

# SERMON,

DELIVERED AT CHARLESTOWN, JULY 23, 1812.

THE DAY APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR AND COUNCIL OF MASSACHUSETTS, TO BE OBSERVED IN

## FASTING AND PRAYER

THROUGHOUT THE COMMONWEALTH;

IN CONSEQUENCE OF A DECLARATION OF

## WAR WITH GREAT BRITAIN.

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**THE following discourse was delivered, PART I. in the morning  
PART II. in the afternoon. The absence of the author prevented an ear-  
lier appearance of this discourse.**

# SERMON.

## TITUS III. 1.

*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.*

## JOEL II. 1, 2.

*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain : let all the inhabitants of the land tremble ; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains.*

**O**UR country, in the Providence of God, and as a just punishment for our national sins, is now involved in a state of calamity and danger, which loudly calls for the exercise of all the wisdom of our wisest men, and for all the best exertions of christians of every class and denomination. A darker day for our country, I believe, was never witnessed by the oldest of the present generation, and probably by none of our ancestors. The darkness that envelops our country is a darkness which is felt, and felt the more sensibly, because the calamitous event,

which has created its deepest gloom, was, to a great portion of the nation, sudden and unexpected.

In this state of things, our chief Magistrate and his council, in their wisdom, have thought fit, in conformity to scripture example, and that also of our pious ancestors, in like circumstances, to appoint this day, to be kept as a day of humiliation, fasting, and prayer. In fulfilment of a part of the appropriate duties of this day, we are here assembled before God, in his sanctuary, to unite in solemn acts of humiliation and social worship.

In the services of this day, an important, and in these times of party feelings and animosity, a very delicate and difficult part, devolves on the ministers of religion. It is their business to lead in the devotions, and to dispense the public instructions of the sanctuary. It is expected that the priest's lips should preserve knowledge, that they should have understanding of the times;\* and be able to give a proper lead to the religious public. In the divided state of opinion in respect to the causes which have involved us in our present calamities, it will readily be perceived, that a minister can hardly perform his duty, at once faithfully, and acceptably, to all parties. Far be it from me to increase irritations already wrought up to an alarming height; rather would I allay them, by all proper applications. I would avoid giving just occasion of offence to any man. Conscious that I love my country, and that I have sought, and am still ardently seeking, to promote its true interests, so far as I understand them, to

\* 1 Chron. xii. 32.

which my past life will witness, I will cherish a hope, that while I this day conscientiously discharge my duty, choosing out the most acceptable words, and feeling hearty good will toward all my fellow-citizens of whatever party or denomination, none will be offended.

For the purpose of bringing before you some of the appropriate duties incumbent on us this day, and in these times, both as citizens and christians, I have selected, as topics of present discourse, a charge of Paul the apostle to Titus, and another charge of God himself to his prophet Joel, both now obligatory on the ministers of the gospel. These charges have already been recited at the head of this discourse.

The duties of both ministers and people in times like the present, are in these passages summarily prescribed. As we are not without danger from the violence of party feelings, of having the authority of our rulers and laws violated, as they have already been in some parts of our country, in a manner highly alarming, and most humiliating and disgraceful to our nation, it becomes the duty of ministers to “put the people in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, and to obey magistrates.” And as we have abundant indications, that “the day of the Lord is approaching; that it is nigh at hand; a day of darkness and gloominess; a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains;” it is no less incumbent on them, as watchmen, to “Blow the trumpet in Zion,” and to sound an alarm from the sanctuary of God. These duties I shall endeavor humbly and faithfully to discharge this day.

The duties of the people, in reference to the first charge, are “to be ready to every good work;” to fulfil all the duties which belong to them, as peaceable, good citizens, manifesting due respect for all legitimate rulers, yielding a prompt and willing obedience to all the wholesome laws of the land, shewing a willing mind for every kind service, as well toward those who differ from, as those who agree with them, in religious and political opinions, and in every thing studying the things which make for peace.

In reference to the second charge, it is the duty of the people to “tremble.” In times of imminent danger, when tokens of God’s displeasure toward a nation are of such a nature, and so multiplied, as to constitute what the prophet figuratively styles, “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds, and of thick darkness;” and God, in consequence, directs his ministers to blow the trumpet in his sanctuary, it is the duty of the assembled congregation to take the alarm, to tremble at the near approach of the divine judgments, to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God; to repent and deprecate his displeasure, and to implore his pardon, deliverance and salvation.

Such, in brief, my brethren, are our respective duties this day. With a view more distinctly and fully to illustrate and enforce them, I shall invite your attention, First, to the class of duties involved in the charge, given by Paul to Titus; and Secondly, to those contained in the charge given by God himself, to his prophet Joel.

