GRATITUDE AND PENITENCE,

RECOMMENDED FROM THE UNITED CONSIDERATION OF NATIONAL MERCIES AND JUDGMENTS.

A Sermon,

DELIVERED

IN THE

INDEPENDENT

OR

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

CHARLESTON, SOUTH-CAROLINA,

OCTOBER 5, 1814.

BEING A DAY APPOINTED FOR HUMILIATION,

THANKSGIVING, AND PRAYER,

IN THAT CITY.

BY BENJAMIN M. PALMER, A. M.

ONE OF THE PASTORS OF SAID CHURCH.

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

CHARLESTON:

PRINTED BY W. P. YOUNG,

No. 44, BROAD-STREET.

1814.

Sermon, &c.

1. *Samuel*, xii. 23, 24, 25.

"I WILL teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth with all your heart: for conſider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye ſhall ſtill do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your king."

The love and the mercy of God are in many inſtances moſt ſignally manifeſted in thoſe very proceedings, of which our unreaſonable hearts are moſt ready to complain. The Jewiſh nation, at the time when theſe words were ſpoken, were living under the civil government of Samuel, the laſt and moſt excellent of their Judges. Happy are the people, whoſe rulers anſwer the deſcription recommended to Moſes by his father in law (*Ex* xviii. 21) "able men, ſuch as fear God, men of truth, hating covetouſneſs." Of ſuch a character was Samuel, whom this portrait ſo well reſembled, that, at the cloſe of his adminiſtration he gave this challenge to the people whom he had governed: "(xii. 3.) Behold, here I am: witneſs againſt

me before the Lord, and before his anointed; whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you." They declined the challenge—they had no charge to bring against him. They are obliged to unite in the confession "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, neither hast thou taken ought of any man's hand." But Israel became dissatisfied with the form of administration, by which their civil affairs had been conducted about four hundred years. And taking occasion from the mal-administration of his two sons, who "walked not in his ways, but turned aside after lucre, and took bribes, and perverted judgment" (8. 2) they solicited of Samuel a change in the whole structure of their government, and demanded to have a king to judge them like all the nations. The Lord was sore displeased with this request, as in every previous period of their national existence, their form of government, tho' it passed thro' several changes, had been still appointed them by the Ruler of the universe. Now, for the first time, they were permitted to have a government strictly of their own choice. God commanded Samuel, his servant, to yield to the wishes of his people in this respect, but at the same time to inform them, in what light God viewed their conduct. "Hearken unto the voice of the people, for they have not rejected thee,

but they have rejected me, that I ſhould not reign over them." Samuel reaſoned the caſe with them at length—aſſured them that the Lord was oppoſed to the royal government, they were about to adopt, not of his mere arbitrary pleaſure, but on account of the oppreſſions into which it was more likely to run, than the plan of government they were now about to relinquiſh. He faithfully warned them of the evil conſequences that would reſult from their new ſyſtem, but at the ſame time aſſured them; that God had not rejected them, tho' they had caſt him off in this particular inſtance (12, 22—25) "For the Lord will not forſake his people for his great name's ſake) becauſe it hath pleaſed the Lord to make you his people. Moreover, as for me, God forbid that I ſhould ſin againſt the Lord in ceaſing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way. Only fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth with all your heart: for conſider how great things he hath done for you. But if ye ſhall ſtill do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your king."

But without purſuing the hiſtory farther in relation to the Iſraelites, we will, with reference to our own caſe, attend to three particulars which the text embraces, viz.

I. The conſideration ſuggeſted.

II. The duty urged.

III. The warning given.

In the firſt place to the conſideration ſug-

geſted. "Conſider how great things he hath done for you." The works of God, my brethren, are no leſs inſtructive than his word. His word and his works indeed interpret each other, and the beſt way to arrive at a full underſtanding of the nature and purport of both, is to make them alternately explanatory, the one of the other. What then are thoſe great things which God hath done for us as a people? They are ſo numerous, and ſo various, that the only difficulty conſiſts in making the moſt judicious ſelection from the immenſe multitude, For no nation under heaven does that eulogium better ſuit, which was pronounced by Moſes upon the Iſraelites (*Deut.* xxxiii. 29) "Happy art thou, O Iſrael: who is like unto thee, O people ſaved by the Lord, the ſhield of thy help, and the ſword of thine excellency." And as this day has been ſet apart by authority for public thankſgivings, as well as humiliation, it is fit our minds ſhould be employed in the contemplation of PUBLIC MERCIES, or NATIONAL BLESSINGS.

