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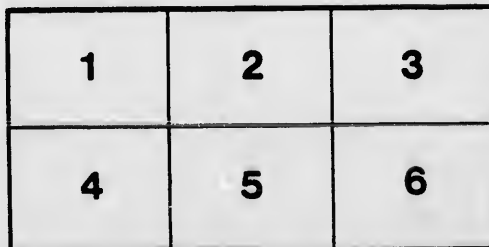
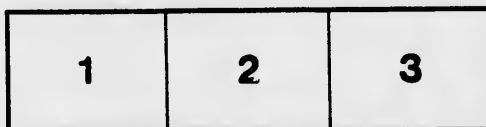
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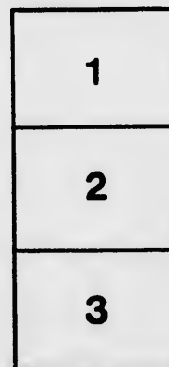
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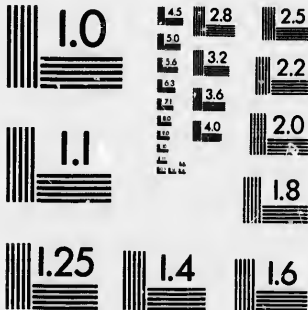
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# "Ebil in a City."

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## A SERMON

DELIVERED TO HIS CONGREGATION,

(AND PUBLISHED BY SPECIAL REQUEST.)

BY

THE REV. ROBERT IRVINE,

Minister of Knox's Church, Hamilton,

ON WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2, 1854.

*Which was observed as a Day of Humiliation and Fasting, by  
Proclamation of His Worship the Mayor,*

During the prevalence of Cholera Morbus  
IN THE CITY.

HAMILTON:

PRINTED BY NICHOLSON, M'INTOSH & CO., KING STREET,  
1854.

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## "EVIL IN A CITY."

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HOSEA iii. 6. "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?"

It has been said by high authority that there is no *positive* Evil in the world. Whether the orthodox moralist is prepared to endorse this maxim may be a question, but it is certain that the orthodox Theologian believes it, so far as the doctrine which it involves applies to the people of God—for inspiration assures him, that "all things work together for *good* to them that love God," &c. Hence it is obvious that what at one time may seem an apparent evil, may at another appear to be a real good—and what one man may regard a real evil, another may regard a real good.

Afflictive dispensations are by some deemed a great calamity, yet we hear one say of them "blessed is the man whom thou chastenest and causest to learn thy statutes." "Tho' no chastisement for the present (that is while it is being borne) seemeth joyous but grievous, nevertheless *afterwards* it yieldeth the unspeakable fruits of righteousness." Afflictions are therefore a blessing—a real good to the man of God—a real good to the sinner whom they bring to Christ, yet like the amputating knife in the hand of the surgeon—they may create pain—and the sinner may wince while the Divine Surgeon is "cutting off the right hand" or "plucking out the right eye."

Still what may be a present evil is in reality a future good. The child winces under the rod, and yet lives to learn that "the rod and reproof bring wisdom, but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame."

In looking at Divine Providences the believer himself is sometimes desperately puzzled. It is often difficult to reconcile what God records in the page of Revelation, with what he records in the volume of Providence, and, therefore, we sometimes find even such men as David staggered by the apparent discrepancy, as for example in the 73rd Psalm. Faith and sense seem to enter into conflict, when God's promises and God's Providences are placed beside each other, and David "the man after God's own heart," for the time being, seems nonplussed—in attempting a reconciliation of the two—till he "went to the sanctuary" and there God solved his difficulties and reconciled the two volumes of Inspiration and Providence. There was one gloomy chapter in the history of Jacob. This patriarch, with all his piety and all his patience—and all his grace, on hearing that he must part with his beloved Benjamin, exclaimed "Joseph is not—Simeon is not, will ye take away Benjamin also? all these things are against me," no doubt Jacob believed that all these things were against him—one Providence follows another, like the waves of the sea, and each is more heavy and more disastrous than the preceding. Joseph is dead—Simeon is retained as a hostage, Benjamin is demanded as a proof of the truthfulness of their story and the integrity of their purpose—the case is a hard one—Jacob remembers the strength of an attachment which time cannot destroy—the very name of Joseph awoke a sigh in his bosom—he remembers, the coat of many colours stained with blood—he then sees a Simeon awaiting—another blank in the family—and now the son of Rachael's sorrow—the youngest, the favourite child, must go or Simeon cannot return—"all these things are against me." So says a faith that cannot see far into Divine Providence. But Benjamin went—and Simeon is released, and Joseph is alive, and Jacob is brought down to Egypt, and bread is provided for him and his family in the famine, and a Goshen the best of Egypt is given to him—and best of all Joseph is still alive! The good old patriarch no sooner falls on Joseph's neck and embraces him, than he discovers, that "all these things are (not) against him." What to

