

God's Goodness, and our Ingratitude.

A DISCOURSE

DELIVERED IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

Pittsburgh, August 3d, 1849:

THE DAY APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AS A DAY OF FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER, ON ACCOUNT OF THE PREVALENCE OF THE CHOLERA—

BY W. D. HOWARD,

Pastor of the Church.

PITTSBURGH:

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY SMILLIN & GUYLOCK, GEORGE WOOD & THOMPSON,
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PITTSBURGH, AUGUST, 6, 1849.

REV. WM. D. HOWARD,

Pastor 2nd Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh;

DEAR SIR:—

Having heard your discourse on the day of the late *National Fast*,—and believing that it has a peculiar adaptation to the condition and wants of the community—we respectfully request a copy for publication, assured that the cause of *order* and *morality* will be subserved thereby.

Very Respectfully Yours,

M. B. LOWRIE,
JAMES I. KUHN,
W. W. WILSON,
J. D. WILLIAMS,
WM. A. IRVIN,
GEORGE P. HAMILTON,

JNO. T. LOGAN,
THOS. HARTLEY,
W. R. MURPHY,
JOHN F. LOY,
J. R. HERSH,
R. C. LOOMIS.

Pittsburgh, August 13th, 1849.

GENTLEMEN,

Whilst preparing the discourse which you have requested for publication, I had not the remotest thought of writing for the press. It was written in great haste, and when I was laboring under an indisposition, so severe, that had the circumstances been different, I should have felt warranted in abstaining from labor altogether. I am conscious that it has great defects, and that it is wholly unworthy the distinction you design it; but as it will afford me much more pleasure to gratify my friends, and, through the Divine blessing, to accomplish even the smallest amount of good, than it will occasion pain to be exposed to unkind criticism, I herewith place a copy at your disposal.

With great respect, I remain,

Gentlemen, Your friend and servant,
W. D. HOWARD.

TO M. B. LOWRIE, JAMES I. KUHN, W. W. WILSON, J. D. WILLIAMS, W. A. IRVIN, GEORGE P. HAMILTON, JNO. T. LOGAN, THOMAS HARTLEY, W. R. MURPHY, JOHN F. LOY, J. R. HERSH, R. C. LOOMIS.



S E R M O N .

PSALM CXLVII: 20.—“He hath not dealt so with any nation.”

EZEKIEL XX: 8.—“But they rebelled against me.”

“Ancient history informs us of a certain soldier, who, being on board of a vessel, which was wrecked by a violent storm, was cast on shore naked, and so exhausted as to have scarcely any appearance of life. A man, who had his home near the sea, happily was at the place, and a witness of his distress and danger. With all humane and charitable tenderness, he flew to the relief of the dying stranger. He carried him to his house, laid him on his own bed, revived, cherished, comforted, and for forty days supplied him freely with all the necessaries and conveniences which his languishing condition required. The soldier, thus rescued from a terrible death, was incessant in the warmest expressions of gratitude, and promised his benefactor, that, as he himself could not render him the reward his extraordinary benevolence merited; he would represent his conduct to the king, (with whom, on account of important services he had rendered him, he had some influence,) from whom, he assured him, he would receive returns somewhat proportional to his humanity. Having entirely recovered, and expressed a desire to return to his home, his benefactor supplied him with money and dismissed him with his blessing from his hospitable dwelling. Sometime after the soldier presented himself to the king; he related the disaster that had befallen the ship, he recounted his misfortunes, stating that he had lost every thing and almost life itself. And now, having filled the ear of his royal auditor with the tale of his own sufferings, you are ready to hear him speak in glowing terms of the extraordinary kindness of his noble deliverer. But he says not a word in his praise; he asks not for him a single favor; and had his baseness gone no further than this, it had been well. But it did. This monster, having looked with a covetous eye upon the

possessions of the man who had preserved his life, was now so destitute of all sense of gratitude, as to request the King to bestow upon him the estate upon which he had been so tenderly treated. The King, without examination, granted his infamous request, and this ingrate returned to his preserver and requited his goodness by taking forcible possession of his property, leaving him and his family in a state of utter destitution.

The injured man, astonished and provoked by such unparalleled ingratitude, determined, instead of submitting to his wrongs, to seek relief; he accordingly wrote to the King, and represented his own and the soldier's conduct in a lively and affecting manner. The King was fired with indignation; he ordered that justice should be done without delay; that the possession should be immediately returned to the man whose charitable offices had been so horribly repaid, and having seized the soldier, caused these words to be branded on his forehead, *The Ungrateful Guest.*"*

It may startle, if it does not offend some of you, my hearers, if I say that the treatment which God has received from us as a nation, resembles that which this humane man received from this monster of ingratitude.

