

JUDGMENT AND MERCY.

A SERMON,

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DELIVERED IN THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
BOROUGH OF CARLISLE, ON THE DAY OF

“**HUMILIATION, THANKSGIVING, AND
PRAYER,**”

RECOMMENDED BY THE SYNOD OF PHILADELPHIA AND
THE GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA;

Dec. 9th, 1819.

BEING AN INQUIRY INTO THE IMMEDIATE, AND THE
PROBABLE ULTIMATE DESIGN OF THE PRE-
SENT AFFLICTIVE DISPENSATIONS OF
DIVINE PROVIDENCE TOWARDS THE
PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES.



Thou wast a God that forgavest them though thou tookest
vengeance of their inventions.—Psalm 99, 8.

By **GEO. DUFFIELD,**
MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL, CARLISLE.

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3-31-32 d. w. d.

JUDGMENT AND MERCY.

Jer. xiv. 19. Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? We looked for peace, and there is no good; and for the time of healing, and behold trouble!

The peculiar judgments of God have been abroad in our land for about six and twenty years past. When He began in a signal manner to pour out His wrath upon the nations of Europe, the American people also were made to suffer, although it was but partially.

A door was then thrown open through which the latter were invited, and a path presented along which they hastened to great national prosperity. They culled their fair flowers from every country and from every clime, and like the industrious bee rolled and gathered their store in full expanded blossoms just ready to fade. But, like the same busy and incautious insect, they saw not their danger, nor were conscious, that under their rapid wings, they carried home to their cells, the hidden embryos that, nourished by their genial warmth, should speedily render them vermiculous, if not ruin their fair labours. Wealth, luxury, and all their attendant vices; corrupt principles and habits, adopted and formed abroad, and emulation, extravagance, and pride, in acting upon them, or yielding to their influence, at home, soon tarnished the glory, and turned the tide of our national prosperity. Scarcely had they begun to accumulate, before the warning voice of God was heard, and seasonable checks were furnished, to prevent the too rapid increase of riches. While our merchants, intent upon the acquisition of wealth, had forgotten every other object, or made it subordinate; and while it was considered almost criminal, to hesitate,

or delay, in increasing the fleet that had already begun to whiten every sea, and in thus replenishing the coffers of our government, our principal cities, the scenes of both daily and nightly industry, and where the efforts of a whole country were concentrated in the labour to be rich, were visited by the *pestilence that walketh in darkness, and the destruction that wasteth at noon day.* Psalm 91. 6. Thousands fell on every side, and for a season, an awful pause occurred. Along the lanes, and streets, where nought had been heard but the noise of hundred hammers, greater far than Vulcan's, employed in constructing new fleets; and the roar of carts and waggons, transporting the produce of every climate; and the laborious cry of those engaged in pouring forth additional stores from deeply laden vessels, all was still as death, save only as that stillness was interrupted by the rumbling of the hearse, that conveyed another, and another, and another, in quick succession, to the tomb. But the rod had scarcely ceased to smart, ere they forgot its pain. The judgment was no sooner withdrawn, than they rushed with redoubled eagerness, to their former work. The temples of their idol mammon, that had been suddenly emptied, were as speedily filled, with others loud and lavish in their Hosannas to his praise. Their zeal in his worship was enkindled, and increased, in contemplating the numbers that had disappeared from his temples. New votaries rose to take their place, and every vestige of the scourge was soon lost, save only the *mourning weeds* that filled the house of God.

These judgments were repeated; but with little effect. *They did not learn righteousness.* Others were added, but with still less. At last, the door to wealth, through which such crowds had entered,

was shut, and obstructions EVERY WHERE *were* thrown in their path. Accustomed to labour, these only made them put forth still greater energies, and some forced an entry, and pressed forward to wealth, in despite of all obstacles. Demands were made upon their ingenuity, and cunning, to surmount them. These demands were heard and answered, and too frequently attended with success. Laborious industry had been cramped in its energies.— A spirit of speculation, was therefore made its substitute : and if the former had attracted admiration, the latter, for a season, induced astonishment. The prayer of Midas* was answered to many, and every thing they touched was converted into gold. The magic influence spread like the lightning of Heaven. The shock was felt through the whole community. All became averse to labour, and all were *hasting to be rich.*† Fortune had given men wings, and they resolved to soar, and reach, as with an eagle's flight, the pinnacle of wealth. *Facilities to speed their flight were rapidly created and extensively employed.*

