

A S E R M O N

PREACHED IN THE ARCH STREET

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

Philadelphia,

ON THANKSGIVING DAY, NOVEMBER 25, 1852,

BY THE

REV. CHARLES WADSWORTH,

Pastor.



PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

"Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving."—Psalm cvii. 22.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."—Psalm xli. 17.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Romans xii. 1.

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PHILADELPHIA, *November 23, 1852.*

Rev. and DEAR SIR,

The undersigned, with many others, having heard, with unmingled satisfaction, your discourse this morning, in the "Arch Street Presbyterian Church," and believing it to be admirably adapted to the times, respectfully desire a copy of it for publication.

We are, very respectfully,

GEORGE W. MC CLELLAND,
J. W. THROCKMORTON,
F. A. VANDYKE, JR.
ROBERT B. POTTER,
HOWELL EVANS,
WILLIAM C. COATES,
JOHN CONSTABLE,
ANTHONY GREEN,
B. MUSE JONES,
W. M. MUZZEY,
STEPHEN H. BROOKE,
G. W. FAHNESTOCK,

B. A. FAHNESTOCK,
WM. WORRELL,
FREDERICK V. KRUG,
JOHN WIEGAND,
WILLIAM WALLACE,
EDWIN COOLIDGE,
W. B. JOHNSTON,
THEODORE DAVIDSON,
JOHN BUEHLER,
WM. S. SNODGRASS,
E. C. KRUG,
GEORGE HERBERTON.

To the Rev. CHARLES WADSWORTH.

PHILADELPHIA, *November 26, 1852.*

GENTLEMEN:—The Sermon you have requested for publication is submitted to your disposal. I scarcely need say, what any reader will discover for himself, that it was written in the greatest possible haste, and goes to the printer without the slightest revision.

Nevertheless, its simple and desultory thoughts I believe to be truthful, and its rhetorical deficiencies I am sure you will, in the circumstances, overlook,—and therefore, unfinished and imperfect as I know it to be, yield it at once to your kind solicitation.

With great respect,

CHARLES WADSWORTH.

To Messrs. B. A. FAHNESTOCK,
GEORGE W. MC CLELLAND,
J. W. THROCKMORTON,
F. A. VANDYKE, JR.
FRED. V. KRUG,
EDWIN COOLIDGE,
And others.

S E R M O N.

"Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving."—Psalm cvii. 22.

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit."—Psalm xli. 17.

"Present your bodies a living sacrifice unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Romans xii. 1.

Our gathering in God's sanctuary this morning, viewed in any of its various aspects, is peculiarly beautiful. Beautiful in *itself*, for it is the setting apart of secular time to the services of divine worship; beautiful in its *occasion*, for it is at the call of the civil authorities, and it seems like a green spot amid deserts under a government reiterating its pretensions to be an economy separated from all religion, to find the finger of executive authority pointing the multitude to the temple of God; beautiful in its *peculiar observances*, for it is a day hallowed to friendship, when many a severed family reunites for a season in the beloved circle, and the very words of the sanctuary are not of indignation, but of love; beautiful, too, in its thoughtful *associations*, for it comes linked with visions of Plymouth and the pilgrims, and the simple names they so honored living, and the hallowed graves of their immortal dead;

beautiful, above all, in the spirit of its *memories*, for they are all joyous—all of life's sunshine and gladness—all of a Father's kindness and a Father's care; we stand to-day on a high mount flung up in the path of our pilgrimage; and, looking back along all our journeyings, have no eye save for the *Ebenezers*—for the green spots fresh in their verdure, and shaded with bright palms, and sparkling with sweet waters, wherewith a bounteous God has chequered all our path.

As a religious service, thanksgiving is an expression of gratitude for divine favors. As a duty of creatures, it has its foundation in the very nature of things. For as we can by no equivalent recompense God for his favors, it seems entirely unnatural that we should not entertain a lively sense of his goodness, and give utterance to our gratitude on fitting occasions in appropriate forms. It has, moreover, the sanction of the highest authority, in the example of all holy men, and in the manifold exhortations and commandments of Jehovah. And while it may not strictly be denominated holy time, yet, as in the exercises of a most holy service, it becomes us to gather statedly in this holy place—our hearts swelling with grateful emotions, and our lips breathing the beautiful language of Israel's king:—“*Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name.*”

It becomes us, however, to enter upon such a service intelligently; to understand what we are doing, and how we are to do it; and the object of our present discourse will be to consider most simply our duty of thanksgiving in the two aspects of *its Occasion* and *its Character*.

