REFORMATION
AND
DESOULATION:
OR,
A Sermon tending to the Discovery of
the Symptoms of a People to whom God
will by no means be reconciled.
Preached to the Honourable House of Com-
mons at their late (O'Emne Fast,
Decemb. 22. 1641.

By Stephen Marshall B. D. Minister of Finch-
field in Essex.

Published by order of that House.

Zeph. 2. 1, 2.
Gather your selves together, yea gather together O Nation
not desired, before the decree bring forth.

LONDON,
Printed for Samuel Gellibrand, at
the Brazen Serpent in Pauls Church-
yard, 1642.
To the Honourable House of Commons, now assembled in Parliament.

I humbly undertake this Honourable Assembly to require my service in preaching at the late solemn and religious afflicting your soules before the Lord, to which not only my duty but experience of your former acceptance of my endeavours, made me yeeld a ready obedience. But although I knew your goodnesse would beare with that weakness which would be discovered in speaking to so grave and judicious an auditory, yet could I not expect to receive so large a testimony, not only of your acceptation, but thanks, as I and my Colleague have done, much lesse that you should so expressly sent to have them publishe, because now what blame shall be cast upon my insufficiency in handling and prosecuting such a subject, must in some sort reflect upon your selves. For my selfe I answer all objections against my sending them abroad, with this, that they are yours, and it is fit for me to yeeld unto your disposing of them.

For the maine lesson handled, the Lord grant that our seeking him while he may be found, may prevent us from being a further prooue of it to other Nations, and succeeding generations.

And to this end, the same Lord guide and bleue us, 417410
The Epistle Dedicatory.

...us, and reward into your own bosomes, and your posterities, all the many, long, and unweared labours which you have undergone, and still continue in for the glory of his name, the reformation of his Church, the honour of his Majesty, the peace and prosperity of the whole Realme. This is so generally desired and sought for at God's hands, that I hope the God who heareth prayers, will not leave the happiness imperfect, which he seems to have prepared by your means, nor deprive us of the good which you are working. To his wisedome, protection, mercy, and grace, he leaves you, who is your daily Remembrancer at the Throne of Grace,

STEPHEN MARSHALL.
A SERMON PREACHED
at the late Fast, before the Commons
House of PARLIAMENT.

2 KINGS 23. 26. Read also Ver. 25.
And like unto him (that is, King Josiah) there was no King
before him that turned to the Lord with all the heart, and
with all his soul, and with all his might according to all
the Law of Moses; neither afterwards arose any like
unto him.
Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness
of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled
against Judah, because of all the provocations that Man-
assiah had provoked him with all.

His King Josiah (Right Honourable and beloved) may most truly be
counted, not only one of the Wor-
thies of the world, but also one of
the worlds wonders: There is hardly
any thing recorded of him but what
is wonderfull, his very birth was
wonderfull, he being prophesied of by name about three
hundred and fifty yeares before hee was borne: And
therein fore-promis'd to doe those great things which he effect'd against Idolaters, and the reliques of Idolatry. And it was wonderfull to think in what a desperate condition, and time of the Church he was born, in the darkest midnight of apostasie, when the ten Tribes were carried away captive, and Judah and Benjamin onely left, and they (as farre as the eye of man could see) wholly and generally fallen from the Lord their God to all manner of Idols and Idolatries; when the very Temple of God was made a denne of Idols; nay, his Altar the onely Altar of Israel destroyed, to make room for Altars erected to Idols: When the true Church had hardly any visible being upon the face of the earth; yea, I am perswaded that in the darkest times of Antichristianity, the true Church of Christ was never more invisible; then it was about that time when Josiah was born. And it was another wonder, that in such a strong faction as Idolatry then had, that any could possibly so prevaile in the Court as to give such education to the young Prince: Nor is it lesse wonderfull that by that time he was but sixteen yeares old, hee stood out a perfect godly man, undertaking the cause of God, and the reformation of Religion, and that with such a perfect heart to make the most compleat and absolute reformation of the Church that ever was wrought by any mortall man since God had a Church on earth. But the success of his labours seems to me the most wonderfull of all the rest, whether you look upon the success it had with the people, or the success it had with God.

The success with the people was this, that although at Jo'siah's first appearing as a right Orient, and illustrious Starre in a dark night, there was hardly any visible wor-

ship or worshipper to be found; yet he carried all before him like a torrent, and walked like a man of fire, (as his name signifies the fire of the Lord,) and brought the whole Nation so about, that there was scarce ever such a Covenant made as he procured, and that not by a prevailing party, but the universality of his Kingdom joined with him in it, and continued in it, and held close to it all the time that Josiah lived in the world. 1 Chr. 24:31, 32, 33.

This was the successse that hee found among the people.

But now the successse that all this found with God is yet more wonderful, and this my Text will tell you of, viz. That notwithstanding such a rare man was thus wonderfully stirred up, thus miraculously carried on with such a perfect heart, with such an unanimous consent of his people, to set upon the work of reforming Religion; and did it so as never mortal man did the like before, nor any arose afterward like unto him; yet notwithstanding all this the Lord turned not away from the fierceness of his great wrath, etc.

And so now you see my Text is a description of the altogether hopelesse and helpless condition of the Church of the Jews; though there was a Physician risen up who had found out the most precious balm that ever was, and faithfully applied it, yet the hurt of Gods people could receive no cure, but they must die for it.

And this may be reduced to these two heads.

First, you have their miserable and forlorn estate in these words, (Notwithstanding the Lord turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath which was kindled against Judah.)

Secondly, you have the cause of all this, what it was that
that made God irreconcilably and inexorably set against them in these words: Because of all the provocations wherewith Manasses had provoked him, though he were dead between thirty and forty years before Josiah ended his days, yet his provocations were the cause that God would never be reconciled to his people, though he was reconciled to Manasses person before he dyed. I purpose not any exact or large handling of this Text, nor is it possible to be done in one Sermon: I shall only cull out such things as are most intended by the holy Ghost, and most suitable to the occasion of our meeting.

And first, let us in a few words consider it in relation to the former Verse, and secondly, as it lies in itself. As it stands in relation to the former description made of Josiah, and the high praises which God there bestows upon him, I thence observe, That when God raises up any excellent instruments to appear in his cause, they are most graciously accepted with him, though their endeavours should come to nothing: There shall be glory, and honour, and immortality, and eternall life to themselves, though there be indignation, and wrath, tribulation, anguish and woe, upon the people whom they would willingly doe good unto. This you see plainly in this Text, Josiah sets up a building which was instantly thrown down, stick and stone, yet never man received better wages and greater reward than hee did. God hath raised up many instruments to do him service who have had admirable success in their way. Moses brought Gods people out of the bondage of Egypt, carried them through a desolate, wastefull, howling wilderness, and that miraculously for forty yeares together: Joshua gave them the possession.
possession of the promised land, and left them in it in peace. David subdued all their enemies about them un-til they were all put under the soles of their feet, leaving them neither adversary nor evil occurrent. Solomon built God's Temple, and established the Church in the purity of God's Worship and Ordinances, and the Common-wealth with admirable peace and prosperity; yet, not any of these more magnified by the Lord than Josiah, whose work came to nothing. This is my first obser-vation; and it hath these two branches, first it im-pies that the endeavours of rare Instruments may come to nothing, that men may be stirred up with admirable spirits to attempt great things for God, and yet their work miscarry.

Secondly, that though their work come to nothing, yet themselves shall be highly magnified with the Lord.

I could easily give abundant testimonies and in-stances of such whom God hath raised up with extra-ordinary spirits; men that we might think had been fit to carry the world before them, who have effected little, or nothing: Elias for one, a man (as it were) made of fire, who at one time called a Parliament of the King, and all the Heads of Israel together, convinced them of their halting between God and Baal, and wrought so at the present, that all the people cried out the Lord is God, and seemed to have their hearts brought back again to the Lord their God; and likewise that eight hundred Idolatrous Priests and false Prophets were put to the sword, yet the very next day, he was faine to run away to save his life, undertaking a journey of forty dayes to keep himselfe from the fury of Iezabel. Ieremy was another rare man, one of the most zealous Instruments that
that ever God employed, in so much that he said of himselfe that he was a man of contention to all the earth, and Gods word was in him like fire in his bones which he could not keep in; yet this man in his almost forty years preaching, could neither prevail with King nor Princes, Prophets, Priests, nor People, all grew worse and worse, and himselfe in the end was carried away by a rebellious company into that accursed land of Egypt, and there died.

And it hath been often observed, that the Lord hath seene it fit for reasons best known to himselfe, to let a-bundance of the Worthies whom hee hath employed even (so far as men could judge) to perish in the work he hath set them about.