But the judgments of God again descended, and disappointed their expectations. These judgments followed in rapid succession, and in various forms, until, at last, the nation was involved in War, the most terrible of all ; and that war was prosecuted, until the government was on the very verge of bankruptcy. For a season men felt the pressure of the wrath of Heaven. Fasts were proclaimed, and many began to seek and turn unto the Lord. A nations hopes, and ardent expecta-

* Effice quicquid
Corpore contigero, fulvum vertatur in Aurum.

Ovid.

† Proverbs 28. 22.

tions, were directed to the arrival of peace—peace the balm of Heaven to heal a people's wounds. For this they prayed : for this they waited, fondly indulging the hope, that former halcyon days would by it be restored. Peace came : and, like an electric shock, joy thrilled through every nerve, and braced a nations hopes. The moment of gladness had arrived. Former sorrows were forgotten, and again men began to vie with each other in their pursuit of wealth. But ah ! the path how changed ! the genius of discord had strewed, her thorns, and implements of woe, along the way, where once, the votaries of mammon had gambolled in prosperity. Soon, soon did they find, that all their plans, and boasted schemes of speedy wealth, were but the mere illusive visions of a distempered mind. The good for which they had prayed, and for which they had so eagerly desired, —peace the offspring of Heaven, only came to increase their toil and pain. Their luxuriant hopes had been forced into rapid growth, and had reached the maximum of their vigour ; but must as quickly fade, and disappear. The vital principle had been exhausted by the effort. For a moment it appeared to yield to an attempt to revive it. The plant was removed to a more genial soil, and a National Bank, it was confidently predicted, would prove the hot bed of a nations prosperity. The remedy increased and quickened the progress of disease. Soon the vigour of hope droops, and dies, and leaves despondency at its root, to flourish in its decay. Disappointed expectation suddenly recoils, and, as with a serpents envenomed stroke, aims a deadly blow against ambitious haste for wealth. The pang is felt to the very heart, and in the moment of vexation and chagrin the desponding, yea, despairing cry is heard.

Why hast thou smitten us, and there is no healing for us? we looked for peace and there is no good; and for the time of healing and behold trouble!

These words are part of the earnest intercessions of the patriot Jeremiah for his country, at a period, when she was adding to her iniquity, although suffering much severe affliction. He had been forbidden to pray for her, not absolutely, but from many, and great discouragements, through which God had frowned upon, both prophet and people. But notwithstanding all, he persisted in his resolution to pray for his backsliding country. In this example we behold both a *duty* demanded from us, and a *privilege* afforded, on the present occasion. We are also furnished with a *specimen of the manner*, in which the duty should be performed, and the privilege improved. It is, in earnestly interceding, to enquire of the Lord, *why he hath smitten us*. Our attention therefore should be directed to "the immediate, and probably, ultimate design, of the present dispensations of divine providence towards us as a people. The contemplation of the former will have a tendency to humble us, and therefore is suited to a day of "*Humiliation and prayer*". The contemplation of the latter will have a tendency to make us rejoice, and therefore is suited to a day of "*Thanksgiving*."

As to the immediate cause of our present affliction, it is to be found in ourselves, both as to that which provokes it, and as to that which gives it all its pain. For it is not only true, with respect to individuals, but also with respect to nations, that *the Lord doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. 3, 33.

Our transgressions are multiplied before Him, and our sins testify against us, Isa. 59, 12. It is

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because our transgressions and our sins are upon us that we pine away, Ezek. 33, 10. In almost every section of our country do the reigning sins of the land appear. Even the remote villages on our borders are not exempt from them. We may read them in our our own Borough. For our transgressions are with us, and we know them, Isa. 59; 12. Hence is fulfilled in us the reproach of the prophet. Ye have made your iniquity to be remembered, in that your transgressions are discovered, so that in all your doings your sins do appear. Ezek. 21, 24.

