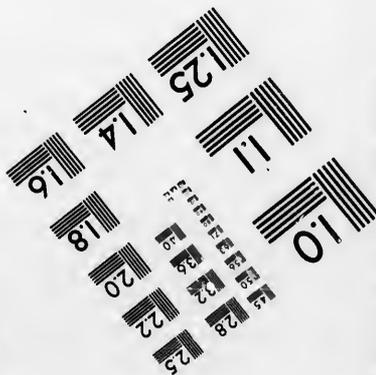
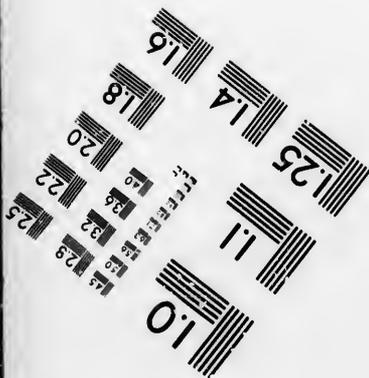
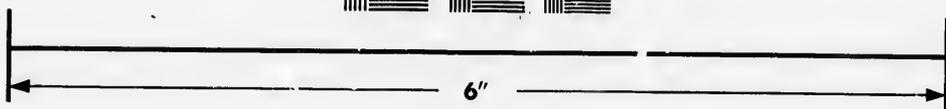
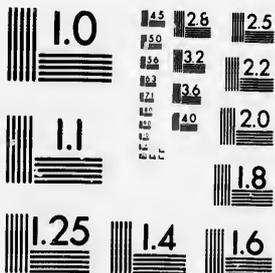


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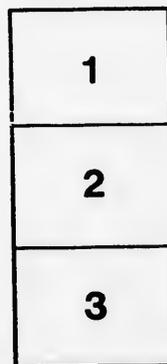
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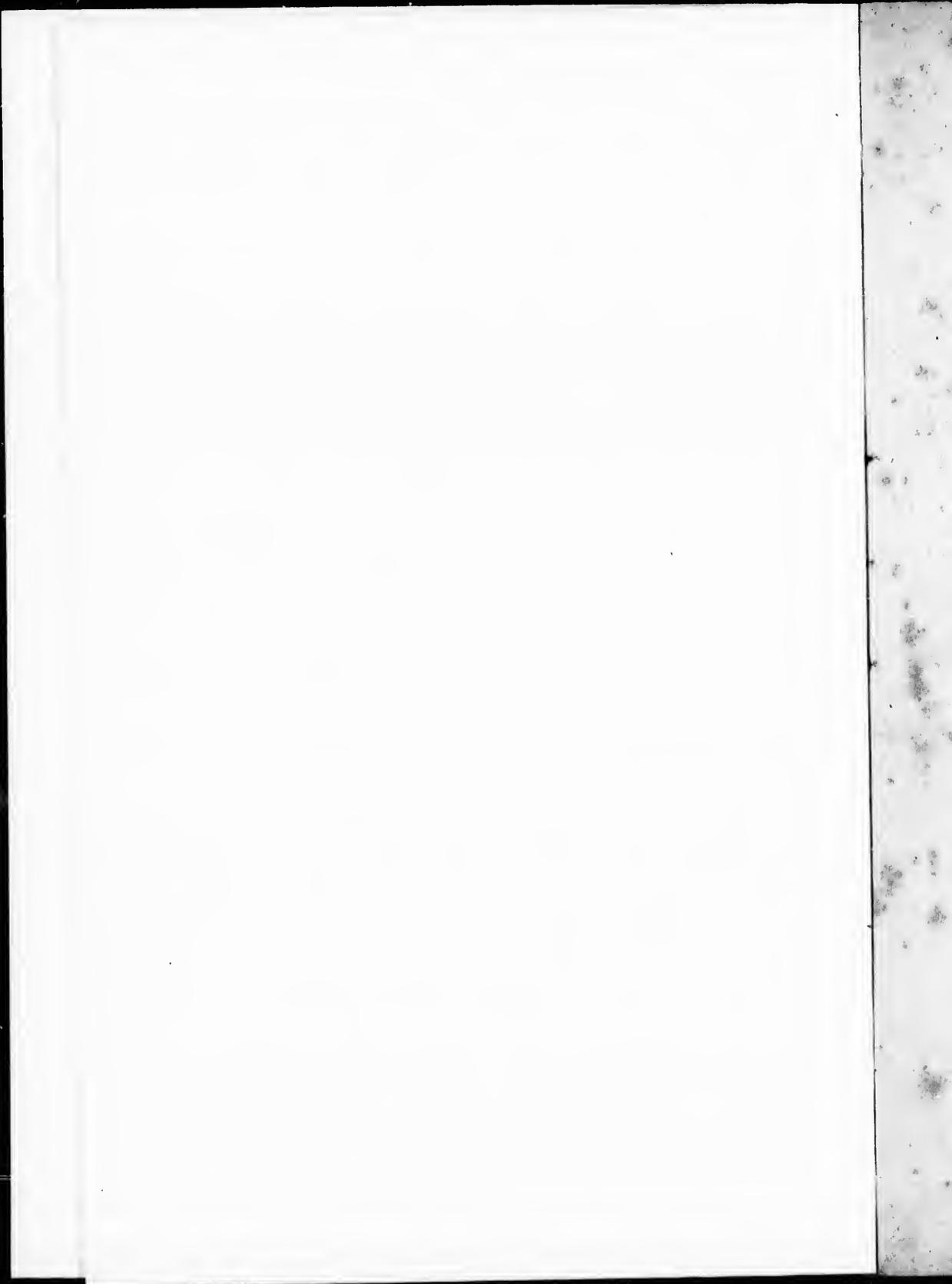
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GOD'S VISITATION OF SINFUL NATIONS.

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SERMONS,

P 252.12

DELIVERED IN COLRAIN,

ON THE PUBLIC FAST, JULY 23,

AND AFTERWARDS IN SHELBURNE,

AUGUST 20, 1812 :

.....
By SAMUEL TAGGART, A. M.
Pastor of the Presbyterian Church in Colrain.
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These discourses were composed about eleven months ago, without any reference to the particular occasion on which they were delivered, and without any fixed purpose of delivering them on any occasion: This is a reason why the particular occasion of the public fasts is so little alluded to. They are published from the copy originally prepared without any other alteration than some verbal connections and what is inserted in the notes. They have occasioned some speculations, and several misrepresentations have gone abroad. They are now published that they may speak for themselves. All that I can say of the remarks which may appear a little out of the common road, is, that they were written under the most entire conviction of their truth. The reason why the publication has been so long delayed, has been that the manuscript from which they are printed, was out of my reach, and only came into my hands this day.

Colrain, September 18, 1734.

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SERMON I.

JER. 5, xxix.—Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?

IT was the lot of the prophet Jeremiah to be raised up and called to the prophetic office in a very degenerate age. The floods, as well of idolatry as vice, with which the nation had been inundated, during a long reign of a cruel, wicked, and idolatrous Manasseh, had, it is true, received a temporary check, by the zealous and persevering endeavours of a virtuous and pious Josiah to effect a reformation. Apostacy had however taken such a deep root, that altho' the current of defection was for a time arrested, and vice overawed by his presence and authority, yet it does not appear that the body of the nation ever concurred heartily in that reformation. Hence it was that nearly all its good fruits and effects disappeared as soon as one of his degenerate offspring mounted the throne. The prophet Jeremiah being himself a witness to this awful progress in the road to ruin, was frequently sent both to the rulers and the nation with heavy tidings. It does not appear that either his denunciations of impending vengeance, or his pathetic exhortations to repentance and reformation, were accompanied with any remarkable success. By his faithfulness he roused the indignation of a profligate court, and an equally profligate people, against himself, and became the victim of a most cruel and unrelenting persecution; by which his life was repeatedly exposed to the most imminent danger. Unlike those prophets who foretold things which were not to come to pass until after the lapse of many ages, he lived to witness the accomplishment of some of his most important predictions, in the actual destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, the slaughter and captivity of the principal part of the inhabitants, and the almost entire desolation of the whole land.

God was the political King and Lawgiver of the Jewish nation, in a sense which was peculiar to that people. We cannot therefore find any other nation whose situation is, in all respects, parallel to that of the Jews. But altho' there is a

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difference in many respects, yet it will perhaps be scarcely possible to find any other nation between whose situation and that of the Jews there are more points of resemblance than in that of the United States. To trace that resemblance, by taking a review of the history of these States, and comparing it with that of the Jews, would lead to discussions foreign to my present purpose. But altho' there should, in many respects, be a dissimilarity in our situation, there is still a resemblance, not only between them and us, but between them and all other nations, in this leading feature of their respective situations, i. e. That every nation is under the watchful care of providence, and will, in their national capacity, be rewarded or punished according to their conduct, in proportion to the advantages for religious and moral improvement which they enjoy. In that remarkable passage of holy writ which we have, JER. 18, vii—x, there is no restriction to the Jews or to any particular nation. It is, *At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation or concerning a kingdom, (i. e. concerning any nation or any kingdom) to pluck up, to pull down, and to destroy it. If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good that I said I would benefit them.* Agreeable to this declaration has been the usual conduct of providence in every age. Nations have been raised up from time to time, and fostered with the most indulgent care of heaven. They have been afterwards severely corrected for their sins, and had their names finally blotted out from among the nations of the earth. Man is to be viewed in a two-fold capacity. First as an individual placed in this world in a state of trial, as a candidate for an immortality of either happiness or misery—and 2dly. as a constituent member of civil society, or as belonging to a particular kingdom, nation or body politic. As it respects man as an individual, his situation is undoubtedly in the first point of view the most important. Our time in this world is but short, and all are rapidly hastening to an untried state of existence, where we must appear before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account of the deeds done in the body. So

extensive, strict, and accurate, will be this scrutiny, that every work must be brought into judgment, and every secret thing that men do, whether it be good or evil; and every man will be rewarded according to his works. GOD is also to be considered as the judge of kingdoms and nations, as well as of individuals, only with this difference, that the period of retribution for the latter, will be after the close of the present scene, and the full measure of rewards and punishments will be dispensed in a future world, whereas, on the other hand, nations as such, or in their national capacity, are judged and their rewards and punishments dispensed in the present state. This world is the only theatre on which nations exist. Here they are either built up or pulled down, exalted to a state of national prosperity, or corrected and punished by severe chastisements. These national calamities are sometimes inflicted for their good, but at others for their extinction from the list of nations. *Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin (particularly national sin) is the reproach to any people.* The prophet Jeremiah, as well in this chapter as in many other parts of his prophecy, gives an affecting and melancholy picture of the corruption and degeneracy of the Jews. This degeneracy consisted of two branches; which have not only a natural but a necessary connection together; viz. In an apostacy from the principles and practice of the true religion, by adopting the idolatrous customs of the surrounding nations, and in the awful prevalence of almost every species of immorality. This the prophet paints in glowing colours, chap. 2, xiii. *For my people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.* For these things God threatens them with his displeasure, the fruits of which they soon after so severely experienced. The words of the text are twice repeated in this chapter, viz. ver. ix & xxix, to show that this visitation and vengeance were both certain and necessary in the nature of things. *Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?* The visitation here threatened was a national visitation, and the sins for which they were to be visited were national sins. For the farther illustration of the subject, I shall

1. Offer some general remarks on God's visitation of sinful nations, and the manner in which he visits them.

2. I shall notice several traits in our national character which go to show, that we are such a nation as has just reason to dread the righteous visitations of heaven.

1st. I am to make some general remarks on God's visitation of sinful nations, and the manner in which he visits them.

When mention is made in the sacred oracles, of God's visiting either an individual or a nation, the term is not always to be understood in the same sense. The term to visit is indiscriminately applied to acts of judgment and of mercy. In many instances it means the same as the performance of a mercy promised, but in others it means the infliction of a previously threatened judgment. The places of scripture in which the term is used in both these senses are too numerous to particularize. A few however may be briefly noticed.—*God will surely visit you*; (i. e. in order to perform the mercy promised to your Fathers, in delivering you out of this land) *and ye shall carry up my bones from hence*, says dying Joseph to his surrounding brethren. *What is man that thou shouldst visit him every morning?* says Job. *O God of hosts look down from Heaven, and visit this vine and the vineyard which thine own right hand hath planted.*—*O visit me with thy salvation.*—Psalmist. The coming of Christ is also called a visitation and redemption of God's people. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people.*—Luke 1, lxviii. *The day spring from on high hath visited us.*—Ver. vxxviii. But in many places God's visiting a people is the same with his inflicting a threatened punishment. *I the Lord am a jealous God, visiting the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children*, says Jehovah himself. And again. *In the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them.* He visits his people's iniquities with a rod, and their transgressions with stripes. All afflictive dispensations of providence, whether more or less severe, may be considered as God's visitations. It plainly appears, from its connection with vengeance, that this is the sense of visiting in the text. It was a correction, and one of the severest kind, which was threatened.

The ways in which God visits offending nations, either for

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correction or severer punishment are various. Sometimes he punishes by wars, which, notwithstanding all their power and preparations, are, by the immediate interposition of heaven, rendered unsuccessful. The race is not always to the swift, nor does victory uniformly fall to the lot of the apparently most powerful. It has not been an uncommon event, for one nation to be crushed, and to fall under the dominion of another people apparently much less powerful than themselves, especially when GOD delivers them into the power of their enemies, as he did the Jews into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. GOD frequently in this way visited the children of Israel, as well for their idolatry as their other vices. The pestilence is also another weapon whereby GOD frequently punishes offending nations. This has proved sometimes more and sometimes less extensive. In this way, He several times punished the children of Israel in the wilderness, particularly when they transgressed so grievously in the affair of the Golden Calf; in the matter of Peor, and when he sent quails to gratify their lustings, and with them sent the plague to punish their murmurings, and many of the people perished. In this way he also punished David's sin in numbering the people. Sometimes also He visits offending nations by famine, by sending cleanness of teeth in all their dwellings, and want of bread in all their habitations. GOD has many ways to effect this, as, by withholding the former and latter rain in their season; by making the heaven over their head iron, the earth brass, and the rain of the land powder and dust; by unseasonable rain, hail and stormy winds; by blasting and mildew; by the caterpillar and locust, which are GOD's army, or by earthquakes, inundations, and fiery eruptions.— These and many other phenomena of nature are all obedient to the divine will, and GOD can use them either for the correction or destruction of a guilty nation. In this way he once visited Israel, in the days of David, and still more severely, during the reign of Ahab, when there was no rain upon the land for the space of three years and six months. The prophet Jeremiah was once a witness to a severe correction of this kind, the consequences of which he paints in such affecting colours in the 14th chapter of his prophecy.