Jacob was an *apparent* Evil—was a *real* good—and no doubt Joseph and his brethren, both deemed their harsh treatment, an evil. They envy Joseph—it is an evil. They conspire against him, it is an evil. They cast him into a dungeon, it is an evil. They barter him against the spices and aromatic herbs of Midian, it is an evil. He is imprisoned under the false accusation of Potiphar's wife—it is an evil. He remains ignominiously immured in an Egyptian dungeon—all this is an evil—an *apparent* evil. Yet long after—when the pages of Providence are unfolded and the mind of God revealed—Joseph stands before his brethren—and as his eye runs over the incidents of the past he addresses them in the following language—“Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.” Hence it is manifest, that what seemed to be an evil was in reality a good—and so far as God's people are concerned, there is no positive evil can befall them in this world, save and except sin.

But our text would seem to go farther than this, for the question which it puts has reference to the *mass*. Is there evil in a *city*? By the phrase EVIL we are to understand not what God calls evil, but what man calls evil. If Intemperance, or blasphemy, or dishonesty, or licentiousness, or gambling, or bloodshed, or murder exist in a city—God is not to blame. He is not the author of sin, and He does not assume the responsibility of these evils. But if bankruptcy, or blasting, or mildew, or pestilence, or plague, enter a city—thinning the ranks of the living and crowding the abodes of the dead—if these enter a city and spread poverty and wretchedness and widowhood and orphanage throughout the streets—if Cholera or Morbus enter a city and throw a pall over its domestic and commercial activities, no doubt the awe-struck inhabitants call this an EVIL, and God looking down from heaven upon such a community, says while he points to the judgment that hangs over them, “Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?” For such evils God makes himself responsible.

There are two points which this text suggests, and the consideration of which becomes the circumstances under which we are assembled.

I. That all the social evils of which we complain are sent and controlled by Christ, and

II. That though sent and controlled by Christ, they are provoked by our sins.

1. All our social ills are sent by Christ.

Christ is exalted as head over all things to the Church. His title to universal supremacy rests on his mediatorial relationship to his Church, and in virtue of this title he reigns uncontrolled in glory, grace, and providence. In glory, Angels and ransomed immortals bow under his control and delight to yield Him universal homage. The bright cherub and the burning seraph who float around his throne in glory, acknowledge his universal authority, for they feel that as they are indebted to Him in common with all other objects in His vast empire, for their creation, so in common with man they are indebted specially to his mediation for their unfallen and confirmed purity. His dominion embraces also ransomed men. The spirits of the just made perfect, are included in his subjects—and each of these gladly bows in grateful submission under the sceptre of his glorious rule, in heaven—for He is King of Glory.

But while in person he is enthroned in glory the admiration of Angels and of Saints, His dominion extends to the utmost bounds of the spirit world, and he possesses dominion over "the spirits in prison." Fallen Angels and lost souls, though under the government of the prince of darkness, are also under control of the Son of God as mediator. "He conquered death and him that had the power of death that is the devil." So that, Hell itself is under Christ's ministerial sovereignty, just as the convict colonies of this empire are under the Supremacy of our gracious Sovereign the Queen. So even the devil and his angels with the myriads of the damned in hell are all under the sway, and all quail beneath the righteous sceptre of Him, who is "King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

Such being the case it also follows that in another department of his rule Christ is Supreme. He is sovereign in grace—and reigns over and controls the spirits of good and bad men—as well as those of good and bad angels. The believer will own no authority save that of Christ. He is the law giver, the king, and the judge, because the Saviour of his own elect. "The Lord said unto my Lord sit thou on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool—in midst of all thine enemies be thou the Governor. \* \* \* Thy

*people shall be willing in the day of thy power."* When Christ exerts his power—in changing the will—he makes his people a willing people, and knowing his will, they yield submission to no authority that runs counter to his—rather than do so Isaiah will submit to be sawn asunder, Jeremiah will submit to be put into a dungeon, Daniel will encounter the Lion in his den, Shadrach, Mechach and Abed-nego will wade through a sea of flame on the plain of Dura. John the Baptist will submit to be beheaded, Peter and John will yield to imprisonment, Paul and Silas will pray and sing praises with their feet fast in the stocks at Phillipi, and the victims of modern superstition and still more modern infidelity will yield to martyrdom inflicted by the man of sin in the metropolis of England and of Scotland, or to the tortures of the guillotine in that of France.