- Merely to state them, will be sufficient to shew their frequency, and universality. There is one strictly national, that commenced in the adoption of the federal constitution, which is *the want of an acknowledgement in it of a Supreme Being, and of a divine revelation.* Although an eminent Judge of a neighbouring state, one of the guardians of that constitution, has happily decided, that it is assumed in it, that the United States are a christian nation, and Christianity the religion of the country, yet, that all important engine of our national prosperity, is, in form at least *entirely atheistical.* Undoubtedly it were a great sin, to have forgotten God in such an important national instrument, and not to have acknowledged Him in that which forms the very nerves and sinews of the political body. He had led through all the perils of the revolutionary struggle, and had established us in peaceful and plentiful security, and then, to have been forgotten, in the period of prosperity, certainly demerited his rebuke. Therefore hath the voice of his providence proclaimed, and even still it sounds in our ears, *I did know thee in the wilderness in the land of great drought. According to their pasture so were they filled; they were filled, and their heart*

was exalted; therefore have they forgotten me. Therefore I will be unto them as a Lion: as a Leopard by the way will I observe them. Hosea, 13, 5—7.

Another sin for which we suffer, is a *want of due respect, to the moral and religious qualifications, of those that are elevated to offices of trust and power.* The question is too seldom asked, “have such the fear of God before their eyes?” while on the other hand the sole inquiry instituted is “will they suit and seek the interest of my party?” *By the fear of the Lord, saith Solomon are riches and honour, Prov. 22, 4, as He himself had found it, and the fear of the Lord is not only the treasure** of an individual, but forms in rulers, the chief permanent security of national wealth.†

A third sin, which brings down guilt upon our land, is *the spirit of adventurous cupidity and speculation, that has in a great measure superceded a spirit of industry, and that in the manner, and to the extent in which it has been recently indulged, was but the spirit of gambling.*|| This is but *a willing to be rich, which the spirit of truth hath said, will lead them, that thus rashly and illegally determine, until they “fall into temptation, and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.”* 1 Tim. 6, 9.

* Isaiah, 33, 6.

† 2 Samuel 23, 2, 3. 2 Chronicles, 19, 6, 7, 9, 11.

‡ To this head may be referred every attempt to acquire property by prostituting the sacred ordinance of the Lot, whether in private companies, at games of chance, as they are termed, or in public authorized Lotteries. To whatever extent the former may yet be practised, in which there has been for some years past, a manifest improve-

|| Proverbs 16, 33, Acts 1, 24—26.

The hand of the diligent* is that which God hath appointed to make rich, without producing these foolish, and hurtful lusts, one of which that invariably, and necessarily, results from a spirit of speculation is lying. Solomon says that "the getting of treasures with a lying tongue, is a vanity tossed to and fro, of them that seek death," Prov. 21, 6. There are not wanting, however, apologists for the use of falsehood, and deceit, in bargaining for property, or in contending with an adversary : but every honest man must have determined, that gain acquired by concealing what may prejudice another, or by confounding evidences, or confusing witnesses, or suppressing what might throw light upon the matter, is both illicit and pernicious.†

A fourth sin is *oppression and usury*. Those that live and indulge, in such practices, thrive, as it were, on the sores of the community. Like the vermin on a diseased body, they fatten on its corruption ; but as it is generally the case, they shall perish with the body that has fed them.‡ For the spirit of God hath said, *He that by unjust gain increaseth his substance, he shall gather it for him*

ment in our public morals, since games of chance have been generally discarded from the circle of fashionable amusements : it certainly does honour to our State that the Legislative Authorities have obstinately refused repeated applications to them for the latter. But notwithstanding this, it is a melancholy fact, that the vending of Lottery Tickets, is practised in our metropolis, and in other cities, to an extent, and in a manner, that cannot fail to prejudice the interests, and morals of the poor, curtail the amount and cramp the energy of productive industry, as well as foster *cupidities in multitudes*, injurious to our social and political establishments.

* Proverbs, 10, 4.

† Matthew 7, 12.

