

# THANKSGIVING-DAY SERMON,

DELIVERED BY

REV. E. R. BEADLE,

Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

*December 7th, 1865.*

GIVING THANKS ALWAYS, AND FOR ALL THINGS.

A SERMON

Preached on Thanksgiving-Day,

*December 7th, 1865.*

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Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia.

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# Correspondence.

PHILADELPHIA, DECEMBER 7th, 1865.

REV. E. R. BEADLE.

REV. AND DEAR SIR:—

Having listened with great pleasure, and we hope profit, to your sermon on Thanksgiving-day, we earnestly ask you to consent to its publication. The *perusal* of its wholesome truths will more deeply impress them on our minds, and our hearts will be better instructed to “praise and glorify God.” The hearing of the ear will not so effectually help us in *the* good work of Thanksgiving, as the frequent perusal of the same truths you so powerfully presented for our consideration.

With sentiments of Christian esteem and respect,

Truly Yours,

C. MACALISTER,	HUGH L. HODGE,
THOS. M. FREELAND,	STEPHEN H. BROOKE,
CHAS. F. HASELTINE,	W. R. MAC ADAM,
THEO. CUYLER,	EDW. S. CLARKE,
PEARSON YARD,	C. E. CLAGHORN,
D. HAYES AGNEW,	SAMUEL AGNEW.

To Messrs. C. MACALISTER, HUGH L. HODGE, THOMAS M. FREELAND,  
D. HAYES AGNEW, and others.

GENTLEMEN:—

I have received your request, and consent to the publication of the Sermon, though I cannot fully accord with your opinion as to the desirableness of putting it in a permanent form. I remain, gentleman,

Most Truly Yours,

E. R. BEADLE.

248 South Eighth Street. }  
December 10, 1865. }

## SERMON

“GIVING THANKS ALWAYS, FOR ALL THINGS, UNTO GOD AND THE FATHER, IN THE NAME OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.”—*Ephesians* v. 20.

THE apostle in this chapter urges various duties upon the Ephesian Christians. They were to “walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time;” they were to be “filled with the Spirit, and not drunk with wine, wherein is excess;” they were to “speak to themselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in their hearts unto the Lord.” Beyond all this, they were to give “thanks always for all things, unto God and the Father, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.” These disciples had been gathered into the church at Ephesus, from the pollutions and debasements of heathenism. They had once been the servants of sin and yielded their members to unrighteousness; but this shameful bondage had been broken: they had been delivered from the dominion of sin, were no longer subject to its power and walking in darkness, but were children of the day, their whole nature changed, their hearts purified and filled with the Spirit, with love to one another and to God. And these renovated natures, these changed affections,

these minds renewed, broke forth in melodies of grace. Blasphemies had given place to blessings, and sinful mirth to songs of joy in the Holy Ghost. In the fullness of these new-found joys, they were not for a moment to forget the source of their blessings, nor cease to be thankful for all the good which divine mercy had conferred upon them. Thanksgiving was a duty. It must enter largely into all service, and be a marked peculiarity of daily life. A heart full of spiritual melodies and remembrances of the divine goodness must find voice in song and praises to the Giver of all good.

They were to give thanks "always" and for "all things." It may read for all persons as well. It is one of the beautiful things of the Christian religion, that there is a fellowship in its joys, as well as community in its faith. It cannot enjoy or possess alone; it must share. It is its nature to impart. To hold and hoard and hide away from others, is no part of its creed. It is like leaven, like light. It will spread; it must be diffused. We joy with all men, all nations. We give thanks to God on behalf of all men, for all the human race. *I exhort, therefore, that first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men.*" For "all men." Christianity, only, does that. The love of Christ binds the human race in a common brotherhood. Mountains, friths, rivers, boundaries of states, color, caste, political faith, will separate men and nations, and make them enemies to each other; but the love of Christ breaks down every barrier, sweeps away every cause of alienation, changes enemies to friends, binds hostile nations in amity, cements afresh all dissevered

bonds, and joins tribes and tongues and nationalities into one household of faith: so there shall be but one fold and one Shepherd. We are to give thanks to God for the good conferred upon the human family, for all that mortals enjoy; for God's love to our world in giving his Son to die, for his kindness in daily providence, for his grace in saving sinners. This thankful spirit must take possession of all Christian hearts. We must rejoice in the happiness of others; we must be glad when others can rejoice, thankful when others can be happy, blessed when others receive favors from God. A cheerful and constant gratitude is a part of the Christian inheritance. It should rise spontaneously, as vapors to the sun, and would always, if our hearts were filled with the Spirit of God. Our fallen nature is selfish; grace overcomes that, makes us unlike ourselves, and like God; fills us with gratitude for the good we have received and gratitude for the good conferred upon others.