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Even those institutions which are in themselves calculated for the good, the happiness, and the prosperity of nations, when perverted from their original design, become in God's hand, the instruments of chastisement, and even of vengeance. We may notice as one instance of this kind, the ordinance of civil government. Unless it is where there is violent perverting of justice in a nation, rulers are the ministers of God for good, and a terror only to evil doers. Nothing can be a greater temporal blessing to a nation, than wise and virtuous rulers. On the other hand, nothing can be a greater scourge than wicked men when invested with great power. *While the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice ; but when the wicked bear rule the people mourn.* When the Queen of Sheba beheld the wisdom and equity with which Solomon administered the government, she exclaims, *Because the Lord loved Israel forever, therefore made He thee King to execute judgment and justice.* What a rich blessing did God's antient people find in the administration of Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon in the early part of his reign, Hezekiah, Josiah and others ? On the other hand how many nations do we find groaning under the hand of a cruel unrelenting despotism ? Indeed it is probable that by far the greatest part of the human race, instead of enjoying the blessing of a government consulting the happiness and prosperity of the nation, are at this moment bound down under a despotism which is rather a curse than a blessing.— Both weak and wicked rulers are a curse to a nation, and as such they are frequently the subjects of complaint in the sacred oracles. *Woe unto thee O Land, when thy king is a child. Thy princes are rebellious, and companions of thieves. Every one loveth gifts and followeth after rewards. They judge not the fatherless, neither doth the cause of the Widow come unto them. That they may do evil with both hands earnestly, the Prince asketh and the Judge asketh for a reward, and the great man he uttereth his mischievous desire, so they wrap it up. The best of them is as a briar, and the most upright of them is sharper than a thorn hedge.* But great as was this calamity, the prophet Micah considers it as inflicted on himself, and on his nation by the hand of God, and as such, he resolves to bear it with patience, saying, *I will bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned*

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against Him, until He plead my cause and execute judgment for me. Altho' the design of infinite wisdom be very different, yet when it falls to the lot of a nation to have children to be their princes, and babes to rule over them, or to be subjected either to weak or wicked rulers, men who either do not know, or have not integrity and independence enough to pursue such a course as the public welfare demands; Should such rulers be elevated even by the people themselves, the finger of GOD is as really visible in their elevation, as when a Moses, a Joshua, a David or a Washington is raised up. It is GOD who raises up one and puts down another, whether it be His design to plant or to rear up to maturity a kingdom or nation, or to bestow a king in His anger whom He will again take away in His wrath. Nations as well as individuals may, many times, read their crime in their punishment. When a people possessing the invaluable privileges of selecting rulers by their free suffrages, for important places of public trust, exercise that right without having any regard to suitable qualifications, either moral, religious or political, but either merely to serve party views, or to gratify some sinister passion, it is far from uncommon for such rulers to prove a curse rather than a blessing to a people. When GOD thus causes the wickedness of a people to correct them, and their backslidings to reprove them, melancholy experience teaches them that it is an evil thing and a bitter, to depart from the Lord their GOD. A striking example of this we have in the Shechemites, after they had elevated Abimeleck to the supreme power among them, while his hands were reeking with the innocent blood of his murdered brethren. Fire came out from Abimeleck and devoured the men of Shechem, and fire came out from the men of Shechem and devoured Abimeleck, agreeably to the curse of Jotham the son of Zerubbaal. Passing by other instances which are of a more antient date, I shall barely allude to one which has come within the sphere of our own observation, and which perhaps gives as striking an illustration of the truth of this observation, as any which the world has witnessed for many centuries past. There cannot be a doubt but the present French Emperor, who rules over most of the nations of continental Europe with such def-

potic sway, has been raised up as a scourge in the hand of God to punish offending nations for their wickedness, and that he is as truly the rod of God's anger, as was the Assyrian of old. But while that nation, with this man at its head, still continues to be a rod in God's hand to punish other nations, she has been herself compelled to drink deep of the bitter cup. The many unjust, cruel and sanguinary executions and massacres which characterized the commencement of her revolution, together with the desolating wars which have and still do mark its progress, connected with the conscription and other tyrannical means to which it has been found necessary to resort to recruit her armies, which are daily hurried on to the slaughter in order to satiate the insatiable ambition of an upstart usurper, connected with almost every species of domestic tyranny and oppression, are means whereby she is severely chastised at this moment. Perhaps her correction is little less severe than that of other nations which she has subdued and enslaved.

Some times God visits nations severely for their correction, when he means nothing but mercy in the end. By humbling them first before he lifts them up, he intends the better to prepare them for those mercies, which he has in store. At other times his visitations are intended for destruction and not for correction. There is an analogy between the manner of God's dealing with offending nations, and the punishments inflicted on the violators of wholesome laws in a well regulated commonwealth. Some punishments are corrective, and are intended both for the security of society, and if possible to bring about the reformation of the offender. All punishments are not of this kind. Capital punishments, at least, form an exception, and perhaps others less than capital. They are intended for the good of society, and to deter others from the commission of similar crimes. Just so it is with either these national or individual chastisements which proceed immediately from the hand of God. All the afflictions to which mankind are subjected in the present life, may be properly termed corrective. They at all times may, and oftentimes do turn out for the good of the individual. *By this shall the iniquity of Jacob be purged, and all the fruit is to take away*

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sin. But whatever valuable ends future punishments answer, as it respects the intelligent universe, and no doubt these ends are vastly important, yet it must be admitted that when Christ shall come in flaming fire, to take vengeance on them who know not God and obey not the Gospel, who are to be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power, the end to be answered is very different from one which is merely corrective, or calculated only for the good of the individual. Just so it is with God's visitations of kingdoms and nations. Many severe public calamities are inflicted which do in the end terminate in national good. Such was the issue of those, many of them very severe chastisements, which God inflicted on his antient people for their sins during the forty years which he suffered them to wander in the wilderness. How great soever these troubles were in order to prove them, God brought them safe to Canaan at last, and they were constrained to acknowledge that not so much as one good thing had failed of all that he had promised. In many instances, however, we find that judgments are not only threatened but actually inflicted upon nations, not for their correction and reformation, but for their destruction. When Israel was commanded to destroy the Canaanites, a punishment inflicted, under Joshua, or when Saul was ordered to destroy the Amalekites, or when fire and brimstone were rained from the Lord out of heaven, none will say that these visitations were corrective, or intended for the good of the nations which were punished in this summary way. A very different purpose was intended, viz. that they might be held up as a warning to deter other nations from the commission of similar crimes. Such has also been the fate of many other nations who made a conspicuous figure both in sacred and profane history. Where are now to be found the several nations of Ammonites, Moabites, Philistines, Edomites, &c. They have as much vanished from the face of the earth as nations, as does an individual when he descends into the silent tomb; while the country they once occupied has, for the most part, become a desert without inhabitant. Where are now the antient and renowned cities of Niniveh, Babylon, Tyre, &c. so famous in antient history, and whose fate was

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such a particular subject of prophecy ; some of which, particularly Niniveh and Babylon, at the head of empires which made the world tremble ? They are no more. The prophecies, dooming them to destruction, have, long since, had their accomplishment. The several empires of Assyrians, Babylonians, Medes and Persians, Greeks and Romans, which, each in their turn, appeared to be so firmly established that no human power was sufficient to shake them, have long since sunk into oblivion, having been mutually the instruments of subverting and destroying one another. These were without doubt raised up and upheld by providence, as instruments of vengeance upon guilty nations and upon one another. These punishments, thus inflicted, could not be considered as intended merely for the correction of these nations. They were calculated to hold them up as beacons to the world in future ages. There is usually a gradual progress in divine chastisements. God does not usually punish nations in the first instance, for their destruction, but bears long with them, giving them repeated calls to repentance. It is not until they have proved incorrigible, under calls and warnings to repentance, that nations are doomed to destruction.

It is also to be observed that God sometimes visits, i. e. punishes offending nations, by spiritual as well as temporal judgments. When a people grow worse and worse under the correcting hand of providence ; when, instead of being reclaimed from national sins, and learning righteousness from God's judgments, which are abroad in the earth, they, like Israel, revolt more and more, it is a striking indication that their correction will be very severe at least, if it does not issue in utter destruction. We have an affecting picture of a succession of divine judgments, and of hardening under them, in the 4th chapter of the prophecy of Amos, to which I refer without quoting. After each of the several judgments, the complaint is repeated—*Yet ye have not returned unto me, saith the Lord.* This is followed with a solemn and awful threatening of judgments still more severe. *Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel, and because I will do thus unto thee, prepare to meet thy God O Israel.* Such a hardening under judgments is not only noticed in scripture as what has sometimes happened, but is also threatened as a punishment ; i. e. when national calamities

and chastisements have not, in the first instance, had the desired effect, God sometimes gives a people up to hardness of heart. Such was the punishment threatened against Israel, after the nation had been called to repentance by a succession of mercies and judgments. Ezek. 24, xiii. *In thy filthiness is lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.* Another striking instance we have in those Jews who went down into Egypt after the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's forces; and the treacherous murder of Gedaliah, who had been made governor of the land. Thither they carried the prophet Jeremiah, who gave them faithful warning from the Lord, of the consequences of their idolatrous practices. To these warnings they return this rebellious answer: *As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us, in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee. But we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings unto her, as we have done, we and our fathers, our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem; for then had we plenty of victuals, and were well and saw no evil. But since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her, we have wanted all things, and have been consumed by the sword and by the famine. But what was the punishment inflicted on these rebels for this open and obstinate idolatry? In addition to a miserable end, in the land of Egypt, they were given up to judicial hardness of heart, in their insatuated attachment to their idolatrous customs. Thus said the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, saying; ye and your wives have both spoken with your mouths, and fulfilled with your hand, saying, we will surely perform our vows that we have vowed, to burn incense unto the queen of Heaven, and to pour out drink offerings to her: ye will surely accomplish your vows: and surely perform your vows. Therefore hear ye the word of the Lord, all Judah that dwell in the land of Egypt; Behold I have sworn by my great name, saith the Lord, that my name shall no more be named in the mouth of any man of Judah, in all the land of Egypt, saying the Lord God liveth. Instances of this kind of punishment, connected with other providential*

chastisements, have not been confined to the Jewish nation. GOD has frequently punished christian nations, particularly apostatizing churches, in the same way, i. e. by withholding the influences of his spirit, and removing his candlestick out of its place, and by giving up the nation itself to the severest public calamities. It was part of the punishment threatened to several of the once famous seven churches of Asia, that unless they repented of their backslidings, he would remove his churches out of that place. This threatening has been long since fulfilled. Where are now these once famous churches? They have been unchurched; the seats where they once flourished, long since overrun by the delusions of Mahomet, the countries involved in slavery and ruin, and the cities converted into heaps of rubbish; so that, of some of them at least, scarcely a single vestige remains, while probably but few of the descendants of the antient inhabitants now occupy the country once possessed by their forefathers. One thing which indicates an increasing severity in the visitations of heaven upon the French nation, is the gross contempt of all religion and religious institutions, and the entire and almost universal prostration of morals, with which the several steps of the revolution have been accompanied. It commenced, it is true, with the most flattering profession of respect for the rights of man, and for religious liberty. But how soon was this beautiful horizon overcast by scenes of horror, tyranny, cruelty and oppression; by the renunciation and proscription of all religion, and an entire depravation of morals? In these scenes of cruelty and impiety, we may read both the sin and the punishment of that nation. When people have no wish to retain GOD in their knowledge, he gives them up to strong delusions to believe a lie. GOD will surely visit for these things, nor are we to expect that the calamities of the French nation will cease, before they accept of the punishment of their sins and return to the paths of religion and virtue.

Should the inhabitants of these highly favoured United States, Jeshurun like, wax fat and kick, by forgetting GOD and lightly esteeming the rock of their salvation; should they publicly and nationally renounce the religion of the Gospel, and turn infidels, deists, and it may be atheists; should this

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become the complexion not only of the government but of the nation, if we may judge by God's former ways of dealing with offending nations, we may expect, either to be brought back to the acknowledgment of our offences, and to genuine repentance and reformation, by severe correction, by sore judgment, or that we will ripen apace for ruin until we are completely deprived of those privileges we have so grossly abused.

2d. I shall now proceed to notice some of those traits in our national character which go to show that, as a nation, we are exposed to those righteous visitations of heaven. *Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

In adverting to these traits in the character of our nation, which give us reason to dread heaven's awful visitations, it is necessary to bring into view—1st. Our privileges and advantages—2d. Our national character and conduct while in the possession of these privileges.

In forming a just estimate of the comparative guilt of either nations or individuals, it is necessary to bring into view the peculiar circumstances in which either the one or the other is placed. Superior advantages grossly misimproved, never fail to aggravate guilt. Previous to the coming of Christ, the Jewish nation enjoyed many privileges above the other nations of the world. To these peculiar advantages, as well as their manifold transgressions, the prophet alludes in the phrase, *Such a nation as this*. To form a just estimate of the character of our nation, we must bring into view our privileges and advantages, as well as our defection and wickedness. *You only have I known of all the people upon earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities*, saith the Lord by the prophet Amos. Under that dispensation, no other nation was favored with a revelation of the divine will. This was by the Apostle noticed as one of their greatest privileges.—*What advantage then hath the Jew? What profit is there of circumcision? Much every way, chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God*. While other nations were left to grope in the dark without any other light, than the dim light of nature to point out the way of their duty, God gave them statutes, laws and ordinances, which had on them the stamp of

His own image and authority. He was their political King, Lawgiver and Judge, in a manner peculiar to that nation.— He also interposed on their behalf, from time to time, in such a miraculous manner, as to justify this and other similar expressions of inspired writers, *God hath not dealt so with any nation, praise ye the Lord.* He had made Himself known by a variety of signs and wonders. He had brought them out of Egypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm, and during the space of forty years, he had miraculously fed them with manna in the wilderness. He had brought them into the land of Canaan, by driving out and destroying the nations before them, and had greatly blessed the labour of their hands, causing the earth to yield an abundant support for a vast multitude. By a train of remarkable providences, they had been raised up from small beginnings, so as to become a great nation. A succession of Prophets had also been raised up from time to time, to instruct them more fully in their duty, and fix them in the belief, and excite them to the practice of the true religion. He had also given them many signal deliverances out of the hands of their enemies, when apparently they had but little power of their own. These peculiar privileges they had grossly misimproved, and had even rejected the Lord from being their King, & manifested an almost incorrigible propensity to imitate the idolatrous customs of the surrounding nations. This depravity, both in principle and practice, had arisen to a great extent in the time of the prophet Jeremiah. To reclaim them—*The Lord God of their Fathers sent to them by His messengers, rising up betimes and sending, because He had compassion on His people and on His dwelling place. But they mocked the messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His prophets, until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.* Such were the privileges, and such was the sin and punishment of the Jews. Our situation is not in all respects parallel. We have neither been raised up, protected, or delivered by miracles, strictly so called. We have not been miraculously fed by manna from heaven, during our journey to, and peregrinations in this then howling wilderness, nor was the sea divided to give us a passage from Europe on dry land. But in most respects

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our privileges have been equal, and in many, far greater than those of the Jews. To illustrate this, I shall take a brief glance, 1st. At our natural, civil and political, and 2dly. At our moral and religious advantages.

With respect to the first—Altho' no miracles strictly so called attended the settlement of this country, yet so many remarkable providences were combined in that event, as clearly proved our planting in this land, to be the work of GOD's own right hand. No person who takes even a cursory view of those events, which, combined together, brought our forefathers from the land of their nativity, to this then howling wilderness, made room for them by the expulsion of the heathen, and raised them up to so great a degree of respectability as a nation in so short a time, but must be sensible that it is the Lord's doing. So rapid has been our increase, that those words of the prophet, that *a little one should become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation*, have been almost literally fulfilled; and, in emerging from a colonial state, and taking a rank among the nations of the world, we have seen a nation born in a day. In addition to these natural advantages, we have been favored with the enjoyment of personal, civil, and political liberty, in a degree perhaps beyond that of any other nation. While the establishment of most other governments, has been the result of either accident or force, or a combination of both, ours has been deliberately framed and adopted by the collected wisdom of the nation; while the men to whom the necessary powers were delegated for that purpose, have had both the excellencies, mistakes, and defects of other systems before them, either for their imitation or warning. While the rulers of other nations have been generally imposed upon them without their consent, and frequently, contrary to their wishes, our governors have been from ourselves; elevated to the places of public trust which they have occupied, by the suffrages of freemen. While many, if not most other nations, have been the victims of an unrelenting despotism, and crushed into the dust by the iron hand of tyranny, our laws have been, with a few exceptions, equitable; our public contributions light, our persons and property protected, and our penal code, perhaps as mild, and

punishments as rare as is consistent with public and general security. In addition to these privileges, we have been for a long interval, for the most part favored with peace in our borders; at a time when many nations, usually denominated christian, have been in a manner desolated by the calamities of a war, almost without parallel in the annals of civilized man. We have also been blessed, not merely with a competence, but with an abundance of the good things of this life; GOD having, as truly as he did Israel of old, fed us with the finest of the wheat, with lambs and rams equal to the breed of Bashan, and made us to ride on the high places of the earth. No earthquakes or volcanoes, have desolated our cities, no wasting judgments have overtaken us, and few nations have been more exempt from the pestilence which walketh in darkness, and from the destruction which wasteth at noon day.

