

UNGODLY NATIONS DOOMED:

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE

ANNUAL THANKSGIVING,

NOVEMBER 29, 1849,

RECOMMENDED BY THE GOVERNOR OF LOUISIANA.

By R. L. STANTON,

Pastor of the Second Presbyterian Church of New-Orleans.

NEW-ORLEANS:
PRINTED BY WILLIAM H. TOY, 59 POYDRAS ST.
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NEW-ORLEANS, DECEMBER 5, 1849.

REV. R. L. STANTON,

DEAR SIR,—The undersigned, on behalf of the Congregation, believing that the Discourse delivered by you in the Second Presbyterian Church in this city, on the late Thanksgiving Day, would, if published, help to disseminate correct views of our duties as a community, and our interests as a nation, respectfully request a copy for publication.

With great esteem and respect,

We are, Rev. and dear Sir,

Very sincerely yours,

J. S. COPES,	E. PEALE,
MELANCTHON JACKSON,	H. THOMAS, JR.
T. C. TWICHELL,	E. A. HALL,
F. M. FIELDHOUSE,	WM. COOPER,
J. W. STANTON,	J. H. HEALD,
THOS. E. ADAMS,	R. H. MCNAIR,
THOS. ALLEN CLARKE,	J. B. GRIBBLE,
JNO. D. HENDERSON.	

NEW-ORLEANS, DECEMBER 7, 1849.

Messrs. J. S. COPES, M. D., E. PEALE, T. C. TWICHELL, and others.

GENTLEMEN,—The Discourse politely requested by you, for publication, is herewith placed at your disposal.

Very respectfully,

Your obedient servant,

R. L. STANTON.

DISCOURSE.

ISAIAH, lx: 12.

“For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish.”

THIS PASSAGE is sometimes construed to mean, that the nation that will not serve God, shall perish. But this is not the true meaning. You can perceive this at a glance, by referring to it. This whole chapter is an address made to the Church. The speaker is the Son of God. He is pointing out the glory which the Church shall exhibit in the latter day, when multitudes of the Gentiles shall be added to it.

It is plainly the Church which is addressed in the opening of this chapter: “Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.” * * “And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and Kings to the brightness of thy rising.”

Then, after portraying the glory which shall attend the great accession of the Gentiles, the speaker says: “And they shall call thee, The city of the Lord;—The Zion of the Holy One of Israel.” This, in the plainest language, characterizes *the Church* as the body addressed.

It is also as evident that he who makes this address, is the Divine Head of the Church, speaking in the name and by the authority of the Godhead. He says to Zion, “I will make

thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations ; * * and thou shalt know that I the Lord am thy Saviour, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob."

It is the same person speaking, and the same object spoken to, in the text—the speaker being the "Mighty One of Jacob," and the object or body addressed being the Church : "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve thee, shall perish."

It is then, *not God*, that is here meant, whom the nations must serve, or perish, but *the Church* of God. If they serve *the Church* as required, of course God will be served. The passage can only refer to the service of God, however, in this indirect manner. If they serve the Church, God's purpose will be accomplished ; and the service, if rendered from right motives, will be regarded as in the highest sense rendered to himself, and will be accepted as such ; for nothing that pertains to the Deity himself, is placed above the honor and interests of his Church. Its walls are ever before him ; Zion is graven upon the palms of his hand ; her children are as dear unto him as the apple of his eye ; the mother may forget her first-born, but Jehovah can never forget Zion. It is in consequence of this high regard which God cherishes for his Church—in consequence of her character, labors, and importance to the world,—that the Mighty One of Jacob says to her, that "the nation and kingdom that will not serve **THEM** shall perish ; yea, those nations shall be utterly wasted." This is the plain, only, and unvarnished sense of the passage.

The great truth here embodied and pronounced, is **THE DOOM OF UNGODLY NATIONS**. The criterion by which their character and destiny are to be determined, is *whether they serve the Church*. "For the nation and kingdom that will not serve **THEM**, shall perish."

