

A

SERMON,

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IN

COMMEMORATION OF THE INDEPENDENCE

OF THE

UNITED STATES

OF

AMERICA.

BY

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A SERMON.

JEREMIAH XVIII, 9, 10.

“ *AND at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it.*”

“ *If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them.*”

THE day on which we are assembled is annually observed by multitudes, though improved by most, in a very improper manner. Such excesses of intemperance, pride, revelling and profanity are commonly exhibited on this day, that many sober-minded people are not in the habit of paying any particular attention to it. And surely, it is not without ground that they object against the corrupt and sensual manner in which it is too often celebrated. The abuse of this day, with a general backwardness to acknowledge the hand of God in the bestowment of our national privileges and blessings, and a prevailing propensity to ascribe to the creature the glory which is due to Him alone, are among the many things which, it is to be feared, will before long, bring down God's judgments in a dreadful manner upon this land.

Nevertheless, could we keep up a proper remembrance of the day which gave birth to our nation, the practice would, undoubtedly, be commendable. There is, certainly, a propriety in publicly acknowledging the Divine goodness to us, and in humbling ourselves for our ingratitude and disobedience. It is apprehended some useful instruction may be suggested on this occasion. It is hoped, therefore, the utmost attention will be given to what may be offered. The passage I have read suggests ideas which are highly important for us as individuals, and for the whole of our nation to consider.

The doctrine it teaches is, that sin will bring down the divine judgments upon a nation or kingdom, however elevated and prosperous their situation may once have been. "And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: if it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will *repent* of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them." By God's *repenting*, in this passage, is not meant any sorrow of heart, or change of purpose, but a change only in his providential dealings towards men. If *obedience*, the condition on which the continuation of his favor to a nation is suspended, be not performed, he will forbear to bestow the promised good, and, instead of a blessing, will pour out a curse.

The doctrine is confirmed by many other passages of scripture, as well as by the history of nations from the beginning. There is a very expressive passage in Deut. xxviii, 15, and onward. "But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes, which I command thee this day, that all these curses shall come upon thee and overtake thee: cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field; cursed shall be thy basket and thy store; cursed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy land, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep; cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The lord shall send upon thee cursing, vexation and rebuke in all that thou sittest thine hand unto to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly, because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The Lord shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he consumeth thee from off the land whither thou goest to possess it. The Lord shall smite thee with a consumption and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they

shall pursue thee until thou perish : and thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under shall be iron. The Lord shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust ; from Heaven shall it come upon thee, until thou be destroyed. The Lord shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies : thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them, and shall be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth." The prophet Jeremiah, in his lamentations over Jerusalem, mentions *sin* as the procuring cause of her desolations : chap. i, 8, 9 : " Jerusalem hath grievously sinned, therefore she is removed : all that honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness ; yea, she sigheth and turneth backward : her filthiness is in her skirts ; she remembereth not her last end, therefore she came down wonderfully." It was for sin that the nations of Canaan were disinherited. Deut. ix, 5 : Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land : but for the *wickedness* of those nations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee." Sin brought the *flood* upon the world of the ungodly : it procured the fearful ruin of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*, by fire and brimstone from Heaven, and the overthrow of *Pharaoh* and his *boist* in the red sea. For sin, the Assyrian empire was overthrown, after they had executed the divine purpose in the destruction of Israel. This is particularly noticed by the prophet Isaiah, chap. x, 12, 13 : " Wherefore it shall come to pass, that when the lord hath performed his whole work upon Mount Zion, and on Jerusalem, I will punish the fruit of the stout heart of the king of Assyria, and the glory of his high looks ; for he saith, by the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom." The Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian and Roman empires, have been successively destroyed for the same reason. The wars and judgments which have, for a series of years, distracted and desolated Europe, and *other* nations of the east, have all been

occasioned by sin. God has been assembling the nations to pour out his fury upon them.