What forbearance, what clemency, what unexampled kindness have we received from the hand of God! What forgetfulness, what ingratitude, what rebellion has he received at ours! From his full hand plenty has descended into all our borders, and yet we have forgotten him who fed us; his mighty arm has often brought us deliverance from external enemies, and his overruling providence has preserved us from the damage that our internal dissensions, or blundering legislation would have occasioned, yet his praise has been absent from our tongues; our cup, in every sense, and in the amplest sense, has been filled with mercies, and yet we are a people laden with iniquity; "He hath not dealt so with any nation, but we have rebelled against him."

In these passages we have two propositions, each of which it shall be our endeavor to establish and illustrate.

I. "He, (that is God,) hath not dealt so with any nation."

This was declared in the first instance of the Jews, and of them it

* In relating this event I have followed, with some unimportant variations, the version given by Arvine in his *Cyclopedia of Moral and Religious Anecdotes*.

was emphatically true. God had selected them from all the nations of the earth with the view of making them the recipients of extraordinary and most precious blessings. He gave them a large and rich inheritance, a land flowing with milk and honey, a land of forests and fertile plains, a land well watered, and well located; a land that produced abundance of corn and wine; he gave them many flocks and herds, and walled towns, and fenced cities not a few. But more than all these, he raised up among them many wise men and prophets, who taught them the knowledge of his ways; he reared the altar, he robed the priest, he appointed the sacrifice, he appeared in might and mercy, and often and most wonderfully in their midst; he made them the depository of his sacred oracles, and he dwelt continually, by a visible emblem among them. Well might the Psalmist say, "He hath not dealt with any other nation," as he hath dealt with the Jews, when they alone had *light*, whilst all the world besides was involved in the deepest darkness; when they alone had *liberty*, whilst all other nations were ground to the earth by a most cruel tyranny; when they alone had *truth*, whilst all other people were groping in the midst of interminable and fatal errors.

But this, which was so applicable to the Jews, is more so to us. With no nation, either ancient or modern, has God so dealt as he has with this of which it is our happiness to be a part. Do you ask for the evidences of this? They are upon every hand. They are written in living letters upon the land, the lake, the river; upon the mountain and the prairie; upon all our forests and all our fields; upon every thing we possess. You may see them in all our Industrial—Educational—Governmental—and Religious interests.

First. This truth is manifested in all our Industrial interests.

We include in these our agriculture, manufactures, and commerce. Let us briefly examine these, that we may derive from each the proof it affords, that "God hath not so dealt with any nation."

(1.) Look at our Agriculture.

To whom has God given so many broad and fertile acres? Where, under the same government, is to be found such a variety of climate, surface, soil and production as within the limits of these American States and Territories? We are a world within ourselves. We might be cut off from every other nation, and yet, not cut off from any lux-

ury. We can almost say, whatever is peculiar to any other country is common to ours. Does England boast of her parks and lawns? we have a boundless forest for every park, and many a lawn in our western world, that, could it be transferred, would hide half her isle from the light of day. Does Ireland boast of her flax and potatoes? we have them both—and France of her vine? we too have the grape—and Spain of her orange and lemon groves? we are not without these—and China of her tea? we can grow even this—and Russia of her wheat? we are fed with the finest of the wheat—and India of her cotton? we have more than all the world's beside. What grain, or fruit, or flower, or forest-tree is it, that our generous soil does not produce? And that not sparingly. There is not a scanty allowance doled out to our multitudinous population, scarcely sufficient to sustain nature, as in almost every other part of the world. The furrows are crowded with corn, the earth groans beneath its superabundant productions, our valleys wave with grain, and our hills and mountains to their very summits furnish food for countless herds and flocks. We have "enough and to spare." After our own extravagant demands have been supplied, we have millions left to feed the famishing in the less favored climes. Egypt was once called the granary of Europe; but she must now yield this proud title to America. "What was once said of England," is more true of the land which God has given us. "It is a paradise of pleasure, the garden of God. Our vales are like Eden, our hills as Lebanon, our springs as Pisgah, our rivers as Jordan, our walls the Ocean, and our defence the Lord Jehovah."

(2.) Again, look at our Manufactures.

