

IN IMPROVING the subject of this discourse, according to the design of our assembling to day, our attention will be confined to the two following inferences : that we have great *occasion*, and great *encouragement*, for humiliation, fasting and prayer.

1.—If we review and apply the subject, we find great occasion to engage in the duties for which we consecrate the day.

As a nation, have we not done evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoked him to anger by refusing to obey his voice? He has long been speaking to us, not only in his word, and in his dealings with other nations ; but in his providence toward us as a people. By the unexampled prosperity and long continued peace, which we have heretofore enjoyed, he showed that he delighted in us to do us good. But how ungratefully have we abused his blessings! Hardened by prosperity, we have perverted the richest favors of his providence as occasions of sin.

It has been shown, that a free people refuse to obey the voice of God, when, in electing men to fill the offices of government, they pay no regard to the cause of religion ; when they uphold rulers in the abuse of their power ; and when the principles and manners of the people are greatly corrupted. Now, in exercising the right of election, have we duly regarded the honor of God, and the cause of truth and righteousness? Have we not forgotten or contemned some of the plainest precepts of God's word? Instead of taking special heed to ourselves, that we choose good men, who fear God and hate covetousness, and who would be a terror to evil doers and a praise and encouragement to them that do well, have not the body of this people been ac-