

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN

MIDDLEBOROUGH, MASS.

AUGUST 20, 1812,

BEING

THE DAY OF THE NATIONAL FAST.

BY JOSEPH BARKER, A.M.

Pastor of the First Church in said town.

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1812.

A DISCOURSE.

PSALM xxii, 4, 5.

Our Fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded.

THE whole of the Psalm, which contains our text, is a prophecy concerning Christ, his humiliation, sufferings, and consequent glory.

This is evident, as several passages of it are quoted in the New Testament, and applied to Christ. When Christ was upon the cross, he cried out, in the words of the first verse of this Psalm, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" In the seventh and eighth verses, the insults, which Christ received from the spectators, are described: "All they that see me laugh me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the Lord, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him." According to the Evangelists, this was literally fulfilled, when Christ was upon the cross. In the eighteenth verse it is written: "They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture." Matthew saith, (chap. xxvii, 35,) "And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, 'They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.'" These quotations abundantly shew that this Psalm had particular reference to Christ.

Christ, when praying, in his affliction and distress, made use of the words in our text, as an argument to enforce his petition. He pleads God's former goodness to his people and praying servants, as an encour-

agement for him to hope to be heard, and answered in peace.

This is a forcible argument, and is a consideration, which may encourage people to pray in the time of their affliction and trouble. God is a prayer-hearing God, and hath been wont to hear, and help his people, when, in their distress and trouble, they have cried unto him.

These words are very pertinent to the present occasion. We are convened to-day in consequence of a proclamation, issued by the President of the United States, in compliance with a request of the Congress, by a joint resolution of the two houses, that a day may be recommended, to be observed by the people of the United States, with religious solemnity, as a day of public humiliation and prayer.

The reason assigned for this appointment, is thus expressed in the proclamation: "Whereas such a recommendation will enable the several religious denominations and societies so disposed, to offer, at one and the same time, their common vows and adorations to Almighty God, on the solemn occasion produced by the war, in which he has been pleased to permit the injustice of a foreign power to involve these United States." There is a propriety, beauty, and solemnity, in the numerous religious societies of all denominations of christians, throughout the United States, addressing the throne of grace, at one and the same time, with their humble petitions and fervent prayers, on the same account. Many thousands, united in the same interest, and sharing in the same calamity, at one and the same time, crying to God for help!

The calamity, with which these states are visited, is the war, in which God hath been pleased to permit the injustice of a foreign power to involve them. God's providence is acknowledged in bringing this war upon us, though he was pleased to employ as an instrument "the injustice of a foreign power." Thus God's hand ought to be seen and acknowledged in all the comforts, which we receive in this world, and in all the calamities, which befall us: For God saith, "I form the light,

and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."

But sometimes, in bringing our calamities upon us, some wicked agent is employed as an instrument: as in the present case; *the injustice of a foreign power* hath involved these states in war.

War is styled in scripture one of God's *sore judgments*. And indeed it is an awful calamity. It is attended with a great destruction of property; it reduces many from affluence to indigence; it destroys many lives, and generally of such persons as are in the prime and vigour of life; it makes many widows and fatherless children; it snatches from aged parents their beloved sons, on whom they depended for the support and consolation of their old age; it often depraves the morals of people, and endangers liberty and free government. It is indeed a sore judgment, which we ought to deprecate, and, if possible, avoid. As the Apostle saith, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." This implies that sometimes it may be impossible for a man, or nation, ever so desirous of living in peace with all men, to avoid war.

Considering war as a great calamity, and unavoidable by us; and considering it as having been brought upon us, by the Supreme Ruler of the universe, by what means or instrument he pleased; with great propriety is a day set apart for public humiliation and prayer.

And the present is the day, which, according to the proclamation, is "set apart, for the devout purposes of rendering to the Sovereign of the universe, and the benefactor of mankind, the public homage due to his holy attributes; of acknowledging the transgressions which might justly provoke the manifestations of his divine displeasure; of seeking his merciful forgiveness, and his assistance in the great duties of repentance and amendment."

God hath seen fit to visit us with the sore judgment of war; he is the Sovereign of the universe, and the benefactor of mankind; "he doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men:" Therefore we must see the propriety of confessing our sins, which have provoked his displeasure, and of seeking his merciful

forgiveness, and his assistance in the great duties of repentance and amendment.

