

Blessings received the sign of Blessings in store.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED,

7

THANKSGIVING DAY,

NOVEMBER 20, 1856,

IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

TO THE UNITED CONGREGATIONS OF THE FIRST
AND SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES,

AUBURN,

BY E. A. HUNTINGTON,

PROFESSOR OF BIBLICAL CRITICISM IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, AT AUBURN.



AUBURN :
WM. J. MOSES' STEAM JOB PRESS.
1856.

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REV. E. A. HUNTINGTON, D. D.

Dear Sir :—Your discourse, recently delivered in the First Presbyterian Church, in this place, on the occasion of the PUBLIC THANKSGIVING, was listened to with great interest by the large congregation in attendance; and that the sphere of that interest and instruction may be enlarged, we respectfully request you to furnish a copy for publication.

Yours, very truly,

S. WILLARD,
J. N. STARIN,
H. WOODRUFF,
S. W. ARNETT,
S. L. BRADLEY,
I. F. TERRILL.

MESSRS WILLARD, STARIN, AND OTHERS.

Gentlemen :—It gives me pleasure to comply with your request. The issue of an exciting political contest naturally leaves many minds full of ominous forebodings. On this account, I am willing to contribute, the little in my power, to encourage those hopeful views of our country, which our national blessings warrant, and which it is one sign of gratitude to the Father of our mercies to contemplate.

Yours, very respectfully,

E. A. HUNTINGTON.

A DISCOURSE.

“The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us.”—PSALM 115: 12.

When we are called upon, on an occasion like this, to bring our offerings into the house of the Lord, in acknowledgment of his benefits towards us, there are two aspects in either of which these benefits may be gratefully contemplated. We may estimate their intrinsic worth, or rather their direct and positive usefulness to us, and on this account we may call upon our souls and all that is within us to bless the holy name of Him from whom cometh down every good and every perfect gift. It is our privilege to value them for so much as they will measure, or weigh, or pass current in exchange for the means of supplying our wants and increasing our enjoyments. In a state of remarkable prosperity, we have inspired authority to say, “The Lord hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad.” But the text, and the whole drift of the Psalm from which it is selected, and many a parallel passage of the sacred volume suggest to us to consider the riches of divine providence and grace in another

light ; that is, not barely as riches in hand, but as pledges of greater riches to come.

Nor is it unnatural, on the contrary, it is habitual and agreeable to us, to take this view of many of our blessings. We hail the first symptoms of recovery from sickness rather as a token for good than as the proper good which we desire. And this is the secret of the husbandman's joy in the springing of the blade from the seed which he has sown ; for he knows that the blade will be followed by the ear, and "after that the full corn in the ear." This, too, is the secret of the inventor's rejoicing, when he beholds the first movement of the machine which he has constructed ; albeit that machine may be of rude workmanship, coarse material, and diminutive size ; and albeit its movement may be as feeble and awkward as that of a new-born child. It is not the present appearance or efficiency of the instrument, but its promise, for which the inventor congratulates himself. When Israel trod the farther shore of the Red Sea, loud was the song which they took up from the waves behind them, and poured out over the wilderness before them. It was not the triumphant end, but the auspicious beginning of their deliverance which then they celebrated. The pilgrims coming to our shores in bleak December are worn out by a long and tempestuous voyage. They are ready to perish. Nevertheless, making their arduous way to land, as if it were a paradise, with one voice they lift up their hearts to God, and thank him for the home which he has provided. But is that

home a paradise already, or a paradise to be? Those holy pilgrims on that barren rock are praising the Lord, like the fugitives in the wilderness of old, in view, not so much of what they see, as of what they *foresee* in what they see. They take up their song from the boisterous ocean,—roughly kind to them, in obedience to Him who “maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still,” and who thus through the treacherous deep openeth a safe path for his chosen, and “bringeth them unto their desired haven,”—and they pour out that song over this new world, and prepare to follow its flying notes over hill and valley, across river and lake, till “the day of small things,” which they “despise not,” shall issue in a day of great things, in which their children shall exult.

