

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

DURING ITS SESSION

A. D. 1849.



Augusta:

WM. T. JOHNSON;.....PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1850.

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE.

No. 38.]

[SENATE.

NATIONAL FAST-DAY

S E R M O N :

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATURE

OF THE

STATE OF MAINE,

AUGUST 3, 1849.

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BY REV. A. KALLOCH.  
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Augusta:

WILLIAM T. JOHNSON, PRINTER TO THE STATE.

1849.

S E R M O N .

“Thus saith the Lord God; I will yet for this be inquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them.”—*Ezekiel xxxvi*, 36.

THE prophecy from which this text is selected was addressed to the children of Israel, reminding them of their past transgressions, showing its influence upon their present distressed condition, and at the same time intimating that the hand of God was about to be interposed for their relief. They had been guilty of great wickedness. They had broken the Sabbath, profaned the name of God, and given themselves to the worship of idols. As a punishment for this, God had given them into the hands of their enemies, removed them from their own land, and scattered them among the heathen. But when they were humbled and subdued, and the enemy exulted over them, God directed the prophet to predict their deliverance and safe return; and, in connection with this prediction, gave them several specific promises of particular blessings, saying, “In the day that I shall have cleansed you from all your iniquities, I will also cause you to dwell in the cities, and the wastes shall be builded. And the desolate land shall be tilled, whereas it lay desolate in the sight of all that passed by; and they shall say, this land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden. But, saith the Lord, I will yet for this be inquired of to do it for them.”

The passage thus taken in its connection, teaches us that, although God is a sovereign of almighty power, and works all

things after the counsel of his own will, that it is still the appropriate duty of man to pray to him, and that he is well pleased with such service.

In accordance with this sentiment, the custom of offering prayer, with humiliation and fasting, has prevailed among all enlightened nations from time immemorial.

It was therefore highly proper, under so great a calamity as the prevalence of a disease which is sweeping off its thousands daily, that the chief magistrate of the nation should recommend us to appropriate a day to prayer and fasting for its removal. It was also highly honorable to the Legislature of this State to respond to that call, both as an acknowledgment of our dependence upon God, and of our respect for the Christian religion, as well as a proper regard for the authority of our rulers.

In performing the duty assigned me at this time, permit me to call your attention to the importance of the duty for which we are now assembled. I will state it in the form of a distinct proposition, viz : It is in accordance with the divine government to make the removal of the evils to which we are liable, and the bestowment of the blessings which we need, the objects of our anxious solicitude.

This will be found true, both in respect to those which come through our own instrumentality, and those which come directly from God, where the agency of man is not apparent.

In discoursing further upon this subject, I purpose to notice some of the blessings which we may expect, and why we may expect them in answer to prayer ; and also some of the evils which we may justly fear, as well as some which now exist, and how we may expect them to be either removed or averted.

I. Notice what blessings we may reasonably expect in a national point of view, and why we should expect them through our own solicitude, or in answer to prayer.

As a nation we may expect yet to reach a degree of prosperity in all the departments of the nation's interests, and a perfection in the science of human government which has never

yet been witnessed in the history of our race. The truth of this remark is clearly indicated,—

1. In the nature of our government.

Our government is eminently free. Such a government, and such *only*, is adapted to secure the highest degree of national prosperity. *Man* was made to be *free*; freedom is a part of his nature; his desires, his hopes, and his efforts are all of them either prompted by the possession, or excited by the absence of this blessing. Neither is it possible for his nature to be fully developed, nor his powers to be completely appropriated to the great work of human life, under any form of government which does not secure to him the most perfect and entire civil and religious freedom. If restraints must be laid upon men by human governments, yet must they be such restraints as men shall have a voice in imposing upon themselves,—uninfluenced by the weight of great names,—unincumbered by hereditary titles, and inalienable wealth,—fully disentangled from the perplexities, and released from the power of the yoke of Church and State. Our government knows no distinction among the citizens of a common country, but puts the lamp of knowledge into the hands of all, and holds out to each prospectively the hope of attaining the highest post of distinction and honor, which his abilities and efforts will allow him to fill.

Such an element, it must be seen at once, lays broad and deep the foundation of national prosperity; and if uninterrupted in its progress, must tend to reach that result in its highest degree.

