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A N
A D D R E S S,

OCCASIONED BY THE
Late INVASION of the
L I B E R T I E S
OF THE
AMERICAN COLONIES

BY THE
BRITISH PARLIAMENT,

Delivered in Charlestown, South Carolina.

BY WILLIAM TENNENT, A. M.

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P R E F A C E.

THIS Address was designed originally only for the Use of the worthy Members of the Author's Church in *Charlestown*, to whom it was delivered, but it is equally adapted to the present State of the *American* Colonies in general. A few Things have been added for this Purpose, but Nothing material has been omitted. The Author's Design, in publishing, was to oblige his Friends, who advised it, and to do some Good to his Country.

W. TENNENT.

(6)

An ADDRESS, &c.

LAMENTATIONS iii, 22.

It is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not.

MY BRETHREN,

THE Prophet *Jeremiah*, from whose Lamentations our Text is taken, lived to see the Ruin of his Nation. His patriotic Soul glowed with an enthusiastic Love for his Country, and he felt all her Miseries by Anticipation. The Man suffers doubly whose Eyes are open to foresee future Calamities. This holy Patriot's Heart was broken long before the Miseries, which he bewails, came upon his Countrymen; inso-much that it is difficult to tell which is the most melancholy, his Prophecy or his History of the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. His Lamentations were evidently written with a Pen dipped in Tears. Every Line is full of Sorrow, and every Word seems big with Distress. But in the Midst of his Complaints we find that
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he justifies G O D, and confesses that it is because his Compassions fail not, that they are not *entirely* consumed. Afflictions, whether public or private, always bring good Men to a Sense of their Sins, and the first Efforts of their Resentments are against themselves.

POLITICAL Subjects do not belong to the Pulpit, but to direct to a right Improvement of the Times is the Duty of every Minister of the Gospel. An unnatural Dispute hath arisen between *Britain* and the *American Colonies*, and the Question is of no less Magnitude than whether we shall continue to enjoy the Privileges of Men and *Britons*, or whether we shall be reduced to a State of the most abject Slavery. It is equally beyond my Province and Inclination to enter into the Merits of this Controversy. It will be sufficient for my Purpose to remark, that we have lived to see our Country involved in a common Calamity. The Cry of Oppression is already heard in one Corner of our Land. The Groans of many Thousands of our Brethren have reached our Ears, and G O D only knows how soon they will be echoed back from every Part of the Continent. A dark Cloud hovers over us. We are threatened with Slavery. War, Pestilence and Earthquakes, those ordinary Ministers of G O D's Vengeance, are transient, partial or local Evils. Slavery is a general and perpetual Evil. It includes all Ages, Classes and Sexes.

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It reaches to every Corner of a Land. It includes the present and all future Generations. It precludes all Hopes of Redress, for it entails those Crimes and that Depravity of Soul which at first procured it. In a Word, it is the prime Minister of GOD's Vengeance, and it has been called upon only in those Cases where less Scourges were unequal to the Demerit of Crimes, or when they had been used to no purpose.

THE first Dictates of blind Passion are to imprecate Vengeance upon the guilty Instruments of our Calamities, and to resolve to endure the greatest Hardships rather than surrender the Privileges we have derived from Nature and our Ancestors.

IT is true, the impartial Judge of the World will vindicate the Cause of the oppressed, and although in righteous Judgment he may leave them to sink under the Load of their Oppressions, yet will he not forget the Oppressor. He hath assured us in his Word, that he will “ vindicate the Poor, and break in Pieces the Oppressor. This is the Portion of the wicked Man with God, and the Heritage of the Oppressors, which they shall receive of the Almighty. If his Children be multiplied, it is for the Sword, and his Offspring shall not be satisfied with Bread. Those that remain of him shall be buried in Death, and his Widow shall not weep. Tho’ he heap up Silver as Dust, and prepare Raiment

as Clay, yet shall the just put it on, and the innocent shall divide the Silver. He buildeth his House as a Moth, and as a Booth that the Keeper maketh. The rich Man shall lie down, but he shall not be gathered. He openeth his Eyes, and he is not. Terrors take hold of him as Waters. A Tempest stealeth him away in the Night; for G O D shall cast upon him, and shall not spare. He would fain flee out of his Hand. Men shall clap their Hands at him, and shall hiss him out of his Place."

NOR is the Use of Means to obtain Relief from our Oppressions inconsistent with the necessary Principles of human Nature, or contrary to the Word of G O D. But there is too much Reason to fear, that while we exclaim against the Instruments of our Calamities, and deliberate about the best Measures to extricate ourselves from them, we forget to exclaim against the prevailing Iniquities of our Country, and to consider them as the only Causes which have drawn down the Frowns of Omnipotence upon us. The Experience of all Ages shews that the surest Way for any Nation to obtain or perpetuate public Blessings, is to acknowledge that G O D who alone can bestow them. It was never known, that a People became unhappy until their Iniquities ripened them for the divine Vengeance. The History of the *Jerwish* Nation is, in this Respect, a striking Lesson to all Mankind. Their
Piety

Piety and Prosperity always kept Pace with each other, and their Defection from GOD was always a Prelude to their Desolation.