1. "Conſider how great things God has done for us" in the eſtabliſhment of our civil liberties. Notwithſtanding the lapſe of years ſince that intereſting and happy period, we ſhould often recur to it in our thoughts, and remember theſe "years of the right hand of the Moſt High, theſe—his wonders of old." A ſtate of things widely different from the preſent, in this view, is within the remembrance of many preſent. They remember, as though

it were a thing of yeſterday, what toils were undergone, what privations were ſuſtained, what dangers and difficulties were encountered, what treaſures were expended, how much blood was ſhed, and how much miſery was endured, before we became, and in order to become a "Free and Independent people." On this occaſion then, let all ſuch, with their offſpring, who know theſe things only "by the hearing of the ear," but who are born to that inheritance which their fathers bought ſo dearly, take "a new ſong into their mouth, even ſalvation to our God." Let us ſing to the king of nations this ſong of thankſgiving, (*Ps.* cxxiv) If it had not been the Lord who was on our ſide, when men roſe up againſt us: then they had ſwallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled againſt us: then the waters had overwhelmed us, the ſtream had gone over our ſoul. Bleſſed be the Lord, who had not given us a prey to their teeth. Our ſoul is eſcaped as a bird out of the ſnare of the fowlers: the ſnare is broken and we are eſcaped. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth." Ye, who were ſharers in the ſanguinary conflict, "tell ye your children of it, and let your children tell their children, and their children another generation," and let them be taught to aſcribe to the Lord the praiſe of having "redeemed Jacob, and glorified himſelf in Iſrael." The duration of the mercy, and the continually increaſing remoteneſs of the period at which it commen-

ced, inſtead of diminiſhing, ſhould augment the gratitude.

2dly " Conſider how great things God hath done for you" in your emancipation at the ſame period from eccleſiaſtical thraldom. There was a time, and it is ſtill freſh in the recollection of many of you, when your religious rights and privileges, for extent, variety and value, were not to be compared with what they are at preſent. Now, there is no pretenſion to control over conſcience, nor is there any diſqualification for civil offices or ſocial privileges ariſing from, or penalty impoſed for, religious profeſſion of any kind. Between God and the individual reſt wholly and ſolely all religious concerns. There is no temptation to hypocritical profeſſion, from the favour ſhewn one claſs of worſhippers; no diſcouragement of a temporal worldly nature in the way of ſincere profeſſion, in another. Eccleſiaſtical liberty followed in the train of civil. And, my brethren, when we conſider what our nature is, how much temporal conſiderations are apt to influence us, in matters in which the utmoſt purity and diſintereſtedneſs ſhould exiſt, we cannot be ſufficiently thankful, that no ſuch obſtacles longer exiſt. In no nation, on the globe, have we reaſon to believe, religious freedom is to be found in ſuch a degree, as in this. On a day ſet apart for the expreſſion of public gratitude, then, let not the church keep ſilence, but unite in thankſgiving to him who was her deliverer, as well as deliverer of the nation.

3 " Conſider how great things God hath done for us" in keeping us ſo long out of the colliſions and miſeries of war, and in preſerving us in ſo remarkable a degree from ſome of its melancholy effects, after we became involved. For how many years were the nations of Europe embroiled, before we became partners in the conteſt, though for a conſiderable time, having extenſive commercial intercourſe with them. The dreadful evil had been juſtly apprehended for ſeveral years, before the ſtorm actually burſt upon our heads. The ſuſpended ſword long glittered in our view, before it received commiſſion to ſtrike the blow. At length, " he who makes the wrath of man to praiſe him," permitted it to inflict the ſtroke. Under it we have ſuffered much, in having the courſe of individual and national proſperity interrupted, but throughout our own ſtate, the deſtructive ſword has " not come nigh any of our dwellings." Probably, at the commencement of the conteſt, ſcarcely an individual could have been found, who would have believed, that for two years our cities and towns would have remained unmoleſted. Yet, ſo it is. We read of towns in conflagration, of citizens deſtroyed by the ſword, of families turned out of their habitations, adrift upon the world, of women and children murdered by the hatchet of the ſavage, in other parts of our lands, while perſonal ſafety has been, heretofore, our uninterrupted lot. Never, in a period of the moſt profound tranquil-