We are to give thanks *always* and for *all things*, and always *in the name of the Lord Jesus*.

Our first duty is,

*I. To give thanks always.*

We are summoned both by our chief magistrate and the governor of this State, to set apart a day of special thanksgiving to God. It is well. Our loyalty to government and our gratitude to God alike summon us to this service. Great mercies demand special recognition. Every year, as it passes, drops its fatness and fills the children of men with good. "*The pastures are clothed with flocks, the valleys also are covered over with corn.*" "*Thou crownest the year with*

*thy goodness.*" It is right, therefore, to appoint a yearly festival, when we can present our thank-offerings to the bounteous Giver of all good, for the many mercies of that year as it passed; a day of special recognition and recital, a feast of in-gathering, a set time, in which the year itself shall pass in review—when the soul shall retrace its journeys, light again on the sunny spots by the way-side, repeat the story of deliverances, recount the tale of blessings. And in this year, which we are now to celebrate in our grateful song, we have unusual cause for praise, as cited in the proclamation of our Chief Magistrate: "It has pleased Almighty God to relieve our beloved country from the fearful scourge of war, to permit us to secure the blessings of peace, unity and harmony, with a great enlargement of civil liberty, and to graciously avert from us the calamities of foreign war, pestilence and famine, while our granaries are full of the fruits of an abundant season."

But the annual recurrence of these seasons is not enough. Special and distinguishing mercies fall on every day, come to us in every providence. He "*daily loadeth us with benefits.*" Daily, therefore, should the incense of our thanksgiving arise to God. As new blessings roll down to us, we should erect new altars of praise, and the fire should never go out. We should cultivate a spirit of perpetual thanksgiving, making melody in the heart unto the Lord. "*I will bless the Lord at all times.*" *His praise shall continually be in my mouth.*" It is not required that we should be fully occupied every moment in contemplating the divine goodness, nor be constantly affected with a sense of joyful gratitude, but that our whole lives should catch the joyful spirit; our existence be a melody; our hearts quick

to understand the loving-kindness of the Lord, and our lips swift to speak his praise. The Hebrews had a continual sacrifice; so our lives should be a *perpetual thank-offering*. We may and should determine seasons of special thanksgiving, should have set times for praise and grateful song, times in which to recount the mercies of the Lord; but the spirit of this work should never cease out of our hearts. For it all seasons are propitious, and all times are ready. We must grow into a life of praise, it must be a habitude, we must wear it as a garment. It is to be one of the badges of our discipleship, one of the marks of our sonship.

It is a pretty conceit that shells, borne never so far away from the ocean, still sing of the sea, and murmur of waves and waters; so the soul that is born of God, wherever it goes, should be filled with the melodies of grace—should sing of mercy and judgment, of deliverance and love, of espousals to Christ, of home and heaven. Its cheerful gladness should waken echoes on every side, and always. The limitation is not to times of fulness and refreshment, in wide fields and rich pastures, and when the soul is like a watered garden. It is easy to sing in the sun-light and at high-noon, when all is well and every stream is at flood; but there are to be songs in the night seasons, praises when our wells and water springs have dried away, joy in tribulation, rejoicings in infirmities, in trials—even in persecutions and death itself.

"Some murmur, when their sky is clear  
And wholly bright to view,  
If one small ~~dark~~ dark appear  
In their green heaven of blue.

And some with thankful love are filled,  
 If but one streak of light,  
 One ray of God's good mercy, gild  
 The darkness of their night."

And some can praise when all is night. Remember that sad night at Philippi. Beaten, bruised, bleeding, with stripes unwashed, thrust rudely into the inner prison, with feet made fast in the stocks! Surely, this is a time for despondency—at least a time to pray, and not to sing! No; these intrepid servants of Jesus take joyfully their Master's shame, and rejoice that they are counted worthy to suffer for His sake. In their lonely cell, they sing praises to God, so loud that the prisoners heard them, so loud that Philippi heard, so loud that Heaven heard.