But secondly, what ever their successe hath been amongst men, they have been never a whit lesse regarded, or rewarded by the Lord; for this the Scripture is plain, 

*Esai 49. 5*. There the Prophet in Christ's name, and in his own name, and in the name of all Gods instruments, concludes, *That though they spend their strength for nought, and in vain; yet surely their work is with the Lord; and though the people be not gathered, yet shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord, and their God will be their strength.* And Paul saith, *2 Cor. 2. 13*. *We are a sweet favour to God in them that perish, as well as in them that are saved.*

And there is plain reason for it, because sincere endeavours to doe Gods service is our whole work, but the successe of these endeavours is Gods work. Now the Lord hath tied himselfe in his covenant to reward every man according to his own work, and not according to the work of another: God never required at the hands of
of any Minister to save soules, or at the hand of any Magistrate to preserve a Nation, of any Husbandman to produce a crop out of the ground, &c. this belongs only to himselfe; he only requires at their hands to bee his servants, to obey his will; wherein if they be faithful, they shall not misse of their reward. God compares Kings and Princes, and other of his servants, to nursing fathers, and nursing mothers: Now you that are persons of quality, if you put forth a childe to nurse, and can have perfect information that the nurse loves, attends, suckles your childe, and performs all the duties belonging to a nursing mother; this nurse, I say, is by you esteemed and rewarded, whether the childe live or die: yea, it may be the more when the childe dies, because you see her afflicted in losing your childe which she would gladly have enjoyed.

I doe but name this, you are wise to apply it to your selves, you (Right honourable and beloved) are employed in great services; God hath raised you up to attempt glorious things for his name, for the purging of his house, and the establishing of this great people in the peace of the Gospel: how farre God will use any of you, I cannot tell; and how farre this unworthy Nation will acknowledge your indefatigable paines, I cannot tell; as yet you have the prayers and blessings of all sorts of people, high and low, rich and poore, that wish well to Sion. But however goe on, yee Worthies of the Lord, with sincere hearts to doe what God requires at your hands; and whether this Nation bee gathered or not, you shall bee glorious in the eyes of God, and the Lord will be your strength. Iosiah you see had the greatest commendation of all others, notwithstanding.
standing the Lord turned not from his fierce wrath: and this is all I have to say from the connexion of the words, that God magnified Iosiah, though his work came to nothing.

Now let us consider them in themselves, where I shall not need before so grave and intelligent Assembly, to waste the time in analysing or giving the grammatical interpretation of so plaine and easie a Text, I shall only take up three doctrinal observations (which you will see to lie clearly in the words) and handle them as the Lord shall please to enable me, and the time permit; whereof the first is,

Doc. 1. That God's wrath is a most fearfull and dreadfull thing when it is once thoroughly kindled.

Doc. 2. The second and maine doctrine is, That the sins of a Church and people may come to that heighth, and God's wrath may be kindled to that heat, notwithstanding their reformation, God will inexorably go on to a desolation. Notwithstanding all that Iosiah did, the Lord turned not from his fierce wrath.

Doc. 3. The third is, this being done for Manasseh's provocations, I observe, That the sins of one generation may be the ground and cause of the destruction and ruine of the succeeding generation. The abominations that Manasseh committed and commanded in his time, were the cause why God was unappeasably bent to the destruction of the generation that lived after him.

I begin with the first, That the wrath of God, when it is greatly kindled, is extreme fierce; or it is a most dreadfull thing to be seen under God's wrath, when it is once kindled. Mark how the words here are eg'd, how wonderfully emphaticall, how dreadfully expressed.
God turned not from the fierceness of his great wrath, wherewith his anger was kindled. David saith, if his wrath be kindled but a little, blessed are they that trust in him, implying their misery that be under it; but when there is the fierceness of his great wrath, they are miserable indeed who are under that.

In clearing of this, I shall first briefly discourse two or three questions, and then endeavour (as the Lord shall help me) to set it home to you in an application.

What the wrath of God is? what is the wrath of God, of which the Scripture speaks so often, and such dreadful things?

In men we use to say, that anger or wrath is perturbation concitati animi, the perturbation of a troubled spirit; but in God it is tranquilla constitutio justi supplicii, a calm and quiet appointment of just punishment. Plainly, wrath or anger in God is never attributed to him, in regard of any troublesome passion, or affection, but only in respect of the effect. I say, that wrath or anger is attributed to God, not secundum perturbationis affectum, but secundum ulionis effectum. In a word then, God's wrath is nothing but his revenging justice, which justice of God, as it simply burns against sinne, the Scripture calls his anger: when it doth more fiercely excandesce, or sparkle out, it is called his wrath: the same justice, when it pronounced sentence, is called his judgement; when it is brought into execution, it is called his vengeance: so that wrath, anger, judgement, and vengeance in God are all one: God's wrath is his revenging justice, and when I say, his wrath (when greatly kindled) is exceeding fierce, I mean it is a dreadful, horrid, and fearefull thing to fall under
under the dint of God's revenging justice.

How may the fierceness of God's wrath appeare?

I answer briefly, it is impossible for any tongue to set it forth. Moses tells us, no man knowes the power of God's wrath: God is not easily provoked, hee is flow to wrath: his wrath is as a great Bell long raising, but when it is once up, makes such a dreadfull sound, as no tongue can express. Many a poore soule feeleth a great deale of it, whole Nations have laine under it; but never was any creature able to say what the power of God's fierce wrath is. But if you will give your reverent attention one quarter of an houre, I shall (God willing) out of the holy Scriptures open something, which may in some degree make you conceive, how fearfull the wrath of God is, when it is once kindled. And doe not thinke that I shall speake of what concerns strangers, and not your selves; for I greatly feare, that before we part, it will be too evident, that this fierce wrath is kindled against some of our owne soules who are here present. Indeed your calling and meeting this day for humiliation, fasting, and prayer, seemes to tell all the world, that you beleevfe that God's wrath is kindled; and therefore being kindled, it is fit you should know what kinde of flame it is.

First, Consider by what dreadfull comparisons the holy Ghost useth to set out the fierceness of God's wrath. As the roaring of a Lyon: the Lyon hath roared, who will not tremble? the Lord hath uttered his voice, who will not fear? To a terrible earth quake, that makes the foundation of the hills to quake and tremble. But most usually it is set out by devouring fire, the most terrible of all. the creatures which God's hand hath made:
made: and mark what kind of fire it is: Sometimes it is compared to a shower of fire; God raines downe upon the wicked fire and brimstone and horrible tempest: raining downe of snares, and fire, and brimstone, is a horrible tempest indeed. If any mortall man had flood with Abraham, and scene the Lord raining downe flakes of fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, hee would have thought it an horrible tempest. Yea it is compared to a lake or river of fire, Esai. 30. ult. The breath of the Lord (speaking of Tophet) like a river of fire and brimstone kindles it. Imagine the anger of the Lord thus set out, as if from Gods nostrils, and out of his mouth should come huge lakes or floods of fire and brimstone, streaming out upon the people with whom hee is angry: What dreadfull things are these? Yet further, Gods wrath is set out to bee such a fire as is altogether irresistible; so that the poore creatures on whom it falls, cannot possibly stand before it: and therefore usually, when God is said to arise in wrath and fury, the people, that bee the vessels of this wrath, are said to bee wax, and firre, and stubble, dry leaves, and rotten hedges; and what are these to stand before huge stormes and floods, lakes of fire and brimstone?

And as it is irresistible, so it is intolerable, which is usually set out by weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

And lastly, Such a fire, when once throughly kindled, can never be quenched. There bee two expressions (among many others) in the Scripture, which bee very dreadfull, to this purpose: The one is Deuter. 32. 26. Where the Lord saith, that a fire is kindled in his anger; and mark what a fire it is, it shall burne to the lowest hell,
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The fierceness of God's wrath shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the Mountains. Such a fire as when once kindled burns up Mountains, earth, and world, and all, and never rests till it abide in hell, where there is no bottom, and there it burns for ever. The other is in Nahum 1, where God's fury and fierce anger is compared to fire which throws down rocks, licks up the sea, burns up the forests, melts and burns the earth and world, and all that dwells therein. Certainly, that must needs be a dreadful and horrid thing which the Spirit of God thus describes.

Secondly, Consider some of the effects of God's wrath, and then you will conceive in some measure what it is. The throwing of many millions of Angels out of heaven into the lowest hell, was nothing but the effect of God's wrath. The opening the flood-gate of all sin and misery upon all mankind, was nothing but the effect of God's wrath. The deluge that over-whelmed all the world, all the plagues of Egypt, burning of Sodom, the earths opening and swallowing up Korah and his company, all the famine, pestilence, blood, that ever the world lay under, are but so many effects of God's wrath. Nay, the dreadful appearance at the last day, when the Potentates and Princes of the world will be humble Suiters to the hills and mountains to fall on them, will bee nothing but an effect of the Lords comming in wrath, to render vengeance to his enemies. Yea, to be thrown to all eternity into the pit of hell; into utter darkness, into the fire that never is quenched, and among worms that shall never cease gnawing, all these are nothing but to be under the wrath of God. But above all these, and if ten thousand more could be named, that
before the Commons House of Parliament.

that one effect of it, in the Lords pouring out his vial of his revenging justice upon the body and soul of our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, is most able to inform us, how great and fierce the wrath of God is: that when he had but one Son who was his fellow (as the Prophet faith, Awake sword, and smite the man that is my fellow;) yet this revenging justice being poured out upon him, made him (who in his person was no other than God himself, yet in his humane nature) when this cup was put into his hand, yea the very first taste of it, made him sweat drops of blood trickling down to the ground, in a cold winters night; and when he had drunk it off, it made him cry out in the anguish of his soul, My God, My God, why hast thou forsoaken me? These effects may helpe us to conceive what a dreadfull thing it is to wrestle with the wrath of God.