ity, has there been a more entire exemption from ſanguinary calamity, than our city and ſtate have experienced hitherto, through the whole progreſs of the war. Certainly, this is a moſt diſtinguiſhing mercy: Though the hum of buſineſs is not heard, as it uſed to be, in our ſtreets; though the comforts and luxuries of other regions do not pour into our harbors; though the productions of our ſoil are houſed in our granaries; though pinching poverty has multiplied the number of the deſtitute; though for all theſe things, as indications that "God's anger is not turned away, but his hand ſtretched out ſtill," we ſhould be humbled; yet, ſhould we, at the ſame time, be fervently thankful, that our dwellings are not in aſhes, that our property is not entirely in ruins, that our families are not ſeeking ſhelter in the woods, that the blood of our citizens has not ſtained our pavements, nor flowed in our ſtreets; for theſe are the uſual concomitants of war. Theſe have been conſiderably felt in other parts of our land, as well as in the territories of our enemy, bordering on our own. It is awfully to be feared, we have been too inſenſible of the goodneſs diſplayed towards us, in this remarkable exemption. "Oh that men would praiſe the Lord for his goodneſs, and for his wonderful works to the children of men." Peradventure, it is not too late for theſe calamities to come upon us. Let us, by repentance for the ſins, on account of which we are thus far ſcourged; by thankfulneſs for the enjoyments

on which the blaſting hand of God has not yet fallen, reſolve to "ſin no more, leſt a worſe thing come upon us." But,

4thly. "Conſider how great things God hath done for" the people of this ſtate, by inclining our legiſlators to frame and paſs ſtatutes favorable to the intereſts of morality and religion, and to civil liberty. The two acts more immediately in view in this remark, are, that concerning duelling, and that making proviſion for the education of the poor. Theſe meaſures, if continued and made effectual, will certainly form a new æra in our legiſlative hiſtory. How often has the heart of humanity bled, and the ſoul of religion groaned, at the ſight of murder of the fouleſt kind, patronized, ſanctioned, honored, rewarded. This practice boaſted of having public ſentiment in its favor. This it never had. This it cannot, will not have, as long as common ſenſe, not to ſay, humanity and religion, exiſts. The body of a people, eſpecially of an enlightened people, can never be ſo infatuated, as to imagine, that the right and the wrong in any controverſy, the honor and the ignominy in any characters in colliſion with each other, can be aſcertained by the adroit or clumſy manner with which a weapon of deſtruction is handled, or by its ſucceſs or failure in bringing to the ground the object at which it is directed. Public ſentiment in favor of this once legalized murder, meant nothing more than the ſentiments of a very few, who trampled on all the laws of re-

ligion, and on as many of thoſe of the ſtate, which interfered with their paſſions as they could, and yet eſcape their graſp. The popular ſentiment has run ſtrongly and uniformly in the contrary direction. But the evil is now ſuppreſſed, we hope permanently. And when we conſider the peculiar aſpect of the times, in which the ſuppreſſion of this crime became ſo popular with the legiſlature as to ſucceed, we cannot but think, that in this circumſtance is found very ſtrong additional ground for gratitude to God. In the exiſting ſtate of our public affairs, it was to be expected, that more frequent occaſions would ariſe to furniſh pretexts for the continuance of this relict of barbariſm, yet it was honorably frowned upon and ſuppreſſed. For this laudable and ſucceſsful effort in favor of humanity and religion, this community owes a debt of gratitude to our legiſlators, and ſtill more to that God, " who has the hearts of all men in his hands."

Nor ought we to paſs unnoticed another act which does them honor, which promiſes to be an extenſive and permanent bleſſing to our ſtate and country, and which ſhould be a ſubject of thankſgiving to the Moſt High—The extenſion of education to the poor, through the medium of free ſchools. On the prevalence of public virtue, and the diffemination of general information, the durability of a government conſtituted like ours, eſſentially depends. Information among the maſs of the people is abſolutely neceſſary to its growth, ſecurity, and ſtability.