When Jeremy Taylor was stripped of his honors and his estates, he walked forth into the green fields, and under the light of the sun, and blessed the Lord, that sunshine, and air, and sweet fields and open heavens, could not be taken from him. Thankful always! a river with full banks ceases not to flow. God's mercies come to us in ceaseless streams. Every moment is loaded with blessings. Manna falls in the night seasons, and mercies crown the day. As mighty rivers pour themselves into the sea, so God fills this world for man. And as the sea gives back its wealth, so should we render thanks always, and give to God the homage of grateful hearts.

*II. We are to give thanks to God for all things.*

This gate swings into boundless amplitudes. We look out upon this vast expanse, as a child upon the ocean. We are called, to gather up the divine benefactions, to our

world, our race, our country, our households, our own souls; and for all to bless the name of the Lord. We must particularize, also, and count them one by one. We must recite our deliverances. We must remember and speak of the benefits of the past and the present. We are to mark the notable mercies of our lives, and stamp our gratitude upon all the ordinary blessings of our daily being. We are to give thanks for all comfort and safety, for every escape from peril and sin, for the good of the city where we dwell, the land of our birth or adoption, for the blessings upon our community, the church, the world. Is this an easy task? If God had given us but one blessing, we could easily recall that; or if but one mercy should fall upon us in each year, or in each day, or in each hour, we might easily recount these; but when our cup is full always; when not a thing we possess, nor a good we enjoy, nor a hope we cherish, nor any thing we have or are, but come from Him, and are the gifts of His love, gratuities, benefactions to beings who deserve nothing, but have forfeited all, how then shall we find words to express this boundless munificence; how shall we recite infinite numbers or measure infinite love? At the best, we can only gather up, here and there, a blessing, as we gather pebbles from the shore, and while pondering these, lift our songs of praise to the Giver of all.

In attempting a limited specification—

1. *Let us be thankful that there is a God.*

A God who reigns over all beings and worlds, and guides all the affairs of the universe. Who makes no mistakes,

whose purposes never fail, whose plans never miscarry, with whom all interests of holiness and truth and right are safe, and with whom there is no variableness, no shadow of turning. It is refreshing to turn from the fluctuations and confusions of our world, from the turbulence and tumult of our own times, to the eternal stability of the divine rule; from the anger and strife and madness of men, to the infinite perfections of God. We are thankful when we behold the *works of God*. We admire the works of men. We commend the husbandman, the artisan, the craftsman, for skill and success. We withhold no praise, if merit demand the tribute. Intellect, excellence, eloquence, genius, skill, shall receive all merited applause; but all these gifts of genius, or skill of handicraft, are but the reflected wisdom, power and knowledge of God. We give glory to God that he has given such power to men. And if these faint reflections so excite our admiration, what praise shall we give to the Author of all! Statuary, pictures, temples, churches, bridges, railways, these inspire us, fill us with awe. But contrast these works, beautiful or grand, artistic or useful, with the works of God, original, uncounselled, unaided. God could conceive the idea of this universe, with all its systems and laws, and then, at a word, create the whole. Man, by patient study, perhaps by accident, discovers the existence of a law; finds that law obtains, that matter is controlled by it, subject to its conditions, and he rejoices as if he had found great spoil. He gives a name to this newly-discovered secret, and tells us that the swinging of a chandelier, the swaying of a ship's mast, the sweep of planets through their orbits, are all in

obedience to the law of gravitation. For ages untold, before man had looked upon the Creator's handiwork, God had moved on all the affairs of his universe, held every world and every atom in place, by this same simple law. Man calls it "a discovery." It is a flash of light athwart the ignorance in which he has been born and groped for so many ages. Did the universe first learn of the existence of that law from him? Did his announcement send a thrill of delight through all the hierarchies of the heavenly world? Did they, for the first time, know that they were held to the throne of the Infinite, by inevitable and invariable law? Did they now only learn that order, harmony and perpetuity had been established in the divine dominions? Alas! for man. These celestial intelligences were at home in the most distant world, knew every star, passed every orbit, came and went as children in a Father's house. Every flight outward, onward, upward, homeward, the stroke of every pinion had been in obedience to this law from that hour when they first expanded into life at the word of the Omnipotent.