## PART I.

*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.*

**OF** the various relations of life, that of magistrates and subjects, or of rulers, and people is of the highest importance to the existence and welfare of civil society. Accordingly, God in his word has given us a variety of precepts prescribing the duties of this relation, which claim the serious attention of the members of every civil community, and which must be duly regarded by all, as they would hope to enjoy the blessings of good government, or an interest in the privileges and hopes of the gospel. To explain and inculcate these duties, constitutes an important part of that counsel of God, which the ministers of Christ are bound to declare to men.

Among the variety of the precepts alluded to, I shall cite the following only, which are explicit. “I counsel thee, (said Solomon,) to keep the king’s commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.”\* “And whosoever (said Ezra) will not do the law of thy God, and the law of the king; (of course the laws of God and the king must accord

\* Eccl. viii. 2.

with each other,) let judgment be executed speedily upon him, whether it be unto death or to banishment, or to confiscation of goods, or to imprisonment.”\* The author of the text, in his epistle to the Romans, is very full on this subject. “Let every soul be subject to the higher powers: For there is no power, but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist shall receive to themselves condemnation. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good and thou shalt have praise of the same. For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid, for he beareth not the sword in vain; for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore ye must needs be subject not only for wrath, but for conscience sake. For this cause pay ye tribute also; for they are God’s ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues, tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.”† To these precepts I only subjoin that in the text, “*Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.*”

It is worthy of particular remark here, that the Apostle, while enumerating our duties to rulers, describes the character and virtues, which they ought to possess. It is expected that rulers, as they would secure a willing obe-

\* Ezra vii. 26.

† Rom. xiii. 1—7.

dience to their government on the part of the people, should be a "terror, not to good works, but to the evil," and that they should be "ministers of God for good," to those whom they govern.

By *principalities*, or governments, and *powers*, we may understand the supreme authority of a nation, by whatever title designated, whether Emperor, King, or President; and by *magistrates*, those who act under them, for the preservation of order, and the administration of justice, as governors, judges, and all others, who are charged with the execution of the laws of the land. The christians, who were to be admonished of their duty to their rulers, it seems, had been taught by some Judaizing teachers, that no obedience was due to heathen magistrates from the worshippers of the true God, the tendency of which doctrine was to make both Jewish and Gentile believers disobedient to the government and laws, which gave them protection, to expose them to punishment, as evil doers, and thus to bring reproach on the christian religion. The Apostles, far from exciting their disciples to acts of sedition and rebellion against legitimate authority, on the contrary, enjoined strict obedience in all things that were lawful, and not contrary to the laws of God, and the dictates of an enlightened conscience; shewing that the gospel, rightly understood and preached, instead of weakening the hands of rulers, tended greatly to their support and success, when engaged in a proper discharge of their public duties.

The general precept in the text, however, is not to be received in an unqualified sense, but is obviously to be

understood with such limitations, as reason, the civil constitutions of a country, and the principles of our religion suggest. Implicit obedience to rulers, whether their laws and requirements are conformable to the laws of God, to the civil constitutions under which they act, to the rules of justice and equity, or not, is not here enjoined by the apostle. The scriptures are consistent with themselves, and must be so interpreted. If rulers, regardless of their responsibility to God, and of the rights of those whom they are appointed to govern, should pervert their authority, to sanction injustice, impiety and vice, to oppress and impoverish those whom it is their duty to protect and cherish, or to require a violation of the dictates of conscience, or the laws of God, disobedience becomes a duty; and cases may exist, though they should be extreme cases, where resistance may become expedient, and even necessary. On this principle was founded that resistance and war, which ended in the establishment of the freedom and independence of our nation.

When a ruler violates the constitution under which he holds his authority, he has no claim to obedience, as to that act, from those whom he governs; but has just cause to expect their resistance. No truth can be more obvious, than that the authority of God is paramount to all human jurisdiction. When rulers enact laws in violation of the laws of God, they counteract the design of their office, and are not to be obeyed; for they are appointed to be the ministers of God for good, and to be a terror to evil doers. Should they by law abolish the christian sabbath, or require the violation of

it, or forbid christian worship, and enjoin that of a false religion, it is plainly no part of duty, in a christian nation, to obey such laws. Of the same nature is the waging of unjust war, in which case the citizens have a right to refuse their aid in carrying it on. Indeed, it is their duty, so to do, if satisfied of the unlawfulness of such war, as they would avoid partaking in the guilt of shedding innocent blood.