Again. Our government is *progressive*. This also belongs to the nature of man. Should the constitution of the United States be admitted the most perfect instrument ever formed by the human mind;—should it stand till the end of time, *un-amended*, as a monument of the wisdom of our fathers,—the solid foundation of our republicanism, each department of the government will be constantly progressing, and each successive generation will write progress and improvement upon the institutions of their fathers.

2. This truth is also clearly indicated in the past history of our country.

The motive which first induced its settlement,—the wonderful preservation of our fathers on their perilous voyage and in the early settlement of the country,—the numberless interpositions of Providence, in the various conflicts through which the country has passed, clearly say that the God of nations intends to accomplish by this nation what he has not yet done by any other.

3. The present condition of our country, and its prospective character, also give their testimony in accordance with what has been said. Our territory now stretches from sea to sea, and from the river in the south, almost to the Arctic regions of the north, with the strong prospect that the whole of British America will yet swell the number of our States ;—and even Mexico may yet find her chords of sympathy so frequently and sweetly touched by our own, as to induce her to become a part and parcel of this nation. Nor is this result (in my opinion,) to be dreaded,—for they only add star after star to our political system, which, true to the laws of attraction and repulsion, revolve around our glorious Constitution with the same order and harmony that did the thirteen original States. Neither should we forget that the territory of our country, now so great and so rapidly increasing, is also being peopled with a rapidity unparalleled in the history of nations. Providence seems to have designed at once to prepare a territory and almost in the same hour to people it. Hence they come from every section and quarter of the globe to find a home within our borders. Let them come. Our land was designed to be the home of the free.

And I may here add, that among the considerations favorable to our future prosperity, the determination so apparent in the public mind to resist the encroachments of slavery and confine it within its present limits, is not the least.

We might advance much farther upon this point and speak of the amazing resources of the country, *now* being so won-

derfully developed. But time will not allow us to extend the thought. Enough has already been said to justify the belief that events are yet to take place in connection with our progress such as the world has not yet witnessed.

I pass then to inquire, why these blessings are to be received in answer to prayer.

Without going into a theological argument upon this point, it may be sufficient to say, that the foundation of our country's prosperity was laid in PRAYER; and its institutions have been preserved and perpetuated until now under the same influence. It was this which sustained and guided our fathers in the struggle which separated them from the land of their nativity, and in all the subsequent perils of their history. The traces of its influence are also distinctly seen in the establishment of the christian ministry, christian churches, religious and literary institutions—whose origin and influences are closely interwoven with the entire web of our history, and which now constitute an essential part of the very frame-work of our social organization. WASHINGTON was a man of *prayer*. While Congress was debating the probable fate of the country, almost in hopeless despair, and while his soldiers were murmuring with cold and hunger, and the enemy were hunting him as a partridge upon the mountains, *he* was often upon his knees, in some retired spot, pouring fourth his soul to the God of battles to give him success;—and who can doubt that he was heard?

Let the man who is ashamed of prayer be also ashamed of the name of WASHINGTON.

After the struggle of the revolution was over, and the delegates chosen by the several States to revise the federal system, were assembled in convention, differences of opinion prevailed, and they were upon the point of breaking up without accomplishing the object of their appointment. At this important crisis Dr. FRANKLIN rose, and addressing himself to the President, among other things said: "Sir, how has it happened that while grouping so long in the dark—divided in our opinions,

and now ready to separate without accomplishing the objects of our meeting, that we have not hitherto once thought of applying to the Father of Lights to enlighten our understandings? In the beginning of our contest with Great Britain, when we were sensible of our danger, we had daily prayer in this room for divine protection. Our prayers, sir, were heard; and they were answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a superintending Providence in our favor. * * And have we forgotten that powerful friend; or, do we imagine that we no longer need his assistance? I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proof I see of this truth; *God governs the affairs of men*. And if a sparrow cannot fall without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without his aid? We have been assured, sir, in the sacred writings, that except the Lord build the house they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this; and I also believe that without His concurring aid we shall succeed no better in this political building than the builders of Babel. We shall be divided by our little partial local interests; our projects will be confounded, and we ourselves shall become a reproach and a by-word to future ages. I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth, prayers imploring the assistance of heaven and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this house every morning before we proceed to business."

It is scarcely necessary to add that the suggestion met a hearty response, and that their proceedings became more harmonious and successful.

Perhaps no event has ever transpired in our country's history, which presents so important a crisis as this. All that had been accomplished by the blood and treasure of the revolution—all that was hoped for in the future, was suspended upon the action of a single hour. PRAYER turned the scale and gave direction to the future.