But the prevalence of ignorance, until within a few years, in our ſtate generally, preſented a melancholy picture, and one of evil omen. But we hope, that day of darkneſs is paſt, and a beneficial light has begun to ſhine, whoſe luſtre will increaſe. Religion itſelf without a miracle muſt be ſlow in its progreſs, where a moderate degree of information does not precede, and in a certain ſenſe pave the way for, its ſpread. For the eſtabliſhment of the above named promiſing fountains of information and inſtruction to the youth, who would otherwiſe have been left to grow up in that ignorance which is detremental to church and ſtate, let us more and more abound in thankſgivings to the Parent of mercies. We may look forward, it is humbly hoped, to a brighter day, both for the church and for the ſtate, for the intereſt of both literature and religion, if this ſcheme is found by growing experience to be more and more practicable, and if it ſhould acquire, as in this caſe we truſt it will, an increaſing popularity and permanent eſtabliſhment.

5. Among the number of the "great things" which "God has done for us," in this city, ought unqueſtionably to be reckoned the uncommon meaſure of health which has prevailed during this ſummer. We have known ſeaſons, in which ſcarce a day paſſed, that did not preſent to our view melancholy evidence of an unuſual degree of mortality. Through the whole of what are called the ſickly months, the king of

terrors has multiplied in former years, the victims of his power. But, during the paſt ſeaſon, we ſcarce perceive any difference at all in our bills of mortality, from what they exhibit in thoſe portions of the year, which we uſually conſider the moſt healthful—It is not extravagant to affirm, that our city, in this particular, has not been exceeded by any part of the continent, by any city in the union. What adds to the evidence of the fact, and ought the more to excite our gratitude for it, is, that our citizens, in providing for the defence of the metropolis, have been in a much more than ordinary degree expoſed to the influence of the climate. Undergoing, for a few weeks paſt, arduous and before unknown labor, at a ſeaſon, when we often think it almoſt dangerous to walk the ſtreets, they continue, almoſt, without an exception, to enjoy as good health, as in the moſt propitious ſeaſon, and in the diſcharge of their ordinary duties. Has not God in this, alſo, "done great things for us," worthy of our moſt affectionate and grateful conſideration?

It would be unpardonable to omit, in this catalogue of our bleſſings, the favor with which he has all along ſmiled upon our naval, and recently upon our military operations. On the ocean, the national wrongs of which we complain, are alledged to have been committed; and on the ocean our ſucceſſes have been ſo ſignal, and ſo uniform, that the Providence of God, as far we may lawfully judge of its intentions by its actions, ſeems to have ſanctioned

and encouraged our efforts. On the land, too, ſince our military efforts have been employed upon our own ground, for the juſt and lawful and honorable object of ſelf-defence, there ſeems to have been a ſucceſs as uninterupted, as diſappointment and diſaſter had been before. Our operations of late, both on the water and on the land, have been excluſively of a defenſive character, and againſt an invading foe. The ſucceſs which has accompanied them, furniſhes a further ground of grateful conſideration, and devout and thankful acknowledgment. As far as theſe events can be regarded, as having a tendency to the reſtoration of peace, and ſo far too, as they are tokens, that God, "though he chaſtiſe us ſore, is not willing to give us over to death," they are worthy of our praiſe to God.

But we ſhould never have done, were we to attempt an enumeration of all that Jehovah hath done for us.

It is time to pay attention in the 2d place to the duty urged in theſe words " Only fear the Lord, and ſerve him in truth with all your heart." This is the only certain method to continue in the poſſeſſions of the enjoyments we now call our own, as well as to procure the reſtoration of thoſe, which for our ſins we have forfeited and loſt. Doubtleſs, abundant as are the cauſes for thankſgiving, which it is in our power to enumerate, not leſs numerous, or cogent, are the reaſons for penitent humiliation. We have a mingled cup to drink at the Lord hands. Sweet as it is to contemplate remain-