Their growth is absolutely astonishing. Seventy years ago, and what were we in this respect? Almost every manufactured article came to us from foreign countries in foreign vessels. Our woolens, muslins, leather, books; all our iron manufactures, cabinet ware, and most other articles came across the water. *Then* we imported almost every thing, *now* we need import nothing but luxuries. *Then* we made scarcely anything, *now* our country is one vast workshop. What article is it, that can administer, either to our necessities, or the gratification of our taste, which is not now produced by ourselves? In what direction can you go in which your ears are not greeted with the ringing of the hammer, and the cheerful rattle of the spindle and

the shuttle? Our mountains have begun to pour out, at the call of the laborious miner, their exhaustless treasures of iron and coal, of lead and copper, of silver and gold, and the ingenuity of our artisans is converting them into every form that necessity or luxury, that utility, or taste demands. We have those among us, and they are not a few, "who are filled with wisdom to work all manner of cunning work in gold, in silver, in brass and iron, in purple and crimson, and blue, the weaver, the engraver, the embroiderer in scarlet and fine linen; those who devise curious works and are skilled in the cutting of stones and carving of wood, and who perform all manner of cunning workmanship." It would scarcely be an exaggeration, should we say, we are a people clothed in scarlet and fine linen, the products of our own looms, and fare sumptuously every day on the products of our own fields and gardens.

(3.) Again look at our Commerce.

A few years ago, it may be said with truth, we had no Commerce, and now this is the second commercial country in the world, and bids fair, very soon, to be the first. Our canvass whitens every sea, and wherever a port invites to trade, it is visited by our vessels. How many of our countrymen go down to the sea in great ships! how many love to ride the crested wave, and to find their home on the broad blue waters!

There is a struggle for the mastery of the seas, and it is not doubtful who will soon be the victors. Europe, cannot much longer, be Empress of the Ocean. She must yield the sceptre, and yield it to one that she too early and has too long despised.

A sagacious observer,* looking, some years ago, upon the condition of Europe, used in regard to it this remarkable language—"The state of all Europe is in the highest degree critical and uncertain. In the calmest times there are tremendous causes at work, volcanoes that may break forth at any moment. Men walk in that part of the world over hidden, hot embers, seemingly dead and covered with ashes, but ready at any moment to burst into a devouring flame. The elements of democracy are at work, a republican tendency and struggle is manifest, the day of retribution of ages of misrule and oppression is

* The REV. DR. CHEEVER.

yet to come. Envy and discontent, the consequences of misery and tyranny, and the desire of change, are at work in the lower ranks, without knowledge and virtue to balance and guide. Many overturnings must take place, and perhaps an universal breaking up of the established order of things. In comparison with ourselves, Europe is like a region at the base of a volcano. War is their passion and their habit, and the slightest cause may prompt it. We look on from this distant side of the world, in quiet security. We are now, and unless the curse comes upon us for our ingratitude, and we be smitten with madness, and blindness, and astonishment of heart, so as to rush un-called into the battle, we may keep ourselves to the end of time, utterly aloof, from the wars and fightings that agitate and tear the bosom of the continent of Europe. We hear the din of their quarrels, the shock of their contending armies, but have no motive whatever to engage in the commotion." This is almost a prophecy." And it has been fulfilled. The distant mutterings that presaged the storm, waxed louder and louder every succeeding year, and now we behold it raging with fearful violence all over those lands. The volcano, around whose frowning summit was seen the indications of a forthcoming eruption, has poured out its burning flood. All Europe is now rocked by the most frightful tempests, every throne is shaken to its foundation, and every government is thrown into consternation and perplexity. One revolution treads upon the heel of another. The most conflicting elements are at work, and the most contradictory results present themselves to the view of an astonished world. All is confusion. There is a fearful struggle without any definite aim, and before it is terminated the whole of Europe, we doubt not, will be involved in a bloody war. Then must all the pursuits of peace suffer, and not the least among them, their commerce. Were we as a nation, struggling against all the world for the ascendancy on the ocean, judging from the past, we have no doubt that in the end we should succeed. But when we have none to contend with, as we believe will soon be the case, since all the commercial nations of the old world are destined to be engaged in the on-coming strife, and their governments will be fully occupied in the atrocious work of treading out the life of liberty which is now laboring to the birth among them, our success is certain. So that whether we look back, and see a commerce that has grown to giant proportions

in an incredibly short period, or look forward, and see the promise of a commerce to which the present is but a beginning, we are equally surprised, and constrained to exclaim as it regards this matter; "God hath not so dealt with any nation."

And now, my brethren, if God has given us a climate and soil of such variety, that there is scarcely any production of the earth that we have not in abundance within ourselves; if he has covered our hills with flocks, and fed us with the finest of the wheat; if he has given such wisdom to our artisans that they have made more discoveries and improvements in the arts within fifty years, than had been made in all the world in any preceding period of its history, in ten times fifty; if he has so prospered us as to bring within the reach of the poorest of our people, the finest fabrics and the richest food; and if to all this he has, although it is within the memory of man that we have become a nation, given us a commerce, in comparison with which that of every nation of antiquity dwindles into insignificance, and to which, with a single exception, even in this commercial age of the world, there is nothing equal, do not all our *industrial interests* clearly demonstrate that, "*He hath not so dealt with any people.*"

Secondly. All our Educational interests go to the establishment of the truth of our text.

