

777
THE NATURE AND EFFECTS OF THE WORKS OF DARK-
NESS DETECTED AND DISPLAYED,

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IN TWO

DISCOURSES,

DELIVERED AT THE

FIRST PARISH IN IPSWICH,

APRIL 4, 1799,

ON THE

ANNIVERSARY FAST DAY

THROUGHOUT THE STATE OF

MASSACHUSETTS,

Br LEVI FRISBIE, A. M.

PASTOR OF THE FIRST CHURCH IN IPSWICH.

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Advertisement to the Reader.

THOSE readers who heard the following Sermons delivered, will doubtless observe that some alterations have been made in the mode of expression, and that some ideas have been added, especially in marginal notes, more fully to compleat and illustrate the sense of several branches of the subject; but they will be satisfied that the general nature, complexion and dress of the discourses remain the same as when they heard them.

And those readers who have never heard them, will, it is hoped, peruse them with seriousness and self-application; and with a candid belief that the author was not moved to preach, or to publish them by any blameable principle or passion, but by a sincere desire to impress on the minds of people truths and considerations which he deems of the most indubitable reality, magnitude and importance.

EPHESIANS, V. 11.

AND HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS
OF DARKNESS, BUT RATHER REPROVE THEM.

AS this day is consecrated to the solemn duties of *humiliation, fasting and prayer*, it may be useful, in order to impress our minds with sentiments and affections suitable to the occasion, to consider the evil nature, the destructive tendency and consequences of sin, as suggested and implied in the text, that we may be the more forcibly deterred from holding any fellowship with it, or with others in the commission of it, and more strongly excited to repent of it in ourselves, and reprove it in others, both by word and example.—And as the nature and design of the duties and services of this day require the greatest solemnity, humility and sincerity, I shall, therefore, attempt, not so much to please your imaginations with beauty of sentiment and elegance of expression, as to impress and affect your hearts with the plainness, simplicity and weight of interesting truth—And as I am persuaded 'tis my duty to speak with great freedom and faithfulness, so I hope you will attend with proportionable seriousness, meekness and candour; more especially because our nation seems to be in a situation peculiarly critical, interesting and dangerous; being threatened with unusual troubles and calamities—Great and forcible, therefore, are the motives for considering and lamenting our criminal follies and offences before God; for humiliation, repentance and reformation; and for imploring a gracious deliverance from the guilt and power of our transgressions, and from their merited impending punishment.

AND that we may be excited to the exercise of these affections and duties, let us proceed to the con-

sideration of the subject before us by attempting in the

FIRST place to explain briefly, what we are to understand by the unfruitful works of darkness.

SECONDLY, What is implied in avoiding all fellowship with them, and even reproving them—and

THIRDLY, What are the reasons implied and suggested in the text for avoiding all such fellowship, and

FOURTHLY, Conclude with a suitable application.

WE are then in the *first place* to explain what we are to understand by the unfruitful works of darkness—and

1st. By works of darkness, we are to understand in general, works of wickedness—Darkness, in the figurative language of the holy scriptures, signifies ignorance, error, falsehood, dissimulation and secrecy; also such sufferings, calamities and judgments, as are the natural effects, or the deserved correction and punishment of iniquity. And although works of darkness may primarily intend nocturnal revelling, lewdness and debauchery, and other vices which are plotted and concealed under the curtain of darkness; yet that they are not confined to these kinds of wickedness is evident, because the Apostle, having reminded the Ephesians in the preceding verses of various crimes and offences to which they had been formerly addicted, mentions the idolatry of covetousness among them, which is not a sin that necessarily seeks to hide itself under the veil of secrecy; and then adds, Be not partakers with them: That is, have no communion in these works of wickedness, nor any fellowship with the perpetrators of them. In like manner he exhorts the Romans to cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light—And he clearly intimates what he intended by works of darkness, by adding in the next verse, Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying—Strife and envying are therefore works of darkness, as much as

those crimes which are committed under the covert of secrecy and darkness. We are therefore warranted to comprehend all kinds and degrees of criminal folly and wickedness under the general denomination of *works of darkness*. Some sins are aptly termed works of darkness on account of their secrecy, obscurity and treachery; others on account of that impurity, baseness and deformity which prompt them to dread the eyes of man, and hide themselves from the face of day. And all deeds of wickedness are properly termed works of darkness, because they originate from Satan the prince of darkness; are conceived and cherished by the ignorance and error of the human mind; break forth in deeds of disorder, deformity and mischief, and naturally terminate in guilt and shame, vexation and misery. And those calamities which naturally spring from wickedness, or are the merited punishment of it, are in the figurative style of scripture called darkness. Thus the Prophet laments: We waited for light, but behold obscurity, for brightness, but we walk in darkness*; and he threatens the wicked that they shall look unto the earth, and behold trouble and darkness, dimness of anguish; and they shall be driven to darkness.† Hence

2dly. WORKS of wickedness are called unfruitful, to express how worthless and barren they are of all real advantage or pleasure. For although they promise advantage and happiness, they are deceitful, and do not fulfill their promises—or if they afford a kind of profit and pleasure, they are uncertain, unsatisfying and momentary; for the triumphing of the wicked is short, and the sweetest transgressions terminate in gall and wormwood. St. Paul appeals to the Roman christians, whether they had received any advantage from those lusts and corruptions in which they had formerly indulged themselves. What fruit have ye in those things whercof ye are now ashamed‡?—This pointed question implies that wickedness is not

* Isaiah lix. 9.

† Isaiah viii. 22.

‡ Rom. vi. 21, 22

only barren of all true pleasure and benefit, but that it ultimately produces a bitter crop of shame and misery ; for, adds the Apostle, the end of these things is death. So that there is a figure in the word *unfruitful*, by which less is expressed than intended, intimating that the works of darkness are not simply unfruitful, but positively mischievous and destructive. They are of such a deluding, infatuating nature, that they blind and pervert the minds of those who commit them, and while they promise them an harvest of advantage and pleasure, they yield to them the bitter fruits of remorse and repentance in this world, or the still more bitter fruits of misery and ruin in the world to come.

HAVING briefly stated what we are to understand by the unfruitful works of darkness, we proceed in the

SECOND place to consider what is implied in avoiding all fellowship with them, and in rather reprovng them.

AND it implies in the *first place*, that we should entertain no friendly affection for sin, or indulge or cherish in our hearts any desire or inclination to the commission of any kind of wickedness, but should abhor and detest it, and even shun the very appearance of evil. Sin is altogether evil ; 'tis the natural source and meritorious cause of all calamity ; 'tis offensive to God, and injurious to our neighbour and ourselves. We have therefore the utmost reason to abhor and avoid it. And we must have a disposition to do this, or we never shall abstain from all fellowship with iniquity. For if we do not hate sin as evil in its own nature, though we may abstain from the open and atrocious *acts* of wickedness, yet we shall be guilty of the exercise of it in our hearts and affections, and shall be in danger of the commission of actual transgressions ; or at least of a secret propensity towards those vices which we dare not practise, and of countenancing and encouraging them in others, and so of

holding a degree of fellowship with them in their iniquity.

AND this hatred and opposition to sin in our hearts, will imply true repentance. For can we deny that we are all sinners? Have we not been chargeable with criminal exercises and actions? If therefore we are inspired with a just hatred of sin, if we are disposed to abhor and renounce it, as wicked, odious and hurtful, we shall be impressed with an unfeigned sorrow that we have been guilty, in so many instances, of omitting that which is good, and doing that which is evil. And we shall lament our transgressions before God, and condemn ourselves for having been so foolish and criminal; and this will excite us to implore his forgiveness through Jesus Christ; to resolve upon an effectual reformation, and a more constant and universal practice of the duties of virtue and holiness, and to frequent and earnest supplication to God that he would enable us by his spirit and grace, to execute these resolutions.—Now unless we are the subjects of these internal principles and affections with respect to sin, we shall not sincerely and effectually abstain from all fellowship with it, or with those who are the perpetrators of it, nor cordially and zealously discourage and reprove it wherever we discover it, whether in ourselves or our neighbours. For as the heart and affections are the great source and spring of all our actions, so these will correspond in their nature to our internal disposition, and consequently a principle of hatred to sin and love to holiness, deeply rooted in our hearts, is the only sure and effectual spring of our abstaining from all kinds of fellowship with wickedness.

2dly. ABSTAINING from all fellowship with the works of darkness, implies that we should not only abstain from *some*, but from *all* kinds and degrees of wickedness. We cannot indeed expect to be perfectly free from sin, while we continue in this world; we shall be subject, while here below, to many criminal infirmities and imperfections; and always liable to be

seduced and surprized into the commission of sin by surrounding temptations. But we have no licence to commit any sin; and the commands of God require us to abstain from *all* iniquity. And we may attain to a determined hatred and opposition to all sin, and to a freedom from the voluntary indulgence of all known wickedness. And therefore if we indulge ourselves in the practice of deliberate wilful wickedness, we can have no scriptural evidence that we are sincere christians, or have any genuine hatred at all to the deeds of darkness. But there are some persons, and we have reason to fear their number is not small, who, though they abstain from some sins, to which they are not so much impelled by inclination or interest, or from which they are deterred by fear of disgrace, loss or punishment, yet indulge themselves in others, with little reluctance or regret. But this must be exceedingly criminal and dangerous, and proves that they are very far from complying with the precept in the text, to hold no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. And we can have little reason to compliment ourselves with the flattering idea of our virtue, of our obedience to the commands of God, or of any well founded prospect of future peace and blessedness, - because we abstain from some sins, and practise some duties, if at the same time we indulge ourselves in the allowed practice of several kinds of known wickedness, and in the omission of what we cannot but know to be our duty. Nor can we excuse ourselves by shutting our eyes against the light, and remaining in ignorance of what, in many cases, is right or wrong, sin or duty. If we really hate sin, and sincerely desire to avoid all fellowship with every kind and degree of it, and to practise their opposite duties and virtues, we shall be solicitously critical and diligent in examining every object, action, or pursuit proposed to our choice, so far as may be necessary to determine whether it be wise or unwise, good or evil. If from a neglect of such examination

we have been deceived and misguided ; and if we have adopted and prosecuted criminal measures and actions thro' ignorance and misapprehension, in cases where we might have been better informed, if we would have taken proper pains to obtain and improve the means of information, we are certainly by no means excusable—Or even if we have had the means of sufficient information, and have attended to them with some degree of care and diligence, and yet were blinded and led astray into folly and wickedness by the force of evil prejudices and corrupt passions, we cannot reasonably plead exemption from great blame and desert of punishment—For these evil passions and prejudices, by which we have been deluded and perverted, being sinful in themselves, can never excuse the errors and vices which have resulted from them as their natural consequences and effects. Were not the Jews guilty of the most aggravated wickedness in crucifying the Son of God ? and yet they did it through ignorance ; they did not know that he was the Lord of Life and Glory—But their ignorance did by no means excuse their crime, because they committed it in the exercise of wicked prejudices and passions ; and because they might have known that Jesus was the Son of God, if they would have attended impartially to the evidence of his divine character and mission ; or if, through prejudice and passion, they had not willfully shut their eyes against it. Those therefore who would avoid all fellowship with the works, and the workers of iniquity, *must*, and if they are honest and faithful they *will*, be careful and assiduous in examining, discovering and determining what *are*, and what are *not* real works of darkness, and who *are*, and who are *not* the perpetrators of them.

