

T H E  
A M E R I C A N V I N E,  
A  
S E R M O N,  
P R E A C H E D I N C H R I S T - C H U R C H , P H I L A D E L P H I A ,  
B E F O R E T H E H O N O U R A B L E  
C O N T I N E N T A L C O N G R E S S ,  
J U L Y 2 0 t h , 1 7 7 5 .  
B E I N G T H E D A Y R E C O M M E N D E D B Y T H E M  
F O R A G E N E R A L F A S T  
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U N I T E D E N G L I S H C O L O N I E S  
O F A M E R I C A .

B Y T H E R E V E R E N D  
J A C O B D U C H É , M . A .

P H I L A D E L P H I A .  
P R I N T E D B Y J A M E S H U M P H R E Y S , J U N I O R .

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M, D C C, L X X V.

1775

# PRAYER before SERMON.

*O THOU eternal and exhaustless source of light, and life, and love! In thee we live and move and have our being! Every moment deals to us a portion of thy bounty, and demands the tribute of unceasing praise! Thy name is LOVE! And LOVE the essence of thy nature! The religion thou hast taught us is a religion of love! And love is the principle and end of all thy dispensations!*

*NEVER dost thou send thy judgments abroad into the world, never dost thou suffer thy chastising hand to fall heavy upon thy children, but when they become insensible of that endearing relation, in which they stand to thee and to each other, and thus violate thy eternal living law of love!*

*WE acknowledge, therefore, and adore thy wisdom and goodness in the infliction*

*of national punishments upon national guilt ! Our eyes must be blinded, and our hearts hardened indeed, if we do not see and feel, under our present visitation, the manifest tokens of thy divine displeasure !*

*WE own and lament, that the dark cloud of judgment, which now hangs over our heads, hath risen from our unnumbered sins and rebellions against thee ! Against thee only have we sinned ! To thee only have we been disobedient and ungrateful. We have neglected to improve under thy past corrections. We have shamefully slighted thy past loving-kindnesses. Our prosperity hath rendered us forgetful of thee our GOD, regardless of thine holy ordinances, inattentive to the precepts of thy gospel !*

*BUT yet, spare us, good LORD, spare thy people, whom thou hast redeemed, and let not thine heritage be brought to confusion ! Recall thy ministers of vengeance !*  
*And*

*And put a stop to the unnatural effusion of christian blood!*

*FROM our present grievous calamities, not our merits, but thy mercy, not our foresight but thy providence alone can deliver us. Accept, therefore, the prayers and supplications, that have this day been offered at the foot-stool of thy throne! Accept, for thy WELL-BELOVED's sake, our public acts of penitence and humiliation!*

*GIVE us grace seriously to lay to heart the great danger we are in from our present unhappy divisions! Take away all hatred, bitterness and resentment from our breasts. Enable us to forgive our offending BRETHREN, even as we ourselves look for forgiveness at the hands of our offended GOD!*

*AND O thou, who alone canst make men to be of one mind in an house! Restore that brotherly union and concord,  
which*

*which ought ever to subsist inviolate in the great family to which we belong! And as there is but one body, and one spirit, and one hope of our calling, one LORD, one faith, one baptism, one GOD and FATHER of us all, so may we henceforth be all of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity!*

*FOR this purpose we pray, that thou wouldst give thy blessing to a preached gospel! Enable thy ministring servants of every denomination to be instant in season and out of season, in promoting the great work of christian love: And whilst they are faithfully employed in planting and watering, do thou, LORD of the harvest! crown their labours with a blessed increase!*

*ALL this we ask for the sake and through the merits of thy well-beloved son JESUS CHRIST our LORD, in and through whom*

*whom we have the high and inestimable  
privilege of addressing Thee, as*

Our Father which art in Heaven,  
Ec.

T H E

A M E R I C A N V I N E,

A

S E R M O N, &c.

P S A L M L X X X. V E R S E X I V.

RETURN, WE BESECH THEE, O GOD  
OF HOSTS! LOOK DOWN FROM HEA-  
VEN, AND BEHOLD AND VISIT THIS  
VINE!

I F we could retire awhile, my bre-  
thren, from the sphere of political tu-  
mult, contemplate at leisure the sy-  
stem of the universe, and look beyond se-  
cond causes for the springs and principles  
of motion, we should doubtless be

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able

able to discern in almost every human event, the marks of Sovereign Wisdom, the energy of Infinite Power, and the prevalence of Almighty Goodness; and should thereby be led to acknowledge the immediate influence and operation of the great moral Governor.

