

THE GOSPEL THE HOPE OF OUR NATION

A DISCOURSE

ON OCCASION OF

THE PUBLIC THANKSGIVING;

DELIVERED IN

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

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DISCOURSE

AN Address from the Queen of England; a Message from the President of the United States; the Firman of the Sultan; the Ukase of the Czar; the Edict of the Emperor; and the Bull of the Pope; these are from time to time promulgated; the word runneth swiftly; ten thousand ears are open to hear; ten thousand eyes to read; ten thousand hands lifted to strike. We receive public documents with the imposing and authoritative—"Be it enacted by the General Assembly"—"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled;" and we have lately received a Proclamation, by His Excellency, HAMILTON FISH, Governor of the State of New York, calling upon us to observe this twelfth day of December, Anno Domini one thousand eight hundred and fifty, as a day of public thanksgiving and praise to God for the favors which he has bestowed upon us during the year. We honor the summons; in obedience to it we are all here. But it is not expected that he, who addresses you, will find his theme in any mortal edict, decree or

message, but in a proclamation from the upper throne, from “the high and lofty One, who inhabiteth eternity;” and it is in the following words:

“Thus saith the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the Lord.”

This announcement is in the Book of books, section entitled Jeremiah, chapter ix. verses 23, 24; sent originally to the Jews, when they forgot the Rock of their salvation; became atheistic and proud; divorced religion from politics; and trusted in their wealth, wisdom, and strength. But as the word of the Lord abideth forever, and his truth endureth to all generations, it is equally applicable to any other nation possessing the same tendencies, and surrounded by similar temptations. And such a nation is ours—one of vast extent, exuberant soil, teeming population, abounding wealth, and general intelligence. Hence, we are exposed to the temptation of trusting in our wisdom, riches and power, and of forsaking the Lord. To check this folly, and the ruin consequent upon it, God speaks, not man; the word is true, not false; plain, not obscure; and in our obeying it, His way will be known on the earth, and praise and thanksgiving be rendered to “God over all, blessed forever.”

On this annual festival, assembled in this sacred house to give glory to God, the words which have been read will

furnish a theme appropriate to the time, and place, teaching us, that

The knowledge of God as revealed in the Gospel of His Son, is the source and security of national prosperity, and hence a proper ground for thanksgiving.

Of the truth of this, I know not whether there is any doubt in your minds—if not, you are indeed a peculiar people; but whatever may be the consent of our understandings, it is to be feared that our hearts do not, as they ought, rely and act on the truth, that God’s favor is life; that righteousness exalteth a nation; and that, aside from the influence of Christianity, there is no more hope of the permanent prosperity of this country, or any other, than there is of our personal salvation. If you think there is any other resource, tell me, on what shall we rely? Can we rest on our wisdom? We are not wise, and if we were, it is written, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.” No, for the wisdom of the wisest, aside from the illumination of the Gospel, is a taper glimmering in the thick darkness. Men are born in respect of intelligence, “like a wild ass’s colt;” and they grope their way to national renown as blind men their journey to the ditch. It might be expected that they would improve by age; grow wise by their own experience and that of others; sharpen each other’s wits as iron sharpeneth iron; build cities and dwell in them; govern sagaciously; take deep root, shoot out branches from the sea to the rivers, and endure from age to age. But the melancholy facts of a wide and long experience justify no such anticipations for the future from the past; for the past is strewn with the wreck of na-

tions, who had no better charts, pilots and lighthouses than were furnished by human skill and wisdom. Even in that antediluvian period, when men added to their stores of knowledge, century after century, for a thousand years each, and had ample opportunities to put to the proof their theories, and carry out their schemes, correct their errors, perfect their machinery, take new observations—in short, grow wise; what was the result but that they were giants in folly, perished in the flood, and not a trace of their wisdom remains, not a book, not a statute, nor picture, nor song, nor city; no monument, no tombstone further than a deluged world was a cemetery in which no mortal has ever known, or ever will know, where one of them sleeps. Of the nations that have flourished since—the wisdom of Egypt has left us a few pyramids—piles of stone and earth, less than a volcano can make in one night—Greece and Rome have had their day, their poets, philosophers, orators and statesmen, painters and architects; and a few of their memorials continue; but their education, intelligence and wisdom could not preserve them from decay, corruption, and death. In understanding, the multitude were like the beasts that perish, while their wise men in their wisdom knew not God, and were cheered by no substantial hopes for immortality. “Those countries and ages which have been most distinguished for science and the fine arts, have also been most distinguished for voluptuousness and crime; thus evincing that the era of moral dissolution may tread hard upon that of the highest intellectual culture.” Human reason cannot discover God’s character, the precepts and sanctions of his government, or repel