IT should be an invariable Rule with *Christians* to regard the Hand of GOD in every Thing which happens, but especially in public Calamities. Not a Blade of Grass is trodden down, nor does a Hair fall from your Heads without his Notice. He overrules likewise the grand Machine of the Universe, and however confused it may appear, yet let *Christians* remember that there is Order in this Confusion. Not one Event is vain, and God's Glory will be the Result of the vast Combination.

THE corrupt Passions of Men, while they aim only at their own Gratification, are the Means whereby God accomplishes his Purposes in the Government of the World. Even the Wrath of Man, the most malevolent of all Passions, "worketh his Will." Devils follow the Malignity of their Natures in all their Actions, but the Almighty carries on, through their Instrumentality, the most valuable Purposes of his Wisdom and Goodness.

NATIONS, like Individuals, have their Vices, which call for Punishment. The Vices of Individuals are seldom fully punished in this World, but it is in this World only that GOD has erected a Tribunal for the Trial and Punishment of national Vices. As Individuals have their Day beyond which

GOD's Patience will not wait, so likewise have Nations. Though he may forbear long, yet the Time *will* come when he will either reduce them to Obedience, or utterly destroy them. The Measure of the Iniquity of the *Amorites* was more than four hundred Years in filling up, but at length it was full, and they were destroyed.

THERE can be no Sign of a Nation's approaching Destruction more certain than its universal Corruption. Ten pious Souls might have saved *Sodom*, and the other Cities of the Plain, from Fire and Sulphur, but many more might not have saved them from some heavy Judgments. We cannot certainly tell when the Day of Vengeance will come, yet we have always Reason to fear it; and it becomes us in a particular Manner, when we behold the Hand of GOD lifted up, to tremble and bow down before him.

IF we examine the religious and moral Character of the Inhabitants of the *British* Empire, we have the utmost Reason to conclude that a Time of general Correction is not far from us. Our Lord found Fault with the *Pharisees* of his Day for being blind to the Signs of the Times. When we behold the western Sky red in the Evening, we expect a fair Day. When we behold the Fields yellow, we know that Harvest is at Hand. These Signs, in the natural World, are not less certain and invariable than the Sign of uni-
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versal moral Depravity in a People being a Prelude to their Destruction. GOD has not thrown the Reins of the Universe out of his Hands, nor will he leave the World to go on at Random. Good Men, who have made it their Business to find out and bewail the Iniquities of our Nation and Country, have been, for Years past, looking for some great and dismal Catastrophe to befall them. The Words of our Text form a Part of their daily Confessions: "It is of the Lord's Mercy that we are not consumed, because his Compassions fail not."

IN order to illustrate the Truth of the Proposition contained in our Text, I shall point out in a few Words the religious and moral Character of our Nation and Country. It will be necessary to include the *British* Nation in this Picture, as their Liberty and Happiness are as much at Stake as the Liberty and Happiness of the Colonies in the present Controversy.

WE cannot survey the *religious* Character of our Nation and Country without complaining, in the first Place, of the universal Prevalence of Infidelity. It has infected not only our reclusive Philosophers, but every Rank and Profession. Even the Coxcomb and Petit Maitre affect to treat the Christian Revelation with Ridicule. It is some Consolation to reflect that this Evil will in Time cure itself, for the principled Infidel will soon be ashamed of Opinions which are now no longer singular,

and which cease to raise him above the most vulgar and contemptible Part of Mankind.

WHAT strange Heresies prevail in our National Churches ! What a general Defection from Articles and Confessions of Faith ! What insidious Interpretations of the Word of God ! There cannot be a more awful Sign of our general Corruption than this Treachery in the Ministers of the Gospel ! How little do we find even of the *Form* of Religion among us ! I do not mean here that there are few who go to Church, or have their Children baptised, or call themselves Christians. There was a Time indeed when these Things were considered as true Badges of the Christian Profession, but in our wiser Age the very Ideas of these things are changed. They are now considered only as Matters of Custom, and in some Cases are complied with only to secure a Title to an Estate, or as legal Qualifications for holding civil Offices.

How few are there that keep the Incense of Prayer daily smoking in their Families ! The Heathens had their Lares and Penates. The Want of Family Worship would have been esteemed a Mark of the Want of Religion in ancient *Rome* and *Athens*.