But thirdly, Were I able to open the thing itself, and let you see it in the causes, you would instantly conclude, that it is beyond all apprehension. Conceive it thus, The revenging justice of God is God's opposing himself against the creature; When God takes his creature into his hand, and by his almighty power upholds the being of it, that it may feel what the Lord Jehovah can doe upon it, and against it; This no living creature can conceive. When God hath only hid himself from his dearest friends, this very hiding of himself hath been so dreadfull, that it hath made them goe roaring all the day long, dried up their moisture, made their lives uncomfortable, and a burden to themselves, turned all other comforts into gall and worm-wood. Now if onely an Eclipse of his loving countenance bee thus intolerable, what is it for God to fall upon a creature

From the cause of it
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Ques. 3. What is the consequence of God's wrath?

The consequence of God's wrath is that when a poor worm must not only stand under the weight of a huge rock falling upon it, but of an almighty God. You that have large thoughts may now easily conceive what a fearful thing the wrath of God is.

The third Question is: Against whom is this wrath of God thus kindled?

1 Answer: First, God's wrath may be kindled mildly and gently against his own dear children, when they walk not faithfully in his Covenant, when they lay aside their filial obedience, when they give occasion to his enemies to blaspheme his Name, though he will not suffer all his indignation to arise, yet his fatherly displeasure may be kindled against them. And even this fatherly wrath, this gentle wrath, if it be not a contradiction to call it so, these small drops of his displeasure, are more unsupportable to them than all the miseries of the world: Yea, they could more willingly submit to the torments in hell (provided that God's countenance did but shine upon them) than to undergo that which this wrath of God sometimes distills upon them: And yet all this while, we may truly lay of them, they are children under wrath, but not the children of wrath, not the people of his wrath, not the vessels of his wrath.

But if you will know, Secondly, What are the people against whom God hath indignation for ever? the Scripture tells you in this expression ordinarily, they are the children of Belial; so they are usually called in the New Testament; that is, such as will not bear God's yoke; master-less children, yoke-less children. And in the New Testament, they are called children of disobedience.
disobedience; as the Apostle, For which things take the wrath of God commeth on the children of disobedience.

Now who these children of Belial, and of disobedience are, I must a little explaine to you, and then the Application will bee easie. I say therefore that these children that will not carry the yoke, are, First, all unbelievers. I doe not meane Negative unbelievers, that is, those that doe not beleve in Christ, because they never heard of him; but Positive unbelievers, who have had the glorious light of the Gospel shinning to them, to whom the Lord Jesus hath been freely offered, as a Saviour to deliver them from wrath to come; and yet they refuse to come in, and to accept of him, as hee offers himselfe in his Gospel; because they do not like to take him upon such hard termes: you may be sure the wrath of God rests upon these men. Tune but to John 3. ult. HEE that beleeves in Christ shall be saved, hee that beleeves not is a damned man: and how? the wrath of God abides on him. Mark that expression, abides on him: The wrath of God takes up, as it were, his habitation in an unbeliever. So that what Gods grace sometimes saide of Solomons Temple, Here will I dwell, for I have a delight in it: So the wrath of God seemes to say of an unbeliever, Here I will dwell, here I will abide for ever.

Secondly, The children of disobedience and sons of Belial, are such, whose lives and conversations are contrary to the rules of the Gospel; who as they will not take Christ to be their portion by faith, so they will not take Christs word in the Gospel to be their guide; but they will live indeed without all yoke, doing what is good in their owne eyes; these are the sons of Belial. You may see a notable description of them in the prophesie of Zacharie, ch. 7. v. 11; where the wilfull disobedience,
obedience, obstinate stubbornness and intractableness, is expressed by divers similitudes, all tending to the same purpose. They refuse to hearken to God's counsel, they pulled away the shoulder, as an Ox or Bullock that shrinks back from the yoke, or as one that should carry a burthen, pulls away his shoulder, when he should take it, and lets it fall: so these deal with the easy yoke, and the light burthen of God's commandments. Yea, they make their hearts as an Adamant Stone; there is in them a stiffe and willfull resolution to sin, whereby their hearts are as intractable to any goodness, as the hardest sort of stones, Flints, or Diamonds are to be wrought by the toole into any fashion we desire: when you have said all you can against their wantonness, uncleanness, prophaneness, pride, covetousness, &c. you prevail no more than when an hammer strikes upon an anvil: Their hearts can easily reject all, yee cannot beat a splinter off from them: then immediately it followes in the next verse, Therefore there came a great wrath from the Lord of Hostes. These are the sons of Belial, these are the vessels of God's wrath.

Now to apply this to our selves, it might first teach all who are reconciled to God by Christ, what infinite cause they have every day of their life, to blesse that grace of God which hath not appointed them unto wrath, but by the blood of his own Sonne, hath delivered them from wrath to come, and provided for them everlasting glory and happiness.

Secondly, it may likewise teach all that feare God never to envie the prosperous estate of any child of Belial, though waters of a full cup be wrung out for them, though they swim in wealth and honour, and pomp in this world, and have all their hearts can de-
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fire, and in the mean time account it their glory that they carry not the Lords yoke, never envie their lot; If any here knew of half a score good fellows set at a banquet of wine, furnished with all the helps of mirth and jollity, if he knew withall, that the shot to be payd for it, must be every mans heart blood, he would be loath to be one of the pack with them. I confesse it is hard not to be troubled at the prosperity of wicked men: even David and Jeremy found it a hard thing not to envie their prosperity. But stay till the shot be paid, enquire how able they will be to undergo the wrath of God, enter into the Sanctuary, understand their end, and thy envy will be at an end, but these I intended not to insist upon.

There is one only proper use for the present occasion, and that is this; you are met this day together to fast and pray and mourn before the Lord; and (as I touched before) hereby you acknowledge that the wrath of God is kindled, and that your selves are called to take a course to turn away Gods wrath: and I verily believe this is the very end you aymed at, in calling us the unworthy Ministers of Christ to your help this day, that wee might bee assistant to you in whatever might turn away the wrath of God from you. Now two things were at large pressed upon you in the morning, as well befitting the work of this day. The one was to rent, and break, and teare every one of your hearts in the sense of your sins, kindly and throughly to humble you in the sight of God. The other was to provoke you to a strong resolution to leave the waies of sin in time to come.

In which two things, humiliation and Reformation, stands the very life of unfained repentance, and the spiritual part of a Religious Fast; without which all our abstinence
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The fierceness of God's wrath.

In humiliation for sin, which hath kindled it.

ritence and sackcloth, and bodily exercises in watching, hearing &c. are mere abominations in the sight of God. I rejoice that you had these things set home in the morning, some of my work being thereby spared. But the bringing this lesson home, if God set it on to your hearts, may help to fasten the counsel given you in the morning, as a nail in a sure place.

I shall endeavour to further your humiliation and reformation from the meditation of the fearfulnesse and dreadfulnesse of the wrath of God.

I must therefore entreat you all, (Honourable and beloved) since you have vouchsafed to call for the labour of a poor man to help you, let me be as free with you, as if you were so many mean people: my duty this day is to do that which Jeremiah did: God calls him in a mourning time; and faith, go to the King and Queen, and say come ye down, sit in the dust, humble your selves.

So I say to you, come down, forget that any of you are Earles or Lords, Knights, or Gentlemen, lay for a while these thoughts aside; and give me leave to ask you two or three Questions, and be so faithfull to your own souls, as to think how you can answer them before the Lord. Are ye not children of Belial? (that is, the very thing which you must answer in your own bosome) that is, are there not amongst you such as refuse to carry the yoke of Christ? who will not take Christ to be your Saviour as he offers himself to you, in his Gospel? you will have him upon other terms than to make him your King, Prophet, and Priest; you would have him to deliver you from hell, but hee shall not be your Lord, so, as for you to resign up your selves to him, as a dutifull wife, resignes up herself to her husband. And for your conversations, you will doe what
what is good in your own sight; if you have a mind to swear, you will swear, you will lie, be unclean, dissemble; these things please you well and you will do them. Now hear what I say, what thy outward quality or condition is, I know not; but this I know, persons of your quality do not use much to be scared; men are afraid to speak any thing that may make you tremble: but you must be scared, or we shall do no good to you. You are now called to have your hearts rent, I have that to say, might rent the very cawle of your heart, even this, oh thou miserable and wretched worme! great is the wrath of God that is kindled against thee. This terrible Lyon roares against thee, a dreadful fire is kindled, a horrible tempest is ready to fall upon thy head, showers and floods of fire and brimstone are even ready to be poured out upon thee: how art thou able to live with everlasting burnings? how wilt thou dwell with devouring fire? Thou that art crushed before a moth, how can thy heart endure, or thy hands be strong in the day that God shall deal with thee? Thou that darst not think of lying one day upon a wrack, that canst not endure for two or three dayes to be wrung with the chobick, that art not able to beare the thoughts of lying under the tearing of a quartane Ague from Michaelmas to Easter; how wilt thou be able to stand under the fall of such a huge rock as the wrath of the Almighty God, which every moment is ready to break down upon thee? How wilt thou doe when these rivers of fire and brimstone shall be poured out upon thee? and thou no more able to stand before them, then a few dry leaves are able to resift the huge breaking in of many waters? Oh beloved, would you with due care apply these things to your own hearts, and present them to your soules as things present,
The fierceness of God's wrath

how would they bring down the most stubborn spirit!
how would they help to break the hardest of your hearts
before the Lord!