idolatry and superstition; and philosophy cannot reform mankind, for it failed to reform the philosophers themselves. Cicero inquires, “Who is there of all the philosophers, whose mind and manners were conformed to the dictates of right reason? Who of them ever made his philosophy the law and rule of his life? On the contrary, many of them have been slaves to the vilest lusts.” Socrates says, “You may resign all hope of reforming the manners of men, unless it please God to send some man to instruct you.” And Plato says, “Whatever is set right in the present ill state of the world, can be done only by the interposition of God.” Do not all these, and all past example assure us, that it is a vain thing for any nation to count on continuance and prosperity from the force of intellect, the education of the few or the many, from the disclosures of science, from legislation, from social organizations? Yes. On this day of gratitude for our general intelligence and skill beyond theirs who have gone before us, and that of millions now benighted, they lift up the voice and warn us in the words of our text, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom.” Let no country ascribe its prosperity to schools and colleges; to science and art; to philosophy and law; but let all lands favored with these—let this state and nation, preeminently blessed with intelligence, give glory to God, the great source of light; and be guided by his revealed will, the fountain of wisdom.

While we cannot rely on our wisdom to lead us to eminence and perpetuate our prosperity, we cannot rely on our strength and prowess to do it; for, in another line of Heaven’s message, it is written, “Let not the mighty man

glory in his might." This sentiment must stand approved by us, my hearers, knowing as we do, that all flesh is grass, and its goodliness as the flower, which groweth up in the morning, and withereth in the evening. Were our Country as full of noble and powerful men as are our forests of thick and tall trees, the maple, hickory and oak, we could not make of them pillars to bear up the national edifice with millions in its halls, and millions on its roof—it would fall into ruins after the manner of Nineveh, Babylon, and Troy, and other cities and nations which *were*, but are not. We cannot glory in warriors, however renowned, for the Anaks fall before a sling, the Siseras are nailed to the ground; the Samsons are shorn by pleasure; the Alexanders are drowned in their cups; and the Napoleons are chained to a rock of the ocean. But if no striking providence cuts down the mighty, they must after the manner of all men bow to the king of terrors; the path which the mighty tread goes the way of all the earth, it leads but to the grave, "and '*dust to dust*' concludes their noblest song." The past year, not less than others, has been freighted with admonitions on the impotence and frailty of men of might. From the tomb of Sir Robert Peel of England, King Louis Philippe of France, Senator Calhoun of the South, and Zachery Taylor, the lamented President, taken from us in a time of darkness and storm, when it seemed he must stand at the helm and guide the ship of state or it would founder on the breakers and rocks, we hear a voice saying, "Let not the mighty man glory in his might." "Put not your trust in princes in

whom is no help, whose breath goeth forth, who return to dust, whose thoughts perish."

And while we cannot rely on mighty individuals, neither can we in any assemblage of flesh and blood, in armies and navies; for war does not build, it destroys; it does not save, it kills; it does not strengthen, it weakens; it does not enrich, it impoverishes; it does not purify, it demoralises; it leaves even the victors worse than it finds them. Martial might is generally despotic, hard-hearted, profane, and licentious; and we know not the day nor the hour when such a sea of passion, as is an army, will overwhelm those it was designed to bear up—when such a mountain of fire will send forth an eruption to burn the villages and fields on its sides and at its base. And however true to the interests of our country an army or a navy would delight to be, the plans of providence may thwart the purposes of men, and destroy in an hour the most imposing array of armed forces, whether by land or by sea. When we remember the hosts of Egypt, sinking in the deep waters; the forces of Assyria, strown like the leaves of an autumnal forest; the armada of Spain, made the sport of the winds; and the armies of France turned into marble in the Russian snows, we find our confidence in human strength rebuked; and desiring, as we do, our nation's continued prosperity—a prosperity for which we this day give thanks—it becomes us to hear the voice of God sounding both in his providential dispensations and in the lesson of the day, "Let not the mighty man glory in his might."