With respect to religious and moral advantages, we may also say, that GOD has rarely dealt so with any nation. The means of education have perhaps been more generally diffused, particularly in the northern states, than in any other nation. Our schools are accessible not only to the rich, or those in the middle walks of life, but to the poorest classes in society. GOD has also favored us with a revelation of his will, much more plain and full than was enjoyed by the Jewish nation, even after the canon of the old testament was complete. Life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, and the veil which was on the face of Moses is done away in CHRIST. While many other nations have no access to these lively oracles, and scarcely know of the existence of such a book as the Bible, and others, altho' not in such a state of total darkness, have few or no opportunities for research, the scriptures, being inaccessible by the common people, became locked up in an unknown tongue, and the pure doctrines of the gospel corrupted by the inventions of men, and the simplicity of gospel worship debased by superstition, we enjoy a free and unrestrained access to the scriptures, and the gospel in its purity, a precious day and means of grace, with the hope of glory thro' a redeemer; connected with all that liberty of conscience which heart can wish. We may worship God in

that way which comports with the dictates of our own judgment, unawed by a proud overbearing hierarchy, without danger of fire or faggot, or of pains and penalties of any kind : or if more agreeable to our wishes and feelings, we can entirely neglect the worship of God, without being amenable to any tribunal unless it be to that of Him who is the judge of the quick and the dead. Connected with these external means and advantages, God has frequently owned his own institutions in our land, by making the word of his grace effectual for the conviction and conversion of sinners; and for building up his people in faith and holiness.

Such have been our privileges, but what has been our improvement? It is a truth frequently inculcated in holy writ, that the more numerous and important the privileges of a people are, the guilt of misimprovement will be the more aggravated and the punishment the more severe. Such was the situation of the Jews compared with that of other nations, and God threateneth them, saying, *You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities.* The Jews of that particular generation who were favoured with the privileges of Christ's personal ministry also enjoyed advantages above those of their predecessors, and he declares them to be exposed to a more aggravated condemnation. *And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. If I had not come and spoken unto them they had not had sin, but now they have no cloak for their sin. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin; but now they have both seen and hated both me and my Father, woe unto thee Chorazin, woe unto thee Bethsaida. For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon, at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to hell. For if the mighty works which have been done in thee had been done in Sodom, it would have remained unto this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, in the day of judgment, than for thee.* As the sins of gospel transgressors are more ag-

gravated than even these, so their punishment will be proportionably severe. *He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing.*

Now are there not also with us sins against the Lord our GOD. Here we must not loose sight of an important distinction already made, i. e. between such sins as are public and national, and such as are merely private and personal offences. The sins of individuals are not always chargeable on the nation, nor do they call for national vengeance, whatever may be the case of the guilty individual. When a particular sin receives no public countenance from the nation, but on the other hand, the current of public sentiment goes to discountenance, restrain, or even to punish the offender where the public welfare requires it, then let the guilt be ever so great, it is not justly chargeable on the nation, nor can it with propriety be termed a national sin. But sins become national when they become so common as to be patronized by the public; when instead of being discouraged by any public mark of disapprobation, they are countenanced and encouraged by the example and approbation of men, whose business it ought to be to restrain them; when the current of public sentiment is so strong in favour of particular vices, that wholesome laws for either their prevention or punishment cannot be carried into effect; when they are committed without shame and without a blush, and an honest and virtuous attempt to carry the most wholesome regulations into effect for their prevention would be the most direct method to incur the popular odium, sins, which might otherwise be viewed as private offences, become public crimes, and contribute to fill up the measure of national guilt. Sins which have the sanction of a law publicly acquiesced in by the nation, for their support, become, in a sense still more striking, national sins. National transgressions of this complexion were far from uncommon, during the reign of idolatrous princes in Israel. Defection and idolatry had then every sanction which the law could give them. This rendered them not the less, but the more offen-

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five to God, and called more loudly for national judgments. *Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee which frameth mischief by a law.* To illustrate this point a little farther, let it be observed that not only the political, but the moral and religious character of a nation borrows its complexion from the genius of the government and the character of the rulers of that nation. A pious few, whose characters may be but little known and noticed by the world, may, and often have been the means of averting the judgments of heaven from a nation, but they do not give a complexion to the character of the nation itself; especially when their piety is discountenanced both by the rulers and the body of the people. In the most degenerate times in Israel, there were always a pious few who mourned in secret over the national defection and idolatry. Perhaps there never was a time when defection was more general, or when true religion was at a lower ebb, or more borne down and discountenanced, than during the reign of Ahab. So much were the true worshippers of God unnoticed at one time, that the prophet Elijah conceived himself to be left alone. But altho' the pious few were so thoroughly concealed that even the prophet did not know of their existence, yet the Lord had reserved unto himself seven thousand in Israel, who had not bowed the knee unto Baal. These hidden ones, however, did not impart a religious complexion to the nation. No—their national character was taken from a profligate idolatrous court. On the other hand we find that whenever that nation was blessed with wise and virtuous, but especially with religious rulers, it gave a religious tone to the character of the nation. But when the character of the rulers, particularly of the supreme ruler, was the reverse, it usually carried the voice of the nation so fully with it as to be considered as a national defection, and the nation was frowned upon and chastised accordingly. Instances confirming this observation may be found in the history of Israel during the reigns of David, Solomon, Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Josiah, &c. as well as during the reigns of Jeroboam and other kings of Israel and Judah, who were of opposite characters. The instance of Josiah is perhaps more particularly in point, on this subject, than that of any other. It does not

appear that the body of the nation ever engaged cordially in that reformation which he prosecuted with so much piety, zeal, and perseverance. Had this been the case, it does not seem as if the defection could have been so sudden and universal, as soon as one of his degenerate offspring came to the throne. Vice, and particularly idolatry, seems only to have been overawed by his presence and authority. Yet this reformation was so far the means of saving the nation, that the punishment justly due for national iniquity did not come upon them during his reign.

But it is time to proceed to the application of these observations to the particular situation of this American nation. It is not my intention to enumerate a large catalogue of immoralities, more or less heinous, or, more or less prevalent among us. These are so numerous that, alas, our gold is become dim and the most fine gold changed. I intend to advert merely to a few, and only a few things which have, in my view, assumed such a complexion, that they must be considered as national evils of great magnitude. And here I am constrained in the outset, somewhat reluctantly I confess, to notice a feature in our national government itself, which presents to my view a national evil of great magnitude; I mean its being entirely destitute of every appearance of a feature which can be termed religious. And as if the entire silence of the original constitution had not been sufficient to calm the fears of the nation, lest something of a religious nature, might possibly, either at one time or another, become in some shape connected with the government, Congress is, by the first amendment since added to the constitution, expressly prohibited from making any law respecting religion. This is not merely such a limitation of the powers of Congress, as to prohibit the establishment by law of any superiority, or the giving of any preference to any particular denomination of Christians above another. It extends to the subject of religion on the broadest ground, i. e. Congress must give no preference to Christianity above Deism, Judaism, Paganism, the impostures of Mahomet, or even above Atheism itself. They must by no law, act, or resolution, acknowledge the existence of a Supreme Being, because that would be a law relating to

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a great and fundamental doctrine of religion with which government has no concern. According to a construction given to this article of the constitution, by high authority, we find that a bill to incorporate the Protestant Episcopal Church of Alexandria, in the district of Columbia, for the purpose of enabling the society the better to manage its temporal concerns; and another to bestow upon a religious society at Salem, in the Mississippi Territory, the paltry donation of five acres of the public lands, including the spot where they had erected a meeting house, both of which had passed both houses of Congress, were objected against and returned, because, by passing these bills into laws, Congress would go beyond their constitutional limits by interfering in a subject connected with religion.* If this construction of the constitution of the United States be just, and it is not my present intention to call it in question, it presents a view of the religious situation of our country which is truly alarming.—

*On February 15, 1811, a bill which had passed both houses for the incorporation of the Protestant Episcopal Church of Alexandria, in order to enable the society the better to manage its temporal concerns. This bill the President returned with his objections, too lengthy to insert at large in a note. But they were grounded on a supposed opinion that it exceeded the limits of that article of the constitution, which says, "Congress shall make no law respecting religion," altho' the passing of such laws was not without precedent. A law had been passed during President Jefferson's administration for the incorporation of a Presbyterian Church in Georgetown. This bill was afterwards rejected by the house.

Vide journal of H. R. 3d session Congress, page 290.

A Baptist society in a town called Salem, Mississippi Territory, not possessing a convenient spot on which to erect a meeting house, built one on the public lands of the United States. The society petitioned Congress for liberty to purchase a less quantity of land than could be sold according to the existing laws, which could not be less than a quarter section, or 160 acres. Congress did not see fit to grant the petition, but passed a bill in which a clause was inserted to make the society a donation of five acres of land, including the spot where this meeting house stood, for the purpose of a common. This bill was presented to the President not long before the close of the session, and he returned it with the following objection, viz.

"Because the bill, in reserving a certain parcel of land of the United States, for the use of said Baptist Church, comprises a principle and precedent for the appropriation of funds of the United States, for the use and support of religious societies, contrary to the article of the constitution, which declares "that Congress shall make no law respecting a religious establishment."

This bill like the other was afterwards rejected.

Journal, ext. supra, page 357.

Christianity is not only treated with entire neglect, but is absolutely proscribed. I see not, but agreeable to this construction of the constitution, Congress has annually violated it by electing chaplains, and giving them a trifling compensation out of the public treasury. At least, the joint resolution of the two houses, which limits the choice of chaplains to particular denominations of Christians, to the exclusion of Pagans; Jews or Mahometans, must be unconstitutional, because it has the appearance of giving Christianity the preference above other supposed religions, some of which at least have more numerous votaries in the world at large than Christianity itself. Indeed, if the separation between religion and government must be so entire, I see not upon what grounds Congress possesses the power of making provision by law for the administration of oaths, as this is a subject which is certainly most intimately connected with religion, and is in itself an acknowledgment of the Being, Omniscience, and moral government of God, and the accountability of man. Where there is no sense of religious obligation, no awe or reverence of a deity, no consciousness of his all-seeing eye, it is difficult to conceive of what use or importance an oath can be in any case. Government therefore cannot renounce all connection with religion, without furnishing the means of its own destruction. But to this length does the principle in question lead us.

It was a charge urged against Israel by the prophet Jeremiah, and one which he considers as a peculiar aggravation of their guilt, that while other nations were generally steadfast in their idol worship, they, viz. the Jews, had apostatised from the service of the true God. *Hath a nation changed their Gods, which are yet no Gods? But my people have changed their glory for that which does not profit. Be ye astonished O ye Heavens at this, and horribly afraid; be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. For my people have committed two evils. They have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. To this source, this national forsaking of the Lord their God, is traced the calamities which follow.— Is Israel a servant, is he a home born slave, why is he spoiled? The young lions roared upon him and yelled, and they made his land waste,*

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his estates burnt without inhabitant. Also the children of Noph and Tabapares have broken the crown of thy head. Hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God when he led thee by the way? The people of these states once acknowledged themselves as a christian nation. The northern states, in particular, were in their first settlement a plantation strictly and eminently religious, and I believe there are but few, if any of these states, but in one shape or another, once gave legislative countenance to the christian religion.— And when it is considered that as a people, we have been so distinguished by the care of heaven, that the Lord has been, from time to time, even from generation to generation, our strength and our song, and has so frequently, in such a signal manner, become our salvation, have not we as well as the Jews, been guilty of forsaking the Lord our God, who has led us by the way? Can it therefore be that the people of these states have not incurred national guilt of a very deep die, by placing themselves in such an attitude before the world, that not a single trace of the character of a christian nation is left? Indeed the whole catalogue of national sins may be considered as shoots springing from this root.

I am sensible that I am entering on a very delicate, and with many a very unpopular subject; and that I shall probably not barely incur the odium of the avowed enemies of religion, but the censure of many of its pretended, and of some of its real friends. Perhaps there is no one feature in the constitution of the United States, which has been the subject of more numerous encomiums, of more unqualified praise upon both sides of the Atlantic, than this, that it takes no notice of, and is not at all connected with religion. It is not difficult to point out the quarter from whence these encomiums have, in the first instance originated. The placing of all religions, or of all sentiments on religious subjects, whether for or against religion itself, upon an equal footing, has been the popular theme of modern philosophers. By thus degrading christianity to a level with paganism, infidelity, and atheism, they doubtless expected to be put in a better situation to overthrow and exterminate it altogether. It is a just matter of lamentation, that so many who are friends at heart to

the real interests of religion, should have so greedily swallowed the pernicious bait that was thrown out to them, regardless of the hook which was concealed beneath. This equalizing of all religious opinions; this ranging of atheism, infidelity, and blasphemy, side by side, with the Gospel of Jesus CHRIST, has been a popular topic, and as it is much easier to call hard names, than to produce sound arguments, the most opprobrious epithets have been liberally bestowed on all who should dare to dispute the orthodoxy of these sentiments.— It has been represented as little better than sacrilege for religion and government to have the remotest connexion together. This principle was avowed, and the most unlimited toleration of all religious opinions proclaimed at the commencement of the French revolution. But how soon was every form of christianity proscribed? That some of our most zealous advocates for religious liberty and toleration, and our warmest declaimers against any connection between religion and government, have nothing less in view than the entire banishment of christianity out of the world, as soon as they are able to superadd violence to their other modes of opposition, cannot admit of a doubt. Should they succeed in the attempt to render the christian religion contemptible and odious, the transition from that state to actual violence, is natural and easy. A very good preparatory step towards rendering it contemptible, is, if possible, in the first place to render the impression universal, that it is a matter of such absolute indifference, as to be entirely separated from the case, and unworthy of the notice, or even of the remotest attention of government. I have already observed, and I again repeat, that I am far from attributing any such motive to many, and probably to the greatest number of those who espouse the opinion I am endeavoring to combat. I could wish however, to be able to convince them, that the opinion is an incorrect one, calculated vitally to injure a cause which they profess to have at heart. In this instance the United States are exhibiting perhaps a new and singular spectacle to the world. A government without a connection with religion of some sort, is probably, a novelty, a phenomenon which the world has never witnessed before. It is a bold experiment, and one which

I fear can only issue in national apostacy and national ruin.