But his control extends beyond the spirits incarnate, of his own saints. He rules over the spirits of the wicked and ungodly. He had the heart of Pharaoh in his hand, and could control it as well as the heart of Moses. He had the heart of Saul in his hand—the King's heart is in the hand of the Lord. He had the heart of Cyrus and Darius in his hand, and could and did control these wicked men's hearts according to his own sovereign purpose and will. The hearts of Judas Iscariot and of Pontius Pilate were in the hands of Christ, even when he was under the arrest of the one and before the tribunal of the other. He was the Supreme Governor of the world of spirits, and could have called forth more than twelve legions of Angels to effect his rescue, had he only willed it.

Now it being established that Christ Jesus as the universal Lord of all things controls the spirits of the damned in hell, and restrains the spirits of the wicked on earth, nothing can be plainer than that He has charge of, and controls all the evil which exists in the vast empire of Providence. In the kingdom of Providence Christ is supreme. "All power is given to Him" on earth as well as heaven, and having all power, he possesses authority to permit and overrule all the evils, whether real or imaginary, that exist in the families, communities and nations of our world. And where such evils, whether real or imaginary do exist—is it not, all things considered, much better that they should be under the control and management of Christ, than left to the impious control of the wicked one—or that those evils should be invested with a self-exercising power, by

which their mischief should become unbounded. We all admit a special providence—in the administration of which Christ Jesus is Supreme, so that the minutest events as well as the greatest are under His special cognizance. The falling of a sparrow—the numbering of the hairs of our head are among the incidents which claim the special cognizance of the Supreme ruler in the empire of Providence.

This doctrine, so far as its application to the great machinery of Divine Providence, all are ready to admit; but there are many who do not so readily admit it when viewed in reference to more minute or apparently insignificant incidents; this is as philosophically as it is theologically heretical. We believe that the power which made the world governs the world. Now, a Newton has demonstrated that there are certain laws which pervade the universe of matter. These laws hold the planets in their orbits, and by these laws the material heavens are kept in order. These laws are fixed and immutable, and because of their fixedness and certainty the chronicler can calculate the rising and setting of the sun, the rise and fall of tide, the various phases and eclipses of the heavenly bodies for centuries to come. These are called laws in nature, or laws of nature; and though the interchange of day and night, of summer and winter, of flow and ebb in our tides, together with the various motions of comets, and the other changes which occur among the heavenly bodies, are all owing to the operation of these laws—yet even a Newton would say that these planets are managed and controlled in all their motions by the direct and special operation and interference of the God of Providence.

A knowledge of the rule by which a mechanic works does not by any means imply that he does not work. If a mechanic invent a self-acting machine, this by no means implies that he has no control over the operation of that machine. Now, in the great events of the divine government in Providence, we are ready to ascribe universal supremacy to Him—why not in the more minute? The philosopher who discovered the law of gravitation, and proved its universality in guiding the motions of the heavenly bodies, will tell you that the very same system of laws by which the orb of our earth and that of the other heavenly bodies are controlled, guides the falling of every drop of rain, or the dancing of every particle of dust that

reels in the whirlblast, or every globe of dew that is suspended to the leaf.

Now, if a special Providence pervade the movements of the planetary system, so that for ages those immense bodies have circled without aberration around their respective centres, may not a similar Providence pervade the more minute objects of nature, in every fitful operation of which a law in nature as certain and fixed as that which guides the planets in their orbits may be observed? Nay, more. If there be a special Providence in the management of all these material things, and if that Providence pervades the whole—from the motion of the particle of sand on the sea beach to the planet Jupiter—are we to infer that a similar Providence does not run through every incident in the *moral* as well as the *physical* universe of God?

The great events in the moral world are ascribed to Divine Providence, moreover, by many who refuse to admit Divine interference in the management of the more minute affairs of men. The rise and ruin of ancient empires are great events in the history of our world, and the God of Providence controlled them. Yet the birth and death of an infant are just as much under his control as these. The moral government of God extends alike to the mightiest and minutest events in his providence, just as the law of gravitation controls alike the atom and the globe.