I shall endeavor to show—

I. What service nations can render to the Church.

II. That the doom here pronounced is a solemn truth, as illustrated in the history of the past.

And from these propositions endeavor to draw—

III. Lessons of instruction concerning our own nation,—arising from our present condition and prospects—and then, see how far these may furnish causes for devout and humble thanksgiving to God.

I. What service can nations render to the Church?

Under this head we may observe—

That sometimes nations have attempted to do too much for the Church, under the plea of serving her. They have formed with her an unholy matrimonial alliance, for the purpose, in part, of extending to her the protecting arm of the Civil Power. I say, in part; for no doubt civil rulers have also had an eye to the influence which the Church might exert in their behalf, by controlling the mind of the people through the priesthood.

This union of Church and State is plainly not one of the ways in which God designed that nations should serve the Church. It never has been of service to the Church in any age. If we grant that some incidental advantages have grown out of it in some particular exigency, still it is true that the evils of union have far outweighed them. This is so plain a truth, seen in every age, seen now, that we need only name it. From the time of Constantine the Great, to the present moment, the Visible Church has groaned under corruption, fraud, simony, moral impurities, and lifeless formalities, which have made her service a mockery of Heaven, wherever she has been yoked to the car of the Civil Power. The middle ages stand forth as a blackened monument of this truth. This union was prolific of those evils which caused the Reformation. Scotland bore the burden until it became intolerable; but at length rose in the might of her Lord, and burst the chains that bound her Zion in subjection to kings and nobles. And the Establishment of England, at this moment, is heaved by throes and convulsions which seriously disturb the peace of the Church, and threaten the safety of the

State—all growing out of that unnatural union, by which the temporal rules the spiritual power, and by which civil courts interpret the doctrines of the Thirty-Nine Articles.

We say, then, on this point, that this is not the way God would have nations serve the Church. Her Redeemer would say to them, Let her alone, if this is your only service; I will take care of her.

Nations may serve the Church—

1. *By protecting Christianity wherever established.*—I mean securing its institutions from molestation, and supporting it against powers that would destroy it. To illustrate this: The Church is engaged in sending the Gospel to all nations of the earth, where now prevail various forms of false religion. If those nations do not protect the institutions of Christianity, so that the Gospel may be planted—if they permit the followers of Christ to be persecuted, and missionaries to be murdered, as some of them have done—God will destroy them. All idols, says the Prophet, God will “utterly abolish.” But Christianity he will establish. And what is demanded of the Civil Power is to protect the institutions of Christianity—to secure the lives, property, and interests of its professors from harm. This is required of all nations, at all times. And this service they can render, in the legitimate exercise of their functions.

Another thing closely allied to this, and which is required of all nations, is—

2. *To guarantee full liberty of conscience, and the perfect freedom of religious worship*—so that all persons and all denominations of christians may serve God according to the dictates of their own consciences, being responsible to God alone for the manner in which they worship him. A nation is not at liberty to show any partiality, by favoring one denomination above another, in regard to any civil rights or immunities, nor can they justly interfere with their religious rights. They can, and should, secure to all persons and sects, untrammelled freedom of conscience in all religious matters.

In this manner, while they favor each individual, they will render great service to the Church at large; for truth will then be left to work its way—and being mighty, it will ultimately triumph.

Nations may serve the Church—

3. *By exerting their power to put down vice and immorality, and encourage virtue and good order, in all proper ways.*

While it is the duty of a nation to secure to the whole people religious liberty, it is their duty to check open and corrupting immoralities, even though they may be committed in the name of religion. Fanaticism has sometimes perpetrated the darkest crimes, under the garb of religious duties. Open and unblushing immoralities have been taught as truths to be received and acted upon—tenets which, if carried out, would destroy the foundations of society. Governments have generally deemed it their right and their duty to guard public morals, and punish those who would corrupt and destroy public purity and order. In this, they may essentially serve the Church, by showing that “the powers that be” are arrayed on the side of virtue. In order that nations may the better guard public morality, all who are in authority should be, personally, men of high moral standing—men of pure character and reproachless lives, whose example may be safely followed. Nothing gives such currency to vice in any form—nothing throws off the restraints of law so effectually—as for the law-makers to trample upon their own enactments. If those in authority show insubordination, the people, extensively, will follow their example. Gaming, profanity, drunkenness, will thrive luxuriantly, under such countenance.

