

**THE DUTIES OF A FAST IN TIME OF WAR,
ILLUSTRATED.**

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN

STONEHAM, (MASS.) APRIL 7, 1814.

BEING

THE DAY OF THE STATE FAST.

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Pastor of the Church in said Town.

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A DISCOURSE, &c.

DANIEL ix. 3.

And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes.

FASTING, humiliation and prayer, has been practised by the church, and people of God, in every age, and under every dispensation : and especially in times of public calamity.

In the passage first read, we have an account of Daniel's keeping a fast to the Lord God.

Daniel was one of the three best men, whose names were left on record in the Old Testament.—When Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, and the Jews were carried captive to Babylon, Daniel was a youth among the captives, but the spirit of God was in him. He feared, loved and glorified Jehovah, and devoted himself to his service, and God was with him, and gave him wisdom, and understanding, above all the wise men in Babylon, in interpreting dreams and visions, and foretelling future events. He was highly esteemed by the kings of Babylon ; and when Darius the Median came to the throne, he promoted him to the high office of prime minister of state.

This excited the envy and malice of the princes, and they sought to find some accusation against Daniel, concerning the kingdom ; but they could find no accusation or fault in him ; his character and official conduct was so spotless, that the keen-sighted eye of envy could find no flaw in it—nothing to ac-

case him respecting state affairs. Happy the ruler that even enemies and disaffected partizans can find nothing to accuse him of. This was Daniel's case. But did this shield him from the malice of his enemies, who were aspiring after the high office he sustained? No, they were determined to destroy him, and though innocent, he must be accused. They had recourse to stratagem, perceiving Daniel to be a worshipper of the God of Israel, and that he prayed daily to him. They assembled before the king, and informed his majesty they had all agreed to have a royal decree passed, that if any man in the empire should ask a petition of any god, or man, for thirty days, save of the king, he should be cast into the den of lions.— This flattered the pride of the king—for it was to make him for a month, the sole deity and benefactor in his empire. Hence he passed the decree. Daniel saw the snare laid for him, but he trusted in the living God. He opened his windows towards Jerusalem, and prayed three times a day to the God of Heaven as usual; his enemies were watching, they report it to the king, and demand him to be cast into the lion's den according to the decree. Now the monarch, too late, sees through their base design: he highly esteemed and loved Daniel, and laboured until the going down of the sun to deliver him, but in vain; the law was passed, and the laws of the Medes and Persians were not to be changed. The princes insisted upon the laws being executed. The king was forced to consent; Daniel is brought, and cast into the den, and the door shut and sealed. The king seemed to have a presentiment that Daniel's God would deliver him. He spent the night fasting, he arose and went early in the morning to the den, and cried, O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions? He listens and hears Daniel's voice from the deep cavern echo, O King, live for

ever—my God hath sent his angel, and hath shut the lion's mouths that they have not hurt me ; forasmuch as before him innocence was found in me ; and also before thee, O king, have I done no hurt. Then was the king exceeding glad for him, and commanded to take up Daniel out of the den, and there was no wound upon him, the lions lay like peaceful lambs about this good man all night, though pinched with hunger ; for the angel of the covenant was there.— Now by the king's command, Daniel's accusers were brought and cast into the den, and the lions brake all their bones as soon as they came within their reach. This ought to be a solemn warning to all who falsely accuse rulers in our day.

This was the Daniel who fasted and prayed, as stated in our text and context—and it seems he kept this fast but a few months before he was cast into the den of lions, and the special answer he had to his prayer, and the revelations he had made known to him by an angel, was an excellent preparative to this scene of trial. The Jews at this time were in great tribulation. God to punish them for their many sins, had permitted their enemies to conquer and carry them away captive. Daniel, realizing their deplorable situation, set himself to fasting and prayer, to confessing his sins, and the sins of his nation, and imploring God's mercy, as it is said in the text—*And I set my face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth and ashes.*

This, my brethren, is our duty this day—we are called upon by the civil authority, by the usage of our pious forefathers, and by the critical and dangerous situation of our state and nation, to set our faces unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting and humiliation, his gracious aid and help. O, may we have the spirit of Daniel; may we keep in some measure such a fast as he did and may our prayers, and the prayers of God's people be heard and answered, and our nation saved.

In order to aid and assist us in the solemn duties of this day, I shall,

1. Contemplate the sins of our nation.
2. Notice some of the evils which our sins have brought upon us.
3. I shall consider the glorious attribute of mercy in our Heavenly Father.
4. State and enforce our duty this day.