Now, in the operation of the physical laws of Providence there will be local evils and local grievancees, while there will be general or universal good, and this without any defect of the great physical system taken as a whole. The spring freshet, for example, which swells the streams and affords the means of forwarding, in certain countries, the winter produce to market, proves a general blessing to a province. The same salubrious rain which swells the freshet, invigorates the soil, and moistens the earth, thereby yielding a rich and luxurious harvest. This is a general good. Yet these rains may sadly inconvenience the traveller, or the freshets which they create may sweep away the insecure property of some inland slug-gard. This is a local evil; yet it is a fractional part of a general and a great good. The thunder storm which sweeps over a continent and purifies its atmosphere, banishing pestilence and plague,

and restoring the inestimable blessing of health to the people, may in its furious career dilapidate a building, or break a forest tree, or destroy the property, or perhaps the life, of some few of the inhabitants over whose territory it passes. This is a local evil; but it is part and parcel of a great good: and while the Sovereign Disposer of all events in the physical world looks at the general good, He puts the question—Is there evil on the continent, and God hath not done it?

In the administration of His providential government we see proofs of the fact now established every day. In the commercial cities of our empire—we might add of our world—we find immense masses of our fellow-creatures living without God. We cannot bring them under the sound of the Gospel; they will not enter the house of prayer. We cannot bring Bible truth under their notice, for they will not read God's precious word. We cannot teach them the means of grace, for they eschew all the appointed instrumentalities for the salvation of sinners. They live without God, and they die without hope. For them the Gospel was provided, but they will not hear it; for them the missionary would go into the highways and hedges, but they will not heed him; for them our Bible Societies and Tract Societies have been established; for their offspring our Sabbath School Institutions were originally appointed, but they will not even avail themselves of such privileges. No means, though bearing the obvious marks of divine appointment, but entrusted to a human executive, seem to be of any avail. Now, when God thus speaks in tones of mercy and of grace, and calls on continents and communities to repent, yet they continue to turn a deaf ear to all the loud and lasting appeals of his Gospel, He changes his mode of treating them, and begins to speak in his Providence. He sends famine; and when the staff of bread is broken, the ungodly begin to tremble and to quail under the weighty hand that smites them. He sends war; and while the din of battle is sounding in an empire's ear, the ungodly, who refuse to hear God's voice when he speaks in the Gospel, sometimes hear it when he speaks in judgment. He sends pestilence and plague; and while the angel of death is sweeping over our world, and specially ransacking the streets, and lanes, and purlieus of our commercial cities, and thinning the ranks of the living, and



peopling with multitudes the abodes of the dead—the thoughtless young man, just entering his career of folly, is alarmed and arrested: the aged sinner, who has long lived without God, is awestruck, while he sees his companion in vice taken and he left: the public mind of a city—of a whole continent—is drawn away for a time from the engrossing pursuits of time and sense: a nation proclaims a fast, millions humble themselves before the living God, and while the inhabitants of our cities, like the men of Nineveh, proclaim a fast, call a solemn assembly, and humble themselves before God, the cry of penitential sorrow is awoken in the bosoms of some poor wanderers of God. Then the calamity which by many is deemed an evil becomes a general and universal good; and while, amid the ravages of the endemic, one family may lose a head, and another a member—in one case the widow may sigh over the tomb of her departed husband, in another the orphan may mourn the loss of earthly parents, in a third the lonely and unprotected emigrant from a far land, a stranger, a pilgrim, may have only reached the foreign shore to find a grave—still these are minor evils compared, it may be, with a great and general good. If the loss of a few be the gain of many—if the natural death of a few should be the means of bringing spiritual life to many more—if the temporal death of even hundreds should be converted by the God of Providence to the eternal life of thousands—then what may seem to us a local and a limited evil, may ultimately turn out to be a general and unlimited good. Could we only trace the consequences which often follow the temporal judgments of the God of nations, we should doubtless find many a penitent heart, and many a broken spirit, and many a ransomed soul in glory, will doubtless trace its eternal salvation, through Jesus Christ, to some providential calamity, which drove it by force to seek pardon and repentance. Where such glorious consequences accrue from the trying events of Divine Providence—when the death of a godly father reclaims a prodigal son—when the wail of widowhood or the sighs of orphanage drive the careless and the ungodly to repentance—when the unbridled fury of cholera morbus strikes terror to the hearts of the intemperate, the licentious, and the Sabbath-breaking portions of the community, and when from their evil pursuits and their ungodly ways they are driven to the sanctuary to their knees, to plead for pardon through

the blood of the cross—well may the Sovereign Disposer of all events look down from his throne of providence and say, "Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?"

