments, and had their day of prosperity. Holland, Switzerland, Italy and Germany were once independent, free and prosperous states. But not knowing the time of their visitation—*not minding the things which belonged to their peace*, they became infatuated, and then fell an easy prey to “the mighty power under whose iron rod all Europe groans” and bleeds at every pore. And they fell, not in the high places of the field—not by force of arms; *but by blindly yielding to the insidious arts of their designing conquerors*. They had drunken of “the wine of astonishment,” by which they were intoxicated, divided and enfeebled; and “then their ruin became inevitable.”—And can we say that our own nation is in no danger from this intoxicating cup, of losing *the things which belong to its peace*? Alas, whatever be the cause, our prosperity and glory are, in a measure, gone, our peace is fled, and war, with all its baneful attendants, is now our portion! The cause may be traced to our sins, which testify against us. These have provoked the Lord to anger; and his anger against sin is the sole cause of all misery, personal and relative, individual and national, temporal and eternal. The sins of professing churches have often provoked the anger of Heaven to remove their candlestick out of its place;—nations tremble for the same cause: yea, the whole earth, and creation itself, groan under the load of man’s guilt. The judgments of God are abroad in the earth, because of

the wickedness of men. And when we consider the fury and rage, the mutual carnage and destruction of nations, does it not appear that they have been drinking of the intoxicating cup of God's holy indignation? Else why are they thus maddened in their passions to wreak their vengeance on one another? Why does a nation, upon the slightest pretext, rise up against nation, so that "blood toucheth blood?" And does not the compassionate Saviour now weep over THIS INFATUATED LAND? Does he not say to America, in the language of our text, "*Oh, that thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! Oh, that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea.*" Had we as a nation hearkened to the God of our fathers, and to the maxims of wisdom contained in his word, this had, even now, been our happy case. We should not have been compelled to witness "the confused noise of the warrior, and garments rolled in blood." Had we, *our fathers, our princes and people*, all united in maintaining the worship of God, and unfeigned obedience to his laws, our national prosperity would not have been interrupted. *The things which belong to our peace* would not have been hidden from our eyes. The blessings engaged to Israel, while they adhered to the service of Jehovah, might have been expected in this happy land. "Our sons would have been as plants, grown up in their youth,—our daughters as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace. Our garners would have been full, affording all manner of store;—our sheep would have brought forth thousands and ten thousands in our streets—our oxen would have been strong to labour—there would have been no breaking in nor

going out,—no complaining in our streets. Happy is the people that is in such a case; yea, happy is the people, whose God is the Lord.”—Such are the blessings, which, in the ordinary course of providence, are generally conferred on nations, whose rulers and people faithfully follow the maxims of the gospel. And such happiness would have been thine, O America, had this been thy uniform character. But how art thou fallen from thy former greatness! How is thy glory departed! “How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed!” Time was, when we were the envy of the world. The fame of our independence, freedom and prosperity rang, *through the channels of COMMERCE*, to the remotest nations. The wealth of almost every clime was, through this medium, wafted to our shores. By this our national treasury was replenished—agriculture and manufactures flourished—learning and the arts advanced with rapid pace, and we were swiftly emulating the greatness of the first in rank in the old world. Happy, thrice happy, O Americans, had ye known what happiness was yours—had ye regarded *the things which belonged to your peace*. But alas, how are they hidden from our eyes! We are now,

2d. To shew that a prospect of ruin and misery coming upon the despisers of God’s mercy will excite the tenderest compassion of all who have the spirit of Christ.

David, that eminent type of our Saviour, exhibits, in a lively degree, this sympathetic, christian affection. “*Horror, says he, hath taken hold upon me, because of the wicked that forsake thy law.*” “*Rivers of water run down mine eyes, because they keep not thy law.*” “*I beheld the transgressors, and was grieved, because they*



*kept not thy word.*"—Having the same mind that was in Christ Jesus, he was grieved to the very heart, to see others blindly rushing to their own ruin. A view of their sinful character and awfully dangerous state filled him with the mingled emotions of grief, indignation and pity. He mourned the wickedness of men and the dishonour of God, more than his own sufferings; and he wept a flood of tears. And no one has a right to pretend to the spirit of Christ, unless the sin and misery of others thus deeply affect him.