NOT only the course of all public transactions, the rise and fall of empires and kingdoms appear to be directed by his omnipotent hand; but his providence is known to extend to the concerns of individuals, to things of the minutest nature, so that, according to the language of inspiration, NOT A SPARROW FALLS TO THE GROUND WITHOUT HIS KNOWLEDGE, AND THE VERY HAIRS OF OUR HEADS ARE NUMBERED.

WHAT a scene of disorder, ruin and desolation would soon be exhibited upon the theatre of the world, was the ALMIGHTY to withdraw his overruling influence! Men, savage in some degree by nature, and more savage by the growth and indulgence of their evil lusts and passions, would soon fall upon each other with a violence and ferocity equal to that of beasts of prey. Ambition, tyranny and vengeance would rage without controul, and the whole world would, ere long, be deluged in blood.

HAPPY, however, for mankind, this is not the case. An all-wise and all-powerful Being sits at the helm. He presides, unseen, in the councils of Princes. He prospers or disappoints them in their projects and undertakings; and renders all the thoughts, intenti-

ons and actions of men subservient to the completion of his own most wise and benevolent purposes.

CONQUEST and defeat, the shouts of the victor, and the cries of the vanquished are from him. The prosperity of nations and the happiness of individuals, public misfortunes and private distresses, plentiful harvests and years of famine, the ravages of war, and the smiles of peace, are all dealt forth by him to the sons of men, at such times and in such degrees, as in his wisdom and goodness he finds expedient for their real welfare. Happy, therefore, that people, who, amid all the variety of changes to which governments as well as individuals are exposed, have placed their sole dependence upon the KING OF KINGS!

WITH these principles in our hearts, and with a sincere purpose of HUMBLING OURSELVES UNDER THE MIGHTY HAND OF GOD, and imploring his gracious interposition under our present public distresses, I would fain hope, that we have all THIS DAY ENTERED THE COURTS OF THE LORD'S HOUSE.

THE trumpet is sound d in Zion. A Fast is proclaimed. A solemn assembly convened. The numerous inhabitants of our extensive colonies, are now prostrate with us before the Throne of Grace, and jointly lifting up their hands and hearts to Heaven in some such supplicatory address as this : RETURN, WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD OF HOSTS ! LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND BEHOLD AND VISIT THIS VINE ! And would to God ! that our united prayers and supplications might

might prevail, that the Lord of mercy would incline his ear, and say to the destroying angel: IT IS ENOUGH—STAY NOW THINE HAND.

IN the Psalm from whence my text is taken, the Royal Author, after having enumerated the many distinguishing favours, with which Heaven had heretofore blessed his church and nation, proceeds in the most earnest manner to deprecate some grievous calamities with which they were at that time oppressed :

GIVE EAR, O SHEPHERD OF ISRAEL, THOU THAT LEADEST JOSEPH LIKE A FLOCK; THOU THAT DWELLEST BETWEEN THE CHERUBIMS, SHINE FORTH!—THOU HAST BROUGHT A VINE OUT OF EGYPT: THOU HAST CAST OUT THE HEATHEN AND PLANTED IT; THOU PREPAREDST ROOM FOR IT, AND DIDST

DIDST CAUSE IT TO TAKE DEEP  
 ROOT, AND IT FILLED THE LAND.  
 THE HILLS WERE COVERED WITH  
 THE SHADOW OF IT, AND THE  
 BOUGHS THEREOF WERE LIKE THE  
 GOODLY CEDARS. SHE SENT OUT  
 HER BOUGHS UNTO THE SEA, AND  
 HER BRANCHES UNTO THE RIVER.  
 WHY HAST THOU THEN BROKEN  
 DOWN HER HEDGES, SO THAT ALL  
 THEY THAT PASS BY THE WAY  
 DO PLUCK HER. THE WILD BOAR  
 OUT OF THE WOOD DOTHT WASTE  
 IT; AND THE WILD BEAST OF THE  
 FIELD DOTHT DEVOUR IT. RETURN,  
 WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD OF HOSTS!  
 LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND  
 BEHOLD AND VISIT THY VINE!

IN applying this passage of scripture  
 to the present solemnity, my observa-  
 tions will turn chiefly upon the bless-  
 ings by which we have hitherto been  
 distinguished, the ungrateful returns

we

we have made to the God of Heaven, for his unmerited goodness, and the only means by which, as a people, we can be re-instated in his favour.