3dly. If we would comply with the exhortation in the text, we must abstain from all fellowship with the works of darkness in our words and discourses—In.

deed if we hate and avoid the indulgence of sin in our hearts, we shall be likely to avoid it in our language. It is, however, of great importance to be cautious and vigilant against all vanity, foolishness and profanity in conversation; against uttering falsehood, detraction, scandal, rash and groundless censures and reproaches against our neighbour. Persons who hate sin in their hearts, do not always hate it, and guard against it in their words, with that care and watchfulness which the evil and malignity of it demand; and therefore they are in danger, from the force of self-interest, prejudice or passion, or from an overheated zeal against what they deem base, ungrateful, perfidious, cruel and impious, of expressing themselves against these evils, with a bitterness, rashness and severity unbecoming that spirit of meekness and benevolence, which the gospel requires. There are, indeed, some crimes and vices either so sordid and brutal, or so impious and abominable, that it seems almost impossible to paint them in colours too dark and dreadful, or to express our abhorrence of them, and indignation against them with too great strength and severity of language. But all crimes and vices are not of this nature. And our neighbour may be guilty, through ignorance and infirmity, of faults and failings, which though criminal, do not deserve to be censured with so much vehemence and asperity. We ought to examine the conduct of our neighbours and fellow-citizens, with coolness and impartiality, and to be convinced, upon sufficient evidence, that they are really as unreasonable and criminal, as they are, by some represented, before we undertake to censure and condemn them. For if we should happen to be influenced in our censures and reproaches by corrupt prejudice and passion, or by giving a too easy credit to the reports and clamors of those persons, who from wicked principles and designs, are disposed to blacken the characters and conduct of their neighbours, we should be guilty of holding fellowship with them in their falsehood and maleva-

olence ; and this is a crime that we are not likely to escape without particular vigilance—For it cannot be denied that detraction and defamation, or the circulating of vile reports, and evil surmizes concerning men of worthy characters, is a sin too deplorably prevalent : So that even men of honest intentions, are in danger of being ensnared by the artful and vicious, into the commission of it.

WE should also be on our guard against all conversation that even borders upon profane jesting, and trifling with sacred things ; or which bears upon it any tincture of wantonness or impurity. 'Tis a shame, said the Apostle, in the verse immediately following the text, even to speak of those things which are done of the wicked in secret—And if men of pure and delicate minds, who hate sin in their hearts, and sincerely condemn it as vile and abominable, are notwithstanding in danger of being drawn in to speak unadvisedly with their lips ; how much greater is the danger of those who have no real aversion to iniquity ? They must be extremely exposed to utter the language of artifice and falsehood, lewdness and impiety ; to treat the name, the truths and ordinances of God with great indecency and profanity, not to say contempt and outrage. They must be in imminent danger of being seduced by corrupt passions and powerful temptations, to go very criminal lengths in holding fellowship with the wicked, in uttering the language of profanity and impurity ; of reproach, calumny, bitterness and revenge against their fellow creatures. I do not say that all who do not hate iniquity in their hearts, are actually guilty of these crimes ; but I say they are in great danger of being thus guilty. For what should prevent them, when they are strongly prompted to it by provocation or temptation, seeing they do not, in their hearts, habitually abhor all such wickedness ? They ought therefore to be deeply sensible of the duty and importance of obtaining a better spirit of mind, and of praying earnestly and frequently to the

God of all grace, that it may be wrought in them by the truth and energy of his word and spirit—And whatever may be the predominant disposition of their minds, they ought by no means to give utterance to criminal and mischievous sentiments and passions ; to do this will render them guilty of a double and aggravated wickedness ; inasmuch as the expression of such sentiments and passions in language, tends to cherish and strengthen the power and prevalence of them in their own minds, and to pervert and debauch the minds of others, and by this method to diffuse criminal and pernicious principles and opinions far and wide, to the subversion of all fundamental truths and virtues, and the great injury and disorder of society civil and religious. For if any person be an enemy to true religion, to sound morality and to good government, and give himself a liberty to vent and propagate his enmity and opposition to them in conversation, in specious and delusive arguments and objections, he may be instrumental, by such a conduct, of doing infinite mischief to the cause of virtue and religion, and to the order and happiness of civil society. I do not assert that all sceptics and infidel philosophers are knowingly and intentionally aiming at the injury and ruin of human virtue and happiness, but I venture to assert, that whoever opposes, condemns, and endeavours to subvert the religion, the morality, the laws and government of his country, unless they are essentially and obviously corrupt and oppressive, is evidently guilty of holding fellowship with the works of darkness, and that we ought to guard against his principles and practice, and studiously avoid them, as we would a deadly pestilence, or an over-whelming destruction. But these observations should not be confined to any particular species of iniquity, inasmuch as all sins of every kind and degree, whether they be more directly against God, our neighbour or ourselves ; whether they be more public or private, against societies or individuals, are works

of darkness, they originate from darkness and delusion, they tend to produce darkness, disorder and misery, and therefore no one ought to hold any fellowship with them, but every one ought to condemn, discourage, and endeavour to suppress them, in the whole tenor of his conversation. And

4thly. As we ought not to hold fellowship with wickedness in our hearts or in our language, so we ought more especially to avoid all communion with it in our practice. To favour it in our hearts, to encourage it with our lips is highly criminal, but to promote and encourage it by our practice is additionally criminal. All practical irreligion, profanity and impiety, all intemperance, revelling and debauchery, all falsehood, injustice, oppression, cruelty, treachery, sedition, treason and rebellion, are emphatically works of darkness, deeds of wickedness and folly; and to practise them, is to have fellowship with them, and to be joint partakers with those who commit them, in their wickedness, guilt and infamy. I cannot entertain an idea of my hearers so dishonourable to their character, as to suppose any of them stupid, shameless and profligate enough professedly to approve, justify or vindicate any of the crimes and vices which have been just now mentioned: They will consequently agree with the Apostle in the text, and with the preacher who is discussing it, that they are all works of darkness; that they are dark, crooked, vile and mischievous practices, and therefore no one ought to venture upon the commission of them, or allow himself in the least degree to pursue them, but to renounce all fellowship with them, and communion in them with the utmost detestation and abhorrence—And so far as any one has been seduced and betrayed into the commission of any of them, by the force of his own corruptions, or the arts and allurements of the Prince of darkness, or his emissaries, he ought to reflect upon it with the deepest regret and repentance, to implore the forgiveness of God through Jesus Christ, and to resolve that by the help

of his grace he will conduct for the future with a determined watchfulness, wisdom and virtue.

BUT 'tis not enough that we renounce all fellowship with wickedness ourselves, we should also in the 5th place, use all proper means and exertions to induce others to do it—And especially should we abstain from affording them any support, countenance or encouragement, in any corrupt and wicked passions, designs and practices.

It will not be denied that there are those, who, not content with practising wickedness themselves, entice and encourage others to join with them in it. They want their support, influence and assistance, and therefore, by various means and artifices, draw them in to be joint partakers with them in their crimes and vices. Error and wickedness love company; 'tis often the case that they cannot accomplish their purposes without it. If any persons have adopted capital and dangerous errors in religion and morality, they are often very zealous and active in making profelytes to their sentiments. And they do this not from motives of benevolence, not because they are satisfied that it would be really for the advantage of their neighbours, and for the benefit of society in general to adopt their sentiments, but they want to keep themselves in countenance*: For the more persons they can persuade to adopt their tenets, the more they are strengthened in the belief and in the open profession of them. Besides they may have some schemes of ambition, interest or pleasure to accomplish, for which purpose a belief of their errors is necessary, and therefore they are solicitous to persuade others into this belief, that they may join and assist them in the accomplishment of their projects.

* It is not improbable that the propagators of error frequently imagine that they are moved by a principle of benevolence: But must it not be an unreasonable stretch of charity to suppose that persons are moved by benevolence to propagate those dangerous errors which instead of being beneficial to mankind, tend directly to their misery and ruin?

