Isaiah 3rd Chapter.

It is very evident from the Bible, and the same truth is confirmed by common observation, that a course of general transgression, whether among individuals, community, or whole nations, will sooner or later be visited with the punitive displeasure of the great God of the universe; but it is equally certain from the general tenor of the scriptures, that the judgments of the Almighty are tempered with mercy, and may be pretty mitigated or entirely removed by a course of repentance, humiliation, and prayer. The touch of these sentiments, is fully preserved by the chapter which we have read in your hearing.

We shall consider,

1. The Character of Isaiah, the place to which he was sent, and the subject of his preaching.

2. We shall consider, secondly, the repentance of the Ninevites, and the mercy of God, which it seemed

1. In the first place, we are to consider the character of the prophet, Isaiah. The history of the individual is very brief. He is considered the most antient of all the minor prophets, and is supposed to have lived 540 years before the advent of Christ. He relates, in his book, that he was commanded by the Almighty to go to Nineveh, to preach against that city; but being afraid to execute his commission, in the populous city of Nineveh, he embarked in a ship which was bound to another part.
During his voyage, a tempest arose at sea, which threatened the destruction of the vessel. Jonah, being suspected as the cause of their ill fate, was taken by the mariners, and thrown overboard. But a supervising Providence had provided an enormous fish which swallowed the prophet. The moment he was cast into the sea. While in the condition he called upon God for relief, and after 3 days and three nights, he was delivered from this storms. On his return to Joppa, he related the second command, to go and preach against the city of Nineveh. Having been severely reprimanded for his disobedience in the last instance, he obeyed the second command without the least hesitation. He had learned from bitter experience, that the health of life is the health of safety.

2. In the next place, The place to which he was sent, The city of Nineveh. This was the capital of the Assyrian empire. It stood beyond the Persian antiquity. Scripture informs us that it was founded by Nimrod shortly after he had built the tower of Babel. Nineveh was originally a small city, and did not grow to much greatness until the reign of Necho the 2nd, about 1230 before Christ. Upon it he: came the heaviest city in the known world. According to both its size, it was of an oval form, and forty eight miles, in circumference. The walls were a hundred feet high, and the gates of its three chambers could drive on four wheels, and one on wheels, were 1500 towers, each 200 feet high.
In the days of the Prophet Jonah, it seems to have been a great city of three days journey. As, according to Josephus, its population must have amounted to 100 thousand souls. Such was the mighty city, with its learning inhabitants, to which the lone prophet was sent, with a message of doom from the Almighty.

3. We shall next consider, the subject of his preaching. It was the overthrow and destruction of Nineveh in 40 days, and his sermon consists of one short sentence: He cried and said, "But 40 days, Nineveh shall be overthrown." This was the only fact which he stated, the only touch which he proclaimed. He did not darken Counsel by a multitude of words, or heap his hearer with long sermons, and labor Earnestly, but he proclaimed the message of God in the most concise and emphatic manner. It was not to be evaded by the most learned, nor misused by the most ignorant.
II. We shall consider in the 2nd place, the repentance of the Ninivites, and the mercy of God, which it secured.

It must be recollected, that Jonah brought his miracles in confirmation of his divine authority. His preaching consisted entirely of threat and terror. He gave them no direction as to what they should do to avert the impending calamity. He did not tell them that their crime was pardonable. That it was proper to prevent the execution of the Doomsday which had gone forth against them, yet, all these discouraging circumstances, they heeded. The Seventy Catechumens—"We are told by our Lord that they repents at the preaching of Jonah. That is, they humbled themselves before Almighty God, and resolved to abandon their sinful ways and reform their lives.

1. The repentance of the Ninivites was founded upon faith in God. The people of Nineveh beheld God, they declared a fast. This is, they fasted as a Messenger from the Clothed with divine authority, and gave entire evidence to the fact which he proclaimed. No man rose ever repent, and reform his life until he received the assurance of salvation, as coming from God, and yet how many there are, who believe in the existence of a God, who profess to believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, etc., and yet they remain as cases of impassible as the death were an eternal sleep. Such persons will be condemned in the day of judgment by the Men of Ninivites, because they are threatened with much greater calamities, than explicitly warned of their danger.
The judgments are not only threatened with tempests of calamities in the present life, but with the punishment of soul and body in the torment of hell hereafter. They are not only lashed with a guilty conscience, it distends with fearful apprehensions in the present life, but God will rain upon them hereafter, storms, fire, tempests, a horrible tempest. They are not only in bondage all their days. This fear of death, but when they go hence, they will be shut up in that light, which is made deep shade; the pile of which is fire, much wood, the heaps of the Almighty like a stream of flaming fire, to destroy it.

While such calamities are threatened against against the sinner, they have no assurance that the execution will be delayed for the space of forty days. The language of the Bible is, “Escape for thy life.” Be not thereof tomorrow, for thou knowest not that a day may bring forth. As this being true, reproved, hardened his heart, shall surely be cut off, and that without remedy.

And yet there are many who profess to believe the language of God, and yet remain as impudent as the. The destinies of eternity were in their own hands. And while they thus live carelessly, while they are wrapped in the arms of carnal security, the final messenger arrives, the fearful sentence is written upon the wall, and they are snatched from the blessings of the road, suddenly and unexpectedly, their reproachless suits are hurled to the face of God — O! what must be the feelings of the poor sinner, when he discovers, that heaven is lost forever!
2. The repentance of the Hebrews was often accompanied with a solemn fast to the Almighty. And never was there one so general as deep and so effective. Then, woman to woman kept still. How stern the exclamation of the King: He spake, 'The fast shall be ended among the people. The King descended from his throne, laid aside his royal robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the ashes to rend his garment and to tear his flesh. (And such a fast at the present time, with respect to the consciousness of God.)

3. The Hebrews not only abstained from food, but covered themselves with the sign of mourning, but they cried mightily unto God. Fasting through thine always be continued. The fasts in like manner, that they loved, some evil shunt, that went not out but by fasting through it. When we failed to discern and answer to hunger, he should be hastened because of fasting. and there is a power in fasting, temperance, temperance hunger, which is more a clear help to omnipotence — — And if these whole nations, could be drawn out in this kind of prayer, the Chalmon would disperse immediately.
4. The Remnants also abandoned their single course—every one turned from the evil of his way, and from the violence of their heart. Fasting and prayer were made in nothing unless it is followed by a general Course of Information. If the people of the County suppose that they can prostitute the favor of God, by the formal humiliation of a single day, and then take up their sinful course again, they will find themselves devoid of the pastimes, has been brought upon the people on account of their sins, They must cease to do evil and learn to do well. Gambling and drinking, horse racing, their houses must be abolished—political strife and political intrigue must be done away with. Hatred, revenge must give place to love for God, man, the love of man, and the desire of wealth must give place to a longings for the soil, and the fruit of righteous labor must be formed out upon the people without constraint.

Let then the afternoon of Solomon be written upon every door post, and soon the Sun of Righteousness shall arise upon our land with healing in its wings. O Let us hunger on this occasion, "Thy Kingdom Come."
In the first place, the pretexts against
the men of God. He saw their works
and God Nehemias of the evil, that he had
profanation among them, and he did cast
Horrors among them and destroyed them.