



Covenant Commission

Reforming the Home, Church, and Civil Government

DIVINE JUDGMENTS UPON TYRANTS

By Jacob Cushing, 1778

“Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people, for he wilt avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries; and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.” -Deuteronomy, XXXII. 43.

That there is a God, *“is the prime foundation of all religion.”* We should therefore employ our utmost diligence to establish our minds in the stedfast belief of it. For when once we have firmly settled in our minds the belief of God’s being, it will mightily influence all our powers of action; it will invite our hope, alarm our fear, and address to every passion within us, that is capable of persuasion, and be in us a never-failing source of devotion and religion.

A God without a providence, is a solitary kind of being, and affords but gloomy apprehensions. For ’tis by his providence that all intercourse between God and his rational creatures is maintained, therein he exercises and displays his perfections, therein his power executes the contrivances of his wisdom, and his wisdom plans the methods of his goodness and grace, which open to the view and admiration of the wise and good, through successive ages and generations.

But that branch of providence, which, in a peculiar manner, demands our attention on this occasion, and should excite our gratitude, is God’s uninterrupted government of the rational part of his creation, mankind in particular. For as all government, so the divine, supposes laws, and laws suppose rewards and punishments, of which intelligences only are capable.

Since, therefore, God interests himself in the affairs of mankind, and the universal administration of his providence extends to all his works, a large field opens for the employment of our contemplative minds. And we are naturally led to consider this divine government, as respecting communities; the affairs whereof are important, and upon which the order and felicity of the world greatly depend.

God is the sovereign of the world, and disposes all things in the best manner. All blessings and calamities, of a public nature, and the revolutions of kingdoms and states, are to be viewed as under the special direction of heaven. Hence the scripture saith, that God *“increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them, he enlargeth the nations, and straitneth them*

again—sometimes he blesseth them, so that they are multiplied greatly; again, they are minished, and brought low, through oppression, affliction and sorrow.”

These truths being necessarily interwoven with religion, and extensively useful under the varying scenes of life, and mysteries in providence—the main design of the present discourse, is to awaken our attention to the passages of divine providence—and lead us to a religious improvement of God’s hand, in the tragical events that took place on the nineteenth of April, 1775. I mean the murderous war, rapine and devastation of that day, which we are now met to commemorate.

Under this visitation, or the greatest trials imaginable, we have abundant consolation, that God rules in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of this earth.

The words but now read, may be, perhaps, not unfitly applied to us, for comfort and encouragement under God’s chastisements, and his usual conduct towards the enemies of his church and people: *“Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people, for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.”* These are the concluding words of Moses his song, which setteth forth God’s works of mercy and judgment towards the children of Israel, his covenant people. And though, in their primary meaning, they respect that nation only, yet they may be accommodated and fairly applied to God’s faithful and obedient people, at all times, and in all ages; inasmuch as the latter part of the prophecy reaches unto the latter days, and is not yet wholly fulfilled.

Some interpret the former part of the verse thus, *“Rejoice ye nations, who are his people,”* supposing it to be a prophecy of the gentiles becoming one body with the people of Israel; because Moses had supposed in this song, great enmity between them, and that sometimes they had sorely plagued Israel; as at others, God rendered to them according to what they had done unto his people: but now breaks out in a rapture of joy, to think that they should one day be reconciled, and made one people of God.

The prophecy then before us, is not limited to the Israelites; but may be understood as extending to all God’s chosen, though oppressed and injured people, in all generations, that he will recompense their wrongs—plead their cause—and do justice upon their enemies. And taking it in this latitude, we may collect several things from it, as worthy our notice, and pertinent to this occasion. Accordingly I observe,

First, that God, in the righteous administrations of his providence, permits the sons of violence to oppress his saints and people; and, in their malice and rage, to attempt their ruin, by waging war with them.