Nations may serve the Church—

4. *By so honoring the Sabbath, that the officers of government shall not be required to labor on that day.*

The Sabbath is an essential institution of God for the Church. Without it, the Church and the world would perish together. Nothing so much hinders all efforts to secure the Sabbath’s proper observance among a people, as to have the public functionaries of that people, and the departments of

its government, habitually engaged in desecrating that day. If the head of the nation, and others in high places, profane this day, their influence will be felt, and their example copied, by millions of the people without any.

We do not say, that the Civil Power shall require by statute, the observance of the Sabbath; but we do say, that all the functionaries of a nation's government should so far observe it as to cause all its wheels to rest on the Lord's Day. In this, a nation may greatly serve the Church—in this, it may honor God, and escape his displeasure. The teachings of Scripture show, that *nations* as well as families and individuals, are bound to set an example to the world of Sabbath observance. No sin is more plainly written in the history of God's dealings with nations, as the cause of their overthrow, than a wilful desecration of his day. A nation cannot do a greater injury to the Church than habitually to violate the Sabbath; nor can it do Zion a greater service than properly to honor this most precious of her institutions.

Nations may serve the Church—

5. *By acknowledging God in public fastings, in view of judgments; and in public thanksgivings for mercies.*

This is a way in which nations may especially serve the Church. The days appointed for such services, become in a peculiar sense the nation's Sabbaths. The services themselves become the nation's worship. The prayers and praises which ascend to God, are the incense of a nation's devotion. We have thus a national example, and a national sanction of Christianity as the religion of the people. We have the most explicit testimony a nation can give to public worship. And above all, we have, in these appointments, the most distinct national recognition and acknowledgement of the Government and Providence of God over nations, and over the world at large. These appointments, emanating from kings or emperors, from presidents or governors, become invested with a national character, and reflect upon the world the real sentiments of the national mind and heart.

Nations may serve the Church—

6. *By maintaining peace with the world.*

Nations can do no greater injury to Zion than to become embroiled in war; nor can they promote Zion's glory more efficiently than by maintaining peace. The Gospel is a message of peace. It is "Glory to God in the highest—peace on earth, good will to men." Every war, prosecuted at home or abroad, foreign or civil, brings into a country a deluge of immorality, infidelity, and crime. Every vice attains a giant growth, and stalks abroad at noonday, unconcealed. Intemperance, licentiousness, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, take especial license, and claim new prerogatives, in time of war.

All the foregoing particulars, with others that might be named, enter into that kind of service, which all nations may render to the Church of God, without in the least departing from the legitimate objects and designs of civil government. Human government is an ordinance of God. Jehovah may therefore justly require this service at the hand of every nation.

If this duty is required of nations, why, on the same principle, is it not required of states of every grade, of boroughs, cities, and all municipal authorities? The same reasons, we think, which make it the duty of the greater, impose the obligation upon the less.

I am to show—

II. That the doom here pronounced upon those nations that do not serve the Church, is a solemn truth, as illustrated in the whole history of the past.

This opens so wide a field, that I can only glance at a few particulars. Take, as the first instance, the Jews. As a *nation*, they have long since "perished;" yea, they have been "utterly wasted." They are scattered among every people under heaven. And what makes their condition a striking illustration on this point is, that they have maintained themselves amid every people on earth, as a distinct and independent community, having their peculiar regulations, still regarding Judea as their fatherland, and Jerusalem as their

capital city, to which they yet hope, whether with reason or not, to be at length restored. But, with all this distinctness and separation from the rest of their fellow-men, numbering, at a low estimate, as the best geographers think, more than five millions, their *national* existence has been a thing unknown for eighteen centuries—ever since the utterance of that fearful prophecy which was pronounced against them by the Son of God, and which was soon after carried into execution by the Emperor Titus. The words of that prediction have been literally accomplished—that they should be scattered abroad, and should become a hissing and a by-word among all nations.