Attempting nothing more than to answer these two questions simply and briefly—

I. *WHY are we to be thankful?*

II. *How are we to be thankful?*

Now in reference to both these topics you will expect us to discourse rather on general and national blessings, than on those strictly private and individual: by a beautiful understanding among our rulers, the old separate State thanksgivings have given place to united National thanksgivings. And although, each man for himself, we are bound this day to remember with deep gratitude God's special mercies to ourselves and our households, yet when gathered thus at once as a whole people in ten thousand temples consecrated to Jehovah, it is becoming that our thoughts should dwell more prominently on God's distinguishing benefactions to our land and nation. Regarded, then, mainly in our aggregate national character, what is to-day *our Occasion for thanksgiving?* (i. e.) *what are the great national benefits we have received from our Maker?* Now to answer this question fittingly were to occupy your attention till the sun goes down. We can of course only glance at the subject. *For the American nation what hath God wrought?* Why the question should be rather — *what hath God not wrought?* What hath God *not* done for America? Unto what people, not excepting even the covenant descendants of Abraham, hath God ever manifested so wonderfully his loving kindness? We are disposed to set up for these United States no invidious claims to precedence. Anniversary harangues have exhausted all the strong words and metaphors of the language, until "*eagles*" and "*star-spangled banners*" have become the shibboleth of fools, and should be held consecrate to bathos. America is, after all, neither the old Eden by the Hiddekel, nor the New Jerusalem by the living water. We acknowledge our imperfections and our disadvantages. We are frank to confess our rudeness and obscurity in comparison with the high culture and ancestral renown of older and transatlantic nations. We have many lessons of social

refinement and political wisdom yet to learn from the empires beyond the sea. Nevertheless, no American heart can ponder the records of the past or the conditions of the present, without a very over-burden of grateful emotions.—Truly “In pleasant places have our lives fallen.” If, borne on angel’s wings, you could take flight over the world to-day, you could find no realm to rival it. A *territory* of two millions of square miles, embosoming immense resources, and capable of sustaining a most dense population. A *mighty munition* of thousands of miles of great waters, protecting us from foreign aggression upon our rights, and foreign interference with our glorious experiment of self-government. A *climate*, judging from its observed influences, as well fitted as any on earth for the finest development of physical and intellectual life. A *soil*, whose fertility, even under all the imperfections of American tillage, has rendered it already the granary of the Old World’s starving millions. *Natural scenery* so bold and beautiful, that God seems to have cast our continent in a rarer and nobler mould than all lands beyond the ocean. *Institutions*, civil, literary, religious; yet indeed immature in the necessary imperfection of experiment and infancy; nevertheless, even now boldly challenging the oldest nation under heaven to show us their equals. Our *Literary Institutions*—inferior, confessedly, in the reach and refinement of their individual culture, yet vastly superior in the advantages for education they afford to the multitude, and the universal culture they put forth on the great national intellect. Our *Civil* institutions—confessedly imperfect in the friction and mal-adjustment of a great national experiment; yet even now the envy and admiration of the world for the harmony of their play and the optimism of their productions. Our *Religious* institutions—discordant, indeed, in the bigoted and unseemly antagonisms of Ephraim against Judah, and

Judah against Ephraim ; nevertheless, this very hour confessedly the only hope of a lost world ; in the glorious brotherhood wherein Ephraim and Judah go forth, bearing in generous rivalry, and together, unto the nations sitting in darkness, the gospel's peaceful and everlasting light.

And, my brethren, in these and a thousand other particulars, how wonderfully blessed is the American lot ! If the inspired Psalmist, looking forth over his beloved Judea—a land whose whole extent was scarcely one-fifth of our own single state—felt his whole soul swelling in thanksgiving unto God, who had granted to Israel a heritage so goodly—how does it become every American to bring his thank offering gladly, at the survey of an inheritance so vast in extent, so fertile in soil, so friendly in climate, so immense in its resources, so free in its institutions, so matchless in its religious privileges, so sublime in the march of its present progress, so lustrous in the hope and faith of its great future promise—standing out in unquestioned prominence on the map of the world as the most magnificent dwelling-place for man on the face of the globe.

Now by this we are brought to the other aspect of the duty of thanksgiving, viz., *its character*, i. e., to a consideration of the other question to be answered—

How are we to be thankful ? What return are we expected to make to the Lord for all these great benefits ?