MANY crimes and vices are of such a nature that they cannot be prosecuted without company and assistance. Complicated projects of fraud, oppression, robbery and plunder, require numbers to carry them into execution. The principal authors of these projects will therefore endeavour to entice others to unite with them in the execution of them. Rioting, gaming, and debauchery cannot be practised without company. Plotting, sedition and rebellion against government, require numbers to unite in their accomplishment; and hence the promoters and fomenters of these crimes, use all their subtilty and influence to draw in, not only the wicked, but the ignorant and unsuspecting, to join them in their iniquitous and destructive conspiracies—They endeavour by various artful suggestions and misrepresentations to impress the minds of those who will listen to them with a belief that their rulers are destitute of wisdom, integrity and faithfulness; that they have a design to deprive them of liberty and property, and to oppress and enslave them. And thus they stir them up to suspicion, enmity and opposition to all order and good government, and excite them to measures tending to plunge the state into the most miserable condition of anarchy and confusion.—And this they do, not from that benevolence to the people, or concern for their rights and liberties, by which they pretend to be actuated, but to gratify their own pride, avarice or resentment, or that they may assume the power and wealth of the nation into their own hands for the promotion of their own ambition, pleasure and parade. But as all these crimes of irreligion, injustice, rioting, treachery, sedition and rebellion, are works of darkness, and every one is bound by the laws of God, by the obligations of virtue, and the respect and concern due to the order, safety and happiness of society, to have no fellowship with them, or grant them any countenance or encouragement, he should not only avoid them himself, but discourage all others from being partners in

them—For it is not enough that a person abstains from the actual commission of wickedness himself, he is bound to dissuade and prevent all others, as far as possible, from having any communion with it—But if instead of this, he encourage and prompt them, even secretly and indirectly, to the neglect of piety and virtue, and the commission of crimes and vices, he is justly chargeable with being a partaker with them in their wickedness. But is there not deplorable reason to apprehend that there are persons, who while they abstain from the actual practice of impiety and wickedness themselves, encourage and excite others to the commission of them? They are too prudent and cautious to appear openly in the practice of such deeds of darkness; they are unwilling to expose themselves to the disgrace or punishment in which such conduct might involve them; and therefore they prompt and employ others to be tools and agents for the accomplishment of their corrupt purposes—By many dark and subtil intrigues and stratagems, they pervert and beguile not only the restless and mischievous, but the uninformed and credulous, and prompt them to oppose and destroy truth and righteousness, peace, order and government, under the pretence of combating and suppressing error, oppression, usurpation and tyranny. If those who are thus made the dupes of the immoral, the irreligious and the ambitious, were well aware of the nature, the tendency and probable issue of their proceedings, they would, at least many of them, renounce them with abhorrence; but being deceived and misguided, by those who act behind the curtain, they fondly imagine they are doing service to the cause of truth and virtue, liberty and happiness, when in reality they are taking the most direct and certain methods to subvert and destroy them—yet they are criminal for permitting themselves to be thus deceived and misguided; because they might know the nature and tendency of their conduct if they would but attend to the means of information; and 'tis hard to

conceive that they would ever engage in such measures if they were not in a degree predisposed to it by certain criminal principles and passions. But those who instigate and encourage them are by far the most blameable, even though they take no direct and active part in these pernicious proceedings, because they know the nature, design and tendency of them, and are, indeed, the prime inventers and promoters of their existence, operation and progress; and are therefore principally chargeable with the sinfulness and guilt of holding fellowship with the most mischievous and detestable works of darkness.

BUT some may flatter themselves that they have a sufficient plea of justification, because they neither engage in these works of wickedness themselves, nor encourage others to engage in them. They do not wish to concern themselves with the affairs of other people, nor involve themselves in party disputes and contentions. They conceive it most safe and prudent to remain silent, and permit every one to take the course most agreeable to his interest and inclination. But will this cold and silent neutrality stand the test of prudence or patriotism? Can it be justified upon the principles of reason, benevolence or interest? If the flames have begun to kindle on your neighbour's house, can you keep silence and be innocent? If your neighbour is running into certain destruction, are you not bound, if possible, to prevent him? If you have reason to believe that a company of ruffians have formed a design to deprive him of his property and peace, his life or liberty, are you not bound to warn him of his danger, and assist him with your counsels and exertions to prevent or repell it? Silence, in many cases, may look like giving consent to error and wickedness, or a tacit encouragement to the authors of them. If therefore we hear a neighbour, or a fellow-citizen disputing against truth and righteousness, in a manner that shews he has adopted, or is in danger of adopting

such principles as are dangerous and destructive to religion and virtue, and even to his own and others salvation, shall we hold our peace? If we see or hear another ridiculing strict morality and religion, and jeering at whatever is deemed sacred and holy, shall we be silent? If we observe a third cursing and swearing, and abusing the holy name of his maker, shall we remain unconcerned hearers of such bold impiety? If we see others violating the sabbath, neglecting or profaning both the day and the ordinances of God, by spending it in idleness, amusement, business or pleasure, shall we forbear to remonstrate to them upon their conduct, and to convince them, if possible, of its criminal and pernicious tendency and consequences? If others are chargeable with fraud, injustice, cruelty and oppression, are they to be regarded with indifference? If numbers around us are thoughtless, vicious and extravagant; if nominal christians, and such as have recognized the sacred bonds and obligations of God's covenant, are covetous, worldly, sensual, and even in a degree dissolute in their moral conversation, is nothing to be said to them or done for them to rouse them to serious consideration, and to excite them to repentance and reformation? Is it enough in all these cases to avoid approving and countenancing the follies and vices which have been mentioned? Does not our text, and do not reason and scripture, charity and faithfulness, declare with one voice, that we ought to reprove them, and to restrain them, as far as it can be done with propriety and justice? And if all other immoralities and vices ought to be discountenanced and restrained by frowns and reproofs, what shall we say of the faults, the crimes, the indignities which are committed against the morality, the religion, the honour, safety and happiness of our country?—must we pass by these with silent indifference? If we hear any of our acquaintance or fellow citizens complaining and caviling against our government, reproaching and condemning its measures and regulations, censuring and

vilifying its ministers, and representing them as weak or wicked—corrupt and oppressive, aiming by insidious and artful plans and measures, to oppress and enslave the people, and to enrich and aggrandize themselves at the expence of their constituents—when we hear such things as these slyly insinuated or boldly asserted, can we believe them? Can we believe that those men whom we once honored, admired and esteemed, as the wisest, the noblest, the most virtuous and spirited patriots and friends of their country, who have sustained innumerable labors, and braved innumerable dangers, to procure, establish and preserve its liberty, independence and happiness—can we believe that these men are all at once become fools and knaves and traitors—and that we owe more respect, gratitude and confidence to strangers, to men of yesterday, and even to the intriguing agents of a foreign Republic, which has treated us with perfidy, oppression and cruelty, than to these long-tried friends and saviours of our country? Is it possible that any persons can believe these false, groundless and wicked insinuations and reproaches? And if they hear them vented and asserted, can they, ought they to hear them with patience and silence? Ought they not, if possible, to frown them out of countenance, and to bear an unequivocal testimony against them? For what says our text? Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but *rather reprove* them.

BUT are we all then to set up for reprovers and reformers of the follies and vices of our neighbours, and of each other? It may be answered, yea, in a certain manner and degree. There are various methods of reproofing faults, follies and vices—and although every person is neither qualified nor called to become a reprover in the most precise and proper sense of the word; yet all may be reprovers in one or other of those ways which are now to be immediately mentioned.

AND if we would be suitable and successful reprovers of criminal folly and wickedness, we must in the

1st PLACE begin with ourselves. This kind of charity may with great propriety begin at home. 'Tis our duty to consider and examine the state and character of our own hearts and actions—faithfully and impartially to enquire, discover and determine, what is truth and error, wise and foolish, good and evil, with regard to ourselves ; and having become satisfied and determined upon these points, then we should compare our own spirit and conduct with the right and the wrong we have discovered, and see how far they agree with the one or with the other.—And so far as we find we have neglected the right and followed the wrong, we should rebuke and condemn ourselves with the utmost faithfulness and severity. We should here admit of no shuffling, no excuses, or self-justifying pleas, but with the greatest honesty and impartiality condemn and abhor our own sins and vices, and commence against them, a fixed, a determined and everlasting enmity and warfare.—We should repent of them, humble ourselves before God for them—earnestly implore his forgiveness in the name of Jesus Christ, and the communication of all that grace and strength which are necessary to crucify and destroy them, and to live, for the future, lives of exemplary piety and virtue.—And when we have thus obtained, in some good measure, peace with God, and peace in our own consciences, a sacred regard to God's honor and religion, and a spirit of justice, meekness and charity towards our neighbour, then we shall be prepared to reprove his faults and vices, with humility and benevolence, united with prudence, faithfulness and resolution.—But if every one who has some degree of this spirit of piety and charity, be not warranted to set up for a formal reprovcr, yet he may in one way or other, testify his dislike and aversion to vice and foolishness.—He can feel, he can manifest in his countenance, in his gesture and actions, his concern, his uneasiness and

disgust at whatever is contrary to truth and decency, piety and righteousness—But if he be a man of knowledge and prudence, of influence and authority, he can point out to the offender, at a proper time and place, his prejudices, his errors and vices; with the nature, the sinfulness, and the pernicious and fatal tendency of his proceedings; he can remonstrate against them, and exhort and persuade the offender with all the force of argument and affection, to consideration, to repentance and reformation—A father, a teacher, a master, a superior, can perform all this, with great propriety towards his children, his pupils, his domestics, and those who confess themselves his inferiors—But I cannot now descend to particular instructions upon this point—Wisdom, humility, meekness, and a benevolent concern for the benefit of individuals and societies, will teach men better than a thousand precepts, how they ought to bear a proper testimony against all error, folly and wickedness.

But that mode of reproof, which is, perhaps, most unexceptionable and persuasive, and which, every one who is disposed to be virtuous and useful, will pursue, is, setting an example in his own conduct of whatever is right, laudable, and important to be done by others. It is a common observation, that example has much more influence than precept. Let us then, if we would reprove and discountenance every thing wrong and vicious in others, avoid it ourselves, and maintain a course of steady, uniform, unaffected prudence, virtue and piety in our own conduct—Let our actions testify that we have a cordial, a sacred regard to God and religion, to righteousness and charity; and to the order, the safety, the honor and prosperity of civil society and government. Let us fear God, reverence his word, treat rulers and magistrates with honor and decency, and pay a suitable respect and submission to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake. This will tend as much, or more than every thing else, to shame, to discourage and suppress disorder and wick-

edness, and to promote private and public peace, regularity and happiness.—A goodly number, and especially a large and decided majority of men of this character, would be an indissoluble band of brethren; an host of heroes, an impregnable bulwark against all the secret or open operations and attacks of darkness and error, of intrigue, artifice and wickedness.