Many plausible arguments have been urged on this subject, which have, without doubt, had a powerful effect upon honest minds. But it appears to me that they are more plausible than solid, and go to support a theory which is both visionary and fallacious. Some of the most plausible are—That CHRIST will protect his church, and maintain his own cause, independent of any aid derived from the civil powers of the world. That the christian religion rests on its own basis, and requires nothing but fair play, i. e. to be neither countenanced or supported, opposed or persecuted by civil authority, to cause it to flourish. That human authority has been generally on the side of superstition and error, and may be indifferently used for the support of paganism and christianity.—These and similar arguments have been urged with much warmth, and a degree of plausibility, attended with special care to brand their opponents with the charge of intolerance at least, if not with being actuated by a persecuting spirit. It is granted that civil government has been oftentimes associated with, and the powers of the civil magistrate exerted in support of a false religion, as well as persecuted the true.—But that is no reason why the supreme power of a nation, affecting to retain the name of christian, should give no preference to the benevolent, heaven-born system of christianity, above those false religions, or above no religion at all. Civil governments have oftentimes been very oppressive. Instead of protecting the rights of the citizens, they have established mischief by cruel and oppressive laws. But that is no argument against either the necessity, usefulness, or importance of civil government. It is granted that, under the influence of a false religion, christianity has been oftentimes persecuted, and that different religious sects, calling themselves Christians, have sometimes oppressed and persecuted one another. This may, perhaps, be a good reason why different sects of christians ought to be placed on an equal footing, as the best mean to cultivate harmony and mutual charity; and to prevent the undue preponderance of one sect over another. But it is no argument why christianity itself should be placed upon a level with either paganism or absolute irreligion. It is also a

glorious truth, and one which, in times of trial, affords the best, if not the only ground of support and consolation to the pious mind, that CHRIST will protect his church; and that neither the malice, power, or policy of earth or hell, shall finally prevail against it. In the protection of his cause, he is not only independent of the civil powers of the world, but where they are found in opposition, he will do it in spite of this enmity. The question therefore is not what the great head of the church either can or will do, but what is the duty of those nations where christianity has been the religion long publicly professed. It does not follow that those powers who either oppose, or refuse to lend their aid in support of his cause, do their duty, or take that course which Infinite wisdom has pointed out to them as proper. Altho' CHRIST is able, and will actually maintain his own cause, yet he has usually seen fit to do it by the co-operation of human means, and of these means the countenance of civil rulers, by ranging themselves on the side of his religion, and enacting wholesome laws for the suppression of vice, and the prevention and punishment of such crimes as are not only in opposition to religion, but injurious to civil society, are not matters of minor importance. The proposition that CHRIST will defend his church, carried to the length which some are disposed to extend it, may be urged with equal plausibility against any other human endeavors to promote the cause and extend the kingdom of CHRIST, as in favor of such an entire separation between government and religion, as is the subject of so much popular declamation at the present day. It is no more than an extension of the principle contended for, to say that CHRIST will maintain his own cause, independent of the preaching of the Gospel, and all endeavors to extend it, and of the translation & circulation of the scriptures, and all other helps for the promotion of religious knowledge; and that all these things are improper, because effected by the intervention of human means. The truth however is, that whenever CHRIST sees fit to interpose in a remarkable way in behalf of his church, he always does it by the intervention of human means, by raising up and qualifying suitable instruments to carry on his own works. God originally brought his people up out of E-

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gypt with a strong hand and outstretched arm ; but he both brought them up out of Egypt and led them through the wilderness, by the hand of Moses and Aaron, under whom the power of the magistrate and the influence of religion were combined. He also raised up Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest, and no doubt he still makes use of religious magistrates to promote the interest of Zion. Magistrates as such, it is said, must carry it with an even hand, i. e. with the utmost impartiality and indifference with regard to religion. They must, in their public capacity, be neither for or against it in any respect. This was not a principle inculcated on ancient Israel under the immediate guidance of inspiration. God ever taught that rebellious people, that their national concerns and religion were intimately connected together. It is not a principle inculcated upon his followers by our blessed Lord. He owns no such indifferent characters, either in the persons of princes, legislators, magistrates or individuals, but expressly declares, *He that is not with me, is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad.*— Governments therefore which assume this attitude of impartiality and indifference with regard to religion, will, in the estimation of Him who is to be the judge of the quick and the dead, be considered as taking their rank on the side of his enemies, as the enemies and persecutors of his cause. When I consider the attitude assumed by this nation with regard to religion, I cannot but tremble for my country. We still affect to consider ourselves as a christian nation ; but where are the evidences of it ? I hope and believe there are many christian individuals among us, and that their number is rather increasing than diminishing in our country. These may be the means of saving us from ruin. But where can we find a single vestige of christianity in our national character ? There is none. Whatever character of indifference therefore our national government may have seen fit to assume, as it is not for CHRIST, or a ranking on his side, it must be against him. If your national character is not christian, it is anti-christian, for there is no midway.

The 2d Psalm is undoubtedly a prophecy relating to the Gospel kingdom of the Messiah, and a warning to princes

and rulers of their danger in opposing that kingdom. *The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take council together against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh; the Lord shall hold them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.* Such is to be the fate of the opposers of CHRIST and his cause; those who break his bands asunder and cast his cords from them. But what is the advice given to rulers that they may escape this righteous indignation? Is it to stand aloof from religion and beware of meddling with any of its concerns? Does he tell princes and rulers, that however they may be permitted to be christians in their private capacity as men, yet, in their public characters, they must act with the utmost impartiality between the interest of CHRIST and of Belial; or that they must not give the slightest preference to the interests of religion, above those of atheism. Nothing like this. On the other hand he exhorts them, saying, *Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be instructed ye judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling. Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him,* i. e. embrace JESUS CHRIST. Let not merely your hearts, but your power, authority and influence be on the Lord's side.

The consideration that CHRIST both can and will defend his church, independent of the power and policy of the world, ought to have a very different effect both upon nations and individuals, from that of promoting indifference and inattention to the interests of religion. While it ought to discourage all opposition on the one hand, from the consideration that whosoever falleth on this stone shall be broken, and on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder; so the reflection that it is a cause which must eventually triumph, is a consideration which ought to animate all to the most vigorous exertions, and neither give way to despondency or discouragement, even when the prospect is the most gloomy. It is therefore a great error to suppose that christianity will be the most apt to flourish under the indifference or neglect of the

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dom. *The Council together let us break.* He that them in derisive and vex them the opposers and asun- the advice as indigna- re of med- es and ru- nristians in characters, en the in- it not give above those and he ex- ngs; be in- ear, and re- and ye perish *Blessed are* CHRIST. hority and

will defend the world, nations and and inatten- to discour- onsideration ten, and on der; so the triumph, is the most vig- ency or dis- gloomy. It is will be the glect of the

civil magistrate. Altho' the condition of the christian church is different from that of the jewish, and it is neither to be desired or expected, that christian rulers should have all that authority in things sacred, which was once enjoyed by the jewish kings, yet if we attend to the prophecies which relate to the situation and duty of christian rulers in Gospel times, we will find them by no means represented as that indifferent kind of characters with regard to religion, which many would wish them to be. I shall quote two or three passages for illustration.

And kings shall be thy nursing Fathers, and their Queens thy nursing Mothers. Arise, shine, for thy light is come and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light and Kings to the brightness of thy rising. And the sons of the stranger shall build up thy walls; and their Kings shall minister unto thee. Thou shalt suck the breasts of Kings, and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour and Redeemer.

One thing which tended greatly to strengthen the grand apostacy was that the kings of the earth gave their power and strength unto the Beast. The same kings of the earth, i. e. of the Latin earth, or Roman Empire, were to have an agency in the downfall of the great whore who sitteth upon many waters. They were to hate the whore and burn her with fire. As a counterpart to this agency, both in the growth and downfall of the man of sin, it was to be proclaimed at his downfall on the founding of the seventh Angel, that *The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.* i. e. As the instrumentality of earthly princes and potentates was used in the promoting of this apostacy, so, at his downfall, and the advancement of CHRIST's kingdom on his ruins, the characters of these same earthly potentates would be changed, and they would equally exercise their power in subserviency to the cause and interest of the Redeemer. Christian rulers may, no doubt, do much to promote the cause of CHRIST and the interest of religion by their example, and blessed be GOD that our rulers are not absolutely prohibited from setting a christian example in private life, and that a regard for the christian religion is not as yet considered as an absolute disqualification for office. But I conceive that christian

rulers are bound to countenance and support religion in other ways than merely by setting a christian example. They are not to act the part of atheists, or of men absolutely indifferent to all religion in their public, any more than in their private capacity. While idolatrous nations were steadfast in their false worship, God blames his people for apostatizing from the true worship of God, and changing their glory for that which did not profit. This entire separation of every thing which belongs to religion from civil government, and the duties of the magistrate from religion, is a changing of the true religion not for another, but for no religion at all. Indeed it goes to make magistrates and rulers resemble, in their public capacity, Daniel's wilful king, who was neither to regard the God of his fathers, the desire of women, nor any God.

An idea has been already suggested, which it may not be amiss again to bring into view, i. e. that if we trace this principle to its source it will be found to have originated, not in a regard to the purity of christianity, or a fear lest it should be contaminated by the maxims of worldly policy, but in a desire to overthrow it. Infidels have been both the first and warmest advocates for this unlimited toleration; this unrestrained circulation of all opinions for and against religion; and this entire indifference on the part of government, with a view to obtain the greater facility to circulate their own: thinking no doubt that that art and craft, in the use of which they have proved themselves such experienced adepts, would be an overmatch for gospel simplicity. Hence their unwearied endeavours to render christianity contemptible and even odious, that it may be the more easily suppressed. Men of honest minds and upright intentions, being either deceived by their subtilty or not suspecting their real intentions, have joined in the popular cry of liberty, toleration, and the entire separation of government from every thing that is connected with religion. But it is natural that the fruit growing on such a tree should excite suspicion. If religion is unworthy the attention of the government of a nation, a very natural inference is, that it is of little consequence in itself, and that it will loose much of its influence on public morals.

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jection against religion, and it hath its influence still. The progress from indifference to either secret or open opposition, or even to persecution, is natural and easy.

I am sensible that I shall be here met with the cry of bigotry, intolerance, and a persecuting spirit. This cry is without foundation. Were I advocating the elevation of one sect of professed Christians, to the depression of all others, there might be some ground for the clamour. So far is this from being the case, that I have no wish to disturb any class of citizens, whether Jews, Mahometans, or even Infidels, in the enjoyment of their civil rights, while they demean themselves peaceable, much less to elevate one sect of professed Christians above another. A portion of real christianity, doubtless, is to be found in different sects, and every christian sect holding to the great principles of christian morality, and the future accountability of man, however some of their opinions may be erroneous and even absurd, may yet hold to all those principles of religion which are necessary to the safety, and connected with the stability of civil government. All I plead for is, that, as it is impossible for government to exist without calling in the aid of religion, so if the christian religion is the true religion, it ought to be acknowledged and supported in our national capacity, at least so far as to declare ourselves, by some public national act, to be a christian nation. But to place a system of atheism, or one so near it as to cancel all moral obligation, even the obligation of an oath, and to obliterate all distinction between virtue and vice, on the same footing with christianity, is not merely to betray the cause of CHRIST into the hands of its enemies, but to unhinge the bonds of civil society, and to let men loose like Tygers to devour one another.

But the popular system of the day, which is to dissolve all connection between civil government and the religion of a country, does not stop at mere indifference about religion, but goes a step farther. It places christianity in the back ground, and as respects one class of men, at least, is not perfectly free from that system of persecution it professes to abhor. When a particular class of men, possessing, perhaps, at least an equal share of virtue and intelligence with the same number of their

fellow citizens of any other class, and important at least, if not absolutely necessary for the due administration of christian institutions, are, in a nation calling itself christian, deprived of any of the common privileges of citizens, it must be a species, a small degree at least, of persecution. Of all the rights of citizens, the right of property is one of the most unalienable. No species of property can be considered as more absolutely a man's own than his personal services. Gospel ministers in particular must, if faithful, devote their time, their talents, and their personal services, to the proper business of their calling. To say that this class of men neither have, nor of right ought to have any legal claim to remuneration for their personal services, but must either devote their time and talents to the work gratis, or be dependent upon the cold hand of charity for their support, is to place them in a situation different from that of every other class of men, by imposing upon them peculiar hardships, and subjecting them to disabilities not imposed upon any other class of citizens. What other class of men would be willing, either to bestow their personal services upon the public, for the principal part of their lives, without compensation, or depend for that compensation on mere voluntary contributions, furnished either by the cold hand of charity, or the colder calculations of avarice? But is it not true that the laws of several states afford no protection to this most sacred property of this class of men; and that the little shadow of legal security which is enjoyed in other states, is a theme of constant clamour and a subject of almost incessant attack, and, if we may calculate on present appearances, will not be of long duration.

I say not these things from an impression that ministers of the gospel have any cause to despair of the care and protection of their master, or that they ought to shrink even from suffering in his cause. My aim is merely to show that this disposition to throw the christian religion and its ministers out of the protection of the law, is a manifest dereliction of duty, on the part of the government of a nation laying any claim to the character of a christian nation, and carries the point of indifference about religion farther than any supposed impartiality will warrant, and does not merely flow from a want of

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religion, but is a real act of opposition to it, on the part of the government.

It is true, it may be said that this irreligious feature in our national government might be remedied, if in our elections of men to fill the several departments we were generally to act up to the christian character, by selecting for places of public trust not only men of probity, but men known to have a conscientious regard to religion. i. e. If public sentiment did not at all partake of the spirit of the government, which is itself an expression of public sentiment, then the defects of the government might be remedied. But is such an event as this rationally to be expected? Is it not much more probable that the genius and spirit of the nation will participate largely in the irreligious features of the Government? Had not this spirit prevailed in the nation, at the time when the constitution was formed, it is not probable that such a feature in the government would have ever existed. When it exists in the head, what can we expect but that it will diffuse itself among the branches? Has not what it was reasonable to anticipate been verified in fact? Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ashkelon, that men professing to regard christianity and christian institutions should be found to advocate the sentiment, that a regard to christianity is neither a necessary nor a very important qualification for a ruler in a christian country, and that a christian does not act a part inconsistent with a sincere and conscientious regard to the religion he professes, in being instrumental in elevating a man, openly professing himself to be an infidel, to the highest place of public trust, among a people still claiming the character of a christian nation. The practice of many is, as it might be expected, agreeable to the principle thus openly avowed. It is to be lamented that, in many instances, we see infidels, men equally without religion and without morals, elevated to the most important places of trust, places which fix them in a situation in which they can do the greatest injury to that religion which they condemn, both by their influence and example. It is a maxim of eternal truth, equally applicable to all times, places and nations, but more especially to a people possessing the privilege of selecting rulers by their own free suf-

frage, that, *When the righteous are in authority the people rejoice, but when the wicked beareth rule the people mourn.* That an infidel, as such, should wish to invest persons of his own moral and religious complexion with important offices is naturally to be expected. It will afford him an additional advantage for opposing that religion which he wishes to undermine and destroy. But that a Christian, one whose constant wish and daily prayer is for the advancement of the kingdom of CHRIST, should wish to elevate either an atheist, an infidel, or a man grossly and flagitiously immoral, to a situation which will give him an opportunity to do the greatest injury to that religion, both by his influence and example, which he himself professes to love and esteem, is one of those unaccountable infatuations, which, it would seem, could only influence the minds of those who are, in this particular at least, given up to strong delusions to believe a lie. Indeed it seems very much like a voluntary surrender of the cause into the hands of its enemies, if not a Judas like betraying of the Son of man with a kiss. A deist, or an infidel as such, can be viewed in no other light than as an enemy to the christian religion and its professors. Had he the power, and did not the maxims of worldly policy forbid it, he would extirpate every vestige of christianity from the face of the earth. Whatever may be the variety of opinions among the opposers of christianity, and the different shades between immortal deists, or deists who believe in a future state, and absolute atheists, are very numerous; enmity to the Gospel is the only point in which they all agree. In this they imitate the several sects of ancient philosophers, and the votaries of the vast number of pretended deities in the heathen world. These could give the most unbounded and unlimited toleration to one another, that they might unite all their forces to bear down christianity alone. So it is with infidels of different shades. Their own differences of opinion are almost infinite. Opposition to christianity is their only point of union. To this object they bend all their forces, and the reason is obvious. Christianity can enter into no compromise with its opposers, any more than it could with the several classes of idol worshippers of old.—
What concord hath CHRIST with Belial? What part hath he that

believeth with an infidel? The very infidel will first come with the song of mutual forbearance in his mouth. This cant frequently gains ground in public opinion, by the consideration that different sects of professed christians have frequently exercised too little forbearance towards one another. In avoiding one extreme, it is natural to run into another. This cant, when coming from the mouth of an infidel, means more than is expressed. It is used merely as a decoy to gain time and strength, that he may obtain the greater advantage against the whole. What kind of toleration christianity may expect, when infidelity is completely triumphant, has been exemplified in France during the bloody era of the republic. They began with the soft, deceptive language of charity and forbearance. But how soon was the tone changed to that of violence and blood! Christianity in every form of it was proscribed; the churches either shut up, or appropriated to the most profane uses; the christian sabbath abolished, and the ministers of religion, without any regard to sect or denomination, either massacred, proscribed, or driven into banishment. This was precisely what Voltaire, the arch apostle of infidelity, wanted. While he was daily chaunting in public the soft melifluous strain of toleration, he could tell his confidential friends, that, if he had one hundred thousand men at his command, he would know what to do. The unwearied endeavors to render christianity odious and contemptible, by uttering, publishing, and often repeating the blackest calumnies, are only prefatory to harsher means to suppress it, should ever power and expediency unite in the measure. I cannot therefore but view the contempt shown to christianity by the national government itself, and the treachery to the cause of religion, discovered in the encouragement given to infidelity, by the elevation of men of such sentiments and correspondent practices, to some of the most important places of public trust, as one of the national abominations of the present day, for which we have reason to apprehend that God will visit us. He has severely visited other nations for similar crimes, and can we expect to escape?