ing mercies, the contemplation of departed bleſſings, and of inflicted ſufferings, excites a pang. Under one of the heavieſt judgments, which Jehovah ſends to ſcourge the guilty nations, we continue ſtill to lie, and therefore while we "rejoice," it ſhould be "with trembling." War ſtill exiſts, and ſhould the pending negociations for peace prove abortive, we may experience its deſolating ravages with more ſeverity, and to a wider extent, than they have yet been realized. While our text, in one branch of it, ſays to a favoured nation, "Conſider how great things God hath done for you," another portion of his word ſolemnly calls upon a people enduring the judgments of the Almighty, "Conſider *your ways.*" We are, my brethren, at one and the ſame moment, that favored and afflicted nation, on whom the mercies and the judgments of Jehovah are operating together. Let us know him in the "judgments which he executes," as well as in the mercies which he beſtows. The goodneſs of God is calculated to lead us, and his ſeverity to drive us, to repentance. Should both fail of producing this effect, O! what will be our deſtiny. But let us rather "hope better things" of our country and its inhabitants, than that they will continue in thoſe iniquities which muſt prove their ruin and "ſweep them with the beſom of deſtruction." The Lord condeſcends to direct us, by the prophet Samuel, to a way of ſafety, that is right and good and reaſonable. "*Only* fear the Lord.

This expreſſion here, as elſewhere, muſt be conſidered as a ſummary deſcription of the whole ſyſtem of duties, which we owe to our Sovereign. It is equivalent to Solomon's definition of religion "fear God and keep his commandments; for this is the whole of man." Or to our Saviour's "one thing needful." Fear the Lord then, ye who have known him, only to trample on his authority, to violate his laws, to deride his threats, to oppoſe his will. Fear him, all ye, whoſe immoral lives have heretofore teſtified, that ye have "caſt off all fear and reſtrained prayer before God." Fear him, ye who have polluted the atmoſphere with your blaſphemies, who have wounded the ear of piety with your imprecations, who have aſſailed the throne of God with your profanity. Fear him, ye, who have employed to the indulgence of indolence, to the purſuits of pleaſure, for the purpoſes of buſineſs, thoſe conſecrated hours, that precious ſabbath, which he inſtituted, as much for *your benefit*, as for his *own glory*. Fear him, ye, who in the relations of life, in which he has placed you, have forgotten to diſcharge the offices of love, which thoſe relations involve—ſuperiors, who have oppreſſed, where you ought to have protected—inferiors, who have been diſreſpectful and rebellious, where you ought to have been docile, tractable, and ſubmiſſive. Fear him, ye, who by the indulgence of hateful and hoſtile paſſions in your heart, have inwardly wiſhed

the deſtruction of your neighbour, of whom, as far as in you lay, you ought to have been the keepers. But, not to enumerate all the caſes in which the law of love, both to God and man, has been violated, nor to point out all the inſtances, in which it ſhould be obſerved, we call upon all to fear the Lord, by aiming to obey his moral precepts, and, eſpecially, by welcoming to their hearts the anointed of God, the Redeemer of man, who is " the end of the law for righteouſneſs to every one that believeth," and without whoſe atoning blood, ſprinkled on his heart, the moſt moral man among us, muſt " lie down in ſorrow." Only fear the Lord," by abandoning all thoſe outward iniquities againſt which his diſpleaſure has been proclaimed—by engaging in thoſe duties to which his precepts urge, and his invitations allure us—by renouncing thoſe carnal hopes which muſt end in bitter diſappointment—by relinquiſhing thoſe ſelf-righteous notions which diſhonor the Saviour, and deſtroy the ſoul, by adhering to that croſs, which is the chriſtians glory, the ruin of ſatan, and the only effectual defeat of ſin. Such are the chief ways by which our fear of Jehovah ought to be expreſſed.

" Serve him in truth with all your heart," our text goes on to enjoin. The evident intimation which theſe words imply, both that there may be a ſervice, inſincere and formal, and that ſuch a ſervice is wholly exceptionable in itſelf, and unacceptable to the Deity, ought