Again not only is the local evil of which we complain, a general good, but it is also under the special control of Christ Jesus, as the King and Sovereign in the empire of divine providence. He sent pestilence and plague on Egypt, and he removed them when he chose. He sent plagues among his own people in the wilderness and he removed them when he chose. He smote the nation in the days of Ahab with famine, and when the plague had done its work he removed it. He can command the winds and seas and they obey him.

There is not an evil under which our nation groans that he could not rectify in a moment of time, and when these evils have done their work and accomplished their designed results they will be removed—not till then. Christ as the God of providence, could as easily drive the epidemic from our streets as he could send the breeze which bore on its wing the swarms of Egypt's flies and buried them in the Red Sea. He could at this moment, as Aaron did of old, grasp the golden censer of his mediation and rush in between the living and the dead and the plague would be stayed—but he waits and pauses till the plague humbles us before him—and it may be that as our Lord and master on beholding the men of Nineveh humbling themselves before him on the day of their public humiliation and fasting, and as he heard the cry of Nineveh's penitential wailing, and arrested his threatened judgment, so on hearing the cry of sorrow which this day issues from every Protestant Church in this City, as well as from many a wretched home over which the ruthless hand of death has recently swept, he may be moved to issue from His throne of Providence a mandate—saying to the raging pestilence "hitherto shall thou come, but no further." With such power He is invested. Oh! that our prayers and tears and importunings may this day move him to exercise his authority and save our city from further destruction.

II. There is a second view of the subject to which we now advert. The evils under which society labours are not only sent and controlled by Christ as the sovereign of the kingdom of providence, but they are provoked by sin.

It may not be possible for us in every instance to connect the private afflictions and public judgments which God sends among us, with specific sins as their provoking cause,—but that sin and suffering, whether viewed on a small or a large scale, stand related as cause and effect, is a position fully justified by the whole tenor of revelation. To connect each calamity which befalls the individual or the nation with some particular and provoking sin—were perhaps a presumptuous invasion of the divine prerogative—but to establish the point that sin is the provoking cause of all our ills, is easily proven. “Whosoever doeth wrong *shall* suffer for the wrong he doeth.” Every man whether righteous or wicked, whose conscience is not entirely destroyed, finds that *personal* sin brings down upon him personal suffering. The God of Providence, has left here more unequivocal proofs perhaps of his moral character than any where else—for the upbraiding voice of a natural conscience, cannot be hushed into silence so long as the burden of guilt hangs over it—the cry of murder pursues the refugee in his flight, and though he escape the detection of human law, he feels that he cannot flee from the avenger within—and not only so, but even without as well as within there is a system of moral retribution, by which the sinner is made to suffer for his crime. Jacob sinned, in the matter of Esau’s birth-right, and Jacob was made to suffer for his sin. David sinned in the matter of the Hittite, and sorely did he suffer for the sin. Judas sinned in the betrayal of our Lord, and for his sin he suffered desperately within—and finally he became his own executioner. Personal sins bring down personal judgments. The Saint and the sinner alike, experience the equity of Jehovah in the administration of his providence—the voice of God within and the judgment of God without—alike unite in vindicating Jehovah’s character and punishing sin in the moral universe; and from conscience within and from providence without no man whether saint or sinner can escape. Jonah may flee from Nineveh and from the command of God, but he cannot flee from his own conscience, nor yet from the providence of God—for while the voice of the hidden monitor upbraids him within, the tempest howls without.

But it is equally true that *family* sins provoke family judgments. Eli was a good man. Yet Eli neglected a very important element in the administration of family discipline—it was a family sin—and

because of it God threatened that he would do a thing in Israel which would cause the ears of every one to tingle—he would bring a judgment on the house of Eli—because of family sin—and the judgment came. Hophni and Phineas the two ill reared sons of Eli perished in one day, whilst their good old parent whose heart trembled for the ark of God sunk beneath the sad tidings of Philistia's proud triumphs. David sinned against his own family in the matter of Uriah—and God threatened that the sword should not depart from his house. The conspiracy of Absalom, moreover, is a proof that family sins bring family judgments—the lamented death of his child which kept him weeping three days and three nights in sack-cloth and ashes, is another proof of the same fact. The curse of God is threatened against "all the *families* that call not on his name"—and the history of many a prayerless, sabbath-breaking, and sinning family furnishes a melancholy proof of the fact that family sorrow, family wretchedness, family misfortune, family disgrace, have been provoked by the family sin of the family that live without the recognition of God, and if Jehovah be a God of justice, he must vindicate his own honour and character before the eyes of the families of the earth. Let the sinner say what he will, family sin will bring down family judgment on the house of the ungodly.