To rejoice in another's calamity is the very temper of hell! To rejoice in the hope and prospect that his calamity will work for his good, is a very different thing. This is consistent with that christian benevolence, which regards our neighbour as ourselves. If fore afflictions appear necessary to humble and reform a bold transgressor, and seem likely to produce that happy effect, then we ought to acquiesce in the divine method, and pray for its success. But to rejoice purely in another's distress is inhuman, anti-christian and diabolical. The benevolent Saviour and his inspired saints have taught us a better spirit, and set us a better example. They mourned and wept, even for those who thirsted to shed their innocent blood. But though Jesus was a man of sorrows, and often groaned and wept in view of suffering humanity; yet the blind infatuation, pride and obstinacy of sinners distressed far more his sympathetic soul. "*He looked on the PHARISEES with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts.*" And when he beheld the infatuated city of Jerusalem, in spite of all his counsels, warnings and entreaties, rushing headlong into ruin, his pitiful soul dissolved into tears. And were the Saviour now visible we should doubtless behold him weeping over the condition and prospect of our own guilty land! Our

peace, prosperity and happiness are on the rapid decline, and war, adversity, and a host of evils, assume their place.

Liberty, too, the pride, the darling and boast of Americans, like a hunted, persecuted fugitive, seems on the point of seeking some more hospitable clime. Driven from nation to nation, and from one end of earth to another, like Noah's dove, she can scarcely find rest for the sole of her foot. For a course of years she has found an asylum, protection and patronage in this western world. But her residence becomes more and more precarious. For already have many begun to treat this celestial visitant with neglect, or cold contempt!

\* [Preferring the unbounded indulgence of licentiousness to the wholesome restraints implied in genuine liberty, INFURIATE MOBS burst the barriers which heaven and earth have raised for the security of life, property and happiness. The deplorable condition of a sister state excites the indignant groans and sympathy of all the humane—of all the followers of the Lamb. That city, which, like Jerusalem, had been highly exalted in privilege, wealth and splendour, is now doomed to be *the prey of those, who reverence no laws, respect no character, and whose tender mercies are cruel*. Even the distant report of their maddened fury is enough to chill the blood, and freeze the soul with horror! It reminds us of that furious mob, who wreaked their vengeance on Stephen, the first christian martyr. In his defence before the Jewish council, his pungent discourse cut to the heart his violent persecutors, and they, like ferocious beasts, “gnashed on him with their teeth.”

\* The subsequent part of the discourse, enclosed in brackets, was pronounced with the rest on the first delivery, but at the last time was omitted, as less pertinent. A few sentences towards the close have also been added, which the reader will excuse.

Being full of the Holy Ghost, he saw in vision a display of heavenly glory. And when he proclaimed aloud, before his exasperated persecutors, the glorious scene presented to his view, "they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord." Then, with brutal ferocity and infernal rage, they "cast him out of the city, and stoned him" to death!

A similar mob persecuted the immaculate Saviour of the world. They misinterpreted all his words and actions, multiplied their false accusations against him, and treated him with every personal insult and indignity. Nothing, in short, would satisfy their bloodthirsty fury, till they had inflicted, upon their unoffending victim, the most ignominious and torturing death!

Thus we see that human nature is the same, in all periods, and *persecuting mobs* were known as early as the apostolic age. From their unbridled ferocity and horrid misrule may Heaven preserve us. "*O my soul, come not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united.*"

Had we, as a nation, *regarded the things which belong to our peace*, scenes of riot, misrule and civil war had never commenced among us. Had we followed the maxims of the gospel, in all our private and public relations and capacities;—had we "studied the things which make for peace, and things whereby one might edify another," we had still remained a united people, owned and blessed of the Lord. But by our various sins we have made God our enemy; and unless he turn away his anger, and have mercy upon us, we must assuredly perish. We humbly hope and trust that "*the things which belong to our peace*" are not forever hidden from our eyes. We hope a precious remnant may yet be reserved, for whose sake God will be entreated to spare



a guilty land. Were it not for this pious remnant, we had, ere now, been as Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboim !

There is no truth in the Bible more plain than this, That it is on account of the righteous God bears with wicked nations. Should these be all removed, the wrath of heaven would soon burst upon their guilty survivors. In proportion as this class are multiplied, promoted, and abound in fruits of righteousness, will be the prosperity of any people. On the contrary, the more wickedness and wicked men are increased and exalted, the more the anger of heaven is enkindled, and ruin hastens apace.

Let our nation turn to the LORD, and bring forth fruits meet for repentance.—Let ministers and people unite in following the maxims of the gospel. And then, be assured, the doom of Jerusalem shall not be ours. God will be our shield, and no weapons formed against us, shall eventually prosper.

But should we go on *unmindful of the things which belong to our peace*—and could we succeed, in conquering the only free nation on earth, except our own ;—the nation, who, bad as she is, is doing more than all the world besides in extending the word of life and the blessings of christianity, to millions ready to perish !\*—Could we succeed in conquering that nation, which now, under Providence, stands between us and ruin—what should we gain ? Alas, nought but poverty, vice and slavery ;—nought but a deadly alliance with that infidel, atheistical power, “ *whose armies shall soon be assembled at*

\* It is said that the Bible and Missionary societies of Great-Britain are paying, as a freewill offering, not less than five hundred thousand dollars, annually, to promote the gospel among the heathen and others destitute of the means of religious instruction. And all this in addition to the millions they expend to support the gospel at home.—See Rev. Mr. Webster's Thanksgiving Sermon, Nov. 26, 1812.

*Armageddon, and fall in the battle of the great day of God Almighty."*

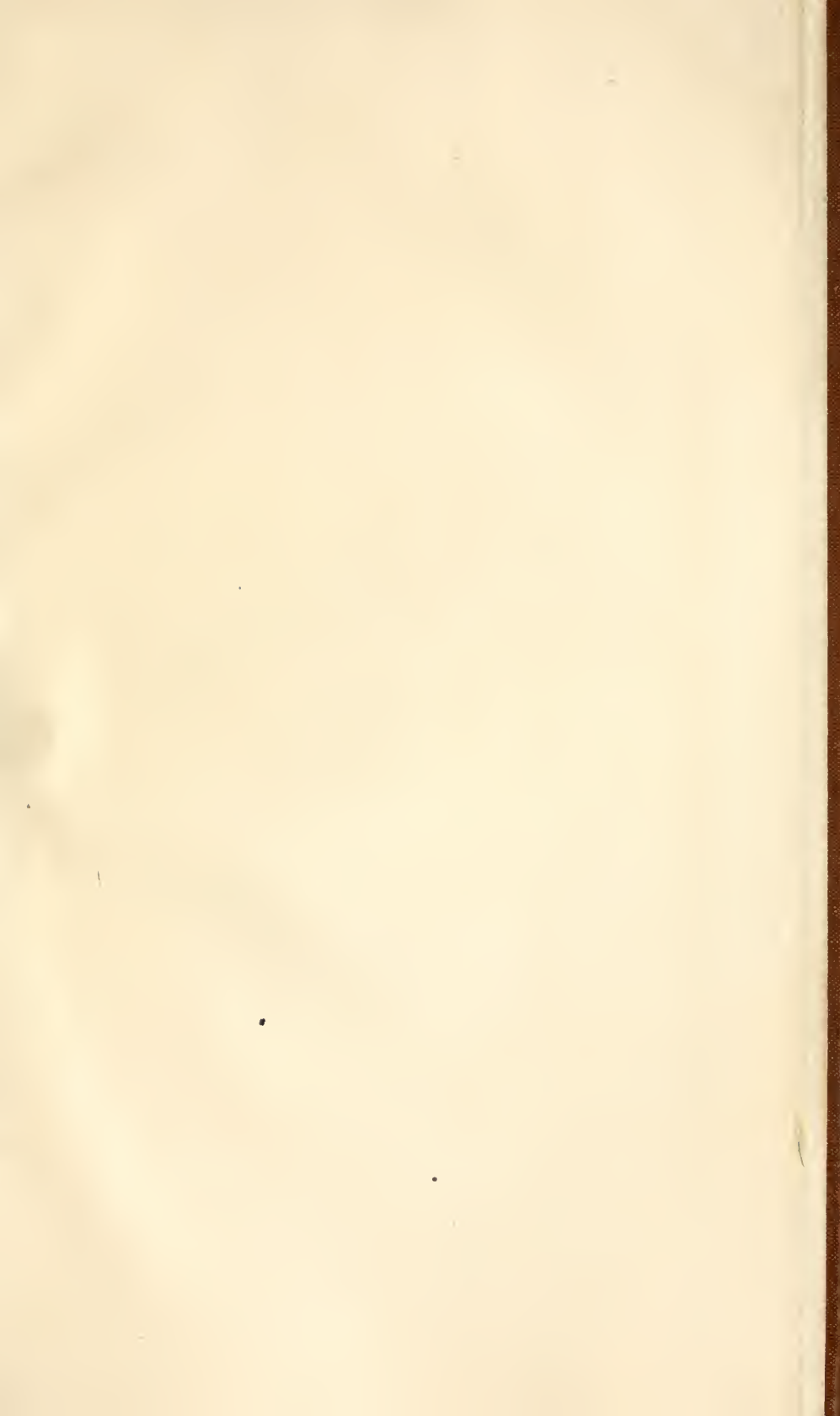
The greatest of all earthly judgments, with which we could be visited, would be an intimate confederacy with infidel powers. For vice, like the plague, is contagious. As sure as we become partakers of *mystical Babylon's* sins, we must receive of her plagues. Our religion, under God, is our defence and our glory. Should this be destroyed, and atheism prevail, then farewell to our peace and happiness forever!