It is an observation, of late frequently, and probably justly made, in relation to the calamities which have overspread so

large a portion of Europe, that they have hitherto fallen most heavily on Roman Catholic countries. These calamities have not been confined to the civil and political, but have extended to the ecclesiastical state of these countries. There infidelity has made the most rapid strides, and the earthly head of that church has been deprived of all power to protect himself.— This among other things, is an evidence that we are approaching to the latter times, or towards the close of the twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days ; at the end of which mystical Babylon is to be cast into the sea, as a mighty millstone, to be heard no more at all. But although catholic countries have, as yet, drunk most deeply of the cup of indignation, those nominally protestant, have not escaped. It is however observable, that among protestant countries, those which have imbibed most largely of the spirit of infidelity, especially those states where it has been the most countenanced by the government, and in that way become by way of eminence, a national sin, who have been the greatest sufferers. Holland for instance was a protestant country, and she has been made to drink deep of the bitter cup. But may we not read the national sin of Holland in her punishment ? Holland, infatuated Holland, by means of her licentious and polluted presses, gave currency and publicity to the atheistical blasphemies of Voltaire, D'Alembert, Diderot, and their associates, which have had such a powerful, and in many places fatal influence, in disorganizing societies, demoralizing the world, and even sapping the foundation of social and domestic happiness. She is now reaping the natural & bitter fruits of these principles. She has been long bleeding at every pore, been stript of her wealth and national consequence, and is now suffering the extreme of an unfeeling, unrelenting despotism. But Holland was the advocate for the free and unlimited toleration, and unrestrained circulation of all opinions for or against religion. Papist and protestant, infidel and atheist, were all placed on an equal footing. If there was any difference, it was in favor of elevating irreligion and blasphemy, to the prejudice of the christian religion. Prussia was also nominally a protestant country, but her principles, both religious and moral, had been greatly debased. The deistical principles of the great Frederick, and the loose and corrupt system of morals, coun-

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tenanced by his court, did more to debase the character of the nation, than ever the splendor of his victories did to promote its political elevation. Now Prussia is almost obliterated from the list of independent nations. Even that shadow of independence which she possesses, is absolutely dependent on the nod of Napoleon. Whenever he considers it for his interest, he can annihilate it with a breath. Should ever like causes predominate in the United States, similar effects may be expected as the result. And as our advantages, both religious, moral and political, have been greater than those of either Holland or Prussia, have we not reason to apprehend a catastrophe still more dreadful, unless averted by repentance and reformation?

SERMON II.

Afternoon—from the same text.

I SHALL proceed on the subject begun in the forenoon, without either preamble or repetition. I therefore observe, 2dly. That after the remarks which have been already made, it may perhaps be deemed superfluous to observe that infidelity or a disbelief and rejection of the Gospel is one of the national sins of our land at the present day. The prevalence of a spirit of infidelity in our nation may be considered as, in different respects, both the cause and effect of that irreligious feature in our national government which has been the subject of the preceding remarks. Had not such a spirit been so prevalent that it was deemed necessary to enter into a sort of a compromise with infidelity, I can hardly induce myself to believe that this feature in our national government would have ever assumed the shape in which it now appears. And this feature, taken in connection with an administration in every respect correspondent,* has had a tendency to nourish those seeds which had been before so plentifully sown, and had begun to vegetate with so much luxuriance. It is now almost two cen-

*It is not my intention to say that the administration has been in general, actually composed of infidels, but that the way is perfectly open to men of that description.

turies since an attempt was made to organise infidelity into a system with the fascinating title of natural religion. The fabulous Proteus himself never assumed, in the fertile imagination of a poet, so many shapes as it has done since that time. But altho' this mystery of iniquity had long before began to work, it was not until the last century, nor indeed until after the middle of it, that it made such alarming progress. This spread has perhaps been the most general in some catholic countries. Exclusive of a general superintendance of providence, which has probably ordained this as one mean to be used in overturning the monstrous fabric of the romish hierarchy, causes founded in the nature of things have had a powerful operation. In this enlightened and enquiring age, multitudes in catholic countries have had sufficient light and penetration to discover the absurdity of many of the superstitions of popery. These they confounded with christianity to which they never belonged, and rejected the whole together. But altho' the spread of infidel principles may have been the most extensive in catholic countries, its roots have struck deep in a protestant soil. We have seen it assuming a bold front, and proclaiming without a blush, an intention to banish christianity out of the world, at the same time expressing the most exulting assurances of ultimate success. We have seen barefaced atheism, rearing up its hydra head in one nation, and attempting to deal destruction in every direction where a vestige of christianity was to be found. But, as I shall have occasion to introduce this subject again in another part of my discourse, I shall make no additional remarks here.

Altho' the United States have not gone all the lengths of revolutionary France in her mad career of atheism and impiety, yet its roots have struck deep. It is but too certain that in many instances and places, the christian religion is openly contemned, while infidelity is, with equal publicity, avowed without shame and without a blush; and it is not to be doubted but the secret influence of these principles, equally corrupt and corrupting, has been extended much farther than the open avowal. In general the operation of irreligious principles is, at first, not only begun but spread to a considerable extent in secret. *Strike, but hide the hand*, is a maxim on which

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infidels have practised but too successfully from time to time. Like other evil doers, when they first begin to disseminate their poison, they hate the light ; nor do they usually bring forward their principles to the public until they have been so far spread and matured in secret that society is prepared to bear the open avowal. One art which has been practised with great success is to impress the public mind with the belief, that that which has been usually termed infidelity is nothing but a harmless speculation which may be indulged without guilt and without danger. It is represented to be a mere honest, or, it may be, a laudable enquiry after truth, and as the result of that enquiry, that the belief or rejection of certain doctrines is not the effect of volition, but depends on the nature and clearness of the evidence which has been presented to the mind. But when divine inspiration asserts that he who believeth not shall be damned, and that an unbelieving heart is emphatically an evil heart, it presents an idea to the mind of something very different from that of a harmless speculation. The true state of the matter appears to be, that infidelity has its original rather in the heart than the head, and is the fruit of a depraved disposition rather than the dictate of an erroneous judgment. Because men do not like to retain God in their knowledge he gives them up to strong delusions to believe a lie. The soul-humbling doctrines and the holy and self denying precepts of the Gospel are, in the first instance, disliked, and to quiet the remonstrances of conscience while trampling on its precepts, the authenticity of the sacred records is called in question. This therefore is not only a moral evil but one of the deepest die. It is in some respects the root of all evils, as it goes to unhinge every principle of morals, and dissolve every social tie which connects man either to his fellow men or to society. Like every other species of immorality, it becomes more or less aggravated, in proportion to the several religious and moral advantages which people enjoy. The advantages for understanding the evidences, and for duly appreciating the worth of the christian religion, enjoyed by the people of these United States, have been incomparably greater than those with which the French nation have been favoured, where the Bible has been studiously kept from

the perusal of the laity, and the pure and simple doctrines and duties of the gospel debased by superstition, and their beauty concealed from public view by the inventions of men. It does not arise from the want of evidence that the christian religion has been in any instance disbelieved. No history was ever better attested than that of the Gospel. And when we consider the wonderful display of divine love made to man, in the obedience, death and sufferings of the Redeemer, as well as the benevolent tendency of the gospel system to promote present and future happiness, it is entitled to the warmest, most cordial and grateful reception. But experience teaches us that it seldom meets with that reception from the children of men to which it is entitled. Men in every age have been too prone to imitate the Jews of whom our Lord complains, sayings, *And ye will not come to me that ye may have life.* Whoever carefully attends to the present situation of christianity in the United States, and sees it not only excluded from all connexion with, or countenance and support from the national government, and equally excluded from some of the states and but slightly noticed in others, and, also observes the degree of carelessness and indifference prevailing in many parts of the country, which is in some places so great that you may travel for days and see scarcely a vestige, that christianity is the religion publicly professed, taken in connexion with the too general neglect of christian institutions, and the profanation of the sabbath, even where there is some appearance of religion, and together with this, brings into view the general prevalence of vice, as well as the smallness of the number of those who publicly own, and zealously espouse the cause of CHRIST, cannot but be convinced that the roots of infidelity have struck deep, and that its spirit prevails so extensively in the United States as to render it one of our national sins. When we bring into view the nature and importance of the christian religion, connected with the clearness of its evidences, may we not consider the commination in the text as pertinently applicable to us. *Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

It may be considered as an enquiry of some importance,

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and deserving a moment's consideration in this place, whether infidelity is to be considered as gaining or losing ground at present in the United States? To answer this question with precision, our information is insufficient. There are, however, some hopeful symptoms that, in many places, it is rather on the decline. In various instances which have come either within the sphere of personal observation, or of information, the authenticity of which cannot be called in question, it appears that some of its votaries have, by a happy change in the temper of their minds, become the humble followers of CHRIST. Others have been hopefully convinced of their error, and others have been so far abashed as to become less bold and confident in their opposition to religion. Perhaps it may, on general principles be said, that the tone of infidelity has become less bold and assuming than it was a few years ago; and that the number, both of real and professing Christians, has been hopefully enlarged. It may still admit of a doubt whether an increase of zeal and activity in promoting the cause in private, while its votaries are waiting for a more convenient time to avow themselves openly to the world, does not fairly balance any diminution of boldness. We have seen that it can assume any shape to suit the times. If the crude, absurd, and vulgar blasphemies of Thomas Paine will not pass current, it can assume a milder form, and insinuate as much of its poison as possible, under the name of liberal, rational and catholic christianity; liberal to every class of opinions only to the truth as it is in Jesus. And whoever impartially examines some of the popular opinions in vogue, under the name of christian doctrines, will find little else in them than infidelity in disguise.

But should the cause of infidelity be, in some respects, really on the decline, this will not be sufficient to exempt us from all fear of God's visitation on that account. God visits the iniquities of the Fathers upon the Children to the third and fourth generation. The calamities which beset the Jews, which terminated in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple; the desolation of the nation, and the seventy years captivity in Babylon, are expressly said to be for the sins of Manasseh, and the innocent blood which he shed, altho' but few

who had arrived to maturity at that time now survived. The destruction of Samaria, and the captivity of the ten tribes, was also an event which happened under one of the least wicked of their kings. GOD has also seen fit to make inquisition for the blood shed by the house of Bourbon, upon one of the most virtuous of the race. The oceans of blood spilt in the destruction and slaughter of the protestants, under the auspices of Lewis fourteenth, have been avenged, not upon himself but his descendants; not upon the individual body of the clergy who were the principal instigators of that bloody work, but upon their successors who never had, in their own persons, been guilty of the like enormity. Should GOD reserve his visitation for this crime to a time when there was some abatement of the spirit of infidelity, we must, in that case, be constrained to acknowledge that the Judge of all the earth does right.

3dly. Is not profaneness, I mean profane cursing, swearing, and blaspheming the name of GOD, a vice so common as justly to stamp it with the name of a national sin? It is unnecessary to multiply words to show this to be a sin of the deepest die. Scarcely any thing can argue a greater degree of irreverence or contempt for the Deity, or more strongly mark the prevalence of atheism in the human heart. It was considered by Jehovah himself as a sin of such magnitude as to entitle it to a particular place among the prohibitions of the decalogue. *Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.* In many other places the enormity of this crime is painted in glowing colours. *For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth—Jer. xxiii, 10. This is the curse that goeth forth over the face of the whole earth; for every one that stealeth shall be cut off as on this side according to it; and every one that sweareth shall be cut off on that side according to it—Zech. v. 3. By swearing and lying, and killing and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood; therefore shall the land mourn—Hos. iv, 2.* Perhaps there is not one among the whole catalogue of vices, for which less can be pled in excuse than this. None of the arguments which are urged in favour of other sensual gratifications can

apply to this sin. Indeed it would seem as if it could afford no other gratification than the malignant pleasure of sinning against GOD, and perhaps there is scarcely one sin in more direct hostility to the spirit of religion than this. It tends not only to lessen, but utterly to efface from the mind, all awe and reverence of a Deity, and consequently, to lessen the solemnity, and render slight the impression of the sanctity of an oath, and so loosen the bonds and undermine the security of society. Customary profane oaths, uttered frequently about trifles, without either solemnity, thought or reflection, and without much regard to either the truth or falsehood of what is uttered, may, and no doubt often times do, pave the way for such customary perjuries as may endanger not only the property but the lives of the most virtuous citizens. As it is a sin which is immediately against GOD, so it paves the way for atheism, blasphemy, and every abomination. But heinous as this sin is, the attentive observer must be sensible that it prevails so extensively in our age and country, as justly to give it the character of a national sin. On this subject I cannot better express my sentiments than by transcribing a few passages from the Panoplist for Feb. 1811, page 400, 401, 402. After taking notice of the profaneness every where prevalent in the pagan world, the writer observes, "Our principal concern in this discussion is with those nations in which the gospel has been preached, and so far received that the inhabitants have been denominated Christians. The records of history, the details of private manners, and the open testimony of the faithful ministers of CHRIST in every age and country, warrant the assertion that the prevailing character of such nations is that of bold irreclaimable profaneness. The monarch, on his throne, the courtier around him, the officers of his armies and fleets, the soldiers and sailors under their command, the tradesman, the artizan, the man of professional eminence, the voluptuary, the country gentleman, the vassal, the beggar on the dung hill, the great mass of the people in short, of every age and character, have habitually used the name of their Creator with irreverence, with profaneness, and but too often have proceeded to blasphemy." It is to be admitted that to this general and gloomy picture there are some exceptions. And

indeed all may be excepted from the charge of allowed and habitual profanity, who have embraced the christian religion in sincerity and in heart, together with many others who have been restrained by right reason and the influence of a religious education. Tho' these exceptions have existed among all classes of persons to the glory of God's grace, yet few indeed have been the instances in which either a christian temper or christian conduct, could be justly said to be the temper and conduct of a majority in any nation. To show that profaneness is so far the character of this nation, as to be justly considered a national sin, the writer observes—"That a sin may be said to prevail, or to constitute a national character, when it is openly, publicly, and generally practised, without fear, without shame, without punishment or rebuke, or effectual disapprobation. A less forcible description might authorize the epithet prevailing as applied to a sin. But all this, and more, can be said of profaneness in this country. Let him who doubts the fact, pass with an observant ear, through the streets of our great towns. Let him hear the vociferations of the teamster, the dray man, the sailor, or the fisherman; let him frequent the bar-rooms of taverns, and any other place where there is a promiscuous intercourse of all classes of people; let him mark what is said in the boxes of the theatre; let him listen to the sports or the quarrels of boys in the streets, and let his ears be stunned with the orgies of the gaming table. If he thinks great towns an unfair specimen, as perhaps they are in some respects, let him get into the stage and pass thro' the country in different directions; let him observe the conversation of his fellow travellers, especially if they are under no restraint from any of the company; let him attend a country training, or a village ball; let him overhear the political disputes which occur every day; let him listen to the common talk of the inhabitants in the new settlements; let him hear the daily language of the men who legislate for the different communities thro' the United States, and of those who execute the laws; and after all this, let him say if he can, that profaneness is not the character of the nation. Should it be said that we have laws against profaneness, and that therefore it cannot be said to be a prevailing, or a national sin, the answer is easy. Those very

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laws when viewed in connection with the manner in which they are executed, afford demonstrative evidence that the melancholy view which has been taken of the subject, is the true one. Many, perhaps all the states in the union, have plain, peremptory statutes against profaneness. Yet, with those laws prominent on their statute books, it is doubted whether there is a single town in the American republic, where they are, or can be executed. Why? Not because there are not some, both magistrates and people, who would gladly do all in their power to have these salutary restraints put in force, but because the multitudes of the community are willing to see them violated and trampled in the dust, and because, in their overwhelming majority are included a full proportion of the rich, the influential, and those who ought to stand as a rock against the floods of immorality which are pouring in upon us." Thus, when profaneness pollutes the hall of our legislators, when it finds its way on the benches in our highest courts of justice, and all laws for its prevention are rendered abortive by the peculiar state of public opinion, more I think needs not to be said to prove it to be a national sin. The Lord will not hold him guiltless who taketh his name in vain. He will not hold the individual guiltless on that great and solemn day of trial, when all must appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST. He will not hold the nation guiltless, but will surely visit for these things, when he visits their sins upon a people.