I. GREAT and astonishing have been the blessings of Providence, by which these American colonies have been distinguished from their very first settlements to the present period. They have indeed been a VINEYARD PLANTED BY THE LORD'S RIGHT HAND. And though some gloomy scenes have now and then shaded the brightness of the prospect, yet even these have greatly contributed to their prosperity and enlargement.

IF we look back a little into the annals of America, we shall find, that this very spot, on which our large and populous city now stands, was, less than a century ago, a wild uncultivated desert. The arts and customs of  
civilized

civilized life were here unknown. Nought else was visible, but the sad effects of ignorance, superstition and idolatry. The untutor'd savage roamed the wood, like a beast of prey, stranger to the comforts and advantages of mental culture, involved in Pagan darkness, with scarcely one ray of heavenly truth to irradiate the gloom of nature.

SUCH was the dark and dreary prospect, when Providence conducted our Forefathers to this new world. He took the tender slip from the PAREN I VINE. HE CAST OUT THE HEATHEN AND PLANTED IT. THE HILLS WERE SOON COVERED WITH THE SHADOW OF IT, AND THE BOUGHS THEREOF WERE LIKE THE GOODLY CEDARS. SHE SENT OUT HER BOUGHS UNTO THE SEA, AND HER BRANCHES UNTO THE RIVER.— From NORTH to SOUTH he stretched the extensive line.—From EAST to WEST he had the prospect open——

**THE WILDERNESS AND SOLITARY PLACE WERE MADE GLAD, AND THE DESART REJOICED AND BLOSSOMED LIKE THE ROSE.**

OUR sober Ancestors brought over with them, not only the several useful arts and improvements, of which the natives were ignorant, but a treasure of infinitely greater value, even the charter of **TEMPORAL FREEDOM**, and the records of **ETERNAL TRUTH**. The banners of **CHRISTIAN** and **BRITISH Liberty** were at once unfolded, and these remote parts of the earth were thereby added to the **MESSIAH'S** kingdom.

**NUMBERLESS**, indeed, were the toils, difficulties, and dangers, to which the first founders of these colonies, as well as their successors were exposed, before they arrived at their present height of opulence and splendor. So  
remarkable

remarkable, however, were the interpositions of Providence, that the most inattentive mind must have frequently discerned them.

SCARCELY is there recorded in the annals of history a more rapid series of successes of every kind in the settlement and population of any country on the globe. Whilst favoured with the nurturing care and protection of the mother country, whose fleets and armies, in conjunction with our own, have ever been faithfully and successfully employed in our defence, our common enemies have looked with astonishment and envy upon our rising glory, nor have dared for years to interrupt a repose, purchased, under the smiles of Heaven, by virtue, industry, and British and American valour.

AND happy, my dear brethren, should we still remain, if the parent  
 C 2 would

would be satisfied with such returns from the children, as filial duty would always prompt them to pay, and not exact such an illegal and unrighteous tribute, as by weakening and distressing them, must in the end weaken and distress the parent too.

H E R E then our present calamities commence. Our MORNING JOYS are past—and a NIGHT OF HEAVINESS succeeds — The HEDGES OF LIBERTY, by which we hoped our VINEYARD was secured, ARE BROKEN DOWN, and THEY THAT PASS BY THE WAY, ARE seeking to PLUCK OUR GRAPES.

'TIS not indeed THE WILD BOAR OUT OF THE WOOD, OR THE WILD BEAST OF THE FIELD, that are ready to WASTE AND DEVOUR IT. 'Tis not now a foreign enemy, or the savages of our own wilderness, that have made the cruel and unrighteous assault—But  
it

It is even, thou, BRITAIN, that with merciless and unhallowed hands, wouldst cut down and destroy this BRANCH of thine own VINE, the very BRANCH, which Providence HATH MADE STRONG EVEN FOR THYSELF!

II. INJURED and oppressed as we are, unmeriting the harsh and rigorous treatment, which we have received from such an unexpected quarter, let us, however, look up to an higher cause for the awful infliction; and whilst we are faithfully persevering in the defence of our TEMPORAL RIGHTS, let us humble ourselves before God, lay our hands upon our hearts, and seriously and impartially enquire, what returns we have made to Heaven for its past favours, and whether its present chastisements have not been drawn down upon us by a gross neglect of our SPIRITUAL PRIVILEGES.