We have sinned against God, or he would not have sent his judgments upon us. Our ways have not pleased him, or we should not have been involved in a war: For it is said, (Prov. xvi, 7,) "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." Therefore repentance, confession of our sins, and amendment of life, are duties incumbent upon us.

We have the written law of God in our possession; each one has a conscience in his own breast; and it is our duty impartially to inquire, what hand our sins have had in bringing this judgment upon our land. Let not that be applicable to us, which is written in Jer. viii, 6, "I hearkened and heard, but they spake not aright: no man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turneth to his cause, as the horse rusheth into the battle." People are very prone, when judgments are sent upon them, to look no further than to the instrument, or secondary cause, and not to acknowledge God's hand in them. Is not that the case, at the present day, with many among us? Some say, that the injustice and oppression of England are the cause of our present war. Others say, that this war was unnecessary and unjust on our part, and that our own government deserves all the blame. But neither of them speak aright, when "no man repenteth him of his wickedness, saying, What have I done?" For we ought to consider this war, as a judgment of God, sent to correct us for our sins, let who may be the instrumental cause. If the government of Great Britain be unrighteous and oppressive, and hath forced us into the war; yet, *that government* is but "the rod of God's anger, and the staff in their hand is his indignation." God hath sent that nation to correct us for our sins. And if the other opinion be correct, that the war is unnecessary and unjust on our part, and that our rulers have imprudently, or wickedly, forced us into it; those rulers, which are chosen by the majority of the people, from among their brethren; who are embarked in the same cause with them; whose interests are inseparable

from the public interest;—if those rulers, I say, be the culpable cause of our war, yet *they* are but an instrument in God's hand. We ought to consider that God hath sent this war upon us, and that he sent it, because of our wickedness; and each one should ask his own conscience, "What have I done?" What hand have I had in bringing this awful judgment upon my nation? And each one should repent of his wickedness, and "amend his ways and doings; cease to do evil, and learn to do well."

After having recommended to us the duties of repentance, amendment, and prayer for God's merciful forgiveness, the proclamation proceeds: "And especially, of offering fervent supplications, that in the present season of calamity and war, he would take the American people under his peculiar care and protection; that he would guide their public councils, animate their patriotism, and bestow his blessing on their arms."

If we are satisfied that our cause is just, and that the injustice of the nation, with which we are at war, hath forced us, either to engage in war, or submit to a greater evil, we shall see the propriety of our offering up such supplications: For we need the protecting hand of Divine Providence. "The race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong." But, if God will take our nation under his peculiar care and protection, of whom, or of what nation, need we to be afraid? A miraculous interposition is not to be expected, nor desired; therefore it is recommended to us to pray, "That God would guide our public councils, animate our patriotism, and bestow his blessing on our arms." If God do not guide the councils of our nation, and inspire them with wisdom and prudence, great is our danger. Wisdom is the gift of God. And "great men are not always wise." Sometimes the councils of a nation are infatuated, and advise to measures, which, instead of promoting the interest of the nation, will bring disappointment and ruin.

A striking instance of this we have in 2 Sam. xvii, 14, "And Absalom and all the men of Israel said, the counsel of Hushai the Archite is better than the counsel of Ahithophel: for the Lord had appointed to defeat

the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.”

Ahithophel had given good counsel, that is, such as would, probably, if it had been followed, have destroyed David, and promoted Absalom’s cause. But Hushai, who was really David’s friend, and Absalom’s only in pretence, gave such advice, as would, if followed, prevent the sudden destruction of David, and eventually prove the ruin of Absalom. The people followed the advice of Hushai; for Absalom and all the people thought, that his advice was better than that of Ahithophel: “For the Lord had appointed to defeat the good counsel of Ahithophel, to the intent that the Lord might bring evil upon Absalom.” We see by this instance the importance of God’s guiding our public councils. David was preserved, and Absalom destroyed, by means of God’s guiding the councils of that nation.

Our country hath its *real* and its *pretended* friends. No doubt, our enemy has many friends among us. *Their* advice, and *that* of the real friends of our country, will be very different. If God guide our public councils, favourably to us, that advice will be followed, and those measures pursued, which are best calculated to promote our interest and prosperity: But if he designs to bring evil upon us, the great councils of our nation may err in judgment and policy, and recommend and pursue measures, which will be hurtful to us.