Now, the cause of this national destruction is plainly written. It was because they did not serve the Church, that they were blotted out. They rejected and crucified the Head of the Church—would not acknowledge his Messiahship—stood aloof from his kingdom—would not enter it themselves and persecuted unto death those who did enter.

But the Jewish nation is only one among a thousand whose history and downfall illustrate this proposition. The kingdoms of ancient Babylon, Assyria, Macedonia, and Egypt—their former history, and present condition—all show that they perished and have been utterly wasted, because they withstood the light of true religion, adhered to their idolatrous systems in defiance of the living God, and would not protect, encourage, and defend the rights of Immanuel, and thus serve the Church. Babylon enjoyed the example and instructions of a Daniel; and each of the kingdoms named, were highly favored of God; but they shut out the light, and perished.

The same is true, at a later period, of other nations, whose glory has been the boast of the world. The Roman Empire was at a high point of prosperity when Christianity was first proclaimed within the walls of the seven-hilled city. When Constantine ascended the throne of the Cæsars, in the fourth century of the Christian era, it was, apparently, a glorious period in Roman history. This emperor bowed to the Cross, and proclaimed Christianity the religion of the State. The

Church was thus taken under the special protection of the Civil Authority. But that which at first may have proceeded from good intent, became, at length, the bane of Zion's glory. The nursing fathers of the Church, who succeeded to the throne, crushed every vestige of spiritual life out of her, by their too fond embraces. Corruption came in at every door. From a protector of her just rights, the State became the dictator of her ceremonies, her doctrines, and her worship. Those of her priesthood who bowed submissively to her worldly lord, and who countenanced and aided in the work of corruption, were advanced to stations of ecclesiastical power and honor; while those who were true to the Church's principles, were hunted upon the mountains, and through the valleys, and made to fly to the dens and caves of the earth, or were tortured upon the rack, and torn of wild beasts. The true Zion of God thus lay bleeding at every pore, while her visible image was reeking with pollution and crime. And it was just at this juncture, under *such* favor from the State, that the Man of Sin fully revealed himself.

Now, what was done by the Roman State at this period, was the most positive disservice which the nation could render to the Church. The State oppressed, corrupted, and laid waste the once fair heritage of God. And what has been the result? Roman greatness and glory have passed away. That nation would not serve the true Zion when she might, and God sent down upon the fair plains of Italy the Goths and the Vandals, to bring into the dust the high looks of those who sat in Cæsar's place. And from the decline and fall of the Roman Empire at that time, to the present, that people have been numbered among the least of the nations of the earth. Their progress has been onward and downward towards utter destruction.

We see a further illustration of the text at a later period. What has become of the splendid empire ruled over by Charles V, and his predecessors, after the dismemberment of the Roman? The States that flourished during the Middle Ages, have been broken to fragments, and their national boundaries have passed away. They served not the Church, but,

down to the Reformation, aided and sustained the Papal Power in corrupting, harrassing, and oppressing her. As a punishment for this, and as a proof and illustration of God's threatening before us, their power was destroyed, and their crowns and sceptres were despoiled of their glory, and were no longer a terror to the world.