But there are two things which keep most people
from being affected with them. The first is, these things
are looked upon as things afar off: Now it is a rule in
Opticks, that things farre off, though they be marvellous
great, yet seeme very little: a Starre that is bigger than all
the earth, seemes no bigger than a candle being many
miles distant from us. So while men look at the wrath
of God, as they did at the Prophets vision, the vision
that he sees is for many days to come, and he prophesies of
the times that are farre off: and put the evill day from
them: All these threatenings are but light matters. Secon-
dedly, it fares with most men in this point, as with some
men that have faire wives; though their businesse
lie within doores, yet they have no heart to bee there
for feare of chiding: So though it be the most necessa-
ry work to think of these things; yet because their
unquiet consciences upon the least serious meditation,
are ready to gnaw and teare them, and make them sleep
uncomfortably, they labour to drive off the thought of
this thing as farre as they can; and will not think of
God's wrath due to sinne, from yeares end to yeares end.
Whereas if men would bring it in remembrance, and
keep their eyes open to behold it, as a thing which una-
voyardly will come upon them, how admirably would it
work upon mens hearts!

To this end, let me tell you a story which I have of-
ten read to this purpose. It is reported of a certaine
Christian King of Hungary, who being on a time mar-
vellous sad and heavie, his brother that was a resolute
Courtier would needs know what he ailed: Oh brother,

(Thaith
(faith he,) I have been a great sinner against God, and I know not how I shall appear before him, when he comes to judgment: These are (said his brother) melancholy thoughts, and makes a toy of them, as Gallants use to doe: The King replyes nothing for the present; but the custome of that Countrey was, that if the Executioner of justice came and founded a Trumpet before any mans doore, the man was presently to be led to execution: the King in the dead time of the night sends his Deaths-man, and causeth him to sound his Trumpet before his brothers doore, who hearing and seeing the messenger of death, springs in pale and trembling into his brothers presence; and beseeches the King to let him know wherein he had offended. O Brother, replyes the King, thou hast loved me, and never offended me, and is the sight of my Executioner so dreadfull to thee; and shall not I, so great a sinner, fear to be brought to judgment before Jesus Christ? If we would thus suppose with Hierom, that we heard this Trumpet sounding, Arise ye dead, and come to judgement, it would work to the purpose: O set your selves therefore in Gods presence, and behold the Lord shaking his lap, (as Nehemiah when he shook his lap, and said, so God shake out every man from his house:) Thus will I make in to eternall destruction all the children of Belial, and then evidence bee brought in against thee, (how great soever thou art amongst men) that thou haft a huge pile of sin heaped up against God, and still haft gone on to adde drunkennesse to thirst, opposing God, his wayes, and his cause, refusing grace offered freely, not willing to bee at peace with God, while thou haft any meanes to fight against him: when all these things shall be laid open before thee, and (as thy just reward)
God strike thee a full blow, and sink thee to the bottom of hell, where thou shalt wish that thou hadst been a toad, or (as one in desperation sometimes wished) that thou mightst live there a thousand years, so thou mightst have any hope in the end, that the wrath of God might cease towards thee. Would not these things then work upon thee? Couldst thou then pass such a day as this, without trembling? Couldst thou be before the Lord, and not have thy heart rent and torn? Be persuaded therefore once more to bring it home to thy own soul, and say, as he said of his green fig, this grew in Carthage yesterday: This wrath, this sea of misery may break in upon me the next moment: I am yet joviall and merry, but God's vengeance with woollen feet followes me close at the back, and will overtake me; if I cannot mourn at the hearing of wrath, I must burn at the feeling of it. The good Lord melt our hearts with the feare of these things, lest we be swallowed up in them.

And then for the second part, for your Reformation, would the Lord make this day, a day of Reformation to this honourable Assembly, what glorious things would be done by you! Now what more effectuall motive, what Furies whip would more restraine from the practis of sinne, or more drive to seek a shelter under the wing of Christ, and to get into the safe condition of the servants of God, than the beholding of this devouring fire, these everlastings burnings, which sinfull men will never bee able to abide? I know such is the depravation of mans nature, that if there were any possibility of avoiding Gods wrath without leaving their sinnes, many men would resolve with that wicked Cardinal not to leave their part in Paris, for their part in Paradise:

And
And with that Noble man (which Luther speaks of who professed, that if this life of going from whorehouse to whore-house might last ever, he would not envie any mans going to heaven. But this will not last; there is great wrath prepared for the workers of iniquity. And therefore my humble request is, that if any of you finde your hearts unwilling to submit to that godly counsell, given you in the morning, of turning to God, doe but think what your finnes, which you prize so much, will cost you. They say the Pope hath a book called Taxa camere Apostolica, where in men may know the rate of any finne; upon what termes a man may keep a whore, be a Sodomite, or murder his father, &c. But here is a rate-book, where any of you may know what a beloved finne will cost you; not a farthing token lesse, than to lie under the devouring fire of God's wrath to all eternity. Porters will try their burthens upon their shoulders before they engage themselves to carry it, doe thou so. It is reported of Master Bilney when he thought he should be burnt, he would put his finger into the candle to see how he could endure burning: doe thou so? goe often alone and say, here is a finne marvellous pleasant, such a sin gains me thus much every yeare, but there is wrath to come: And therefore as Elihu said to Job, Because there is wrath, beware lest he take thee away with his stroke; a great ransom cannot deliver thee, hee will not esteem thy riches, no not gold, nor all the forces of strength.

Fourthly and lastly, there is one use peculiar to you that be our Noble Senators, the Lords and Commons gathered in Parliament: wee know your care is for our good, but this I humbly propound to you, you will never
never doe us good, if God's wrath be not taken away from us: were you so many Gamaliels, so many Hemans, so many Solomons, so many Angels gathered together, and all of one heart to study Englands good, you can doe England no good, if God's wrath, which is kindled against it, be not pacified. And therefore let your great study be both to finde out what hath kindled God's wrath against us, and what may remove it from us: of which I shall bee able to give you further knowledge in the next and maine lesson to which now I passe, viz.

That the sins of a people may come to that passe, and God's wrath may bee kindled to that heighth, that notwithstanding their Reformation, God will goe on to a desolation. In handling whereof I shall (the Lord helping mee) discusse these three things. First, I shall open the thing in these, clear the conclusion, and see if I can make you understand it. Secondly, enquire in hypothesis, whether it concerne us or not; whether our Nation, Church, or State, may bee thought to bee in any danger of it. And thirdly, I shall endeavour to make some uses which may be fitting for such an Assembly as this is.

For clearing the conclusion, I shall endeavour these three things. First, I will demonstrate the truth of it. Secondly, I will enquire whether the signes of it may be known, and how farre they may be known: Whether the Lord hath left any foot-steps or rules for us to prognosticate by, and so to judge when a people is come to that passe: And if so, then, Thirdly, what those tokens are: And I shall endeavour to speak plainly and freely of them all.
For the truth of it, were there no other Instance to be found in any other Story, but this in my Text, it were sufficient to prove that such a thing may bee. That which hath been already, may bee so againe. **Isaiah**, we see, wrought such a **Reformation**, that the whole **Kingdome** did, all his days, follow the Lord; and notwithstanding all this, God turned not from his fierce wrath, but went on to destroy them. The Lord threatens else-where that he would doe it, **Zeph. 2. 1, 2.** Gather yourselves together before the decree bring forth, before the day passe as the chaffe, before the fierce anger of the Lord come upon you: As if he should have said, The decree is not yet come forth, but if once it bring forth, it will be too late for you to seek for mercy. There be other examples (though not so full as this) sufficient to prove this truth: As **Nineveh** for one: The Lord sent the Prophet **Jonah** to preach repentance or destruction to them; and you know it is said, The **King** laid aside his Crown, and called them all to repentance; and repent they did, and God saw their works, and for a while forbore that City, and yet the judgement of most Interpreters is, that within forty years after, the City was destroyed, even in the same age wherein the Reformation was made.

That Instance of the **Jews** is most remarkable, in our Saviour Christ's time: **John Baptist** came before him, and turned the hearts of the parents to the children, and the children to the parents; made ready a people prepared for the Lord; there went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region about Jordan, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins. And Christ had so many followers, that the Scribes and Pharisees said, **all the world went after him**; that is, the body of their Nation. And the Apostles converted so many, that they said to **Paul**, that **Acts 21. 20.**
there were many myriads, many ten thousands of Jews that believe, who are all zealous; yet notwithstanding, in that very age, wherein the Gospel wrought thus effectually among them, the wrath of God came upon that Nation to the utmost, & scattered them over all the world.

It is likewise recorded of the Romane Empire, which for a matter of six or seven hundred yeares had been a dreadful enemy to the Kingdom of the Lord; first against the Church of the Jews, and afterwards against the Christians (while it was unconverted;) in Constantinople the Empire turned to Christianity, and in the very first age of the Empire Christianity, came the desolation and dissolution of it. So that there is a truth in it, that God's wrath may be so far kindled, that he will accept of no atonement, but will inexorably proceed to desolation.