4. Another evil which I cannot but consider as one of the national sins of the present day, is the profanation of the Lord's day. Here I shall occasionally make use of some of the observations of the same writer in the Panoplist. The institution of a sabbath was for the most benevolent purposes; and is, in its nature calculated to promote both the spiritual and temporal happiness and comfort of the children of men. In a temporal view, it is undoubtedly calculated for comfort, and is, in a degree, an alleviation of that part of the curse which dooms man to acquire his bread by the sweat of his brow.— It gives him one day in seven for rest and repose, to repair the decays of nature, both in man and beast; and it is still more immediately calculated for our spiritual comfort, as it is ap-

pointed on purpose to lead the human mind off from the things of this lower world to the immediate contemplation of the divine perfections, and of that rest which remaineth for the people of GOD. No one command of the decalogue is guarded by more severe sanctions than this. None, the violation of which was more severely punished. The religious observation of the sabbath is not merely enjoined by the sanction of severe penalties; the observation of it is also recommended by many precious promises. Of these I shall notice only the following, *Isai. lviii. 13, 14.* *If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor Him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words: Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord, and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.* In the brief hints which it will be practicable to make at present, there will be no room for controversy, either in relation to the morality of the fourth commandment, or to the change of the time from the seventh to the first day of the week since the resurrection of CHRIST. I merely observe, that the same moral reasons for the observation of a day, devoted to the immediate worship and service of GOD, not only exist, but have equal force under the Gospel that they had during the existence of the Mosaic economy. The same GOD is to be worshipped. And to keep up in the human mind a sense of the presence of the object of worship, and of the obligations we are under to render unto the Author of our being, that homage and adoration which is His due. There is the same need of a set time to be appropriated to this worship now, that there was under the law.—The resurrection of CHRIST, connected with his perfecting the work of redemption, and entering into his rest, is an event of at least equal importance to point out the first day of the week, as the day proper to be observed under the Gospel, as was either GOD's resting from his labors after the six days' creation, which was referred to from the beginning, as a reason why the observation of a sabbath was enjoined, or the deliverance out of Egypt, which seems to be referred to as a rea-

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son for the observation of the jewish sabbath. As the sabbath was instituted for the most benevolent purposes, both as a day devoted to the immediate worship and service of God, and as a day of rest from those labours to which man is doomed during the other six days of the week ; so, wherever this day has been religiously and conscientiously observed, it has never failed to produce the most valuable effects. The experience of God's people, in every age of the church, has verified the truth of the observation, that religion always declines in proportion as the religious observation of the Lord's day is neglected. Those therefore who endeavor to diminish the sanctity, and relax the obligation religiously to observe the Lord's day, may be justly considered as relaxing religious obligation in general ; and those who habitually profane it, probably could, in no other way more effectually lend their aid to banish christianity out of the world. The reason why infidels and irreligious men, of every description, have shown so much anxiety to abolish the sabbath, is obvious. It would be one very important point gained towards the abolition of christianity. When the French revolutionists undertook to banish christianity out of France, they did not consider the work as done while the sabbath remained. The abolition of the religious services of that day, and the institution of the decades, which had no connection with religion, was therefore an important part of their plan for the abolition of christianity. To maintain for any length of time a just sense of religion, without the sabbath and its services, will, on making the experiment, be found equally impracticable with an attempt to support our bodies in health without the aid of necessary food. Misguided Christians, who have united their endeavours with those of the enemies of religion in attempting to relax the obligations religiously to observe the Lord's day, do not consider how effectually they are going over to the enemies' camp, and contributing to their own destruction. CHRIST and his cause are evidently wounded in the house of such friends.

It remains now briefly to consider some of the evidences, that this is one of our national sins. A definition of a national sin has already been given : i. e. a sin becomes national when

either there is no law to restrain it, or the current of public opinion is so strong in favour of it, that the law cannot be executed, when it is committed openly in the face of day, without shame and without a blush. If we take a view of the situation of our country, we cannot but be convinced that the grossest profanation of the Lord's day is thus open and national in our land. Indeed this is but a natural fruit of infidelity which we have seen to be a national sin; and we cannot expect but that the profanation of the Lord's day will go hand in hand. Let us for a moment advert to facts. Travelling or journeying, either singly or with waggons and droves going to market, has become nearly as common on this as on any other day of the week. Taking a ride for pleasure or recreation is also another abuse of late years very common, particularly in the vicinity of large towns. A jaunt to the country to spend the day in feasting and amusement, by which not only themselves but the families to which they resort are detained from public worship, has become a fashionable mode of spending the sabbath, and has taken place of a regular and religious attendance on the worship of God. Unnecessary visiting, and other kinds of recreation has become common both in town and country. In some places it is not merely appropriated to unnecessary visiting, but is converted into a day of public resort at places of dissipation, at taverns, tippling and gambling houses. Instances of the grossest profanation are not uncommon in many places in New England. Here the sin of profanation is undoubtedly the more aggravated, as New England was, in its first settlement, a plantation strictly religious, and for a long time that part of the United States has been noted for the strict observation of the Lord's day. An authentic history of the manner in which this day has been regarded in New England, from its first settlement to the present time, would both exhibit the value of the institution, and be a proof of the strong tendency which there is in our natures to destroy the sources of human happiness.

If the sabbath is in some instances, thus grossly and openly profaned even in New England; if New England, once so famed for the regularity of her attendance on religious institutions, & the strict observation of the Lord's day, is so far degen-

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erated from her former habits, what are we to expect in some other parts of the union? In many places the Lord's day is undistinguishable from any other day in the week, unless it be rather by a greater degree of riot and extravagance, than by a single vestige of religion or religious worship. In some of the states, it is true, laws against the grosser violation of the sabbath exist in the statute books. But have they not become, in general, worse than a dead letter, by the impracticability of carrying them into effect, on account of the state of the public mind? The very existence of these laws in the statute book, connected with their almost total inexecution, is an evidence, that, even in those states in which such laws nominally exist, the violation of the sabbath is a national sin. This farther appears from the consideration that it is intimately connected with, and partakes of the irreligious feature of our government already noticed. The transportation of the mail in every direction on the Lord's day by public authority, without any real or apparent necessity, as well as the late law, not only authorising, but enjoining it upon postmasters to open and sort the mail, are acts of the constituted authorities of the nation, which have had a tendency to increase the evil. If public stages travel, private carriages, teams, and every other vehicle for the conveyance of men or goods, will follow the example. This gives a national sanction to the evil. In a time of war, or of public danger, the conveyance of intelligence in the most expeditious manner, from one part of the continent to an other, may be an object of sufficient importance to authorize the transportation of the mail on the Lord's day. But in time of peace, when nothing but the ordinary transactions of civil life require it, these cannot be put, ordinarily, to such hazard by the delay of one day, as to afford sufficient cause for encroaching on the time which ought to be peculiarly devoted to the purposes of religion.—We may add to this, the examples of too many men in the most important places of public trust, who frequently devote this day either to public or private business, or to the purpose of amusement. These things all tend to the national profanation of the day. This, therefore, is one of the sins of our nation, and whenever a justly offended God is pleased to visit us in judgment, he will visit this sin upon us.

5thly. Blood guiltiness, or murder, must also be considered as one of the sins of our nation. Perhaps there is no one sin for which God usually makes a more severe inquisition than for blood. When I speak of blood guiltiness or murder, I don't mean murder of every description. Murder of several kinds is still punishable by our laws, and the state of public opinion is, in most places, such as to present no obstacle to the due execution of the law, on fair and legal conviction. If instances of murder are either more numerous or flagrant than formerly, a point on which I have not sufficient information to be competent to decide, (but admitting the fact,) it may argue a greater degree of individual depravity, but it is not justly chargeable to the amount of national guilt, unless so far as it is connected with that species which custom and folly authorizes, and which the laws usually do not reach, or are inadequate to restrain. It will be readily perceived, that that species of murder, falsely called honorable, which is too much winked at by our laws, is meant; I mean the practice of duelling. To the people of New England this sin has appeared to be one with which they had but little concern. Its horrid aspect has been contemplated from a safe, and as we supposed, an undiminishing distance. We have been taught to regard it as murderous and detestible in its nature, and as deplorable in its consequences. We have not imagined that our brothers and our sons were in danger of being massacred by their associates, and their friends, and that our fields and retired places were to become the theatres of single combat, and be consecrated to the purposes of revenge and slaughter. But when we deemed ourselves secure from all danger of participating in this crime, our hopes were too sanguine. Several duels have been fought either in New England, or by New England men, and there is danger that the evil may increase.

The word murder is one which justly strikes the mind with horror, and never without making us conscious of its tremendous signification, without exciting sentiments of pity and compassion for the sufferers, and of indignation against the perpetrator of the crime. But such is the state, may I not call it the depravity of public sentiment among us, that the term duelling is heard of with but little emotion, and the

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practice itself is spoken of with complacency and approbation. The man who lays in wait for, and takes away the life of another, is justly condemned to an ignominious death, while he who takes away the life of his friend by that species of murder which is authorized by the laws of honor, falsely so called, instead of being frowned upon indignantly, is received with applause, and openly caressed in the most fashionable and polished society; while many times, the man, who either from motives of tenderness for the life of a fellow creature, or from a regard to his own, or from any other consideration, dictated either by motives of religion or humanity, declines to enter the list in the bloody combat, is treated with every mark of contempt. Surely this is to give the countenance of society to the practice in question, and all who thus countenance it, participate in the guilt and crime. A contrary practice, should it become general, would, in almost every instance, prevent these deeds of blood. Yet can the practice when examined either at the bar of reason, or by the standard of either scripture or sound morality, be viewed in any other light than as murder! Indeed it is a compound of murder, in the common acceptance of the word, and suicide. The principals are guilty of a voluntary destruction of their own lives in case of death, and of an exposure to suicide in case death does not follow, if the parties actually proceed to fight. It cannot be pretended that the morality of an action depends in any degree on a man's ability to shoot straight, or handle a sword dexterously. Indeed the duellist who kills his fellow, it may be his intimate friend, is frequently, by many degrees more guilty, more inexcusable than a common murderer.— Duellists are not generally to be found among the lowest rabble. They are, for the most part, men of more knowledge, and of a higher education than those who commit murder in other ways. The felons who are executed for the crime of murder, are, for the most part, ignorant, uneducated, and persons who have been but little accustomed to the blessings and restraints of an improved state of society. They have never been taught to govern their passions, nor subjected to the influence of that decorous treatment which the rules of politeness indispensably require. Duelling is commonly per-

petrated with much greater coolness than any other species of murder. There are undoubted exceptions to this general statement. Some murders are the fruit of long harbored malice. Still the greatest part of murders, which are brought before courts of justice in civilized countries, are committed under the immediate influence of sudden and violent passions. But men, many times not only engage in, but prosecute and finish a duel, while every step from the incipient provocation, until one of the parties is laid dead at the other's feet, is conducted with the greatest coolness and deliberation. Some times the duel is deferred for a considerable time, and afterwards resumed with as steady a purpose as accompanies the most laudable of human actions. Other murderers seldom kill those with whom they have had much intimacy, but duellists many times kill those with whom they have long lived in the habits of friendship; those whom they have professed to esteem and love, and whom they were bound by every social tie to protect and defend. Other murderers inflict vengeance either on their enemies or on strangers, at least this is generally case. Even the American Savage, or the ferocious Arab, does not imbrue his hands in the blood of his friend. I have not room farther to expatiate on the enormity of this crime, as would be easily done, by showing that it is murder committed on settled principles, and by tracing its consequences both as they respect government and society, and the immediate connections of those who happen to fall victims to their own folly and the tyranny of a barbarous custom. If every subject of petty altercation were to be magnified into an offence which could be expiated only with blood, then all personal security would be destroyed, and neither society or government cou'd subsist. But how trivial are the causes from which many quarrels of this kind originate?—When GOD makes inquisition for blood there is no doubt but that shed in duels will undergo a severe scrutiny.*

It remains now to consider the evidences that this is a national sin, according to the definition of a national sin already given: i. e. if a particular crime cannot be restrained and pun-

* The preceding observations are principally extracted from the Panoplist for March 1811.