In vain, my honored hearers, do we rely upon the extent of

our territory—the number of our people—the strength of our armies—the wealth of our country—the wisdom of our statesmen, or the combined influence of them all, to secure the accomplishment of the high and glorious destinies of our country. For God will be acknowledged in all this, and will be sought unto to do these things for us.

II. We notice secondly some of the evils which we have cause to fear,—some of which now exist.

The same considerations which excite our hopes also lay the foundation for our fears.

The history of all the nations of the earth has most clearly shown, that great national prosperity has always been attended with great national danger ; and it does not require a prophetic eye to discover many points of danger to which we are now exposed. I propose to notice a few of them.

1. There is great danger that the spirit of true patriotism may be lost or become enfeebled, and that the love of distinction and personal preferments shall take the place of it.

While the love of country is the ruling passion, it is always attended with the spirit of concession, and the yielding up of partial and local interests for the public good. But when this passion becomes feeble, or is rendered dormant, and the love of distinction and personal aggrandizement takes its place, political parties become bitter,—attack each other with violence,—resort to unjustifiable and dishonest measures for the accomplishment of their purposes, and too frequently give their sanction to that mischievous maxim, “All is fair in politics.” Local interests, too, spring up, creating sectional prejudices,—arraying one portion of the country against another,—producing a general spirit of murmuring and discontent, the immediate effect of which is to check the general prosperity of the country, and its ultimate tendency is to anarchy.

2. The spirit of avarice is an evil to be feared, and one to which we are much exposed, if we are not already suffering from its influence.

It tends to divert business from its natural and ordinary course. Instead of leading men to the pursuits of industry and economy, it plunges them into the gulf of speculation, leading them to dishonesty, and ultimately to the commission of crime. It may well be questioned whether our chief national sins, by which we are now exposed to the judgments of God, do not spring from this source.

To this, I think, we may trace the sin of intemperance, as its legitimate source. Why, I ask, has not our government, ere this, prohibited the manufacture and importation of intoxicating liquors? The point has long since been settled, that they are, in no case, useful as a beverage to men in health; their use is also known to be the giant sin of our land;—their manufacture and importation, then, is tolerated simply because it is a source of revenue; but it is a revenue which is not needed. The sources of both private and public wealth are abundant without it. It is, then, simply the *love* of money, or the spirit of avarice, by which this evil is fostered, and by which so much of life, health, and reputation, are destroyed. Many of the effects of this evil follow immediately; but it is worthy of serious consideration, whether the judgments which we receive apparently more direct from the hand of God, are not, in part at least, on this account. Could we occupy a position where we could survey this evil, in its heights and depths, in its length and breadth; count up the number of its victims; witness the tears, and listen to the cries, of widows and orphans, which day and night ascend up to God, calling for a righteous retribution, we should not wonder that we are visited with pestilence; we should rather wonder that we are not also visited with other, and greater calamities. It is not for me to mark out the constitutional limits by which either the general, or state governments, are bounded in their action upon this subject: but I am quite sure, that if we were fully alive to the magnitude of this evil, there would be found a point somewhere, where the strong arm of government could interpose and arrest this mighty foe.

Slavery, with all its heinousness, is also the offspring and fostered child of avarice. It is now generally admitted in the free States, and by many where it exists, that slavery is an evil. Why not, then, abandon it at once? Whatever other difficulties may lie in the way of such a result, it must, I think, be acknowledged, that the amount of property invested in the persons of slaves, is the principal. It is not the love of slavery for the sake of itself, that keeps it alive. Its hideous deformities are too prominent not to be seen and hated; but the love of money is the root of the evil. Could I control the purse of the nation, I would purchase every slave in the land, and send him back to his native country; and I pray God that the time may soon come, when the General and State governments will either do so, or appropriate a suitable portion of our own territory, where our colored population may find a home, and to which all now in slavery shall be transmitted—be protected, educated, and trained up to be a free and happy people.

Avarice, not content with the lawful opportunities afforded in the progress of our country's prosperity, encroaches upon forbidden time. When the Almighty created the heavens and earth, he set apart one day in seven to be devoted to his service, and to be enjoyed as a day of rest by his creatures; and he requires that every intelligent being upon earth should, on that day, suspend all matters of business or pleasure, and pay his devotions to God. But the demands of avarice are not to be limited by the requirements of God; six days are not sufficient for the accomplishment of its purposes. It is therefore a natural consequence that the desecration of the Sabbath should be a prominent sin in an avaricious nation.

