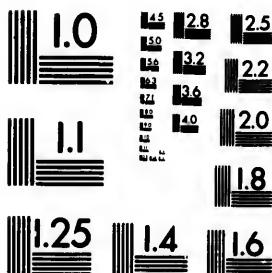
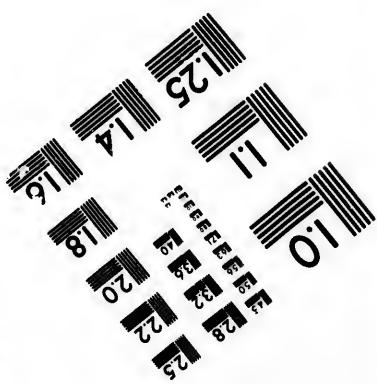


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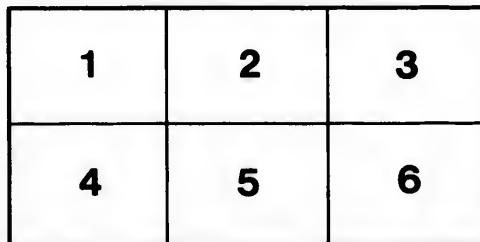
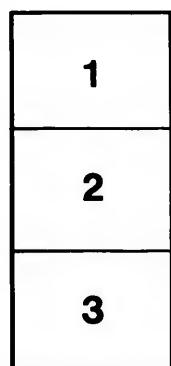
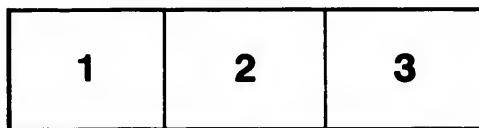
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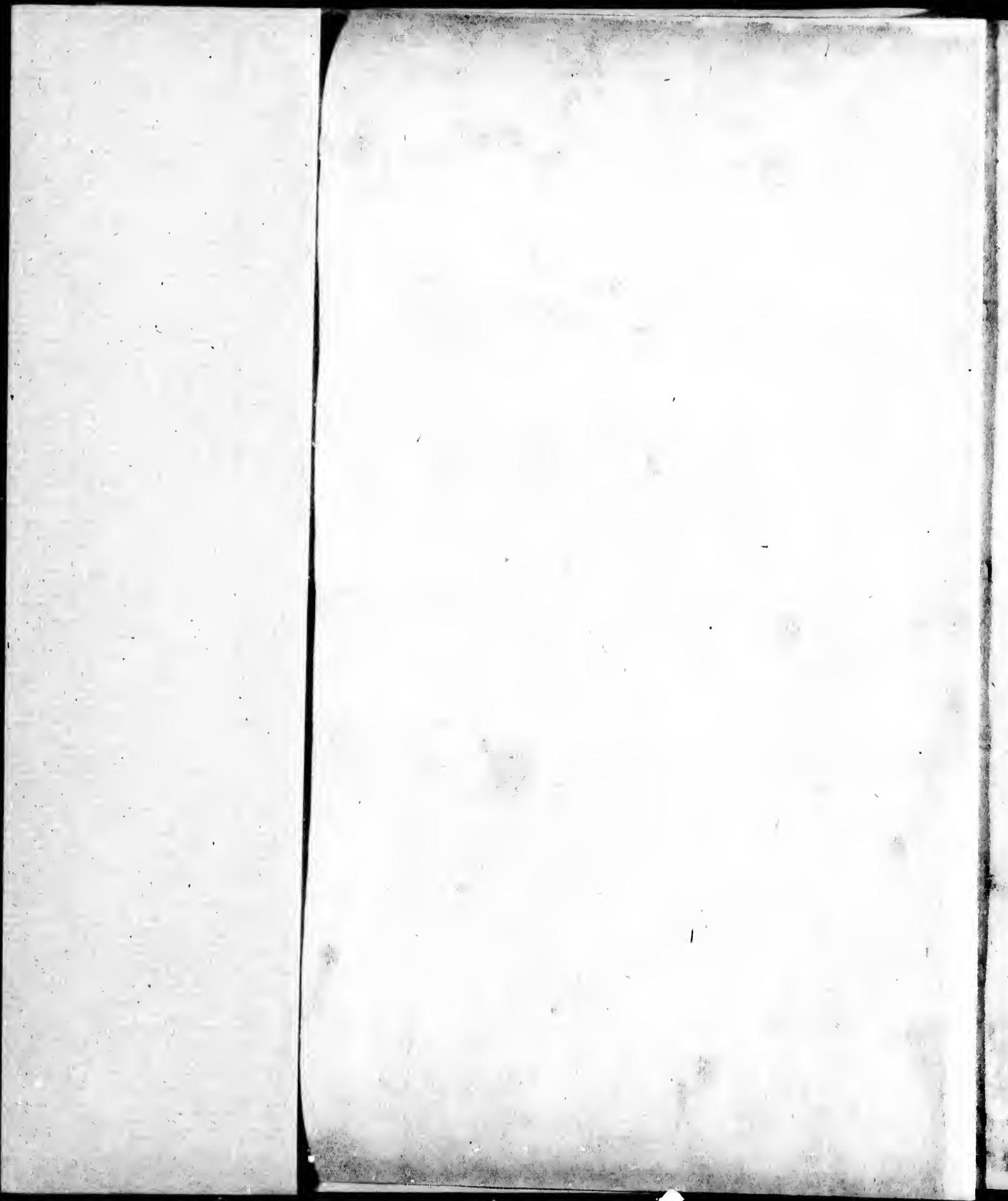
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A
S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE

Parish Church of ST. PAUL at HALIFAX,

On FRIDAY, April 25, 1794 :

Being the day appointed by PROCLAMATION

FOR

A General FAST and HUMILIATION

IN

His Majesty's Province of NOVA-SCOTIA.

BY THE RIGHT REVEREND C H A R L E S,
Bishop of Nova-Scotia.

Published by desire of his Excellency the LIEUTENANT
GOVERNOR, of the Honourable Members of His Majesty's
COUNCIL, and of others.

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THE following Sermon, like most other occasional Sermons, was not intended for publication, when written. It is now printed as it was delivered; with this only difference—that some intire paragraphs, and parts of others, which were omitted in the delivery to avoid being tedious, are inserted in their places; and a few references are flung into the margin.