The celebrated Grotius, the best authority extant on the law of nations, has the following pertinent observations on this subject. If citizens are commanded to take up arms in a cause, which to them appears evidently unjust, "they ought altogether to forbear, for that *God* is rather to be obeyed than *man*. To justify subjects for refusing to execute the wicked commands of their rulers, we have several examples in the sacred scriptures." "Where the subject doth not only doubt the lawfulness of the war, but is by very probable arguments induced to believe it unjust; especially, if that war be *offensive*, and not defensive, he is bound to abstain." In another place, this great man adds: "That the ground of a war being unjust, (although it be solemnly undertaken as to the manner) yet are all those acts that are done in it unjust, so that they that shall knowingly commit such acts, or assist in the doing of them, are included in the number of those, who, without repentance, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." Such were the sentiments of this distinguished writer; and they appear consonant both to sound reason and to the holy scriptures. In the Old Testament we find Daniel, and other ancient worthies, steadfastly refusing to yield obedience to

the edicts of impious tyrants, enjoining the worship of idols, choosing rather to encounter fierce lions, and to be exposed to a burning fiery furnace, than to violate the sacred laws of God, and the dictates of their own consciences.

In matters of religion we are to call no man master. The apostles, while they communicated a system of the purest morality, and exemplified it in their own conduct, enjoined men not to renounce the gospel, or to violate its sacred obligations from the love of life, or the prospect of the most alluring worldly advantages. Christians were required to go every consistent length in obeying the commands of their legitimate rulers; but whenever, in their consciences, they considered such commands, as incompatible with the will of God, they then felt, that their obligation to obedience ceased, it being clearly incumbent on them to obey God rather than man.

I add one other observation in this connection,—that the exhortation to obey rulers does not prohibit due attention to our own rights as citizens. We are bound vigilantly to guard these rights, as a sacred deposit, and to defend them at every hazard against the encroachments of arbitrary power. There are reciprocal rights belonging to magistrates and subjects, founded in reason, and the constitution which binds them together. Authority is delegated by the people to those who are constitutionally appointed to govern them, for the protection of the innocent, and the punishment of the guilty. Whenever this authority is abused, and perverted to different and opposite purposes, redress is to be sought in legal

**and constitutional ways, either by respectful petitions and remonstrances, or if these should prove ineffectual, by removing such unworthy rulers from office, in the regular use of freedom in elections, (where the government is elective) doing every thing with a sacred regard to the safety and welfare of the state.\***

\* In the delivery of this discourse, the duties involved in the apostle's charge in the text, were enumerated and enforced, at some length. It was particularly stated, that under the limitations mentioned, the people owed to their magistrates, honor, support and obedience; and to them and to their fellow citizens at large, they were obligated to a diligent performance of "every good work," embracing piety toward God, and sobriety, industry, frugality, honesty, and justice, in respect to themselves, their families, and in their dealings, and intercourse with others; all which duties are summed up in the exhortation of the apostle, to be addressed to all good citizens; to "lead a quite and peaceable life in *ALL godliness and honesty.*"

This part of the discourse, being less appropriate to the particular design of the day, for the purpose of reducing it to a shorter compass, is omitted in the printing.

## PART II.

*Blow ye the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in my holy mountain : let all the inhabitants of the land tremble ; for the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand. A day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains.*

**W**HEN the Israelites were journeying through the wilderness, Moses was directed to make two trumpets of silver, which the sons of Aaron, the priests, were to use on certain occasions, and for purposes particularly specified. Among them were the following :—“ If ye go to war in your land, against the enemy that oppresseth you, then (the priests) shall blow an alarm with the trumpets ; and ye shall be remembered before the Lord your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies. Also in the day of your gladness, (or thanksgivings) and in your solemn days, (or days of fasting and humiliation) ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings, and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings ; that they may be to you for a memorial before your God.”\*

\* Numb. ch. x. 1—10.

**In allusion to this divine institution, the prophet in the text was directed, to “ Blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in the holy mountain,” for the purpose of awakening the attention of the people to the tremendous judgments of God, which awaited them, as the just punishment of their apostacy from God, and ingratitude for his blessings. As the blowing of these silver trumpets, and sounding the alarm to the people, was by God himself made the express duty of the priests and of the prophets; we may infer, that it now belongs to the office of ministers, whenever their country is threatened with the judgments of heaven, faithfully to sound the alarm, to awaken the attention of the people to the causes of the judgments, and to warn them to repent.**

**In the days of the prophets, under the Jewish dispensation, certain men were elevated to the responsible station of watchmen, answering to ministers of the gospel under the Christian dispensation, whose office is described in the prophecy of Ezekiel,† as follows: “ If when the watchman seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people, then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning, his blood shall be upon him; but he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come and take *any* person from**

\* Ch. xxxiii. 3—10.

