

Fasting and prayer is the old established way of obtaining help from God. This appears from the sacred history. In the reign of Jehoshaphat, many heathen nations formed a league against Judah, collected a great army, and were in full march for Jerusalem. The king was greatly troubled, and set himself to seek the Lord. He proclaimed a fast throughout all Judah; and the people gathered themselves to ask help of God. The king himself took the lead in the public solemnities, and earnestly besought the protection of Heaven. The people seemed, with one heart, to unite with their king. Their prayer was heard in Heaven, and they obtained an easy victory over their combined foes. When the same country was threatened with the judgments of Heaven in the time of Josiah, that pious king set himself to seek the Lord God of his fathers. He abolished idolatry, and used every means to effect a reformation through the land. In this good work he was in some measure successful, and the anger of Heaven was turned away from them for a season. When Jonah was sent to preach to the great city of Nineveh, and to cry against it, that in forty days Nineveh should be overthrown; the people believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest unto the least of them. Even the king took off his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. He commanded every man to turn from his evil way; for said he, *Who can tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger, that we perish not? And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way, and God repented of the evil that he had said that he would do unto them, and he did it not.*

In these instances, recorded for our example and encouragement, you see how appoaching judgments were turned away from a guilty people. Prayer and fasting were the principal means of obtaining exemption from threatening calamities. When an individual assaults us, we may resist or flee; but when God undertakes to deal with us, shall we think to stand