1. As was proposed, I am to contemplate our sins, and the sins of our nation. This, Daniel did in his fast. But where shall I begin, and where shall I end? where shall I find language to express the number, the greatness, and aggravation of our sins. Our sins as a nation, are innumerable as the stars of Heaven, and the sands on the sea shore; great and aggravated sins, sins of omission and commission, sins of thought, of word and action, sins against God, ourselves and fellow men. As Daniel said, so we have cause to say, with shame and blushing, *We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments.* Whereever we turn our eyes, we behold our land filled with great and awful sins against the Lord of Hosts. The prophet's pathetic address to Israel is applicable to our nation.

Hear, O Heavens, and give ear, O earth, for the Lord hath spoken, I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib: but Israel doth not know, my people doth not consider.

Ah, sinful nation, and people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers; children that are corrupters; they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward. This has truly been our character and conduct as a people. But let us particularize some of the great sins of our nation.

Profanity is a great sin in this land; some years

after the settlement of this state, it was declared in England, by a gentleman who had been over here a year, that he never heard an oath uttered in the time, but alas, what an alteration, since we have become a swearing nation; all kinds of profanity is every where to be met with; thousands every hour pouring forth the most horrid oaths and imprecations, taking God's holy name in vain; the air is rent with profane oaths, crying to Heaven for vengeance. Husbands and wives, parents and children mingling their blasphemies, and daring the wrath of the most high, who has said, *swear not at all. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. By reason of swearing the land mourneth.* And the Judgments of heaven are black over us.

Lying is another great sin in this nation. What horrible lying is practised by thousands; the young and old, the high and low, the rich and poor are given to it: a lying spirit seems to pervade the land, many bend their tongues like a bow for lies, but are not valiant for the truth; many lie to hide their sin and shame, and clear themselves from blame in the view of mortals. What lying to cheat and defraud others? what lying to injure and defame the characters of others? what lying about our rulers to blast their characters, to bring them into contempt, to withdraw the confidence of the people from them, and to turn them out of office? what lying in the public prints, what vehicles of falsehood and corruption many of them have become, to mislead the people, and carry into effect party purposes? It has repeatedly been stated in some prints that the mission to Russia was unauthorized: that Alexander had never offered his mediation between our government and Great Britain. But public documents laid before Congress shew these declarations to be false. This is only one of thousands of falsehoods to deceive the people, and run down the

present administration. God has said he hates a lying tongue, for he is a God of truth; he has said, *All liars shall have their part in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.*

Intemperance is another great and awful sin which pervades our nation, and provokes God to anger: vast multitudes are given to the intemperate use of ardent spirits. This nation has annually consumed more distilled spirits than any other nation of its numbers, perhaps on the globe. It is computed that it has cost us annually thirty millions of dollars for distilled spirits we have consumed. How many drunkards are to be met with, reeling to and fro and casting forth their filthy vomit; their appetite for strong drink is like the grave, which never says enough. They are drowning their reason, destroying their health, disgracing and impoverishing their families, and fitting their souls for perdition. The uncommon high price of spirits and the noble exertions of serious people has checked the progress of this vice in some degree, but still it greatly prevails, and enhances our guilt as a nation.

Adultery and uncleanness is a sin which blackens the American character: many live in chambering and wantonness, fornication and lasciviousness, yea, many go beyond this, and live in the awful sin of adultery; they adulterate and break the marriage covenant by a vile, criminal intercourse with others. In the bible this is represented as one of the most heinous sins in the sight of God, and under the Mosaic law was punished with death. How many families, and how much domestic happiness this sin has destroyed, and how many souls it has probably plunged into destruction. If the obscene debauchery carried on in some of our sea-port towns was fully known, it would be enough to astonish the world! Solomon, speaking of such abandoned prostitutes, says, *Her house is the way to hell, going down to the chambers*

of death. These horrid sins, like those of Sodom, cry to heaven for vengeance.

Gaming, attending theatres, balls, and other scenes of vain amusement, form another group of sins against the Lord. How many thousands spend their days and nights, their time and money gambling! This leads to drinking, swearing and quarrelling. How many thousands spend their time and money at the theatre, to see and hear that which tends to corrupt their morals, to excite impure passions and take the mind and heart off from that which is good? How many spend their time and strength in the ball-chambers and assembly-rooms, running with the tune and chaunting to the sound of the viol! *Woe to them that chaunt to the sound of the viol, and invent to themselves instruments of music like David, and put far away the evil day.* However men may justify these vain amusements, God condemns them, and will enter into judgment with those who live in them.