Some ardent explorer pushes his researches into nature's most secret chambers. He drills, and blasts, and quarries; and as he drives his drill, and heaves up layer after layer of the earth's surface, he exposes the tombs of countless generations, never seen by the eye of man. He lights on some insect, or plant, or shell, or huge saurian entombed in rocks that were old when man was born. In the mountain ramparts of Upper Egypt, which wall in the Nile on either side, for hundreds of miles, are the rock-hewn sepulchres of the ancient Egyptians. Huge sarcophagi, fashioned from

the Theban hills, to receive the bodies of the Pharaohs, still lie imbedded in these deep cavities; but in these very sarcophagi, and in the Theban hills themselves, which cover the mummied inhabitants of old-world cities, are graves of still more ancient generations, whom God laid away to sleep in more beautiful and lordly sepulchres than ever Memphian priest or Theban king fashioned for himself. Theban graves have been opened, and passages which penetrate the hills followed to the end. So these abodes of extinct generations have been searched; and when some curious fossil insect or animal is found, which man has never seen before, straightway science fashions a name, gives a description, and heralds to the world something new! Ages ago, that same insect was created and fed by the Divine hand, filled its times and seasons, and then God laid it down in its rocky tomb, not to be seen again until man should be born, and six thousand years of his history pass away. Strangely new.

In surveying the works of God, we find that the least of all, are as full of wonder, and challenge our amazement as much as the greatest. A ponderous globe, or a drop of water—a planet, or a mote in the sunbeam, are alike marvels of the Creator's skill.

We will give thanks to God for all the works of his creation; but, for the moment, let us praise him again—

## 2. For this beautiful world.

It was fashioned by a divine hand. At its completion, the Creator himself surveyed it, and pronounced it good. A ponderous globe, held up by the hand of Omnipotence,

whirling on its orbit with a velocity which outstrips human thought, revolving on its own axis, giving alternate night and day, moving in its own orbit, and bringing forth the seasons in their round. Its surface beautifully diversified with undulating lands, dotted with mountains and hills; rich in spreading valleys and wide prairies, crossed with streams and rills, studded with lakes, and divided with majestic oceans. Vegetation covers the earth with a rich carpet of green; rich, also, in all fruits pleasant to the taste and good for food; abounding in every variety of form, and every diversity of color; in fruit, and flower, and shrub, and majestic forest tree. The eye is every where arrested by the grandeur of the landscape, the beauty of the field and flood, or the sublime magnificence of the ocean. Over all is spread the bright firmament, in which are set the sun, moon, and stars, which are ever shedding down their glory and their good upon men. And these are all *gratuities to man*. It was not needful to our existence that there should ever have been a flower created, or a particle of verdure spread over our earthly abode. We could have lived, and fed, and found a grave on this earth, without all this rich array of beauty and ever-varying brilliancy and grandeur. And then this beautiful earth is the habitation and home of *life*. The beasts roam its forests, the birds carol in its woods, and make its air vocal; fishes abound in its oceans, lakes, and streams, and man plants his dwellings in all its pleasant places. *It is a good world*. Cursed with sin, and sorrowful in its desolation, the birth-place and the grave of the human race; solitary in its guilt, and doomed to the burning, it is still a good world. Great and precious

interests are bound up in its history. The Son of God has visited it, taught in its language, eaten of its fruits, suffered for its redemption, and slept in its bosom. Angels have lighted upon it, and all its valleys and hills are known in heaven. Jehovah loves it, defends it, and rolls it on, from age to age. The Bible is in it, and the gospel of Jesus is going forth to encircle it, and bless its peoples. A great army of the host of God are preparing in it for the mansions above. The bones of the prophets are in it; the holy example of prophets and martyrs, and Christian heroes, stand written in its records, and the church of God is planted in its high places.

The consolations of religion, the pleasures of knowledge, the intercourse of society, the interchange of human affections, the smiles of the human countenance, kind words, gentle attentions, precious friends, are here. Here are domestic relations, ties of affinity and blood. Here is love, which "took flight at the fall, and hovering over the ruins of this lost world, lighted at last on the domestic sanctuary," the sweetest solace of poor, fallen humanity. *It is a good world;* and as we stand to-day, six thousand years from the advent of man upon it, we may echo, with glad hearts, the word of its Maker and Lord, as he looked upon its perfect form and glorious beauty, and pronounced it good. Its garniture is beautiful, its appointments are wise, its future glorious. I cannot look upon these mountains and hills, and plains and streams, and forests and falls, and lakes and oceans, and not feel a quicker pulse beating in my veins. I love them all. My Savior built them. He spread out these heavens. He garnished them. He led forth Arctu-