How shamefully is the religious Instruction of our Children neglected in this Country. It is one of those new Paradoxes in which the present Age is fruitful, that the Mind should be left unprincipled in Religion, until it is
able

able to choose a System for itself. It would be an Affront to your Understandings to show the Absurdity of this Conduct. Would to God there was the same Zeal among us to transmit to our Children the Religion, as there is to transmit the Liberty we derived from our pious Ancestors!

How little do we find of the Influence of the Gospel among those whom Charity obliges us to hope are real *Christians*! Lukewarmness has taken the Place of Zeal, and there is little to distinguish the Disciples of *Jesus Christ* from the rest of the World. The Love of **G O D** has waxed cold in many, and if our Nation and Country were to be judged by the Conduct of **G O D**'s People alone, we should have Reason to forebode the most dreadful Calamities. Yes, my *Christian* Friends, I am sure you subscribe to our Text with Respect to yourselves, "that it is of the Lord's Mercies that you are not consumed."

LET us now examine the *moral* Character of our Nation and Country.

FORMERLY Vices were described by the Classes of Mankind to which they belonged, but we find they have spread themselves so universally among all Ranks in the *British* Empire, that we can no longer describe them in that Manner.

WE shall begin by mentioning the universal Profanation of the Sabbath Day. This is a true Mark of national Impiety, and hence we find

find that it never was forgotten when the *Jews* were reproached, or punished for their national Sins. The Sabbath is now the fixed Day with some for Entertainments and Jaunts of Pleasure, as being most free from the Interruptions of Company, and the Inconvenience of meeting the ordinary Vehicles of Business. The Merchant is now no longer ashamed to own in Company, that he spends his Sabbath in posting his Books, or writing his Letters. I must not except here the Manner in which public Worship is performed among us from being a Profanation of the Lord's Day. A Gentleman would think you injured him greatly if you took his going to Church as a Profession of Religion, or his saying AMEN as an Evidence of his Belief in the Prayers of the Church. Surely it is of the Lord's Mercies that we are not consumed for this Crime!

How much does swearing and cursing abound, and how often is the sacred and eternal NAME profaned among us. Formerly this was the Vice of *low Life* only, but it has now infected the Army, the Navy, the Bar, the Court, and every Order of Men in the higher Ranks of Society. Formerly it was a Vice of the Men only, but it is now common to both Sexes. An affecting Story, a Fly, or any other Insect, will sometimes produce Exclamations from our Ladies, which are equally shocking to Religion and Delicacy. I might here enter into a Detail of the Abuse of Oaths
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in those Cases where Government has made them lawful and necessary. It will only be sufficient to name the Custom-House, our Courts of Justice, and our popular Elections, to remind us that general Perjury belongs to the Catalogue of our national Crimes. It is indeed of the Lord's Mercy that we are not consumed!

DRUNKENNESS, and Intemperance in eating and drinking, form another Class of our Vices. It would take up too much Time to show the mischievous Effects of these Sins upon our Souls, Bodies, Families, and upon Society in general. When we reflect upon the universal Prevalence of this Vice in this Country in particular, we have Reason to say, that it is because the Compassions of the Lord fail not, that we are not consumed!

LET me here draw a Veil over the *secret* Vices of our Nation and Country. I shall not poison your Imaginations by going into a Detail of what the Eye of GOD beholds covered only by the Curtain of Night. It would profane the Pulpit to mention some of these Crimes. If *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, if *Zebaim* and *Admah* in the untaught Ages of the World had Showers of burning Sulphur rained down upon them, it is surely of the Lord's Mercy that our Cities, our Nests of Iniquity, are not consumed!

TALK not of the public Charities of our Nation and Country. The highest Monuments,

ments, we can erect to the Honour of Charity; can never atone for that general Want of Piety, Sobriety, Justice, and Chastity which characterize us.

I conclude our religious and moral Character, therefore, by agreeing with those who declare that Infidelity, Irreligion, Venality, and Vices of every Kind, have never prevailed in a greater Degree, and cannot well rise to a higher Pitch than they have lately gained in our Nation and Country. They prevailed, it is true, in a great Degree, in the dissolute Reign of *Charles* the Second, but they were confined chiefly to the Channel of the Court. The middle and lower Classes of People, and the Inhabitants of Villages and Country Places continued Strangers to them. But this cannot be said of the present Generation. Our common and Country People seem to vie with the first Classes of Mankind in Vices, which were formerly peculiar to them alone.

IF there is any Virtue in the *American* Colonies, or laudable Attention to divine Things among every Class of People, it must be confessed that they are to be found chiefly in that Colony where G O D has begun to lay his Hand upon us. It is true they have degenerated greatly from the Piety, and pure Manners of their Ancestors, but still I am bold to say, from my own Knowledge, that there is more Appearance of the Gospel in *New-England* than in any other of the Colonies. And if

“ Judgment

"Judgment has begun at the House of GOD," what more dreadful Calamities await those who have no Pretence to the Character of his People! Lord enter not into Judgment with us!