among them, he is taken away in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel ; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die ; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity ; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it ; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity ; but thou hast delivered thy soul." On this passage the margin has the following comment : " He sheweth that the people ought to have continually governors and teachers, who may have a care over them, and warn them ever of the dangers which are at hand. The wicked shall not escape punishment, though the watchmen be negligent ; but if the watchmen blow the trumpet, and then they will not obey, they shall deserve double punishment."\*

\* In times of great degeneracy and wickedness, watchmen, both in the civil and priestly office, who faithfully discharge their duties, and boldly warn the people of their dangers, put at hazard their worldly comforts, their peace, and, not unfrequently, their lives. Thus in the days of the prophet Jeremiah, who faithfully proclaimed to the house of Israel, the tremendous judgments to which their sins had exposed them, some of the baser sort, irritated at his plain and cutting reproofs,—said, " Come, let us devise devices against Jeremiah ; let us smite him with (or *for*) the tongue, and let us not give heed to any of his words."\*—This prophet, for his fidelity, was afterwards most cruelly persecuted, and finally stoned to death in Egypt. The prophet Micaiah, for his honesty and fidelity, in warning the king of Israel of the fatal consequences of his engaging in an unjust war against Ramoth-gilead, in opposition to the flattering and deceitful predictions of certain false prophets, was first, insultingly " smitten on the cheek," by one of his false brethren, and afterwards, by command of the king " put in prison," and ordered to be " fed with the bread of affliction, and water of affliction."† And so it has fared with faithful ministers, in degenerate

\* Jer. xxxviii. 13.

† 1 Kings, xxii. 24, 27.

**Our wise, vigilant, and faithful governor has proclaimed our present dangers, and the ministers of the gospel, as watchmen, are called upon to echo the warning voice, that the people may hear, and tremble, and repent.**

**At the period when the prophet, in the text, was commanded to blow the trumpet in Zion, and to sound an alarm, the land of Israel was visited with a most formidable army of locusts, whose progress through the country resembled that of a desolating fire. Before them the fields were verdant and fruitful as Eden; behind them like a barren wilderness. This calamity was so extensive and awful, that the prophet describes the season of its continuance, as “a day of darkness and gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness.”**

**The calamity proclaimed by him who is elevated at the head of this Commonwealth, as our Watchman, to give us warning of our dangers, and on account of which, specially this day of fasting and prayer, has been appointed, is the WAR, in which “it has pleased the Almighty Ruler in this World, in his righteous Providence, to permit us to be engaged;” a war unusually afflicting and portentous of evils to our country, because waged, “against the nation from which we are descended,” and therefore unnat-**

**mes, ever since. If then ministers now, in the pious, temperate, but firm and honest discharge of their duty, should meet with opposition and insult, and slander from those, who cannot endure sound doctrine,” let them remember the words of the apostle, “Brethren, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you; but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.—Wherefore let them that suffer, according to the will of God, commit their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.”\***

\* 1 Pet. iv. 12, 13, 14, 19,

ural, and nearly resembling a civil war, which of all others is the most affrontive to heaven, and the most distressing to the finest and best feelings of our nature.— A war, it is added, in the proclamation, against a nation, “ which for many generations has been the bulwark of the religion we profess ;” yes, let me add, against a nation, which is still the bulwark of this religion, and which has done for years past, and is still doing, under Providence, more than all other nations beside for its defence, and its propagation through the world.—A nation which embosoms a great multitude of devout men and women, precious pledges of her safety, and formidable for her defence against all her assailants ; whose prayers, like a cloud of incense, daily ascend up before the throne of God for protection ;—against such a nation as this, sheltered behind the shield of omnipotence, our rulers have been permitted, in the righteous providence and displeasure of God, to engage our country, not in a *defensive*, but *offensive* war.

A war, in the view of it which we have now taken, (and there are other views of it, in respect to the comparative strength and state of preparation of the two countries engaged, which the luminous publications of the day have made familiar to your minds, which are equally strong and impressive, as to its calamitous effects, and probable disastrous and ruinous issue,) I say, a war, in the single *religious* view of it, which we have now taken, is an event sufficient of itself to produce for our country, “ a day of darkness and gloominess.” And when we add to this, the other views of it alluded to, and particularly, when the loss of human lives, the waste of property, the corruption of morals, and the ten thousand

other nameless and incalculable evils, which ever follow in the train of war, are taken into the account, it will surely become for our country, "a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread on the mountains." If there ever was a time in our country, when the ministers of religion were called upon to blow the trumpet in Zion, to sound the alarm in the sanctuary of the most high God, the present is such a time. If ever there was cause for the inhabitants of any land to tremble, we of this nation have now reason to tremble, on account of the present war, and in view of the prospects which it opens before us, especially if it be not speedily terminated.