rus and his sons, he hung out Orion and the Pleiades. I look to the day when I shall bid them all farewell, that I may go to see his face, brighter than them all! Till then they are as a vesture for my soul. I wear them as a garment; clothed upon, by the hand of Omnipotence. It is not my religion to worship nature, yet do I adore the great Author of all. To me, there is no nature but God; and I thank Him for every beautiful thing of his creation, and every gift of his love. I thank my God for this earth, for its mountains and plains, rocks and hills, oceans, lakes and streams; its prairies and deserts, woods and lawns, its hanging foliage, springing grass and flowers; the music of its winds and waterfalls; its murmurs, shrieks and songs; for its times and seasons, the young spring and laughing summer, the sombre autumn and bracing winter; for its rains in seasons, and gently distilling dews; for its balmy airs and healthful frosts; for its plants and seeds, and animalculæ, its shells and corals, fishes, birds and beasts! "*These are the works of thy hands, O Lord; in wisdom hast thou made them all.*"

### 3d. *Let us give thanks to God for life.*

Some pray for annihilation, some mourn that they were ever born; but life is one of the grandest, most precious gifts of God; not merely the privilege of breathing, but life with all its rich experiences and noble destinies. "It is not all of life to live." Life is a gladness; not life extended, but life given and enjoyed; that we have been born at all, become inhabitants of this world, subject to its laws and included in its history. We might never have been born;

no such names as ours ever have been recorded on earth or in heaven; but we breathe, we live, we have a being. We have been quickened from the dust, and made living souls. A healthful glow is on our cheeks, the warm blood is rushing through our veins, and life in all its gladness is ours. How much does that mean "to live," to be human, to think, to know, to love, to look out upon this world in the consciousness of being, and feel within us the ecstasies of life, and to know that these beatings are immortal. To feel that we are the creation of the Omnipotent,—dust fashioned into men, living instruments made to vibrate in harmony with the wide universe; to be forever possessed with life, to look back upon the ages as they waste away, as but the dust we have shaken from our feet in our immortal journeyings, and still press our wondering way toward the Infinite and the Eternal! Life! life! for that boon we bless the giver,—God!

*4th. Let us thank the Lord for all he does to make life a gladness.*

The enjoyments of the mind, thought, study, reading, conversation, correspondence, hearing intelligence, the pleasures of science and art, the harmony of sounds, melodies of music, the charm of the human voice, the power of language, the presence of friends and companions, congenial souls, the power of motion, rest, sleep, recovery from injury and disease. Pleasures of the senses; food, pleasant to the taste; sights, beautiful to the eye; sounds, grateful to the ear; aromas, pleasant to the sense of smell. For *childhood*, with its sports and plays, and merry laughter; for *youth*,

and its wild dreams of joy and coming greatness; for *manhood*, and its joys of toil, conflict, success; for the ripe fruits of *old age*, and garners filled with the rewards of a life well spent, for the good of men and the glory of God. In all the adjustments of the great economy of life, God has sought our happiness and well being. In the structure of human society, in all relationships and duties, in modes of intercourse and travel, in trade and commerce, the pursuit of science, or a profession, business and duty, lie along the paths full of pleasantness; and when prosecuted with honest motives and a right heart, minister largely to our comfort and happiness.

*5th. We will thank God for our country.*

We have a goodly heritage, which we must conserve and pass down unimpaired to our children and the generations to come. We have great civil and religious privileges, wealth of soil, riches of commerce, means of education, an open Bible, an unfettered conscience. It is a land which the Lord hath blessed. It holds the graves of our fathers, who counted not their lives dear unto them, and the graves of their sons, who followed their footsteps, and fell, like them, in defending their country's honor and weal. It is a land on which God has poured out his Spirit more largely than any other land of the earth. It has been the birth-place of souls; it holds in its bosom the ashes of godly men. Saints have ascended to glory from its mountain-tops and valleys, from its cities and fields. It has nursed patriots and heroes, and furnished an asylum for the oppressed of all lands. It has passed many seasons of peril, and stood

unshaken amid storms that have heaved the world. And now, in this last sore trial which has convulsed the nation, and in which such fearful sacrifices have been made—in this bloody baptism for the living and the dead—while rude hands have grasped the pillars of our republic, and madmen walked amid our most sacred bulwarks, with swords drawn and torch ablaze, our God has defended, and will still keep for us, the precious heritage.