Pride is another great sin in this nation; we have been lifted up with pride, been proud of sin, population and wealth, proud of our constitutions, our liberty and rights. Some are proud of their knowledge, their beauty, their dress and equipage. Pride reigns in the hearts of multitudes through the nation. This God abhors. *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*

Ingratitude is another great sin in this land. We have been ungrateful to God, and to man. God has done great things for us, but we have been ungrateful for them for temporal and spiritual, civil and religious blessings.

Dishonesty, cheating, defrauding, speculation, and oppressing the poor, are great sins among us.

Sabbath breaking is a great sin. How many pay no suitable attention to the Lord's day. They spend it in riding abroad, in visiting, in making bargains and transacting worldly business. How many loaded

teams do we see pass the streets on the Lord's day? These things are wrong; this is an alarming sin.—Our General Court have been petitioned year after year to pass some law to prevent travelling, by which serious people are disturbed even in the house of God, but the majority refuse to do it. God from the beginning has required one day in seven to be spent in his service, and to that people who rob him of this, he will require it at their hands. Neglect of family government, and disobedience of children to their parents are great sins, which threatens the community with great evils. Stealing, robbing and murdering, are awful and very provoking sins, which are frequent in all parts of the nation. What horrid murders do we hear of from various parts—a few months since a shocking murder was perpetrated in this town. Tatling, backbiting, and defaming others, are great sins, speaking evil of rulers, traducing, slandering, and saying every thing bad about them, are black sins in this nation. *Thou shalt not speak evil of the rulers of thy people, saith the Lord.*

The contempt and neglect of the gospel and its ordinances and holy duties, is a great sin; what multitudes undervalue and neglect Christ and his gospel? they never go to hear the gospel preached, others go but rarely now and then half a day, and then perhaps oppose and despise it. What multitudes live without prayer to God? how many prayerless families, and prayerless persons? how many who have no fear nor love to God, who render him no homage, who live like heathens in a christian land? *God will pour out his wrath upon the heathen, and the families that call not upon his name.* The abounding of error, is a great sin in this land; every error is propagated and embraced with avidity. Infidelity and Atheism is awfully prevalent. Yea, every sin that can be thought of, or named, is prevalent in this nation. Could all our sins be named up, how vast would be the num-

ber, and how immense our national guilt? our sins have grown up unto the heavens, they have provoked God unto anger, and he has sent his judgments upon us.

2. I was to notice some of the evils our sins have brought upon us.

All the evils we have suffered, and are now suffering, are the bitter fruits of sin: *For it is an evil and a bitter thing to sin against the Lord.* He will not suffer sin to go unpunished. Nations he punishes as such in this world, and he punishes moral evil with natural evil. Nations he punishes for their sin with the sword, the famine and pestilence, and other temporal judgments. God has sent his judgments one after another upon us; the storm of his indignation now blackens and lowers over our land; we are in a very critical, dangerous situation, for the state of a people is ever dangerous whose sins have provoked God to anger. We are involved in a bloody war; this, God in his righteous judgment, has permitted to come upon us as a punishment for our sins. He has let loose the heathen upon us to mangle, torture and destroy our men, women and children, and to lay waste our frontiers. He has permitted the European nations, and especially England, to disregard all the established laws of nations, of right and justice, and to sweep our commerce from the ocean—plunder us of millions in time of peace—to impress and enslave, and cruelly treat thousands of our seamen—to murder our citizens; to send her agents and spies among us to stir up sedition and rebellion. God has suffered that nation to turn a deaf ear to our remonstrances, and to persist in her injuries and insults, until our government have been forced to draw the sword, to defend our rights. This war is a great calamity, we are surrounded by enemies. Our seaboard is lined with ships of war, blockading our ports; the hostile savages on our extensive frontiers, and the

British troops in Canada. Many battles have been fought by sea and land; much blood already shed, and many lives lost. The storm of war is still gathering and blackening, and great preparations making on both sides for another campaign. It has been reported that lord Wellington with his army of veterans are ordered to America, and that we are to be beset on all sides with fire and sword.