That he would “animate their patriotism.” This would be a means of our protection. In our revolutionary war, the patriotism and zeal for liberty, with which people were then inspired, were the principal means, under God, of our obtaining success, establishing independence, and laying a foundation for our present prosperity and greatness. At that day, we were a very small people, in comparison with what we now are. We were then destitute of experienced officers and soldiers; destitute of all the implements of war; destitute of almost all kinds of manufactures, and not able to clothe ourselves: But people were patriotic; they loved their country; they loved that liberty, for which *their* fathers had left their native country, and endured

the hardships, attendant on living in a wilderness; they were willing to deny themselves, and forego many of their comforts, and their ease, for the good of their country and posterity. And *their* patriotism and zeal procured for us the great privileges which we now possess. With propriety, then, it is recommended to us to pray, that God would animate the patriotism of our nation. Patriotism is as necessary, and would be as useful, now, as it was in our revolutionary war. It would enable us patiently to bear many deprivations, endure hardships, and valiantly encounter danger, if necessary, to defend our rights, maintain our independence, and promote our national prosperity.

“And bestow his blessing on their arms.” Without God’s blessing, it is in vain for a nation to raise armies, and send them forth to battle; or to build and equip ships of war, to encounter the enemy on the sea. But sometimes it is the duty of a people to engage in war, and use armies and armed ships; it being necessary, in order to defend their lives, their property, and their just and invaluable rights. But it is vain to trust in an arm of flesh. Great and powerful armies have often been vanquished by a foe, which they despised. Witness Burgoyne and Cornwallis, in our revolutionary war. They were brave British generals, each commanding an army, far superior to any these states had to oppose to them; they issued out haughty proclamations, expressive of their contempt of the American armies, and boasting of the power of their nation: But God delivered them into the hands of those, whom they had despised. A boasting proclamation of a general hath often been the prelude of his own disgrace. It is dangerous for a people to depend on the greatness, the skill, or courage of their armies. The king of Israel gave a very discreet answer to a boasting message, which had been sent to him by the king of Syria: (1 Kings xx, 11,) “Tell him, Let not him that girdeth on the harness boast himself, as he that putteth it off.” God can save by many, or by few. If God bless our arms, inspire the people with patriotism, and guide our public councils, all will go well with us; our enemy will restore our rights, which they have unjustly taken

from us; make restitution for the property, which they have piratically taken from us; and release from captivity and cruel servitude, the many thousands of the citizens of these states, who are now wickedly and inhumanly held in bondage, and compelled to expose their lives, in fighting against their own friends and brethren.

Further, it is recommended to us, in the proclamation, to pray, "That God would inspire all nations with a love of justice and of concord, and with a reverence for the unerring precept of our holy religion, to do to others as they would require that others should do to them." All christians, of whatever denomination, or of whatever political sentiments, can, and will comply with this recommendation: For it is, only in other words, the same which Christ recommended in that form of prayer, which he taught his disciples: "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." It is God's revealed will, his written law, that men should do to others, as they would wish that others should do to them. If God would inspire all men, and all nations, with a reverence for this unerring principle of our holy religion, oh! how happy it would be for the world! No more would the wretched Africans be torn from their native country and from all that is dear to them, and be forced into cruel slavery, to suffer, groan, and die, under the rigorous discipline of unfeeling masters; no more would tyrants reign, who fill their numerous subjects with wretchedness undescribable; no more should we hear the alarm of war; no more would there be animosities and contentions among neighbors; no more would the poor suffer hunger, and beg in vain for bread. Oh! what evils would be removed, or prevented, by all nations being inspired with such a disposition! and what unspeakable happiness mankind would possess! This world would be a heaven!

Our proclamation proceeds: "And, finally, that turning the hearts of our enemies from the violence and injustice which sway their councils against us, He would hasten a restoration of the blessings of peace."

Prov. xxi, 1: "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." God can turn the hearts of our enemies, so

that they will lay aside their injustice and cruelty, which they are practising towards us, and treat us in a righteous and friendly manner. And this is what we ought to wish, rather than to desire to do them harm. And this I believe to be the sentiment of our nation. We bear no ill will to the English nation; we descended from them; we speak their language, and, on many accounts, feel more attached to them, than to any other nation: otherwise, I presume, we should not, for so long a time, have borne with the injuries and insults, which they have inflicted upon us, without resorting to war. I cannot think that our government would have borne so long with any other nation, which had treated us as England has done, without seeking retaliation. But we wish them to be turned from their violence, injustice, and oppression towards us; then we should joyfully disband our armies, and heartily welcome a restoration of the blessings of peace.