I love my country, North and South, East and West. I love it the more, when I think of the despotisms of the Old World—where I have seen humanity bleeding under the hoof of tyranny, and heard the despairing cry go up from millions. I love it the more for the eager hopes of the Old World, which gather around this last grand experiment of human liberty. I love it the more for the large promise given in our growing history and charities, that our land shall become the almoner of blessings to the nations. I love it the more for the fiery trials through which it has passed, and the deliverances which have been wrought in its behalf—for the future of good which travails for birth in our national struggles; and though we have much yet to try our faith, many questions of grave concern to settle, fierce animosities to lay to rest, and deadly feuds to reconcile, yet God will visit us in mercy, and when his strange work of judgment is done, he will heal all our wounds, and in the fulness of his blessings, our woes will be forgotten. And while the strain of our song swells upward to God for our country—the land He has given us—we may not forget the unusual causes which demand special recognition and gratitude.

*“It has pleased Almighty God to relieve our beloved country from the fearful scourge of war.”*

War is ever a woe and a curse. It can never come but in judgment. What waves of sorrow has it swept over our land! leaving behind desolated homes, multiplied graves, feuds of blood, sorrows that generations will not heal. It is at an end, we trust, forever. The four dark, sorrowful years of our history are past. May their like never be seen again.

*The same kind Providence has “secured to us again the blessings of peace.”*

Men can go and come on their lawful occasions, without challenge and without delay. We can resort again to our various callings, and prosecute, without distraction and without interruption, the calls of commerce, trade, science, art. Our universities and colleges are again filled, the inter-dependencies of life are again working harmoniously; our railways are not in military possession or under military surveillance; our ships can again spread their sails, and venture to every sea, without fear of capture; our mills and manufactories are no longer forging, and spinning, and weaving fabrics for a vast army, in camp or on the battlefield, but to supply the wants of a nation and a world at peace; our armies are disbanded, and the hundreds of thousands of soldiers, who were taken from the field and from all departments of labor, have been returned to peaceful employments and quiet homes. We give thanks for their return, and the more, that they are not soon to be called again away.

*We are called also to praise God, that out of all these calamities there has come a great "enlargement of civil liberty."*

The enfranchisement of the human race, will be one of the issues of divine Providence in this world. For every healthful step to this end, we rejoice and give thanks. We pray that the time may be hastened. In this transition the freedmen will pass through many trials, suffer much, waste much; but let us do what we can for them, to elevate their condition, to prepare them for better days, to make them men.

Let us praise God for the faithful and persistent labors and the "pecuniary offerings spontaneously bestowed to relieve the necessities, to bind up the wounds, and cleanse the hearts "of those who have perilled their lives for their country."

In this good work there has been but one feeling and a common impulse. The great heart of the nation beats with a warm and kindly sympathy for its citizen soldiery, and that feeling which found such munificent expressions in the day of our conflict, will not fail until all needful provision has been made for the wounded and disabled remnants of that army, who endured hardships, and counted not their lives dear unto them.

We are to give praise also for the *memory of the honored dead.*

On this ground we may tread softly. Uncover thy head and put thy shoe from off thy foot. These heroic dead are our sires, our sons, our fellows, companions, friends. We thank God for their lives, for the purity of their faith, the singleness of their consecration, for their precious memory; but we sorrow in their death. We take comfort only in

the thought that God called for and accepted the sacrifice; but we cannot forget that they are dead. Our human nature and human affections are wounded; lie ever bleeding and torn, and it is only by the highest stretch of our faith that we can lift our vision and gaze across these furrowed fields and garnered dead, to a world where the clangor and strife of war are forever hushed.

Let us rejoice and praise God that *the destinies of our nation are in his hands.*

He confirms or changes the purposes of men at his pleasure, and overrules all human designs, and all human wickedness, to establish righteousness, truth and justice in the earth. Jehovah reigns. He is moving in all our country's affairs, and working out our destiny in his own strange way!