As this war is the sole occasion of the appointment of this day of humiliation before God, and by the Proclamation is distinctly brought before us for our consideration, it is proper we should religiously contemplate it, both as to its causes and its effects. This is necessary indeed, in order to regulate our own conduct concerning it.

That it is lawful and right to discuss the measures of government in respectful and decent language, is so obvious to freemen like ourselves, who from our childhood have been in the constant practice of it, and is so amply secured by our free constitutions, that I shall take it for granted. There is nothing in such conduct incompatible with a due subjection and obedience to our legitimate rulers. In regard to the war, which has placed our country in its present "aweful and alarming circumstances," it is not only the right, but the sacred duty of every man seriously to consider it, and to determine whether he can or cannot conscientiously give it his support. I judge

**for no one but myself. I cannot be denied the right of forming an opinion on a measure so momentous in its consequences to our dearest interests; nor of declaring it, when formed, officially as your watchman. It is my duty so to do, as I regard the safety of my own soul.\***

**As to the reasons which have been publicly assigned by our rulers for declaring the present war, after faithfully considering them for myself, by the aid of the best lights I could command, I am free to say explicitly and publicly, these reasons do not satisfy me, either as to its justice, its necessity, or its expediency. Others, I know, who have had the same means of judging, as myself, in their examination have come to a different conclusion. It is well known also, that throughout our country, while there is a large portion of the citizens, whose voice is in favor of this war, there is also a great multitude, among whom are not a few of our ablest statesmen, and best citizens, whose opinions deserve and will command respect, whose voice has been lifted up loudly and decidedly against it. This is not the time, nor the place, nor am I the person, to enter into a course of reasoning on this subject, to shew who are right, whether the supporters, or the opposers, of the present war. This has been already done, by abler hands, on both sides of the question, whose elaborate productions are before the public. These will be consulted by all who are not already satisfied. Both parties are responsible to God for their opinions and conduct in regard to this war. Those who voluntarily engage in supporting and carrying it on, profess to feel justified in so doing. I am not their judge. While they are permitted, without resistance, to pursue what**

\* See Ezek. xxxiii. 6. before quoted.

they consider their duty, it is hoped, that in a country, which glories in the enjoyment of civil and religious freedom, those who are conscientiously opposed to it, and think it their duty, by all peaceable, constitutional, and lawful means, to bring it to a speedy close, and to effect a safe and equitable peace, will be protected in their rights, and supported in the discharge of their duties. It is peculiarly incumbent on all, who hold different opinions in these critical times, to study the things which make for peace, to exercise mutual candor and forbearance, and to provoke one another, not unto wrath and strife, but unto love and good works.

In this spirit, I would make a few further observations on this subject, for the purpose of bringing more clearly to view our present evils and dangers, and to prompt to all suitable exertions to avert them.

War, under the most favorable circumstances, is a great and awful calamity, and always has been considered, as one of the most dreadful scourges of God, on a guilty nation. Many of you, who now hear me, well remember the eight years war with Great Britain, which was the price paid for our liberties and establishment, as a nation. This war, with few exceptions, was considered by the American people, as a just and necessary war. Men of all classes united with a zeal, bordering on enthusiasm, in carrying it on. One soul animated almost the whole body of the citizens. The counsels of the wise, the prayers of the pious, and the skill and courage of the bravest of our countrymen, with a WASHINGTON at their head, were all combined in its support. This war had an object, both important and attainable, and which, after a

noble struggle, was attained. This object was the vindication of the sacred rights and liberties of the people, and their ultimate establishment, as an independent nation. Yet, under all these favorable circumstances, what sacrifices were made ; what privations and sufferings were endured ; what miseries were entailed on thousands of our unhappy countrymen ? Recollect the awful conflagration, which in a few hours laid this town in ashes, and forced its distressed and impoverished inhabitants to wander forlorn through the country, dependent on the charity of strangers. Other towns, not a few, and their inhabitants, afterwards shared similar misfortunes. What an immense amount of property was wasted ? How many valuable lives were sacrificed in battle ; how many more perished by sickness, and in loathsome prisons ? How were widows and fatherless children, and childless parents, multiplied throughout the country ? And worst of all, what a dreadful change was produced by this war in the religious principles, morals, and regular habits of the people, the pernicious effects of which have ever since been visible, and will not cease to be felt and lamented, to the latest generation. But no one can adequately describe the evils even of this war, than which no one of equal length was ever conducted throughout by men more wise, or under circumstances more favorable, as to its political and moral effects on the nation.