Now let us consider the great encouragement we have to pray at this time of our nation's trouble, and the argument to enforce our petition, suggested in our text. "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded."

The words of our text will naturally lead us to turn our thoughts to the history of our fathers;—our *immediate* fathers, the generation which has in part just gone, and the remainder of which is rapidly going, off the stage of life; or farther back, our ancestors, the first civilized settlers of this country; or still farther back, the saints in all past ages. For in all ages, so far as history, sacred or profane, gives us any account, saints, in a time of trouble, have been wont to pray to God; and he has always appeared for them and granted them relief. I shall cite a few instances, recorded in the holy scriptures: 2 Chron. xx, 12; "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might against this great company that cometh against us: neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee." This was a part of the prayer of the good king Jehoshaphat, when a great army was coming against his nation. Ver. 10: "And

now behold, the children of Ammon, and Moab, and mount Seir, whom thou wouldst not let Israel invade, when they came out of the land of Egypt, Behold I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of thy possession, which thou hast given us to inherit." He pleads the injustice of his enemies as well as their power, and the righteousness of his own cause, and looked to God. Immediately God answered him in these words: "Be not afraid nor dismayed, by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours but God's. Tomorrow go ye down against them: Ye shall not need to fight in this battle; set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem: fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them, for the Lord will be with you." And God caused the numerous hosts, which had come against Jehoshaphat, to fall out among themselves, and to slay one another; so that Jehoshaphat had nothing to do, but to gather the rich spoil of their enemies, and return to Jerusalem with joy.

Another instance we have in Hezekiah the king, and Isaiah the prophet, when Sennacherib king of Assyria invaded the land of Judah, and sent his servants, with an insulting message to Hezekiah, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, boasting of the many conquests, which he had made, and even blaspheming and defying the God of Israel, and striking the people with a panic; 2 Chron. xxxii, 20: "And for this cause Hezekiah the king, and the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz, prayed and cried to heaven. And the Lord sent an angel, which cut off all the mighty men of valor, and the leaders and captains in the camp of the king of Assyria: so he returned with shame of face to his own land."

Many other instances, similar to these, are recorded in scripture, of ancient saints trusting in the Lord and praying, in time of war and other calamities; and of their obtaining relief in that way. And they were encouraged to do it, by a command and promise of God. Ps. l, 15: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver thee."

Our ancestors, the first civilized inhabitants of this country, had *their* troubles: they were persecuted and

driven from their native country, on account of their religion: They were not allowed, in their native country, to worship God, according to the dictates of their own conscience, taking the scriptures for their directory. They were under the necessity of conforming to that mode of worship, which the government of England had established, which they conscientiously believed to be unscriptural; or to leave their native land, with all the delights and luxuries of an old settled country, to hazard their lives in crossing a wide and tempestuous ocean, and to settle down in an uncultivated wilderness, the dreary mansion of wild beasts and savages. They chose the latter; for they loved liberty, and "that religion which we profess." They had to struggle with many difficulties; famine, sickness, and wars with the savages, who were numerous, when *they* were but few in number. They had no aid from their parent country: But they were pious; they prayed and put their trust in God, and were preserved.

Our immediate fathers, *that* generation, of which some are yet alive, (though the greater part have fallen asleep) had war,—a distressing war, which continued seven or eight years,—and with the same nation, with which we are now at war. They were forced into war, by the unjust and oppressive treatment, which they received from that nation, from which they descended; similar to the treatment, which we have been receiving from them, ever since we became an independent nation. It was with great reluctance that our fathers entered into that war; for they considered the contest to be unequal. England was powerful by land and sea, and, at the commencement of that war, was not in a state of hostility with any other nation to divide her forces. Our fathers had no regular troops; no force upon sea or land, compared with that of their enemy. But they considered their cause to be good, and that they were in duty bound to attempt to defend those rights and privileges, which God had given them, and which had been very costly to their fathers, and to retain them if possible, to be transmitted to their children, and generations unborn. They made use of what strength they had; used what means they could to defend themselves; trusted in God, and prayed. And