Another judgment upon our nation is, division and party spirit, which rages to an alarming degree; this is more to be feared than our foreign foes, *for a nation divided against itself cannot stand*. There are many in our state and nation opposed to the general government, opposed to all its measures, whether right or wrong, and do all they can to palsy the arm of government, and counteract all its salutary measures. There are some violent, disappointed men who wish to get into power; these deceive and mislead many of the honest and well-meaning in the community. These violent partizans rejoice at our defeats, and mourn at the defeat of the enemy; they side with the enemy, justify them, try to aid, help and comfort them; yea, these men are trying to dissolve the union, and array the northern against the southern states. They have brought this state to the brink of a civil war, and it is to be feared they will effect it the present year, except the Lord in mercy prevents. O, what an alarming state we are in!— This opposition to our government, tends to encourage the enemy, prevent peace, and protract the war.

Pestilence is abroad in our land; in many places mortal sickness prevails; the spotted fever or cold plague, hurries many of all ages to the land of silence.

Scarcity of bread in some places, and such a high price in others, that the poor cannot procure enough, is another calamity.

Distressing and desolating fires in various parts of the land, is another great calamity, and token of God's anger.

Heavy taxes, and increasing national debt, is another calamity. Tremendous storms and inundations, with hosts of devouring insects, are among the evils sent upon us for our sins. Surely black clouds of wrath hang over us, and threaten the nation with still greater evils, with the loss of our Independence, and all those precious rights and liberties purchased by the valor and blood of our fathers.— We are threatened with civil and ecclesiastical tyranny, with slavery, yea; with utter ruin, as a punishment for our sins.

But is our doom sealed? is the sun of our national prosperity set to rise no more? is there no deliverer we may flee to for help? is there no mercy in the Lord God of Israel, the mighty and everlasting God of our forefathers for us? Yes, our God is gracious and merciful; here is the sheet-anchor of our hope.

3. I was to notice this darling attribute of mercy in our God. Daniel, when contemplating the sins of his nation, and the judgments they had brought upon them, yet took encouragement from a consideration of this attribute of God's mercy: says he, *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness though we have rebelled against him.* Mercies and forgiveness belong to God: this is his darling attribute, this is the glory of his character, this was the foundation of Daniel's hope respecting his nation, this encouraged him to plead with God for his interposition and help, notwithstanding his people had so rebelled against him, and enkindled his anger.

And, my brethren, this should be the foundation of our hope, and the ground of our encouragement in this dark and gloomy day, the rich and superabounding mercy of God. *To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness, though we have rebelled against him, the Lord is merciful and gracious; he delights in forgiving the sins and blotting out the transgressions of his people, in removing his judg-*

ments and granting them help, when they become sensible of their sins, confess and repent of them, and look unto him for help. Judgment is styled God's strange work, but mercy is his darling attribute. Mercy is the name by which he will be known; hence he proclaimed his name to Moses, *The Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, slow unto anger, forgiving sins and blotting out transgressions.* God has in all ages shewed himself merciful and gracious, forgiving the sins of his people and granting them help in time of trouble, when they have called upon him, in numberless instances, when Israel had sinned greatly against the Lord, and enkindled his anger, and brought his judgments upon them; as soon as they became sensible of their sin, repented, and cried unto the Lord, his anger ceased; his mercy flowed, his mighty arm was stretched out for their defence; their enemies melted before them, and their judgments were turned into blessings.— David in the 78th psalm, gives a history of Israel's rebellion, and God's mercy to them; after describing the wickedness of the people, he adds, *But he (the Lord) being full of compassion, forgave their iniquities, and destroyed them not, yea many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath.* And my hearers, has not God's dealings toward our nation, showed that he is full of mercy and compassion? That to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness though we have so rebelled against him. *Yea, it is of the Lord's mercies we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.* If God had dealt with us in strict justice, if he had laid righteousness to the line, and justice to the plummet, and had entered into judgment, and dealt with our nation according to its deserts, we should long before this, have been laid waste, and swept with the besom of destruction. Health would have been taken away, and pestilence would have walked through

the land filling it with death and mourning. The earth would not have yielded its increase, and pale famine would have given us cleanliness of teeth. Our enemies at home and abroad would have succeeded in pulling down the temple of liberty and made us slaves.