The founders of our institutions were a century in advance of their times. They had discovered the grand truth which had escaped all the world beside, that education, in its amplest sense, is at once the highest glory and the strongest bulwark of a nation. They knew that without it a country could not develop its resources; could not govern itself; could have no reliable defence against its enemies, and that therefore its inhabitants must be poor, and what is worse, must be slaves. Hence among their first acts we find them erecting, side by side, the church and the school house. Free schools were established here for all the people, when such a thing was not dreamed of in any other part of the world. Nor were they satisfied with making provision for the mere rudiments of an education. "Within eight years of the time of our fathers reaching these shores, they planted a College, when it could live only by levying a contribution of a peck of corn from each family in all the colonies, or its value in real, unadulterated wampum." In the very infancy of the country men were found who

gave princely donations to found or to foster these invaluable institutions.* “Every child as it was born into the world, was lifted from earth by the genius of the country; and in the statutes of the land, received as its birth-right, a pledge of care for its morals and its mind.” And the wisdom of their conduct is now plainly seen. From these sowings has sprung a rich and glorious harvest. The school and the college is everywhere planted. Except upon our distant frontier, no child, in all our wide territory, need grow up in ignorance. In every State the amplest provision is made. Our expenditures for these purposes, appear to Europeans, as most extravagant. The single city of Boston, with a population of about one hundred thousand, expends more, annually, for the education of her children, than does all England, with a population of fifteen millions. Some nations may have larger and richer Universities, there may be a few, where collegiate education is more common than it is with us, but no nation has so many and such excellent common schools, and among no people are the children so generally and so well instructed. “There is among us an universal diffusion of knowledge, which is unexampled in the world.”†

Nor is our education confined to that which is secular. We are trained to the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ his co-equal Son, our Saviour; the noblest and best of all knowledge. The Scriptures are spread open before us and we are made acquainted with their surprising and sanctifying contents. The Sabbath school, and the sanctuary open their doors in every part of the land. Pious parents, in many instances, have taught our lisping tongues to utter the sublimest truths, and pious teachers, in others, have given us “line upon line, and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little.” “In no other part of the world have *all* classes the means of religious training. If any doubt remains, think of those crowds of Papists, who through ignorance of the Scriptures, pray to departed saints, and tender gold for

* As early as 1638, only eighteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims at Plymouth, the Rev. JOHN HARVARD left a legacy of seven hundred and seventy-nine pounds to the school at Newton or Cambridge, afterwards the College called by his name.

† “It is said that in England, not more than one child in fifteen possesses the means of being taught to read and write; in Wales, one in twenty; in France, until lately, when some improvement has been made, not more than one in thirty-five. In New England,” and in many other parts of our country, “every child possesses such means.”—*Daniel Webster*.

the pardon of sin! See those hordes of Mohamedons, stupid as the beast, till their infuriated passions awake them to spill a brother's blood. Think of the millions of pagan tribes, who to this day, worship a block of wood. Yes, think of the *hundreds* of millions, who never saw a Bible, who never enjoyed a Sabbath, and to whom no kind angel of mercy ever carried proffers of pardon." Think of the multitude of Jews who persist in their unbelief, and to whom the Gospel is a stumbling-block; and millions of others, who are neither Papists nor Pagans, Mohamedons nor Jews, but are living in the midst of Protestant Europe, and yet, as effectually debarred from any religious training as if they were the subjects of the King of Morocco. And now, as ye look over these wide wastes of intellectual and moral desolation presented to your view in every part of the world, and contrast them with the verdure and fruitfulness found among ourselves, are you not constrained to exclaim, surely, "*God hath not so dealt with any nation.*"

Thirdly. All the institutions of our Government proclaim the same truth.

is so notorious that we have more freedom in this land than any other upon which shines the light of day, that it seems almost like a loss of time to pause to observe it. We are not ground to the earth by a cruel and capricious despotism—we are not obliged to support an expensive monarchy, and a proud aristocracy, who grasp all the wealth of the nation and leave the million to pine in penury and struggle with starvation—we are not cursed with a pseudo-republicanism worse than either—there is not quartered upon us a vast army who keep us in servitude at the point of the bayonet—nor are we chained to a dead carcass, bearing the name of a Church, which by its shameless extravagance deprives men of their honest earnings on earth, and by its formalism and heresy robs them of heaven. Here we have a government of reason; a government of our own choice; a government that is economical; that secures the greatest good to the greatest number; that has an arm to punish the loftiest offender, and to protect the humblest citizen. Here the press, and opinion, and religion enjoy the largest freedom. Here liberty burns with the brightest flame, pouring her blessed light into the remotest corners of the land. Here is an asylum for the oppressed of every clime, and multitudes are finding