‡ Proverbs 1, 19.

that shall pity the poor! Prov. 28. 8. Hypocrisy may be attempted, and indeed is frequently, by the usurious oppressor, in order to prevent the evil, that conscience at times predicts: but *what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained when God taketh away his soul?* Job 27. 8. He secures his own damnation, and as to what he may leave behind him, we are assured, it shall not benefit his family. *His offspring shall not be satisfied with bread. Those that remain of him shall be buried in death: and his widows shall not weep. Though he heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.* Job. 27, 14—17. The promise of God hath secured a competency to none but such as exercise their talents, and employ their industry, in occupations, or pursuits, that are *strictly righteous.* *He that walketh righteously, and speaketh uprightly; he that despiseth the gain of oppressions, that shaketh his hands from holding of bribes, that stoppeth his ears from hearing of blood; and shutteth his eyes from seeing of evil; He shall dwell on high; his place of defence shall be the munitions of rocks: bread shall be given him, his waters shall be sure.* Isaiah 33. 15. 16. What his promise teaches on this subject, his providence illustrates, and confirms. As he hath pledged security, and sufficiency to the righteous, so hath he denounced instability, and shame, against them that exercise an oppressive covetousness; and his providence executes the threat. *Wo to him that covetheth an evil covetousness to his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of evil! Thou hast consulted shame to thy house by cutting off many people and hast sinned against thy soul. For the stone shall cry out of*

the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it. Hab. 2. 9—11.

That this is a sin which will subject a people to judgment, the Lord himself hath assured us, in his charges against Israel. *Thou hast taken usury and increase, and thou hast greedily gained of thy neighbours by extortion, and hast forgotten me saith the Lord God. Behold therefore I have smitten mine hand at thy dishonest gain, which thou hast made, and at thy blood which hath been in the midst of thee. Can thine heart endure or can thine hands be strong in the days that I shall deal with thee?* Ezek. 22. 12—14. The multiplicity of oppressive suits at the present day, and the universal indisposition to afford the debtor time to pay his debts, with the thirst for sacrificing property, do not only indicate, that an *evil covetousness* is numbered among our national sins; but the unfeeling and unrighteous conduct, occasionally exhibited by magistrates and constables, and other of our officers, is lamentable proof that we are at least approximating the degeneracy of Israel, and that we have reason, as a people, to fear the accomplishment of similar denunciations of vengeance executed upon them in the days of Ezekiel the prophet. *Her princes in the midst thereof are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and destroy souls to get dishonest gain. The people of the land have used oppression, and have vexed the poor and needy: Therefore have I poured out mine indignation upon them; I have consumed them with the fire of my wrath: their own way have I recompensed upon their heads saith the Lord God.* v. 27, 29, 31.

A fifth sin is *Intemperance*, with its usual attendants, *profanity and uncleanness*. These are classed together because they are most frequently committed by the same persons. Has not the pre-

valence of this sin in many parts of our country nearly obtained for it the name of a *land of drunkards*? But a very few years since, and it was said that scarcely could ten sober men have been found in the whole of a particular township, in a neighbouring county.* How many are the instances of

* From the report of the Auditor General of this state recently presented to our Legislature it appears that "Tavern Licenses," during the year ending with the 30th of November, 1819, have secured to the Treasury the nett revenue of \$30,899 87. Can it be possible that even the one half of these taverns are necessary for the accommodation of travellers, or for facilitating the transaction of business among our citizens—the only legitimate objects to be had in view in granting licenses? On the contrary, does it require any great sagacity to discover, that a very great proportion of them, are but Bacchanalian temples, where scenes of worse than beastly excess, are exhibited; where a few bloated and filthy votaries of this infernal idol, are to be continually found, rendering their orisons with frantic zeal and devotion; and where even the fire of youthful blood may be seen to enkindle the incense that burns upon his altars! Pass but a little distance from them, and you shall see the huts of poverty, where almost the only objects, that meet the view, are pale emaciated, and dejected mothers, with their broods of miserable, ragged, squalid children; half naked,—half famished; their little all having been taken to pay their fathers tavern bills! If any one will but observe, as he travels through our state, how our leading roads are almost lined, and our villages crowded, with these haunts of dissipation, he cannot fail to be convinced of their demoralising tendency, as well as of the lamentable fact, that they have their origin, and derive their support from the insatiable thirst, and exorbitant demand for spirituous liquors. From the report of the "Society for the prevention of pauperism," in the city of New York, presented at their late anniversary meeting, it appears, that **ONE MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS**, are expended annually, in that city, for spirituous liquors!!! If this, for a population of 120,000, is to be taken as a fair specimen of the proportional expenditure for this object in the United States generally; or if it should be reduced to even one half the amount, how enormous must be the demand, and how insatiable the appetite for this intoxicating poison!