THE author wishes, in this time of great apostacy, to bear testimony to the truths of heaven, which are the sources of man's consolation and happiness, and call for the warmest gratitude to Almighty God. Nor is he less desirous to guard as far as he can, those who are under his pastoral care, against a horrid system of impiety, and misrule, or rather phrenzy, which is unexampled in malignity and extent; which levels Man with Brutes, extinguishes all human hope and comfort, and would desolate this earth, were it to prevail. It may be considered as one of the severest judgments with which God, in his displeasure, has ever visited the human race.

His sentiments on these points, he has given in the following Sermon. He therefore readily complied with the request of those Gentlemen who signified their desire that it might be published: And to them, it is now most respectfully

INSCRIBED.

HALIFAX, May 1, 1794.

HOSEA VI. 1.

Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.

WHOOVER believes firmly in the existence of God; and that he is possessed of infinite wisdom, justice, holiness and power—whoever believes that this infinitely wise, just, holy and powerful Being presides over the world; that in particular, he regulates and governs the affairs of mankind, ordering them in the manner that is most suitable to the purposes of his wisdom, holiness, and justice:

WHOOVER is a firm believer in these undoubted truths; and under the impression of them, sees, with an awakened, trembling heart, the hand of God stretched out, inflicting heavy judgements—visiting some guilty land with calamities; where perhaps the bands of Society are rent asunder—where war, desolation, famine and blood shed direct their baneful course, giving sure indications of an incensed Providence; and whilst his own country partly feels those calamities, he views them marching with hasty strides, and ready to involve it in all their aggravated horrors, which can only be averted by deep humiliation, repentance and reformation:

SUCH a person, thus impressed with those truths, thus affected by these objects, will naturally adopt the language of my text—“Come,

" let us return unto the Lord ; for he hath torn,
 " and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he
 " will bind us up."

HOSEA was a Prophet of Israel, after the revolt of the Ten Tribes from the King of Judah. The sins of the Israelites had risen to an enormous height. Idolatry, lewdness, murder, pride, and wickedness of every kind prevailed ; and swept almost every trace of piety from among the revolted Israelites ; as we learn from this Prophet, who was an eye-witness.

THE people had rejected the knowledge of God ; and therefore he threatens to reject them. " They were joined to Idols. Whoredom and wine had taken away their heart ;" that is, had deprived them of a right judgment, and perverted their understanding ; insomuch that they quarrelled with the few faithful Priests and Prophets that were left, who admonished them of their duty ; yet listened gladly to the false Prophets who led them astray. They even " asked counsel of their stocks," or idols, in preference to the living God. " The Lord had a controversy with the land ; because there was no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they broke out ;—and therefore the land should mourn, and the Inhabitants languish.†"

THUS.

† See Chapters IV. and V. where these and other heavy charges are brought against Israel and Ephraim.

THUS perverted in principle and practice, we need not wonder that Israel and Ephraim, in the hour of distress, when threatened with hostilities by the surrounding nations, neglected the Almighty, who could effectually protect them; and flew for assistance to an idolatrous power. Accordingly, they applied to the King of Assyria, offering tribute for his protection. But this availed nothing; for the Assyrian betrayed them; and not many years after, one of his successors extinguished the kingdom of Israel.

THE Almighty upbraids them, by Hosea, for thus deserting him, and seeking help in a wrong quarter. " When Ephraim saw his sickness, " that is, perceived his danger and weakness, " then went he to the Assyrian; yet could he " not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. " For I will be unto Ephraim as a lion, and as " a young lion unto the house of Judah. I, " even I, will tear and go away. I will take " away, and none shall rescue. I will go and " return unto my place, till they acknowledge " their offence, and seek my face; in their " affliction, they will seek me early."† Thus the Almighty was to withdraw his protection and favour, and leave them to feel the effects of their iniquity, till their sufferings and afflictions should bring them to a right mind.

GOD having now declared his purpose, the design of his judgements, and the effects which they should produce; the prophet in my text, which immediately

† Hosea V. 13.—15.

immediately follows, points out the conduct that they ought to pursue. He uses the language which they, and all others in similar circumstances, should adopt, in consequence of the Almighty's declaration—" Come, and let us re—" turn unto the Lord ; for he hath torn, and " he will heal us ; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up."

I know no language, My Christian Brethren, no sentiments more suitable to our situation ; or which we should more earnestly adopt and practise, than these. We are torn and smitten by the calamities of war ; and that war with a nation which has wholly cast off the faith and fear of God ; and whose principles, were they to prevail, would destroy all religion and virtue, and banish all order, peace, liberty and happiness, from this earth. We are assembled by public authority, to humble ourselves before the God of heaven ; to deprecate his just displeasure for our manifold transgressions, and abuse of his mercies ; to implore his pardon and protection; and to beseech him that he would be pleased to grant success to the endeavours of our beloved and most exemplary Sovereign for our safety and preservation.

In these circumstances, I appeal to Yourselves, whether We should not return unto the Lord with deep humiliation, with unfeigned repentance, and reformation ? Whether We should not earnestly beseech him to heal our wounds, and bind us up in the bond of peace ; avert those evils

evils with which we are threatened ; and continue to us those blessings, those privileges, civil and religious, which We have hitherto enjoyed ?

This is evidently our duty. To assist You in the discharge of it, permit me to explain more fully the grounds on which the duty rests ; and the particulars in which it consists ; and then to apply my observations to our present state and circumstances. And may God so enable me to speak, and You to hear, on this solemn occasion, that we may derive mutual benefit from it.

I. In the text now before us, we have a full acknowledgment of the Almighty's superintending Providence. From him proceeded the judgments under which the Israelites suffered. He it was that had torn and smitten them with calamities ; and as these calamities proceeded from him, so also the removal of them was to flow from him only. The same hand that had torn and smitten them, was also to heal and bind them up.

This important truth is every where inculcated, in the clearest, strongest manner, throughout the book of God. None is more interesting, none more consolatory, in our passage through this vale of tears. The reflection that this world, and all its concerns, are under the paternal care of a Being, who is infinite in wisdom, goodness, justice and power, chears the drooping mind amidst the disorders that prevail ; and gives a pleasing assurance that those disorders will be over-

over-ruled ; that they will finally terminate in the benefit of the general system, and reflect honour on its divine Ruler.

THE Almighty, being infinitely holy in himself, cannot behold iniquity but with abhorrence. Hence the moral conduct of his creatures must be a peculiar object of his providence. His innate purity leads him to detest sin, his justice to punish it, and thereby stop its progress ; which otherwise, among rational beings and free agents, as we are, might frustrate his purposes. Nor are those attributes less interested in the support of virtue, truth, and righteousness, in which his reign consists, and from which the happiness of his rational creatures must ultimately result.