God is a being of infinite power and inflexible justice, as well as consummate wisdom; and doth according to his sovereign pleasure, in the natural and moral world. He over-rules all things for his own glory, and in subordination to that, has a particular regard to the happiness of his covenant people: His church and chosen are not without mistakes and errors, in this imperfect state—hence they are prone to degenerate and transgress—to be

too regardless of God, and deficient in their obedience—nay, to be guilty of great wickedness. And it becomes necessary, to punish such revolters from the ways of God, and purity of manners. Hence, when the all-wise God designs the chastisement and reformation of his backsliding people, he “*visits their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes,*” and uses those methods, that shall best promote his moral government; inflicting this or that judgment, as pleases him. The divine providence then is to be devoutly acknowledged in all events, in all public evils and calamities.

Sometimes there are visible marks of God’s anger and displeasure against his people. Their counsels are divided, and their strength impaired—their enemies are permitted to distress and injure them—or they have been harrassed by the will and conduct of ambitious, designing men, who have contributed to the ruin of their country, even at the same time they pretend a mighty zeal for its interest: Or, they are scourged by haughty tyrants and cruel oppressors: Yet the hand of God, and his over-ruling providence is to be acknowledged in these things, as much as when a people suffer by famine, pestilence, earthquakes, storms and tempests, &c. which are commonly regarded as the more immediate tokens of God’s anger, and works of his providence.

In all public evils, calamities and distresses of God’s people, he, in his providence, proceeds according to equal rules, and for wise and salutary purposes. Hence the promises of temporal blessings made to the Israelites, in case of their obedience to the divine commandments, and the threatnings of temporal evils and plagues denounced against them, in case of their disobedience, recited in Levit. xxvi, and Deut. xxviii chapters; related chiefly to them as a body politic, because with regard to the public, they always took place. When religion and virtue flourished among them, and they walked in obedience to the divine laws, they prospered, were successful in their wars, had great plenty, and all things conducive to their welfare and happiness.

But when they revolted from God, and were generally corrupt and dissolute, they were despised, miserable, and a prey to their jealous and envious neighbours. And it may be noted, in general, that when public calamities were inflicted upon them, whether by the more immediate hand of heaven, as drought, pestilence, famine, and the like; or, by instruments in providence, as the hands of their enemies and oppressors; it was always as a just punishment for their national iniquities; their idolatry, irreligion and abounding wickedness. And upon their repentance and reformation, these calamities were removed, and their prosperity restored.

Nor was this course of providence peculiar to the Jews. The established rule of the divine procedure towards nations is ascertained in Jer. xviii, 7, &c. “*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. 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.*”

We are assured, in the oracles of truth, that “*Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin,*” i.e.

abounding vice and wickedness, “*is a reproach to any people.*” And with regard to mankind in all ages, may it not be said, that when a people have been remarkable for justice, temperance, industry, and zeal for the public good, they have prospered in all their affairs, and been high in reputation? And, perhaps, no instance can be produced of a nation’s being given up to exterminating judgments and calamities, so long as virtue, probity and religion flourished among them. But when falshood and perfidy, injustice and general corruption, with a contempt of religion, have generally prevailed among them, they have fallen into many calamities, and been deprived of those advantages they so much abused.

Thus God, in a variety of ways, may correct and punish his degenerate people; and, among others, permit enemies to oppress them, shed blood in their land, and lay them waste.

It by no means reflects upon the righteousness of God, that those whom he employs as instruments in the execution of his judgments upon a revolting, sinful people, are themselves chargeable with injustice and cruelty; and have nothing in view but the gratifying their own ambition, avarice and lust of power. And commonly they who are the authors, or perpetrators of such violence and severity upon a people, are afterwards, in God’s time, justly punished in their turn, for their vices, their pride, wantonness and barbarity.

Wherefore, if we make a religious improvement of such dispensations, we shall resolve all into the good pleasure of him, who is “*higher than the highest,*” and has the absolute disposal of all in his hands. And however undeserving we may be of such unrighteous treatment from men, our fellow-mortals; yet we are to adore the great—the wise—the powerful God, humble ourselves under his mighty hand, accept the punishment of our sins, learn righteousness, patiently bear the indignation of the Lord, and quietly submit to his providences; and, while his judgments are upon us, repent and reform, confide in his almighty power, hope in his mercy, and plead his compassion and the riches of his grace, that in his own way and time, which is the fittest, we may see his salvation. Pass we, therefore,

Secondly, to observe, the dispensations of heaven towards oppressors and tyrants, the enemies of God’s people. “*For he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries,*” none shall hinder his proceedings, to be fully avenged of them.