The glorious gospel and its precious ordinances would have been taken from us, and we should have seen a famine not only of bread, but of hearing the word of the Lord. But the Lord being full of compassion, has forgave our iniquities, and destroyed us not, yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. God has mingled mercies with judgments. O how many mercies, temporal and spiritual, civil and religious, we yet enjoy. God has mercifully restrained our foreign enemies, and given us many victories by sea and land over them. He has restrained and defeated our domestic foes, and hitherto prevented their dissolving the union, rising in arms against government, and plunging us into civil war; the great body of the nation are yet united to support the constitution and government, and to defend our rights; and thousands of our young men are girding on the sword to protect the nation, and repel her foes; in general we are blessed with health and plenty in the land.

God yet in mercy grants us the gospel and its ordinances, and is pouring his spirit upon some parts of our land. In Richmond, (Virginia,) we hear there has been such a marvellous reformation, that seventy persons were added to a church in one day. Surely the Lord our God is merciful, and is waiting to be gracious, and to help us out of all our troubles, if we will turn to him with all the heart. God is able to help us in this time of trouble. He can heal our divisions, and unite the people, and confound traitors, and enable us to vanquish our enemies; and he can

dispose them to make a just and honourable peace with us ; he can make the earth fruitful, and bless us at home and abroad, and pour his spirit upon us, comfort his saints, and save sinners ; and he will do all this for us, if we flee to him, confessing and repenting of our sins, and imploring his help. *For to the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness.*

I trust God feels towards this nation, that he has planted and done so much for, as he felt towards Israel, when he said by the prophet Hosea, *How shall I give thee up, Ephraim ? how shall I deliver thee, Israel ? how shall I make thee as Admah ? how shall I set thee as Zeboim ? Mine heart is turned within me, my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger, I will not return to destroy Ephraim, for I am God, and not man, the holy one in the midst of thee, and I will not enter into the holy city.* O ! how merciful God is ; this affords grounds of hope and encouragement for such a sinful nation as this, to realize their sins, repent of them and turn to the Lord, and seek his help.

4. I was to state and enforce our duty this day. We cannot be at a loss for a moment what our duty is ; may we all have hearts to do it.

1. It is our duty to have a deep sense of our many, great and aggravated sins : many have no sense of their own sins ; or those of the nation. While this is the case, they will not keep an acceptable fast, or perform their duty. It is of great importance that we are convinced of sin, that we know how vile we are, and how great the guilt of our nation.

2. It is our duty to confess to God our own sins, and the sins of our families, our towns, state, and nation, to acknowledge our wickedness, and plead guilty before God. This Daniel did in his fast. He made his confession to God, and said, *We have sinned and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and*

have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments. O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our king, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. Thus Daniel confessed the sins of his nation, and thus we should this day.

3. It is our duty to repent of all our sins before God with all the heart, to hate them, to loath ourselves for them, to justify God, condemn ourselves, and mourn as in the dust, because of the dishonour done to God, as well as the injury to ourselves and fellow men: yea, it is our duty to repent of all the sins in the nation, to hate them, to mourn that we are such a sinful nation, and sorrow after a godly sort for our land defiling iniquities. Daniel sorrowed, repented and humbled himself for the sins of the nation, and the Lord forgave and blessed the nation on his account. May there be many pious souls this day like Daniel, not only ~~repenting~~ for their own sins, but for the sins of the nation, and be a mean of averting impending judgments, and procuring needed mercies.

4. It is our duty to be grateful to God for the many favours vouchsafed to us, and the good we yet enjoy; we have yet innumerable mercies, for which we should feel the liveliest gratitude, and render praise to our gracious God, *who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*, who is preserving our lives and healths, giving us food and raiment, and causing us to dwell in safety, while some sections of our country are exposed to the rage of the merciless savages, and blood stained, cold hearted, cruel Britons, who offer every abuse to virtuous women, and often murder their prisoners after they have surrendered, as was the case, I am informed, at Fort Niagara.

We yet enjoy civil and religious liberty, the gospel and its ordinances, for which we should praise the Lord.

5. It is our duty to believe in Jesus Christ, to love and adore him, and build all our hopes of pardon and acceptance with God, of salvation for ourselves, and our nation, upon his merits and intercession. If God pardons our sins and saves our nation, it will be on Christ's account: all our help must come by, and through Christ—hence our trust should be in him, and the eye of faith fixed upon him. *Believe in God, believe also in me*, says Christ. If we trust in him, we shall be as Mount Zion, that cannot be moved.

6. It is our duty to pray, and make our supplications to the Lord our God, this day.

Prayer is an important part of the duty of a fast.—Daniel set his face to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting.