The second Question is, Whether this may be known; whether we may possibly find out any direction, whereby to judge of God's purpose of thus coming against a people. Ans. And for that, I confess, a great many men, especially such as are not willing to have any dangerous truth preached to them, doe think that all preaching and study, in such points as these, is of no more certainty, than the judgement of judiciall Astrology: Tell them of wrath to come, or desolation of Churches, or destruction of Common wealths; they look on such as shall tell them of these things, as upon a company of ignorant people, who will be of their Authors faith; or esteem them as proud men, who would be thought to have more acquaintance with God's secrets than their neighbours, and therefore they must adventure upon such high points; or at best, conceive them to be full of discontent, melancholy people, who look on every
every thing with black spectacles; but in the meantime themselves will never be persuaded, that any can give them rules of directions to judge in this kind: But you are wise: and if you please to take two or three places of Scripture into your serious thoughts, you will conclude quickly, that this is a point may be known: The one is Jer. 8. 7, where the Lord blames the stupidity of the people, that whereas the Storke in the heavens knows her appointed times; and the Turtle, and the Crane, and the Swallow observe the times of their coming; but his people would not know the judgements of the Lord: arguing them to be more silly and simple than the very birds and fowles, who could observe what seasons were fit or unfit for their staying or removing in such or such a Countrey; and Gods people remained ignorant of the seasons of Gods approaching judgements. Another place you shall find, Hos. 7. 9, where the Lord faith of Ephraim, that is, the ten Tribes, gray hairs are scattered here and there upon him, yet he knows it not: The meaning, plainly, is this: That as gray hairs are remembrance, and plain tokens of declining old age comming upon men: so there were symptoms and tokens of Ephraims ruine comming upon him, and yet hee would take no notice of it. Our blessed Saviour also in Mat. 16. v. 1, 2, 3. tells his hearers, that they could make Almanacks for weather, and discern the face of the skie, and yet could not discern the signes of the times, (implying that Prognostications might also be made, if men would study the right way) whereby they might know what God intends to doe with a people. So then, there is one step gained, that something may be know of Gods approaching judgements.
But that I may not deliver any thing but what you shall have a full suffrage for, I add in the next place, and confess, that because all seasons are in God's hands, and all people under his absolute prerogative; so that, if he please, he may destroy a Nation for one sinner; and againe, if he please, he can exercise so much mercy, that no sinner of a people can set any bounds or limits thereunto; nothing but his own holy will setting limits to his patience, long-suffering and mercy; and because also God doth always bear such a tender regard to his own children, that where ever they live, he doth often for their sakes (as it were) reverse his sentence of desolation. In regard of these things and some others which might be suggested, I think I may say, no mortal man can possibly determine when the precise time of this or that Nation's utter ruine is certainly come. What Christ said of the day of Judgement, may fitly bee applied here, the very day and hour of the last Judgement no man knows, but only the Father, and the Sonne, to whom it is revealed from the Father, and that also since his Resurrection; but yet there bee signes whereby we may know the approaching of that day: So wee may say of this, though wee cannot know the very time of a Nation's desolation; yet wee may know when the ruine of it comes neere at hand. And what learned men say of them, who have studied for the Philosophers stone, though they could never finde out the Elixar, yet in their search after it they have found out many excellent things, admirable and full for mankind: So in this search, if wee cannot determine that such a Nation will in-
fallibly bee ruined, yet wee may certainly finde such things as thereby to learne what to feare, what to expect, what to pray against, what to strive after, &c. And so consequently the handling of this question may bee exceedingly usefull to such an Assembly, as I am now called to speak to in the name of God.

This then is a second step that we may know such things as may make us feare desolation, and consequently labour to prevent it, or prepare for it.

Thirdly, the maine question is to enquire what are the Tokens, the gray haires, the flourishing of the Almond tree, whereby we may guess at mans going to his long home.

I answer, Politicians, and some Divines will tell you of the fatall period of Kingdoms, that they have their youth, their strength, and after a time their declination; and shew by abundance of experience, that States seldom continue above five or six hundred years without some fatall change: But wee must goe by a surer rule than this. It is not length of time, which makes God weary of shewing mercy; but, what Solomon faith of Kings, for the transgressions of a land many are the Princes thereof; so for the transgressions of a land, and the transgressions only, many are the ruins thereof. Now there is one rule which God hath alwayes proceeded by in the dissolution of Churches and Kingdomes ever since the beginning of the world, and that is this. That whenever the sinnes of any Church, Nation, City, Family, or Person (you may take it as large or as narrow as you will) are come to a full measure, then God infallibly brings ruine upon them. This is the rule which I shall...
I shall make plaine to you: God hath set severall vessels to limit the sinnes of all Nations, beyond which they shall not goe; as once God said to the waves of the Sea, Hither thou shalt goe, but here thy proud waves shall be stayed: So God hath said of the sinnes of Nations, Families, Persons: Thus farre I will forbear thee, but farther thy wickednesse shall not exceed; then comes thy end. Take four or five cleare evidences for it in the Scripture. First, that speech of God to Abraham: I will give thy posterity all this land, but not yet, because the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full: though they were Amorites, God would beare with them, till their iniquities were come to the full, and then he would spare them no longer. Another is Zachary 5. verse 6. The Prophet in a Vision saw an Ephah, a thing like a busheell; and moreover the Lord told him, this is the resemblance of the Ephah, throughout all the earth: as if God should have said, this is not only proper to this people, but this rule I go by throughout the whole world; and what was that? the Ephah is brought out, and into the Ephah is cast a Woman; this woman fat and filled the Ephah: then one brings a talent of lead for a cover to it, and that stops the mouth of it, and shuts the woman in; then come two women with the wind in their wings, and they take up the Ephah and carry it between heaven and earth, and place it in the land of Shinar or Babylon, there to build it an house, and to set it upon its own base. Now what is the meaning of all this? there is one word in the vision, which is a key to open this lock, viz. this is wickednesse: the meaning whereof is, That the Lord had brought the Jewes from the captivity of Babylon, where they had been
been seventy yeares: as soone as they came home, though they turned not to Idolatry, yet they proved stark naught. God sets them their Ephah, puts their iniquity into a vessel, and doth (as it were) say, Goe on, till yee have filled the Ephah; but as soone as that is full, I will clap a talent of lead in the mouth of it, I will take a course yee shall finne no longer in this land, but will scatter you into Mesopotamia, into the land of Shinar, and there bee as wicked as yee will. So you see when the measure is full, then vengeance comes.

Take another instance, in the first of Iames verse 15.

when lust hath conceived, it brings forth sinne; and sinne when it is finished, brings forth death; which is of the same interpretation with the former, and shewes us fins progresse in the rising, reigning, and ruine. First a man hath lust, a wicked corrupt heart that he brings into the world; every man comes into the world with a heart full of lust, now this lust brings forth iniquity; God leaves people to goe on in wickedness, if they be not such as he means to save; and when their sinne is perfected, it brings forth death; when it comes to the full fourty weeks, and hath gone the full time, then comes destruction. Take yet two instances more, both in the fourteenth of the Revelation verse 14, &c. in the Parables of the vintage, and of the harvest; when they were ripe, then ruine comes. Till then God useth to beare with people: smaller judgements often come before sinne is ripe, and are removed againe; but when once the measure is full, then God faith, as in Nahum, chap. 1. verse 6. Hee will make an utter and, affliction shall not rise up the second time; hee will
Now if by the way you desire to know why God defers so long and rather cuts not off wicked men sooner: I answer, it should suffice us, that it is his will to do it; but further he doth it, partly that they may be for exercise to his people to purge and humble them, as Asaph was his rod to whip his people, before the rod was burnt. And partly to declare his long-suffering, and patience, thereby to leave them without excuse if they prove incorrigible. Thirdly, this is for salvation to some, who in the mean time are to be gathered in: and this I take it, the Apostle means, 2 Pet. 3.9, when he saith, the Lord defers his coming to judgement, because the Nation of the Jewes is first to be gathered in. So that as the Angel said till Lot was plucked out of Sodom, so God hath some brands to snatch out of the fire, for whose sakes he defers the execution of vengeance against them, whose sins call for it. For these causes, and it may be others not known to us, but secret to himselfe, doth God deferre the full execution of his wrath till sinne be ripe.

But how may we judge when the sinnes of a people grow to the full? I answer (and but briefly, because I would not be burdensome to an attentive auditory; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak in the best:) to finde out sinnes fulness, foure things must come into consideration. First, what kinds of sinnes they are which are land-destroying sinnes. Secondly, the quantity of these sinnes. Thirdly, the aggravation of them. Fourthly, which is the upshot of all, the incorrigibleenesse of them.

For
First, the kinds of them, I meaneth thus, there was never any Church or Nation without sinne, but all sinnes are not Church-wafting sinnes, nor Land-destroying sins; but there are sins which are called abominations, such as make a land spue out the inhabitants: such as make God drive them out: And they are some against the first Table, some against the second Table. Against the first Table, first, the sin of Idolatry. Evenmore as Idols come in, God goes out: When there was an image of jealousy set up, God goes farre from his Sanctuary. God likes no such neighbours. When Ephraim offended in Baal, he dies for it: when the meane man bowes himselfe, and the great man humbles himselfe to stocks and stones, God will spare them no longer. When the glory due to Jehovah, is communicated to dumbe Idols, this God will bear at no peoples hand. And the reason is plain, this is as the marriage bed to God, this provokes his jealousy, which is his rage, then be will accept of no ransom: This therefore is the abomination that makes all desolation.