not to paſs without very ſpecial notice. The miſtake is too common in the world, and apt to be too eaſily imbibed and acted upon, that we may ſatisfy Jehovah with thoſe appearances of devotion which are not found and real. But "my ſon, give me thy heart," is his demand. What though we have met to day to thank Jehovah for his goodneſs, while we "conſider how great things he hath done for us." If this gratitude come from no more interior ſource than the lips, it is mockery of Omniſcience, it is inſult to Omnipotence. We aſſemble in his houſe, again, for the purpoſe of humiliation. But if our hearts be not really humbled, under a preſſing and painful ſenſe of guilt, we but continue to incenſe him, and to increaſe and add fuel to the fire of his indignation, which is already kindled. Serve the Lord then, as the text admoniſhes us, in *truth* and with *all the heart*, and all will be well. Let it appear by our ſubſequent lives, by our future conduct, that we have been the better for this day's appointment, and for the exerciſes of the ſanctuary in which we have been employed upon it. Could the humiliation and gratitude of all who are aſſembled throughout our city, on this day, be thus *evinced*, our reformation would be as viſible as if written with a ſunbeam. Our ſecurity amid the ſtorms of war, as real, as though God had "ſet a mark upon us," in token of our preſervation, forbidding every enemy to injure or annoy us. Alas! we have much, very much to be humbled for, as every one who is

in the habit of making obſervations on what paſſes around him, muſt be immediately and ever ſenſible. Hear the oaths of the profane. Witneſs the exceſſes of the intemperate. Contemplate the extravagance of the diſſolute. Dwell on the vices of thoſe, who are "lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God." Obſerve the violations of the ſabbath. Call to mind the neglect of the ſanctuary, and the contempt ſhewn by multitudes to the ordinances of God's houſe. View the coldneſs and lukewarmneſs of thoſe who are, in the main, ſincere, and you will ſee cauſe enough for the queſtion "ſhall not I viſit for theſe things, and ſhall not my ſoul be avenged on ſuch a nation as this?" Alas! if "judgment were to begin at the houſe of God," what a ſweep would be made. How much empty profeſſion would be brought to light—how much contradiction of character in profeſſors to the principles by which they profeſs to be actuated. How much inconſiſtency of conduct with thoſe rules, by which we have ſworn to be governed. Let us then judge ourſelves now, and condemn ourſelves, if we find there is matter of condemnation in us, and thus becoming penitent, reformed and pardoned, we ſhall not be "condemned with the world." Then, though the deſtroying angel ſhould paſs through our city or ſtate, mowing down thouſands by the ſword of war, ſcattering among us the noiſome peſtilence, or pouring upon us any other vial of Almighty wrath, the Governor of the Univerſe, the protector

of his church would ſay to us, "Come my people, enter thou into thy chamber, and ſhut thy doors about thee, hide thyſelf for a little ſeaſon, until the indignation be overpaſt." Or if we were not ſuffered to obtain exemption from temporal calamity, the judgments of God would not, in the end, prove calamitous to us. The fire that conſumed his enemies would only purify us. The chaſtiſements, that in their caſe would only be preludes to a more fearful, to an eternal doom, would in ours be preſervatives from the wrath to come. Looking to the Judge of the Univerſe, as the friend of our ſouls, and breathing after the full enjoyment of his preſence, we would "fall aſleep in Jeſus," and when we awaked, we would be eternally "ſatisfied with his likeneſs."

But we dare not conclude the ſubject (as in ſo doing we ſhould have perſormed but half our duty) without adverting in the

IIId Place to the kind and ſolemn warning in the laſt clauſe of the text. But if ye ſhall ſtill do wickedly; ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your king." Tho' we have no king ſo called, yet the ſpirit of the warning is as applicable to us, and to any people under any form of government, as to the Iſraelites. The words evidently contain a menace to the conſtituted authorities of every country, and to the people over whom they bear the ſword. My brethren, there is great danger of miſunderſtanding and miſconſtruing the proceedings of providence, and againſt theſe miſtakes

and miſtatements, we cannot be too much up on our guard. Do you infer from our late ſucceſſes, that the Lord has no controverſy with us? that we are a people pleaſing in his ſight? that we ſhall go on to proſper to the end? This inference, in regard to the two former particulars, certainly, is incorrect: and in the laſt may be premature. A more correct deduction from late events, would be, that God has not given us up, that he is ſaying to us in the affectionate ſtrain of heſitation, "How ſhall I give thee up, Ephraim. How ſhall I deliver thee Iſrael: how ſhall I make thee as Admah—how ſhall I ſet thee as Zeboim." In this point of view, they are unutterably animating and extenſively encouraging. But if we are ſetting it down as an aſcertained fact, that we are the peculiar favourites of heaven, that God has no complaint againſt us, that he is owning and will own us to the end, we may groſſly deceive ourſelves. The ſingle circumſtance, that this war has been ſuffered to come upon us at all, muſt, to believers in revelation, furniſh ſomething like mathematical demonſtration, that the "fierce anger of the Lord has been, and ſtill is, waxing hot againſt us." Conſider the various ſteps of Providence that preceded the awful ſituation in which we are now found—the length of time we have continued in a ſtate of hoſtility—the deep darkneſs that ſtill reſts on our proſpects of peace—the uncertainty what kind of peace we ſhall at laſt have—the valuable lives that have been, and may ſtill be