Both sacred and profane histories are replete with accounts of calamities which have been brought upon nations and empires in consequence of sin. Though once raised to the summit of earthly glory and greatness, yet for *this* they have been reduced, captivated and destroyed. Though fortified in the strongest manner, possessed of immense resources, and to human appearance *invulnerable*, they have, in various ways, fallen under divine displeasure, and been subjugated, impoverished, and overwhelmed in ruin. The deplorable effect of sin, in the troubles and desolations, of nations, have appeared ever since men began to multiply upon the face of the earth. It has been proved, again and again, that "sin is a reproach to any people," an *undoing* thing. It has ever appeared that "the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will," and that "those that walk in pride he is able to abase."

Some appear to flatter themselves, that "the Lord hath forsaken the earth, and that there is not such a particular divine providence to be acknowledged in the evils and calamities which befall nations, as has been held up to view. They are ready to view these things as *unavoidable* evils, the result of chance, rather than particular divine judgments, expressive of God's holy displeasure at sin. To such blindness and unbelief the depraved heart is ever prone. Thus the prophet complained: "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they *will not see*." Multitudes are willing to ascribe their troubles to any other cause, rather than view them as punishments inflicted by God for their sins. But however unwilling they are to acknowledge the divine hand, we have the fullest evidence that the evils experienced by nations and individuals, are corrections and punishments from God. It is written, "shall there be evil in a city, and the Lord hath not done it?" God, indeed, makes use of second causes to accomplish his purposes, but his hand is not, on this

account, the less to be acknowledged in the events that take place. He punishes a wicked nation for their sins, when he raises up an enemy to overpower and subjugate them, *as really*, as if he should destroy them after the manner of Sodom. Nor is his hand any the less concerned in the judgments brought upon the nations in *this* age of the world, than in those which were anciently inflicted. Wars, famine and pestilence, with every other calamity, are as much under his direction as ever, and are inflicted for the *same* reason. *Sin* brings down divine judgments upon wicked nations *now* as truly as it did upon the inhabitants of Canaan, upon Israel and Judah, or upon the Babylonians. And it may be concluded, that God, as much now as ever, will repent of the good wherewith he said he would benefit a nation, if they sin and do evil in his sight. He may indeed bear long with them; but if they do not repent, he will come out against them and trample them in his fury. If they do not perform the condition on which his favor is suspended, but cast off his fear and rebel against his commands, however elevated and prosperous their situation may once have been, he will surely visit them with judgments.

The doctrine being established, some interesting improvement may be made.

1. If sin will bring down the divine judgment upon a nation, however elevated and prosperous their situation may once have been, we learn what our own nation is to expect, except speedy repentance prevent, viz. the righteous judgments of heaven poured out upon us in thick succession, notwithstanding the high state of elevation and prosperity to which we have been raised. As a nation we have become very corrupt and wicked in the sight of God; and for our sins his judgments are now hanging over us.

When we review the divine conduct towards us, especially since our separation from our mother country, we must conclude that we have been a people highly favored of God. He has evidently spoken

concerning us “to build and to plant us.” The liberty, peace, and prosperity we have enjoyed, are without a parallel. While we have “heard of wars and rumours of wars;” while Europe has been drenched in blood; while destruction upon destruction has taken place among the nations of the earth, we have been eminently favored with order and tranquility. Though at times we have been surrounded with danger; and though individuals have suffered from the contending powers of the east, our situation, as a people, has been truly eligible.

Whether our liberties and privileges be continued, or not, it is certain that we *have been* raised to a high degree of eminence, prosperity and happiness.

Through the goodness of our beneficent Creator, our independence was not only *declared*, but *effected*, in spite of the spirited exertion of a numerous and powerful enemy: and the same blessing, so dearly bought, has, under his protection and mercy, been maintained and perpetuated. The liberties and rights of man have been happily secured to us by our excellent constitution. We have enjoyed a great degree of health, plenty and prosperity in our undertakings. In many respects, Divine Providence has *signally* interposed in our favor. We have been blessed with a great measure of Divine protection, forbearance and care. God has delivered us out of the hands of our enemies on every side, and carried us, as it were, on eagles wings.