Since, then, the prosperity of this nation is not based

upon the intelligence or strength of our citizens, where shall we find it? Perhaps you hear the gold say, "It is in me." But whether it says so or not, I apprehend that multitudes place their hope in that abounding wealth which exists among us, and is rapidly augmenting. Yet here again we are in conflict with "Thus saith the Lord, Let not the rich man glory in his riches." An idolatry this, to which all hearts are prone; one to which we as individuals and as a nation are eminently exposed, none more so since time began; for what country under the whole heaven has equal stores of wealth in its bosom; what population was ever more assiduous or competent to disclose them; and what period ever furnished such facilities for an extensive acquisition? The soil rich and boundless; the lakes and the rivers teeming with commerce; science, finding diamonds in charcoal; and the rocks and the rills yielding golden harvests. And while we have the poor always with us, some indigenous, more exotic, we have an uncommon proportion of the rich of different grades from the possessor of a thousand to the millionaire—all rich men—and those who are not so, hope to be, and many of them will be. And inasmuch as money answers all things, supplies unnumbered wants, raises the poor from the dunghill and sets him among princes, and confers on him the authority to say to one, "Go, and he goeth; and to another, come, and he cometh; and to his servant, do this, and he doeth it," There is a strong temptation to glory in riches, and hence great danger of degeneracy and ruin. In the language of another, "National wealth has, in all ages, been the most active and

powerful cause of national corruption. The power of voluntary self-denial is not equal to the temptation of an all-surrounding abundance; and no instance has yet occurred, in which national voluptuousness has not trod hard upon the footsteps of national opulence, destroying moral principle and patriotism, debasing the mind and enervating the body, and preparing men to become, like the descendants of the Romans, effeminate slaves. All which is done to stimulate agriculture, commerce, and the arts, is, therefore, without some self-preserving moral power, but providing fuel for the fire which is destined to consume us. The greater our prosperity the shorter its duration, and the more tremendous our downfall, unless the moral power of the Gospel shall be exerted to arrest those causes which have destroyed other nations." Hence, as we love our nation, and pray for its continuance, let us beware how we "glory in our riches."

The possessors of wealth should also consider, that so far as they are personally concerned, it is folly to trust in riches, so transitory, here to-day, gone to-morrow, flying on the wings of an eagle; the fires turning them into smoke and ashes; the floods sweeping them off; the hand of dishonesty filching them; the ships sinking into the sea under their pressure; so that they, who boast themselves in their wealth and set their nest on high from fear of evil, may at any moment fall to a poverty so abject, that none shall be found among those, whom they disdained to set with the dogs of their flock, so poor as to do them reverence. The lamentations of thousands rise up from the wreck of their fortunes, and frame themselves into words

of admonition to us, like that dissuasive in the proclamation of God, "Let not the rich man glory in his riches."

And when it is further considered, that wealth, though it abide with one permanently, does not fulfill the expectations which are indulged concerning it, but almost invariably increases the insatiable appetite without any possibility of appeasing it—verifying the adage, "the more one has the more he wants"—when it not only diminishes his part, but increases his cares and anxieties, and enslaves him to the drudgery of waiting on a mass of filthy lucre; and obliterates his sense of dependence on God for his daily bread, and narrows down the passage through heaven's gate to the dimensions of a needle's eye, through which a camel can sooner go than he—his wealth, so far from crowning him with honor and glory, sinking him down to shame and everlasting contempt—oh, what emphasis is derived from all this to the words of warning which this day of thanksgiving for our personal and national prosperity rings in our ears, saying, "Let not the rich man glory in his riches."