He is the supreme Lord, governor and judge of the world, therefore will he chastise offenders; to him belongeth vengeance, therefore the wicked shall not go unpunished.

The enemies of God’s church and people, are God’s adversaries. “*The Lord’s portion is his people, he keeps them as the apple of his eye*” verses 9, 10, of the context. Whoever grieves or afflicts them, provokes God, for they are “*his peculiar treasure.*” And having a singular concern for them, he will be their shield and their defence, however they may be persecuted by their enemies. “*For the Lord shall judge his people*”; verse 36. i.e. plead their cause, and deliver them from the oppression of their enemies; as this phrase is frequently used in the

book of Psalms. He will have mercy upon his servants, and turn his hand, which punishes them, upon their adversaries.

Thus utter destruction is denounced upon Edom, for their unnatural enmity against the Jews, and cruelty towards their brethren, in Obad. ver. 10, "*For thy violence against thy brother Jacob, shame shall cover thee, and thou shalt be cut off forever.*"

To confirm our faith and hope in God, in troublous times, in days of darkness and misery, it may be proper to look back, and devoutly contemplate that most signal act of divine providence, that when the primitive religion which had been derived from the beginning, was in danger of being lost among men, and the world became generally involved in gross superstition and idolatry, it pleased God to single out a nation from the rest of mankind, and to erect them into a sacred polity, set apart by their fundamental constitution for the profession and worship, the faith and obedience of the one true God, in opposition to the worshipping idols or false deities, and to the worshipping the true God by images. The more effectually to awaken the attention of mankind, and to give the more illustrious confirmation to that church constitution, it was wisely ordered, that in the founding and establishing of it, there were repeated and amazing exertions of the power of God.

And the whole of that dispensation was admirably so contrived, as to prepare the way for a more spiritual and perfect state of the church, which was to succeed it, and was to be more universally diffused; in the founding of which, providence interposed in a yet more remarkable manner, by a series of most astonishing events.

Through the powerful influence of a wise providence, events that were designed for the destruction of the church, have been made subservient to its greater stability. Thus Haman's malicious, revengeful plot, which threatned utter ruin to the Jewish nation and religion, was most marvellously over-ruled to contribute to the confirmation thereof.

Likewise the christian church, though the world ever was an enemy to it, has been firmly established: It has been maintained against cruel persecution, and the greatest violence. And though continually burning, it has not been consumed, though tossed with tempests, and worried by its oppressors and adversaries, frequently passing through the furnace of affliction; yet it retains a form more bright and beautiful, as of the spouse of Christ, and the joyful mother of children, which no man can number.

Indeed churches are not perfect or compleat; they are apt to decline and transgress; nothing therefore can be more equal and fit, than that God should, in his holy providence, manifest his righteous displeasure against backsliding churches that have fallen from the power and purity of religion, into a state of corruption.

Should it happen that, in times of persecution, bloodshed and war, the church may be reduced in its members, still the remnant may become more refined, holy and heavenly. The faith and patience of the saints be more exercised, their zeal and piety more eminent, and practical godliness more gloriously appear. And then, in due season, God raiseth his church and people from their afflicted and oppressed state, and rendereth vengeance to

their adversaries and persecutors. Thus Babylon of old was punished for her cruelty and oppression of the Jewish church. And thus shall it likewise be in the case of mystical Babylon; which, after having been long suffered to prevail, and to “*make war with the saints of the most High,*” shall have a mighty downfall, wherein the vengeance and justice of almighty God, shall be illustriously displayed; of which we have a striking description in xviii. chap. of the Revelation.