But it is not only in such cases as these, when the present good is comparatively insignificant, that we should accustom ourselves to read in it the promise, made valid by God’s own sign manual, of a better portion in store for us. The greatest acquisition in this life is, after all, but a beginning, and should be regarded more as a *proof* of God’s good will toward us than as the last and highest expression of it. Even the choicest blessings of the Gospel are but means to an end. The very fruits of these blessings in our hearts, while we remain here below, are but the first-fruits, the foretaste and earnest of a more abundant harvest in heaven. Instead, therefore, of bidding our souls take their case in *temporal* riches, we are not even to count ourselves to have apprehended

the grace and truth which come by Jesus Christ, so long as we remain in the flesh. The very gifts of the Holy Ghost, however fully experienced on earth, must still be estimated, not only according to their actual value, but also according to their value as notes, the representatives of something more precious, to be paid at a future day; for in this state of trial, "as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

Although then, fellow citizens and Christian brethren, we might well survey our national and personal blessings, in order, from their inherent excellence and immediate service, to derive motives for coming before the Lord with our thanksgivings and our praises, yet let us prefer to take a larger view of our obligations to our Heavenly Father, and let us magnify his name for the manifold mercies foreshadowed in the manifold mercies enjoyed.

It will not be difficult to show, that every distinguishing element and characteristic of our unexampled prosperity, as a people, is more a promise than a fulfilment. It is not a finished, but a growing good. Great as it now is, it is becoming greater for the morrow, and, rightly improved, no human foresight can discover when it will reach maturity and begin to decay. Written all over with the finger of God, may be read upon it, "The Lord *hath been* mindful of us; he *will* bless us. . . . The Lord shall increase you more and more, you and your children."

I. Carrying this train of reflection along with us, let us glance for a moment, in the first place, at the *extent* of our country compared with *its population*. Stretching from east to west across the widest part of the continent, and from the inland seas and their majestic outlet to the ocean, on the north, to the American Mediterranean on the south—when we survey this vast territory, the unparalleled increase of its inhabitants in eighty years, from three millions to thirty, is as nothing. This vast territory, capable of sustaining a population as large as that of China, a third or a fourth part of the whole race, three or four hundred millions, is as yet inhabited by no larger number than crowd the little islands of Great Britain and Ireland. What then is this boundless domain to us, a mere handful, thinly scattered over it? For our present use and enjoyment, it is no more than that petty pittance of it which we can occupy. But for our future enlargement, it is everything which, known or unknown, already appropriated or yet to be discovered, may be included within its unmeasured limits. And to whom the Lord hath given such an estate, hath He not promised an expansion to suit it? Accepting this “goodly heritage” as his allotment, and holding it in his name and for his glory, is it not his assurance to us that we shall go on ever multiplying, as a people, while “yet there is room?” Is it not with us as it was with Abraham, when the Lord said unto him, “After that Lot was departed from him: Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and

eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, and walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee?" It cannot be doubted that it is because God intended, on certain conditions, to make of us a great nation—as the stars of heaven for multitude—that he has placed us where there is ample space and verge enough for an indefinite increase.

II. We shall find a second illustration of the same point in the *resources* of this "goodly land and large," compared with our *ability* to develop them. We have not inherited a desert, the terrible sublimity of its vastness constituting its most remarkable peculiarity. It is full of all the various material of national wealth; material which it is impossible for a sparse population to convert into wealth, and to raise to its highest value or greatest utility. We can neither bring the soil nor the mine to its utmost productiveness. Our lakes expand, our rivers flow, our seas and oceans encircle us on every side, and excavate our harbors at convenient distances along our coasts, and roll their billows to the ends of the earth, not "to waft a feather," not to facilitate our present comparatively inconsiderable commerce merely, but to invite, and foster, and accommodate a commerce which shall be adequate to the demands of any population with which

these States may hereafter teem and swarm. We have within our own borders the means for the convenient subsistence of well nigh the whole race. With husbandmen enough, we may fill a granary for the world. With artificers enough, we may supply the world with all the implements and fabrics essential to civilized life. It is the glory of our mother country to be the world's workshop. It may be our glory, in coming time, to be the world's work-shop and granary both. Such resources we may alienate, but we cannot consume them. We hold the title to them, but like heirs in their minority, we are constrained, by the circumstances of our condition, as if by legal enactments, to content ourselves with a petty allowance from these resources; not such an income as indicates their capital value, but only such as it is fit or possible for us to expend. Meanwhile the surplus proceeds accumulate, and the unproductive parts of the inheritance wait, till we shall be of age, and our capacity, both for business and happiness, shall be equal to the management and enjoyment of them. Mirrored upon our many waters, embossed upon our fertile fields, engraved upon the iron and copper and silver and gold of our exhaustless mines, and chiseled in the granite and marble of our great mountains, and etched indelibly upon our interminable strata of coal, one and the same sentence everywhere meets our eyes: "The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us."