Since, then, the experience of men and kingdoms coincides with the voice of revelation in dissuading us from placing our hope of national prosperity in learning, wealth, and power, I proceed to a consideration of that part of the text in which we are informed where our trust may be reposed, and in what we may glory. "Thus saith the Lord, Let him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the Lord, which exercise loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth; for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

A knowledge of Jehovah and submission to his authority; His glory as it shines in the face of Jesus Christ; or in other words, the Gospel of the Lord Jesus is the only hope of our nation's future prosperity, or that of any other. The race can be blessed with nothing else. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent;" and it is life temporal also, for godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, as well as that which is to come. The revelation of God—the Gospel of Christ—is our hope for future good, as it is the ground of the blessings for which we give public and united thanks. It is so, because it places us under the government of a just, omniscient, almighty, and good Sovereign, to whom all our acts are known; to whom all hearts are open, and all thoughts are naked; and from whose dominions and administration no one can escape. It sets before us the highest possible motives to a virtuous life in the allurements of everlasting glory and joy in paradise; and it dissuades from vice by all that is dreadful in eternal pain; and thus it addresses our hopes and fears with a force which has no parallel. It provides for sinners pardon at the cross; and by a love passing knowledge, subdues them to penitence. In the Redeemer's life we have a perfect example; in his precepts a guide for our conduct invariably safe, and so plain that the way-faring man though a fool need not err therein. The Scriptures assure us, that the Gospel is the wisdom and prower of God; the riches of his goodness; the brightness of his glory; the concentration of all possible power and motive; and that if it fail to save us, nothing can save us; and

nothing remains for us, but a fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation. And while the Gospel is thus adapted to reform men beyond all other systems, it has also the aid of the Spirit of God superadded, a power beyond all argument, beyond all eloquence, a power which renovates the heart so that old things pass away and all things become new ; a power which in a short time effects the most happy changes in individuals, neighborhoods and communities ; a power in view of whose operations it is predicted that the knowledge of the Lord shall abound, all men know him, wars cease, and the earth be filled with his glory.

And are not the expectations thus awakened in the Gospel's behalf justified by the results ? Look at the triumphs which it has achieved. With one obscure man executed as a malefactor to introduce it, and twelve fishermen to press its claims on the public regard, it spread in the midst of opposition, fires, tortures, and death, till in two centuries it triumphed in the Roman empire, which then ruled the world. And when in subsequent times, christianity was allied to the state and corrupted by superstitions, its glory obscured and its friends sequestered in cells and caves, the Bible again asserted its rights, the reformers preached its doctrines, and the "half of Europe burst her chains, and experienced a moral resurrection." And in our own times we behold its progress and its triumphs among nations most degraded. It casts their idols to the moles and the bats ; tames their ferocity ; washes them from their impurity ; lifts them out of their debasement ; prescribes to them equitable laws ; enlightens their minds ; multiplies their temporal comforts ; and opens before them

the gates of immortality. "In South Africa among the Hottentots, the purities and charities of civilized life are rising up under evangelical culture. At Sierra Leone, also, orderly, decent and happy settlements are formed, and churches, too, are established, giving evidence of elevated piety—composed of beings rescued a few years since from the chains and darkness, and moral corruption of slave-ships," and of slave plantations. In Greenland the inhabitants are warmed by the rays of the sun of righteousness ; their dwarfed and frozen souls have been expanded and invigorated by that heavenly charity which embraces the world ; so that at one time, out of their deep poverty, they contributed to the necessities of certain poor saints in these United States. The Islands of the ocean receive God's law ; they hear the voice from heaven saying, "Understand and know me, that I am the Lord," and a change has come over them so wonderful that your heart must leap for joy to know but the half of it, and the other half you would scarcely believe though it were told you. The transformation of the Sandwich Islanders from a condition of cannibalism, infanticide, idolatry, oppression and war, into a people kind, inoffensive, generous and just, possessing a spirit so primitively christian that they send missionaries to other lands, and pour into the treasury of the Lord with a liberality which, in the comparison, puts our offerings to shame—what will you say of this, but that the Gospel has done it ? and how can you sum up their history in fewer or better words than are found in that prophecy, "A nation shall be born in a day ?"