What a contrast does the war in which we are now engaged with the same power form, to that which we have just described ? Compare, if you will, the men who were then, and who are now, at the head of our nation, and at the head of our armies !! The present war, moreover, is far from being generally popular. Large and

respectable minorities in both branches of the national Legislature, were decidedly opposed to it, and the minority of one branch have published their able and solemn protest against it. The same spirit of opposition prevails throughout some whole states, and pervades in degree the whole country, and is manifested in Memorials, Resolutions, and Remonstrances. The nation, it cannot and should not be concealed, is divided concerning this war. Multitudes, among the most competent to form a judgment on the subject, consider it as an unjust, unnecessary and ruinous war: without a definite or attainable object; a war, the *tendency* of which, if not the *design*, is to inflame our resentments against a christian nation, among whom are the sepulchres and ashes of our ancestors, and with whom we ought on every principle, to endeavour to live in peace; a nation that is manfully struggling for existence, and the protection of the small portion of liberty which remains in the old world; and to throw us into the *fatal* embraces of the tyrant of Europe, the insatiable devourer of every republic on earth, except our own. A war, in the opinion of many, which a christian nation cannot pursue, without incurring the awful stain of blood guiltiness. With such views, how can good men, how can CHRISTIANS, give this war their sanction, and support, or offer their prayers for its success? What good man, indeed, who has a mind capable of comprehending the consequences of success in this war, on our part, in the extent that is contemplated by at least some, who are its advocates, would not deprecate it as one of the most awful calamities, that could befall the world?—But a nation so divided, so totally unprepared for war, as ours, were our cause even a just one, could not reasonably hope for success.

What then are we to expect from the contest in which we are engaging, but the ruin of our commerce, the depreciation and abandonment of estates, now among the most valuable, in our commercial towns; the sacrifice of an immense property of our citizens, which is now in foreign countries, beyond our control, or on the ocean; the loss of our little navy and brave seamen; the destruction of the lives of multitudes of our young men; a vast increase of national debt, and heavy taxes, without the means of paying them; disunion, alienations, animosities, insurrections, and civil war, among ourselves; and worst of all, AN ALLIANCE WITH FRANCE, an event to be seriously apprehended, and more to be deprecated than any which my imagination can conceive, the evils of which, if we are to judge from the state of the European republics, comprehended in her embrace, no one can contemplate without horror and dismay.\* My soul indeed

\* The following paragraphs from the admirable memorial of "more than *fifteen hundred* of the free electors of the county of Rockingham," (N.H.) to the President of the United States, on the subject of a *French Alliance*, express in a style of peculiar energy and excellence, the sentiments, and *Resolution*, I trust, of a great majority of the nation.

"But although we lament the present war, on all accounts, yet do we deprecate it, *most of all*, as we view in it, as we fear, the harbinger of *French alliance*. The United States, and Napoleon Emperor and King, have now a *common enemy*, and, in some sort, a *common cause*. They wage war against England, for objects, in some degree, the same. There has been, really or apparently, *a series of remarkable coincidences in the measures of the two Governments*. Add to this, the known character of the French court for intrigue, circumvention, perfidy, and the world will judge whether OUR FEARS are either groundless, or unwarrantable.

"On the subject of *any French connection*, either close, or the more remote, we have made up our minds. We will IN NO EVENT, assist in uniting the Republic of America, with the Military Despotism of France. We will have no connection with her principles, or her power. If her armed troops, under whatever name or character, should come here, we shall regard them as enemies. No pressure, *domestic* or foreign, shall ever compel us to connect OUR interests with those of the House of Corsica; or to yoke OURSELVES, to the triumphal Car of the Conqueror, and the Tyrant of Continental Europe. In forming this Resolution, we have not

sickens, and is ready to die within me, when I meditate on the scenes, which in all human probability must be soon realized in our country, should this fatal war be persisted in, by the parties now engaged. Viewing things in this light, as I honestly do, and placed here as your spiritual watchman, I should be highly criminal, I could not answer it to my conscience, nor to my God, to my country, nor to posterity, if I did not blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm from this sanctuary; if I did not with my fellow watchmen, weep between the porch and the altar, and with them cry,—“ Spare thy people, Oh Lord, and give not thine heritage to reproach, that the heathen, (and worse than heathen) should rule over them.”

The Lord only knoweth, what is before us. We are in his hands, blessed be his name, and he will order our lot as a nation, as seemeth good in his sight. As the Judge of all the earth, he will do right. If in his righteous displeasure, and for the punishment of our sins, the evils which we fear and deprecate shall come upon us, while we confess, in behalf of our afflicted country, in the language of Nehemiah,—“ Oh Lord, thou art just in all that is brought upon us; for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.”—We will with him also pray,—“ Now therefore our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that has come upon

been thoughtless of possible consequences. We have weighed them. We have reflected on the measures, which an adherence to this Resolution might hereafter occasion. We have considered the events which may grow out of it. In the *full and undisguised* view of these consequences, we have formed this OUR RESOLUTION, and we affirm to you, Sir, and to the World, that it is deep, fixed, and unchangeable.”