Above all things, we have enjoyed the invaluable blessings of the gospel. Liberty of conscience has been granted to us, with numerous opportunities to hear the word dispensed, and to improve in religious and useful knowledge: and the church of the living God has been established and made eminently to prosper in our borders.

But what returns have we made for these benefits? To whom have we paid our acknowledgments? Some, it is hoped, have given glory to the Lord of all hosts—the Author of all good; and have made “mention,

that his name is exalted " But alas ! it is to be feared that this number is but small. Have not the multitude forgotten the God of their mercies, and lived in rebellion against him ? And have we not reason to fear that heavy judgments are shortly to be poured out upon the land ? Have we not provoked God to *repent* of the good wherewith he said he would benefit us ?

Let the subject be closely applied. Permit me to enumerate some of the crying sins of the land, which will assuredly bring down the judgments of God, except a thorough repentance prevent. Let me begin with the sins of ingratitude, pride, and vain glorying. These are awfully prevalent. To whom do most feel themselves indebted for the liberties and privileges they enjoy ? To God ? Nay ; but to our statesmen, our officers and our armies. Multitudes appear to realize no higher power than that of men, in the deliverance and salvation wrought in our favor. They think their debt of gratitude is discharged, when they have given honor unto men, or taken it to themselves. Encomiums are lavished upon the instruments of our freedom and prosperity, while the God in whose hand our breath is, is not glorified. What vile ingratitude this ! what expressions of pride and arrogance !

It is by no means improper to give *due* honor unto men. We are doubtless indebted to the instruments, by which our liberties and privileges were procured. Their wisdom, their love of liberty, their promptitude, their courage and perseverance, were truly admirable. Let their memory be ever held dear by us and our children.

But shall we stop when we have paid our compliments to *these instruments* ? Nay, there is a higher power to be acknowledged. Let not the assertion be ungrateful to you, that it was God who established our independence, and crowned us with victory and honor ; and that to him the glory is supremely due. The want of a feeling sense and acknowledgment of this, is vile ingratitude---a sin, for which the land must

repeat, or mourn. It is greatly to be lamented that the hand which has bestowed such peculiar favors upon us, should be so generally forgotten, that the beneficent author of our civil and religious privileges, should be so basely neglected and despised. Can we be secure while this disposition and practice remain? Can we rationally look for prosperity, while we walk in the ways of pride and vain glorying? Certainly not. The judge of the earth will "be avenged on such a nation" in due time.

Another crying sin is that of *intemperance*. This vice has become very prevalent, and appears to be daily increasing. Persons of almost every description, are overtaken and undone by it. Such an abuse of spirituous liquors must be highly provoking to a holy God. When, therefore, we see such hords of drunkards, and behold them increasing in numbers and filth, is there not cause of alarm for the safety of our country."

Besides intemperance, the prevalence of *profanity* affords just occasion of alarm. The number of profane swearers in the land is immense. In almost every direction the ear is saluted with profane oaths and curses. Surely, "the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

The *profanation of the sabbath* is also an abounding and aggravated sin. This holy and precious institution is, by multitudes, trampled under foot. In the face of positive command, they pursue their worldly avocations, sports and recreations on this day. The anger of God, therefore, can but be, hereby, increased. The profanation of the sabbath was one of the sins which brought wrath upon ancient Israel: and it is one for which wrath will be poured out upon this land.

We may also enumerate the sins of backbiting, lying, lasciviousness, injustice, and oppression, as alarming and growing evils. The baneful influence of these vices is evidently extended. That description in Hosea is, in a great measure, applicable to our land. "Hear the word of the Lord, ye children of Israel;

for the Lord hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood toucheth blood: therefore shall the land mourn." When such iniquities abound, it is time to expect judgments.