in our midst protection from oppressions that rain down upon them in the land that gave them birth. No one surely can doubt these things, but if any should, then we recommend them to commence their search for that spot on all this globe where they can enjoy more or richer blessings, or live under the protection and fostering care of a wiser and freer government. Will you turn to that vast empire over which the Autocrat of all the Russias sways his iron sceptre? Look at that nation of ignorant, besotted slaves, liable for the exercise of inalienable rights to be cast into prisons whose doors were never taught to open for the wretches they confine, or sent to Siberia, to drag out a miserable existence amid eternal snows, or torn from their homes in tender years to swell those armies which are engaged in the atrocious work of treading out the liberties and lives of those who are struggling to be free. Will you there seek an asylum from the oppressions of this government? Well if it is not to be found there, will you come further south and seek it in England? The citizens of that favored land have many privileges. It is a Protestant land. They have a noble constitution, trial by jury, the right of appeal, and many other privileges, justly esteemed the most precious that men enjoy. But more than these, it is a land of Bibles, of Sabbaths, of Sanctuaries; it is a land which has been consecrated by many prayers, and is now the home of many of the most precious servants of God. But an enormous national debt, an expensive system of government, an expensive and intolerant hierarchy, and a still more expensive aristocracy, who hold almost all the landed property, almost all the offices of trust and emolument, a vast standing army, ruinous taxation, a crowded population and low wages; grind the face of the poor, almost preclude the possibility of a person rising above the position in which he was born, or laying any thing up for a season of sickness, or the period of old age; prevent his educating his children and in the great majority of cases compel him to subsist on the coarsest food, to wear the coarsest apparel, and to live in a most uncomfortable and unhealthy dwelling. Well, if greater blessings are not to be found in England, will you seek them in Republican France? Unhappy France! distracted by numerous fierce factions, the prey of unprincipled demagogues, and fanatical speculators. There the people are contending for they know not what, boasting of republicanism, yet butchering the poor Romans for wishing to

be free; shedding their blood like water to sustain a government, which has less in it to command the respect of the world, than that from which they have just delivered themselves. Will you look to unsettled, distracted, blood-stained, dishonored France, for a freedom and happiness that is not to be found here? Nay. Then surely you will not go to Rome, or Austria, or Spain, or Portugal. Ah! superior privileges are nowhere to be found. We all know it well. There is written in glowing characters upon the institutions in whose grateful shade we are permitted to dwell, "*God hath not so dealt with any nation.*"

Fourthly. But there is one other evidence of this truth to which we must briefly refer. I mean our religious privileges. Here every man may worship God under his own vine and fig-tree. There is none to molest him or make him afraid. Every one is permitted to sit under the droppings of the sanctuary. The gospel is brought to our very doors. This is, in a pre-eminent degree, a land of Sabbaths, and Sanctuaries, and Bibles. Our religious privileges are as free as the air, and as multitudinous as the leaves of the forest. God offers to every one of us eternal life. "We are pressed with the obligations of dying love." There are no people on the face of the earth, that have so many calls, yea, I had almost said, so many motives, to be the servants of God, as we. There is a voice coming up from the graves of our fathers urging us to be christians and testifying to us that in the service of God there is great reward. The wonderful dealings of Divine Providence with us all through our surprising history, continually exhort us to choose the Lord God, as our God, and the King of Israel as our ruler. The lives and conduct of those who laid the broad, deep foundations of our government, and achieved our liberties; and the marked providences of God in sustaining them all through their perilous labor, constitute a most eloquent sermon, which is constantly ringing in our ears. We ought to be, not so much a christian nation, as a nation of christians. To no people in modern times has God given such evidences of his graciousness. And he is still merciful. Our sins have provoked his wrath, yet he has not withdrawn his Spirit. We are not yet obliged to take up the sad lamentation, "The harvest is past, and the summer is ended." That mandate which consigned Ephraim to utter hopelessness, has not gone forth respecting us. "Thus

after our cup has run over with earthly blessings, God has opened to us all the treasures of heaven. First he fills our tables with his fruits and wines and then invites us to the marriage supper of the Lamb. Here is unparalleled benevolence. No world has known the like. The angels have seen nothing like it in heaven, the devils have heard nothing like it in hell. That God should be kind to the *good* is to be expected; but that infinite love and wisdom should exhaust their skill to make a rebel happy, is enough to excite wonder in the breast of Gabriel."

But notwithstanding God has done all this, and much more, we have proven a degenerate, ungrateful, and rebellious people. This brings us to the other part of our subject, to the illustration of which we must now proceed.