Look, at a still later period, to France. Read the history of her treatment of Zion. Number the adherents of a pure faith that perished on St. Bartholomew's day. No civilized nation on earth has so maltreated the Church of God. Instead of protecting and sustaining Christianity in her rights, France has been among the foremost to countenance and aid in her wrongs. And what is the result? Do you say she has not perished? Yet, has she not been "utterly wasted," by revolution upon revolution, so that, had she literally perished, it would have been a high relief from the greater woes she has actually suffered from her successive reigns of terror? And have not the judgments of God upon her been so clearly marked, that even the way-faring man though a fool might see in them the direct consequences of her treatment of the Church? And who can tell, even now, how long her present government may stand, or how long it may be before the historian shall record, that as a nation, she has perished? She must pay more honor to the Sabbath of God, than to hold her elections on that day; she must acknowledge God in his judgments, and exhibit thanksgiving for his mercies; she must cease her oppressions of the Church, which she is at this moment enacting among the defenceless inhabitants of the Isles of the Pacific, begun under her late Monarchy, and continued by the Republic—and, repenting of these disgraceful persecutions, she must become, from an oppressor, a protector and servant of the Church; or the prediction of our text will yet be realized to the full, in her downfall and utter desolation.

And even the present state of all Europe is but an indication of the truth of the text. Popes have always been, so far from serving the Church, her greatest oppressors. And look

now at the Papal States as a nation. What has become of the temporal sovereignty of Pius IX? May we not truly say, that it has perished? that, as a temporal ruler, at least, his power has fled? that the spell is broken and the charm gone? And what nations have been most racked and torn by the recent commotions upon the continent? They have been France, Austria, and the petty States of Italy; those who have always led the van in the support of the pretensions of the Man of Sin, and in hemming in and treading down the fair vineyard of the Lord. The destruction of *all* of them will yet come, unless their course be changed. The text does not say *when* God will lay his heavy hand upon the nations who serve not his Church; but that they "shall perish," is their certain and fearful doom!

While most of the States of Europe that have upheld corrupt religion to the disparagement of the true, have recently either been torn by civil commotion, or been swept by the tide of revolution, we look to the British dominions for an exception; and we may well ask, Why is this so? The answer, which many close observers, who have noticed this fact, have given, is, that God has been England's protector. With all that we are accustomed to hear about England's faults, (and we know she is not faultless,) notwithstanding she is loudly decried by many tongues, and severely chastised by many pens, there is no denying this fact, that as a nation she has done much to serve the Church, in times present, and in times past. We say nothing now about the motives by which she may have been impelled. We only look at the broad public fact, that she has been, in many ways, a strong bulwark in defence of the Church of Christ. She has shielded Christianity, at home and abroad. Wherever her power has extended, in her wide conquests in the East, the Gospel has found protection. The missionary has always felt safe under the broad banner of Britain. And at home, although she has a national Church Establishment, she now secures the freedom of worship. She has exerted her power to put down vice and immorality, and encourage virtue and good order.

She has been a strong bulwark in defence of the Sabbath. She has been in the habit of publicly acknowledging God in his judgments, and has ~~not been forgetful of his mercies~~. Even the last steamer brought the intelligence which was published in our evening journals of yesterday, that the British Queen had proclaimed a General Thanksgiving throughout all her dominions. And many a time in her history, (and even of late, as in her remonstrance with Russia, who demanded the surrender of the Hungarian exiles,) has Britain interposed to preserve the peace of the world. She has been, in her national capacity, often enabled to do more, and has done more, in many of these things, than any other nation on earth—far more in some respects, than even our own, arising out of her proximity to Europe, and the peculiar form of her government.

Now, it is not the result of accident, that while such a tide has lately swept over Europe, Britain has been spared. We may rather read in this fact the illustration of a great principle, the converse truth of the text, that *the nation and kingdom that will serve the Church, GOD will sustain and defend.*

The question now arises—

III. What lessons of instruction can we learn from what has been said, concerning our own nation? and what can we find, in our present condition and prospects, which calls upon us for thanksgiving to God?

The chief lesson taught us in the text, and taught in all history, is, that if we, as a nation, do not serve the Church of God, in all legitimate and proper ways, we too are doomed—we “shall perish”—yea, we shall be “utterly wasted.”

What, then, are the signs of the times? Is there any thing, or is there not, in our own condition, which in the matters of service noticed, calls for thanksgiving to God? To this we answer—

1. That as regards protection and security, Christianity enjoys every thing that could be desired or asked for, under our Government. For this, we should give thanks to God.