And that we may be established in the faith of the prophecy before us, that God “*will avenge the blood of his servants,*” and execute “*vengeance upon their adversaries,*” we may advert to the animating promise of our blessed Saviour, in the parable of the unjust judge, who, neither fearing God nor regarding man, was nevertheless prevailed on by the continual cries of the widow, to do her justice against her adversary; our Lord adds, And shall not God avenge his own elect? “*Will he not much more be moved to vindicate his chosen and dearly beloved people, that cry to him day and night, under the cruel oppression of their insulting enemies, even though he may seem to bear long with them, to give them space for repentance? I tell you, he will certainly vindicate them, and when once he undertakes it, he will do it speedily too.*” Herein, “*our condescending Lord only intended to intimate, that if the repeated, importunate cries of the afflicted, may at length prevail even upon an inhuman heart, they will be much more regarded by a righteous and merciful God, who is always ready to bestow his favours, when he sees we are prepared to receive them. We may rely upon it, that God will vindicate his saints. Let this encourage them, though the rod of the wicked may for a while rest on them—and let it intimidate the proud oppressors of the earth, who, in the midst of all their pomp and power, are so wretched, as to have the prayers of God’s people against them.*”

We have encouragement then, to hope in God; that he will build up Zion—that he will appear still for us, under all our distresses and oppression—that he will avenge the innocent blood of our brethren, inhumanly shed in the beginning of the present unjust war—that he will render vengeance to his and our adversaries—and one day restore tranquility to our country—that he will make our land “*a quiet habitation,*” when we may view it in perfect peace, and free from all fears of hostile invasions. For, to use the words of the prophet Isaiah, “*The Lord is our judge, the Lord is our lawgiver, the Lord is our King, he will save us.*” Hence we are naturally led, in the last place, to observe from the concluding words of my text.

Thirdly, the kindness and compassion of God, to his penitent, praying and obedient people: “*And will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.*”

Though God chastise his people with the rod of his hand, or permit enemies to oppose and oppress them, yet he will remember his holy covenant, and shew compassion to them, upon their humiliation and repentance. This is illustrated in Neh. ix chap. wherein the Levites make a religious confession of God’s goodness, and the Israelites wickedness—greatly provoking God by their disobedience and rebellion against him, and contempt of his law; therefore, as in verse 27, “*Thou deliveredst them into the hands of their enemies, who vexed them, and in the time of their trouble, when they cried unto thee, thou heardest them from heaven; and according to thy manifold mercies thou gavest them saviours, who saved them*

out of the hand of their enemies.”

God will not “*cast off his people, neither will he forsake his inheritance: The Lord will not cast off forever—but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies.*” He will arise, and have mercy upon Sion, when the set time to favor her, is come.

To represent the perpetual love of God to his church and people, the prophet Isaiah utters himself in this rapturous strain, “*Sing, O heaven, and be joyful, O earth, and break forth into singing, O mountains, for God hath comforted his people, and will have mercy upon his afflicted*”—chap. xlix. 13. And speaking of their deliverance at last, saith, ver. 26. “*And I will feed them that oppress thee, with their own flesh, and they shall be drunken with their own blood, as with sweet wine, and all flesh shall know that I the Lord, am thy Saviour, and thy redeemer, the mighty one of Jacob.*”

The intention of God’s severe dispensations being not the destruction of his people, but their amendment, it becomes them to acknowledge his hand, confess and forsake their sins, and importunately seek to him for needed salvation. Hence, we are frequently exhorted in scripture to repentance, as the surest way to obtain mercy from God; Job v. 17. “*Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty—for he maketh sore and bindeth up, he woundeth, and his hands make whole. He shall deliver thee in six troubles, yea, in seven, there shall no evil touch thee. In famine he shall redeem thee from death, and in war from the power of the sword.*”

The corrections of his hand are the scourges of a faithful God, who retaineth not his anger forever, because he delighteth in mercy. To this purpose we have a more general exhortation to repentance, in Hos. vi. 1. “*Come, and let us return unto the Lord, for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up.*” The same God that punisheth us, can only remove his judgments, and shew us mercy. God will “speak peace to his people, and to his saints, if they return not again to folly—surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him.”