LET me add, finally, that another excellent and effectual method of reproof and discouraging error and wickedness, is to carry them, by prayer and supplication, before the tribunal of God, and beseech him to take them under his management and controul. When they have become so prevalent, so overbearing and outrageous that human wisdom, power and authority cannot restrain their force and violence, then our only resource is in God; He can with infinite ease flash upon the minds of the wicked such a clear conviction of their sinfulness, their guilt and danger, as will effectually dispose them to a cordial repentance and reformation: Or he can speak to them with the voice of thunder, make them tremble at his presence, and shrink down into their own littleness as worthless worms of the dust—He can hedge up their way with thorns, turn their counsels into foolishness, and blast all their projects in a moment. Thus Hezekiah prayed before the Lord and said, O Lord God of Israel, that dwellest between the cherubims, thou art the God, even thou alone, of all the kingdoms of the earth; thou hast made heaven and earth—Lord bow down thine ear and hear, open, Lord, thine eyes, and see; and hear the words of Sennacherib which hath sent him to reproach the living God. Now therefore, O Lord our God, I beseech thee save us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the Lord God, even thou only*—The Lord heard him, and sent an overwhelming destruction upon his impious enemies.

Not only the wise and powerful, but the aged and

* 2 Kings, xxix, 15, 16, 19.

infirm, females and children, may eminently serve the cause of truth and righteousness, of private and public safety and happiness, by offering up to God in its favor their sincere and earnest prayers and supplications : For he regardeth the cry of the humble, and doth not forget their prayer—he heareth them when they call upon him, and saveth them out of their distresses. And we may conclude the present discourse by observing that such prayers are highly suitable and necessary at this day of darkness and difficulty—when there is too much reason to lament that so many are inclined to hold a dangerous and criminal fellowship, in a greater or smaller degree, with the unfruitful works of darkness. Alas for them ! they consider not that the darkness of error and sin, lead directly to the darkness of misery and ruin—Involved in darkness, they do not discover the criminal nature, and the fatal tendency of vicious and infidel principles and practices—They are to be pitied as well as censured for their spirit and conduct—That they do not see that an indulgence to pride, vanity and extravagance, to error, infidelity, indifference and aversion to the service and worship of God, the doctrines, ordinances and blessings of the gospel, and a propensity to sensuality, intemperance and ingratitude for the numerous and distinguishing favors of heaven ; and especially for the blessings of mild, equitable and efficient laws and government, are faults and vices, exceedingly blameable and ruinous—That they are blindly pursuing such practices as tend directly to plunge themselves and their country down a dreadful precipice into a gulph of unspeakable disorder and misery. Let us then repent, and pray that the darkness of sin may be dissipated, that it may not overwhelm us with the darkness of misery—and that God would give us the light of knowledge, virtue, unmolested peace, liberty and prosperity—through the merits of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and Holy Spirit, be endless praises. AMEN.

[The text in this section is extremely faint and illegible due to the quality of the scan. It appears to be a list or a series of entries, possibly names or titles, arranged in a structured format.]

SERMON II.

EPHESIANS, V. 11.

*AND HAVE NO FELLOWSHIP WITH THE UNFRUITFUL WORKS
OF DARKNESS, BUT RATHER REPROVE THEM.*

IF the sun, moon and stars were all blotted out from the fair face of heaven; our condition would be unspeakably gloomy and miserable; but if all the light of moral and religious truth were extinguished from the world, our condition would be still more gloomy and miserable. Perhaps all will not readily believe this assertion. But if they would sufficiently consider the subject, they must be convinced of the truth of it. For moral and spiritual truth and goodness are the light, the life and happiness of the soul; but ignorance, error and sin, are its darkness, its death and ruin. Therefore the means and measures which God has employed to preserve and revive the light of truth and holiness, have been apparently much more wonderful and illustrious than those which he has employed to support and cherish the natural light. The most eminent minister of truth and goodness which God has employed for expelling error and wickedness from the world, is his own dear son, our Lord Jesus Christ. He came into the world to give light and life to mankind. And the truths, promises, precepts and benefits of his gospel having been diffused, in a great mea-

sure throughout the earth, have had a powerful effect in dispelling the darkness and sinfulness in which it was involved. But the powers of delusions and wickedness still operate in the world, and oppose and endeavour to destroy the influence and prevalence of truth and goodness, and to introduce the reign of error and sin, of darkness and death. We are required, therefore, as we regard the honour of God, the benefit of man, and the purity, safety and happiness of our own souls, not to encourage the works of darkness, the deeds of falsehood and wickedness; nor to have any affection for them or fellowship with them: What this fellowship is, and what is implied in abstaining from it, and holding no communion with the deeds of darkness, but in rather reprovng them by all means calculated to discountenance and suppress them, we have already considered.

BUT perhaps some may be ready to enquire what necessity there is for all this care and labor and sollicitude to oppose and suppress those passions and actions which are denominated works of darkness? Why is it not as well to let mankind alone, and suffer them to chuse and pursue such principles and practices as they please, and not attempt to restrain or confine them to a contrary system? Would it not be better to permit them the enjoyment of full liberty to think and act as they judge will be most conducive to their own benefit and happiness? To such queries, if we can suppose any persons inclined to propose them, we may answer by considering in the

THIRD place the reasons implied and suggested in the text, why we should avoid all fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. These reasons are included in the two epithets which are given to these works, viz. that they are darkness, and that they are unfruitful.

1st. THEY are dark works, or works of darkness; because, as we have already observed, they are works of ignorance, error and delusion. He who works or

walks in darknefs, does not well know what he is doing or whither he is going. He is liable to work wrong, and to wander aftray ; to do mischief and run into danger, while he imagines he is doing good, and walking in fafety. So he who is doing evil, is, in a moral fenfe, working and travelling in darknefs. His fins are founded in ignorance and error. For he does not know, or duly confider whence they come, whom they injure, or to what iffue they tend.

He is ignorant or inconfiderate from whence his works of darknefs originally proceed. He does not fufficiently confider that they come from the Devil, who is emphatically ftyled the Prince of darknefs ; and who is the original author and promoter of all wickednefs. The Devil having rebelled againft God, and become a finful, guilty, miserable creature, is full of enmity to God, and man. He labors to oppofe and overthrow God's plans of wifdom, holinefs and mercy ; and being full of envy and malice againft mankind, he ufes every exertion of power and artifice to tempt and betray them into fin, guilt and misery. He would be glad to root out and expell every plant and fpark of truth and goodnefs, religion and liberty, peace and happinefs from the world, and turn it into a ftage of vice, confufion, wretchednefs and ruin perfectly refembling his own infernal abode. But as he cannot accomplifh his defigns by power, constraint and violence, therefore he endeavours to do it, by fubtilty and deceit ; by fuch false fuggeftions, fuch artful temptations and allurements as are adapted to influence the appetites and paffions of men, and lead them to the commiffion of wickednefs, under the delufive idea of doing right, and aiming at true honour, fafety and happinefs. He endeavours to perfuade them that there is little or no evil in violating the laws of God—Or if there be any evil in doing it, yet no calamity or punifhment will ever overtake them for fuch violations. Thus he deceived our firft parents by affuring and perfuading them that they fhould not fure-

ly die, if they *did* transgress the command of God.— And thus he endeavours to deceive and seduce their posterity. And when they comply with his temptations, 'tis, at least in part, through ignorance and inconsideration. They do not reflect from whence these temptations come. They conceive them to be the operations and inventions of their own minds, and that a compliance with them will be productive of benefit and happiness, and hence they proceed to indulge them, till they are convinced by their own sorrowful experience, that they have been deceived and seduced by the spirit of darkness to their own shame, vexation and misery. It is neither necessary nor possible to trace, and declare the numerous arts and stratagems which Satan uses to seduce, to injure and destroy mankind. But 'tis sufficient to assert in general, that as he is our mortal enemy, so he will employ every measure which infernal policy can devise, to delude us into sin, and plunge us into misery. And he will employ not only his own power and subtilty for this purpose, but if he can find any of our fellow-creatures base and wicked enough to become his tools and agents, he will prompt and assist them to delude and betray their neighbours into such folly and wickedness as tends to plunge both themselves and their tempters, and even the innocent and unsuspecting into infamy and ruin. Now as the works of sin are works of darkness, because they are, in the manner described, the effects of the dark, deceitful and malicious operations of Satan; every one should be aware of *this*, and avoid all fellowship with them.

BUT the subtil devices and temptations of the Devil are not the only sources of sin. The corrupt principles and passions of men, are not only criminal in themselves, but the springs of all kinds of practical wickedness; and these principles and passions are dark and delusive. For men do not consider and perceive the evil nature and pernicious tendency of them; and therefore are seduced and impelled by them into nu-

merous crimes and vices. The appetites and passions of men are restless and craving, there is a pleasure in gratifying them, and people are not sensible that such a gratification, especially when 'tis irregular and excessive, is sinful and ruinous. The profit or pleasure which appetite and passion propose and promise to men, infatuates their minds, and prevents their discovering the vexation and misery into which they are plunging. Passion is blind and violent, it rushes forward in the dark to the possession of its object, or the accomplishment of its purpose, without ever pausing to consider their criminal nature, or their destructive consequences—Like children who cannot, or will not, believe that those fruits which they love can give them sickness and pain, or that there can be any evil in getting them wherever they can come at them; so we are naturally very unwilling to see or believe that those pursuits and practices which give us the possession or the prospect of advantage or pleasure, can be either hurtful or criminal. That which does not displease, and seems not to injure ourselves, we do not imagine can be offensive or hurtful to others; and we are ready to be angry at them for resenting, opposing or condemning it.