Now on this point, be it at once and for ever remembered, that thanksgiving is not merely, either an inward emotion of gladness, or an outward expression of lip-service. Our text speaks of “*THE SACRIFICES of thanksgiving.*” Such sacrifices were required under the old Hebrew economy. The fed beast was slain, and the incense burnt, and earth's most precious things were consecrated to Jehovah. And though the cumbrous machinery of types has given place to a simpler and

more spiritual worship, yet the reality and necessity of constant and costly offerings has not ceased, and even from us God expects "*the SACRIFICES of thanksgiving.*"

And the last two clauses of our text explain the *nature* of those sacrifices: the first, *setting forth our general and national duties*; the last, *our duties special and individual*. Let us consider them in their order:

"*The sacrifices of the Lord are a broken spirit:*" i. e. *an acceptable thank offering un'o God is "a broken heart."*

Now, in respect of nations as well as individuals, it is the designed tendency of God's goodness to lead to repentance. And in view of that constant goodness, God has a *right* to expect of us this day, as a *great and glorious* nation, and God *does expect* of us, as a *sinful and short-coming* nation, the thank-offerings acceptable in his temple—of "*a broken heart*" and "*a contrite spirit.*"

Ah, my brethren, God is a jealous God, and he will not accept a single hour of thoughtless psalm-singing in his temple as an equivalent and atonement for years of hard-hearted forgetfulness and rebellion. This is as true of man in the aggregate as of man in the individual; and it is therefore that there seems to me, in the attitude of our great nation united in the religious services of this day, something almost sublimely and terribly *ludicrous*. We have termed it a *national* thanksgiving. As it were, the whole people of the land unitedly offering thanksgiving to God in his holy temple. The incense is going up to the skies from ten thousand altars, and millions of voices are joining now in the swell of one magnificent hallelujah. And yet, *actually*, as manifested in the tenor of our national character and conduct, what is our real attitude this day in regard of Jehovah? Why that of a nation trampling God's laws under foot in giant scorn: in the very boldest attitude of blasphemy and defiance. Is there a single precept of the divine law we observe as a nation? Ah, go ponder

these precepts at your leisure, and learn how our land is in armed rebellion against Jehovah. Just begin with the first, and go on in their order.

“Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.”

And do we keep that law? Alas, no better than the poor idolaters of Israel: for, like them, no sooner are we out of the Egypt of bondage, than we forget the God who hath brought us forth with a strong hand. *Riches*—individual and national wealth—seem to us the Gods who must go before us to our political Canaan; and so we have torn off our individual and national ornaments, our jewels of honor, and honesty, and pure patriotism, and noble philanthropy, which our fathers brought with them through the sea, and have cast them into the raging fire of covetousness, and behold, there have come forth—a calf;—and we have bowed down and worshipped, and men have brought peace-offerings, and children have shouted hosannahs, and maidens have gathered with timbrels and dances, and young men have eaten and drank and rose up to play. *“No other Gods before me!”* Why verily Jehovah might as well have been buried ages ago in the great grave Geology seeks for him, for any influence a thought of his being has in our great national councils, or on our great national operations!

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.”

Keep we that law? Alas, so foul are the blasphemies blistering this day in high places, and low places, on the American tongue, that the American Jehovah seemeth nothing else than a great God to *swear by*.

“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.”

Keep we that law? Why you cannot petition your legislature against a Sabbath breaking railroad. You cannot send your remonstrance to your great national council against Sunday mails; so that your own letters to

beloved ones may not be an offence to God by their Sabbath journeyings, but the nation scoffs at you as priest-ridden. And the American mind seems concentrating all its energies, and arraying all God's great elements unto one great purpose—the wind, and the water, and the very lightnings of heaven, working together to murder God's holy Sabbath, and transport the very carcass thereof out of the universe.

"Honor thy father and mother."

Keep we that law? Why verily there seems nothing in the midst of us like the old-fashioned relation of parent and children. Babes spring from their cradle "young gentlemen" and "young ladies," and the travestied rendering of the old-fashioned commandment is, "Thou shalt obey thy daughter, and honor thy son."

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Keep we that law? Alas, it has come to this: that while under the very shadows of our temples pollution flaunts in radiant apparel, and the miasmata of the cities of the plain ascend to heaven, mingled with the incense of our holy offerings. Yet woe be to the indelicate man of God who dares lift a light in the den of the monstrous iniquity; and the priest in his holy robes utters hurriedly and shrinkingly the very words of the precept God thundered from the skies.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness."

Keep we that law? Why, my brethren, there walks not the breadth of this fair land to-day a creature of our race whose heart hath not bled under the serpent tooth of slander. And the whole newspaper press, which may justly be called our great national tongue, what is it—with many noble exceptions—but a mighty machinery for the utterance of foul calumny, and the martyrdom of personal character?

"Thou shalt not kill."

Keep we that law? Why the blood of men murdered

in our highways and our city streets cries out against us unto heaven. And while we do not say that there may not be wars justifiable by Revelation; and do not believe that the time has yet come when our land should cast away sword and spear, taking only to ploughshare and pruning hook; yet we do believe and do say, that some of our later military enterprizes are a bold violation of this divine precept; and while men may call them a vindication of national honor—as if, forsooth, a thief's honor were vindicated by defending his stolen property. Yet, call it what you will, *God calls it murder.*

“Thou shalt not steal.”