Let us extend the principle, and we shall see that *social* sins provoke social judgments. Sodom and Gomorrah sinned, their cry went up to heaven, and the Lord sent down fire and brimstone and destroyed them all. The sins of Sodom were marked by peculiar aggravation, and therefore the judgment was marked by peculiar severity, and except one praying family, every family in those cities perished, and perished by the artillery of heaven, shot forth with unrestrained and desperate fury by the hand of the living God. Similarly, when we look at Babylon, and Jerusalem, and Nineveh, and Pompei, and many other cities which were once the *emporiums* of our world's commerce, and the rendezvous of our world's iniquitous inhabitants, and ask where are they? we think we hear a voice issuing from the ruins and saying, "The hand of the Lord hath done it." When God visits our cities with commercial embarrassment, or with pestilence, or famine, or plague, or sickness, or death, are we to regard such evils as merely accidental? Ought we not the rather to seek for the provoking causes of such calamities in the

drunkenness, and blasphemy, and licentiousness, and Sabbath-breaking, and dishonesty, and public and private vice of our inhabitants? The philanthropist may attempt to prevent the prevalence of distemper; the physician may attempt to account for it or to cure it; but the Christian who reads and believes his Bible, must and will trace the judgments of God which abound among us as readily to the sins of the people, as God traced the judgments which he sent upon Sodom and Gomorrah to the impieties of their ungodly inhabitants.

But we hold that the principle holds good when viewed on a *national* scale? Why did God send ten plagues on Egypt, and finally bury its infidel monarch and his armies in the Red Sea? We reply, on the authority of God himself, that Egypt's plagues were sent because of Egypt's sins. Why did God send famine and pestilence, and blasting, and mildew, and death on Israel in the days of Ahab. We reply as before—the nation's sins provoked the God of nations to visit her with his judgments. Why did Moab and Ammon, and Amalek, and Philistia perish? We reply that national sin brought down after a long long period of divine forbearance—national judgments—and when a nation's cup is full God stretches forth his hand and destroys that nation.

Why did Assyria, and Greece, and Rome, lose their national existence? where is their military prowess? where their national individuality? where their commercial greatness? where their literary eminence? All blasted and gone—the God of Providence has thrown a funeral pall over their former grandeur, and their past history compared with their present ruin, shews that the mighty are fallen and their weapons of war have perished—where is the cause? We reply again—national sins have brought down national judgments. Only think of Spain, a nation whose flag some 200 years ago floated over 70 millions of human beings, and over nearly one seventh of the entire territory of our earth, yet no nation of modern Europe at this moment presents such a shrivelled, consumptive aspect as Spain.

For this state of things the diplomatist may attempt to account—whilst the Spanish patriot may watch and weep as he sees colony after colony dropping off—and his own nation gradually pining away—its cities dwindling, its commerce dying, its soil becoming barren,

and its very nationality perishing—but let any man take his Bible in his hand and read the history of God's judgments in times gone by, and compare them with the history of this nation, and the problem is easily solved. Spain has long been pre-eminent in crime, and, therefore, the cup of her national sin has become more rapidly filled than that of some other kingdoms, but the hand of God lies heavy on that nation, just because she has long been sunk in the deepest vice.

The conclusion of the whole, therefore, is—that when God sends famine, and pestilence, and plague, and war internal, and war external, upon the nations of our earth, these calamities under which a nation groans are provoked by the nation's sins. Christ is Governor among the nations; and when his authority is disowned, his laws disobeyed, his religion despised, his name profaned, his Sabbath violated by national law and national practice—assuredly, as the King of nations, he will assert his authority, and visit with his judgments the people, the countries, and the kingdoms by whom he is publicly insulted, and his supremacy publicly disavowed.

In drawing these remarks to a conclusion, we would call special attention to the following facts:—

1. That no affliction, whether personal, social, or national, is either accidental or arbitrary. Every affliction and every bereavement which has of late been sent among the families of this congregation, and of this city, were the result of design; and not only so, but they were needed. God has had some wise purpose to serve by laying his hand so severely on this city. There is some great end in view;—what it is, God knoweth; but there is some great end in view in multiplying the widows and orphans of Hamilton. It may be to tax the generosity of our citizens; it may be to try the faith of the afflicted; it may be to arouse to activity and call into operation the latent spirit of public benevolence; it may be to prove, by the subsequent dealings of the Almighty, that he can be a Father to the fatherless and a husband to the widow; or it may be to allay the pride and the vain-glory which the rapid growth of a young city sometimes begets;—there is a species of civic pride which often grows in a young community, especially among those who have watched with interest every storm that has been laid, and have seen

its population swelling and its commerce growing with mushroom rapidity. God can diminish as well as increase; and to accomplish one or other, or all of these purposes, he may send forth the fiery rod of his chastisements;—he has an end in view. Nor does he act merely as an arbitrary avenger in such cases—we need the chastisements which our sins provoke—they are a part of the discipline by which God trains his people for heaven, and by which he drives communities to repentance. Hence the conclusion—that men and nations alike require divine chastisement.