But why do we wander up and down in the earth from

the equator to the poles, to collect from the huts of barbarians a testimony in favor of the Gospel as the source of national prosperity? a testimony though it be so triumphant, that it leaves to infidelity no chance to mutter or peep. Why go to other tribes and tongues as if we were not ourselves every one of us this day witnesses? as though this nation were not itself the tallest monument of the power of Christianity in turning a wilderness into a fruitful field, and the desert into a garden? as though we did not understand that the Gospel took our pilgrim fathers and mothers out of the horrible pit and miry clay of a heathenish ancestry and moulded them into Puritans, and placed their feet first on the Rock of Ages and then on the Rock of Plymouth, whither they came glorying neither in their wisdom, their might, nor their wealth; but in this, that they understood that God ruleth in the earth, and delighteth in loving-kindness, judgment and truth? They came hither weak, not strong; they were few, not many; they were poor, not rich; and their own wisdom—they named it not before him who charges his angels with folly. They did not then understand that they were the germ of such a vast empire as this. They did not look with prophetic vision along the track of time and see the wilderness of their adoption filled with States stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and teeming with twenty-three millions of people—the steam boats plowing the rivers and lakes—the iron horses, whose sinews are steel, and whose provender is fire, racing through the land chased by the thundering trains—and the lightning's post-riders carrying dispatches. They had no dream even of the

prairies which stretch and roll between cape Cod and the Rocky mountains, nor of the golden chain of placers which bind those mountains to the western coast. No; they did not glory in the thought that they were the fathers of these United States as they exist now, only two hundred and thirty years from the time of their landing, or as they will appear, by the favor of heaven, when another two centuries shall have rolled away; but they gloried in this, that they knew the Lord; were acquainted with the love of Christ, and the doctrines of the cross; and they counted all earthly good, present or absent, all suffering, as nothing for the Gospel's sake. This was the hiding of their power, this their wisdom, this their wealth. "The only glory which shone in their windowless cabins was the light of Calvary and of heaven." Had it been otherwise, had they, instead of living unto God, lived in the foresight of their fame, been proud, talked of their destiny, and left on record perpetual boastings of the greatness of their work, gloried in founding an empire, and counted themselves to be the benefactors of mankind, "all of them princes to look to," they would not have been the Christian heroes that they were; their descendants would not have been so blessed; we should not have had this goodly heritage, nor been assembled on this thanksgiving day to praise the Lord, and to glory in Him "who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth."

Now, my hearers, while we do not, I suppose, doubt but that the power which produced the universe must be employed to uphold it; and that the hand which placed the sun in the heavens must continue its light and heat; is it

not equally plain that the Gospel, which changes barbarians into civilized and Christian men ; which made our ancestors eminent, and our country a favored land, must pervade our hearts, and control our conduct and that of our countrymen, in order that we may continue a prosperous people, and not perish as the nations which have gone before us ; nor be tossed with revolutions as the kingdoms that are round about us ; nor rest in a fixed and petrified state, as have the Chinese for ages past ? And must it not be undeniably true, that the more the Bible is employed as a text-book, and the more its living spirit pervades the teachers and pupils in fireside education, in our common schools, academies and colleges, the more will our nation prosper ? And while we regret that any should wish to separate religion from education, we render thanks to God this day for the general intelligence and sanctified intellect which exist in our land. We glory in it, not for its own sake—we regard it as the offspring of the Gospel ; and hence the increasing knowledge, progress in arts, science, inventions, and the multiplication of the blessings of the present life, we hail as evidences that the influence of Christianity is, on the whole, greater now than in former days. It may not be so in some individual hearts, but we hope it is so in the community. If we find science more luminous than heretofore, we conclude that revelation is pouring on it more light ; as opaque bodies are more brilliant on which the sun's rays fall in greatest amount and intensity. And while there are men wise in their own conceits, who reject the counsel of God, and thus prove themselves to be fools ; and folly sits in high places ; and our prayers that God

would teach our senators wisdom, seem not always to be answered ; it may happen that the errors of those in reputation for wisdom shall teach us to put less confidence in men, and to pay a more hearty regard to the inspired direction, "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord." We thank Him this day for the multiplication of colleges, seminaries, and schools, which exert a salutary Christian influence ; for the instructions of the pulpit ; for the thousand valuable books written by authors now living, or by those who, being dead, yet speak ; for the circulation of Bibles and religious tracts ; for the labors of colporteurs, diffusing abroad publications cheap and good, to counteract the mischief done by swarms of "yellow literature," so called—"yellow jackets," noted for poison—not for honey,—the locusts described in Revelation, their shape like horses, with the faces of men, hair of women, tails like unto scorpions, and stings in their tails with which they do hurt. Be thankful if your houses are kept clear of them, and your sons and daughters escape their contact and corruption. We glory not in such wisdom, the fruit of depravity ; the more we have of it the greater our folly. A licentious writer may be a genius, elevated till he shall "stoop to touch the highest thought," and yet be a fountain of pollution to millions of men. But not to dwell on this, but thankful for the general and salutary intelligence which prevails in our land, I pass on to remark :