In all this, his character, as moral governor of the universe, is deeply concerned. For what could be more inconsistent with the character of an infinitely holy God, who is placed at the head of the great intellectual system, the righteous Governor of intelligent beings ; than to suffer those beings to violate his laws, dis honour his government, and destroy his kingdom, without punishing the offenders, without checking their impious career ? His word and works sufficiently declare, that he will not permit such disorders to go unpunished ; nor suffer such a blemish to rest on his administration.

THERE are two methods especially by which
the

the Almighty in this life, punishes iniquity, or checks its progress; and also gives support to virtue. One is the interposition of his providence, of which more hereafter; the other is that wise order or constitution which he hath established in the moral system, and which inseparably connects our duty and happiness together; and the breach of that duty with our misery. The consequence of this unalterable constitution is, that no man ever did, or ever can violate his duty, and persist in that violation, with impunity. And whilst it manifests the Almighty's displeasure against sin, and his watchful care over the interests of virtue; it also luminously displays his wisdom and beneficence, in thus blending our duty, our interest, and happiness together, and making them run in one common channel.

II. But my subject leads me to consider these principles as applied to nations, collective bodies of men, rather than to individuals. To such, my text refers, and to them the present occasion confines me. The righteous government of heaven indeed extends equally to nations, and to individuals that compose them. The only difference between them lies in this—that national transgressions must meet their punishment in this world; whereas the punishment of individuals is generally referred to a future retribution; when the ways of God will be fully justified, and the perplexities of his providence, however dark at present, will be intirely removed. Not that individuals always escape till the day

of judgment ; the punishment of their transgressions very often overtakes them in this life. Intemperance, lust, fraud, cruelty, and irreligion are sure to bring wretchedness, and shame, and disgrace, and anguish in their train : They, and other enormities, frequently become monuments of divine displeasure even in this world ; whilst the fearful expectation of meeting God in severer judgment hereafter, incessantly pursues them.

BUT although some individuals may, for wise reasons, be permitted to escape till the day of general retribution ; yet this neither is, nor can be, the case of nations, collective bodies of men. In this world, and in this only, they can be punished, as such, for their transgressions. And the reason is evident. all those societies and combinations in which men are now united, will be intirely dissolved in a future state. Nations will not then be judged, as nations ; but individuals must answer for their own conduct. The line of rectitude will be applied, the torch of heavenly truth will be held up, to each person's conscience ; and according to their conduct, and the light they enjoyed, as individuals, their fate will be determined.

IT is needless to lose time in proving what all must acknowledge—that an intire period will then be put to the existence of nations, as such ; and therefore the divine procedure with respect to them, is necessarily limited to the present stage of existence. Accordingly, the will and purpose of God concerning them, are thus declared

clared by the Prophet Isaiah—“ The nation and “ kingdom that will not serve thee shall perish ; “ yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted.” Or as the same awful truth is more concisely and strikingly conveyed by the prophet Ezekiel —“ I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and “ it shall be no more.†” Where the triplication of the threat, indicates the undoubted certainty of the event.

It is a common, though very great mistake to suppose that this procedure was confined to the Jews and Israelites—the descendants of Abraham, whom God had chosen for his peculiar people. You need only look into Your Bible, to be convinced of the grossness of this error. Consult the prophecies recorded in the book of God, which extend to every nation with whom his people were connected for a long series of years ; then turn to the history of those nations, and You will find those prophecies exactly verified. From the history it will appear, that every thing took its natural course in those nations, according to human apprehension ; yet under the direction of a steady providence, the purpose of God was carried on ; the prophecies were accomplished by men who were unconscious that they executed the designs of heaven. The history of the Jews, is, in fact, a history of Providence with respect to them ; and the Prophecies contain histories also of the same Divine Providence

dence towards the several heathen nations, which were respectively the subjects of those Prophecies.—A few instances will make this plain.

THE prophet Isaiah was commissioned to denounce judgments against the Jews for their flagrant transgressions ; which judgments were executed by the king of Assyria. “ O Assyrian, “ says the Almighty, the rod of mine anger, “ and the staff in their hand is mine indignation*. I will send him against an hypocritical nation ; and against the people of my wrath will I give him a charge, to take the spoil, and to take the prey ; and to tread them down like the mire of the streets.” The prophet immediately adds—“ Howbeit he, the Assyrian, meaneth not so, neither doth his heart think so ; but it is in his heart to destroy, and cut off nations not a few†.”

THUS whilst the Assyrian was the rod and scourge of God’s anger, the minister of divine Providence to execute its designs, he meant not so ; he was unconscious of it ; but was actuated by ambition, cruelty and pride ; for which he is here reproved ; and when he had performed the work of God on Zion and Jerusalem, he is here threatened with punishment in his turn.

THE destruction of Babylon by the Medes and Persians, under the conduct of Cyrus, was foretold

* Bishop LOWTH translates this better—“ the staff in whose hand is the instrument of mine indignation.” *New Translation of Isaiah.*

† *Isaiah X. 5—7.*

by Isaiah and Jeremiah†; and the enormous crimes of that great and wealthy city, are declared to be the cause of that heavy judgment. Many circumstances of its reduction, are minutely predicted,—“that the waters of its river, the Euphrates, should be dried—that God would break in pieces the gates of brafs, and cut asunder the bars of iron before Cyrus—that a snare should be laid for Babylon, when she was not aware, and she would be caught—that her princes, and other wise men, and her captains and her rulers should be drunk—that they should sleep a perpetual sleep, and not awake.”

SUCH was the prophecy; and we learn from history, that Cyrus turned the course of the Euphrates which ran through the city—that he marched in the night with his army through the channel, now dry—and that he surprized the Inhabitants whilst feasting, and overwhelmed with wine and debauchery‡. Belshazzar was king of Babylon when this disaster happened. He made a feast to a thousand of his Lords. He commanded the sacred vessels which had been taken from the temple of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, to be brought forth; out of these, he and his princes, and wives and concubines were securely quaffing wine, when a hand wrote his doom upon the wall opposite to where he sat; and

† Isaiah XLV and XLVII. Jerem. L and LI.

‡ Herodot. Lib. I. Chap. 191. Edit. Gronov. 1716. Fol.

and when Cyrus entered his capital, and deprived him both of his empire and life†.