III. In connection with our acquisition of such a land

and such treasures in it, it may be instructive to notice in passing, that, as if to enable us to keep and to improve them, as one people, the most wonderful of all the modern discoveries in science and inventions in art have been made, according to the proverb, "in the very nick of time." But for these discoveries and inventions, it may be doubted whether the union of these States could have been preserved even till now. On account of them, it is to be hoped that it will be preserved, time out of mind. At all events, they constitute ties stronger than the ties of blood and language, to bind us together. Bars of iron, crossing each other at all angles, and prolonged farther and farther, year by year, are fastening down upon these States to make them "now and forever one and inseparable." And stronger than bars of iron, though vibrating under the foot of the lightest bird, and swaying like gossamer in the wind, a net-work of paths for the obedient lightning serves the same purpose still more effectually. And when, through this instrumentality, at once so frail and so powerful, and by means of this swift-winged messenger, I hear the Pacific whispering to the Atlantic, and the Atlantic shouting back to the Pacific, methinks they say, We embrace one family in our arms, and our fond duty it is to compel them to abide, world without end, in mutual harmony; never to suffer them to entertain the spirit of strife and division, even for a moment. It is the voice of God on both sides, speaking benedictions which impel us to exclaim, "The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us."

IV. More significant still, are our extraordinary means of intellectual and moral education; their excellence and multiplication and diffusion, together with their perfect adaptedness to all sorts and conditions of men. Our schools and Churches are the best evidence that the Lord hath been mindful of us, and the surest token that he will bless us. Learning and piety are the only reliable safe-guards of any government, emphatically of a popular government. More than this, they are the real though often despised and forgotten sources of all thrift in business, of all improvement in art, and refinement in manners, and of all progress, in whatever direction, towards a high civilization. Our theory, and in a good degree our practice is, to educate everybody, to teach everybody the wisdom which springs up at our feet and the wisdom which cometh down from above. We have no exoteric philosophy. We hide no secrets in our libraries. We hang up no veil before the mercy-seat in our sanctuaries. We forbid no class of mankind, save one, no individual, to strive for the mastery, whether in the arena of intellectual gladiatorship, or in the race "for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." We throw open the doors, and go out into the streets, and into the highways and hedges, and invite, yea urge the most ignorant and degraded—with one exception—to aspire to all knowledge, human and divine, and to cultivate every virtue of earth, and every grace of heaven.

Such is our national profession, and our national contempt of this profession though in some instances outrageous, is still

to be regarded as exceptional, and though recently perhaps increasing, is destined, we hope and pray, henceforth to diminish, and at no distant day to disappear. To be the world's work-shop, or the world's granary, or both, is a small matter. It is for us, if we will, to be the world's school-house, and the "house of prayer for all people," to preach the Gospel to the poor, until "the poor of this world" shall be "rich in faith," and at sight of them, the rich of this world shall be "poor in spirit," and thus both shall inherit "the kingdom which God hath promised to them that love him." Surely, for this reason also, and more than for any other reason hitherto mentioned, it is our exalted privilege, like Abraham of old, by the light of the present to gather gladness from the future, and, believing God, to thank him because he hath been mindful of us, and will therefore continue to bless us.

V. Resulting in part from the foregoing reasons—particularly the last—for appropriating the words of the Psalmist to ourselves, and, in some aspects of it stronger than any of them, or than all combined, is the *tendency of emigrants* from almost all other lands *to our shores*. Hardly is there a tribe under heaven not represented in these States. The streams of immigration wash over our country from every point of the compass, on every spot to precipitate their mingled freights of poverty and riches, of good and evil. Such a spectacle was never before witnessed. From the cradle of humanity on the banks of the Euphrates, the chil-