And the church of Christ, notwithstanding all oppression and persecution, shall one day break forth as the morning, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and triumph over all its potent, cruel adversaries; even when the glorious things spoken of her, in the latter days, shall be accomplished; corresponding to the prophecy of Isaiah, chap. lx. wherein describing the Jews restoration from captivity, takes occasion therefrom to represent the glories of Christ’s kingdom, which began upon the first publication of the gospel, but will not be completed ’till the fullness of Jews and gentiles are come into the church; and saith, “*Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders: Thy sun shall no more go down, neither shall thy moon withdraw itself; for the Lord shall be thine everlasting light, and the days of thy mourning shall be ended: Thy people also shall all be righteous; they shall inherit the land forever, the branch of my planting, the work of my hands, that I may be glorified. A little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation: I the Lord will hasten it in his time.*”

From the preceeding discourse, in connexion with our context, arise the following truths, for instruction and improvement of the dispensations of heaven; and therefore proper for our meditation, on the present occasion. As,

- That we should extol the Lord of heaven and earth, who is possessed of glorious perfections, which render him the only fit object of our religious worship.
- That we should acknowledge the infinite power of our God, and his sovereign dominion over all; and give honour and service to none other.
- That his works of providence, no less than of creation, are most perfect; since he doth nothing without the greatest reason, and according to the rules of exact justice.
- That we are ignorant of the methods and reasons of God's judgments, that take place in the world.
- That all the evil, and all the good, that befalls any man, or the whole church, proceeds from the just and equal administrations of divine providence.
- That in God we may find a sure refuge, at all times, for he is in one mind, and changeth not.
- That he will render vengeance to his adversaries, and do justice to the enemies of his church.
- That he will be merciful to his people, his humble, penitent, praying people, and will, in his own way and time, avenge the blood of his servants.
- That therefore we have abundant cause to rejoice with his people; and to yield cheerful and constant obedience to him.

These hints might be profitably enlarged upon; but I must leave the more particular improvement of them, to your own private meditations; and fall in closer with the design of this anniversary, which is to keep in mind a solemn remembrance of the origin of the present murderous war, and more especially of the innocent blood wantonly shed around this sacred temple; and the subsequent slaughter and desolation by British troops, on that memorable day, April nineteenth, one thousand, seven hundred, seventy-five: A day religiously to be regarded by all professed christians.

The distress and anxiety of the inhabitants of this town, and the adjacent, arising from the singular and horrid scenes of that dismal and dark day, tho' diminished by time, can never be effaced in the human breast.

With compassion and tender sympathy, we renew the sorrow and lamentation of the bereaved, for their deceased friends and relatives, who then fell a sacrifice, bled and died, in the cause of God and their country, by the sons of violence, and hands of murderers, as

multitudes have fallen since in our land, whose blood we hope in God, he will speedily and righteously avenge, and restore peace and tranquility.

The all-interesting events of that day, that distressing day, have been painted in lively colours, by my worthy brother:* and the leading steps, or rather stretches of parliamentary power, and hasty strides of British ministerial vengeance, to reduce Americans to submission and abject slavery (as introductory to this unjust and ruinous war) have been set in a striking point of light, by my rev. father,† who have gone before me in this lecture.

Nothing new therefore, can be suggested by me on this occasion. I have only to stir up your pure minds, by way of remembrance, of the transactions of that awful day; to excite your devotion, and to recommend a religious improvement of God's righteous dispensations then, and through three revolving years now completed.

In pursuance of their oppressive measures (if not intentionally to begin the barbarous and bloody scene) the enemy came upon us like a flood, stealing a march from Boston, through by-ways, under the darkness and silence of the night; and, like cowards and robbers, attacked us altogether defenceless; and cruelly murdered the innocent, the aged and helpless. Accordingly they are described by the prophet, as persons whose hands are defiled with blood; adding, "*their works are works of iniquity, and the act of violence is in their hands. Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood; their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity, wasting and destruction are in their paths.*"

With astonishment and gratitude we recollect the kindness of our almighty Preserver, that no more were slain by the hand of violence; and that the people willingly offered themselves to the help of the Lord against the mighty, who manfully opposed the efforts of British pride, power and barbarity. The hand of God was visible in these things; and the power and goodness of God manifested in our deliverance, from the enraged, disappointed enemy, is to be devoutly retained in memory, and thankfully acknowledged. When we consider, how weak and unprepared we were at that time, for such a sudden assault (though the behaviour of the British troops might have led us to expect hostile measures would ensue*), we may, not unfitly, adopt the words of the psalmist, concerning the church of old; in Ps. 124, wherein she blesseth God for a miraculous deliverance from a formidable enemy; I say, we may apply the words in the beginning of the psalm, to ourselves and circumstances, with a little variation; "*If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, now may New-England say: If it had not been the Lord, who was on our side, when men rose up against us; then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us,*" and began to break out in fierceness: In their furious rage they would have suddenly devoured us, and laid waste the country.