both fathers and sons becoming drunkards together? How eagerly are amusements sought, by many of our youth, which serve merely as an apology, to secure greater freedom, and facility for revelrous excess; amusements, which mostly are promoted and managed by wine bibbers, and gluttons, and terminate in lascivious or riotous merriment, where surrounding morality is too feeble to overawe, or secrecy can be had without a restraint upon their festivities! Yea, how frequently do they meet, and drink, expressly for the lowdest purposes! But against such, God hath pronounced his woes. *Wo unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till wine inflame them! And the harp and the viol, the tabret and pipe, and wine are in their feasts.* Isaiah 5. 11, 12. *Wo unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to him, and makest him drunk also, that thou mayest look upon their nakedness!* Hab. 2. 15. Our laws, it is true, contain provisions for remedying these things: but where are those that should execute them, and who are they? Too often themselves actors in these scenes; or if not, studiously avoiding every occasion of their becoming acquainted with the violations of the laws, and refusing to act for fear of losing their popularity and injuring their private interests! We have a full and accurate description of these things drawn by an unerring hand. "His watchmen are blind: they are all ignorant, they are all dumb dogs, they cannot bark; sleeping, lying down, loving to slumber. Yea they are greedy dogs, which can never have enough, and they are shepherds that cannot understand: they all look to their own way, every one for his gain, from his quarter. Come ye, say they, I will fetch wine and we will fill ourselves

with strong drink, and to-morrow shall be as this day and much more abundant." Isai. 56. 10—12.

Proofs of the prevalence of this hydra of vice are to be met with continually. How many mothers, and children, are rendered widows and fatherless, by the intemperance of fathers! How many parents hearts are made to bleed by the drunkenness of their children! What confusion has not this vice introduced into families! How entirely has it extinguished the charities of life, and indurated the finer sensibilities of nature, and swept, as with the besom of desolation, the sanctuaries of domestic peace! See the tender wife, how she pines, and sickens, and dies with grief, under the abuses and abominations of her husband! See the children, how they learn, alas too frequently, to blaspheme, and drink, and revel, from the example of their fathers! See the miserable, diseased, debilitated, rotten, dying offspring, that the youthful drunkard sends into the world! Are not such sad spectacles of vice, to be met with almost every where throughout the land? And doth not this *lust for pleasure*, this worse than beastly sensuality, prove a never failing, yea overflowing, fountain of pollution, whence are to be seen the foul streams of corruption spreading through the whole community! What horrid profanity assails our ears! Even youthful tongues are heard to utter filthy and blasphemous language! What multitudes of illegitimate children are continually sent into the world, without a guide, and protector, to become, in most instances, vagabonds on earth, and premature victims for Hell! What robbery and murder, may not be traced to this fruitful source of crime,* and how rapidly of late have these

* Hinc patriæ proditioes, hinc rerumpub. eversionses,

things increased among us! "By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, saith the prophet, they break out, and blood toucheth blood, therefore shall the land mourn." Hos. 4. 2. Therefore does it mourn.

The sixth and last sin that may be noticed is *the profanation of the Sabbath*. How extensively, and flagitiously, this is done you well know. The Sabbath in numerous instances, is made a day of business, or of pleasure, according to mens convenience and feelings. Our stores are not opened, it is true: but there is a species of traffick carried on, in the retail of spirituous liquors on that day, by those whose license only extends to the six days of the week. The highest authorities of the country have legalised the profanation of the Sabbath, by the transportation of the mail on that day; and have positively refused to hear the remonstrances of the christian part of the community on that subject. The laws in our own state are lamentably deficient upon that subject, and our legislators hesitate, and delay to act in the case; nay even sanction the profanation of the Sabbath, by their own example, in repairing to their legislative chambers on that day, rather than to the house of God. The subordinate executive authorities of the state, seek a subterfuge in the deficiencies of the law, and refuse to do their duty. Still may they act, lame as are the laws, upon their own view of the violation of the Sabbath, the only mode in which they can act effectually, and with promptitude:

hinc cum hostibus clandestina colloquia nasci: nullum denique scelus, nullum malum facinus esse, ad quod suscipiendum non libido voluptatis impelleret: stupra vero, et adulteria, et omne tale flagitium nullis illecebris excitari aliis, nisi voluptatis.