Our dominions do not extend to the heathen world, but the missionaries of the Cross, that have gone to our Indian tribes, repose under our national protection. So far as there has been any occasion for action, our Government has generally been prompt to afford the institutions of the Gospel ample security, by the exertion of its power in all proper ways and places. I can now call to mind but one exception to this, in our whole history. When the State of Georgia, a few years since, imprisoned the missionaries sent to the Indians, the National Government was censured by many for not efficiently interfering to protect them. But it should be remembered that the case was carried before the proper judicial tribunal of the nation, and the Supreme Court sustained the cause of the missionaries; thus giving the best expression of the national will, and the firmest assurance that in all similar conflicts, justice, truth, and Christianity, will triumph.

2. Freedom of worship is guarantied by our laws to every citizen. No sect is favored above another. No religious test is required as a condition of governmental favor. The constitution, the supreme organic law, secures every religious right that any individual or body of men can demand or desire.

3. Vice and immorality are discountenanced, and virtue and public order encouraged. Though all is not done under this head which could be desired, yet we have cause for thankfulness. The measures taken by the Government to discontinue spirit rations in the army and navy, are worthy of all commendation. The prompt dismissal from the service of those aiding or engaged in duelling, is another good sign of the times. The distinct recognition of Jehovah as the Ruler of Nations, by our chief magistrates and governors, in their annual messages, and the appointment of chaplains in the army and navy, in the two Houses of Congress, and in state legislatures, show decidedly that the influence of the national and state governments, is on the side of morality, order and religion. The union of our Government with that of Great Britain in measures to put down the slave-trade, (however inefficient the means may have proved,) shows the stand we

have taken as a nation, against one of the most glaring enormities which has ever disgraced the world.

4. God is acknowledged by our national and state sovereignties, in public fastings for judgments, and in public thanksgivings for mercies. As a proof of this, witness the former in the late National Fast for the stay of the pestilence, and the latter in the service in which we are now engaged—a service appointed by nearly, if not quite, every governor in this union of States.

5. As a nation, we are now at peace with the world, and our studied policy is peace. Hence, the prompt measures of the administration to prevent a broil with Spain, and possibly with England, by seizing the munitions of war made ready for a descent upon a neighboring island. We may say, indeed, that in all the national wars in which we have been engaged, we have been repelling aggression; and we have reason for devout thankfulness to God, that our laws and policy, and the spirit of our rulers, dispose us to peace with all the world.

6. As regards the Sabbath, we may also find cause of thankfulness, notwithstanding much complaint is made against some departments of the Government. Springing from the popular will, it is not the province of the National Government to *require* the observance of the Lord's Day, unless the people so decree by statute. If public functionaries observe the day, and the laws require no one to desecrate it, it is all that can be demanded. And on this point, the friends of religion regard it as one of the most auspicious signs of the times, that the present Chief Magistrate of the Union, decided to postpone his inauguration to the Presidency till after the Sabbath, although the day of the month named in the constitution, for that ceremony, occurred (the first time in our history) on the Lord's Day. This example, so praiseworthy, will live and shine as a guide to all future generations.

The Department against which the chief complaint is made for a violation of the Sabbath, is that entrusted with carrying the mails. But even here, a disposition is manifested, and a pledge has been made, by the proper functionary, to obey the voice of public opinion. On many of the most

prominent mail routes in our country, the stillness of the Sabbath is not broken. This reform, the people have desired, and the government has acquiesced. What more could be done? We have the same reason to know, that whenever *the people* desire the mails to be stopped all over the country, it will be accomplished, and the whole land will have rest on God's holy day.