To this catalogue we may subjoin the sins of envy, strife, covetousness, earthly-mindedness, uncharitableness, and unmercifulness. Infidelity also, hypocrisy, and heresy, of various kinds, abound; together with much unfaithfulness in parents, and disobedience in children; undue dependance on arms of flesh, reveling and idolatry. Some may be surprised to hear of idolatry being practised; but the land is full of it. Fashions, characters, possessions, titles and pleasures, are all regarded more than God, and consequently become idols.

To complete this sad detail, the multitudes are full of impenitence and unbelief. The Gospel and the Christian ministry, are treated with great inattention and disrespect. The calls of mercy are awfully disregarded, and the hearts of most are hardened against God. Can such a nation prosper?

It is allowed, that there are exceptions to this general corruption. There are some who are righteous, and in favor with God; and, for whose sake, his judgments are withheld from being poured out upon the wicked. Nevertheless, when corruption have become so general; when the enormities of vice are so extensively practised, there is reason to expect calamity will shortly come, except a reformation prevent.

A people may become *so corrupt*, that God will not spare them, though there be eminently righteous persons in the midst of them. This idea is clearly expressed in Ezekiel xiv 13, 14, "Son of man, when the land sinneth against me by trespassing grievously, then will I stretch out my hand upon it, and will break the staff of the bread thereof, and will send famine upon it, and will cut off man and beast from it. Thus'

these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, they should deliver but their own souls by their righteousness, saith the Lord God." Notwithstanding, therefore, there are pious and virtuous characters amongst us, we have reason to expect judgments will be poured out upon the land for the great corruption and wickedness of it. He who is capable of discerning the signs of the times, cannot but be apprehensive that we are fast ripening for calamity. From the manner in which God has dealt with other sinful nations, we cannot rationally expect to escape the rod, without a thorough reformation. Without repentance we may expect blasting, mildew, drought, famine, wasting sicknesses, loss of liberty, war, and bloodshed, with a complication of other judgments.

These are no *imaginary* evils. They will surely come, if our sin and impenitence remain. If we turn not from our evil ways, it may be relied on, that God will *repent* of the good wherewith he said he would benefit us. And though he has favored us above any of the other nations, he will turn his hand against us; take away our independence and liberty; cause us to groan under the cruel hand of oppression; and consume us with war, confusion, and perplexity. We now see that his hand is stretched out. We are surrounded with danger on every side; and, before long, it may be expected that the curse will fall upon us. God calls, and warns, and threatens, and waits; but his forbearance will not always last. As his patience and long suffering are but little regarded; as the multitude still go on to do evil, it may be expected that the day of calamity is at hand, and that the things which are coming upon the land make haste.

It is highly probable that, to some of you, these heavy tidings are unexpected and offensive. You imagine there is no danger, and that we shall still dwell in safety. You boast, that our soil is fruitful, our climate healthy, and our population great; our resources numerous, our constitution the happiest in the world, and our wisdom and valor the most tried

and genuine. That we have strength to cope with *any enemy*, and, consequently, need not be alarmed. But what ground of safety is here, if God be not on our side? What is all this but trusting and glorying in the creature, in an *arm of flesh*, which is one of the many things which have been stated as grounds of alarm?

That we have become a great people, and that we inherit an exceeding good land, is not denied; but what security is hereby afforded, if we have provoked Jehovah to cut us off? What can we do with an enemy, whom he may raise up to subjugate and destroy us? There is, indeed, no power on earth which we need to dread, *as such*. There is little to fear from the forces of England or France, or any other power, *simply considered*; but there is great reason to be alarmed at our sins. On account of our sins, we may justly fear the Lord of hosts will raise up some adversary to lay us waste; and then, "five shall chase an hundred, and an hundred shall put ten thousand to flight." Yes, my hearers, *sin*, the procurer of expected calamities, is in the midst of us, and is the bane of our peace.