But blessed be God, to whose infinite mercy we ascribe our deliverance, who was then a present help. These barbarous savage enemies were put into fear; they were made to flee before us, and hastily to retreat (as wild beasts to their dens) before a few scattered, undisciplined freemen:* Not to our courage or conduct, but to God's name be all the praise and glory.

A close attention to the occurrences in this unnatural war, from its rise to the present time, affords us great occasion to sing of God's mercy, and to rejoice with his people; and likewise to fear and tremble before the Lord, that his anger is not yet turned away, but his hand is stretched out still.

If this war be just and necessary on our part, as past all doubt it is, then we are engaged in the work of the Lord, which obliges us (under God mighty in battle) to use our "*swords as instruments of righteousness, and calls us to the shocking, but necessary, important duty of shedding human blood*"; not only in defence of our property, life and religion, but in obedience to him who hath said, "*Cursed be he that keepeth back his sword from blood.*"

Here I shall take occasion, to address the companies of militia in this town;† our brethren, now under arms. My friends, having early distinguished yourselves in a readiness to promote the common good, and safety of your country; by opposing, with others, its invaders, and the murderers of your brethren in this town and neighbourhood, on that day we are now commemorating: You escaped the arrows of death, when perhaps equally exposed, as those that were cut off by the hand of violence: To the God of your life, and who was then, in a peculiar sense, your preserver, defence and shield, you owe everlasting love and obedience.

You were spared, it may be, further to signalize yourselves, and to do yet greater service for God and your bleeding country, which calls aloud to you, and all its hearty friends, to rouse and exert themselves, for the destruction of the common enemy and oppressor; and to wipe away the blood wherewith this land has been stained. To arms! To action, and the battle of the warrior! is the language of divine providence; and you have every motive imaginable to awaken, and excite you to be up and doing the work of the Lord faithfully. The honor and glory of God, and the salvation of your country under God, call aloud upon all. Duty, interest, liberty, religion and life, every thing worth enjoyment, demand speedy and the utmost exertions.

Cultivate, my friends, a martial spirit, strive to excel in the art of war, that you may be qualified to act the part of soldiers well; and, under providence, be helpful in vanquishing and subduing the enemies of God and this people; and be numbered among those who shall be worthy to wear the laurels of victory and triumph.

Above all, let me recommend and urge it upon you, to strive for a more honorable and shining character; I mean, that of true christians, good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and to fight manfully under his banner, as the high priest of your profession, and great captain of your salvation. Then whatever service he shall call you to, or sufferings allot you; wherever he shall lead, you will cheerfully follow, be ready to face the enemy and every danger, and meet death with calmness and intrepidity, whenever arrested, and be conquerors through him.

We wish you, and all our friends and brethren, called to bear arms, and jeopard their lives in defence of their country, and support of the common rights of mankind, the presence of God, and a blessing this day, from the house of the Lord, all grace and good in time, and

glory everlasting.

Finally, let us all devoutly worship and honor, fear and serve the Lord of hosts, and God of armies; hearken to his word, and seriously attend to every providence. Let us continue our fervent cries to God, and offer up importunate, unceasing supplications to the most High, to "*avenge the blood of his servants,*" and be "*merciful to*" this "*his land, and to his people.*" We are encouraged to this from the providence and promises of a powerful and faithful God. The repeated successes during this calamitous war, from its beginning to the present day, have been great and wonderful; and give us confidence in God, and hope of a happy conclusion, if we amend our ways and doings. Our enemies, indeed, have been permitted to make great destruction in divers parts of our land (in their rage and cruelty unequal'd) who have attempted, with fire and sword, to spread desolation far and wide.* For as they began the war with a mean, dastardly spirit, so they have prosecuted it, in all their measures, with a rigour and barbarity, exceeding the savages of the wilderness; yet, through the interposition of heaven, they have been frustrated in their grand design, defeated and disgraced.