I will here mention some things for which we should pray; and I will take his Excellency's proclamation for a guide.

1. We are directed in the proclamation to pray for the pardon of our sins; this Daniel did in his fast. He fervently cried, *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive*. Our sins are many and great; it is of the last importance that they are forgiven. In order to this, we must confess them to God, and with all the heart implore his forgiveness through the merits of Jesus Christ.

2. We are directed in the proclamation to *pray God to protect the United States, and preserve their liberty, union, and Independence*.

The United States are exposed to great danger; they are assailed by enemies within and without, foreign and domestic, by savages, by Britons, and by Tories and traitors! We need divine protection, but we are not to expect this protection in a miraculous way, without our own exertion. In order to be protected against our enemies, we must have armies,

and they must fight and vanquish them. Hence in praying God to protect the United States, we must implore his blessing on our arms by sea and land, that he would crown them with success; that he would inspire our generals with wisdom, policy and courage; that our officers and soldiers might be bold and resolute as lions, that they might not be vanquished, but shielded in the day of battle, be victorious, and conquer the enemy—and so be a mean of protecting the United States. Our liberty, our union and independence is in danger of being overthrown; are there not many in this, and some of the other States, who are associating together, and planning the destruction of our precious liberties; are they not pursuing measures to dissolve the *Union* of the States, to separate the northern from the southern and western states? Now with this, would expire our Independence and Constitution, and all our blood-bought rights. Let me ask, is there not a *Strong* faction among us, who openly avow these things, who say the time is come to dissolve the Union, and mean to do it this year, if in their power? O my brethren, is our liberties, our federal union and independence thus in jeopardy? Then let us pray God to preserve them to us, to carry the counsels of these Ahithophels headlong, to frustrate all the plots of treason, and enemies to our liberty, union and independence, by opening the eyes of the people whom they have misled, and disposing them to withdraw their support from them, and to frown indignant upon all their reasonable plans.

We are directed by the proclamation to pray that *the wisdom of our wise men may not perish, nor the understanding of our prudent men be hid*. It seems the wisdom of some of our wise men, both in the national and state government have perished, and their understanding and prudence is hid and left them, or they never would have made such speeches as they

have, taking ground hostile to the nation that gave them birth, and friendly to the nation in arms against us, uttering things to encourage the enemy to continue the war, and not listen to just overtures for peace. What can be clearer evidence that the wisdom of men have perished and their understanding and prudence is hid, than to hear them say, England has done us no essential injury, that this war with that nation is unjust, unprovoked and wicked; that the enemy has always been ready to redress our complaints, and make peace; that the annals of the world do not afford an instance of a war begun for so trifling a cause, and prosecuted with so much imbecility, and with so little judgment. But has our armed ships on the ocean manifested so much imbecility in capturing so many of the enemies frigates and sloops of war? Did Perry's fleet manifest so much imbecility in capturing a British fleet on Lake Erie, which was superior to them? and Chauncey in chasing a fleet superior to him all round Lake Ontario? Did Gen. Harrison and his brave men shew so much imbecility in capturing a whole army of regulars and Indians, who had chosen their ground? But such declarations need no reply but his Excellency in the proclamation—that their wisdom is perished, and their understanding and prudence is hid. O let us pray God to fill our councils with men of more wisdom and prudence.

4. We are directed to pray for *the President and Congress, that by discreet and impartial discharge of their respective duties, they may promote the peace and safety of the nation.*

Some say we ought not to pray for the President and Congress, they are so corrupt; and it is said, some ministers do not pray publicly for them; but such differ from the proclamation, that directs us to pray for the President and Congress. They need the prayers of all good people, they need wisdom and

direction from on high, in this time of war and impending danger, when they have so many secret enemies within, and open enemies without, to contend with. Our President and Congress are fallible men, liable to err, and have undoubtedly erred in many things. Let us then pray for them, that God would hold them in his hand, and give them wisdom to know fidelity, resolution and patriotism to do what is right, and that they might be a mean of promoting the peace and safety of the nation.