Keep we that law? Why I do not know what new synonyms may have been introduced into our political lexicons; but morality has been wont to regard the largeness of the plunder as only enhancing the foulness of the felony; and though men in high places may speak of any high-handed encroachment upon the territory of neighbouring nations as a simple Annexation—*yet God calls it THEFT!*

“Thou shalt not covet.”

Keep we that law? Alas! make the best of that desire, and call it what you please—a desire to enlarge the area of freedom, or to diffuse more widely the principles of our peculiar institutions—yet if that desire be, in violation of all the courtesies of national intercourse, and the whole spirit of ancestral negotiations—to wrest, without money and without price, whole islands or provinces from the control of any rightful sovereignty, *then God calls it COVETING.* Why we are as bad this day as the very haughtiest of the victorious Cæsars; and having cast our covetous eyes over the whole round world that God has made, would fain have God make us another world, that we might covet that also.

Oh, my brethren, what need of demonstration on this most obvious point of our national disregard and violation of all God's commandments; and with our great sinfulness so apparent, did I not say rightly, that our national attitude this day is almost ludicrous in its seeming of bold, and transparent, and most terrible mockery? We are standing up as a mighty people, singing a loud and ambitious hallelujah of thanksgiving unto the Eternal Jehovah, and yet the while, mark you, like a giant heated with wine, trampling in dust under our feet every commandment of God in mockery and despal. And do ye think, and can it seem to you that Jehovah will accept, such an offering as an expiation for such wickedness? I tell you *nay*!

"*The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.*" The "*penitential heart*" of this great people must be laid as "*a sacrifice of thanksgiving*" on his holy altar; else the very smoke of its incense will be an offence to the Eternal One! Nothing less than a national reform, a great national repentance, "*a broken heart*" and "*a contrite spirit*" will be acceptable to Jehovah. God has been very good to us—oh, how wonderfully has he blessed us! It is his great hand, and not the hand of sagacious statesmanship, that has gathered round us this day so many testimonials of the working together of American institutions for the American welfare.

The forth-bringing of the Spirit of our peculiar national liberty was amid the fierce throes of the great Reformation. *God gave it birth.* It was cradled amid the fierce storms of early Protestantism. *God rocked its cradle.* It rose into youth, abandoned and outcast amid the heartless dynasties and despotisms of the Old World. *God* smiled upon it lovingly in its loneliness, and opened for it a Canaan of hope in a new hemisphere. The child grew well and wondrously amid the solitudes of the forest sanctuary; for it was *God* that girded

its loins with strength, and fed it with the wild meat of the wilderness. The savages of the desert looked scowlingly upon the boy's slumber, but the shield of their Great Spirit seemed bright on the bosom, and they recoiled from the death-stroke. The enemies of the elder world sent against him their Gath-like champions; yet there met them a youth on the shore with a shepherd's armor, and *God* guided the pebble to the giant's brow. And now, grown mighty in stature and in strength, standing, like the Apocalyptic angel, upon land and sea, his right hand grasping the very lightnings, and his voice speaking to a world with the sound of many waters, he stands—alas! alas! forgetful of all past deliverances, in proud scorn of his Everlasting Protector—tearing God's great statute book into fragments, and trampling it under his giant feet in despal and blasphemy. And standing thus, I say, do ye think God's anger will be appeased, and God's great love conciliated—Think ye Jehovah will be deceived, and feel himself honored, and smile graciously back, like a carved image at the shrine of a Hindoo, if the gigantic rebel, with his very foot on the broken commandments, just look up into his face for an hour, with a half-glance of reverence, and sing him one psalm as a majestic thanksgiving? Nay, nay, my hearers: I tell you *nay*! Jehovah hath too much respect for his Godhead to accept such a mockery of sacrifice.

The *heart—the great national heart—penitent for sin, broken under a sense of iniquity*—this is what God asketh: this is what God will have. And just so sure as Jehovah is immutable, and holds not with a palsied hand and a heartless power his sceptre over nations, just so surely must America make between two issues her great national election. Either turning from this warfare with Jehovah, and flinging down spear and shield, and laying a penitent and obedient heart all consecrate on

God's altar, she must go forth as a divine almoner of good unto a world, on her great national mission of purity and peace to all nations, in the strength of a protecting God, glorious and immortal: or else she must gird herself more mightily for the battle, and, rushing like a giant on the bosses of God's buckler, go down as a reed in the storm's path—a wreck and a ruin, and a desolation for ever!

Thus much, then, for the fitting character of our national thanksgiving.

II. But, passing from this to consider briefly the text in its more individual and personal application, we would have you reflect upon the return God expects from each one of us by himself, for these great national benefactions: and enquire of what nature to-day should be your sacrifices and mine, of thanksgiving.