AND we are apt to flatter and deceive ourselves, by giving specious and virtuous names even to our sins and vices. Thus some people will call a disbelief and contempt of all religion, *free thinking*, and liberty from the prejudices of education and the yoke of superstition. Lasciviousness and debauchery they term gallantry—Rioting and drunkenness, good cheer—Cheating and knavery, skill and policy—Avarice and parsimony, prudence and œconomy—Insult and revenge, spirit and courage—Groundless jealousy and suspicion of rulers and magistrates, political caution and watchfulness—Opposition to law and government, order and subordination, they miscall patriotism. love of liberty, and hatred of tyranny and oppression. In these and other instances, too many persons give false and flat-

tering titles to their criminal passions and practices, and to cheat themselves into a fond belief that they are real virtues, or at worst not odious vices.

ON the other hand, they often give invidious and reproachful names to moral virtues and christian graces, and having thus dressed them up in the garb of savage beasts, they imagine themselves warranted to hunt them down with unrelenting artifice and violence—Or if they cannot by these means disguise and conceal the evil and deformity of their own vices, and of their enmity and opposition to the virtues of others, they are ingenious to invent many plausible excuses to soften and palliate the sinfulness and absurdity of their spirit and conduct. They will plead their peculiar constitution, their singular circumstances, the strength of their passions, the power of temptation, the greatness of their provocations, with other pretences and apologies too numerous to be mentioned. But all this is frequently no better than pleading one sin in excuse for another, which, themselves would see, did they consider and judge attentively and impartially, can afford them no ground of justification. Their excuses are such as they would not accept from any one who had injured or offended them, and they are such as cannot screen them from the charge of wickedness, nor from suffering its fatal consequences.

NONE we hope will be offended at these observations and assertions; They are made, not from any desire to blacken human nature, or to reproach any particular persons; but from a desire to shew to every one that their sins and follies are works of darkness, because they originate in error and delusion, are carried on by ignorance and self-deception, and therefore tend the more effectually to plunge the authors of them, before they are aware of it, into ruinous guilt and misery. He who is not guilty cannot feel himself injured; and he who is, should consider it as a part of friendship in any one, to warn him against these deeds of darkness, to exhort him to avoid them, and to hold no more

fellowship with them than he would with a most poisonous serpent, or malignant enemy.

BUT as people are apt to be blind and thoughtless respecting the springs and causes of their sins and vices, so they are ignorant or inconsiderate respecting the beings or persons who will be offended or injured by them. They do not know, or they will not consider, how greatly God is offended and provoked by their transgressions. And they are, perhaps, ready to wonder why he should concern himself so much with the moral character and conduct of mankind; And why he should be so much displeas'd at passions and actions so agreeable to themselves; And to imagine that as he is infinitely good and gracious, he cannot be much offend'd at them, or dispos'd to punish them with any great severity. They do not duly consider that, altho' their sins and vices cannot harm and injure God, as they do mankind, because he is infinitely above pain, loss or disappointment, yet as he is infinitely wise, just and holy, and has the most perfect sense (if we may so express it) of what is criminally foolish, unjust, base, unreasonable and injurious, therefore he cannot avoid being displeas'd with it; 'tis contrary and odious to his very nature, and that nature tends to manifest its opposition to it, by frowning upon the perpetrators of it, and by inflicting upon them a deserved punishment. As a parent is griev'd and offend'd when his children and domestics are perverse, ungrateful and disobedient, and by their contention and violence disturb the peace and order of his house, and bring trouble, disgrace and misery upon his family, so reason and scripture teach us that God must be displeas'd and dishonor'd when his rational offspring, who are his family, do, by their folly and wickedness, bring dishonor, disgrace and misery upon this family, or upon any members, or considerable branches of it. And that very benignity and kindness which dispose him to desire and promote the purity, peace and happiness of his rational creatures, and of the several societies into which

they are formed, must equally dispose him to view with displeasure and abhorrence the spirit and conduct of those who basely and wickedly disturb this peace, tarnish this purity, and destroy this happiness. Could you see a man cheating and defrauding one neighbour, robbing and plundering another, abusing and murdering a third, and not feel the risings of indignation? Could you behold one acting the savage in his family, insulting and abusing the meekness and innocence of an imploring wife, and committing outrage and cruelty upon his little harmless playful children, and not have your passions kindle into a flame of wrath sufficient to consume such a monster? Could you behold a ruffian mad with slaughter and lust, attempting to violate the innocent face of youthful beauty, and the sacred honors of female chastity, and not burn to revenge the intolerable outrage at the hazard of your life? And will you believe that a God of infinite justice and benevolence, can look upon these, and similar crimes and vices, in all the deformity of their nature, and misery of their consequences, with a cold indifference? can infinite pity and mercy behold them without kindling into wrath? But God, you will say, is not affected with passions like ours. He possesses, however, powers and perfections which correspond to our faculties and passions, though infinitely superior to them in purity and perfection. Hence the scriptures, by way of accommodation to our narrow conceptions, represent him as clothed with the organs and senses of humanity; hence the following impassioned complaints and addresses: "They break in pieces thy people, O Lord, and afflict thine heritage; they slay the widow and the stranger, and murder the fatherless; yet they say the Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it." Mark the subsequent address—"Understand ye brutish among the people, and ye fools when will ye be wise? He that planted the ear shall he not hear? He that formed the eye shall he not see? He that chastiseth the heathen shall

not he correct? "He that teacheth man knowledge, shall not he know?" Know what? "The thoughts of man that they are vanity." And the evil deeds of man, that they are odious and destructive; that they incense the anger of God, and tend to pull down upon the heads of those who persist in the perpetration of them a dreadful weight of punishment and perdition. But it may be said that the crimes described in the preceding passage were very great and aggravated. True; and what if the crimes of some at the present day should be found of equal magnitude? must they not expect, if persisted in, to meet an equal retribution? But where they are smaller they tend to increase: one sin leads to another, and that produces a third, and the series continues to augment, till the stream of wickedness, which was thought to be small at first, swells to a flood of iniquity; and not only those who first set it afloat, but others who were drawn in to add to its torrent, are plunged into a sea of crimes, and finally overwhelmed with a deluge of destruction.

BUT though all this be true, yet mankind are reluctant to believe it. They wink it out of sight; they cannot think their sins are so dishonorable or displeasing to God, or that his wrath is incensed against them. And when judgments and calamities befall them, they do not consider or believe that they are inflicted by the hand of Providence as the punishment of their sins, but they impute them to natural causes, and never duly consider the hand of God which gives direction, energy and effect to these natural causes; and therefore by undertaking to remove them, or to guard against them for the future, they make themselves easy, and embolden themselves to pursue the same vanities and vices, which have in reality, been the moral grounds and causes of all their sufferings—And thus by their thoughtlessness, self-flattery and deception, they encourage themselves to persist in the works and ways of darkness. (E)

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AND as they do not consider and believe how offensive these works are to God, so neither do they perceive how greatly they tend to injure and destroy themselves and their fellow-creatures—For all sins and vices, whatever flattering appearances they may assume, and however they may allure us to the commission of them by promises and prospects of profit, honor and pleasure, are notwithstanding works of darkness in this additional respect, that they lead to trouble, shame and misery. Which observation brings us to a particular consideration of the

2d. GENERAL quality of the works of darkness, that they are unfruitful—That is, they are useless and unprofitable, and even hurtful and pernicious.

MEN do not generally, if ever, commit sin merely for the sake of doing wickedly. No ; they are prompted to it by the desire and expectation of some advantage, reward or pleasure. They flatter themselves with the prospect of riches, honor and happiness. And they may probably gain some temporary advantage, some sensitive gratification from their sins and vices. But these cannot be pure and permanent ; they will sooner or later corrupt, and turn into gall and poison. People are not so happy as they expect to be even in the very enjoyment of their vices. Great care, vigilance and labour are commonly necessary to acquire the gratification of criminal inclinations. Guilt and disappointment often attend, or immediately follow them. Some thorn lies concealed beneath the rose, some sting is secreted in the honey of criminal indulgence. Some vices are scandalous and incur reproach and infamy. Some are expensive and produce want and poverty. All criminal excesses injure the constitution, and induce a weakness and disorder, which blunt and finally destroy the power of enjoyment. Some crimes disturb the public peace, oppose and violate government, injure the happiness of society, and thence incur public punishment and infamy—Or if they become so powerful and prevalent as

to defy the arm of government, and triumph over its authority, they must soon destroy all public order, safety and happiness, and bring on a flood of universal confusion and wretchedness.

BUT after all that can be said, people may not be disposed to believe that the works of darkness are so unfruitful, or rather that they are exceedingly productive of the fruits of shame, vexation and misery—But 'tis their duty and their interest to believe it; and it may appear more obvious and certain, if we go on to consider the influence which crimes and vices will naturally have upon *religion*, upon *society*, and upon our *moral, spiritual and future interests and circumstances*.

AND first, with regard to the influence which wickedness will have upon *religion*.