That, as the influence of the Gospel is the hope of our nation, we are grateful this day, that there remains to us the Sabbath ; a day without which no nation has prospered or can prosper ; for without it the claims of the Gospel

will not be asserted ; its saving influence will not be secured. It is an ordinance for the good of man's body and soul, appointed in the wisdom and kindness of the Lord ; and whatever tends to eradicate from our minds a sense of its sacredness, and the habit of a hallowed observance, endangers our country. All legislation which conflicts with it, as does the Post-office system ; all printing of Sunday papers ; all traveling on that day ; and all work which is not a necessary mercy, so far from being a blessing to our land, and the inhabitants thereof, is a curse. On this point we cannot be too cautious. For, in the just and forcible language of Doctor Beecher, "Every Sabbath-breaker, in addition to the ruin he brings on himself, is impairing the moral principle of the community in which we live, and the obligation of an oath ; and, of course, impairs the security of our lives, and property, and character, and multiplies temptation around our families—increasing the difficulties of a virtuous education, and the chances of destruction to our children ; and by augmenting the power of licentiousness, and impairing that of moral principle, he is preparing to rob our children of the birthright of liberty, and to bring on them the yoke of a grievous bondage."—"Give up the Sabbath—blot out that orb of day—suspend its blessed attractions—and the reign of chaos and old night would return. The waves of our unquiet sea, high as our mountains, would roll and dash from west to east, from east to west, from south to north, and north to south, shipwrecking the hopes of patriots and the world. Who, then, is the patriot that would thrust out our ship from her peaceful moorings, in a starless night, upon such an ocean of storms,

without rudder, or anchor, or compass, or chart ? The elements around us may remain, and our giant rivers and mountains. Our miserable descendants, also, may multiply, and vegetate, and rot in moral darkness and putrefaction. But the American character, and our glorious institutions, will go down into the same grave that entombs the Sabbath ; and our epitaph will stand forth a warning to the world—**THUS ENDETH THE NATION THAT DESPISED THE LORD, AND GLORIED IN WISDOM, WEALTH, AND POWER.**" This note of alarm was uttered more than twenty years ago, when petitions from all parts of the land were sent to Congress praying that those enactments might be revoked by which thousands and thousands of mail-carriers, post-masters and assistants are required to unite with the wicked in prostrating the holy Sabbath, and other thousands are tempted to go to offices for letters and papers on that day—petitions against which the Hon. Richard M. Johnson, who died a few weeks ago, reported unfavorably, and the work of desecration has continued. But while we have reason to fear the judgments of God on our land for Sabbath violation, we still hope there may come a change for the better ; we are thankful that this subject awakens the solicitude, prayers, and efforts of the pious and patriotic ; and that a multitude of our citizens "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." We are thankful that some boats and cars remain quiet—that avenues once open are closed, that many tempted to work on that day assert their right to rest, and take shelter under the shield of God's law ; and that the heart of the world—London, that great metropolis, is, by her example, teaching all lesser cities, that the post-office

can be shut and the interests of commerce not suffer. No interests can suffer by obeying Heaven's decree—no one can prosper in the breach of it—for, the individual or nation that will not serve God shall perish. Be thankful this day, my hearers, for the Sabbath, and evince your gratitude by its due observance, glorying not in the wisdom, might or riches that tempt men to break it, but in the Lord whose loving-kindness hath ordained it, because he delighteth in righteousness.