II. "We have rebelled against him."

Is this possible! Has God done so much for us; more than he has for any other people; given us all that heart can wish, and yet have we been, not only ungrateful, but rebellious? We have; and the evidences of our ingratitude and rebellion rival, in number, the mercies of God.

In proof of this declaration in our text, we shall at present enumerate some of the prevalent sins of our land. Give us, we pray you, your attention, and let us have the assistance of your consciences and your prayers, for whilst this is a melancholy, it is a necessary and pressing duty. The hand of God is heavy upon us. The pestilence, his angry messenger, is visiting every portion of our widely extended territory, and sweeping into untimely graves multitudes of our unhappy countrymen. Our sins have provoked a merciful God, and he is thus showing his displeasure.

It behoves us with the deepest humility to array our sins before our eyes, that we may be, through the divine blessing, duly affected by their enormity, and led to deep and unfeigned repentance.

1. The first class of sins I shall mention as proving our rebellion, is our *abuse of God's mercies*.

I have mentioned liberty as one of our principle blessings, and now, I may mention the abuse of it, as one of our principle sins. How true is it that extremes meet, and that all extremes are error. Without liberty, we should be a nation of slaves, an excess of liberty will produce the same result. The only difference is in the kind of master we

shall have. In the one case he might be a despot, whose talents would command our admiration, whilst his vices and cruelties would excite our contempt and execration; in the other, they would be miserable ruffians, the very off-scourings of the creation. And if we must make choice between these, then give us the tyrant rather than the rabble, the despot rather than the mob.

The spirit of insubordination; of disregard and contempt of law; is one of the most dangerous spirits by which a community can be visited. It includes every other vice. It turns tyrant in the very worst form. Order, property, virtue, life fall before it. It lights the torch of the incendiary, it sharpens the dagger of the murderer, it hisses on the ruffian mob to deeds of violence and bloodshed, it drives the judge from his bench, and tramples the laws beneath its feet, it awes the legislature and defies the constitution. It fears nothing, it cowers before nothing, but the bullet and the bayonet. And these it ought to have without stint.

This spirit exists among us. It is growing mighty, and consequently insolent. It has long gone unwhipt of justice, and now begins to set all authority at defiance.

The most extravagant notion of liberty exists in the minds of some of our people. The child thinks himself at liberty to set at defiance the law of the parent; the employed, the regulations of the employer; the idle; that they have a perfect right to the fruits of industry; the vicious; that they have a right to the respect and honor of the virtuous. Some complain if they are not allowed to engage in a business that scatters firebrands, arrows and death in the community;—others, when they have abused a trust, if it is taken from them;—and others, when their insolent and extravagant demands are not complied with, if they are not permitted to engage in a conspiracy that would lay a whole city in ruins. This is what we call an abuse of liberty. This we regard as one of our national sins; and as one of the evidences that we have rebelled against God.

I do not say that we have all committed it. But I do say that it has been committed so often; it has made its appearance in such high places; and has been connived at so often, that it has become a national sin.

And now, in regard to this sin, what ought we to do? It is plainly set before us, it is an evidence of our rebellion, and it is one of the causes of the distresses that have come upon us. Why, let us look at it, let us repent, and let us reform.

I call upon you parents to begin with your children, and teach them the great lesson of obedience, without which all your other teachings will be in vain. Let your word be *right*, and then let your word be *law*. We ask you not to be cruel, we ask you not to be tyrannical, we pray you not to provoke your children to wrath, but we beseech you to teach them the fifth commandment, and require of them that reverence which is your due. Keep your children from bad company; keep them from the streets; lead them to the church, and send them to the Sabbath school. Let all your commands be framed in wisdom, and delivered with kindness, but insisted upon with unyielding firmness. Your children's welfare, your own comfort, your country's honor and stability, your Maker's law, all combine to urge upon you the performance of this duty. And if we this day address those who have the hearts of parents, patriots, christians, we shall not speak in vain. Suffer the word of exhortation, and may God enable you, in this matter, to do your whole duty.

I call upon you magistrates to maintain the majesty of the laws. Let mercy be mingled with justice, but still let not justice be sacrificed. Let the offender be punished, it will do him good, it will do good to society, it will avert the judgments of heaven. How is it that our ears are stunned with so many oaths; that we witness so much Sabbath breaking; that we see so many shops open on the Lord's day; that we so often hear the rattle of dice and the clatter of ten pins? Swearing, and Sabbath breaking, and gambling, are they not violations of the laws of the commonwealth? Where are ye, ye guardians and executors of the laws? Important trusts have been committed to you. For the sake, not of your offices and emoluments, but of your country, we beseech you, be not faithless.