3. At a time of great national prosperity there is as great a liability to *forget God*.

Humanity is weak. It is liable to be overwhelmed in the pursuit of gain, when there are so many inviting opportunities,—so much to interest and excite the mind. For no one sin

has the earth been more frequently visited with the judgments of God than this. "Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that have not known thee, and upon the families that call not upon thy name." "I will be exalted among the heathen." "I will be remembered in the earth," saith Jehovah. "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me." "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." To secure obedience to these and similar commands, and to keep the recollection of himself constantly before our minds, God has, by an invariable law, connected suffering with every act of disobedience. The suffering thus produced is sometimes mental, sometimes physical, and sometimes both. In some cases the effect follows the cause immediately; in these we see our own agency closely connected with our miseries. In others the effect is more remote from the cause, in which we regard the affliction as coming more directly from the hand of God. But, doubtless, the hand of man is in it; for "The curse causeless shall not come." Could we trace every pestilence with which this world has ever been visited to their real source, we should doubtless find them all to have originated in the infraction of the laws of God.

Take, for instance, Cholera, on account of which we are now assembled. Though we cannot trace out all the infractions of the laws of health and life by which it is brought upon us, yet there are some points where this agency may be seen. The uncleanness of person, the filthiness of their habits, and the crowded state of the towns and cities where they dwelt, may have been the cause of its origin among the heathen, where it was first known. Its course in this country also, both in its former and present visit, shows that it has a strong affinity for those classes of society and for those localities where such irregularities most prevail.

Having briefly noticed some of the more prominent evils of the land, I submit a few thoughts upon the means of their prevention or removal.

Though no form of prayer, or other act of devotion which

we can present to God, can have any effect to change the laws by which He governs men, yet there are three ways in which prayer proves an unspeakable blessing in the prevention or removal of evils.

1. *Pardon* is obtained in answer to prayer. There is a redeeming system in the divine economy, the centre and source of which is Jesus Christ, who has offered himself as an atoning sacrifice, and now lives at the right hand of God to make intercession for us. He has said, "Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name, it shall be done unto you." It was in this way that the inhabitants of Nineveh obtained reprieve from the threatened punishment of their sins. When it was announced, there are "yet forty days and Nineveh shall be overthrown," the king, and the people, believed God, and proclaimed a fast, put on sackcloth and humbled themselves before Him. "And God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God repented of the evil that he said he would do unto them; and he did it not."

2. As a preventive of evil, it brings us into the more immediate presence of God, and leads us to a more strict observance of His laws. The more frequently that man is in communion with God, by prayer, the less is he likely to violate any of the laws of his being, and of course, less liable to evil.

3. When calamities can neither be overturned nor removed, PRAYER prepares us to bear them. When the King of Israel's child was sick, he fasted and prayed; for who can tell, said he, but God may have mercy upon me that the child may live. The child died, but still his prayer was answered, and the blessing which he received was even greater than that of the life of the child,—reconciliation to the will of Heaven. So we, my hearers, if God is not pleased to remove the calamity under which our country is now suffering, may, at least, hope to be prepared to meet whatever awaits us, with Christian fortitude and submission.

REMARKS.

1. The policy of our country should be such as to encourage the dispersion of the inhabitants over its surface. Great cities are great ulcers. The crowding together of hundreds of thousands in so small a compass, is itself a violation of the laws of health ; while the intemperance, licentiousness, and other irregularities of life which usually prevail there, render the inhabitants easy victims of disease.

2. In view of the number and enormity of our sins, the extent, severity, and threatening character of the calamity with which we are now visited, nothing can be more important than that the entire nation should bow before God in *prayer* ;—and could we believe that every adult in the land would bend the suppliant knee, and send up an humble prayer this day, to God, we should seem to hear him saying, as when seventy thousand men of Israel had fallen by the pestilence, and the destroying Angel had stretched forth his hand over the city of Jerusalem, “ *It is enough ; stay thy hand.*”



STATE OF MAINE.

IN SENATE, August 7, 1849.

ORDERED, That 1,000 copies of the foregoing Sermon be printed for the use of the Legislature ; and 1,000 additional copies for the use of the Senate.

DANIEL T. PIKE, *Secretary.*