Ye drunkards, profane swearers, and sabbath breakers; ye violators of truth, dishonest dealers, fornicators and adulterers; ye sons of pride, arrogance, and vain glory; ye lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God; ye infidels, heretics, hypocrites, despisers of that which is good, and unbelievers of every class; ye strangers to gratitude, holiness and virtue; ye that cast off the fear of God, and put far away the evil day, and trust in an arm of flesh; *ye are they*, who are going to bring down the wrath of God upon the land! *Ye are the plotters*, the instruments of ruin upon a nation! You may now flatter yourselves that you shall have peace, though you "walk after the imagination of your wicked heart." But, "be sure your sin will find you out." Except you repent, you will be overtaken with judgments, and finally destroyed without remedy.

If sin will bring down the Divine judgments upon a nation, however elevated and prosperous their situation may once have been; and would we, in this land, be in the way of safety and happiness, we must turn from sin, and obey the Lord our God. We may view ourselves as addressed in the following passage: "Return thou blacksliding Israel, saith the Lord, and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you." It highly concerns us also to take heed to another scripture exhortation. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the lord, and he will have mercy on him, and unto our God, for he will abundantly pardon." The verses immediately preceding the text are likewise in point: "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: if that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them." Notwithstanding, therefore, the danger to which our sins have exposed us, if we would repent of our evil ways, and return to the lord, there would still be hope in our case. We might still expect the divine protection and favor would be exercised towards us. But we cannot have reason to look for safety and prosperity on any other ground. It is "righteousness," alone which really "exalteth a nation."

It will be proper here to notice some particulars in that line of conduct, by pursuing which, we may expect the divine protection and blessing.

A very obvious duty incumbent upon us, is that of the exercise of unfeigned gratitude for past favors, and for the present forbearance and long suffering of God. No people were ever under greater obligation to the Father of mercies. As we have been exalted to Heaven, in point of privilege; as the divine bounty has been astonishingly spent upon us; as the divine conduct towards our land, ever since it was first peopled by the English, has been almost as remark-

able, as it was towards Israel, both in their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, and their subsequent preservation and prosperity; it highly concerns us to return the sincerest gratitude for such unmerited favors. It behooves us to revive this much-neglected duty, and, on a review of God's care, protection, and mercy towards us, to give him the glory due to his name.

Another very obvious and weighty duty, is that of humility and self abasement for sin. Under the reception of Divine favors, we have made but poor returns. Like Jerusalem, we have "waxen fat and kicked." Almost every species of vice is practised in the land, as has been observed. For this great corruption and wickedness, it concerns us to be humble and abased before God. There is a peculiar call for the exercise of such a temper at this time, when the land is ripening for ruin, and when the Divine judgments are hanging over us.

It is also of great importance that we should be brought off from all dependence on the creature, to rely wholly upon God for safety and strength. God calls to us, as in the prophet; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might; let not the rich man glory in his riches; but let him that glorieth, glory in this that he understandeth, and knoweth me." It concerns us also to feel the force of the following passage: "There is no king saved by the multitudes of an host: a mighty man is not delivered by much strength. An horse is a vain thing for safety; neither shall he deliver any by his great strength." It is infinitely unsafe to trust in the creature, and to glory in worldly greatness; and it is awfully provoking in the sight of God. The offensive and dangerous return of this temper and conduct, has been made to appear in the fearful examples of Babylon, Tyre, Jerusalem, and many other once flourishing and populous nations and cities. It is much to be lamented that this evil is so prevalent in our own land. Would we be safe and prosperous, it must be forsaken. For the divine denunciation is

still in force: "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." This propensity to depend on human aid, must be given up, and a firm reliance on God for refuge and strength, must possess our minds, or our safety, peace and advancement cannot be secured. This will not preclude the necessity of improving all proper means of defence and prosperity. Means are to be used; though we are not to rely merely upon them. Our supreme dependence must be upon God. To him must we look, by fervent and importunate prayer, for safety and help.