Now the last clause of our text just answers this question:—"Present your bodies"—i. e., as the original means—"Present your entire selves living sacrifices to God, which is your reasonable service." You will understand at once that we are taking these words only in their national bearings and aspects. Arbitrary as may have seemed at first the whole system of sacrifices among the Hebrews, there was nevertheless a beautiful appropriateness in the selection of special offerings for special occasions. Cain was a husbandman, and he brought of the fruit of the ground. Abel was a shepherd, and brought the firstlings of his flock; and so is it ever,—our required sacrifices are a "reasonable," an intelligent, and appropriate service.

Our sacrifices are to be in kind the same as our benefactions. Are you thankful for wealth? Then your wealth should be consecrated to Jehovah. Are you thankful for health, or intellect, or children? Then your bodily and mental faculties should be used for God's glory, and your beloved offspring should be early consecrated unto and trained up for Jehovah.

And so as well in the *direction* of the consecration. Our thanksgivings for *religious* privileges should be something for the advancement of religion; our thanksgiving for *social* beatitudes should be something for the purification and perfection of the great social system. And so in the case under review, our sacrifices of thanksgiving for our great *national* privileges should be *our bodies*, i. e., our entire *selves*, consecrated afresh to the perpetuation of our great national interests. We are, therefore, here in God's house to-day, not merely to lift our voices in hallelujah to God for his great blessings to us as a people, but to consecrate all our powers to his service, and a service whose direction shall be to perpetuate unto our children's children our great social, and political, and religious privileges. Our sacrifices of thanksgiving are to be *our living selves*: and therefore, the solving the question, *What sort of consecration God requires of us individually?* is involved in the solution of this other question, *What kind of men our nation needs in times like the present?*

Now on such a point time would fail me to attempt an extended illustration. Let me suggest a few qualities that should enter as essential elements into our character as citizens, at such times, of such a nation, and leave the wider range of the thought to your own private meditations.

And, *first* of all, not only in its appropriateness to the sacredness of this occasion, but in its absolute importance to the welfare of our country, we observe that the citizen of such a country should be *personally religious*. And this for the twofold reason, that such piety will lead him to love his country more, and will incite him to greater efforts to secure its highest welfare. It will produce in his heart greater love for his country, because it will give him a truer and loftier conception of that country's great design in God's economy of pro-

vidence. To an unbeliever in the Bible's revelation, all earthly interests end with the present. Ask him what a *man* is, and he will tell you that he is a compound of bone and blood and animal fibre; or, descending to a finer chemical analysis, that man is, chemically speaking, a mixture of about fifty pounds of carbon and nitrogen with some ten gallons of water. Ask him what a *nation* is, and he will answer, that it is an aggregate of some twenty or more millions of such organisms, together with certain accumulations of gold, and landed estate, and household furniture, and mines, and cotton mills, and agricultural and commercial machinery: in a word, a simple political organization, whose loftiest purpose is to bring the highest species of animal, with the least misery and in best condition, to an everlasting grave.

But to a *religious being*, man seems an immortal creature, made in God's image and hastening to eternity. And this American nation seems the mighty wheel in the great mechanism of the Evangel, whose movements in the wide economy of God's providence are working out the restoration unto Jehovah's sovereignty of this revolted world. So that a Christian's love for man; and for American nationality, as the highest realization of associated manhood; will be, in comparison with the infidel's, as a love for a marble statue, in contrast with a love for a winged and crowned archangel. And thus, excited to greater efforts for the welfare of his land, religion will equip him most efficiently to labor in behalf of it; for it will send him out to seek the smiles of divine providence in a life of well-doing: striving to outroot in our midst all those great national iniquities which excite God's anger:—and knowing that a religious morality is the only safeguard for free institutions, will urge him so to diffuse the principles of personal and political virtue throughout all our borders, that our national

foundations shall rest on righteousness and equity ; and the Omnipotent Power that sheltered American infancy so lovingly, shall brood over our loftiest maturity in protection, almightily and for ever.