AND to give one other instance. The overthrow of the Persian empire by the Greeks, was foretold by the Prophet Daniel. This event was accomplished by Alexander the Great, whom Daniel calls the Prince of Grecia‡. Alexander literally fulfilled the divine prediction ; and therefore was the minister of Providence for this purpose. Yet what were his motives for going to war with Persia ? The avowed design of Alexander's expedition, was to be avenged of the Persians for their invasion of Greece formerly ; and to which he was stimulated by his own boundless ambition, and thirst of empire‡.

I could adduce many similar instances ; but these are sufficient. They shew that God Almighty permits wicked and tyrannical governments to prosper for a time ; that he makes them his scourge, the instruments of his justice upon others. These instances unanswerably prove farther, that the dispensations of God in punishing sin were not confined to the Jews or Israelites ; but extended equally to other nations : That he marks with a jealous eye the moral conduct of mankind ; that offenders will assuredly be punished ; and that his justice will be signalized and honoured

† Daniel V. ‡ Daniel X. 20. See also Chap. XI.

‡ See Plutarch's Life of Alexander, Quintus Curtius, and Diodorus Siculus, Lib. XVI. p. 479, et Lib. XVII. p. 499. Edit. Rhodeman, 1604. Fol.

honoured in the destruction of those whom his mercy could not reclaim.

HENCE, the sword, pestilence, and famine are expressly called the sore judgments of God, to execute his displeasure on guilty nations†. Obedient to the divine command, these rush forth, to chasten and reclaim, if men will return unto the Lord ; or else, to overturn and utterly destroy, if they continue impenitent, and refuse to be reformed. Whenever therefore we see those judgments abroad—diffusing misery, and laying waste the abodes of men—they are certain indications of an incensed Providence. We may be assured the hand of God is there ; whatever the immediate and physical causes are ; or by whatever motives those may be actuated, who are the instruments in inflicting them.

The conduct and sentiments which should be adopted by all who are thus visited, are, as I observed before, mentioned in my text—“Come, “ and let us return unto the Lord ; for he hath “ torn, and he will heal us ; he hath smitten, “ and he will bind us up.”

III. To depart from God is only another expression to signify our offending him, by transgression of his laws, or abuse of his mercies ; and is the real cause of human misery. For if there were no sin, there would be no punishment or suffering. To return to the Lord is the same as to repent of transgression, reform what has been

† Ezek. XIV. 21.

been amiss, and serve the Almighty faithfully. And such is his unbounded mercy, that if men will thus turn to him ; if from a sense of their guilt and ingratitude, and a desire to be at peace with him, they will repent unfeignedly, and reform their ways ; he will receive them. Their transgressions will be blotted out, and forgotten : The arm that was uplifted to punish, will be stayed ; and they will experience the loving kindness of the Lord.

THIS is signified in the verse immediately following my text. Those who, according to the prophet's words, exhorted each other to return to the Lord, and acknowledged he had smitten them for their offences, declare with pious confidence, that if they thus return—“ After two “ days he will revive us ; in the third day he “ will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight ;” that is, if we unfeignedly return to God, he will pardon us. He will dry up our tears, remove our calamities, and restore those blessings which we provoked him to withdraw.†

PERHAPS You are desirous to ask—“ What “ are we to turn from ?” The question is interesting and proper ; and I shall answer it in the words of Ezekiel, which are among the sentences prefixed to our excellent Morning and Evening Service.—“ When the wicked man turneth away “ from his wickedness which he hath commit-
“ ted,

† Hosea VI. 2. In its secondary and spiritual Sense, this verse refers to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. See Dr. Pocock's learned Commentary on the Place.

" ted, and doeth that which is lawful and right ;
" he shall save his soul alive. †"

Thus we are to forsake and turn from those transgressions by which we offended the Almighty ; and Your reason and conscience will tell You, that otherwise we cannot have any claim to his mercy. Without this it would be presumptuous to expect his pardon ; for in that case, his mercy would be a support to iniquity, and would invite to the violation of his laws.

It is then our indispensable duty, to turn from lukewarmness about religion, about the things of God and salvation—a crime, against which he has declared his pointed indignation ; and for which some of the most flourishing Churches have been destroyed. Indifference and inattention to the stupendous love of God in giving us a Saviour—disregard of that holy Saviour, and of the salvation which he purchased with his precious blood—and insensibility to our own ruined state, and want of a Saviour ; must be attended with a very high and complicated degree of guilt and ingratitude. They may be considered as some of our most crying provocations against our Creator and Redeemer ; and perhaps the chief sources of our other offences.

It is our duty to turn from infidelity ; from hardness of heart, and contempt of God's word and commandments ; from neglect or abuse of

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† Ezek. XVIII. 27. + See Rev. III. 14—19.

his sacraments and other ordinances ; from profanation of his Sabbath, that sacred day, which he has expressly commanded to be kept holy ; the due observation of which is one of the principal guards of religion, virtue and order ; as the profanation of it opens a wide door for irreligion and the greatest crimes. We are to turn from pride, vain glory, and hypocrisy ; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness ; from adultery, fornication, and all other deadly sins ; from indulging them in ourselves, or countenancing them in others. We are to turn from all sedition, turbulence, and contempt of order, and legal authority ; and also from all false doctrine, heresy and schism.†

UNDER these, and other iniquities, our land mourns. They abound, and cry to heaven against us. Their guilt is greatly aggravated by the display of evangelic light and truth that shine upon us ; and it is our indispensable duty to turn from each of these ; with fixed abhorrence of the crime, and sincere penitence for committing it.

IF we cast our eyes over this land, we see the strangest inconsistencies, and other deplorable effects, arising from the irregularities that have been mentioned. With gross ignorance and neglect of religion, we find presumptuous claims to

† See our most excellent *Litany*, where most of the above particulars are enumerated ; and from each of which, we pray the Almighty to deliver us.

to divine inspiration—to commissions from heaven to violate its own institutions.. In the midst of thoughtless profusion, we hear loud complaints of indigence and poverty. Drunkenness, that vice so ruinous to soul and body, greatly prevails, especially among the lower classes. It is a pestilence that walketh in darkness ; a destruction that waiteth at noon day†. It is justly and loudly complained of ; yet no effectual step is taken to check it, which might easily be done. With sloth and indolence, we find a disregard of moral rectitude, and a disposition to overreach and defraud ; in order to make up for that honest industry and frugal œconomy, which would fully supply all reasonable and necessary wants. And we also find a strong propensity to defame and speak evil of our neighbours, which is a sure mark of an unchristian temper ; and to intermeddle in the affairs of other people, to the neglect and injury of our own.