The *Government* must not then be blamed where this evil continues, but reform must begin in the sentiments of every individual bosom; and when a public opinion shall have been formed, pure and potent, our rulers will hear, and this, and every remaining blot that attaches to our national escutcheon, will be wiped away.*

* NOTE.—As an illustration of individual obligation, respecting the character of public sentiment, an extract is here given from one of the author's Discourses on a former occasion :

“And what is public opinion? Is it any thing more than the aggregate of individual or private opinion? Can the whole contain more than its several parts? Who, then, is *responsible* for the complexion and consequences of the public opinion? Are not the individuals, of whose private opinions it is made up? If not they, then who? It is a moral power, and momentous in its results, either for good or ill. This, no one can dispute. It is also a responsible power. God holds it to an accountability. Neither can you say it is a corporate power, and as such has no soul, and no responsibility. Public opinion becomes not corporate until it is embodied into public law. And even then, it is held accountable to God, for he deals with nations as truly as with men. And furthermore, in a nation like ours, where the people are their own law-makers, through their immediate and frequently chosen representatives, individual responsibility is far greater in respect to that corporate public opinion which exists in the statute law of the land, than it is under a monarchy. Who, then, is directly accountable for the existence, character and power of an agent, which does ninety-nine hundredths of all the good and ill which blesses and blasts human nature for time and eternity? *Every man and woman of society*. You and I, to the extent of our influence, are individually accountable for it, and we must meet the responsibility before God. We cannot roll it off upon others, any more than we can our sins. We cannot escape it by skulking in the crowd, any more than we can escape the Omniscient Eye at the judgment seat. We are social beings; and unless we can annihilate ourselves, we must be held to this personal responsibility.

“But, how few in private life, ever dream that they are accountable for the character of public sentiment—that they have any thing to do in forming it,

As a whole, then, viewing the situation and prospects of our country, we have every reason to thank God, and take courage. We must, each and all, put our shoulder to the wheel, and endeavor to rid our nation of every remaining sin; but while there is much of this work to do, we must not forget how great are our blessings, nor how profound and heartfelt should be our thanksgivings.

We should thank God that the Pilgrim spirit is not dead, notwithstanding our great worldly prosperity. We should thank God that he directed the Puritan and the Huguenot to come hither, and over these broad plains, and upon our distant hills, to unfurl the banner of civil and religious freedom, and teach the world a new lesson in self-government. We should thank God that so much of their blood and spirit is diffused through the body politic, and so many of their descendants are spread over the land. According to Bancroft, the first

or rectifying it. They regard it as a sort of *personified non-entity*, in which they take no concern, and for the character and tendencies of which they care not. They regard it as the world does a foundling—as having no parentage, and to be committed to the care of certain public keepers. But, just so true as public sentiment possesses a moral character, and is made up of individual sentiment—just so true, as in its evolutions it is capable of blessing and cursing mankind—and just so true, as by our individual power, rightly exerted, we may, to a certain extent, change, modify, and wield for good, this mighty engine—just so true is it, that every man and woman in society, will be held responsible for the use, in this way, of whatever influence he or she may possess. We are then responsible for this, and we cannot shake it off. And as regards this *personal* accountability for the character and consequences of public sentiment, it is a rule which has *no exception*. All *general* rules are said to have exceptions; but this is a *universal* rule—it has none. The responsibility rests upon the lowest man in society; for there is no one so low, but who has influence over some other one. As it mounts up, from the lowest, through all the intermediate grades to the highest, the responsibility increases in a fearful ratio. The more extended the influence you possess among your fellows, whether it arise from wealth, or learning, or talent, or station, the more awful is the account which you must render at the bar of God. But as the most obscure among men cannot escape the obligation, so they will not be able to flee from the searching scrutinies of the judgment day!"

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Puritan settlers of New-England are the parents of one-third of the population of the United States. In the first fifteen years, the time when most of the emigration from England took place, there came over 21,000 persons. Their descendants, in 1840, were estimated at 4,000,000. Each family has multiplied, on the average, to a thousand souls. As long as this leaven is left to work, we need not despair of the Republic. Our fathers came here to serve the Church. Their sons and daughters pride themselves in being the servants of the Church. This is their highest honor. Our nation, as such, in many legitimate methods, is the servant of the Church. As long as the Pilgrim spirit lives, this will continue to be the case. And while this continues, the national doom mentioned in the text, will never be verified in our history.