5. We are directed to pray *that our rulers and those of Great Britain may be disposed to an amicable and just settlement of their disputes, and be as willing to repair the wrongs they have done to others, as to vindicate their own rights.* O that God would in mercy cause this to take place: then we should soon hear good news from our ministers at Gottenburg. Then Great Britain will speedily restore the nine hundred ships and cargoes she has taken from us in time of peace. Then she will emancipate and send home the hundreds and thousands of our poor seamen that she has impressed and held in cruel bondage on board her ships, to fight her battles.—Then parents will embrace their long-lost sons—wives their husbands, and children their fathers—and the horrid practice of man-stealing will cease. Then the savages will be disarmed of the tomahawk and scalping-knife, and be sent away to their hunting ground, to reflect on their madness and folly in joining Britain against us, by which they have lost the flower of their warriors, many of their towns, and have been brought to a state of starvation and wretchedness. Then the poor Canadians will be dismissed to their homes in peace. Then her fleets and armies will be withdrawn from our shores, and a just and honourable, and lasting peace will be settled. All this will take place if Great Britain is only as willing to repair the wrongs she has done to others, as to defend her

own rights. But has our government done no injuries to Great Britain that they ought to repair? Have we taken no ships from them in time of peace? No, not one! Have we never set the savages to make war upon her subjects in time of peace? *Never!* Have we impressed and held in bondage her seamen? No, not one! But does she not complain that we have her seamen? Yes, but they come to us, and enter voluntarily on board our ships, because they are fed, and clothed, and paid better than at home! And are not all men born free, as expressed in our bill of rights? And have they not a right to go to what country they please, and spend life, which God has given them, where they chouse? But our government are disposed to put to rest this complaint, and have passed a law to exclude from our ships all British seamen. Hence if the British government are only ready to repair the wrongs she has done us, we shall soon see good days. Let us pray God, who has the hearts of all men in his hands, to incline and dispose them to.

We are directed to *pray God to save us from dangerous political connections, from evil counsels, and rash enterprises.* And let me ask, are there not some in this state who wish to form a political connection with the enemy, open our ports to their shipping, and supply them with all they want? Some who have been hardy enough to give the evil counsel to organize a court of Admiralty, raise the embargo, and detatch thirty thousand troops to put down the officers and laws of the general government and to establish an independent government in this state! This would be a rash enterprise indeed! This would soak the earth with American blood! Whether this was what our governor had in view, and feared, when he penned this excellent sentence in his proclamation, I shall not undertake to determine: but this is the most likely and dangerous political connection, the most evil council and the rashest enterprise I have

any knowledge of; let us pray God to save us from them.

7. We are directed to pray for peace. This is what we need, and what all good men desire. We should not be hypocritical and pretend we belong to the peace party, and say we desire peace, when in our souls we desire the war to continue three years longer, rather than the present administration should have the honor of making a good peace. But we should be sincere, and from the heart desire peace—and pray God to dispose the enemy to repair the many wrongs they have done us, and make speedily a just and righteous peace; and that our mission to Europe may produce this happy state of things, that so a stop might be put to any further effusion of blood, and that violence may no more be heard in our towns, of ravished matrons and virgins, and conflagrated villages, as at Hampton, Frenchtown and Havre de Grace; nor wasting nor destruction on our frontiers by British troops and their savage allies.

8. We are directed to pray God to favour the people of this State with health and plenty, and bless them in all their increase and in all the works of their hands, and we should implore the same blessing upon the United States, for we all are one nation. We are directed to pray God to regard with compassion the suffering nations of Europe, and deliver them from the violence of bloody and deceitful men.---- There are bloody and deceitful emperors, kings and princes in Europe who have long been forming combinations, raising mighty armies, stirring up war, and desolating nations. May God change the hearts of all such bloody tyrants, and dispose them to seek the peace and prosperity of their subjects, and the world. Let us pray God to stay the pestilence, and be the health of our countenance; to favor us with the showers and shines of heaven, cause the earth to be fruitful, grant us a plentiful harvest, and crown the year

with his goodness. Finally, we should pray God to pour his spirit upon us, and his blessing upon our offspring, convert sinners, build up his churches, and appear in his glory; that he would send his gospel to all nations, pour his spirit upon them, turn them unto the Lord, usher in his latter day glory, and fill the whole earth with peace, and righteousness and holiness, and happiness: then man will no longer be the enemy, but the friend of man.

Now, brethren, having heard what your duty is, be exhorted to do it. O set your hearts to the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications with fasting. With Daniel, and in the spirit of Daniel, say, O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord hearken and do defer not, for thine own sake, O my God. And may the Lord hear the prayer of his people this day. May he answer and do for us and our nation, and save it. And all the glory shall be given to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, world without end, *Amen*, and *Amen*.

FINIS.