dren of men separated, four thousand years ago, some going east, some west, to replenish the earth and to subdue it; and now and here, for the first time, the descendants of those who went east meet the descendants of those who came west, to dwell together under one government, and to prosecute their various avocations together, in peace and quietness, as one people. The motto of our national banner, *E Pluribus Unum*, One from Many, bears daily a larger import. Originally expressing the union of but thirteen feeble colonies, mostly from the same mother country, it now means a vast deal more than thirty-one mighty States united. It means one people formed out of all nations; bearing at least a remote resemblance to that great multitude which the apostle saw in the new Jerusalem, redeemed out of every kindred and tongue, yet speaking one language, and joining in one song of grateful praise. Europe furnished the beginning of our population, and is still making the largest additions to it. But we have millions from Africa, and thousands and tens of thousands from Asia and the isles of the sea. Here, during times of civil commotion in their respective States, have fled refugees from Canada, Mexico, and every part of South America, from France, and Germany, and Italy, and Austria, and Poland, and Hungary, and from the most distant convict settlements of Great Britain. Here they come flocking, according to their most pressing wants, some for bread, some for farms, some for political liberty, some for social equality, and some for freedom of conscience. So it happens that

foreigners by birth, everywhere throughout our wide domain, mingle with foreigners by descent, as we all are, in ploughing our fields, digging our canals, laying our railways, navigating our rivers and lakes and seas, excavating our mines, working our factories, exchanging our merchandise, electing our rulers, framing our Constitutions, enacting, interpreting and executing our laws, building and using our school-houses, our academies, our colleges, our seminaries and Churches, our prisons, our asylums and our hospitals; in all possible ways and by all possible means, forming and modifying our national character, and evolving, if not our "manifest," certainly our real and inevitable destiny. The miracle of Babel is reversed among us, and, instead of one speech confounded by division, we witness many tongues made intelligible by union. All the languages and dialects of men are abandoned for a common vehicle of thought; and at this moment, our strong old English is spoken in greater purity and with greater uniformity, by the mixed race of American citizens, from Maine to California, than in the little island from which it was imported, by the large majority of the native race, its blood uncontaminated since the days of good king Arthur.

I am aware that in the eye of political prejudice and religious animosity,—in which I confess myself to have an ample share,—the foreign element of our population is only evil and that continually. On this question, in this place, I have nothing either to deny or to affirm. This foreign element may be in itself as bad as it can be regarded, and yet

the *tendency* of it towards our country may, after all, be the most conclusive proof that the Lord hath been mindful of us, and is still waiting to bless us more and more. The tendency of the sick to a hospital, or of the insane to an asylum, is surely to its commendation, speaking unequivocally of the wisdom of its management and of the blessing on its inmates. The inclination of pilgrims and strangers, the world over, to come here, is one thing; the effect of their presence here is quite another thing. And it is only of their inclination to come here that I am now speaking.

This wonderful phenomenon may be attributed to the incalculable abundance and value of our physical resources. But in this respect the territory of these States is not superior, in some things not equal to Mexico and Central and South America. There are gathered all the elements of extended and powerful empires. Yet thither turn not the eyes nor the steps of the needy and oppressed. We must look, therefore, for some other explanation of the unanimous converging of these classes to our ports as to so many havens of hope and rest.

But it may be said that our republican government is the explanation. And is the security which we offer to personal rights our great attraction? Are the nations drawn to us by the invitation which we hold out to men of all races—but one—of all ranks and of all creeds, to meet here upon the same footing; and, under no other restraints than those which are necessary for their mutual protection, to compete with one

another for all the rewards and all the honors at our disposal? It cannot fail to occur to you, that the existence of such a government is itself to be explained. If it be our liberty which constitutes our charm, then whence our liberty? How happens it, that we have here no landed aristocracy, no titled nobility, no law of primogeniture, to perpetuate an estate, or a privilege, or a distinction, in the same family from generation to generation? How happens it, that we have here no established religion, no lordly hierarchy, no system of tithes, no inquisitorial courts? Why this strange difference between our institutions and those of almost all other nations? Why is it that this people alone are the State, and that they alone elect and change their rulers at their pleasure, only under restrictions of their own making, and teach them by very rapid and summary, yet orderly and peaceful revolutions, that they must rule according to law or not rule at all? It is perfectly obvious that we must carry our investigations farther back, if we would reach a satisfactory solution of the question before us.

And who can doubt, who deny, that all nations flow unto this land, for the very same reason—only not so strong—for which they shall finally flow unto the mountain of the Lord's house, saying to each other on the way, "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not

lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more;" for the very same reason that "in those days, ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you."