WHEN we take a Survey of all the Circumstances which aggravate our Guilt, we have Reason to be confounded. Our Light, Mercies and Privileges have been superior to those of almost any People on the Face of the Earth. The Sun of Prosperity has shone without a Cloud on our *American* Hemisphere. GOD has given us a fruitful Soil, plentiful Harvests, profitable Commerce, free Governments, and repeated Victories over the *native* Enemies of our Country; and to all these Blessings of Nature and Society he has added the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*. The Treasures of Heaven have been exhausted for us. Our Crimes, therefore, have been committed against the greatest Profusions of Love and Grace. Surely it is because "GOD's Compassions fail not," or we should long ago have been consumed for such unparalleled Ingratitude!

BUT further, should you ask, why is the Blow which is aimed at our Liberties so long delayed? Why is the Sword of civil War still at rest in its Scabbard? Why are not our Cities in Flames, and our Streets streaming with Blood, and why is not the Yoke of Bondage rivetted on our Necks? I answer once more, it is because the Compassions of the Lord have not failed towards us!

WHEN the mere Politician weighs the Danger or the Safety of his Country, he computes them in Proportion to its Fortresses, Arms, Money, Provisions, Numbers of fighting Men, and its Enemies; but when the Christian Patriot weighs the Danger and Safety of his Country, he computes them by its Numbers of sinful or praying People, and its Degrees of Holiness and Vice. It is not the Threats or Boastings of our Adversaries, that should make Melancholy sit upon our Countenances. We have more to dread from our Iniquities than our Enemies.

I do not mean to propose in a little Christian Assembly, Measures of Reformation to be adopted by a whole Nation and Country. It will be more to our Purpose to mention the Duty of Individuals upon this alarming Occasion.

CONFESSION, PRAYER, and REFORMATION, are Duties to which every Individual is called, as well for the Welfare of his Country, as for the Sake of his own Salvation. Say not that you are but one, and can do Nothing.--- It is of single Persons that Kingdoms are composed, and that Argument pleads equally against all Reformations. If you cannot save your Country, is it not worth while to save your Souls?

GOD will ever be a Shield to the Righteous, to cover them in the Day of Trouble. It is said that few or no *Christians* perished in the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. Personal Reformation

formation gives personal Safety; and if GOD does not find a Way for the *Christian's* entire Escape in a Time of Calamity, yet he will make that very Calamity the Means of enlarging his Happiness, and Death itself the immediate Door to Glory.

CONFESSION is the first Step to Safety. A Sense of our Crimes is a hopeful Dawn of Deliverance. And here I cannot help repeating a Passage of a Letter which I lately received from an aged Servant of *Jesus Christ*, whom it becomes me to revere; “ If (says my honoured Correspondent) I could hear our People exclaim against their Sins as warmly as against Lord *North*, I should have Hopes of Deliverance. Alas, they hug their Crimes while they decry the Executioner! Were we as harmonious in our Remonstrances against ourselves, as we are against the late oppressive Acts, our Case would not be so doubtful!”

LET us then bow down before the Hand of GOD, and confess our Iniquities with the deepest Prostration of Heart. In three Days (without Repentance) *Nineveh* would have been destroyed. It will be impossible to bring us to the Feet of a boasting Minister of State, if we first humble ourselves properly at the Feet of the Lord.

PRAYER to ALMIGHTY GOD is a powerful Defence against public Calamities. This is a Duty not of more private than public Benefit. To whom does Nature or Re-

velation encourage us to go in all Times of Distress but to him who holds the Hearts of Kings in his Hands, and wields the Sceptre of the Universe. It can be the Business of but a small Part of our Community to plan Schemes for our Deliverance, but we may all co-operate in the Duty of Prayer; and let the Christian Patriot remember, that in an Age and Country when Petitions and Remonstrances to earthly Rulers have lost their Efficacy, Prayer to G O D still possesses, I had almost said, an Almighty Efficacy. The Prayer of one Man once saved a City devoted to Destruction; and it is not attributing too much to it to add, that the Prayers of one Christian Society may yet save our sinking Country.

BUT in vain are Confessions and Prayers, unless we turn from our evil Ways by a thorough Reformation. To this the Gospel of our *Lord Jesus Christ* calls you at the Peril of your Souls, as well as of your Country. To this every Motive from Heaven, Earth, and Hell invites you. A general Reformation, my Brethren, would be a greater Act of Benevolence to our suffering Brethren in the North than all your generous and spirited Contributions. Take G O D, therefore, for your G O D, and become the Disciples of *Jesus Christ*, and be assured of Safety here, and of Crowns of immortal Glory hereafter.

THE END.