It is really painful to dwell on such matters ; and nothing but a sense of duty, and a hope that it may be of some service, could conquer my reluctance to enlarge on them. But “ necessity ” is laid upon us ; yea, woe be unto us, if we “ preach not the Gospel ; and declare all the “ counsel of God.” We are commanded to “ cry aloud, and spare not ; to shew the people “ of God their transgressions and sins ; for if

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“ any

† Psalm XCI.
+ Isaiah LVIII.

+ I Corinph. IX. 16. Ads XX. 27.

" any perish through want of warning on
 " our part, their blood will surely be required
 " at our hands†" It is not I, but the Son of
 God who assures You, " Except ye repent, ye
 " shall all perish.||" And should not those par-
 ticulars, to which that repentance must extend,
 be explicitly mentioned, and brought to remem-
 brance for the purpose ?

My wish is to assist You in a necessary part of Your duty, which, I trust, You are heartily disposed to discharge. Even with that assistance, and after Your own examination, many things, which are known to God and highly offensive to him, will escape Your notice ; for who can tell how oft he offendeth ?—Not only, therefore, from those offences now enumerated, but also from all others which a diligent scrutiny may bring to our knowledge, and from whatever else is inconsistent with the Christian character ; We should return to the Lord ; lamenting our past transgressions, and firmly resolving, through his grace, to live in future as becomes the Gospel. From a prayerless and insensible state, we should turn to God with affectionate zeal, and gratitude for his unspeakable mercies. " Count-
 " ing all things, with St. Paul, but loss, for
 " the excellency of the knowledge of Christ
 " Jesus our Lord ; for whom we should be
 " willing to suffer the loss of all things else ;
 " and count them but dung, that we may win
 " Christ†"

‡ Ezek. XXXIII. 8. || Luke XIII. 5.

" Christ+"—obtain an interest in him, and the blessings which he hath purchased. " And having escaped the corruption which is in the world through lust, we should give all diligence to add to our faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowlege; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity. For if these things be in us and a bound, they will make us that we shall neither be barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ."‡

SUCH then are the grounds and nature of the Duties required of us, according to the spirit of my text, on this occasion. Give me leave now to apply these observations and truths to our present state and circumstances.

IV. PUBLIC humiliation, and earnest supplication to God, with fasting and repentance, in time of general calamity and danger, are duties enjoined by divine authority. They are very proper and right in themselves; and appear to be dictated even by natural light and reason; for Heathens, as well as Jews and Christians, have uniformly had recourse to them in such circumstances. Nor have they been disappointed in their hopes of relief. The merciful parent of the universe aims at the benefit of his creatures. He punishes only to reclaim; and when offend-

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+ Philip. III. 8. 9. ‡ II Peter I. 4—8.

ing mortals are sensible of their transgressions--when they turn to him with unfeigned repentance and reformation ; that is, when they are fit subjects of mercy, he rejoices to extend that mercy towards them. His destroying angel is recalled ; his judgments are arrested ; and the light of joy and consolation visits the abodes of sorrow and affliction.

Thus in the case of Nineveh--to pass over the other numerous instances that occur--when the prophet Jonah announced the approaching judgments of God in this concise, but alarming sentence--“ Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be “ overthrown ;” We read, “ that the people of “ Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast. “ —And the king of Nineveh rose from his “ throne, and laid his robe from him, and co-“ vered him with sackcloth and sat in ashes. “ And he caused it to be proclaimed and pub-“ lished through Nineveh, by the decree of the “ king and his nobles ; saying, let neither man, “ nor beast, herd nor flock, taste any thing ; “ let them not feed, nor drink water. Let “ men cry mightily unto God; yea, let them “ turn every one from his evil way, and “ from the violence that is in their hands. “ Who can tell if—God turn away from his “ fierce anger, and we perish not.† ?” The consequence of this unfeigned humiliation and repentance, was—that the Almighty suspended his threatened judgments, and Nineveh was spared.

THERE

† Jonah III. 4—10.

THERE never was a time in our memory, and few are recorded in history, when it was more necessary to call upon God, and implore his pardon and interposition, than the present. Or when it was more expedient for those who profess themselves Christians to stand forth, and acknowledge their dependence on the living and true God—confess their transgressions of his righteous laws—turn from those transgressions—implore his pardon, protection, and preservation from that impious phrenzy which is gone forth ; and from the dreadful evils it has inflicted, and still continues to inflict.

WE are engaged in a war which is singular in almost all its circumstances. It is not a war of ambition, or avarice, or conquest, on our part. It was not begun with the design of extending commerce, enlarging territory, or subjugating foreign countries. On the contrary ; it is a war of pressing necessity, and self preservation ; to defend our holy religion and civil constitution from subversion ; for no less than the total subversion of both was avowedly aimed at by the ferocious innovators with whom we are at war. Every thing, in short, that is dear, or estimable among mankind, or that is worth a struggle, was, and is at stake. For it is a contest in the cause of humanity against violence and blood—of order and government against anarchy and confusion—of right and justice against lawless rapacity—of real liberty against oppression and tyranny—of truth against falsehood—and of God against the most audacious Atheism.

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THE state of France at the present day, is an occurrence wholly new in the annals of the human race. The history of mankind, in its extensive range, furnishes no instance that is parallel; no instance of so general a phrenzy seizing a populous and polished nation; a phrenzy that is not confined to any particular description, but diffused through all ranks and orders of people. The high and the low, the peer and peasant, the learned and the ignorant, are equally stimulated to the perpetration of the most atrocious crimes; delighting in slaughter and unbridled cruelty; sporting with the lives and property of mankind; destroying all religion and subordination; openly avowing atheism; and sinking into a total depravation of principles and manners!

Whilst we cannot but lament the desolation occasioned by those assassins; and humanity weeps over the victims of their relentless fury; we stand aghast with horror at so awful a spectacle! We see that a nation is no more exempted from madness and phrenzy than an individual! We are alarmed, we are roused; and that justly. For should it please God in his justice, and for the punishment of our offences, to suffer a like spirit of infatuation and phrenzy to seize upon us; or to permit those who are already seized with it, to prevail: Judge I beseech you, what deplorable effects must follow! Who but must tremble at the consequences!