Far be it from me to claim for my country more than a very remote approximation to that glorious excellence which, in the last days, shall distinguish and adorn the kingdom of God among men. Our national, and social, and personal faults, our sins, we have cause to fear, are even now crying to heaven for vengeance. But by the unmerited mercy of "the Governor among the nations," we still retain those divine sources of all true and lasting prosperity—the law of the Lord, the word of God, its righteous and benevolent and peaceful influences and effects, which in coming time shall make Mount Zion the joy of the whole earth, a delightful land unto all the inhabitants thereof. It is, in spite of our heinous offences, on account of these inestimable blessings, that all the kindreds of the nations now mingle and multiply within our borders. This *holy Book*, known and read of all men, whosoever will, is incontrovertibly the Magna Charta of our liberties. The principles, the laws and ordinances which this holy Book teaches us to observe, lie at the foundation of our free institutions, and support the whole fabric of our republican government. Without a standing army, without a reliable and efficient police even in our largest cities, and in our rural districts without even locks or bolts, without any kind of

preparation for self-defence, to what can we be indebted for our unexampled safety and sense of security, at all hours of the night as well as of the day, and for our bloodless political excitements and revolutions, if not to the wide-spread and far-reaching, interpenetrating, often unacknowledged and unsuspected power of the Bible? I grant, with sorrow, that we by no means appreciate the Gospel of the grace of God according to our familiarity with it as herein revealed, and I dread lest our familiarity with it may be fast diminishing. But God would have saved Sodom itself for the sake of ten righteous men, and I am persuaded that it is because of a yet not insignificant proportion, in the midst of us, of them that fear Him and keep his commandments, in some degree according to their knowledge of their duty, that He not only spares this land, but still continues to fix the gaze of the world upon it in admiration, and to make it the fondly sought refuge of the world's poor and suffering outcasts.

It is not the doubtful dogma of bigotry or fanaticism, it is the certain teaching of all true history and philosophy and religion alike, that no outward restraints, mechanically applied, can so curb the passions and direct the conduct of men, as to keep them from ruinous collision with one another, and to guide them in courses which will lead each to the promotion of the common welfare. There must be a *faith* inwardly received and voluntarily and cordially obeyed. And no such faith has ever been found in any sense adequate to the end, except the faith recorded in the Bible, the faith once deliv-

ered to the saints by holy men, who spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. What an example of *charity*, in the fact that God himself so loved the world as to give his own Son to die for his enemies! What a motive to *imitate* this divine example, in the fact that the imitation of it is the evidence of our interest in its fruits, of our title to eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord! Should we not expect, that wherever the doctrines of grace might in any measure prevail, there in the same measure would prevail that industry, that honesty, that integrity, that veracity, that equal justice in punishing the guilty and in defending the innocent, that support of every man in his own temporal and spiritual rights, that generosity, that kindness, that forbearance, that gentleness, that humanity to instruct the ignorant, help the weak, and comfort the afflicted, that purity, in one word, that piety which, let infidelity say what it will, ever acts like the law of gravitation, to gather all things to itself? Righteousness exalteth a nation, and multitudes will cast in their lot with that nation in which they perceive the *fruits* of righteousness, whether aware of the *origin* of those fruits or not. It is because those fruits, in which our conscientious forefathers abounded, are yet brought forth in our land, that it is yet the retreat of the fugitives from every clime. It is because the Lord hath been mindful of us. But for this they would find here the sepulchre, instead of the asylum of their hopes. These fugitives prove that the Lord hath been mindful of us; and in them, rightly

received, and honorably and charitably dealt by, He will bless us. I am not now speaking of their political relations to us, but of our Christian obligations to them. Let us do our duty to them, and they are a token that the Lord will bless us—yea, the blessing itself with which he will enrich us. They are the harvest, already white, spread around our own doors, waving over our own fields, forbidding us to plead, in extenuation of our sloth, that no man hath hired us; commanding us, as if by the voice of the Master himself, to enter into his harvest, and to do with our might whatsoever our hand findeth to do, under the assurance of receiving whatsoever is right. With what emphasis may it be said to the whole American people, “The promise is to you and to your children, and to *them that are afar off*,” to you and your children and them together. Here, out of all lands, God seems to be collecting a people, like a great river, from innumerable rills; the quality of the many waters “melted into one,” excelling that of either of its tributaries. Evil influences may defeat it, but such influences resisted, and the fair prospect is, that the tree of humanity, planted in our soil and engrafted with scions from every variety of the race, shall tower upwards in strength and beauty, as it has nowhere towered before since it was uprooted from paradise, and shall exhibit, in these ends of the earth, something of its first and final glory and honor and immortality.