Another reason why we should glory in the Lord, and give thanks for the Gospel as the hope of continued prosperity, is found in the fact, that we are a *free* people. The Lord delighteth in loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness. He says, "Break every yoke; let the oppressed go free." Christ came to preach deliverance to the captive, the opening of prison doors, and the setting at liberty those who are bound; and while this language intends especially the emancipation of our souls from the thralldom of sin, it is true, also, that the Gospel breaks the rod and snaps the chain of civil tyranny. It rescued our ancestors from the oppression of the mother country. It destroys the despotism of those barbarous nations into which it has been recently introduced. The progress of freedom indicates the progress of the Gospel, which is, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men." The Bible is so opposed to oppression that the Pope and his ministers condemn it; keep it from the people; burn it; forbid it to be read. The Bible is so much the patron of freedom, that the planters at the South withhold it from their slaves. They enact laws which prevent them from

learning to read it. They may imprison you if you go there and fully and faithfully preach it. And yet they pretend that the Bible sanctions slavery! What infatuation! What contradiction! What spell binds them when they think the attributes of God can take the part of the oppressor against the oppressed; and when they do not, as did Jefferson, tremble for their country when they remember that God is just; that he exerciseth judgment and righteousness in the earth? The Gospel is opposed to slavery. We are glad it is. We owe to it our freedom, a blessing beyond price—more precious than life. And we thank the Lord and glory in Him to-day for the evidence we have, that the Gospel is progressing among us, increasing the spirit of freedom. The North drinks deeper into it. The South is agitated with it. The slaves are uneasy under the yoke. God exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth—not in heaven only—not in this and that spot on this globe only—but in the earth—in the Southern States, as well as in New York, and He delights to do it. The tide of freedom is rising in the land; and if the wise men of the South do not know it; and the politicians at the North do not know it; the fault is their own, for why do they not discern the signs of the times? If any think to make capital by joining hands with oppression, they should be as busy as men making fortunes out of houses on fire. They have no time to spare. The area of slavery may be extended; the Fugitive Slave Bill, (fugitive in more senses than one,) may be executed for a little moment; but it will produce no repose; it will not quell the tide; it will not rub from the

gold that canker, which eats the flesh as fire ; it will not appease the upbraidings of conscience ; it will not harmonize with the law and the prophets ; it will not hang its hope on the cross of Christ ; it will not stamp Caesar's image and superscription on men made in the similitude of God ; it will not receive the approbation of Him who delighteth in loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. The President of the Universe does not sign that bill. You have his *veto* in the message from His throne. There are no compromises, no concessions, no constitutions, no laws, which can suppress agitation ; make the slave love his bondage ; or the system of oppression to prosper. The antediluvians might as well have talked of compromises with the windows of heaven, and the fountains of the great deep ; and adjusted the balance of power in the flood ; or the cities of the plain drawn up bills to bind the storm which was rained "from the Lord out of heaven." It is too late to negotiate a peace. The eleventh hour is past. It is almost twelve ; and then the clock of the Divine administration which runs by a law higher than our constitutions, as the heavens are higher than the earth, will strike the hour of jubilee ; and toll the knell of slavery, which waxes old and is vanishing away. Nation after nation has cast it out ; Austria, in the year 1823—the Spanish provinces in S. America, in 1828—Mexico, in 1829. In 1834, the yoke of 800,000 slaves was broken in the British West Indies. In 1839, Pope Gregory XVI. said, "We admonish by our apostolical authority, and earnestly invoke in the name of God, that none, henceforth, dare subject to slavery, unjustly persecute, or despoil of

their goods, Indians, Negroes, or any other classes of men." In 1846, the Bey of Tunis, having under him 2,000,000 of subjects, declared, "The servitude imposed on a part of the human kind whom God has created, is a very cruel thing, and our heart shrinks from it. Now, therefore, we abolish slavery throughout our dominions." On the 3d of July, 1848, the King of Denmark proclaimed "that all *unfree* in the Danish West Indies, are to-day emancipated." In the same year, France decreed the emancipation of slaves throughout all her colonies. And after all this, is slavery—the abhorred not only of God and angels, but even of tyrants—is slavery to repose, extend, flourish, lengthen its cords and strengthen its stakes here ? Are we to defend it ? Our army and navy to fight for it ? A spirit so evil that it can find no rest for the sole of its foot in Tunis, Rome, and other despotic lands, does it flee for its life to our hearts as a city of refuge ; and lay hold of the horns of our altars ; and wrap its nakedness and deformity up in our flag ! and do the senators and representatives in Washington become its sponsors and foster-fathers, and our constitution its shield, so that he is a traitor who will not rise up and do it reverence ! Know all men, we intend to be good citizens, cool and peaceable, subject to authority—lovers of the union—rejoicing in it, praying for its perpetuity—but come what will, we rejoice more this Thanksgiving day for the Gospel, that great law which must in its progress sweep slavery from the earth. Let it go ; it ought not to live ; it must die ; it is so decreed by the Lord in whom we glory, because "*he exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness*

in the earth, for in these things I delight, saith the Lord."