IF people indulge themselves in sin, in neglecting the truths and ordinances, and in disobeying the commands of God; if they allow themselves to commit fraud, injustice, intemperance, lewdness, with other species of vice and wickedness, they must soon find, if they do not renounce all thought and consideration, that religion is against them; that it condemns their criminal purposes, plans and practices, and threatens them with punishment, if they continue to pursue them. What now can they do? They must either renounce their sins, their favorite designs and pleasures, or they must renounce religion. But they do not wish to do either of these; nor to proceed with a painful consciousness of guilt and inconsistency—They will therefore endeavour to explain away the more rigid parts of religion, and to model the remainder into such a form as will correspond with their inclinations. And in accomplishing this accommodating plan they may easily avail themselves of the assistance of a number of modern divines and philosophers—But if they are men of thought, they may probably find that with all this assistance, they cannot accomplish their purpose; that religion is too plain, determinate and inflexible, to be bent and moulded into such a form as

will countenance their criminal passions and practices. So long as they profess to believe the scriptures to be the word of God, they cannot easily satisfy themselves that they admit of their reconciling the opposite interests and services of God and Mammon. They must therefore be again at a nonplus, and if they are determined to persist in their sins, they must persuade themselves that the religion of the Bible is but a fable, and so utterly reject it—But they will not, probably, renounce all religion, the christian religion only shall be sacrificed at present, and the religion of nature shall be spared, and extolled as needful and sufficient to guide them in the way of safety and happiness.—But they will not, they cannot under the influence of their present views and principles, adhere to the dictates of natural religion ; for this implies the belief of a Supreme Deity, the Creator, Preserver and Governor of all things ; a being of infinite and immutable power, wisdom, holiness, justice, truth and faithfulness ; who is present with all his creatures, and perfectly acquainted with all their affections, words and actions. But admitting the existence of a God of such perfections, and the reality of our relations to him, the consequence which is necessarily drawn from this concession by nature and reason is, that this supreme, all-perfect being ought to be honored and worshipped, loved and obeyed by all mankind. That he approves virtue and condemns vice, loves righteousness and abhors iniquity. What then will become of the disciple of natural religion ? For that is as real an enemy to his corruptions and vices as the revelation which he has rejected. If he continues in the indulgence of them God may punish him : he may still be in danger of temporal and eternal misery. He has renounced Revelation, the only source of light and hope to fallen sinners, and he can have no assurance from the light of nature that God will pardon his offences, that he will not take vengeance on his iniquities, that the course of partial sin and suffering which has commen-

ced in this world, will not be extended, continued and compleated in the world to come—He is launched on an ocean of doubt and darkness, where gloomy fears, suspicions and presages of evil must haunt and agitate his mind, and poison all his pleasures. He must therefore drown all thought in absolute stupidity and forgetfulness, or he must renounce his sins and become a virtuous and religious believer, or plunge into the gulf of perfect infidelity and atheism—That is, he must persuade himself that there is no God; or none that regards the concerns or the actions of men, or who will ever call them to an account for their crimes and vices. And he will consequently deny the immortality of the soul, and the existence of any state of future rewards or punishments. He will believe that he is nothing better than a reasoning brute; that his soul perishes with his body, and rots and sleeps forever with its kindred animals, in the dust of the earth.—And now he has nothing to restrain his vices, to curb his luxury and riot, or deter him from any pursuit or pleasure which his soul desires. Upon his present principles there is no law to restrain him, no conscience to sting him, no God to condemn him, no future rewards or punishments to animate his hopes or excite his fears—All his hopes and fears, his views and prospects, joys and pleasures being confined to this world, and his term of enjoyment being short and uncertain, he will naturally be stimulated to improve it with ardor and activity. And to devote himself to the gratification of sensual appetite and passion as his only happiness, and to remove or bear down by artifice or violence every obstruction, every opponent which stands in his way. And when men have adopted such dark, deluding and destructive principles and practices as these, what can restrain them from the excesses of wickedness and violence? Will a regard to honor, to humanity, or will the impression of natural affection restrain them? by no means, for the determined indulgence of wicked appetites and passions will

soon exterminate every useful and laudable affection from their hearts—Can they be controuled by the force of law or the arm of civil government? They may be restrained by these means from open, scandalous and destructive crimes and vices, while their numbers are small; but should their numbers be increased and extended—should they become the predominant party, must not their principles and pursuits induce them to resist and overthrow all legitimate, equitable and efficient government, and to erect in the room of it a government corresponding to their own principles and passions, managed and administered by rulers and magistrates, impious and profligate like themselves? Who would explode all religion, abolish all divine worship and ordinances, discard all justice and equity, violate all the principles of morality and humanity, and licence all crimes, every species of baseness, treachery, cruelty and oppression, except such as would be destructive of their own authority, tyranny, luxury and avarice. How inexpressibly deplorable must be the condition of a people thus overrun with infidelity, atheism and wickedness? Curs'd with a government without religion, without virtue, without any regard to God, or justice and benevolence to man.

WE do not assert however, that the works of darkness, the deeds of error and wickedness, when they are adopted and pursued, always proceed to these horrid extremes, but only that such are their natural tendency and effects. Every vicious man is not an avowed infidel or atheist; but every vicious man, who obstinately persists in the commission of wickedness, must, of course, become a practical infidel or atheist. If he profess, verbally, to believe the christian religion, yet he denies it in heart and practice; it makes little or no impression on his mind, and has less influence on his conduct—and he who rejects christianity, and professes to believe the religion of nature, either does not understand it, or derives no influence from it—in words he acknowledges God, but in works denies

him. But although wickedness adopted and pursued, does not always end in avowed infidelity and atheism, yet its tendency to such an issue is strong, and it very frequently terminates in it.* Now if the works of darkness have such a pernicious influence upon the

* It is, I presume, no violation of charity to assert that there is great reason to believe, that a large proportion of those who have renounced the christian religion, and adopted the principles of deism and infidelity, have been impelled to such a conduct by their enmity to those doctrines, precepts and threatenings of christianity, which mortified their pride, condemned some favorite passion or pursuit, and denounced vengeance against them if they dared to persist in it—And when they had once commenced deists, the step to total infidelity and atheism, was easy and natural—And if they have not avowedly taken it, yet they have disguised and misrepresented the character, the government and the laws of God, as also the nature, the condition, and destination of man in such a manner, as to weaken and destroy the principles and obligations of piety and virtue. And they have varnished over the deformity of vice, and even taught the lawfulness and expediency of it in such a degree, as to encourage and warrant mankind in the unrestrained commission of it. If any one wishes to see this subject illustrated in a clear and masterly manner, he may consult Dr. Dwight's two sermons upon the nature and danger of infidel Philosophy.

But the most affecting and alarming image and example of the baneful influence which the works of darkness have upon religion, have been exhibited by the philosophers of France, and by the leaders and governors of the French Republic, and other principal characters in that nation. The errors and vices which had prevailed in that kingdom previous to the revolution, had led many of its subjects to adopt an infidel and atheistical philosophy. This philosophy was operative in producing the revolution, and was extended and confirmed by it, and the principal promoters of it, till finally it burst forth like a flood in public acts and measures hostile and destructive to all the doctrines and institutions of religion, and to all the principles of virtue, humanity, sincerity and justice. As evidence of the truth of these assertions, it may be sufficient to read the accounts given in various publications, of the conduct of the French government towards their own subjects, and towards those states and kingdoms which have been invaded by their troops, or conquered by their intrigues and their arms. In these publications we are assured by incontestable authority, that the French government have decreed to ABOLISH the ALTARS OF GOD, to destroy the christian Sabbath, and the sacred bonds of marriage—that death is an everlasting sleep, and that an inscription to this effect be placed in capitals at the entrance of their grave yards: “That the Convention solemnly renounced both the belief of a God, and the immortality of the soul, asserted that all religions were the daughters of ignorance and pride, and decreed the publication of these sentiments in all languages.” “The Supreme Being,” says a member of the committee of public instruction, in an official report of that committee to the national convention; “The Eternal Being is no other than nature uncreated and uncreatable; and the only providence, is the association of mankind in freedom and equality. Man, when free, wants no other divinity than himself. Reason dethrones both the kings of the earth, and the kings of heaven. No monarchy above, if we wish to preserve our republic below. Volumes have been written to determine whether a republic of atheists could exist. I maintain that every other republic is a chimera. If you once admit the existence of a heavenly sovereign, you introduce the wooden horse” (that is an engine of destruction) “within your walls. What you adore by day will be your destruction by night. A people of theists would necessarily become a people of revelationists”—i. e. those who believe a God will believe divine revelation. If the reader would wish to obtain further information upon this subject, let him peruse, among other publications, the appendix to Dr. Moazz's Thanksgiving Sermon, delivered on the 29th day of November, 1798.

principles and the practice of religion ; if they induce men to adopt the impious and dangerous errors of infidelity and atheism, errors which often lead men to the most fatal extremes of vice, licentiousness and cruelty ; those who retain any suitable sense of the excellency, dignity and importance of religion, must have a proportionable sense of the deadly nature and tendency of these works of wickedness, and of the indispensable duty and interest of abstaining from all fellowship with such deluding and destructive practices.

AND they will perceive still further reasons for abstaining from them, if they go on to consider in the next place, the pernicious influence which error and wickedness will exert upon the state of civil society and government.

AND for this purpose let them suppose that a people or nation are, in a predominant measure, wise, religious and virtuous, that they have a free, mild and equitable government ; that their legislators and magistrates are wise, just, faithful and benevolent. But suppose further that the deeds of darkness begin to prevail among such a people in a degree uncommon, and to be countenanced and practised by a considerable number of them ; that the leaven of infidelity, atheism, anarchy and confusion, begins to ferment and swell and threaten to burst from its confinement ; what will be their influence upon the state of society and government ? Will it not be that those who are most infected with these evils, will begin to grow discontented, restless and turbulent ? that they will repine at their own condition, and envy the prosperity of their neighbours ? And being ambitious of wealth, honor and pleasure, and yet too ignorant or too idle to obtain them by lawful means, or to enjoy them in a warrantable measure, they will wish to obtain them by fraud, corruption and violence. Unawed by the authority of God, unrestrained by the bonds of virtue and religion, uninfluenced by the principles of modesty

and humanity, they will wish to give themselves up to the impulse of their lusts and passions ; but restrained by numbers more virtuous than themselves, they will study to corrupt and seduce them to the adoption of their own principles. Check'd and embarrassed by the majesty of the laws, and the authority of Government, they will wish to subvert them. And being emulous of places of honor, trust and profit, and unable to rise to the possession of them, by fair and lawful means they will attempt to do it by flattery, falsehood and treachery. Encouraged by the countenance and the confidence of the idle, the restless, the disappointed, the embarrassed, and the vicious, prompted and assisted by the intriguing influence, and the insidious policy of some foreign power, they will endeavor to disseminate their licentious and disorganizing principles, and to form and execute the design of a general and destructive revolution. For this purpose they will form clubs and secret societies, that they may the more easily and safely mature their plans, systematize their operations, propagate their sentiments, and promote an extensive intercourse between all the members and branches of their fraternity. They will circulate books of the most impious principles and hurtful tendency. They will aim to corrupt Printers and Editors of Newspapers, and induce them to fill their various periodical publications with false representations, groundless surmises, slanders and calumnies against the most virtuous, wise and dignified characters. They will watch the Magistrates and Ministers of Government, misconstrue their laws, condemn their measures, depress their virtues, magnify their imperfections, and endeavour to load their characters with reproach and ridicule, that by such means, they may weaken their influence, destroy their authority, and frustrate all their operations for the order, safety and happiness of the community. They will have the address, by procuring the suffrages of the ignorant, the