HATH

**HATH OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS, then, SHONE FORTH AS THE LIGHT, AND OUR JUST DEALINGS AS THE NOON DAY?—Hath a sense of GOD's unnumbered and unmerited mercies awakened in our souls an ardent affection for our divine Benefactor? Have we been more zealous for the honour of his government and the observance of his laws? Have we testified our zeal by a correspondent practice? By works of piety, beneficence, and public virtue? Have our heads of families been careful to set good examples to their children and servants, by a punctual attendance at the house of God, by a decent and devout behaviour in our solemn assemblies, and by regular, daily, grateful addresses to their heavenly Father in their closets at home?**

**HAVE we been careful to check that overweening fondness of gaiety and pleasure,**

pleasure, which frequently discovers itself in the dispositions of our children?—to check it did I say—yea, to endeavour to root it out of their hearts, and plant and nourish in its room the love of God and of goodness?—In a word, have we been industrious, in our several stations and according to our respective abilities, in propagating the gospel of JESUS CHRIST, as well in sound doctrine as in sound practice? Hath OUR LIGHT for this purpose, so SHONE BEFORE MEN, THAT THEY SEEING OUR GOOD WORKS, have been led TO GLORIFY OUR FATHER WHICH IS IN HEAVEN?—

ALAS! my brethren, have we not rather been so far carried away by the stream of prosperity, as to be forgetful of the source from whence it was derived? So elevated by the prospect, which peace and a successful commerce have opened to us, as to neglect those  
 impressions

impressions of goodness, which former afflictions had left upon our hearts? Have not luxury and vice, the common attendants of wealth and grandeur, too soon made their appearance amongst us, and begun to spread a dangerous infection through our hitherto healthy and thriving state? Amid the hurry and tumult of the passions, hath not conscience fallen asleep? Hath not a false security gained ground? And a worldly spirit too generally prevailed?

**AND** is it not for this, that the **ALMIGHTY** hath bared his arm against us?—Is it not for this, that he now speaks to us in thunder? And, as we would not be drawn by the cords of his love, that he is now chastising us with the rods of his wrath? Is it not for this, that the flames of an **UNNATURAL** **WAR** have burst forth in the very bowels of our native land? And that

our

our garments have been already stained with kindred blood?—

O MY GOD! let this suffice!—let MERCY interpose, and stay the avenging hand of JUSTICE!

FOR behold! we now desire to TURN UNTO THEE WITH ALL OUR HEARTS, WITH FASTING, AND WITH WEeping AND WITH MOURNING! We know, that MERCY is thy darling attribute, and that JUDGMENT is a STRANGE WORK to thee!—RETURN then, WE BESEECH THEE, O GOD OF HOSTS! LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN! And once more BEHOLD AND VISIT THIS VINE!

III. BUT WHEREWITHAL, my dear brethren, SHALL WE COME BEFORE THE LORD, AND BOW OURSELVES BEFORE THE HIGH GOD? With what sacrifice shall we approach his altar?

With what language, or by what conduct shall we invite him to return ?

THE SACRIFICE OF GOD IS A BROKEN SPIRIT : A BROKEN AND A CONTRITE HEART, O GOD, THOU WILT NOT DESPISE. PRAYER and SUPPLICATION, is a language, which he will not refuse to hear : And REPENTANCE and REFORMATION of life, through the redeeming power of his EVER-BLESSED SON, is the only conduct, that will reinstate us in his favour.

LET us adore, then, the divine wisdom and goodness, for putting it into the hearts of that Honourable Assembly, now entrusted with the great cause of American Liberty, to call upon the whole people, whom they represent, in the most solemn and affectionate manner, to join in deprecating the Divine displeasure, by one general  
act

act of religious humiliation. Heaven be praised, that they have hereby shewn their attention and zeal for our eternal as well as temporal welfare.

Go on, ye chosen band of Christian Patriots! Testify to the world, by your example as well as by your counsels, that ye are equally the foes of VICE and of SLAVERY——Banish the Syren LUXURY, with all her train of fascinating pleasures, idle dissipation, and expensive amusements from our borders. Call upon honest industry, sober frugality, simplicity of manners, plain hospitality and christian benevolence to throw down the usurpers, and take possession of their seats. Recommend every species of reformation, that will have a tendency to promote the glory of GOD, the interest of the Gospel of JESUS, and all those private and public virtues, upon the basis of which alone,

the superstructure of true Liberty can be erected.

