

not even speaking our own words, been desecrated by both Rulers, and people, by being employed for almost every secular purpose? Has not the name of God which should be used with the deepest reverence and awe, been fearfully profaned in common conversation? Have not fraud and dishonesty lifted their cry to heaven? Has not a spirit of worldliness and covetousness, a hastening by all means and at all hazards to be rich, been widely prevalent? and have not the ordinances of God appointed for promoting our eternal salvation been esteemed less in value than those perishable objects, which can afford but a temporary comfort?

The person who does not, in all these recent calamities, see the connection between God's judgments and our sins, would scarcely see it were it written by the finger of God, in brightest characters in every part of his spacious firmament above us and around us.

But in the principles of the divine government the connection between faith, repentance, prayer, and the removal of God's judgments is no less close than between judgments and sin. And with reference to our present circumstances it ought to be most deeply impressed on our minds that though outward calamities may sometimes seem to be removed without repentance, faith, and prayer, this is no proof of their real and final removal, or of the possession of the divine favor, but on the contrary is evidence of the certainty of their sooner or later falling with a weight all the more terrible and overwhelming on the heads of the impenitent. For example, were not the judgments that fell upon Jerusalem just the full accumulated amount of that storm of divine wrath that had for ages been gathering in the heavens and which, because God's voice of warning had been, from generation to generation, despised, at last, with unrestrained and irresistible fury, burst over the devoted city? And is not the case of Jerusalem more than once referred to by our blessed Lord as a warning of those judgments unspeakably more terrible that await the impenitent in eternity? So that if escape from temporal calamities for sins unrepented of be possible, there is a day coming when retribution must overtake transgressors with a severity according to the length of space given for repentance.

But, brethren, there is one thing which at this eventful crisis demands our solemn and undivided attention because it is full of encouragement and hope. It is this that after all judgment is God's strange work; that not only is he reluctant to draw his glittering sword and take vengeance on his enemies—the impenitent despisers of his mercies and warnings—but even after having drawn it, he is ever ready to return it to its scabbard upon seeing any plain symptoms of prayerful humiliation, repentance, faith, and unfeigned desire to lay down the weapons of their rebellion and to return to their allegiance.

So very slow is our God to anger that, as you remember, he gave to the old world no less than 120 years space for repentance; and it was only after his omnipotence had been defied, his admonitions contemned, and the world had filled up the measure of its guilt, that the deluge of sin which overspread the world was swept away by a deluge of water.

Likewise the case of Ninevah, so appropriate to our present circumstances, shews that God even after he had proclaimed the ruin of that mighty city, upon seeing signs of penitence on the part of the people did not inflict the judgment threatened.

Dearly beloved brethren, we would urge it upon your attention that although God has in the midst of judgment been remembering mercy, yet matters are still in suspense because the issue of events may entirely depend upon that line of conduct towards the Supreme Ruler, which you as a people and as individuals are to adopt. Pause then and consider the way by which you are to obtain the removal of something infinitely more dreadful than any temporal calamity—the anger of God. The removal of this spiritual calamity is to be obtained, and the divine favour secured, by pleading at the throne of grace for a saving interest in the precious atoning blood and meritorious obedience of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, by profound humiliation on account of sin, by unfeigned repentance, evidencing itself in a thorough and unexceptionable amendment of life. Suffer us, then, as your spiritual guardians, and as bound to watch over you in these calamitous times, strongly to urge upon you the necessity of diligence in the use of means—of secret prayer, of family worship, of associations with your brethren for the purpose of prayer, and of regularly assembling yourselves together in the House of God. Finally, be assured that it is only by the Holy Spirit rendering these means effectual—enabling you to depend for acceptance on the free grace of God, and the mediation of Jesus Christ, and to forsake every besetting sin—that you can have any solid foundation for expecting him to deliver you from existing evils, to prosper you as citizens of time and bliss, you in all eternity. Amen.

Belleville, 3d January, 1838.

The above Address was appointed to be read to the congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery at the last meeting held on the 3d of January, 1838.