2. That private and public chastisements demand private and public humiliation and repentance before God. The apostle says, "Is any afflicted, let him pray." Times of suffering should be times of repentance and prayer, and this is as becoming in nations and communities as in individuals and families. We, therefore, commend the ungodly king of Nineveh for proclaiming a fast, and commanding man and beast to abstain from food and humble themselves before God when his judgment was threatened against the city.

3. That God's providences, like God's ordinances, will make us either better or worse. The plagues of Egypt only hardened Pharaoh's heart, while they caused the slaves of Goshen to pray with redoubled importunity. So God's judgment will either harden the ungodly, and augment the black catalogue of our national guilt, or they will bring many weeping penitents to the foot of the cross, and cause the faithful of the earth to sigh and cry for all the abominations that are done in the land.

4. That every man, whether saint or sinner, behoves to acknowledge his share in the guilt that has provoked God to lay his chastising hand upon us. Let us not say that it is because of this man or that man's sins—it is because of *our* sins that we are afflicted. Our individual contributions make up the annual revenue arising from the city tax; and every one of us contributes his share in making up that enormous guilt which has awakened the wrath of an offended God, and has recently filled our city with sorrow, and emptied our homes, our families, and pews of many of our most valued friends and fellow-members.

Let us, then, with one heart and one humbled spirit, bemoan ourselves, and confess our own sins and the sins of our families before the Lord our God; and it may be that while the loud cry of peni-

gentle word for sin arises this day from among us, and enters the ear of a prayer-hearing God, that he will in sovereign mercy hear, and stretch forth his hand and spare us, and save us through the merits and mediation of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

FINALLY—We cannot leave the subject, without pressing on your attention an imperative duty which the subject suggests. If “*pure religion and undefiled*” before God, be to visit the widow and the fatherless, in their affliction, then let me appeal to the Christian philanthropists among you, and ask what provision can be made for the wants of those bereaved families, whose mental agonies are this day far too acute to permit their reflecting upon the wants of the body whether immediate or prospective. Within the past few weeks it has been my painful duty to stand by the sepulchre which received the remains of the husband, the wife and the son, while the tears of eight orphan children moistened the earth as the grave-digger threw it in. This is only a solitary case out of many. The widows and the orphans of our congregations have a peculiar claim on our generosity and regard; and next to them, the convalescent and surviving inmates of our hospital. Strangers from a far country—emigrants houseless and homeless—cast upon our shores, many of whom only reached Canadian soil in time to find a place of interment for a father or a mother; these claim our interest and our attention, for we ourselves are pilgrims as our fathers were, and sojourn as strangers in the earth. As Christians—as a Christian community—we are bound by the sacred genius and heavenly spirit of our holy religion, to look out for all such cases of peculiar bereavement and suffering, and provide for their temporal and spiritual wants.

If our blessed Lord and Saviour were to visit our earth—I would say our city—at this moment, where should we find him? Would it not be, as before, talking with the widows in their affliction—healing their sick daughters, and raising their dead sons? If his followers were to return to our earth, would we not find them, like Elijah of old, sojourning under the roof of the widowed mothers, and blessing their barrels of meal and cruses of oil? Would we not find the Son of Man and his faithful followers visiting our lanes and streets, and alms-houses and hospitals, and alleviating the sufferings and allaying the sorrows of the afflicted and the dying? Would we not discover in their conduct at this moment all the marks of what



the Holy Spirit, by James, has described as "pure religion and undefiled before God?"