Secondly, the sins of prophaning, contemning, scorning and persecuting of Gods holy things, his holy day, his holy servants, I joyne all these sinnes together, because they come all from the same root, that is, malignancy against God: God himselfe is prophaned, slighted, contemned in all these. Thou hast despised my holy things, and prophaned my Sabbaths, therefore thou hast caused thy day to draw neere. God therefore would make Moab as Sodom, and the children of Ammon as Gomorrah, because they reviled his people; but there is one proosfe may serve in stead of an hundred,
2 Chron. 36. The Lord did a long time bear with them, but when once they came to that pass, they polluted his House, despised his Word, mocked his messengers, misused his Prophets, his wrath grew hot against them till there was no remedy: God could then bear them no longer, but utterly would destroy them. And it is our Country-man, Venerable Bedes observation, that when the old Britains grew to that heighth of sinne, as to cast odium in religiouis profesores, tanquam in adversarios, God prefently fent in the Saxons, who destroyed them all.

There are also some finnes against the second Table which greatly helpe to fill the measure of a people's iniquity: As first, such finnes as are destructive to humane societie, crueltie, blood, oppression, deceit, these were the finnes which brought the flood upon the world of the ungodly. These are the sinnes which the King of Nineveh saw would ruine him and his Kingdome.

Secondly, the fensual lusts of drunkenesse and whoredome; I joyn these finnes together, because they are usuallie joyned in Scripture; and forbidden in mens practice: And you shall clearly in the search of the Scripture finde them to be among the abominations which helpe to fill up the measure of a peoples sin, and prepares them for judgement. I have seen a horrible thing in the house of Israel (faith God, speaking of the finnes which made God hew them downe) there is the whoredome of Ephraim; whoredome and wine, and new wine take away their heart: This was one of the things that made God have controversie with the land to make it mourne, and to take them all away
way. I have not time to prosecute these things; you shall easily find that these are gray faces in any Nation where ever they are found.

Secondly, the quantity of these sinnes is very considerable, when they are universally, no Nation ever was without them, but when once they come to spread as a Gangrene over the whole body, then the measure quickly growes full: When all flesh had corrupted their ways, then the flood came rushing in: When from the crowne of the head, to the sole of the foot, the whole body was full of wounds, and bruises, and putrefied sores, then it was to no purpose for God to strike them any more with any hope of healing.

You shall finde in the 24. of Ezekiel, a notable description of Jerusalem's condition, when Nebuchadnezzar came to destroy them, the Prophet compares the City to a great pot, whereinto all the choice pieces were put to be boiled, the thigh and the shoulder; and all the choice bones, but they were all rotten flesh whose scumme would not boile out, meaning, that the Princes and Rulers, Prophets and Priests and People were all overspread with abominable wickednesse. So in the 22. of Ezekiel, all states are brought in, the Prophets devouring soules, the Priests violating the Law, prophaning holy things, Princes and Rulers oppressing, the people robbing, &c. then God poures out his indignation, and consumes them with the fire of his wrath.

But this must be understood with this caution, that when I say all, tis not to be understood as if God would spare a people untill the whole multitude grew wicked, and none remaining on his side:

F 2

God
God had seven thousand in Israel who were faithful to him in the worst time of Ahab's apostacy, but the meaning is, when the number of such as abstain from these abominations, is so small, that they are not considerable, to God, they are always considerable, but not always considerable as to the turning away of judgment, or to the preventing of ruin. Ten righteous men would have been considerable in Sodom for the sparing of it, when five would not. So the sum is, that when these abominations are generally spread, and very few in comparison abstaining from them, a people grows ripe apace for destruction.

3. The third thing considerable, is the aggravation of these sins, and therein I shall only give this one briefe rule, that in all places & countries, houses, families, or persons, the more mercy, light and means these sins are committed against, the sooner is the vessel of their iniquity come to the full. Amos 3.2. You onely have I knowne of all the Nations of the world, and therefore I will visite you for all your iniquities, Ezek 9. God begins at his sanctuary and with the antient men, who had stood longest before him. And Daniel makes this the reason why God brought a greater evil upon them than upon any other Nation, because no other Nation had enjoyed the like means to keep them from sinne, or to bring them to repentance. And in the 22. of Esay. The valley of vision had the greatest burden of wrath of all others; that is, the people of Israel, to whom God had sent all his Prophets from time to time. And there is great reason why sinses against light and covenants, mercies and Con-
before the Commons House of Parliament.

Conscience, should be most provoking: It is thus even amongst all ingenuous men, he that eateth my bread, (as thine David) hath lift up his heele against mee. 

Psal. 41, 9
if it had been a stranger, I could have borne it: Is 2 Sam. 16, 17.

This then is a plain case, that the more mercy a people injure against, the greater is their sin, and the sooner comes their judgement.

4. The last thing considerable to finde out the fulnesse of sinne, is the Incorrigibleness of it, and if the Lord grant that we can quit our selves of this, we shall yet doe well: by this Incorrigibleness, I meane, when the sinnes of a people are growne so great, that they are too strong for the mounds and banks which God hath set to keep them in compasse. Now God hath set Foure Boundaries for sinne, and when sin is growne too strong for all these, you may conclude that (reserving or excepting what God may doe in his absolute prerogative) if he goe by his wonted rules, that Nation is going to her long home.

First, God hath set Conscience and Shame to be boundaries among all people, to keep sin in compasse: Conscience to make them stand in awe of God: Shame to make them stand in feare of men. These two God hath set up (as his Officers and heraulds) in all mens hearts; and when once men can run into sin, as the horse into the battell, rejoicing to doe evil, proclaiming their sins as Sodom, not being ashamed and past all feeling, there is one bank broken downe, one Boundary plucked up.

Secondly, another bank that God hath set, is
the example, and conversation, and prayers of his owne people, whom he scatters here and there amongst men, and great is the power and force of their presence to keep sinne in compass, partly by the Majestie of the Image of God, shining in them, partly by their holy examples, partly by their wise and seasonable counsell, admonition, reprobations, partly by their prayers, whereby they bring downe restraining and constraining grace: Now when these are either taken away from a place by death, or driven away by persecution as Lot out of Sodom, or living amongst them, God takes off their edge to pray no longer, as Abraham for Sodom, or Jeremys for the Jews: There is a second Boundary pulled up.

The third is, that of Magistrates and Ministers, whom God hath invested with his owne authority, and put upon them some beames of his owne Majestie and Image, put his sword into their hands, and armes them with power to keep sin in, and beat it downe: The Magistrate having the sword of Justice, and thereby being made custos utriusque tabule; and Ministers having the sword of the Spirit, these two are strong Rampires, and Banks, they are the watches to hinder sinnes course, they are Phyistians to the hurts of Gods people, and when once the sins of a Land grow too strong for these, farewell all, you will soone heare the daies of their visitation are at hand. And this is done in three Cases.

First, when Magistrates and Ministers take sinnes part, and in stead of joyning with God against sin, they joyne with sin against God: as if the dogges should joyne with the wolves a-
against the sheep, and the shepherds.

Thus it was in Jeremiah's time, he found the people harder than a rock to be wrought upon, but he said, Surely these are poor and foolish, who know not the way of the Lord; I will get me to the great men, and I will speak to them, for they have knowne the way of the Lord, and the judgement of their God; but were they such, or did they so? marke what follows, these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bands, in stead of maintaining Gods yoke, and strengthening Gods hands, they broke them a pieces: and what followes, therefore a Lyon out of the forrest shall slay them, an evening wolfe shall spoil them, a Leopard shall watch over the cities, every one that goes out shall be borne in pieces. Thus it was likewise in Hosea's time, when the Prophet was a fool, and the spirituall man was mad, when the Princes would be drunk with bottles of wine, &c. Thus it was in Ezekiel's time (as was before touched) immediately before their desolation.

Secondly, when Magistrates or Ministers are daftly, when they are afraid of sin and sinners, and dare not appeare for God, when such men have God, Conscience, their office, the lawes, all on their side, and yet dare not appeare against Idolatry, prophaneness, violence, sensuality, as it showes the men to be of a base spirit, so it argues the sins of that place to be of great strength even fit for judgement. Thus it was in the 22. of Ezekiel, ver. 30. when all such were growne corrupt, sought for a man among them, that is some Phinehas, to stand in the gap, to make up the hedge, some zealous Ministers to
to stand up and mediate with God for them, and testify in their ministry against them, but I found none, and therefore I poured out my indignation upon them.

Thirdly, in case any Magistrates or Ministers doe appear on God's part, as Isaiah, Jeremiah and others did in these forlorn times, yet they prove too weak stakes, they are able to doe nothing; the inundation of wickedness beares them downe, and runs over their heads: In a word, when some Magistrates take part with sinne, others afraid of it, and the remainder, who are faithfull can prevail nothing, this Rampire is likewise overthrown.