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ished by law because supported by public opinion ; if the most efficient laws are evaded and the guilty uniformly screened from justice, then the guilt of the crime is justly chargeable on the nation. Let us apply this to the crime in question. There is no law of the United States against duelling. So far from being punishable it is no obstacle to preferment. We may find duellists in the most important offices. In our courts of law ; in either or both branches of the national legislature, and upon the benches of justice, without exception of the highest judicial tribunal in the United States. We may find a man called to legislate perhaps upon the very crime of murder, as well as to pronounce the sentence of the law upon that crime, whose hands are reeking with blood. Laws there are in many, perhaps in most of the United States, to prevent or in some shape to punish this crime. But how are they executed ? Persons disposed to shed each others blood have only to step over the line into another state to be free from prosecution. So far is public opinion from opposing any barrier to the practice that many are driven into duels by the force of a tyrannical custom, contrary to their own sense of right and propriety. In some places the torrent of public opinion in favour of this barbarous custom is so irresistible, that the man who dares to obey the laws of God or his country, the voice of conscience or the dictates of humanity, in preference to what are absurdly called the laws of honour, may expect to be hunted from what is called genteel and honourable society. This is a fact well known as it respects many parts of the United States.* The laws of God and man, the great law of

* As one hopeful symptom of an abatement of the evil practice of duelling, I feel a degree of satisfaction in having it in my power to notice a late law of Virginia in relation to that practice, passed, if I mistake not, in the year 1810. That large, and in many respects, respectable state has perhaps produced as many, if not more duels than any other state of the union, to the great grief of many of its best inhabitants. The Legislature has at length interposed to restrain the evil. Having never perused the law itself, I cannot state its provisions with accuracy. I understand one of them to be, to render the person who has been either directly or indirectly concerned in a duel, forever after incapable of being appointed to any office of public trust, from the highest to the most inconsiderable office in the state ; and before his appointment to office, the candidate must make solemn oath that he has never in any way violated that law. This disqualification extends not only to those who have actu-

benevolence to our fellow creatures, all the choicest feelings of humanity, the first law of nature which is self-preservation, or an endeavour to preserve our own lives and the lives of others, the choicest blessings of society and of domestic happiness, and frequently the person's own sense of propriety and moral obligation, must all be prostrated before the wicked and absurd maxims of what are called the laws of honour; and creatures formed for immortality are thus hurried uncalled into the presence of their God with all their sins upon them. These laws of honour tend to foster a spirit of cruelty and revenge, even all the worst passions of the human heart. In the public countenance given to the practice we see mischief established by a law, at least by a tyrannical custom of equal force, if not above all law. These considerations are sufficient to prove, that the guilt of this sin lies upon the nation as well as upon the individual who commits the crime. Both rulers and people are guilty; the latter because they countenance it by public opinion, and the former because they do not restrain and punish it. If persons are in a manner compelled, by the irresistible force of public opinion, to put their own lives and the lives of their friends at hazard in a duel; if there is no law of the United States against the practice; if in those states where there are laws they are evaded and rendered nugatory for want of due execution; if the man who has thus imbrued his hands in the blood of his friend, is, so far from being frowned upon, in the high road to public notice, and can find his way into our halls of legislation, our Senates or the benches of justice in our highest courts in the United States, then the nation takes the guilt upon themselves, and the crime becomes the sin of the nation. I forbear farther enlargement on the subject. By killing, or as a consequence of killing or murder, the land mourns. When God visits our nation he will make inquisition for blood,

ally fought, but to every man who has either given or accepted, or been the bearer of a challenge, or consents to be second in a duel. The wisdom of this law is tested by its effects. Since it was enacted, a duel has rarely happened in Virginia. May this prove a prelude of the expulsion of every vestige of this remnant of gothic barbarity, so highly disgraceful not only to the christian character, but to humanity itself, from every part of our country.

he will take vengeance on such a nation as this.

Had I not already protracted the detail to so great a length, I might easily swell the black catalogue, by mentioning many other sins both against God and man, which, altho' some of them may not have so far obtained the public countenance as to be strictly national sins, or sins of which the nation as such assumes the guilt, are at least awfully prevalent. I might have mentioned and largely commented upon the sin of intemperance, which is not only a heinous sin in itself but an inlet to almost every other vice. Had I a talent for description, I might have portrayed, in glowing colours, the scenes of misery and wretchedness which the drunkard brings upon himself and his connections. This is a vice which is very common in our land. Scarcely a town or a village can be found, where there are not some, frequently many, who have bro't distress and ruin upon themselves by this sin. Scarcely a collection of *people* can be found, assembled on any public occasion, among whom an attentive observer cannot discern evidences of the prevalence of this evil. I might mention lasciviousness, including all the kinds, from a gross violation of the marriage covenant, to every ramification of the vice. This may proceed in part from the impetuosity of passion; but it is also derived from a corruption of principle. No point have infidels laboured more assiduously, than to destroy the sanctity of the marriage covenant. Wretched indeed would be the state of society, should these libertine labours be crowned with complete success. Indeed it is doubtful whether it could subsist at all. Whether are they to be deemed, the friends or the enemies of society, who would dissolve all those tender & endearing ties which link societies and families together? I hope this sin is not openly countenanced by the nation. No legislative body in our nation, has, as yet, declared in the face of the nation and the world that there is nothing criminal or disgraceful in the promiscuous intercourse of the sexes. A laxness of morals in this particular is nevertheless awfully prevalent. I might enlarge the catalogue, for indeed there is scarcely any of the sins of Sodom, or of any other nation, which is not more or less prevalent in our land. For these things the land mourns. I must however close this, perhaps,

tedious detail. These vices are all branches of the same root, viz. that spirit of irreligion which has already been noticed as so generally prevalent; and vain will be the hopes of reformation from any other source than the principles of the Gospel. I cannot however close the subject without mentioning one particular more, growing out of the peculiar situation of our country, which threatens to become a national evil, of equal, if not of greater magnitude than any which have been mentioned; I mean the present situation of our foreign relations, and the attitude which it appears probable will be assumed in a short time. I must therefore mention,

6thly. That another evil with which we are threatened at present is the making a common cause with the transatlantic enemies of God and religion.* As this is a delicate subject, I don't wish to venture on it rashly nor pursue it any farther than I believe myself possessed of the clearest evidence. It is not my intention in this place to attempt a discussion upon any supposed partiality in our foreign relations, or a disposition to cringe and bow to one foreign nation or irritate another. I mean merely to advert to what appears to be our present situation, without noticing the manner in which the way has been prepared for it. Nor shall I touch upon this any farther than it has a bearing upon our moral and religious situation, and our national and individual accountability for our conduct. It can neither be denied, disguised, nor concealed, that we are in danger of an entanglement at least, if not of making a common cause with the conqueror, or rather the tyrant and oppressor of continental Europe. Should such a connection actually take place, its fatal consequences to our prosperity and happiness, and even to our national existence and independence, cannot be painted in too livid colours. I shall however consider them only in a moral and religious point of view.

* The reader is reminded that this discourse was composed nearly a year ago. Any allusion to a state of war is therefore to be considered as only by anticipation, grounded upon the then state of our foreign relations. What was then considered as a probable event is now historically true, and war has increased the anticipated danger. If providence does not soon interpose to snatch us out of the gulph into which we have rashly plunged ourselves, it is impossible to foresee when or where the calamity will end.

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That this terrible power exhibits all the discriminating characteristics of the Antichrist of the last times, has, I think, been satisfactorily proved by late writers who have made that subject their particular study. Their arguments and explanations of prophecy I have not room to detail. St. John defines Antichrist to be one who was to deny the Father and the Son, i. e. one who was to be both an infidel and an atheist, or rather as an atheistical power who was to rise up in opposition to the christian religion, and indeed to every religious and moral principle, and not as any mere individual. To this power the character of the wilful king described by Daniel strictly accords.—Dan. xi. 36, 37. *And the king shall do according to his will, and he shall exalt himself and magnify himself above every God, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of Gods, and shall prosper till the indignation be accomplished. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any God, for he shall magnify himself above all.* By a king, in prophetic language, we are not to understand an individual monarch but a kingdom, or the supreme power of a nation, whatever may be the form of its government. No power exhibiting all these distinct marks of the Antichrist of the last times has appeared in the world before atheistical France. But when we see revolutionary France renouncing the christian religion, abolishing the christian sabbath, defacing and profaning the places consecrated to the public worship of the Deity, publicly burning the Bible, with every expression of contempt and indignation; fixing this inscription publicly in their burying grounds, that death was an eternal sleep; forcibly shutting up the houses of public worship, and making the mere expression of a desire that they might be opened a great, if not a capital crime; disregarding the God of their fathers, and him who was antiently the desire of women, by proclaiming themselves a nation of atheists, and proscribing, massacring, or banishing the ministers of religion of every description, and manifesting a disposition to extend their system of proscription against the throne and the altar throughout the world, we need not be at a loss for a clue to discover the Antichrist of the last times. This was a state of things for which the public mind had been long preparing by the labours of Voltaire and his atheistical associates. When-

in addition to the moral and religious view of this power, we consider her preponderating influence among the nations; the vast armies under her controul; the extensive and populous territories reduced to a state of complete subjection; the eagerness with which she grasps at universal dominion, and the confidence with which her present ruler expresses the belief that it is within his reach, and the consummate art with which one conquest is used to effect and extend another, we cannot be much at a loss to find Gog and his numerous armies, described in the 38th and 39th chapters of Ezekiel. In the change from a pretended republic, or rather from a revolutionary vortex, to a military despotism, other predictions have been circumstantially fulfilled. That people, who had but just before magnified themselves above God and all legitimate authority, and spoken marvellous things against the God of Gods, have received a foreign God, i. e. a foreign ruler, from an origin which neither they nor their fathers acknowledged, manifesting the most abject submission to his authority, and honoring him with every species of imperial magnificence. Nor does the subsequent alliance of that tremendous atheistical power with popery render the characteristics of Antichrist less discriminating. It is observable in the revelations, that before the great battle in which the antichristian beast was to bear the papal harlot to execution, and they were to perish together in the great battle of Armageddon, popery was to change its appearance, and be no longer the beast it was formerly but the false prophet. That which gave the popish hierarchy the distinguishing character of a beast, was not merely the system of idolatry and superstition, introduced, patronized and established by that church, but the civil power with which its visible head was invested, or rather the overbearing influence exercised by the pope over the civil authority of all nations within the pale of the romish communion. The kings of the earth, i. e. the latin earth, or Roman Empire, were to give their power and strength unto the beast, i. e. to lend their influence, or rather become the mere passive instruments of upholding the grandeur and extending the influence of him who blasphemously pretended to be CHRIST'S vicar upon earth.

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But altho' this same ecclesiastical power still continues to patronize superstition and idolatry, yet being divested of civil authority, or any controuling influence over the kings of the earth, it ceases to be a beast, which in prophetic language includes the idea of an idolatrous civil power, and assumes the character, which is in prophetic language designated by the name of a false prophet. The beast, i. e. the power who will then be peculiarly entitled to the character of a beast, will enter into a confederacy with the false prophet and both shall perish together.

Let us for a moment see how this description, borrowed from the sacred oracles, agrees with the present state of things. The Emperor Napoleon has restored popery in France, and in other countries composing his vast empire. But how is it restored? Has he, in reality, evinced any more regard to christianity or even to popery, than formerly, when he was alternately papist, mussulman, and atheist? Has he restored to popery any of its former powers, or given liberty to the free exercise of christianity, in any shape, any farther than it accords with his capricious will for the moment? No. The temporal power of the pope has been long declining step by step, and it has been left to Napoleon to give it the death blow. The spiritual power he has also placed under his own controul, and it can only be exercised in immediate subserviency to his will. The popery restored is the mere creature of the state, the instrument of an ambitious and capricious policy, which he can annihilate at pleasure, whenever such a measure becomes congenial to his political views. Popery then, as at present existing in the world, completely divested of all civil, and nearly stripped of all ecclesiastical power, and existing only by the courtesy of a man who has no other view in its support than to render it subservient to the purposes of his ambition, is no longer that tremendous beast it was formerly, when it carried terror and dismay to the imperial throne, and nearly all the thrones of Europe. But as the system of idolatry and superstition still remains, it is properly, in the language of the revelation, styled the false prophet, with whom the antichristian beast, being, as is generally supposed, the Roman Empire, under its last head, was to connect himself,

and which was, together with the beast, to go into perdition. It is farther questionable whether Napoleon has any thing else in view, in the re-establishment of popery within his dominions, than its entire destruction together with christianity. The antient priesthood had been principally destroyed during the horrors of the revolution. No encouragement is given to young men to embrace the sacred function. They have nothing to expect but the most abject poverty and the most sovereign contempt. The few ministers of religion are generally old men, their numbers at present wholly inadequate to the discharge of their functions, and rapidly diminishing by death, while few or none appear to take their places. This observation is applicable to christian teachers of every sort, whether catholic or protestant, while, by the bulk of the nation, religion is treated with the utmost contempt. It is probably expected that, in this way, the entire destruction of christianity will be effected by time. Such is that tremendous power with whom we are in danger of forming a more close political union, if not entering into a direct and formal alliance; a power exhibiting in the most striking colours all the marks of the Antichrist of the last times. I need not here detail the present state of our relations with that power—perhaps I may not fully understand it, & if I did this might beneither the time nor place to make the detail. One remark however is obvious—that the present state of our relations with France renders a collision almost certain with the only power which has hitherto been able to set up any thing like an effectual barrier against the boundless ambition of Napoleon. Should that unfortunate event take place, the probable immediate consequence would be our being brought completely within the vortex of his political views, if we should not be considered as an integral part of his vast empire. It would be easy to expatiate upon the probable consequences, probable did I say, rather upon the necessary and unavoidable consequences of such an event to our political constitutions, and national independence; but I only ask, what will be its consequences to morality and religion? What will be its tendency to expose us to the awful visitations of heaven? I do not mention this from any apprehension that this antichristian power will succeed in his plan for destroying christianity. CHRIST'S church

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is founded on a rock and the gates of hell cannot prevail against it. But what is to be the ultimate fate of the beast and the false prophet? *I beheld* (says the prophet Daniel) *even until the beast was slain, and his body destroyed and given unto the burning flame.* He was to prosper till the indignation was accomplished; was then to come to his end, and none should help him. That this tremendous power, at the head of which Napoleon is now placed, is raised up by providence for the express purpose of scourging and punishing the nations for their wickedness, cannot admit of a doubt. Allies and enemies indiscriminately feel the smart of this scourge. Until the purposes of indignation, which the Sovereign of the Universe has in view, are accomplished, he will prosper; but when that which is determined is done, he will be cast down and destroyed, as was the Assyrian his prototype of old. By joining with Antichrist, and in that way becoming partakers of his sins, we may expect to become the partakers of his plagues. To join with, and help the ungodly, has always been attended with the worst consequences to a people professing the true religion. It is a crime on which providence always frowns, either first or last. Even good king Jehoshaphat brought wrath upon himself & upon Judah, by joining in affinity with Ahab; and when this same Jehoshaphat afterwards joined with Ahaziah, who did very wickedly in equipping a fleet to go to Tarshish for commercial purposes, as a testimony from heaven that a connection with that wicked prince was displeasing to God, the ships were destroyed by a tempest, so that they could not proceed to Tarshish. Much more reason have we to dread the severest chastisement, should we be so far infatuated as to unite our destinies with the Antichrist of the last times, who is doomed in the end to perish with a terrible destruction. If we are partakers of his sins, if we make a common cause with him, (and by a war with the only power who has been able to oppose any thing like an effectual barrier to his ambition, we do in fact make a common cause with him,) we must expect to be, in a measure at least, involved in his calamities. Rather ought we not to comply with the advice given in the language of inspiration. *Come out from her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not*

of her plagues. That there is an antichristian influence at present prevalent in the United States, is a fact, the proof of which depends upon evidences by no means equivocal. Deism itself is antichristianism, as it is a direct opposition to CHRIST; and as what has been usually termed deism, has degenerated nearly or quite to atheism, it is a denial both of the Father and the Son.—St. John's description of Antichrist.—The infidelity of our land is not the mere speculative sentiments of a few detached isolated individuals. There cannot remain a doubt, but the systematic infidelity of the last days, a system, in which its votaries, altho' agreeing in nothing else, unite in an endeavor to extirpate christianity out of the world, has found its way into our hitherto highly favored land. Of this we have had not only intimations, but direct proofs, which have been spread before the public. This systematic attack may be probably carrying on more secretly at present, but we have no reason to believe it to be abandoned. The bitter fruits of it are still visible in the awful prevalence of irreligion in the United States. If, in connection with this prevalence of antichristian sentiments and feelings, a political connection should be formed with the very Antichrist himself, as we should in that event be more deeply as well as more nationally partakers of his sins, so we should have reason to dread a more immediate participation in his plagues. To such a state of things the words of our text would be strictly applicable. *Shall I not visit for these things saith the Lord? Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

By way of application of these remarks to the present situation of our country, I shall suggest a few things, which appear to be duty in the present crisis.