credulous and the artful, to introduce some of their principal leaders into public bodies, and offices, of superior influence and importance ; who will there exert themselves with unremitting zeal, art and activity to procure such measures as will conduce to the prosperity of their dangerous designs, and to obstruct and frustrate such as are for the real benefit and security of their country. By these and other arts of subtilty and darkness, too various and complicated to be minutely traced or described, they will extend and ripen their plans of iniquity, till they begin to discover themselves in an open and hostile opposition to the laws, the officers and friends of government, and to break out in sedition, insurrection and rebellion. And these, if not suppressed by the arm of military power and justice, will open the door to an army of foreign invaders from that land of pretended light and liberty, which, with a monstrous and cruel absurdity, professes to give freedom to mankind at the point of the bayonet.—But wo to that people, to that nation which is doomed to accept the bondage of such a freedom. By the malignant force of its devouring influence, her government is subverted, her liberties are destroyed, her fathers are murdered or driven into banishment, her peace and safety are annihilated, her religion is insulted and trampled under foot, her houses are plundered and burnt, her matrons and virgins are violated, and her helpless children and harmless infants do not escape the edge of the bloody sword. Is this a picture too dark and gloomy to be just ? Is it not rather, but an imperfect representation of the dismal calamities which have been realized by those European countries which have experienced the fatal effects of the works of darkness in the fulness of their policy and power ?

But however dreadful and destructive these effects may be upon the natural and civil privileges and enjoyments of a people, yet we may go on to observe in the *last place*, that they exert an influence still more calamitous and deplorable upon their souls, and their

moral, spiritual and future interests and circumstances.

For ignorance, infidelity and wickedness, in proportion to their power and prevalence, blot out from the minds and hearts of men, all remaining sparks of light and virtue, honor and humanity, warrantable hope and comfort, and degrade and carnalize them into the worst kind of brutes and savages. For how poor, how despicable, how miserable and pitiable an animal is man, without a God, without a soul, and without any desire, hope or prospect of immortality! Blind and ignorant in himself, he rejects divine revelation, the only source of light, of certainty, of direction and consolation to fallen sinners. Weak and helpless by nature, unable to guide, to support and defend himself, or to obtain or secure to himself the possession or enjoyment of honor, safety or happiness, he renounces all belief and confidence in that God whose paternal power, wisdom and mercy are alone sufficient to sustain, protect and comfort him, in this dreary wilderness of labors, dangers, snares and sufferings. Incapable of the pleasures of rational society, of the joys and refinements of friendship, of virtue, piety and internal peace and harmony, he seeks his whole happiness in the transient, intermitting gratifications of sensitive appetite and passion; in the eager and lawless pursuit of which, by endeavouring to bear down every person who obstructs his progress, he becomes an enemy to every man, and makes every man an enemy to himself, and thus embroils himself in endless anxiety, embarrassment and danger—In love with existence, and clinging to it with an ardent wish of its everlasting duration, he strangely rejects the belief of his own immortality, or treats it with indifference and contempt; and consents to exchange it for the momentary pleasures of this world, and finally to sink into everlasting nothingness and oblivion; or to risk the suffering of eternal despair and misery. If he die in ignorance and stupidity, he can see nothing before him but the dark and dreary gulph of endless annihilation.

But if reason and conscience should awake, at last, to the belief of a God, of religion, and of a future state of eternal rewards and punishments, how must his soul be agitated with anguish and terror? His past crimes and vices in long and dreadful order, rise up to his affrighted view; God from above frowns upon his guilty soul, and perdition from beneath yawns wide to receive him. How dreadful, at the awful tribunal of God, will be his account for reason dethron'd, conscience abus'd, virtue insulted, religion profaned, despised and rejected; talents and privileges perverted, and every thing precious and sacred treated with contempt and outrage? Then the poor, miserable creature will find, to his sorrow and amazement, that there is a God of infinite majesty, truth and justice, whose boundless love and mercy he has despised and rejected, and whose awful wrath is incensed against him. Then he will find that he has a soul which must exist forever to endure the just punishment of his wickedness. And how will he lament with tears of anguish and self-condemnation, that he did not repent, believe and obey the wise and holy commands and counsels of God? That he did not secure, through the merits and intercession of a merciful Saviour, the final enjoyment of eternal life and happiness? How will he lament that by persisting in the works of darkness, he has found, by the bitterest experience, that they are fruitful in nothing but unutterable infamy, anguish and despair? And how will he wish, like the rich voluptuous sensualist in the parable, to send a messenger from the dead, to warn his vicious infidel companions, to repent and abandon their wicked works, lest they should bring them to the place of intolerable torment?

AND now what more profitable *improvement* can we make of our whole discourse, than to suffer ourselves to be led by it in the

1st. PLACE, to serious reflection and enquiry how far, and in what instances, we ourselves have been guilty of holding fellowship, in any degree, with the

works of darkness. We are not willing, perhaps, to acknowledge that we have been guilty, or to enter into a strict and impartial examination of our past spirit and conduct, lest it should present to our minds a subject of painful mortification. For must we not all confess, that we have been chargeable, more or less, with the commission of sin, or the neglect of duty? We may apprehend that others are more criminal than ourselves; and if this were admitted to be true, yet are we intirely innocent? Every sin is a work of darkness; and from every sin, the most wise and virtuous dare not claim a perfect freedom. They have reason to bewail their many faults and offences with tears of humility and repentance. And if the best are not free, how many criminal vanities, and aggravated transgressions, have others to deplore? And however disagreeable and mortifying the work of reflection and repentance may be, yet 'tis absolutely necessary to be done; and we are bound to be sincere and faithful in the performance of it.

AND we are solemnly called upon this day, not only by our civil Fathers, but by reason, by conscience, by the word of God, and by the perilous circumstances of our country, and even of the whole christian world, penitently to remember our sins, and to bewail them before God with deep humility and contrition. We are a people whom God hath been pleased to distinguish with privileges and benefits, civil and religious, great in their nature, their number, their magnitude and variety. And whom he hath placed in a situation, and under advantages, to cultivate and improve virtue, religion, national peace, liberty, dignity and happiness to a degree of perfection seldom or never experienced. And have we been suitably grateful to him for these invaluable blessings? Have we made such an improvement of them as he might reasonably expect? Have we not been ungrateful and insensible of his favours; and converted them into means of pride, vanity and extravagance? Have not irreligion, infidelity,

profanity, intemperance, impurity and licentiousness, with other vices, too greatly prevailed in our land? And have they not provoked the displeasure of God against us? Many of our capital towns and cities have been visited with such pestilential diseases; as have baffled the skill of Physicians, and swept off multitudes to their graves. And are not those towns and cities afflicted still with painful apprehensions of the return of these fatal disorders?

BESIDES, a powerful nation, a terrible republic, subtil in its intriguing policy, unjust in its aggressions and demands, and cruel in its attacks and injuries; a republic which God seems to have raised up for a scourge to a sinful world, is let loose upon our trade and commerce, to despoil us of our property, abuse, imprison and slaughter our brethren, and drag us into the calamities of a singular and distressing war—And if simple war, with its usual antecedents and concomitants, were her only object, she might justly be less dreaded; but that which is peculiarly grievous and alarming, is, that her principles of infidelity, atheism, licentiousness and anarchy are disseminated, and have made, we have reason to fear, an awful progress in our land: Threatening, by their baleful influence, to corrupt our citizens, subvert our government, destroy our liberty, independence and happiness, and involve us in a dismal scene of confusion and wretchedness. This has been her avowed and constant practice, to send forward a host of infidel, disorganizing principles as pioneers to prepare the way for her introduction into those states and nations, which she intended to conquer by her arms, and humble to her will. And by these means she is attempting to accomplish her cruel purposes against these United States. Ever since they formed a connection with her, she has been laboring by artifice and intrigue, to render them dependent on her power, and subject to her will. And since her revolution, and the war of plunder and oppression which she has carried on against all the nations in her neigh-

bourhood, 'tis more apparent than ever, that she has formed and maintains a fixed and deliberate design, to gain, as she has over other states and kingdoms, an absolute ascendancy over our government, our public measures and councils, our liberty, commerce and riches, and render them subservient to her designs of ambition, conquest and luxury. And she *has* had, and probably *has* at this moment, her agents and emissaries in the very bosom of our country; but these could effect nothing, were it not that too many of our own citizens are enough infatuated to espouse her cause, and to endeavour to give energy and success to her ruinous influence—And this mystery of iniquity and darkness, operating sometimes by secret artifice, and sometimes by open force, tends and threatens to produce all the deadly fruits and consequences, which have been already described.

THIS being our situation, and these our circumstances, what is to be done?

WE must in the 2d place, improve our subject by bringing it home to our own hearts, consciences and concerns. We must be effectually roused and excited by the numerous and powerful motives and considerations which it has presented to our view, to renounce all fellowship with sin, all communion with the works of darkness; and to bear a firm and unequivocal testimony against all error, infidelity, impiety and wickedness, and against all the means and measures which are pursued against the laws, the government, the honor, independence and safety of our country. We must labor by all suitable means to promote and cultivate union and harmony in our religious and political sentiments and opinions. The wisest, the ablest, the most virtuous and faithful patriots and friends to our country must be chosen for legislators, magistrates and ministers of government. And when they are chosen and appointed, we must give them our approbation, our respect and confidence—We must encourage and promote, to the utmost of our power, union,

attachment and confidence between subjects and rulers, and endeavour to avoid and suppress whatever tends to weaken and destroy them. We must encourage and promote measures of public safety and defence by our countenance and approbation, and endeavour by steady and vigorous exertions to give them energy and effect.