What would ye do, O ye that are now at ease,
reclining

reclining in the shade of peace and security, were bands of ruthless, ferocious ruffians let loose to massacre and destroy ? In such a day of visitation, where could you seek for safety or shelter ?† When your houses would be laid in ruins, and your streets made a place of graves ? When your towns, and once happy settlements would become solitary ; and no voice heard in them, but the lamentations of the disconsolate, and the groans of the dying ? When your parents would be slaughtered in one place ; your wives and children in another ; and your bosomfriends in a third ? When each field was a field of blood ; and the slain would lie behind the slayer, as sheaves behind the reaper in the time of harvest ?‡

There and many other calamities—more indeed than my time or feelings would permit me to relate—are actually experienced at this day, and become familiar in France ; and how earnestly should we return unto the Lord, and implore his pardon and protection, that those evils may not overtake us ! For these are the natural and necessary consequences of the levelling, atheistic principles which are adopted in that miserable country ; and they will infallibly produce the very same effects in any other country where they are admitted.

But perhaps You are ready to reply—“ We have not cast off the knowledge and fear of God. We profess our belief in him ; we de-

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test

† Isaiah X. 3.

‡ Jerem. IX. 22.

" test atheism ; and therefore those evils need
" not be apprehended."

It is true ; and I heartily bless our gracious God for it ; we have not arrived to such a pitch of iniquity as to renounce his name. And I trust his mercy will not abandon us, nor give us up so far to delusion, as to reach this last stage in the career of folly and incorrigible wickedness — " to say in our own heart there is no God." It is a state of impiety and brutishness, of which very few heathens were capable. It is a state, of which even devils seem to be incapable ; for they believe and tremble.†

But it is proper, as well as interesting to observe, that France arrived by gradual, progressive steps at this extreme of impiety ; and that the same steps, if pursued, will surely lead any other people to the like dreadful extreme. The explosion indeed was sudden, which spread general ruin ; but the train had been laid, and the materials prepared several years before, which produced that explosion.

WHAT these were, in the line of policy, I shall not stay to inquire, though they might be easily traced ; and shall only advert very briefly to the actual state of things among them, with respect to religion, at the time of their revolution, and for some years before it. The vicinity of our parent state to that kingdom, and our constant

† James II. 19.

constant intercourse with it, made us well acquainted—indeed too well acquainted—with the principles, manners, and political conduct of the French.

Now, it is certain fact that at the period alluded to, and for many years preceding, Religion had not only lost its influence among the higher ranks of that people; but was treated with derision, contempt and scorn. Not satisfied with rejecting Divine Revelation, or even with the profession of Deism, which acknowledged a supreme Being; they went farther, as was natural, after this first fatal step. For as they did not like to retain the Revealed truths of God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.† Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools; and adopted the dismal reveries of *Materialism*; that is, rank Atheism: By which all restraint was removed from sensuality and vice; as the existence of a Deity, and of a future state, was exploded.

The consequences were exactly such as might be expected. Not only Religion, but all Morals were disregarded and despised, when they came in competition with the Fashion ; and the Fashion authorized the gratification of every appetite, that vanity or pleasure, that ambition, pride or revenge, that voluptuousness, sensuality, and lasciviousness, had to be gratified. Among other

D 2 things,

[†] Rom. i. 28. Where, from verse 19 to the end of that Chapter, the reader will find a character admirably adapted to the French reformers on principles of levelling Atheism.

things, Sunday was the principal day for intrigue, card-playing, and gambling of every kind. And all this was carried on under an exterior of politeness, a conciliating affability and address; which only served to disguise the poison, render it more palatable, and make its operation more baneful, certain and extensive.

THE bad example of those who, either by birth, station, or opulence, are elevated above the mass of mankind, is always attended with pernicious effects. For such is the weakness, or folly, or unprincipled cast of many, that they will glory in following the steps of their superiors, however criminal; and think themselves warranted by their example, in any extravagance or irregularity! But how absurd it is to suppose that any example, however exalted the person, can justify a violation of the laws of heaven; or a deviation from those rules on which the welfare of Society depends!

FROM the Capital, where all the great and poulent resorted, (and is at present the prolific source and fountain of iniquity and misrule) the infection was gradually diffused through the whole nation. Among the lower classes, the forms of Religion were indeed preserved; but, alas, they were *mere* forms. They consisted chiefly in pompous processions, in showy exhibitions, in crossings; in sprinkling with holy water, and in attention to departed saints, both male and female. After hearing Mass in a language, of which scarcely one in an hundred understood a syllable; Sunday was spent in dancing, merriment

riment and pleasure. The spirit of Religion was vanished ; and these methods were ill calculated to restore it ; or to convey any solid instructions to the mind, and fortify it with rational principles of Religion and truth against the inroads of impiety. And this circumstance accounts for the general and sudden depravation of that people ; and for the astonishing rapidity with which the torrent of atheism has borne down every thing before it. For the evil spirit of infidelity, finding their minds empty, swept, and devoid of right principles ; and associating with it other malignant spirits : Entered in, and took possession ; so that the last state of that wretched people was far worse than the first ; and they were ripe for any mischief.†

THESE circumstances are mentioned because they afford an instructive lesson to us—that we must avoid their principles and conduct, if we would avoid their miseries. The warning voice from heaven concerning mystical Babylon, may be fitly applied to us, with respect to the practices of that unhappy nation—“ Come out of her, my “ people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, “ and that ye receive not of her plagues.”‡ To imitate, or be connected with, such monsters, is disgrace and ruin. For however these sons of folly and impiety may prevail, and insult the most High for a time ; however they may rage, and take counsel together against the Lord and his Anointed, the Saviour of a lost world : Yet

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+ Matth. XII. 44, 45. ‡ Revel. XVIII. 4.

he that sitteth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, and have them in derision. They are only a scourge in his hand; and when they have answered the purposes of his Providence, and have filled up the measure of their iniquity, he will, as in all similar cases formerly, break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.†

To a serious, reflecting mind, the aspect of the present times appears to be big with events that are momentous and alarming—like a dark and gloomy cloud, overspreading the face of heaven, full charged with materials of ruin, and ready to burst with destructive violence. The prophecies contained in the book of God, which will assuredly be fulfilled in due time, authorise us to expect the most awful calamities in the latter times. The commissioned Angels stand ready with *Vials of wrath*; which vials are to be poured upon the earth, previous to that glorious period, when “the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ.”‡

How far the unexampled enormities in France, and the general commotions occasioned by them, may be connected with those fearful events; whether they are a part of them; or only a prelude to them, and intended to usher them in: Is only known to that God, whose eye equally surveys the past, the present, and the future; who

† Psalm II. ‡ Revel. XI. 15. See also the XV and XVI. Chapters of the same book.

who will certainly execute his purposes in the manner and at the times, which his wisdom and councils have determined.