4. There is but one more, which when it is likewise cast downe, destruction is at the very doore, and that is, God's lesser judgements: God sometimes keeps petty seisions, to prevent great Assizes, inferior executions, to prevent utter desolutions, which when they prevail nor, it is a certaine token of extreme wrath. Sometimes God afflicts neighbour Nations, destroying their Cities, that the rest might receive Instruction, and their dwelling not be cut off: As Judges will hang up a thieve upon a Gibbet, to kepe others from the gallowes, I have overthrown some of you (faith God) as Sodom, I have smitten you with blasting and mildew, I have sent among you the pestilence, yet ye have not turned to me, why should ye be smitten any more? You shall see this notably expressed in the 24. of Ezekiel, Where God compares Jerusalem to a pot and all the Inhabitants to flesh boilting in the pot, but all the boilting would not fetch out their scum, no
before the Commons House of Parliament.

no threatnings, no visitations, no inferiour Judgements could prevaile with them, but still their scum', their blood, their filthinesse and lewdnesse abode in them; mark then in the 13. v. what doome God gives of them, because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, I have tryed all meanes to doe thee good, and thou wilt not be reformed, thou shalt never be purged from thy filthinesse any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee, I the Lord have spoken it, and I will doe it. And that example in the sixth of Jeremy, is most remarkable, where God useth such a parable as this, the bellowes are burnt, v. 9. 30. the lead is melted in the fire, the founder works in vaine, for the wicked are not taken away, reprobate silver shall men call them, for the Lord hath rejected them. God here compares himselfe to a Silver-smith, who takes a piece of oare, and tryes all his art to divide between the dross and the metall, but cannot doe it, and at last throwes it away with indignation, faith it is base stuffe, on which he will never bestow any more labour. So God seems to say, my Ministers have spent their lungs, dryed up their throats, all my other judgements have been tryed, but the wicked are not taken away, they are all base dross, I will bestow no more paines upon them.

And now you understand what the gray hairs of a State or people are, & when a people are ripe for destruction, when the time is come that God will passe them no more, you shall not need to enquire by what meanes he will doe it, he hath all in his owne hands, he hath famine, and pestilence, and sword, and wilde beasts, and fire, and earthquakes; and if none of all these doe it, he hath flies, and lice, and grasshoppers, and rats and mice enough to destroy the strongest Kingdom in the world in a moment; if he but whistle, hisse, or call for them.
A Sermon Preached at the late Fast

**Obj.** It is true may some say, if people go on in their wickedness, and prove incorrigible, no marvel, though God proceed thus against them: but that it should be the case of a people, who set upon Reformation, this is strange: And how will this stand with the doctrine preached in the forenoon, that when a Nation repents, God will repent. &c.

**Answ.** In such an assembly as this, a short answer (if true) will satisfy. First, God never promised that the sincere Reformation of a few should prevent the judgment of a multitude: if God's time of Execution be come, Noah, Daniel, and Job shall deliver neither son, nor daughter, who are not turned home to God. Secondly, I answer, that though the Nation joyned in the Reformation, it was not in sincerity, if it had been found, the doctrine in the morning would have carried it away, and I must have had another interpretation of my Text. It is true, Josiah carried it by his authority, but the people's hearts were not right. And Jeremy faith no less, when I removed Samaria out of my sight, her Treacherous sister Judah turned not to me. Yes, might the people say; we did turne to thee under good King Josiah, but it was but fainly (faith the Prophet) and it appeares to be so, for as soone as ever Josiah was dead, they made an universal Apostasie from the Lord, and so their Reformation was but like that of the Nation of the Jews in Christ's time, which our Lord compares to the uncleane spirit, going out for a while, and returning againe with seven Devils worse then himselfe. As if England by the help of this noble Parliament, who lay the causse of God to heart, should joyne in a Reformation, though against the haire, it would come to nothing in the end. And so I have in some measure cleared this Doctrine in Theis,
The first, how far the approaching ruin of a Nation may be known, and what the signs of it are. The second follows, and that is;

Whether this concern us. And what answer would you have me give you? I could willingly answer in this, as Daniel did Nebuchadnezzar, when he was to interpret a dream to the King, which in the true exposition foretold Nebuchadnezzar's fall: It is said Daniel stood still for an hour, and his thoughts troubled him, and in the end speaks out, My Lord, the dream be to them that hate thee, and the interpretation of it to thine enemies. So say I, Oh let the parallel of this be some other people: Oh that it might not fit England! but doth it fit? Right honourable and beloved, your great wisdoms, your diligent inspection, your ample intelligence, your faithfulness and sincerity makes you better able to judge, then my meanness can attain unto, who am none of the wisest observers of the time; but I must speak, and what I speak, I shall speak freely and humbly, I would I could speak sorrowfully: I know I speak to wise men, who can well judge what I say.

First, I hope verily we are not yet come to that pass that God should say of us, I will pass by England no more; blessed be God, we have a gracious King, many Noble Peeres, many excellent Commons, who have already done great things for God; I need not repeat them, 'all the Kingdom knowes them to their comfort. Yea, and blessed be God, the same gracious Sovereign, and Honourable Assembly of Parliament doe yet enquire what is further to bee done, what wrath is kindled, and how it may be quenched, and have called the whole Kingdom, to afflict themselves before God, that his great wrath might be turned away from us. And yet
yet we have a sprinkling of Phinebazzes, worthy Magistrates, who in their several Countries and Counties dare appear in God's cause against sinne, and the boldest sinners. And we have also a good sprinkling of faithful Ministers, who stand on the watch Tower, and blow the Trumpet, and give the people warning. And for ever blessed be the Lord (which is not the least pledge of our hopes, for the lengthening out of our tranquillity) we have many ten thousand Saints in England, who not only abstaine from the abominations of the times, but mourn for them, and give God no rest night nor day, until hee bow the heavens and come down, and set up for himself a glorious Throne amongst us: And unto these God hath made many promises of sparing the Land for their fakes, and that their posterities after them shall bee blessed.

But as I hope this, so the Lord will be a wittesse with me, that I feare whether all these persons, and their graces doe bear a just proportion to the meanes and mercies, which God hath given to England, or to that huge Inundation of sinne, wherewith England is over-runne at this day. And here, had I a tongue to speake, and you and I hearts and eyes to poure out teares and sorrow, we might make this place a Bochim, a place of weepers. For, what kind of these sins doe not overflow us? You will say at first, not Idolatry: but I tell you, neither were the Germans carried away with Idolatry, when their desolations broke in upon them, nor the Jews, before their last destruction. The measure of our Iniquity may possibly bee full, though this sinne come not in; but God knowes, and you know that we have not onely abundance of Idolatrous Papists, who are proud, insolent and daring, but abundance of Popish Idolatrous spirits, superstitionly
fittiously addicted, willing to embrace any thing that
goeth that way, one ly they will not have it goe under the
name of Popery. And for the other sines of contempt
of Gods holy Ordinances, his day, his servants, and all
his wayes, oppreession, cruelty, defrauding of brethren, the
sensual sins of uncleanness, especially that of drunken-
ness; Goe but to the places of greatest reforts, Market-
Townes, populous Cities, and Fayres, &c. and your
hearts would tremble to think, how our Land is over-
spread with these: Oh Beloved, the generality of the
people of England, is extremly wicked, and which
argues our case to be most miserable, it seemes to beare
down, and to break over all our Banks, multitudes sinning
with a whomes fore-head, proclaiming their sins as Sod-
omy: And the vox populi is; that many of the Nobles,
Magistrates, Knights and Gentleman, and persons of
great Quality are arrand Traytors and Rebels against
God, taking part with wicked men, and wicked caues
against the Truth, Patrons of Ale-houses and disorders,
checking inferiour Officers, who discover any zeale for
God against an ill cause: That in many of their fami-
lies (not to mention Religion) there is not so much as
a face of Civility: Many others of them, who seem to
withwell, dare not draw out the sword which God hath
given them, and some few others born down in their
places with the torrent of wickedness. And as for our
Ministers, how many sad complaints and petitions hath
this Honourable Assembly received against many hun-
dreds of them? multitudes of them rotten and unsound
in their doctrine, and so virtuous and corrupt in their
lives, that they fulfill that which: Arch bishop Abbot said
in his Lectures upon Joah, professing that his heart bled
within him, to think of the miserable condition of the
precious
precious soules of many people who had such Ministers, as Johannes Aventinus speaks of, who (if they were not in the Ministry) would not be thought fit hog-beards to keep swine. Besides thousands of others, who (God knowes) want either will or skill to doe the Lords work faithfully. And the residue who have endeavoured to give the people warning, and to teach them the good way of the Lord, have been a long time born down and opposd as the troubleurs of our Israel. Sure I am, what ever our Ministers are, or doe, the sins of the Land are too strong for them, and our people remaine unsubdued to Jesus Christ.

Yea which is yet worse, the very judgements of God have wrought little upon us, all the long and heavie pressures of the Neighbour Churches, his wrath upon our selves, terrible and waisting pestilences and famine, his blasting all our enterprises, his scouring us with rumors of warres and bloud, prevale nothing; we still grow worse and worse: Indeed if any sin grow out of fashion, (as cloathes doe) then we leave it, otherwise we goe on boldly and impudently, let God threaten or doe what he will. And all these evils are aggravated by being committed against greater meanes and mercies, then any Nation under Heaven enjoys this day besides our selves.