Now, it is not for me to prescribe at this time, or in this place, any systematic plan of benevolence or Christian generosity. I only advocate the principle, and I am persuaded that the maintenance and practical outworking of the principle may be safely entrusted to you. The food and clothing of many orphans may devolve on this community;—above all, the moral and spiritual training of many is entrusted by the Almighty to us. In such a work, it is hoped that this congregation will not be behind, when the proper time arrives for entering upon it. There will, no doubt, be cases of a special nature presented to you individually, and it is hoped that they will be treated as their merits demand; but as on such occasions the vigilant eye of Romanism will be peering into our hospitals and almshouses, and eagerly seeking the Protestant orphan, with the pretext of administering to his temporal relief, but with the real design of proselytism, be it the honorable, the philanthropic, the Christian duty of every follower of Christ among us to seek out for "his own," and especially those of his household of faith, every case that claims his charity, and provide for it. This is a duty which you owe to such objects on the ground of humanity, on the ground of philanthropy, on the ground of Christianity. But your charity is not to be limited to these objects, though they have a primary claim. You are commanded to do good to all, *especially* to them that are of the household of faith; hence it is that, above and beyond the special or denominational claims which may be urged, there are those of the British and continental emigrant, who, irrespective of creed or country, calls upon you, and who has a claim on your liberality and Christian charity simply because he is a fellow-creature.

In the name, therefore, of Him "who though he was rich yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich," we beseech you to hear the claim of widowhood and orphanage, the claim of poverty and wretchedness, the claim of the pilgrim and the stranger, the claim of the disconsolate and down-hearted emigrant from a far country, who, amid the sorrows of affliction, poverty, and bereavement, remind you that "he that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." Amen.

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# APPENDIX.

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## REQUISITION.

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TO HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR.

*May it Please Your Worship,*

We the undersigned Ministers of the Gospel in this City, in consideration of the existing state of the Public Health, respectfully request your Worship to appoint a day of Fasting and Prayer, inviting the Citizens to suspend secular employments, and in private and public worship, to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, acknowledging this calamity to be from Him, and imploring His mercy in its removal.

We respectfully suggest that next Wednesday, the second day of August, would be a convenient time.

Your Worship's humble Servants,

ROBERT IRVINE, Minister of Knox's Church.

ALFRED BOOKER, of Park Street Baptist Church.

WM. McCURE, Minister New Connection Church.

JOHN HOGG, U. P. Church Minister.

EDWARD EDES, Congregational Minister.

J. GAMBLE GEDDES, Rector of Hamilton.

JOHN HEIDEN, Incumbent, Church of the Ascension.

JAMES ELLIOTT, Wesleyan Minister.

WM. HAW, Wesleyan Minister.

Hamilton, July 28, 1854.

## PROCLAMATION.

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In accordance with the above, I hereby appoint Wednesday, Aug. 2, to be set apart for Public and Private Worship, Fasting and

Prayer, that the Almighty may be pleased in His infinite mercy, to remove from amongst us the scourge with which we are now afflicted.

I, therefore, as Mayor of the City of Hamilton, earnestly request that all business of a secular nature be suspended upon that day; and that the recommendation contained in this Proclamation be religiously observed by all our citizens.

CHARLES MAGILL, Mayor.

Mayor's Office City Hall,  
Hamilton July 29, 1954.

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IN accordance with the above Proclamation, Divine Service was conducted in all the Protestant Churches in the city of Hamilton, on Wednesday, the 2nd of August. Every Store was closed, every Church filled, and the city wore a peculiarly solemn aspect during the day. In the evening, a united concert for prayer was held in Knox's Church. The Church was completely filled, and the devotional services were marked with a peculiar appropriateness and solemnity. The Rev. Mr. McClure, New Connexion Methodist Minister; Rev. Mr. Booker, Baptist Minister; Rev. Mr. Hogg, U. P. Minister; Rev. Mr. Ebbs, Congregationalist Minister; and Rev. R. Irvine, pastor of the Church, joined in the exercises of the evening.

The following obituary is taken from the official returns of the Board of Health:—

		OF CHOLERA.		OTHER CAUSES.	
From July	1 to July 8	- - -	29	- - -	14
"	8 15	- - -	84	- - -	21
"	15 22	- - -	118	- - -	46
"	22 29	- - -	143	- - -	29
"	29 to Aug. 5	- - -	71	- - -	42
Aug. 5	12	- - -	43	- - -	14
Total to this date, - -			488	- - -	166

Prior to the 1st of July, there were several cases of Cholera, and besides several interments not in the city burying grounds, as well as deaths not reported, which may have escaped the notice of the Board of Health, making the actual mortality greater than the above abstract shows.

## ERRATA.

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- Page 9, first line, for *to*, read *from*.  
" 11, line 13, for *endemic* read *epidemic*.  
" 13, line 21, for *them*, read *there*.  
" 16, last line, for *storm*, read *stone*.  
" 19, third line from bottom, for *affecision*, read *affliction*.