It is not, then, *of necessity*, true, as some philosophers imagine, that nations must have their periods of decay, ruin, and final extinction. We are not warranted in looking merely at the past for a reason for coming to this conclusion. Grant that history would seem to teach this lesson. We have other teachings besides history. If God says that the nation and kingdom that will not serve his Church, shall perish, is it not a fair inference, that those who *do* serve her, shall live, and thrive, and flourish?—at least, till the full purpose of any national organization shall have been accomplished? The inference is fair. When, therefore, we would judge of our nation's prospects for the future, we must ask what she is doing to serve the Church. If she is acting in her proper sphere in this matter, God will take care of her safety.

The text plainly teaches, that nations are preserved or destroyed for the Church's sake. They exist only for the Church. All things in heaven, and earth, and hell, are made tributary to the Church. God accomplishes his purposes through nations, whether christian or idolatrous. When they serve Zion, he will protect them. When they do not, he will still overrule them for her good; and when he has done with them, he will break them with a rod of iron, and dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

If our nation is to be preserved, we of this day must continue to bear in mind the counsels given to New-England by one of her early ministers: "It concerneth New-England always to remember, that originally they are a plantation religious, not a plantation of trade. The profession of the purity of doctrine, worship, and discipline, is written upon her forehead. A spot of this vast jeshimon, converted into corn-fields, orchards, streets inhabited, and a place of merchandize, cannot denominate New-England. All these notwithstanding, if she fall away from her profession, call her Ichabod, the glory is departed." Another early divine, in a sermon before the Legislature of Massachusetts, says: "When the Lord stirred up the hearts of many of his people to come over into this wilderness, it was not for worldly wealth, or a better livelihood here for the outward man. The generality of the people that came over professed the contrary. Nor had we any rational grounds to expect such a thing in such a wilderness as this. You have your towns, and fields, your habitations, and shops and ships, your numerous posterity, and great increase in the blessings of the land and the sea; but it was another thing and a better thing that we followed the Lord into the wilderness for. My fathers and brethren, this is never to be forgotten, that New-England is originally a plantation of religion, not a plantation of trade."

These are the counsels of wisdom. If they were needed by our fathers, they are needed by their children. So long as we remember and follow them, so long we may rely on the protecting arm of that universal Providence which overshadows all nations, tribes and tongues, and without whose permission no sparrow can fall, nor any hair of our head be lost. But if we forget that our first and last duty is to serve the Church, we "shall perish"—we "shall be utterly wasted," like the empires of the past, whose history is written in blood, and whose memory is cursed. No nation can wage successful war with God; for sooner or later, if by no other means, he will visit it with luxury, pride, sensuality, and wide-spreading vice, which will sap the foundations of public and private virtue, and insure its speedy downfall, despite of all the ge-

nius of human policy, As a nation, we have nothing to depend upon but our public virtue, intelligence, and regard for the laws of God. Our defence cannot be in standing armies, a vast navy, strong ramparts, and frowning battlements, but in the favor of the Head of the Church. No martial array, no line of battle-ships, no munitions of war, can save a nation that has cast off the fear of God, and that is distinguished for the violation of treaties, for oppression, bribery, corruption, intemperance and Sabbath-breaking. All such nations "shall perish." This word has gone forth from the mouth of the Lord, and it shall not return unto him void.

We are called to-day to give thanks to God for his mercies. And our greatest cause for thankfulness is, that we find so much of his favor towards us as a people—that there is so much of good in our present condition, which gives high promise of life, energy, prosperity, and glory, in the years that are to come. For this we are indebted to the God of Nations. For this we are called on by the Psalmist, to "Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name." AMEN.

NOTE BY THE PRINTER.—The publication of this Discourse has been unavoidably delayed by the absence of the Author.