But, passing from this general thought, and descending a little to those particular qualities which enter into the character of a man *nationally*, or in this reference *practically* religious, we observe,

Secondly, That a citizen of such a country, in such a generation, should be eminently a *practical and common sense man*. The days of theories have gone by, and a man that will dream over hypotheses and abstractions, either religious or political, is a dead fossil, make the most of him. Even Genius, so long delighting in rose-leaves and reveries, has sprung from the day dreams of its youth, and gone forth to the substantial enterprizes of its manhood. Imagination hath itself become practical in its energies. Poetry is not dead, for the word "poet" means a *creator*, and its powers will cease only when a progressive race has attained the loftiest height of its possible strivings. Nor does poetry sleep even. Spite of all sentimental lamentations over the homely utilitarianism of this age, it is, after all, the most poetic and imaginative of all ages. But then imagination hath become practical. Samson hath sprung from the lap of Delilah, and gone forth against the Philistines. The poet, the creator of these later times, brings forth, not day dreams, but realities. The steam engine is a mightier epic than the Paradise Lost. The magnetic telegraph is a lovelier and loftier creation of true poetry than Spenser's Fairy Queen or Shakespeare's Tempest. Genius hath flung the flowery garlands off, and gone forth with a bronzed cheek and a hard hand, to work for a race in the very van of advancing civilization. The age is emphatically common sense and practical ; and whether it be in literature, or politics, or religion, the

man of dreaming speculations, and subtle metaphysical theories, is at best a mummy of a by-gone generation, and ought to be secluded from the busy world in a glass case, as a remarkable specimen, a monstrous curiosity. A religious man, who would do good to his country, must go forth with his religion as a political light, a great national savor. What we want is, not so much these good men who will mourn over our national degeneracy, and fast over our national sins, and pray for our national prosperity; as those *better* men who will rise up from their fasts and prayers, and go forth and work for the reformation of our national morals, and the securance, through practical righteousness, of our national well-being. The time has come for the diffusion of practical piety into our whole national politics: when the selfishness of personal ambition, and the low intrigues of partizanship, and the whole ruffianism of demagogue statesmanship, should be cast out, and the spirit of honest patriotism and religious principle abide as the conserving presence over the whole national and political economy.

And so we remark, *thirdly*, as that without which all this must be for ever impossible—

That a citizen of such a country, in such a generation, should be emphatically *a bold man*. I do not mean a blusterer, a man of ruffianism and sham-chivalry, who talks loudly of his honor, and resents insults, and practices pistol shooting, as if to let out a fool's blood were essentially to edify a fool's reputation. By bold men I do not mean swaggerers, Quixotic politicians, who project interventions and invasions, as if the American eagle were only a game and gaffed fighting fowl. No! the land has already enough of them. Our entire political organization, from the lowest ward meeting to the highest national council, swarms with them, till one would almost suppose that every tenth American mother were a giantess, and had brought forth a Goliath.

But we do mean that our age requires men of true and tried courage : men who, taking ruffianism by the beard, dare to do right and stand by the right : men who fear neither to explode an old dogma, though adored for centuries, if it be a falsehood : nor to stand by an old custom against a world, if it be honorable and truthful ; who are afraid neither to tear the religious vizard from the face of a false reform :—nor to turn the back on the old Sphynx of conservatism in the direction of a true progress ; men that, understanding what is best for man's welfare and God's glory, will rend as the flax on a Samson, every *tether* of party or sect, that would withhold them from seeking it ; doing their duty manfully themselves, and leaving Almighty God to take care of their reputation.

We observe, therefore, *fourthly*, that of course such men should be *educated* and *intelligent*. We do not mean that they should be literary men or classical scholars : men competent to construe Plato's Greek, and to calculate eclipses : delighting to quote Horace at dinner tables, and vapor about old republics on rostrums. University education is well enough in its place. But by *education* and *intelligence*, as needed by our country, we mean *plain common sense* and *a knowledge of human nature* ; an understanding of the operation of human governments, and the philosophy of human society : an acquaintance with the history of the past, not for the sake of classic quotations and encyclopædian statistics, but for the recorded development therein of a progressive humanity. We want men who understand the wants of our great country, and can take warning from the beacons that blaze over past political disasters. Republican franchises are tremendously fearful prerogatives. The principle of representative *instruction*, yea, even of representative *accountability*, must be for ever ignored in our politics, or else every constituency must be educated

and intelligent enough to instruct its representatives wisely, and hold them to their account discerningly and justly. The time has come when no paltry cabal of intriguing demagogues should select our executive and settle our national foreign and domestic policy. But when every man who casts a vote should be able not merely to read it and to understand the party it goes for, but to know as well for himself, who ought to govern him, and how he ought to be governed.

Consequently we remark, *fifthly*, that an American in this age should be eminently *a comprehensive man*. I mean a man of large views, and broad sympathies: a man neither of half a heart, nor half an idea: not one of those mongrel and monstrous good men even, who will have slavery to be the only evil on earth, and total abstinence from strong drink the only virtue out of heaven. But men whose minds half an idea cannot satisfy: in whose great souls half a world would leave half a vacuum; whose piety is breathed in no sectarian shibboleth; whose patriotism becomes not an exotic if it pass a state line, or cross the Potomac; whose morality vapors not everlastingly about some one isolated cardinal virtue; whose philanthropy reaches more than one caste or one color; who find in every creature of our race a child of the same great Father, and in every religious sect a fellow band in the same army of Immanuel; and in every tribe and nation under heaven a part of the same mighty world, already redeemed by Divine blood, and bound resistlessly onward to a glorious regeneration.