LEAVING these things to him who is omniscient and almighty; we know enough, and there is sufficient cause, to rouse us from spiritual sloth and slumber; and to awaken us to a lively sense of our duty and danger. The judgments of God are actually abroad. They are hastening towards us, and will unquestionably overtake us, unless averted by deep humiliation, by unfeigned repentance, and reformation. If we neglect that duty which we owe to the Almighty; if we disregard and condemn his worship and ordinances, and persist in the violation of his righteous laws: We then countenance his avowed enemies; we practically associate with them; and are preparing the way to introduce all their detestable and destructive principles. We equally with them bid defiance to God; and provoke that wrath, which fills heaven with awe, and hell with terror; and which ever has, and ever will consume the enemies of the living God.

It remains therefore that we adopt, and put in practice the devout sentiments of my text—
 “ Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for
 “ he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten,
 “ ten, and he will bind us up.” And oh! that I could prevail on each person in this audience, to set about the painful, but absolutely necessary duty of self-examination; and an application of the truths which we have been considering, to his own state and conscience. For our spiritual wounds,

wounds, like other wounds, must be searched and probed, before they can be healed or bound up. Let us not presume to trifle with God at this awful crisis; nor act a deceitful part towards ourselves. If we would effectually put a stop to the rising wrath of heaven, we must enter deeply into our own hearts; and with the lamp of divine truth to enlighten and guide us, explore each dark recess, where sin, that enemy of God and of our peace, may be lurking.

I take it for granted, that according to the design of this solemnity, you have abstained from bodily food. But this is by no means sufficient. The cattle of Nineveh were subjected to such a restraint. In that fast which is acceptable to God, abstinence from food must be accompanied with deep humiliation, with unfeigned contrition for our offences, and with actual reformation of those offences. The bands of wickedness must be unloosed, our bread dealt out to the hungry, and the naked covered. It is then only that God will hear and answer our prayers. It is then only that our light and deliverance will break forth as the morning, +

THE voice of God, speaking in holy Scripture, hath long called us to the practice of these and other Christian duties; but we have not hearkened. He now calls on us by the louder voice of his judgments, to turn to him, that iniquity may not be your ruin. Let us not be more faithless
and

+ Isaiah LVIII.

and hardened than the Heathens of Nineveh ; but listen to this warning voice, which may be the last call to repentance and deliverance. Let us not disappoint its gracious purpose. Instead of looking abroad, and fitting in judgment on our neighbours ; let each person look into himself, and strictly examine his own heart. All have contributed to provoke the Almighty ; all should therefore humble themselves before him, and implore his pardoning mercy.

LET not a false shame prevent us from confessing our manifold transgressions to that God, before whom they are naked and open, with all their aggravating circumstances. In vain would we try to hide them from his piercing eye ; we should rather acknowledge and bewail them. Let not self-love draw a deceitful veil over our offences ; nor induce us to suppose, that because we think lightly of them, God will do the same. Let not self indulgence plead for sins of habit ; nor make us imagine, because custom has reconciled them to us, that they can also be reconciled to infinite purity. Though dear as a right hand, they must be cut off—though dear as a right eye, they must be plucked out, and cast from us.

FINALLY. Let our humiliation, repentance, and reformation be such as will not require to be repented of ; nor add to the number of our transgressions. And carry this interesting truth with You—that every duty and virtue which You faithfully practice, and each sin You truly

E repent

repent of, will be thrown into that scale which weighs for the preservation and prosperity of Your country ; and that every vice You indulge, every act of disregard and insult to the Author of Your being, and to that holy religion, which he has mercifully given to crown You with salvation, will help to turn the ballance against us.*

FOR the love of God, therefore, and of his Christ—for the love of Your own soul, and of Your country, lay these things seriously to heart. Improve this occasion. Fly to the Almighty, with a prostrate, penitent heart, for pardon, grace and protection.—And may the God of heaven and earth assist you in this Your bounden duty and service. May our prayers be heard; and may we have reason to rejoice, and to bless God for temporal as well as for spiritual salvation.

GRANT this, most merciful Father, for the sake and merit of thy only Son, Jesus Christ; to whom, with Thee, and Holy Ghost, Three Persons, but One eternal God, be ascribed, as is most justly due, all glory, praise, might, and dominion, henceforth for evermore.

AMEN.

* I have somewhere met with a sentiment similar to that which is expressed in the latter part of this sentence; but my memory does not enable me to point out the place, and refer to it.

A P P E N D I X.

AFTER this Sermon had been prepared for the Press, the Printing of it was unavoidably delayed some days. During this interval, His Royal Highness Prince Edward, after a Campaign that was signalized by the most vigorous exertions of the Army and Navy in the West-Indies, and by the happiest success, arrived at Halifax, covered with victory and honour. The Inhabitants expressed the sincere joy they felt on the occasion, as well as their Loyalty to our Sovereign, in several Addresses to His Royal Highness. Among others, the following Address was presented by the Bishop and Clergy of Nova-Scotia; and it has been judged proper, since the above delay has afforded an opportunity, to insert it here, with the kind and condescending Answer returned by the Prince.

To His Royal Highness Prince E D W A R D,
Fourth Son of our august Sovereign, King GEORGE III.
Knight of the most Noble Order of the Garter, and of the
most Illustrious Order of St. Patrick, Major General of His
Majesty's Forces, &c. &c. &c.

MAY IT PLEASE YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS,

THE Bishop and Clergy of Nova-Scotia beg leave to approach Your Royal Highness with sincere and respectful congratulations on Your arrival in this Province.

YOUR progress, SIR, to this part of His Majesty's American dominions, has been strongly marked by a variety of hazards. Whilst we admired that heroic ardour and intrepidity which, at the call of duty and honour, led You to spurn every danger, from fatigue through inhospitable wilds, from the extremes of climate, from avowed enemies, and from others who were secretly hostile; we were greatly agitated, and felt the utmost anxiety for Your safety. Like the celebrated Roman, who is equally memorable for the number of his victories, and for the celerity of his military movements, You flew to the embattled hosts of Your enemies—like him, “ You came, You saw “ them, You conquered.”