In consequence of the large number of our sister States united with us in celebrating this day, I have been led to regard it as a national festival, and to address you thus far exclusively in view of your relations as citizens of the whole country. With regard to your relations to this city, to these Churches, and to your respective families, and with regard to your circumstances as individuals, you can be at no loss to determine wherein the Lord hath been mindful of you, nor on what grounds you may safely anticipate that he will bless you. I will only remark, that you have the more reason, and not the less encouragement, to argue from the past to the future, if at the present time you are in affliction, as many of you must be personally, and as I know you all to be, who belong to and constitute these Christian congregations. When an interval of adversity lies like a starless and stormy night between two serene and sunny days,—as with those youthful parents from whom their first-born is taken; as with that aged mourner whose life-long companion has left him to go down alone with sorrow to the grave; as with that widow and her helpless orphans whose house is left unto them desolate; as with you, two Churches whom I, a recent stranger, found confiding and joyous in your gifted, useful and honored pastors, but whom I now find, after the lapse of a single year, as sheep having no shepherds,—O! is it not a privilege, in such an interval of adversity, to walk by faith and not by sight; and, remembering the day which went out in this thick darkness, to look for the day into which this thick dark-

ness shall dawn, and courageously to sing, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."

If my subject teaches any lesson plainly, my hearers, it teaches that confidence in God is thanksgiving; that to argue from God himself to himself, is after the manner of that child-like gratitude towards Him, as our Father, with which he is ever well pleased. Because "the Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad," therefore he will do great things for us, whereof we shall be glad; thus it becometh us to celebrate his wonderful works to the children of men, and to praise him for his goodness. It is the most ungrateful distrust and unbelief, to argue from ourselves to God, and to limit his mercy and grace by our unworthiness and sinfulness. If He would not save the chief of sinners, no sinner could be saved; and no sinner ever will be saved who will not pronounce himself the chief of sinners. "Trust in the Lord and do good;" *that* is to "give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