Another duty, highly necessary to the security and advancement of our nation, is that of electing men of integrity and uprightness to the public offices of the government. It is much to be regretted, that so little respect is had to this subject by electors. If less attention were paid to the particular political views of candidates for office, and more to the real uprightness and integrity of their characters, we should enjoy a much better and safer administration. The advancement of unprincipled and wicked men to office, is of dangerous tendency. The sacred proverb will ever hold true, "When the wicked beareth rule, the people mourn." Again it is written, "The wicked walk on every side when the vilest men are exalted." Whoever reads with attention, the scripture history of Israel and Judah, cannot but be sensible, that wicked rulers greatly endanger the liberties, safety, and prosperity of a nation. In an elective government, like ours, it argues a great defect and want of faithfulness in the people, if men of known vicious characters are put into office. When the people advance such characters to bear rule over them, their conduct is exceedingly offensive in the sight of heaven. It is highly important that we should be apprized of this evil; and, if we would be in the way of prosperity and safety, that we should endeavor to select virtuous and upright characters to fill the public offices, and that we should give our suffrages for no other. Undes

the administration of such men, we might reasonably hope for the Divine blessing.

It is also of indispensable importance that we respect the institutions of the Gospel. The Christian ministry, the holy sabbath, word and worship of God, must be attentively regarded; and the Lord Jesus Christ must be embraced by a true and living faith. An improvement of our religious privileges, is a duty of the highest magnitude. We cannot be a nation, approved of God, except we submit to his Son, whom he hath exalted at his right hand. If we live in unbelief, and "neglect so great salvation," we cannot avoid his displeasure.

In fine, we are called to the exercise of every Christian grace, and to the practice of every moral virtue. Forsaking all the sins which have been enumerated, we must become a strictly upright, holy, and obedient people. Then shall we enjoy the Divine protection and mercy. Blessings similar to those promised to Israel in the xxviii chap. of Deuteronomy, will come upon us: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day; that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee and overtake thee. Blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field; blessed shall be the fruit of thy body, and the fruit of thy ground, and the fruit of thy cattle, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. Blessed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and blessed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The Lord shall cause thine enemies, that rise up against thee, to be smitten before thy face: they shall come out against thee one way, and flee seven ways before thee."

Thus we have good and evil, life and death set before us; and it is of high concern to us to make a wise improvement of these admonitions and instructions. Will it be said by any, that they are needless

or ill-timed? Who but the blind and impatient can indulge a thought of this nature? It is highly probable some would have been better suited with an address which would have cherished such a spirit as Nebuchadnezer possessed, when he walked in the palace of the kingdom of Babylon, and said, "Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the house of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honor of my majesty? But it was not the design of this discourse to flatter the pride of man. Knowingly to foster a spirit which takes the honor from God, and gives it unto men, would be a crime of crimson hue. Rather let him who must answer for the blood of souls, if neglected and unwarned, appear a reprover of sin, and an inculcator of that obedience, without which we cannot be prosperous and happy. And let one and all feel the importance of strictly attending to these things. Will you lay them to heart? Will you cease from evil, and learn to do well? Or are you resolved to walk in the ways of disobedience? If this be the determination of any of you, you must abide the consequences. If any of you harden your necks under reproof; if you indulge in profaneness, intemperance and dishonesty; if you abuse this day by rioting and debauchery, and walk in the imagination of your evil heart, you are solemnly warned to prepare to meet a sin-hating and sin-punishing God. Be assured the end will be bitter.

But if any of you feel the weight of these things; if you realize the doleful effects of sin; if you have hearts to repent and turn to God; if you are resolved upon a life of new obedience; you may take hold of comfort. The Lord will be your refuge and defence.

May we all feel the force of instruction and reproof; improve this occasion for the honor of God, and our own good; conduct with the utmost order; exercise a spirit of unfeigned thankfulness and humility; be enabled to pray for our own peace and that of our nation; and finally be brought to the full and everlasting enjoyment of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

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