us, and on our rulers, and on our priests, and on our fathers, and on all thy people.”—“ For thy great mercies sake consume us not utterly, nor forsake us, for thou art a gracious and merciful God.”\*

What then are we to do?—Situating as we are, beginning, and but beginning, to feel the effects of the just displeasure of heaven, to taste the bitter fruits of our own wicked doings; surrounded on every side with dangers; with prospects gloomy and dismal, which way soever we turn our eyes, what course shall we pursue? What are our present duties? Our Chief Magistrate, a man of wisdom and experience, of piety and prudence, who both fears God and regards man,—blessed be God, that at such a time as this, he has been elevated to be our guide.—Our chief Magistrate has taught us what are our present duties, in his admirable proclamation. On this subject, ministers can hardly do better, than simply to repeat his own words.—In our present circumstances, and on this day, consecrated to the solemn purposes of *fasting, humiliation, and prayer*, “it becomes us, in imitation of our fathers, in their times of perplexity and danger, with deep repentance, to humble ourselves before the Almighty Ruler of the world, on account of our sins, and the ungrateful returns we have made to him for his mercies. To ascribe righteousness to our Maker, even when he threatens us with the most severe of all temporal calamities, and to beseech him to avert the tokens of his anger, and to remember for us his former loving kindness and tender mercy. To unite in humble supplications to the God of our fathers, who was their defence in danger, and to whom they never sought in vain, and to beseech him,

\* Nch. ix. 31—33.

through the merit of his Son, that he would forgive our ingratitude, and the innumerable transgressions of which we have been guilty. That he would give wisdom, integrity and patriotism to our national and state governments; that the leaders of the people may not cause them to err.—That he would inspire the President and Congress, and the government of Great Britain, with just and pacific sentiments; that he would humble the pride and subdue the lusts and passions of men. from whence wars proceed, and that peace may speedily be restored to us, upon safe and equitable terms.”

It is our duty to unite in prayer to Him, who is the God of hosts, of order. of peace, and of justice, that “ he would guard the lives of our soldiers and mariners, and protect our commerce and navigation, from the dangers with which they are encompassed.—That he would preserve us from intestine violence and foreign invasion.—That he would dispose the people of these states to do justice to the Indian tribes, to enlighten, and not to exterminate them; and that he would protect our frontier settlements from their ravages.” Especially, should our most fervent, our daily and hourly petitions ascend to the throne of God, “that He would preserve us from ENTANGLING and FATAL ALLIANCES, with those governments, which are hostile to the safety and happiness of mankind. That he would regard with tender compassion, the nations whose most essential rights have been wrested from them by fraud and violence, and who are groaning under the cruel hand of oppression; and that he would break in pieces the power of the oppressor, and scatter the people that delight in war.”

**We are directed further to pray, particularly, that the inhabitants of this state may be the objects of the peculiar favor of God ; that he would take them under his holy protection, and hide them in his pavilion, until the present calamities be overpast ; that the chastisements with which he may think proper to afflict us may serve to humble us, and do us good, and that we may not be like those who are hardened by his corrections, and who in the time of their trouble multiply their transgressions against him. That he would save us from the baleful influence of party spirit, and that whatever enemies may rise up against us from abroad, we may have peace and mutual confidence among ourselves, and know by experience how good and “how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”**

**Finally, we are directed to pray generally, “that God would accomplish the promises of his mercy concerning the future repose and prosperity of the human race, when men shall beat their swords into ploughshares and learn war no more ; when fraud and violence shall cease forever, and righteousness and peace prevail throughout the earth ; when the kingdom of the Redeemer shall triumph over all opposition, and the heathen shall be given him for his inheritance, and when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”**

**Such are the appropriate duties prescribed by our Governor, to be fulfilled by us this day. Thus it becomes us to pray, and conformably to our prayers should we act, in reference to the several objects of our petitions.**

**What petitions could be better suited to our present situation, either as individuals or as a nation? Were these**

**petitions offered to God, from devout hearts, sincerely, throughout our land, and the duties they involve duly fulfilled by our fellow-citizens, generally, we might rest assured, that the gloominess, and clouds and thick darkness, which now envelope our country, would be quickly dissipated, and our trembling hearts, and saddened countenances would be gladdened, with a bright morning without clouds, and be filled with a joy corresponding with that which is felt on beholding the clear shining of the sun, after a long and dismal storm.**

**In order to realize these blessings and joys, it is indispensable that we should be awake, and at our respective posts, and be actively engaged in fulfilling our appropriate duties, both civil and religious. Praying, if we act not in conformity to our prayers, will avail us nothing. It will be vain, and worse than vain, to know our duties, if we do not fulfil them. The Lord alone can rescue us from our present embarrassments and afflictions; but he will be sought unto, in the use of the proper means, to do these things for us. We are bound to be fellow labourers of God, in bringing about our salvation.**