Cic. de Sen.

but do not our magistrates, and constables, and others, shut their eyes as they walk the streets, and suffer offenders to escape punishment. Even the people seem to have conspired with them in their indolence and indifference, and the character of an informer is held up to view as a fit object for reproach and invective. Yea it has even arrived at this height, that the enemies of the church do "mock at her Sabbaths."* Therefore, God in his providence seems to declare; "Because my Sabbaths they greatly polluted, I will pour out my fury upon them to consume them." Ezek. 20. 13. He hath already done it, and we continually hear of his doing it, in cases of special judgments, that descend upon those who devote that day to the purposes of business, or of pleasure.

Such are some of the principal sins of our land, for which it suffers, and for which it may well mourn. Do you then complain, that former days of gladness and prosperity have fled; that the fruits of industry are few, and that even industry itself is left to beg; that what it was hoped would prove an healing balm, has rather operated as an irritating poison? Then hear the cause, as from the mouth of God. "Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withheld good things from you." Jer. 5. 25. *Wherefore the immediate design of his providence towards us as a people is, to punish us for our National sins. Sins become national when all, or the generality of a people, are personally transgressors in them: † when the conspicuous and influential men, such as governors, representatives, magistrates and ministers, are also infected with the corrupting virus: ‡*

* Lam. 1. 7.

† Isaiah 1. 5.

‡ Hos. 9. 15. Jer. 23. 15.

when the official guardians of public morals enact cruel and unrighteous laws,|| or tolerate and do not punish, the violations of Gods' :§ in most, if not in all of which respects, the sins enumerated may be seen to possess the general character attributed to them. We have therefore much cause for deep humiliation before God, and earnest intercessions with Him, that He would not hide his face from us, but pardon our transgressions, and put away His judgments.

To these we may be encouraged, even from our present sufferings, for much mercy is yet poured into our cup. This mercy, in general, is dispensed in that, which proves the instrument of our pain. The rod of discipline is applying, but, however, severe may be its strokes they appear to be issuing in good, which is probably *the ultimate design of the present dispensations of divine providence towards us as a people.* The effects of former narcotics ^{leg} so freely administered, begin to be corrected. The community is convalescing; and we may entertain hopes of its being, ere long, fully recovered from the prostration occasioned by recent luxury, and effeminacy. A return to primitive habits of frugality, temperance, and industry, begins to be observable. Retrenchment, and Economy are studied, and becoming as popular as dissipation and extravagance had previously been, and we hope to see the day when vying with the luxurious follies, and expensive establishments, of foreign nations, will be considered disreputable, disgusting, and discordant with the spirit of our liberty. The exuberant growths of a few unexampled years of prosperity are lopping off. The way to wealth is

|| 2 Sam. 21. 1.

§ Josh. 7. 11, 12. & 2 Chron. 19. 2.

once more seen to be through industry, and frugality, and not through idleness, and speculation. Let the discipline be continued for a few years longer, and we may expect to see such a change, of character, and of habits, as to indicate clearly the regenerated health of the community. Industry in some regular calling, will be demanded of all, at least, of such a vast majority, as to discourage, and discountenance indolence, and idleness, even in those that may not be dependent on their business for support. Opportunities for transgression, and temptations to crime, will thence become less frequent. The morbid predisposition to vice, which gives to them their principal efficiency, will be greatly corrected. The virtues of *social and domestic life*, will thence be cherished, and cultivated. The public morals will consequently improve; and vices, that now threaten our very existence, as an independent people, will disappear. Thence may we calculate upon the continuance, and establishment of our singular, and pre-eminent political and religious privileges; and in the return of the community to habits of frugality, industry, and morality, anticipate with gratitude, the long life of our republic.* For any hope that *these may be the ultimate design of the divine providence towards us as a people*, we are bound to render thanks to Him, who "is the Governor among the nations."†

In addition to this signal mercy, which already begins to rise with *healing* in its beams, there are others of a more special nature, that demand our gratitude as members of this state, as members of this Borough, as members of this church, and

* Psalm 22. 28.