To second your virtuous attempts, let the **MINISTERS** of the everlasting gospel, the embassadors of **JESUS CHRIST**, step forth with fresh zeal and courage to their duty. Let them remember, that they are not only answerable for their own souls, but for the souls of those under their care. “They are set as watchmen over the house of Israel.”—Let them, therefore, **CRY ALOUD AND SPARE NOT**: let them **LIFT UP THEIR VOICE AS A TRUMPET, AND SHEW ISRAEL THEIR TRANSGRESSION, AND THE HOUSE OF JACOB THEIR SIN.**

**FROM** these let the **MAGISTRATES** take the alarm—Let them boldly rebuke vice—Let them punish immorality and profaneness without respect to rank or fortune—Let them become **MINISTERS**

NISTERS of the GOSPEL as well as MINISTERS of JUSTICE — Let them inculcate the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, as far as their influence and authority extends.

WHEN MAGISTRATES and MINISTERS shall ardently conspire for such pious and benevolent purposes— Heaven will surely smile upon their labours of love ; and the people committed to their charge will GROW IN GRACE, and become eminent examples of every divine and social virtue.

WE cannot expect, my dear brethren, that the GOD OF HOSTS WILL RETURN, LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND BEHOLD AND VISIT OUR VINE ; that he will cause his sun to shine, and his refreshing dews and rains to ~~descend~~ upon it, unless we are careful to cultivate and improve the soil, and to root out every useless noxious

*descend*

ious

ious weed, that will impede its growth. By neglecting this, we shall be in danger of incurring the dreadful sentence denounced against the barren fig-tree, CUT IT DOWN: WHY CUMBERETH IT THE GROUND?

BUT whilst I am recommending in general those essential branches of a true reformation, piety and gratitude to GOD, repentance and humiliation for past neglects, together with the revival of every private and public virtue, which can adorn and dignify the citizen and the christian, let me not forget to remind you, at this awful season in particular, of the great gospel duty of CHARITY, which will ever prompt us to sympathize with the distresses, and to relieve the wants of our brethren.

WHILE prosperity stretches her silken banner over our heads, and administers a continual supply of the comforts

forts and enjoyments of life, let us not be content to repose at ease beneath her friendly shade, and selfishly and solitarily reach forth our hands to take her cup of bliss, whilst thousands are suffering, neglected beside us, and ten thousands at our right-hand. In these calamitous times at least, let us deem it **BETTER TO GO TO THE HOUSE OF MOURNING THAN TO THE HOUSE OF FEASTING.** Let us cheerfully sacrifice our hours of entertainment and convivial mirth, and be willing to contract our usual expences, that we may have leisure **TO WEEP WITH THEM THAT WEEP,** and have somewhat to spare for the relief of them that want.

FOR, alas! if arms must decide the unnatural contest, and Heaven should even smile upon our righteous cause, our success cannot be purchased without many a tear, on the part of the victor as well as the vanquished. An

anxious

anxious parent may be afflicted with the melancholy tidings of the death of an only Son—A fond wife may be plunged into all the bitterness of woe, upon reading the name of her affectionate spouse among the number of the slain—A beloved child may listen with an heart-felt anguish to the sad story of his father's fall—And all this load of misery may be dreadfully accumulated by the languors of disease, and the frowns of poverty.

OUR fasting and humiliation, therefore, will stand us in no stead, unless, whilst we are seeking TO LOOSE THE BANDS OF WICKEDNESS in OUR OWN hearts, we endeavour likewise TO UNDO THE HEAVY BURDENS OF OTHERS, AND TO LET THE OPPRESSED GO FREE—unless we DEAL OUR BREAD TO THE HUNGRY, AND BRING THE POOR THAT ARE CAST OUT INTO OUR HOUSES—WHEN WE SEE THE NAKED, THAT

THAT WE COVER HIM, AND HIDE NOT OURSELVES FROM OUR OWN FLESH.

IF our hearts and hands are employed in such deeds of beneficence and love, OUR LIGHT SHALL BREAK FORTH AS THE MORNING, AND OUR HEALTH SHALL SPRING FORTH SPEEDILY: OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS SHALL GO BEFORE US: THE GLORY OF THE LORD SHALL BE OUR REAR-WARD.

IN a word, if we would wish THE GOD OF HOSTS TO RETURN, TO LOOK DOWN FROM HEAVEN AND BEHOLD AND VISIT our American VINE, we must be prepared to meet him by such heavenly tempers and dispositions, as alone can testify our vital union and communion with him. Happy, if we find him a reconciled God in CHRIST JESUS! Thrice happy, if our faith has fixed us to the ROCK OF AGES! Then indeed the rude winds

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may

may blow, the billows of public or private adversity may rise and rage : But we shall stand collected and secure, like the stately cedars of the mountain, amid the general storm.

F I N I S.

*For shine in the third line from the bottom of page 29  
read descend.*