Another reason for Thanksgiving and glorying in the Gospel as the hope of our nation, is the spirit of peace which pervades it. "On earth peace," was the song of angels at the birth of the Redeemer. War is said to be the natural state of man; whether it be so or not, the Gospel changes man's nature; and in that millennial day when the knowledge of the Lord shall fill the earth, the nations will learn war no more. The wolf will lie down with the lamb. That day approaches. The Gospel is bringing it. The Janus of the world will be shut. It is not now so easy for men to fight as it used to be. Our last war, will, we hope, have the high distinction of being forever our *last*. The spirit of the age is becoming pacific; Peace Congresses are good signs; the rail-roads, steamboats, and telegraphs, are binding the nations together in universal brotherhood; the mountains are levelled, the valleys are raised; the oceans and rivers are bridged, which have heretofore separated, and made "enemies of nations, that had else, like kindred drops, been mingled into one." We glory in "peace on earth, good will toward men;" not in war with its blood and desolation, burning cities, orphans, widows, wails, and woes. We cannot see the lustre, splendor and glory of battles; they have no enchantments to bewitch us; to our dull comprehension they are deadly, wretched, and disgraceful; and hence we glory in peace; we praise the the Gospel of love; we hail the progress of its principles and spirit; and on this Thanksgiving day we give glory to God in the highest, that we know him, and understand

that he is exercising that loving-kindness in the earth, which has from eternity been his delight.

We thank Him, also, that the present is a period of benevolent designs and enterprises; that the Gospel, which has so enriched us with the river of God full of water; strengthened the bars of our gates; given us peace in our borders; filled us with the finest of the wheat; multiplied our population; increased our intelligence and wealth; and withal, and best of all, opened before us the bliss of eternity, when time with us shall be no longer; we thank him, that this Gospel is speeding its way; that we may aid its flight; and in doing it, avert the dangers to which, as a nation, our unparalleled prosperity will otherwise inevitably expose us. Here the wise may concentrate their wisdom; the mighty their power, and the affluent their wealth. Casting our abundance into the Lord's treasury, it will not be necessary in order to prevent our ruin, that providence should sink our wealth in the sea, or burn it by millions, as in the past year at California and elsewhere. Enlisting our power in subjugating the world to Christ, we shall not be devoured one of another. Employing our intelligence to reflect the wisdom of God, translating the Bible into all tongues and evangelizing all nations, God will give us more light; harmonize our legislation with the statutes of his throne; preserve to us the Sabbath; remove oppression; purify our literature; preserve our philosophy and science from skepticism; and our theology from presumption and pride. Acknowledging God in all our ways, He will guide us by His counsel; establish the work of our hands; continue to bless our country; and

through it, cause his way to be known on the earth, and his saving health among all nations.

The wants of a world looking to us for example, stretching out its hands for relief, and crying, "Come over and help us," is a broad field, a safe one, in which the resources and the ambition of our nation may find ample room to expatiate. We thank God that He has cast up before us a highway in which we may run for an immortal crown, and that He has put us on the track. May His spirit work in us mightily; then shall we perform our mission, our country endure, and the knowledge of the Lord fill the earth. Let us arise, and reap, for the harvest of the world is turning white. "The days, O brethren, roll rapidly on, when the shout of the isles shall swell the thunder of the Continent; when the Thames and the Danube, the Tiber and the Rhine, shall call on the Euphrates, the Ganges, and the Nile; and the loud concert shall be joined by the Hudson, the Mississippi and the Amazon, singing with one heart and one voice, Alleluia! Salvation! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!" We understand Him—we know Him—the Lord who exerciseth loving-kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth—in these He delighteth—in Him we glory. Glory be to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, world without end, Amen.