Shall we not all, my friends, imitate the mourning Jesus, and weep over our infatuated country? Our former glory is departed. "*Darkness covers the land, and thick darkness the people.*" Our joy is turned into mourning, and our abused mercies into desolating judgments. Already, distress wrings many a heart, and horrors of thick darkness brood on many a countenance. The arm of industry is palsied by the sickening aspect of the times, and anxiety is all alive in expectation of scenes more tremendous! Thousands of wives, parents, and other connections, now feel a dreadful solicitude for husbands, children and friends, who are in danger of falling a prey to a provoked enemy. The prospect that numerous widows, orphans and beggars will be multiplied by this desolating judgment, must give pain to every heart, that delights not in war and human misery. Our only consolation and hope, in this distressing season, are in the government and perfections of God. But even this hope and consolation we cannot expect to realize, if our sins continue to testify against us, and we remain impenitent. The rod of divine correction will still be stretched over us, and the besom of destruction will sweep us away, unless we take refuge in the Ark of safety, unless we "break off our sins by righteousness, and our iniquities by turning unto God." "The name of the

Lord is a strong tower : the righteous runneth into it, and is safe."

Be exhorted, my friends, to secure this refuge, and then you need not be afraid of evil tidings. "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance. He shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord." Do you wish to avoid Jerusalem's doom, and to shun the plagues of antichristian despoilers? Then beware of the fascinating cup. Beware of "THE WINE OF ASTONISHMENT." *Beware of snares laid privily for your destruction. Sell not your birthright for a mess of pottage. Barter not your religion, your Saviour and your souls, for any paltry gratification, which flattering infidels may offer.* But behold the banner of the Prince of peace. Enlist under Christ as your Leader and Commander. Let his word be your sword, faith your shield, and hope your helmet of salvation. This is the contest, to which we are called. This is the warfare, to which the trumpet of the gospel invites you. Join, as volunteers, this standard, and then, whatever be the doom of your country, victory is yours. YOU SHALL COME OFF MORE THAN CONQUERORS, THROUGH CHRIST, WHO HATH LOVED US.

AMEN.













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