*6th. Let us be thankful that honesty and integrity have still a firm hold upon the universal conscience in our land.*

There are excrescences upon the body politic; diseases which mar the beauty and disfigure the form; but underneath all beats a strong life. Ragged rocks and distorted strata crop out on the surface of the earth, the unmistakable marks of convulsion and ruin; but the massive granite underlies all. The current of the stream is marked on the surface with eddies and whirlpools and counter-currents; but deeper down, the majestic waters move on steadily to the ocean. On the surface of human society, we see many commotions, much that is painful and trying; defeats, betrayals, defections, apostacies, triumphs of wickedness. Gigantic frauds are perpetrated, sin is bold, iniquity comes in like a flood, men in high places betray

trusts, and men in low places lie in wait to deceive. Crimes of great enormity follow each other in quick succession, political obliquity has pervaded our social relations, corrupted party, and eaten into our noblest national life; yet deep in the heart of society, lies a conscience which yet responds to God's law and eternal right. Fraud may be fashionable and crime popular for the moment, but the eternal lines of truth, virtue and right, are not obliterated. In the deep heart of man, held by the restraints of grace, and yet under the divine control, there lies a belief in *the real* and *the true*. The foundations of human virtue and faith are not destroyed. If a polished stone be defaced and ruined, or a noble column fall shattered to the earth, or a fracture mark the wall here and there, the building still stands and the eternal verities are its base. Society is not wholly corrupt; the defences of righteousness are not wholly swept away. In these fearful times the public conscience may be impaired, but it is not destroyed. It may be borne down for a time, while men are swayed with passion, but it will yet arise in its might and terribly rebuke the workers of iniquity. The human conscience has outlived the assaults and injuries of six thousand years, and is yet found intrenched in human bosoms. It is offended at wrong, responds to right, and holds no man guiltless who breaks the laws of God or man.

7. *Let us give thanks that there is a Church in the world.*

God has a people. There are men who love and serve him. There is a great host of the sanctified. There are many saints. Not all who seem to be, are; not all who bear the name, have the spirit or know the power of true

religion; but there is still to be found "a *chosen generation, a royal priesthood,*" thousands who have not bowed the knee to Baal, multitudes who bear the marks of the Lord Jesus. Christ has a Church on the earth, which embosoms many Christian graces and much of the excellence that is to be found among men; a Church striving to obey the commands of her Lord and bear His word of grace to every creature. In the midst of defections, strifes, apostacies, skepticism and practical atheism, let us rejoice and give thanks to God, that there is a sanctuary on the earth, where the truth finds a home, and weary human hearts a refuge. The word of God is yet preached in its purity, and in all good fidelity. There be many who have turned aside to fables, to false philosophies, to useless and hurtful speculations, and have preached another gospel. That has been true of every age; but there be more who have remained steadfast in the truth; who, amid reproach and obloquy, have adhered, unflinchingly, to the great cardinal doctrines of grace; faithfully uttering them without fear or favor, and seeking only to live them and proclaim them, so as to commend themselves to their own consciences and to God. While there are, here and there, exceptions, the Church, as a whole, is yet true to her mission and her God. She is going out into the highways and hedges, seeking every where the wandering and the wayward and laboring, as never before, to reach every soul with the words and blessings of the gospel. I hail with joy and devout thanksgivings to God, these aggressive movements, opening places for daily prayer in the great centres of commerce, lifting up the voice of praise amid the busy din

of trade, building school-houses where poverty has gathered her children and guilt made its lair; leading the feet of her disciples the way to the abodes of misery and want, and making them sons and daughters of mercy and consolation to the outcast and the wretched. For such a Church, and such works of a Church, let us give thanks. For every missionary, for every mission-school, for every devout and humble disciple who is seeking, by word or work, to do good to the poor, the neglected, the imprisoned, the bond, let us give thanks and pray that the Lord would increase the company of these faithful servants so much the more!

8. *Let us be thankful for the utterance of the gospel of Christ.*

A gospel that tells us we are sinners and how we must be saved; that dares rebuke us to the face and tread our pride and self-righteousness in the dust, like filthy rags; a gospel that can strike straight through all subterfuges and all sophistries and all sins, and bring us, penitent and believing, to a Savior's feet; such a gospel we have in our world. Its utterances are heard to-day. We have the means of grace. The candlestick is not removed out of its place. In lands where apostles and prophets and martyrs toiled and died, the lights have gone out. But a single one of the seven churches of Asia holds even the formalities of Christian faith. Our teachers are not removed. The light still burns. The word is sounded forth. Messages and messengers come to sinners. God calls to men. The door of mercy is opened. Now, to-day, sinful men may hear and turn to God! We may know how our sins may be

forgiven—how heaven may be won by the blood of the Lamb. Is that nothing? to know how we may find the favor of God and make our way back to our Father's house? You may think lightly of the gospel and its messages to guilty men. Many do. Christ himself is as a root out of dry ground; without form or comeliness. But not so to all. "*To them that believe, he is precious,*" and to souls in darkness, under the curse, groping for light, praying for life; souls hungering for the bread of life; waiting for the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Be you thankful that *the door is not shut*; that mercy's voice yet rings out over this world, and that there is help from the sanctuary for lost men;—for you.