And which is yet sadder, (oh that I were mistaken upon condition I were tyed to a recantation!) our dealing this last yeare is more injurious against God, then heretofore. The Lord hath gathered such an Assembly of Noble Peeres and Commons, who have done such great things, that many of us began to hope our Pilgrimage through this wilderness had been almost ended, and that England would now turn to the Lord, and become a people zealous of good works: But verily so farre as I can understand,
stand, the body of the Nation makes little other use of all the mercies of this last yeare, but to abuse all the liberties procured both for Church and Common-wealth, to greater and bolder sinning against God: and now also, which yet speaks more sadly, the Lord God begins to appeare against us, not onely in permitting many unexpected blocks and rubs, huge trees cast in the way of our Worthis that they cannot march on in their strength: and the much expected Reformation sticks long in the birth; but God hath drawn out, and fourished the sword, and made it begin to drink blood in the Neighbour Nation, which when it once begins to drink, seldome is put up againe, till it be drunk with blood: this God hath suffered to be drawn out upon our deare brethren in Ireland, upon our owne flesh and blood, and that by a Nation, by whom (though they may seeme contemptible to some, as being barbarous, unarmed, &c. yet) wee may feare that God will plague us, because we have not laboured to bring them to the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ. Mene sekel. The Lord grant that being put into the ballance we be not found too light.

What shall we do then? First beleue it, not that England shall be ruined; I say not so: but believe that great is the wrath of God which is kindled against us, that we stand upon ill termes before him; that though hee may save us by his Prerogative, yet if he proceed with us at common Law, according to his usuall rule with other Nations, we are in great danger to be utterly lost. I preffe this the rather, because we are a secure Nation, not willing to beleue anything that may disturb our ease. One Zedekiah who will preach pleasing things, shall bee beleued more then twenty Micaiah's: such as tell us wee are

Applicati-  on to our selves.

First beleue that we are in danger.

1 Kings 22. Which we are loth to doe.
are the most flourishing Church in the world, the strongest people by Sea and Land, all other Nations court us, and have their own hands full, the Irish bee only discontented, weake men, and will soon be quieted, such, I say, shall bee beleaved more then an hundred Jeremias, who would put us in feare. It is reported that Honorius the Emperour lying at his pleasure at, Ravenna, when newes was brought him that Rome was taken and spoyled, he thought they had meant a fighting Cock which he called Rome: so when we are told of danger, we flight all that is spoken, & believe nothing in that kind: but the Lord grant that this Security or ours be not a calm before an earthquake: when they say peace, peace, then sudden destruction comes upon them. But let us believe and tremble: the wise man never hides himself till he sees the evil comming, and the first step to nurserys peace was their believing that God was comming against them.

But you will say that is the way to discourage men, and you doe not well to discourage them in whole hand and courage our welfare lyes. Oh beloved, let men not bee so interpreted; were this objection fit in other cases? suppose one should come and truly tell us the enemy were landed, the Sea were broke in, the House or City, were on fire, were it fit to object, oh say not so, you will discourage men? Discourage or not discourage, if this be not told, how shall the enemy be driven back, the breach of waters flopped, or the fire quenched? But neither need this discouragement, but rather furnish us with matter of humiliation and action. Isaias sate down and wept, when he understood Gods wrath was kindled, and fell to reformation. Ezrarent his garment and plucked off his hair, and fell to his work, and so let us do: Let us believe that God's displeasure is a gainst us, that we may feare before
before this Great God, and labour to get his wrath turned quite away; and that is the second Vse.

2 Let us all labour in the right way to turn this wrath of God from us; and that, First, by mourning under it; God looks we should be ashamed when he spits in our face, and takes it wonderfull unkindly, if we tremble not when this Lion roars. Consider seriously of that place, Esay 22. There you shall see an enemy was comming against Jerusalem, and God was much displeased, because they took not the right way for their safety, and so ill, that he said that iniquity should never be purged from them till they dyed, and yet see what they did, they scoured up their armour, they gathered the waters, that the enemy might have no benefit by them, they repaired the breaches in the walls, made a deep ditch for greater fortification: what hurt was there in all this? Oh but they begun at the wrong end: the Lord called them to weeping and mourning, and to baldness, and to girding with sackcloth: to tremble before him because of his wrath, and this they regarded not, and therefore God would never pardon it. Till therefore wee mourn because of God's displeasure, all other means of welfare will faile of that comfortable effect which we desire. I know the world makes a scorn of this, You are one of the mourners, but let our soules be numbred among those mourners: God will restore comfort to these mourners: and no man knowes the power whicthes poore mourners have to turn away Gods wrath.

Secondly, and as we must mourn for this fulness of our sins, so every one must help to empty the vessele, as we have helped to fill it: the fuller our vessele is with sinne, the neerer our ruine is, and if we could knock out the bottome of the vessele, or by any means empty it, Gods wrath would passe away with our sins: Oh help to empty it.
it, your Atheisme, your prophanenesse, your opposing of good men, and good causes, your adulteries, lies, &c. get them out by all means; all God's threatnings speak to us, as the waves of the Sea seemed to speak to the Mariners in the first of Ionah. Ionah had told them that the tempest came for him, and till he was cast over, the Sea would never be quiet, yet they rowed hard to carry Ionah to land, but the waves seemed to tell them, Cast Ionah over-board, or we will fetch you over-board. Out therefore with your lusts, God hath no other quarrell against us, he doth not afflict us willingly, he saith to us as Ionah said to the wife woman of Abel, farre be it from me to swallow up or destroy a City in Israel; deliver only Sheba the Sonne of Bichri, or throw his head over the wall, and I am gone. Doe thou so, finde out all thy beloved sins, say to thy darling lust, as Junius Brutus said to his Son, Thou villaine, shall I nourisb thee to destroy the Common-wealth? and stab him; shall I walk in these ways, to be the ruine of the Church and Common-wealth? the Lord rather strike me dead with a Thunder-bolt. Let us therefore everyone begin to sweep before our own door, and we know not how soon the whole street may be made cleane.

Thirdly and lastly, (right Honourable and Beloved) you are to see our Physitians, and repairers of our breaches; the horns of God's wrath begin to push at us, you are the Carpenters that must cut off these horns; I therefore make this humble suit to you, that (as you have besought his Majestie to call a day of Fasting and Prayer throughout England, and we hope we shall have many more, till the fierce wrath of God be turned away) so in all your thoughts to doe England, Scotland and Ireland good, you would set down this, that the turning away of God's
Gods wrath is of greatest consequence: if you let God go on to be angry, doe what you can we shall lose all at home and abroad. Thus did Josiah, when once he understood out of the Book of God, that the Lords wrath was kindled, he presently sends to Hulda the Prophetess, to enquire what was to be done that they might quench it, esteeming all other business unseasonable and fruitless, while that fire was burning. And here I shall only in a few words commend to you the example and practice of this brave King, whom this Text so magnifies. 1. He mourns, and calls all the people to mourn with him; and that through Gods mercy you have done. 2. He goes out in that way, whereby you heard more in the forenoon, and breaking down all the Images and relics of Idolatry: the Lord let it close to your hearts, that you may leave nothing which is contrary to Gods pure worship. 3. He executed the justice and vengeance of God upon the Instruments of the Kingdoms ruine, the Idolatrous Priests, digging the very bones of some of them out of their graves: the same Lord directs you, that in your great wisdomes you may see as the Angels of God, to discern what is to be done with them who have been the troublers of our peace, and the greatest kinders of Gods wrath against us: spare whom ye may spare with Gods good will; but remember, it is foolish pity that destroys a City: let not the men escape, whom God appoints out to punishment. 4. He resolves to Reform Religion, and the worship of God, and to set it up, and maintain it according to the word; and to that end he calls together the Priests, and Prophets, the Elders of Judah and Jerusalem, and with them enters into a Covenant before the Lord, to walk after the Lord, and to keep his Commandments, &c. O that the Lord would put it into the heart

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of you all to do the same; you know what you have been often petitioned for, the God of all wisdom directs you in due time to proceed in this cause, and if in your wisdom you shall find it fitter that a grave Synod of Divines should be called, to inform your consciences what is to be done, I beseech you follow the direction of God's word in it. Fifthly, And then for the manner. He did all according to God's law, he consulted not with flesh and blood, enquired not into terms of policy, how far the State would bear it, or how far the people would concur without grumbling: but did according to all which God had appointed in his word. And lastly, he did it with zeal and fervency, he laid not out his strength in his own cause, and then used diversions and diminutions in God's cause; but there was his strength laid out, where he knew God's jealousy lay. The Lord make you such Josias, such zealous men, what Anakims or Gyants would you prove? you might (with Briareus the Giant with 100 hands, of whom the Poets speak) take thunderbolts out of the hand of God, and so save your selves, your families, and the Nation. Go on, ye worthies of the Lord, and thus deliver us. If there be any healing, any deliverance, you shall be our Saviours; if there be none, you may with Josiah get the judgement respired for your lifetime: let the worst come, the glory of the Lord shall not only be your reward, but your terror, your safety: you shall deliver your souls, and your children after you shall be blessed. Do this, and the Lord God be with you.

FINIS.