God delivered them: He raised up a Washington to lead their armies, and, under God, to save their country. He also raised up many other brave officers and soldiers, and "taught their hands to war, and their fingers to fight." He also raised up able and patriotic statesmen and politicians, to take the helm, and guide the affairs of our nation. He inspired the leaders of the several Colonies (as these states then were) with a spirit of unanimity and patriotism. From New Hampshire to Georgia, inclusively, the Colonies formed a union; though previous to that time, they had had but little acquaintance with one another, and their forms of government, their habits and interests were diverse; yet they were inspired with patriotism and love of liberty; they renounced all local interests; became united as a band of brothers, and made a common cause of all the sufferings or interests of each Colony.

At that time also the clergy in New England were zealous in the cause of liberty; they exhorted and animated the people to make resistance to the oppressive acts of Great Britain, and were very influential in effecting the independence of our country. By doing which, they incurred the great displeasure of their enemy; so that, wherever the troops of their enemy had an opportunity, they shewed their resentment and spite, by setting on fire meeting houses, and abusing and killing ministers. Several places in New England can witness to their meeting houses having been injured, defaced, set on fire, or utterly destroyed.

The reverend, venerable, and patriotic President of Yale College at that time, where he alive, could witness to the abusive and insulting language, which he received from them, when a prisoner and in their power; and the heavy and cruel blows, inflicted upon him, with their guns, which, though not instantaneously, probably occasioned his death.* And the amiable and pious Caldwell, a Presbyterian minister in New Jersey, were he alive, could relate a more affecting story; he could tell you, that when his wife, an amiable lady was sitting in her house, with her little domestic circle around her, and her infant in her arms, (he himself be-

* Rev. Naphthali Dagget.

ing absent) a British barbarian pointed his musket into the window of her room, and instantly shot her dead; that her body was thrown into a hole, and the house, in which she was, set on fire and consumed with all the property it contained; he would tell you, that this horrible affair, the murder of his wife, *deliberately* and without provocation, was never frowned upon by the British commander;—he would also tell you, that the houses, dedicated to public worship, in his vicinity, did not escape their fury. But his voice is silent in death. Within two years after the death of his amiable and delicate wife, he himself was murdered, by an assassin.*

At that day, Christians, in all parts of our country, betook themselves to prayer; there were Continental fasts; Colony fasts; prayer meetings, frequently, in individual churches, and parishes, and neighborhoods. Some of you, my hearers, well remember these things: For the church and its worthy minister in this place, at that day, were forward and zealous in that just cause of defending the rights and liberty of their country, both by praying, and by fighting. And God grant that their successors may ever continue to imitate their example!

God, who inspired our fathers with patriotism, with zeal for liberty, with courage to assert their rights, with prudence to use what means of defence they had in their power, and to look to the Divine Ruler of the universe for his protection; *that* God heard their prayers; disappointed their enemies; gave them independence, civil and religious liberty, and the best constitution and form of government in the world.

In consequence of that patriotism; and those exertions of our fathers, attended with the blessing of God, we have lived, several years, in peace and prosperity; and have increased in wealth and population, beyond all former example or precedent. England hath ever since envied and hated us; hath oppressed and injured us; hath endeavored to prevent our growth, and hath sought our ruin, especially the ruin of our commerce and navigation. Unrighteous rules and orders have

* Mrs. Warren's Hist. of the American War, Vol. ii, p. 203.

been established by the government of that nation, one after another, for the purpose of taking our property, contrary to all the established laws of nations; which were encroaching on our rights, and humiliating to an independent nation. We have remonstrated, and persisted in remonstrating; having sent ambassador after ambassador; envoy after envoy, to endeavor to bring that government to a sense of justice: but all in vain. The more we have condescended, and manifested patience, the more insolent and oppressive they became: until at last, they have compelled us, either to submit to them, as ignoble, dependent colonies, or defend our rights by war. After long and calm deliberation, our national government chose the latter. War is declared. And now we are called upon, in imitation of the example of our fathers, to look to God for help.