Intemperance is another glaring sin of which we are guilty. We abuse God's goodness, by converting that which he has given us to sustain life, into a most fruitful cause of crime, of pauperism, of misery in every conceivable form, and of death, both to the body and the soul. This sin, alas! notwithstanding all the efforts of the Christian and the

philanthropist; notwithstanding all the prayers and tears of women and children, made widows and orphans by it, is increasing among us. It is said that every twenty-fifth person in our country is a drunkard; that one hundred millions of dollars is wasted among us, and that thirty thousand of our countrymen are crowded into dishonored graves and a terrible eternity by it, every year. What are the ravages of the pestilence compared with these ravages! What are all our losses, compared with these losses?

2. The second class of sins we shall mention as evincing our rebellion, is the abuse of God's name and ordinances.

Profanity prevails among us to a shocking extent. Perhaps among no people on the face of the earth is there as much profane swearing as there is among us. I think I have heard it observed, that whatever be the vernacular of a man, he swears in English. "By reason of swearing the land mourneth." This vice is most wantonly indulged in, whilst for it there is not the shadow of a reason or excuse. And unhappily it is not confined to the low, to the vulgar, and the despised. It has been welcomed into the most refined circles; few classes are exempt from it, and many are wholly given up to it. We hear it from toothless age, just tottering on the verge of the grave, and lisping infancy just learning to prattle. Go where you may, along the high-way, in the market-place, in our hotels, in the stage coach, the car, on the boat, even as you are entering the house of God, and your ears are stunned with oaths that make the blood run cold. This vice is especially daring, it is a direct attack upon God, it betrays the most settled enmity against him, and it is especially offensive to him, for he declared in the most solemn manner amid the thunderings and lightnings of Sinai, that he would not hold him guiltless, who perpetrated it.

Now is it any wonder, if clouds of oaths rise up from every portion of our land, and from every age, sex and condition, more numerous and more fervent than our prayers, that the wrath of God descends upon us? Ah! in the afflictions of my country, in the absence of the Divine Spirit, in the fewness of conversions, and in the destruction of property, and life, by fire and frost, by flood and sword, and in the marchings of the terrible pestilence, whose ravages belong to all times, whose victims belong to all classes, methinks I see the answer to mil-

lions of profane prayers. "O God have mercy upon us, for we are a people laden with iniquity."

Again, the profanation of the Sabbath proves us to be a rebellious people. God attaches great importance to the Sabbath, he has put great honor upon it, and there were few sins visited, under the Mosaic dispensation, with a more terrible punishment. Wrath was brought upon Israel; Jerusalem was made a desolation; and her sons and daughters driven into servitude, because they profaned the Sabbaths. "What evil thing is this that ye do," says the pious Nehemiah, "and profane the Sabbath day? Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the Sabbath."—Neh. xiii. 17, 18. The richest blessings were promised to the Jews upon their observance of the Sabbath, and the severest judgments were threatened upon their desecration of it. "And it shall come to pass if ye diligently hearken unto me, saith the Lord, to bring in no burden through the gates of this city on the Sabbath day, but hallow the Sabbath to do no work therein; Then shall there enter into the gates of this city kings and princes, the men of Judah, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; and this city shall remain forever. But if ye will not hearken unto me to hallow the Sabbath day, and not to bear a burden, even entering in at the gates of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day; then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem and it shall not be quenched."—Jer. xvii. 24, 25, 27. Now is God, the God of Jews only? is he not of the Gentiles also? Yes, of the Gentiles also. He is our God, and Governor, and Judge, now as emphatically as he was the God and Governor and Judge of the Jews in the days of Jeremiah. If they were punished for this sin, we may not expect to escape. Once, the Sabbath in America was regarded as the holy of the Lord honorable. He who desecrated it was lightly esteemed. Men, then, were not allowed to walk the streets on business, or pleasure. I have read of the Lieutenant Governor, of one of our proudest states, being stopped, by a public officer, as he was walking out on the Sabbath, and obliged to return. In those earlier, and, shall I add, better days of the republic, the outward observance of the Sabbath was universal. No vessels left our ports, no places of business or amusement were thrown open, "the traveller delayed his journey,