**One course, which I conceive leads directly to the salvation of our country, and the security under God, of our liberties and privileges, and which I cannot forbear to mention, because I consider it indispensable to our existence, as a free and independent nation, is, that in all our future elections of officers to manage the affairs of the Federal government, or those of this Commonwealth, we should select those, and those only, who sustain the character, and possess the qualifications, which God himself has described in his word. “The God of Israel said,**

**the Rock of Israel spoke to me," said David, when uttering his last words, "He that ruleth over men must be just, ruling in the fear of God; and he shall be as the light of the morning, when the sun riseth, even a morning without clouds; as the tender grass springeth out of the earth by clear shining after rain."—"Thou shalt provide," said the Lord to Moses, "Out of the people, able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness."—The duties required of subjects, all imply, that they should seek, by all proper means, to promote such characters, as have now been described, to rule over them. Such rulers would deserve our honor, our confidence, and obedience. Such rulers God would approve, and bless and prosper their administration. Under such rulers our country could not fail to flourish.**

And here I think it my duty to remark, that it is an essential defect in our Federal Constitution, in my own opinion, and that of many others, that it does not require that such men alone, as we have now described, should be permitted to administer it; that it does not recognize the christian religion, nor even the existence of God; so that even an Atheist may be constitutionally placed at the head of our nation. This is a national sin, for which we are now justly suffering the displeasure of heaven, and which ought to be deeply lamented and speedily reformed by the whole nation,

Rulers are "ministers of God" to the people "for good," they are "revengers to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil." They are to be a terror, not to good works, but to the evil. Their laws are to be conformable to the laws of God, as their subjects are commanded to

obey both, when consistent with each other, under heavy penalties. Laws which require different and opposite conduct cannot be obeyed. Human laws therefore, in order to be obeyed, must accord with the laws of God; for where they differ God is to be obeyed, rather than man. Such being the station and duties of rulers, it is obvious that they should resemble God in their temper and character. As they are delegated to act for God on earth, they surely should be like him. They should be well acquainted with his character, with his laws, and government, and should venerate and love them, as an ambassador does those of his prince, and steadily aim to possess the like character; and, in their own laws and government, to copy those of God. How can an infidel, who fears not God, nor believes his word, nor regards his law, be a minister of God for good? Would not such a man, if made a ruler, in all probability be a terror to *good* works, and not to the *evil*? What security could a people under a ruler of this character have, that his laws would be conformable to the laws of God; and consequently, that wrath would not be executed on him that did *good*, in obeying the laws of God, in preference to his own unjust laws; while he that should do *evil*, in obeying the laws of man rather than those of God, would receive favour?\*

\* In confirmation of the correctness and importance of the preceding observations, I would direct the attention of the Freemen of this Commonwealth, to the 18th article, in the "Declaration of Rights," which forms a part of our excellent Constitution; an article that marks the wisdom, of the framers of this instrument, and which claims special regard at this awful crisis.—The article follows;—

"A frequent recurrence to the fundamental principles of the Constitution, and a constant adherence to those of *piety, justice, moderation, temperance, industry, and frugality*, are absolutely necessary, to preserve the advantages of liberty, and to maintain a free government. *The people ought, consequently, to have a particular attention to all those principles, in the choice of their officers and representatives; and they have a right to*

As we would hope for peace, and safety, and prosperity, and the favor of God, let us resolutely resolve, that we will spare no exertions to elect such rulers as God shall approve. This, believe me, is the only course of relief and safety to our afflicted country. Under rulers of no other character, has any christian nation ever flourished, for any length of time. Under rulers of a different stamp, nations have always degenerated, and been finally brought to desolation and ruin. With such rulers at the head of our nation, as God has described, we should have every thing to hope. With those of an opposite character, we have every thing to fear. We have before us, and in our choice, our bane and our antidote. Oh, will God give us, as a nation, a heart to make a right choice; and to know and to regard, in this our day, the things which belong to our peace.

Finally.—If in view of our sins this day, we as a people, “rend our hearts, and turn unto the Lord our God; who is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil, who knoweth, if he will return and leave a blessing for us behind him?—Who knoweth, if the Lord will not be jealous for our land, and pity his people, and save his heritage from the reproach of having the heathen to rule over them?—My brethren, let us faithfully do our duty, and hope in the mercy and salvation of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.—AMEN.

require of their lawgivers and magistrates, an exact and constant observance of them, in the formation and execution of all laws, necessary for the good administration of the Commonwealth.”