And as following from this, we remark, *sixthly*, that an American of our generation should be a *man of progress*: a man fit for the nineteenth century, and baptised with its baptism. I do not mean that he should despise old things because they are old. We have enough of such men already, the world knows: men

who would put out the sun that they might introduce gas lights, and ignore the principle of physical life, that they might walk and digest food by the application of electricity; men everlastingly parading themselves in the march of mind, though the direction be that of a wandering star—outward bound, into black darkness: as if man's intellect were a high-pressure locomotive, and the true human progress, the swaggering of a blinded giant, yearning to swim stormy seas, and to leap great precipices. But by men of progress I do mean men who see in the mighty movements that go on around us, indications that as yet the race is in the infancy of an on-coming and magnificent manhood: who have no sympathy with old things, just because they are old; who are something more than overslept watchmen—coming out with their lanterns when the east is flashing with the day spring: whose type is not Lot's statuesque wife, looking back everlastingly to Sodom, but the rather Lot himself, with his face lifted to the mountains and urged on by archangels.

Meanwhile, and *seventhly*, we observe that the American of this age should be emphatically *an earnest man*. I do not mean that he should be excitable. We have enough of this, the world knows. The American character, altogether discordant and chaotic in its multiplicity of elements, yet holds all these elements in combination, by the principle of a hot fusion. In the universal furor with which we enter into all opposite and antagonistic pursuits—of politics, and money making; fanatical piety and frenzied scepticism; magnificent church building and expensive theatricals; hero-worship, and hyper-religious bigotry; infidel socialism, and great moral reforms;—the intense excitability of our national youth is a mystery quite incomprehensible by the stolid and superannuated philosophy of the Old World. But then, excitability is not earnestness. Earnestness is not a

spasm of furious feeling, but the constant inspiration of a mighty master passion ; not a whirlwind on the sea, raising a waterspout, but the steady sweep of a trade wind, rousing the whole sluggish ocean into billowy and resistless life. And this is what our age needs. It is an age such as this lost world never saw before. The three score and ten of our years are worth more in these tides of earnest and efficient life, than the whole nine hundred and sixty and nine years of the old patriarch.

It is a time not to be dreaming and theorizing, but to be up and doing. The fact that American nationality is yet in its infancy, is the mightiest of all inducements unto American Christians and patriots to be mightily earnest in bringing the infant up in the ways it should go. The present generation of men will leave its character as an impress on our national character unto all generations. If the young eyes that are just opening on our national glories look out, in the dimness of age and the gathering darkness of death, upon America, and behold us, a great people—honest and temperate, and law abiding, and united in tried fellowship, and loyal to God in practical obedience to his great statutes, and working efficiently out, in the temporal and eternal interests of the whole world, the manifest purpose of divine providence in our national existence and progress ; then there is no influence under the broad heavens that can darken thenceforward our promise, or lift up in our great progress, hindrance or disaster. For the fused metal in the mould will have cooled into iron and hardened into adamant ; and the statue in its standing place shall be magnificent and for ever.

And from this simple thought, how impressive the exhortation to be at work for our country ; to consecrate our living selves as a divine offering in our national service. Earnestness will come too late if it come only to baptize with its spirit the coming generation. *Now,*

at least, nationally is the day of salvation. In the great cradle beyond the mountains sleeps the giant infant, and with all its young Herculean strength, it hath yet the docile heart of earlier childhood. Send now the spirit of true piety and earnest patriotism to mould its forming character for a world's good and Jehovah's glory, and all its future life shall be in the mighty championship of human rights against every ruthless oppression. But leave it alone, as ye are this day leaving it alone, to grow up in the ways of a wild and untutored and infidel youth, in contempt of its God, and careful only for its own personal aggrandisement, and it will spring in its unbaptized strength from that cradle, and rush forth to its destiny trampling all sacred things under its feet, and taking hold like a blinded Samson on the pillars of the palaces of the world, will rock them into ruin, and die itself beneath them.

Now I may not consider this point further, nor detain you on other points longer. This is but a most rude and imperfect cartoon of the character of the man whom our country and our times need to stand up in our midst as our great national bulwark. You can complete the picture for yourselves, and consider it at your leisure.

The main point we have been considering is, that a fitting sacrifice of thanksgiving for our great national privileges should be, the consecration to God—in endeavours to perpetuate those privileges—of *our whole selves* in such style and stature of moral and intellectual manhood.

Simple gratitude and gladness, we insist on, is not what God requireth. He hath showered upon us, as upon no nation under heaven, the riches of his wonderful and adorable goodness; and a single annual gathering to chant anthems of praise to his name, is not all that such benefactions deserve, or Jehovah requires of us.