Our cause is as just as, and very similar to, *that* of our fathers. What was the cause of *their* war? The English Parliament claimed the right of making laws, binding on their Colonies, in all cases whatever. Our fathers denied their having such a right, and remonstrated against that exorbitant claim, as they were not represented in that Parliament. But to establish their claim, several laws were enacted, imposing duties and laying taxes on the Colonies, with which our fathers refused to comply. Then several other unrighteous and cruel laws were enacted, to punish, and terrify into submission, refractory towns and colonies; 'till our fathers perceived, that they must relinquish all their liberty and privileges, and become the slaves of the British Parliament, or take the sword, and fight for their liberty. They heroically declared that, "They would be hewers of wood and drawers of water to no nation under heaven;" declared their independence, fought, and conquered, and maintained their rights.

What is the cause of our present war? Various oppressive and unrighteous acts have been established by the English government, infringing upon our rights as an independent and neutral nation. They have, unlawfully, taken a large number of our merchant ships, containing much property; they have fired upon our

vessels, national armed vessels, and unarmed coasters, and killed a number of our citizens, even within the limits of our own territories; and that government instead of punishing their officers, who were guilty of such murderous conduct, have promoted them to higher honors, thereby shewing their approbation of their iniquitous actions;—they have forcibly taken many of our seamen out of our vessels on the high seas, thereby exposing those vessels to destruction, for the want of hands; and many others, within the limits of our jurisdiction. By such a mode of impressing seamen, many of our citizens have been cruelly torn from their country, from their families, and from every thing dear to them; have been deprived of their liberty, and doomed to an ignominious and slavish bondage; they have been forced to fight, on board of British ships, against those who were amicably disposed towards the United States; they have been liable to be sent into distant parts, and into unhealthy climates; they have been forced to hazard their lives, (and many of them no doubt to lose them) in fighting the battles of their oppressors, against their own friends and brethren; they are forced into such a situation, that they may be the unhappy instruments of taking away the lives of their own brethren, or be killed by them. Shocking to humanity! This is the conduct of that nation, which is famous (though undeservedly) for humanity, liberty, and religion.

Great Britain hath arrogantly claimed the right, because she has the power, to rule over all the ocean, and suffer no vessel to sail upon it, or carry on commerce any where, but according to her direction and permission; she hath subjected to capture and condemnation all our vessels, which do not pay tribute to her, and sail under her permit. Who is not filled with astonishment at such arrogance as this? “Be astonished, O ye heavens at this!” Did England create the ocean? We read in Ps. xcv, 5, speaking of Jehovah, “The sea is his, and he made it.” Hath the Maker of the sea given to England an exclusive title to it? No: God is no respecter of persons; all nations are his creatures, his

children, as well as the English; and all nations have an equal right to use the ocean. If Great Britain had power sufficient, they would have an equal right to exclude all nations but their own, from the use of the atmosphere, as they have to prohibit them the use of the ocean. The sun, the air, and the ocean, God hath made for the use of mankind in common. England hath usurped the dominion of the ocean, and by virtue of that claim, hath, for several years, been making war upon our commerce.

To acquiesce in such an unrighteous and arrogant claim, must, to these United States, be a most mortifying humiliation. It would be base submission in us, not to resist it, with *determinate* resolution. It would be injuring our posterity to surrender such an invaluable privilege, as we should, by a compliance with that claim. We are the guardians of our posterity; it is our duty to defend this privilege, and transmit it down to them; as our fathers did to us.

There is no room to doubt but that the British government has excited the savage tribes on our frontiers to acts of hostility against us; and that they have furnished them with the implements of war, adapted to their barbarous mode of fighting; when they knew it to be their custom to kill, indiscriminately, men, women, children, aged people, and infants, inhumanly mangling their bodies. *This*, we believe, the English government hath done, and is now doing.

In addition to the long list of injuries, which they have done to us, they have attempted to dismember our union, and destroy our excellent form of government; they have attempted to excite in our citizens a spirit of discontent, and insurrection against the constituted authorities and laws of the nation. And, what aggravates that horrible conduct, they had a secret agent in this country, endeavoring to effect these mischievous things, at a time when Great Britain and these states were amicably negotiating for a friendly accommodation of their differences; and when Britain was making great pretension to friendship.

The acts, orders and claims of the English government are equivalent to demanding of us a surrendry of our rights as an independent nation, and to submit again to be her colonies. We say, *we will not*. This is the dispute to be decided. Our government has been attempting for years to settle all our differences, by calm reasoning and friendly negociation; but England hath refused: It must now be decided by war.