BUT it should be our principal concern to secure the presence and blessing of God. And for this purpose, let me repeat it, we must reflect upon our past offences, our sinfulness of heart and life, and cordially repent of them before him, imploring and obtaining his forgiveness through the mediation of Jesus Christ— We must confide in his infinite mercy, and labor, by his assisting grace to renounce our errors and vices, to reform our lives and manners, and to yield a sincere and uniform obedience to his will. By these means we may confidently hope to obtain the favour, support and protection of that Being who is infinitely powerful, wise and good; and if he be for us, who can be against us to any effect? Guarded and defended by his almighty providence and grace, though a countless host of enemies, or even of demons, should encamp against us, we need not fear either their policy or their power.

AND these moral and political measures of defence and safety should be adopted in earnest and in season. Nothing in concerns of such importance, can be more stupid and dangerous than procrastination and delay. For matters seem to be drawing towards a crisis pregnant with consequences of the highest magnitude and importance. It may not, perhaps, be long, before the interesting point will be determined, whether we shall remain a free, independent and happy nation, or whether we shall fall a prey to the force of artifice and delusion, yield to the horrors of civil war, of foreign invasion, and sink under the weight of violence and tyranny into a gulph of slavery and ruin. 'Tis time therefore for every friend to the religion, to the gov-

ernment and safety of his country, to come forward, and take a vigorous and decided part in her favour. 'Tis time for all those, who, through ignorance, misinformation, or imposition have been betrayed to encourage and promote such men and measures as are hostile to our country, to examine them, to discover their criminal and mischievous nature and tendency, and in spite of every motive of pride, resentment, party-spirit or connection, to renounce them forever.

BUT perhaps some persons may think that these are all vain and groundless alarms; and there is no reason to apprehend events so pernicious and deplorable.—But certainly such persons must be inattentive and uninformed; or being well informed, they do not judge honestly and impartially of the real state of things and the obvious causes we have for painful apprehension. They certainly judge and act under the influence of some prejudice or passion which blinds and perverts their judgment and conduct. We do not wish or design to censure or alarm any one without cause.—Nor do we wish any to depend merely on our assertions: But we wish them to seek the means of information, to read what has been written, to consider what has been acted, and to examine and weigh them deliberately and impartially, and then judge for themselves. We wish them to know and consider the conduct of the French government towards those nations which they have deceived by their professions, ensnared by their intrigues, and conquered by their arms—The destruction they have made of their rights and liberties, the countless millions of treasure they have extorted from them by artifice and violence, and the desolation and misery they have spread among them by plunder and oppression. We wish them to consider the injuries they have offered to the government and people of these United States—The depredations they have committed on our commerce; the insult and cruelty with which they have treated our brethren, and the

indignities they have offered to our Ambassadors of peace: They refused to accredit them, they labored to ensnare them, they insidiously demanded of them loans and gratuities to a vast amount.* We wish them to consider the restless activity, the unremitted diligence which the emissaries and partisans of France in this country have exerted to disgrace our rulers, and weaken their authority, to obstruct the measures of our government, to detach the people from their affection and adherence to it, to poison their minds with principles of infidelity, error, anarchy and treason, and stir them up to insurrection and revolt—Such an insurrection was excited some years past in the frontiers of Pennsylvania, to suppress which, subjected the nation to a million of dollars expence—another has actually begun to discover itself in the same state.† We wish people to consider these alarming facts and appearances, and then candidly to judge, whether we have not too many reasons for painful apprehension; though not, I trust, for depression and discouragement—And we wish them to carry their considerations ultimately into a serious channel, and to improve them as motives of humiliation, repentance and reformation, whereby the anger of God may be averted, and the smiles of his favour and blessing may return.

BUT that there should be any persons in this country, who claim the name and the privileges of Ameri-

* Whoever wishes for further information upon the foregoing subjects, and a fuller evidence of the truth of the observations which have been made, may read Mr. HARPER'S observations on the dispute between the United States and France: In which they will find that the Dutch have been plundered by France of fifty-two millions of dollars in less than two years, under the name of amity and alliance. And that estates were confiscated in Belgium, by the same power, to the amount of two hundred and fifty millions of dollars—And that in 1795 it was computed that two millions of persons had been massacred in France during the revolution. And they may read a short history of the revolution in the republic of Geneva, effected by the artifice and violence of France. They may read the history of the subjugation of Switzerland, by MALLET DU PAN; also the dispatches of our Envoys to the French republic. And they may enquire whether a late account in our public papers be not founded upon sufficient authority, which states that the French have extorted from the several nations which they have overrun by their troops, or subjected to their power, the enormous sum of sixteen hundred millions of pounds, exclusive of the property they destroyed by plunder, fire and sword. They may enquire also whether it be not true that the French cruisers, officers and agents, have treated our maritime brethren with great insult and cruelty.

† It has since, as all have understood, been happily suppressed.

cans, and who know and consider all these things, and yet remain careless and unconcerned ; nay more, that there should be any (and can it be questioned whether there are such ?) who knowing and considering them, do rather enjoy them, and wish for an entire revolution in our government, and alteration in our circumstances, effected by that foreign influence, so much and so justly dreaded by others, is really quite astonishing ! What advantages they can expect from such a revolution, or how they can hope to escape the dismal calamities which must inevitably attend, and follow it, is wholly unaccountable—That some may escape them, and that a few may obtain, by means of them, a great accession of power, riches and luxury, is not impossible. But could they be contented to hold these advantages with a spirit of base servility to the arbitrary domination of French masters ? Could they be so destitute of all principles of virtue, honor and humanity as to riot in the spoils of their country ? Can they behold the ruin of their nation, the subversion of its government, the disgrace, banishment or death of its legislators and magistrates, the destruction of its commerce, the dissipation of its riches, the poverty and misery of its subjects, without anguish and distress ? Can they contemplate without pity and terror, even in imagination, the bloody fiend of civil war, attended by the cruel arms of a foreign foe, stalking over the once happy plains of America, burning her towns and villages, slaughtering her sons, polluting the venerable heads of the aged, and the fair and lovely forms of the young, with bloody outrage or brutal lust ; and filling all places, once the retreat of social labor, happiness and love, with tears and groans, desolation and death ! if they can, their hearts must be harder than a rock of adamant !

BUT *here*, it may be said, we have no reason to expect such dreadful scenes.

THEY have been realised in Germany, in Belgium, and in Switzerland, and who can promise that they

would not take place here if the same causes and instruments should successfully operate and finally prevail ?*

How much reason therefore have we for the exercise of repentance, virtue and holiness? For union in heart and practice in the cause of our religion, our government and our country? and to study by all means to secure the favour and protection of God, that he may never suffer us to fall a prey to such overwhelming calamities.

AND NOW TO CONCLUDE: Since this world is subject to such agitations, convulsions and miseries; since those places and nations where peace, safety and happiness were most reasonably to be expected, are not exempted from great troubles and afflictions; and since all stations and circumstances are subject to losses, disappointments and distresses, 'tis in vain to expect

* As every person into whose hands these discourses may fall, may not have had opportunity to read the charge given by the Bishop of Landaff to the Clergy of his Diocese, I will take the liberty to present a few passages of it to their view; as they are suited to confirm and illustrate in a clear and forcible manner, the observations and assertions which have been made above. The Bishop, who is a man of great ability, knowledge and candour, who is in the best situation to obtain accurate accounts of the spirit and conduct of the French—thus addresses himself to his hearers:

“ You will not, I think, be guilty of a breach of christian charity in the use of even harsh language, when you explain to them [your people] the cruelties which the French have used in every country which they have invaded, for no language can reach the atrocity of the fact. They every where promise protection to the poorest of every thing which they possess; they plunder their cottages, and they set them on fire, when the plunder is exhausted; they torture the owners to discover their wealth, and they put them to death when they have none to discover; they violate females of all ages; they insult the hoary head, and trample on all the decencies of life. This is no exaggerated picture; whoever has read the accounts of the proceedings of the French in Suabia, in Holland, in Italy, in Switzerland, know it is not.”

In another paragraph he asks, “ Are the French coming here to enrich the nation? Will they pay attention to the poor of this country, when they have so many thousands of infinitely poorer persons in their own? Will they reward their seditious adherents amongst us? Yeas, they will reward them, as all history informs us, such traitors ever have been rewarded—they will reward them with contempt, pillage, beggary, slavery and death. The nation will be ruined by exorbitant impositions; our naval power will be destroyed; our commerce transferred to France; our lands will be divided (not amongst those who wickedly covet their neighbours goods) but amongst the French soldiers, who will be every where stationed, as the Roman soldiers were of old, to awe the people, and collect the taxes; the flower of our youth will be compelled to serve in foreign countries, to promote the wicked projects of French ambition—Great Britain will be made an appendage to continental despotism.” “ And after seas of blood have been shed, millions of lives lost, towns plundered, villages burned, and unutterable calamity has been endured by persons of all ranks; after all this is done, what advantages will you have obtained beyond what you now possess?”

rest and happiness in the present state ; 'tis in vain to expect them in any state but that where we shall be totally delivered from sin, and all its baleful effects. With what earnestness and diligence should we therefore exert ourselves to mortify our corruptions, to cultivate virtue and holiness, to obtain the blessings and comforts of salvation, and a fixed and animating prospect of eternal rest and happiness in the kingdom of Glory ?

A FIRM belief that God reigns, that he overrules and orders all creatures, actions and events in this world, with infinite wisdom, rectitude and goodness ; an unreserved confidence in his mercy, a free access to his throne of grace, and a cheering hope of final introduction to his presence in glory, will serve to mitigate our fears and sufferings, to support us under all the trials and afflictions of the present state, and reconcile us to the idea of bidding it an everlasting adieu. O then let us have recourse to the supports and consolations of religion. Let us study to possess and increase that faith which will prove an anchor to the soul amidst all the storms of calamity and temptation by which we are agitated on the boisterous ocean of this world : And then we shall finally arrive safe at the haven of eternal rest, where no enemies will assault us, no temptation seduce us, no sin nor suffering oppress our hearts with sorrow and distress ; but unclouded light, liberty, glory and blessedness shall elevate and transport our souls for ever and ever.

AMEN.

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