9. *Let us be thankful for the hopes of glory.*

Glory is to come; man's highest attainment will be in the future; to that we press our way. There is much here that is full of good; that is itself good; but these are only *provisions for the way*. We are on the march. We encamp in the desert, but pitch ever toward the land that is afar off. Our home is not here, (let us be thankful for that,) amid damps and choking vapors and nights and graves. No! In the distant future; in the land where no inhabitant forevermore shall say, "I am sick;" on the Mount of God. If we had not hope of that, we should be of all men, the most miserable. For that hope we give thanks. It inspires our fainting courage; it quickens our tardy footsteps; it refreshes our weariness and languor, and shortens these painful night-watches, as we wait for the morning. Courage! ye waiting servants of the Lord! The day breaketh.

And what shall I say more? Language fails in the recital. • Still, I am to add,

*III. That we must give thanks for all in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

Because all mercies come through his intervention and for his sake. Save by Him, we cannot approach unto God; we cannot offer a prayer, ask a favor, seek for any good, receive the smallest benefaction. Christ holds "*all power in heaven and earth; all judgment is committed unto the Son,*" and this, that men may honor the Son even as they honor the Father. God deals with men now on new grounds, since he has given his Son a sacrifice for the sins of the world. It is no longer law, but Christ is set for the rise and fall of the human race. On this rock they fall and are broken, or it shall fall upon them, and grind them to powder. It is to receive or reject Emmanuel—"God with us." Condemnation or acquittal will be as we receive or deny Him. You cannot even *give thanks to God, save through His name!* God will not hear even praises from lost and forgiven sinners, that do not come up through the intercessions and blood of Jesus.

While you rejoice in all your dwellings, for the good hand of God upon you, go and share your bounties with others less favored than yourselves. All are not joyful to-day. On this day men will sicken, and the poor hunger, the desolate be lonely, and the widow more sorrowful than yesterday, because her loved one comes not. Give thanks to God, speak words of comfort to men. Share your good things: Divide the spoil. Make houses that are strangers to luxuries for once to ring with joy from their fulness; make little children glad; make the prisoner and the

outcast feel, to-day, that they are still human, and not forgotten of men. Let the soldier share with you. Let the day everywhere be bright as God has made it. Do not mar this beautiful sunshine, nor this season of festivity with hateful passions and lusts, with sordid graspings after gain. Relax your animosities, give play to your better nature, and above all to Christian graces—and breathe, through all these glad hours, the purity and blessedness of God!

If we could make this earth, *for one day only, like heaven!*

A single remark remains.

*I. By this Eucharistic life and song, can we alone secure the blessing of God.*

"LET THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE, O GOD: LET ALL THE PEOPLE PRAISE THEE: THEN SHALL THE EARTH YIELD HER INCREASE, AND GOD, EVEN OUR OWN GOD, SHALL BLESS US."

Where no vapors ascend, no dew falls. On those arid wastes of the desert, where the burning sands glare up to the heavens, desolation reigns. Farther north, from a land of mountains and valleys, and springs, and streams, and lakes, ascending vapors climb the sides of Lebanon and float away to heaven, to pour again their fulness upon the earth in refreshing dews and fertilizing rains. The soul that climbs oftenest to the mount, and ventures nearest to the dwelling-place of God, comes down with the face all ablaze with the ineffable glory. For the sake of Emmanuel, and as the result of his intercessions, God sends his rain and dew, and causes his sun to shine upon the un-

thankful and the evil; but he fills his people with good, and even in the days of famine, they shall be satisfied. To those who give—give to him, give for him, give to his poor and suffering ones, he gives again, “*good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.*” “*Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thine increase: so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*”

Be thankful to God for all his mercies to you. Praise him for his goodness. It is the work of heaven, and so much as that spirit breathes in earth, so much shall it be like heaven; and these shall be to your soul the foretastes and earnest of the land, the pledges of final fruition and endless joy in the presence of God.