Our fathers, being satisfied that their cause was just, exerted themselves, trusted in God, prayed, and proved successful. We ought to do the same. We ought to pray, trust in God, and endeavor to defend ourselves. We ought unanimously to support our national government, and aid it in drawing forth the resources and power of our nation. The more energetical our measures are, on first entering into this war, the shorter, probably, will be its continuance. Vigorous exertions will be likely, in a short time, to give us an honorable peace, which is, and ought to be, our sole motive to engage in war.

Let us, above all things, put our trust in God, and endeavor, by our sincere repentance, and humble and fervent prayer, to engage the Lord of Hosts on our side. And let us use all prudent means to defend our rights. And, as a principal means, let us endeavor to maintain union and concord among ourselves. The rights and privileges which we enjoy in a more eminent degree than any other nation, are many and exceedingly valuable. We have an excellent constitution of national government; devised by men of knowledge, wisdom, and patriotism; calculated to insure to every class of people the rights of man; and which was received and ratified, by a large majority of the people of the United States. The people have a constitution of their own choice; and rulers, who are bound, by their oath, to be regulated by that constitution, chosen by the people themselves, and that only for a short term; which lays them under a strong obligation, and holds out to them a weighty inducement, to aim at the public good. This is a greater privilege, of a civil nature,

than is enjoyed by any other people in the world. Oh! let us defend this constitution, and hold fast this liberty.

This constitution prudently points out where and with whom the important, and dangerous, power of making war shall be lodged. It is not intrusted with an individual, who, provoked by some personal insult, or impelled by some violent passion, might involve a nation in the calamities of war, whenever he should please; or keep them in perpetual war, when not for the interest of the nation, to gratify his own ambition, that he might proceed from conquering to conquer; it is not intrusted with an individual State, or section of the Union, whose local interest might induce them to make war, when the other parts of the nation would prefer peace; it is not intrusted with an individual class of men, who, to promote their *selfish* interest, would keep off a war, when the honor and invaluable rights of the nation, without a war, must be sacrificed;—But the power of making war is given to the representatives of the people of all the United States, assembled in Congress, who will know and possess the feelings of the majority of the people. Thus that very important power is committed to the safest trust.

It is therefore our duty and interest to obey our own laws; laws made by our own representatives; by men, who became legislators by our express desire. Those, therefore, who are exciting people to disobey our laws and rulers, are doing wrong; they are doing what their own conscience, if not seared, *does* condemn.

Those, who are attempting to effect a dissolution of the union of these States, are wicked and impolitic. We have sufficient reason for believing that there are such men among us. We have reason to fear that the British emissaries, which have been sent among us, for the purpose of disaffecting people towards their own government, and effecting a dismemberment of these States, have been too successful. Otherwise how can we account for the many private conventions, which have been held, and for a larger one being proposed; and for many speeches and resolves, which have been published, tending to effect that separation?

Such conduct is *wicked*, as it has a tendency to weaken or destroy our government, and thereby endanger the liberty and rights of the people; as it has a tendency to set at variance brethren and most intimate friends; as it tends to confirm the opinion of those, who believe that republican government is impracticable, and that the whole of mankind were created only to serve the purpose of a few tyrants and lordlings, thus degrading human nature to the level of brutes, and casting a blasphemous reproach upon the great Creator of all things;—as its tendency is thus to destroy the peace and happiness of our community and of individuals, it is *wicked*.

It is *impolitic*; as the strength and prosperity of our nation, if not its very existence, depend on the union of the States, of which it is composed. The maxim of the English government, and its policy concerning these States, are, and ever have been, *Divide and conquer*. And it is written in the unerring book of truth, Matt. xii, 25; “Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation: and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.” Any part of these states cannot be separated from the other *peaceably*: If such an event ever takes place, it will be the effect of some violent convulsion, and bloody civil war. One half of the people in New England, without doubt, feel their obligation, and also an inclination, to support the Constitution of the United States; and, rather than to be severed from the Union, and relinquish a republican government, would maintain a severe struggle, which might occasion a neighbor to kill his neighbor, and a brother to imbrue his hands in his brother’s blood.

Furthermore, all the United States are under obligation to support a republican government in each State, and quell any insurrection or rebellion, which may arise in any part of the union. If any of our citizens, then, impelled by their ambition, their aversion to republicanism, their attachment to the government of Great Britain, or any other evil demon, are wishing and endeavoring to dissolve the union of these States, they are *wicked, impolitic, infatuated*.