My text speaks of "*sacrifices*"—of the giving our whole selves to the great work of our national welfare,

as an acceptable and reasonable service. I have not thought to speak to you as religious men, but only as patriots thanking God for your great social and civil beatitudes. And I say such benefactions alone, deserve at every one of your hands sacrifices—contrite spirits bowed unto God for our past unfaithfulness, and new consecration to his service in this great national direction.

Such, and such only, is an acceptable thanksgiving. The custom of this anniversary had its rise with the Pilgrims: of it were they alike originators and examples. And how did they keep it? Oh that I could roll back for centuries the tide of time! That I could close your eyes for a moment on the glories that constitute your present nationality, and open them on those earlier days and ruder forms of Americanism for which our fathers offered so earnestly *their* sacrifices of thanksgiving. Oh that for a little hour these towns and cities, with their mighty population, and their hum of busy life; and these blessed homes, with all their luxurious delights, and their cherished affections; and these sanctuaries, with their Sabbath bells, and their sacred and undisturbed services; and all these countless and invaluable sources of present comfort, and of future hope, which make us this day in our borders the freest, and happiest, and most wonderful and glorious people the world ever saw. Oh! that for one little moment these might all seem to disappear, and in their stead the primeval forest, with its mighty aisles and its awful solitudes, might rise up around us, and we listen as our fathers listened to the rush of the mighty wind, and the roar of the wild beast through the wilderness, and the cry of the red hunter in his path of battle. I should love to stand with you on Plymouth rock, just as Plymouth rock was at the landing of the pilgrims, two hundred years ago, and show you how at the first, in the midst of all their darkness and trial,

American hearts kept festival, and offered unto their God the *sacrifices* of thanksgiving. There they gathered in their lonely and untempled worship. The beloved homes of their childhood, and the precious sanctuaries wherein they had learned to worship Jehovah, were far away in their blessedness and their beauty ; and behind was a wide and tempestuous sea, and before them the mighty depths of an untrod and awful wilderness ; and beneath their feet the bleakest soil of the rock-bound shore ; and above their head the cold and cheerless azure of a stranger heaven : and yet even thus and there, *their thanksgiving* was more than the burst of hallelujah, that pealed startlingly out through the aisles of that rocking forest, and rose exultingly up through the depths of that bending firmament. It was, indeed, the tearful, and yet entire and joyous, laying of their very selves, body, and spirit, and soul, on Jehovah's altar. The offering of themselves and their little ones in an everlasting covenant unto God : the spirit contrite, the heart broken, in acceptable service.

And what, then, oh, tell me what ought to be *our* thanksgiving for our amazing national beatitudes. Oh beloved, beloved, the spirit of the old pilgrims, of which this day is a memorial, shames our smaller consecration. We do but mock God's great love by any half-hearted offerings. Gathering in his temple to thank him for our great national blessings, and yet not devoting ourselves here to the great political and religious welfare of that nation, we mock Jehovah with lip service. Yea, coming as individuals to offer words of acknowledgment for the great temporal and spiritual mercies of another blessed year, and yet not devoting ourselves with earnestness, yea, with an entire consecration, to God's renewed service, alas ! we put open scorn upon our Divine Benefactor. The crown we bring to our Maker is a crown of thorns ; the cup of thanksgiving we tender is of the gall and the vinegar.

Thus—thus speaks the text of God's prescribed thank-offerings. It shows me a great temple flung open for sacrifice. The priest stands at the shrine, the fire burneth on the altar; and behold, he that would worship acceptably, brings not of the fruits of the earth, nor of the firstlings of his flocks: nay, he cometh, earnestly bringing, and lovingly offering, *his contrite spirit, his broken heart, his living self*, in everlasting consecration.

And tell me, beloved, will ye offer this day such a reasonable service? Ah, I call on you, and I call on myself, by the memories of God's past goodness, to obey this commandment. How fully does our Heavenly Father deserve this at our hands! In all our forgetfulness he has never forgotten us; in all our disobedience and our scorn, never hath he withheld from us all the depth of his infinite tenderness. And, standing thus this day, amid these wonderful memorials of his abiding affection: surrounded by ten thousand influences making life beautiful and blessed, and yonder crowned immortality attainable through Him who has died for us:—yea, gathered in God's own sanctuary professedly to offer unto him anew these sacrifices of thanksgiving—Oh, I tell you again of God's exuberant and almighty goodness: I point you again to this beloved altar, all kindled with its untorturing and holy fires: and I pray you, in Christ's stead, to lay your own selves upon it, a living sacrifice, with "*your contrite spirit,*" yea, "*your broken heart.*"

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