We bless that gracious Providence which preserved You in the midst of numberless perils; and hath crowned His Majesty's Arms in the West-Indies with such brilliant success, in which

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DIX.

which Your Royal Highness bore a most conspicuous and distinguished part*.

Could any thing farther endear to us a Sovereign, who unites in His Person a bright assemblage of Princely and Christian virtues, and reigns already in the hearts and affections of His subjects, it would be the reflection, that so many of His Royal Offspring, despising the blandishments of ease and pleasure, to which their Rank invites them, are amongst the foremost in every hazardous enterprise, and to brave all dangers, in the cause of humanity and real liberty; and in defence of our invaluable Civil Constitution and most holy Religion. We consider it as an instance of Divine goodness, which claims our warmest gratitude, that so exemplary a Monarch should fill the British throne at this trying and eventful period, when a spirit of anarchy is gone abroad; and when, in consequence of it, eminent virtue, and a strict attention to the duties of Religion, are peculiarly necessary in all; especially in all who bear rule, or who are elevated, by their birth or station, above the mass of mankind. Providence has raised Him to refute, by His example, the malignant calumnies of atheistic Levellers against Monarchy and regular government; and to rescue His own dominions, perhaps the world, from the dreadful effects of their principles, which are calculated to extinguish all religion and virtue, and to banish order, peace and happiness entirely from the earth.

MAY

* His Royal Highness set out from Quebec, January 22d 1794, when the ground was covered with snow to the depth of five feet, and arrived at Boston on the 6th of February—the distance about 600 miles, three fourths of which is an unoccupied wilderness.

The Commodore on the Halifax Station, happening at this time to be out on a cruise, the Prince was disappointed of a Frigate; but being determined to join the army in the West-Indies before their intended Service commenced, His Royal Highness embarked at Boston, February 15th on board the Roebuck Packet, carrying only six guns; running the greatest hazard of being taken by the French cruisers, of which there were then several on the American coast. He was chased and fired at by a vessel, unknown; but had the good fortune to arrive safe at Martinique on the 3d of March.

Immediately on his arrival before Martinique, the Prince was invested with the command of above a third part of the British Army, together with a thousand seamen, encamped at La Coste. In three days after his arrival, the first Batteries were opened against Fort Bourbon; and during the siege, which lasted 14 days, his Royal Highness, contributed

MAY that Almighty Being, by whom Kings reign, and Princes decree justice, long, very long preserve our most amiable and beloved Sovereign, an ornament and a blessing to His subjects. May His Royal Progeny, stimulated by the example of their illustrious parents, tread in Their steps, and transcribe into their own lives the shining virtues that are daily displayed before them, and thereby become the admiration and delight of mankind. And may the British arms, which have already derived lustre from the exertions of Your Royal Highness, continue, under Your Leading and Talents, to triumph over the foes of freedom, order, and religion; securing to the Sovereign, the stability of His Throne; and to His Subjects, the inestimable blessings conferred by our Constitution, which far surpass those that are enjoyed, at this day, by any other people.

THESE, SIR, are our unfeigned sentiments and wishes. We think ourselves happy in this opportunity of testifying them to Your Royal Highness; and of assuring You that we are, with the profoundest respect and veneration,

SIR,
Your Royal Highness's
Most devoted,
and most obedient,
humble servant,
CHARLES NOVA-SCOTIA.

(Signed by the Bishop in behalf of himself and of the Clergy.)

HALIFAX, May 26, 1794.

To

tributed greatly towards the surrender of the place, by being constantly present, and giving orders for the construction of eight batteries, immediately under his command.

After the surrender of Martinique, His Royal Highness embarked on board the Quebec Frigate, with the command of the Brigade of Grenadiers and some Seamen, for the purpose of reducing the Island of St. Lucia; which, through the most spirited and vigorous exertions, was effected by the troops under His command, together with the Brigade of Light Infantry and Seamen, commanded by Major-General Dundas, who was a junior officer to the Prince. His Royal Highness returned with the Troops to Martinique to get a few days of rest; after which he again embarked on board the Veteran, of 64 guns; and with the same Troops, strengthened by the 39th Regiment, for the reduction of Guadaloupe—this was effected by rapid movements, and the use of the Bayonet, in about 12 days; no Cannon being employed, except by the enemy. The

To which His Royal Highness was pleased to return the following ANSWER.

I FEEL particularly flattered by the pleasure which my arrival in this Province seems to give You.

It is with the truest satisfaction that I perceive the interest You have taken in the success of His Majesty's Arms in the West Indies, and in my own Personal Conduct on that occasion.

THESE assurances claim from me the warmest acknowledgments.

PERMIT me to join with You in fervent Prayers to the Almighty Disposer of all things, that he may bestow on His Majesty a long and happy life; that His Subjects may have the happiness of long admiring His example, while His Family have that of profiting by His virtues.

I sincerely hope that Your kind wishes in my favour may be realized, when at a future period I may be employed in the active Service of my Country; and You may rest persuaded that I shall ever retain the most lively sense of Your assurances of Attachment to the Person of His Majesty, and the British Constitution.

Before I conclude, I must again return my best acknowledgments for those sentiments of interest in my favour which You have so kindly and particularly expressed in this day's Address:

The reduction of the above Islands, was, by the Commander in Chief's orders, the finishing of the Campaign; His Royal Highness, agreeably to those orders, which he had received from Lord Amherst, embarked on board the Blanche Frigate, April 30th, for the purpose of returning to America, and arrived at Halifax, May 10th.

The observation of a sensible man, and an eye witness of the transactions in the West-Indies, should not be here omitted—"The presence " of Prince Edward excited the most pleasing sensations in the Navy " and army. The unceasing vigilance with which his Royal Highness " superintended every approach of the enemy, the prodigious exposure " of his person on the most trying occasions, and sharing equally " with the soldiers in all hardships; while it excited admiration, ex- " cited also an increased emulation, and materially contributed to the " happy issue of their short, but brilliant Campaign."

On this brief detail, which must afford pleasure to every loyal and generous mind, it may not be improper just to observe—that there are few instances, if any, on record, of such rapid movements as those of this gallant and amiable young Prince; and these diversified by so many trials, and attended with such extraordinary success.