What is the prospect before us, if these Eastern States should be separated from the Union? The New England States have thrived and prospered, by commerce and navigation; and their long established habit will lead them still to seek their livelihood by the same means. New England cannot relinquish this calling. This was well understood by the representatives of the Southern and Western States in Congress, and to favor this part of the Union, and promote the general interest of the nation; and to protect commerce and navigation in particular, have been the great objects of the pursuit of our national government, and the occasion of the measures, which, for years past, they have pursued. It was, with a particular design to favor the commercial States, that the Embargo acts so offensive to many, were passed. Congress believed that it was a measure, more likely to succeed in defending our commercial rights, than any other they could devise. The Southern States suffered by it, in their private interest, equally with the Northern: But they, with becoming patriotism, consented to it for the benefit of the commercial sections of the Union. How unfounded and ungrateful, then, is the charge of being opposed to commerce, alleged against them, by some members of these Northern States; which charge is calculated to alienate the affections of the people from one another, and bring about a separation of the States!

When this measure was relinquished by the government, because it was so offensive to many, the nonimportation system was substituted. And *it* was opposed equally as the preceding measure had been, by the same party. Then Congress proceeded to declare war; for they were determined to protect our commerce, and the freedom of the ocean. Suffer not then yourselves to be so deceived and imposed upon, by the suggestion that the present administration is unfriendly to commerce, as to consent to a dissolution of the union of these States. Such a rash measure would be the ruin of these Eastern States, or at least the destruction of their commerce. If these Eastern States adhere to their Sister States, and support the union, their shipping

will be employed to transport to market the rich productions of the plantations of the Southern and Western States. But, if we, by separating, cause those States to become our enemies, can we expect to have our shipping employed by them? We shall be to them a foreign nation; and not always upon friendly terms.

Will England employ our shipping? Certainly they will not; for they have enough of their own. And the principal ground of all our differences with England is the great increase of our shipping, together with the enterprising spirit of our mercantile men.

If the United States support their union and their government, the important and interesting rights of our commercial men will be protected. England will be coerced to remove the embarrassments, which have obstructed our commerce. But these Eastern States, *alone*, will not be able to protect their rights. The Southern and Western States can have as good sale for the productions of their plantations, if carried in English ships, as if in American. The consequence, then, of separating these States would be, that England would have the carrying trade, and be the friend of the southern section of the Union; and the shipping of these Eastern States must be greatly diminished, and the remainder be controlled by English laws.

The New England States, if separated from the others, would assuredly be subjected by Great Britain; if not *really* to be her colony, to that which is almost tantamount; to be allowed no foreign trade, without her permit. From such an evil, and from such disgrace, good Lord deliver us!

It is the duty of a watchman, when he seeth evil coming, to give warning. Ezek. xxxii, 2; "When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head."

I am, in Divine Providence, set as a watchman upon this part of the wall of the spiritual Jerusalem. I feel it to be my duty to give warning, not only when I perceive my flock exposed to spiritual enemies; but also when in danger of great temporal evils. Indeed this consideration hath induced me to deliver the present discourse; though I have, heretofore, said but little, in this sacred desk, upon any political subject. But the present is an interesting crisis, therefore I cannot, consistently with faithfulness, keep silence. I do therefore solemnly warn all my hearers to consider the importance of obeying the laws of our national government, and living in peace among ourselves. *Republican* government is incompatible with mobs and insurrections. All evils, which can take place under a republican government, can, in a constitutional way, be removed and redressed. If evils arise from individuals, the law will defend and redress the injured;—if from any *law* of the nation, a new election of the National Legislature, will remove the evil.

To conclude, Let us strive to defend our rights and privileges; let us endeavor to preserve inviolate the union of the States, and to support our excellent constitution, the bulwark of our civil and religious liberty. Yet, upon this occasion, and in this connexion, let me call your attention to a subject, unspeakably more important. These privileges, of which I have been speaking, are very valuable, as they respect a nation, which may exist through many generations; but as they respect us, as *individuals*, their importance is comparatively small. We cannot live to enjoy them, but for a short time. This life soon passeth away. And we are probationers for a future and eternal state. Let us then, above all things, see to it that we secure the friendship of God, be prepared to meet our final Judge, and enter into everlasting peace. Amen.