ſacrificed, before the purpoſe is accompliſhed—the prodigious expence at which the advantages we do gain, are acquired, let theſe things be conſidered, and the proſperous turns that occaſionally take place in our affairs, and that have recently been multiplied, tho' they furniſh ground of hope, and motives for thankfulneſs, are poor cauſes for triumph. In retracing paſt events, we ſhall find that judgment has ſucceeded judgment—every ſubſequent calamity more alarming than that which preceded it, till, at laſt, we have been compelled to drink the bittereſt cup, that Jehovah ever puts into the hands of offending nations. When it was left to David's choice, whether he and his people ſhould be viſited by famine, peſtilence or ſword, he prefers either of the judgments from the immediate hand of God, to that in which human agency ſhould be employed for his ſcourge. (I *Chron.* xxi. 13.) "I am in a great ſtrait: let me fall now into the hand of the Lord; for very great are his mercies: but let me not fall into the hand of man." When earthquakes or ſtorms, fires or floods, diſeaſe or famine, ſcourge the land, we are obliged to ſtand ſtill and own the hand of God—if we rebel or complain, it is againſt heaven itſelf—there is no alternative between the moſt preſumptuous oppoſition to Jehovah, or the moſt profound ſubmiſſion to his ſtroke. But when the awful curſe of war is upon a people—when they ſee the human hands that are inflicting the blow, when they ſee the immediate ſource

of their ſufferings, as it reſpects human agency, their minds are ſo intent upon thoſe whom they believe to be the guilty authors of their own and their country's woes, that they have neither time nor inclination to eye the directing hand of the great governor of nations. Such a ſtate of things often calls into exerciſe the very worſt paſſions of the human heart. And if a wide difference of opinion happen to exiſt among a people, as to the real origin of their calamities, all the charities of life are apt to be forgotten, all the ſenſibilities of the heart to be congealed, and while every one feels the exiſting evil, he is apt to charge his neighbor and his brother, with having contributed to produce the very ills, which all complain of. This is one reaſon why war is the moſt awful, and the moſt to be deprecated, of all poſſible national calamities.

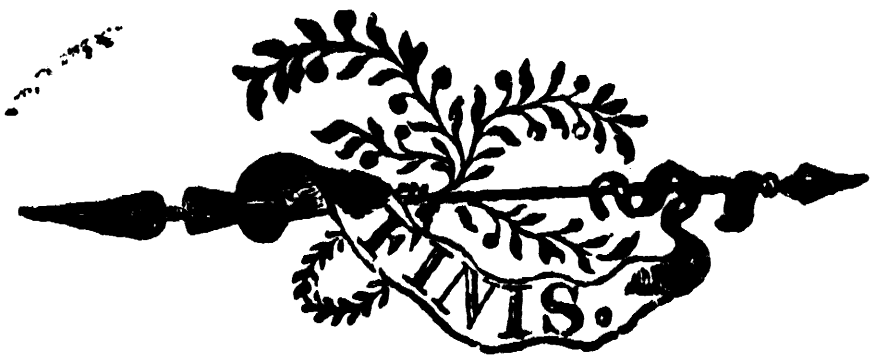
Another reaſon is, that a contempt of death, the king of terrors, is generated, very unfriendly to the cultivation of virtue, and to the ſpirit of religion. Men, that would be thrown into conſternation by his gradual approach, from the ſuppoſed neceſſity of the caſe, contrive to harden themſelves againſt every apprehenſion of it. If it is " conſcience that makes cowards of us all," at ſuch a time the remonſtrances of conſcience will be reſiſted by every man, who knows he is not prepared to die. For religion to revive or to proſper in a country, where the din of arms is heard, and where are ſeen " garments rolled in blood," is not a