In various instances, particularly in the last campaign, a merciful God hath crowned our arms, with singular success and victory;† enabling us to destroy and break up a whole army, under one of the greatest generals, perhaps, that Britain can boast of. This is the Lord's doing, and 'tis marvelous in our eyes.

The Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save. We may then confidently put our trust in the living God, and refer our cause to him that judgeth righteously, the cause of our oppressed and bleeding country—inasmuch as "*he will be merciful to his land.*" We are assured, "*The Lord loveth the gates of Sion*"; that he "*will bless his own inheritance*"; and that when "*the Lord shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory. He will regard the prayer of the destitute—the children of his servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before*" him; and enjoy the tokens of the divine presence among them.

These assurances of our covenant-God and Father, may well animate our spirits, invigorate our faith, confirm our hope, and establish our confidence in him, under the severest trials and miseries that befall us, in this day of calamity and war.

Whether the prophecy and promise in our text, shall be accomplished, while we of the present generation, are upon the stage of action; is known only to him, who is the Lord of life and death. However, we may piously and cheerfully leave the event to God, whose righteousness remaineth, and his faithfulness to all generations.

I cannot conclude, without just hinting, that though we must necessarily concern ourselves, in some degree, with the things of this present evil world, so long as God shall protract our lives; yet our highest interest lies in another region, far beyond this state of noise and war, danger and misery. And whoever faithfully serves God and their generation here, in a wise improvement of their talents, shall in the end, receive a crown of life, unfading and eternal.

Here is nothing, my hearers, nothing worthy your highest affection and unceasing pursuit.

“*All that cometh is vanity.*” All things are liable to change, and in perpetual uncertainty. Every thing tends to dissolution, and God alone is invariable.

We are all children of mortality—and must die out of this world. Blessed be God, honor and immortality beyond the grave is ascertained by divine revelation. Being called to glory by virtue, let us diligently and conscientiously perform all the duties of our holy religion; labor to secure our peace with God, through Jesus Christ our only Savior—that we may be perfect and compleat in him, as our head.

That so, when contending powers and jarring nations on earth shall be removed—all kingdoms and states dissolved—and all empire and dominion blotted out, excepting his, who is the first cause, and last end of all things: We may have a place in the highest heavens; be admitted to dwell in God’s immediate presence—and join the heavenly host in the warmest ascriptions of blessing, and honor, and praise and glory to God and the lamb, for ever and ever.

amen

[*]The Rev. Mr. Clark, in his printed sermon, preached April 19, 1776, and his annexed impartial narrative.

[†]The Rev. Mr. Cooke, in his printed sermon, preached April 19, 1777.

[*]Witness their numerous insults to the inhabitants of town and country: And their warlike preparations, and formidable fortifications on Boston-Neck, and at the entrance of the town, erected in terrorem.

[*]From the best accounts it appeared, that not more than 300 of these, were, at any time properly engaged with the two British brigades (in their flight from Concord to Charlestown), near 2000 strong.

[†]Under the command of Capt. John Briggs and Capt. Francis Brown, which by their military parade on this and similar occasions, and military appearance, while attending the religious exercise, add to the solemnity of the day.

[*]Among many instances, may be mentioned the burning of Charlestown, Falmouth, Norfolk, Kingston. The rapine and devastation in New York and the Jersies; and their unparalleled treatment of the inhabitants there, both for inhumanity and debauchery. To which may be added, their murdering our friends, whom the fortune of war put into their hands; I mean their starving them to death: inhumanity more than savage! And to compleat their accursed plan, they have hired and let loose upon us the Indians, to scalp and butcher of every age and sex, to plunder and lay waste wherever they came: All this has been acted by Britons, who glory in their valor and humanity.

[†]Our army in the northern department, was remarkably successful in divers actions; particularly on the 7th October, in which they attacked the lines of the enemy, and drove them from their works, killing and captivating several of their principal officers, and many privates; gaining great advantages. On the 17th October, 1777, Lieut. Gen. Burgoyne surrendered himself, and his whole army into the hands of the brave Major-General Gates, at the head of well-disciplined continental troops, and intrepid militia of New-England.