† Proverbs 28. 2

that ought not to remain unnoticed on an occasion like the present.

As members of the State, we have rich cause for thankfulness, in that happy origin, which, doubtless, has already procured, and will continue to procure, the blessings of propitious Heaven. For in the annals of history, we shall not meet with an instance of political birth, more honourable, than that of the state of Pennsylvania. Our thanks are also due that our chief executive,* and some other principal officers of state are not ashamed, and do not hesitate, at least externally, to honour *the religion of the Redeemer*: that our metropolis has been exempted from malignant disease, while those of several sister states have been made to suffer:—that while other parts of our country are suffering severely from drought, we have had an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and of the fountains' limpid streams, both for man and beast; although the latter rains have failed, and the reward of the husbandman, may not have equalled that of former years:—that a spirit of improvement in the internal parts of the state has not been crushed, nor materially checked, by the pressure of the times:—that the indications of *an approaching dawn* of literature upon our State rather increase:† and that the interests of Zion among us have not declined. All these demand from us a tribute of thankfulness, since “every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no vairableness, neither shadow of turning.” James, 1. 17.

* See his proclamations recommending days of Thanksgiving.

† We cannot felicitate ourselves in the immediate prospect of any thing greater on this subject. But whoever is acquainted with the history of our literary institutions—how

As members of this borough our thanks are due for the singular health that we have enjoyed during the present year; that while other places around us have suffered we have had more than our ordinary share. Our thanks are also due for the restraints that have been imposed upon vices and amusements formerly and freely practised and indulged in:—for the weight of public sentiment, and feeling, in favour of morality, and religion:—for the spirit of forbearance, and conciliation, among the members of different religious denominations:—and for the fact that our churches are all supplied with pastors. For these things let us give thanks to Him who alone “maketh to differ.” 1 Cor. 4. 7.

As members of this church also we owe a debt of gratitude to God; that He hath not withdrawn His gospel from us; that He hath continued to us His ordinances; that He hath permitted us to have free and unrestrained access to them; that He hath inclined so many among us to profess His name; that He hath in any measure poured upon us the *spirit of grace and supplication*; that He hath accompanied the preaching of the word, in any degree, with the energies of His Holy Spirit; that He appears to incline the hearts of some to seek Him in the season of their youth; that He hath imparted zeal to any and enabled them to

they have languished—how some of them have died—how reluctant our Legislature has been to revive them, and how pitiful, at best, has been their beneficence; and at the same time contemplates the immense amount of ignorance in our community, and the consequent depravation of our public morals, if He can relish, in the least degree, the pure light of science, cannot fail to be thankful for the hope, that *the munificence of sister states* may have created all around us, the bright orbs of literature that shall speedily dissipate the darkness which blasts and mildews the growths of private liberality.

adorn the doctrine of God our saviour in all things.
 Tit. 2. 10 ; that He hath established His fear in the hearts, and His worship in the houses of any ; that the instances of back-sliding among professors have been but few ; that a spirit of harmony and brotherly love appears to prevail ; that the hand of charity, and christian beneficence has not been withheld ; in short, that He continues to us His Christ, our dear and honoured Jesus, and gives us, especially in our solemn communion seasons, sweet fellowship with Him, and at all times, all good things convenient for us. These are mercies that demand from us a song of praise. Let us then hasten to our adorable Jesus and while our minds are irradiated with His glory, we shall better discover how rich, and numerous are our blessings. Oh if He be *ours and in us* the command is *rejoice evermore!* 1 Thess. 5. 16. But if not ; then know that you live merely on the forbearance of God. His curse may instantly blast your hopes, and the “breath of his nostrils” drive you to perdition. If out of Christ you are just ready to drop into Hell : and by continuing in your sins you aggravate your own woe, and add unto your country’s guilt ; you shall secure your own death and leave a curse behind you. It is time for you to repent of your wickedness, *saying, What have I done?* Jer. 8. 6. for myself, my family, my state, my country, and my God ? Let every one fly for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before him in the gospel, and through the influence of that hope let all study to *purify* their hearts and ways.— “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy ; for it is time to seek the Lord till he come and rain righteousness upon you. Hos. 10. 12.—
Amen.