common occurrence. The evidently and the awfully demoralizing effects of war, is another of the reaſons which mark it out, as the hotteſt furnace of affliction, into which an angry God ever thruſts offending nations. The ſtagnation of buſineſs, the ceſſation of active and induſtrious habits, the ſcenes of temptation that open themſelves, and various other circumſtances that might be enumerated, added to all the natural miſeries and calamities of ſuch a ſtate of things, ought to make us very humble at the thought, that this laſt, greateſt, heavieſt judgment of the Almighty is ſtill upon us, and we know not how long it may continue. It has been preceded too, in a greater or leſs degree, by all the other ordinary but leſs ſevere ſtrokes of his holy hand. Peſtilence has, in times paſt, ſwept ſeveral of our cities. Conflagrations have conſigned to ruin very large portions of others. Earthquakes have ſhaken an extenſive part of our continent. Tempeſts, floods, and tornadoes have deluged or torn our property and endangered our lives. Armies of inſects have " turned our fruitful fields into barrenneſs," in almoſt a ſingle night, and even the ſmall remnant of our produce, that has been ſaved, poſſeſſes not half the value, nor realizes half the proceeds which it was once able to command. It ſeems as if the Lord had tried every experiment with us; and, in adding war to all our other calamities, he ſeems to ſay to us, " if this does not anſwer the purpoſe, I

have done with you, I have viſited you with every rod, which I am accuſtomed to employ. I have no new expedient to make trial of;" "therefore if ye ſhall ſtill do wickedly, ye ſhall be conſumed, both ye and your king." The advantages which we have enjoyed from the popular form of our government, notwithſtanding incidental evils, have been pre-eminently great. And our obligations to gratitude and obedience have been proportionably augmented. But "if we ſhall ſtill do wickedly," he may contrive to bring us under a yoke, more galling than that which we have not long ſince thrown off. In exchange for the rich privileges and diſtinguiſhing advantages which we have reaped from the preſent national compact, and the happy union and harmony it was deſigned to ſecure, he may cauſe us to be involved in a ſtate of anarchy and diſcord, that may iſſue in the loſs of our liberties, and in the overthrow of our excellent political fabric. Theſe have been actual events in other inſtances; they are poſſible events with regard to us. And who does not tremble and ſhudder at the thought. We may, ere long, have bitter cauſe to tremble and ſhudder at the thing itſelf, "if we ſtill do wickedly." But let us take the kind and friendly warning, that we may not realize the fearful doom to which it points. When the flame of war is once kindled, human calculation cannot aſcertain the extent to which it will ſpread, the ſcenes of deſolation which it will produce, nor the length of time

it will continue burning. When this terrible flame was kindled on our shores, probably not an individual imagined, that upwards of two years after, it would be raging with greater fury than at any previous period, and threatening still to increase. But so in fact we find it. And while we rejoice in late successes, we are to "rejoice with trembling." God may by these partial and temporary advantages, be bringing us to the test, to see what impressions they will make, what effects they will have upon us, and to shape the future course of his providence accordingly. O! may he find us a grateful, a prudent, a calm, a considerate, a virtuous, and enlightened people, not disposed unreasonably to abuse the tokens of his favor, but to turn them to the best account. May we, in this city, be the better in a moral and religious point of view for the appointment and observance of this day. If any new public "work of faith, or labor of love" has taken place among us since this last judgment of God has come upon us, it is to be prized as an evidence that the spirit of religion, appearing in its fruits, is yet with us. We have one such evidence in the increase of charitable societies.

Such things are encouraging. O may there be more fruit of this nature, as well as other kinds, that may abound to our account.

May we take encouragement from the mixture of Divine mercy with fiery justice to act such a part, that the destroying angel may sheath his sword entirely. May we become such

a righteous, and by conſequence ſuch a happy people, that no enemy ſhall dare to invade us; but perceiving us " compaſſed with God's favor as a ſhield," ſhall rather exclaim " How ſhall I curſe whom God hath not curſed: and how ſhall I defy, whom God, hath not defied." May our ſanctuary employments, this day be ſo evidenced as ſincere by their fruits, that whereas this day has been appointed for humiliation and thankſgiving, the next which ſhall be appointed may be ſet apart for thankſgiving only.