1. Let us be duly sensible both of our own sins, and the sins of our nation. The first step both to individual and national reformation, is to be sensible that it is necessary. *They that are whole, have no need of a physician, but they that are sick.* It is but too common for people, both in their national and individual capacity, to possess too much of the self important, self complacent spirit of Laodicea, by imagining their situation to be directly the reverse of what it is in reality. As it respects their national privileges and advantages, the United

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States are in the habit of expressing much of this self-complacency, by considering themselves not only the most free, but the most virtuous and enlightened nation in the world, while they consider other nations as slaves. I have no wish to depreciate the advantages we have enjoyed, or to undervalue the constitutional privileges of my country when fairly enjoyed. Few nations have been so highly favored. Some of our distinguished advantages have been already mentioned in this discourse. No man can be more sincerely attached to our political institutions, considered merely as political, than myself, and no nation can be under stronger obligations to maintain a deep sense of the great things which a kind and indulgent providence has done for them than the United States. But when we take a review of our religious and moral situation, it cannot but be apparent to every reflecting mind, that it was not for our superior virtue, or from our being more holy than other people, but from considerations originating solely within the divine mind, that we have been thus favored. On taking such a review, instead of indulging this spirit of self-complacency, may we not find abundant reason to exclaim in the language of the prophet, *Ab sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity; a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, and they have gone away backward.* The picture of our national character, drawn in the preceding part of this discourse, is far from exaggerated. It might have been easy to have descanted at large on many traits which were but slightly touched, if at all mentioned, which have become so common as to assume the character of national. Taking these things in connection with our manifold privileges, as well as the signal interposition of providence in our behalf, we may justly cry out, woe unto us, because we have sinned. God has written unto us the great things of his law and gospel; but, as a nation, we have accounted them as strange things, practically saying, who is the Lord that we should fear him. Ingratitude was one of the sins of Israel. It has been ours. God has repeatedly done great things for us, for which we have been glad. But we have refused so much as to mention his name,

or acknowledge either his being or providence, in our national capacity. It is justly esteemed a very dark trait in the character of an individual, when, so far from blushing at the criminality of his conduct, he glories in his shame. Is not the same thing equally criminal in a nation, and is it not applicable to this nation? Perhaps there is no feature in our constitution which has been viewed with more complacency, and been the subject of more unqualified praise, both in this and foreign countries, than this, that it takes no notice of, and has no connection with religion. This feature, however, I cannot but consider as a great Pandora box, which is a very fruitful source of all the evils we either feel or fear. So long as the United States, in their national capacity, continue to deny the Lord, who bought them, renounce all connection with, and refuse all protection to religion, there is little prospect of any thing else, than that, as they refuse to retain God in their knowledge, he will permit them to reap the fruit of their own doings. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people, and unwise? Is not he thy Father that hath bought thee? Hath he not made thee, and established thee?* Let us be deeply sensible of our national sins, of public and prevailing iniquities, which may not be strictly termed national, but especially of private and personal offences, as the first effectual step to reformation.

2dly. Let us keep our eyes steadily to that divine hand which orders and directs all events. It is a comfortable truth of the christian religion, that all things, not only in the natural, but in the intellectual and moral system, all things relating either to individuals, or to the fate of kingdoms and nations, are not only in the immediate view, but subject to the control, and under the direct superintendance of providence. *I will cry unto God most high, unto God that performeth all things for me.* Not so much as a sparrow can fall to the ground without our heavenly Father, and even the hairs of our head are all numbered. He puts down one nation and raises up another; puts down one individual and raises another; abases the mighty, and exalts them of low degree, and none has a right to say unto Him what dost thou. Mercies and judgments, both national and individual, prosperity and adversity, are all equally from his hand. But such

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is the atheism which is natural to the human heart, that men frequently overlook a providence, both in mercies and judgments. When the Lord's hand is lifted up, they will not see, when the Lord calls to weeping and to mourning, behold joy and gladness. *Who gave Jacob for a spoil, and Israel to the robbers? Did not the Lord, he against whom we have sinned, for they would not walk in his ways, neither were they obedient unto his law? Therefore he hath poured upon him the fury of his anger, and the strength of battle, and it hath set him on fire round about, yet he knew not; and it burned him, yet he laid it not to heart.*— These, and many more, are the complaints of the prophets on God's antient people for their stubbornness under judgments. And when at times afflictions were noticed, and they gave some evidences of a disposition to accept of the punishment of their sins, it was frequently but feigned, tho' they sometimes apparently acknowledged that God was their rock, and the most HIGH GOD their redeemer, their heart was not right with GOD, and they only flattered him with their mouth, and lied unto him with their tongue. Equally prone were they to overlook, or to be unthankful for his mercies. When made to ride on the high places of the earth, then Jeshurun waxed fat and kicked; forgot God, and lightly esteemed the rock of his salvation. Equally prone are we to overlook the giver of every mercy. Altho' God has not interposed for us in the same miraculous manner that he did for the Jews, we have enjoyed many blessings, to which the Jews were strangers. Providence has signally interposed in our favor.— We have had our season of prosperity, a prosperity almost unparalleled in the annals of nations. Our flow of prosperity has abated; the tide has turned, and is now sensibly on the ebb, and calamities, more serious than any we have experienced, appear to be approaching. From whatever source these calamities may come, it is still the hand of God. In whatever view we may consider the instrument, it is our duty to bear the indignation of the Lord, because we have sinned against him. Whatever may be our future lot, either in a national or individual capacity, if our eyes are constantly directed to the hand of providence, we will reap this two fold advantage. A remembrance of the days of adversity, which are many, and of the sudden changes to which

both kingdoms and nations are exposed, will keep us humble in prosperity ; and a belief that all the operations of kings, princes and states, are immediately under the control of heaven, who says unto them, hitherto shalt thou come, and no farther, has a powerful tendency to keep the mind from sinking, or despondency under the pressure of either public or private calamity. He will make even the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of that wrath he will restrain.

3dly. Next to a suitable eyeing of the hand of providence, and indeed as insuperably connected with it, we are called to the great duty of repentance and reformation. Threatened calamities have been oftentimes averted by the nations timely breaking off from their iniquities. This is agreeable to the divine declaration, already quoted from the prophet Jeremiah, which I shall not repeat. As kingdoms and nations are, in their public capacity, the subjects of God's providential government, and meet their rewards and punishments in this world, so where there is only an external reformation, it has sometimes proved the means of prolonging national tranquility. No one can suppose that the repentance of the Ninevites at the preaching of Jonas, was in general, an evangelical repentance ; yet the threatened destruction was averted for a time. Josiah's reformation, tho' sincere on his part, was in general but hypocritical on the part of the nation. But the threatened calamity did not overtake them during his reign, nor until they had apostatized from that reformation. Was a mere outward reformation to become general in our nation, it might be the means of restoring and lengthning our national tranquility. Our existence however is not merely for national purposes. We are formed for immortality, and the time is hastening on when we must appear before a tribunal where nothing will be approved but purity of heart. Let us not therefore rest in a mere outward reformation. The Lord searcheth the heart, and as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. That reformation may in the issue become general, it must in its commencement be individual and personal : i. e. every one ought to resolve in his place to reform one. We may harangue as long as we please on the degeneracy of the times, and the need of reformation ; but unless it commences

in individual reformation, it can never become either public or national. The remark has been already made, that the character of a nation is not to be estimated by that of a pious few who happen to be in it. Nor are we to take it from that of a number of vicious, disorderly people who are constantly trampling upon the laws. It is to the nation itself we are to look for a national character. Whatever is countenanced by public law, or supported by public opinion, may be considered as in part constituting a national character. It is in this view, and not because there were no religious people, no practical and experimental christians in our nation, that I considered we had lost our character as a christian nation.— But if the character of a christian nation is ever to be regained, how is it to be done? The answer is plain. It must be by the progress of religion among individuals. No nation ever assumed a christian character, immediately on the first propagation of the gospel among them. This must be the work of time, and the fruit of a pretty general extension and embracing christianity among individuals. Those therefore, who would wish to see us in the possession of a national christian character, will, if they act a consistent part, do every thing in their power to promote individual reformation and personal religion. Should that happy time ever come, when men shall generally know, and follow on to know the Lord, a national christian character would soon be regained, and our kings would soon become nursing fathers, and our queens nursing mothers to the church; our rulers would soon kiss the Son, or embrace JESUS CHRIST in their public capacity, and our kingdom, even as a kingdom or government of this world, would soon become the kingdom of our Lord and of his CHRIST. This can be effected in no other way than by the individuals of which these kingdoms are composed, becoming decidedly on the Lord's side. Every individual reformation is therefore one step towards our becoming a christian nation. Where is the man, who, on taking a view, either of his heart or conduct, does not find something in himself which needs reformation? Is there nothing in our general conduct which calls for reformation? Have we uniformly treated the things of religion in a manner suited to their

nature and importance, and our own deep interest in them? Shou'd our lives be without reproach; are there not many heart evils which need reformation? Let it be kept in mind that I am now addressing those who are christians by profession. Is there nothing in our conversation, nothing in our families which needs reformation? Are there not many prayerless families in particular which need reformation? Are we or are we not criminally negligent in the great duty of bringing up our families in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; of infilling into their minds the principles and of exciting to the practice of true religion, both by precept and example? Should a real reformation take place among the professing people of God it might do much. Tho' it did not immediately change our national character into that of a religious or christian nation, yet God has frequently blessed whole nations for his churches sake. No doubt there are many of God's people in our land. Should these universally separate from the camp of the ungodly, and arise and trim their lamps, it might be the means of not only of calling down present blessings, and prolonging our tranquillity, but of commencing such a general reformation as might in due time become national, so that we might in the issue become that happy people whose God is the Lord.

4thly. Another duty of great importance at all times, but in a special manner in the present crisis, is prayer. Do we wish for either spiritual or temporal blessings, let us pray for them. Even where the people of God have an absolute promise of good things in store, they are directed to pray for them. *Thus saith the Lord God, I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.* The prophet Daniel was a man greatly beloved of God, and also mighty in prayer. It was immediately after one of the most spiritual and heavenly prayers recorded in scripture, in which he particularly confesses his own sins and the sins of his people; at the same time acknowledging the justice of God in all the evils which had come upon them for their sins; that the Angel Gabriel was sent unto him to communicate the most important of all his prophetic revelations: i. e. that which related to the time of the Messiah's coming. The prayer is recorded at large in the 9th chapter; the conclusion of it ver. 18, 19, is remarkable. *O my God,*

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incline thine ear and hear ; open thine eyes and behold our desolations, and the city which is called by thy name : For we do not present our supplications before thee for our righteousness, but for thy great mercies. O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken, and do ; defer not, for thine own sake, O my GOD ; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name. Immediately after this fervent supplication, the Angel Gabriel was sent unto him to inform him both of the time when Messiah was to come and of the nature of the work he was to do. The famous prophecy of the seventy weeks, recorded in this 9th chapter, contains perhaps as clear and full account, both of the work the Messiah was to do, and of the time of his appearing, as any which is to be found in the old testament. It was communicated by the Angel, immediately after this most serious and fervent prayer. GOD is still a prayer-hearing GOD. Altho' we are not to expect to be made prophets, or to have any particular revelation communicated, nor is this one of those things for which we ought to pray, yet we may expect mercies. Mercies, spiritual and temporal, public and private, national and individual ; mercies to the church and commonwealth, for ourselves and others, may be expected in answer to prayer. When a mercy is received in answer to prayer, we will be the better prepared to relish its sweetness, and the more thankful to the giver. Or if GOD should see fit to withhold the mercy asked for, a praying frame is a powerful support under the want or privation of the mercy prayed for. For example, a sick man prays for health. If he has a spirit of prayer it will support him under the want of it, and render him patient and submissive on a sick bed, or even enable him to face the king of terrors, and pass out of time into eternity with comfort. If the Judgments of GOD are abroad in the earth, the man endued with a spirit of prayer finds the most comfort in a season of trial.—*Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee ; the desire of our soul is to thy name and the remembrance of thee. God is our refuge and our strength, a very present help in trouble ; therefore will we not fear though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea. Altho' the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine ; the labour of the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat, the flock shall be*

cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall, yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the GOD of my salvation. Whether light shall arise out of darkness, or whether the dark clouds which now hang over us shall continue to thicken until they burst in some dreadful calamity upon our nation, the man of prayer is best prepared for either continued trials or deliverance. Let us pray for ourselves, pray for the church and nation, as for other mercies so for this especially, that we may be that happy people whose GOD is the Lord.

5thly. As there are important duties which we owe to GOD, so there are duties which we owe to our social connections, the faithful discharge of which may contribute to the regaining of our christian character as a nation. Of these the duties we owe to a rising generation ought not to be forgotten. Youth are the best hope of their parents, the church, and the nation. Their morals and principles are of the greatest importance to society. It has been a part of the plan of the infidel and the irreligious of every description, to spare no pains and use every art to corrupt them; the greater diligence should therefore be used to counteract the designs of the adversary. But I must pass this and observe that there are duties which we owe to civil society, with some brief remarks upon which I shall close. And as it is not my intention to enlarge, I shall barely notice this one, which is of great importance, and that is in our exercise of the right of suffrage, to fill important places of public trust, to pay particular attention to the religious and moral, as well as the political qualifications of candidates: i. e. that we endeavor to select not only men of wisdom and talents, but men of virtue and religion, at least men who are known to be believers in revelation, and friendly to gospel order and christian institutions, and men whose morals are not a public disgrace to the christian character.— The right of suffrage, to the extent in which it is enjoyed in this country, is a privilege with which no other nation is favored. The value of the privilege depends very much on the manner in which it is exercised. By a wise and conscientious exercise of this right, much might be done to ward off the ill effects of that irreligious feature in our national government, which has given rise to a considerable portion of

the remarks contained in the preceding discourses. No doubt this feature in our government has paved the way for the introduction of men into our national councils, who are opposed to every form and appearance of christianity. In this the children of this world have proved themselves to be wiser than the children of light. The doctrine of the entire separation of government from religion, in the extent to which it is carried, is an infidel doctrine. But means have been found, in some way, to render it popular with many of the professors of christianity. They have progressed still farther, and caused it to be believed, that a respect for religion, or even a speculative belief in revelation, is neither a necessary or a very important qualification of a ruler in a christian country. This impression is peculiarly favourable to the cause of infidelity, and has no doubt been much promoted by the arts and labours of men of that description. It has already been observed that an infidel, as such, can be viewed in no other light than as an enemy to the christian religion in every form of it. By engrossing as much power as possible into their own hands, they are placed in a situation to exert a more powerful and more fatal influence to injure that religion which they take every opportunity to render contemptible. It is impossible that it should be otherwise, for what can be more opposite than light and darkness? What security can we have of even the political integrity of a man without religion and without morals? Do we depend upon the sanctity of an oath as an important bond of society? An oath can have no other foundation than religion. Destroy all impressions of religious obligation, and oaths become mere words of course. There can be nothing binding in them; one important cement of society is gone, and no other motives to action are left than those of ambition, convenience, or self interest. All the power which remains with the people to remedy this evil, is in the proper use of their right of election. Should that be executed wisely, and without either improper bias or corruption, many evils which we have reason to fear, might be avoided. But, on the other hand, deplorable is the situation of a nation, when on each side walk the wicked, and the vilest of men are exalted; and more deplorable still, when vileness itself is the most

direct passport to promotion. Those, who by an imprudent exercise of this privilege, lend their aid to elevate such men, do thereby contribute, by the most effectual mean in their power, to the defection of the times, which must ripen us more and more for the chastisements of heaven. *The God of Israel, said the Rock of Israel, spake unto me—He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God.*

To conclude—Let us be real christians. Whatever may be the aspects of providence towards our nation, our time in the world will be but short. Let us therefore look beyond all the transitory things of time, to that solemn hour when we must all appear before the judgment seat of CHRIST. Neither our natural relations, or political connections, are any thing else than momentary, compared with futurity. But a vast eternity awaits us, and we must soon enter on that untried state. Let us therefore extend our views to eternal things, and in the event of severe trials, either national or individual, betake ourselves to those chambers of security, which GOD has prepared as a hiding place for all who put their trust in him, and to which he invites them, saying, *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee ; hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast—For behold the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquities : The earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain.*

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