and the young laid aside their pleasures." But alas! how have things changed. "How has the fine gold become dim." Now in every part of the land business and pleasure are attended to as though God had never said "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." Boats are plying in every direction on our rivers—the quiet of this hallowed day is disturbed every where, by the rattle of mail coaches, and the scream of the locomotive whistle. In some of our cities the stores, the theatres, the ball rooms, are open on the Sabbath, the wharves are crowded with busy workmen, and the pious, if any be left in those graceless places, are disturbed by the rumbling of lumbering drays and wagons, and the cursing of profane teamsters. But worse than this, if any thing can be worse: look at the violation of the Sabbath in high places. Our government, systematically, defies high heaven, and tramples upon his holy law, by running the mail on the Sabbath. Congress often sits on the Sabbath. On the fourth of last March, which occurred on the Sabbath, it is said they passed laws, and our Chief Magistrate was seen sitting in the Capitol giving his official signature to those laws; and then they published to the world that they had been passed on Saturday. Thus, our national legislature committed the double sin, of violating the Sabbath and violating the truth. Is it any wonder that God's judgments are abroad? Look at these things, and be surprised if you can, that God has kindled fires in our borders, and consumed millions of property; that he has broken up the fountains, and rolled the desolating waters into the very heart of our cities; that he has sent forth the pestilence, to breathe his pestiferous breath on every part of our land, to array us in sackcloth, and make our smitten country one vast Aceldama? "Oh! God have mercy upon us, for we are a people laden with iniquity."

We might mention many other instances in which God's ordinances are abused, but now have not time. There are many other sins besides those which may properly be put into these classes, which demonstrate our rebellion. What shall we say of our *extravagance*, of our *worldliness*, of *killing*, and *stealing*, and *committing adultery*, and *blood touching blood*, and *the breaking out and overflowing of wickedness*? What shall we say of a corrupting literature, which falls in very showers around our dwellings; of the growing mercenariness of the press; of the proneness of ministers of the gospel to seek popularity

rather than usefulness; of the increasing wrecklessness of human life; and of, we know not what, other vices and crimes? We can say nothing. We know they exist, and we have reason to fear, to a degree, that the best informed have no adequate conception. We blush to utter more, and it is needless. These are enough; enough to prove, that, notwithstanding, "God hath not dealt so with any people, we have rebelled against him:" enough to humble us in the dust before him, if we are not wholly given over to sin: enough to alarm us, and to lead us to unfeigned repentance. O, my God, how great are our crimes, and how wonderful is it, that we are not consumed and swept away in thy righteous displeasure!

"These sins have offended God,"—I use the language of another, somewhat modified,*—and he has come out of his holy place to punish us. If we do not repent, how can we hope that God will not treat us as he has other wicked nations, and discharge upon us, ultimately, the full vials of his wrath. Is there not occasion why this day should be devoted to God? If he be for us, none can be against us; but if God forsake us, we are as stubble, and can be trodden down by any foe that he may commission. And can we hope that he will continue to protect us, when discipline and prayer are neglected; when the name, the worship, the Sabbath, and the sacred honor of God are disregarded; and when every sin that can be named prevails? Will he continue to shield us by his power, when no longer his people? Will he be "a wall of fire round and about us," when no longer "the glory in the midst of us?" As the Lord liveth, our sins have placed us in danger, yea, have sent forth his desolating judgments in our midst, so that a voice has gone forth from the highest places in our land, saying—"Let us humble ourselves before God, let us fast and pray," lest in his just displeasure we be destroyed.

Is it not then a time when all classes of men should fear before the Lord? Ought not the ministers to take their stand between the porch and the altar, and cry, with incessant tears, "Lord, spare thy people, and give not thy heritage to destruction," and our land wholly to the sword of the destroyer?

My Christian friends, it becomes us to lie low in the dust to-day, and

* REV. D. CLARK.

to inquire for those sins by which a merciful God has been offended. The church is not free from blame. Had we been less worldly minded, more self-denying, more devout; had we had more of that spirit of importunate prayer which Abraham had when he interceded for Sodom; it might not have been thus with us. Think, brethren, of the impending dangers. Every thing dear to the pious heart is at stake; the country bought with the blood of our fathers; yes, and the American churches bought with richer blood. As we inquire this day, where are the seven churches of Asia, others may inquire, another day,—“Where are the once flourishing churches of America?” O, is this ground, made sacred by so many prayers and penitential tears, to be trodden down by savages? Is this temple of God, and others like it, to be razed to the ground, or converted into synagogues of Satan? After God has baptized it with his Spirit, will he suffer it to be prostituted to such vile purposes! Christians, let this day be sacred to prayer for Zion, and for your afflicted country. Pray not here only, but go to your closets and deplore the prevailing iniquities, and weep over a people, who by their sins, are destroying themselves. If God will not forgive us, we die. And it is only in answer to the prayers of the saints that he will forgive. Oh! how much is dependent this day upon that little band whom the world despises, and of whom it is not worthy. If the mandate go forth from God that shall stay the ravages of the pestilence—if the floods of tears which now flow in every part of the land be dried up—if the pall of death be lifted from us—if health return to our countrymen, and prosperity to our business, and the merciful Spirit to our churches, it must be in answer to their fervent prayers. Then ye who have an interest at the mercy seat, let me exhort you to become, this day, in behalf of your afflicted country, wrestling Jacobs. “Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal us; he hath smitten and he will bind us up.”

AMEN.