

before Omnipotence? We can neither deliver ourselves out of his hand, nor escape his righteous vengeance. We can only flee for refuge to his infinite mercy. When God undertakes to deal with a nation, he will overcome; he will either humble or destroy. Obstinate impenitence under the frowns of Heaven, therefore, only prolongs misery. It heightens the anger of Heaven, and turns chastisements into exterminating judgments.

Jehovah is on a mercy seat; he waits to be gracious, and in wrath remembers mercy. He will hear the cry of repentance and faith; he will never cast away those who cast themselves upon his mercy. Hear what God says: *I will be unto Ephraim as a lion; I will take away, and none shall rescue; I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offence, and seek my face; in their affliction they will seek me early.* Again: *O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.* The Lord shews them in what manner they must return, and then adds, *I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him.* And what can be more in point than the words of my text? Now, *said the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and weeping, and mourning, and rend your hearts, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.* Hence you see that the means by which national calamities have been removed is a turning to God by repentance and earnest supplication; and that God encourages us with the hope of acceptance if we thus return to him. It is not enough that a few individuals turn from their sins, and supplicate the throne of grace. Many must seriously engage in the business of reformation, and be earnest in their prayers for the salvation of their country.

But it is necessary I should point out the manner in which we must return to God. This is clearly mark-