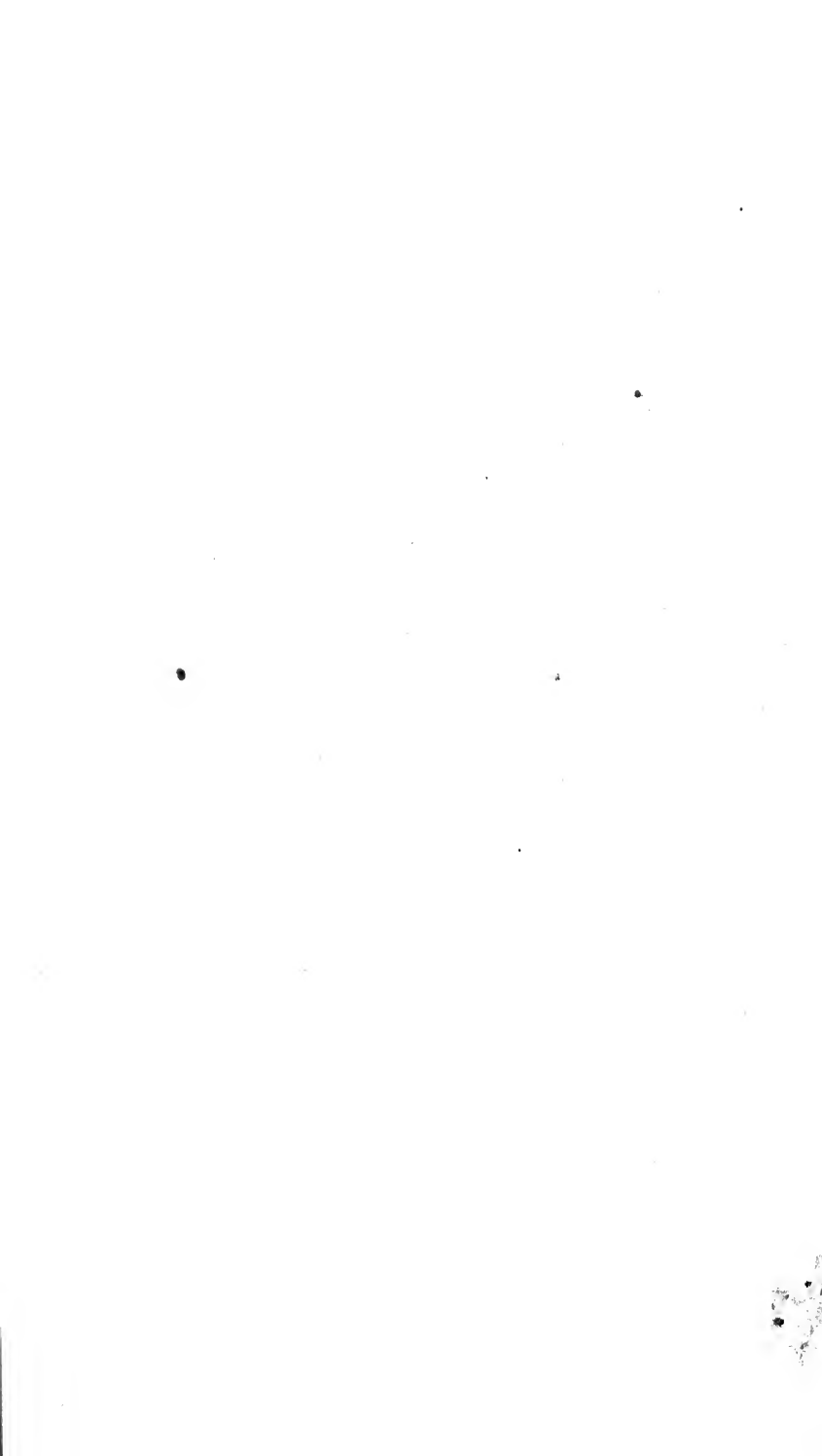
" Though within us and without us,
Darkly opens life about us,
Yet by faith we'll trust the bands
Laid and kept by *other* hands."

It follows, that with a race of sinners like the children of men there can be no thankfulness for the goodness of God, except that goodness lead them to *repentance and faith*, the essential precedents and first-fruits of all good works. With-

out repentance and faith there may be an animal enjoyment, a sensual reveling in the abundance of our earthly portion, but no true gratitude even for that, while our spiritual blessings, our only durable riches, will be entirely overlooked, or, worse still, despised and rejected. It is written that when the king of Persia and Haman, his favorite minister of state, sat down to drink together, in exultation over the enactment of their bloody decree for the extinction of the people of God, "the city Shushan was perplexed;" that kind of sensual and cruel self-gratulation threw the great capital of Persia into confusion and dismay. But when Nineveh repented, proclaiming a fast and putting on sack-cloth, because they believed God, there was a quiet, sober joy in that "exceeding great city of three days' journey," and no soul was troubled save the soul of Jonah, and his soul, with but a momentary flash of foolish anger. Shall we not this day praise the Lord our God, and offer unto Him our thanksgivings, by putting away our sins, our pride, our covetousness, our ambition, our unbelief, our form of Godliness emptied of its power, our bigotry, our superstition, our licentiousness, our intemperance, our oppression? Shall we not break every yoke, and let the oppressed go free? Shall we not feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and the imprisoned, and alleviate every form of human suffering, according to our ability?

I am happy to be able to bring your gratitude at once to the test, and to give you a fair opportunity of determining in what light, with what emotions, you contemplate the forbear-

ance and mercy of God towards you, by determining how you feel and are ready to act towards your delinquent fellow-servants. It is your custom, on this occasion, to make an offering as God has blessed you in your basket and your store, to aid the Martha Washington Society, in their truly benevolent work. I love to beg for anybody but myself, and this feeling, I sometimes think, constitutes the most striking difference between a beggar and a minister. I love to beg for any class of the poor and the suffering; but for the family of the wretched inebriate,—that broken-hearted wife, those neglected children, no wood in the shed, no provision in the cellar, no fire in the stove, the roof no shelter from the rain, the window no protection from the blast, that wife and those children shrinking into themselves, shrinking away from the world, away from their natural protector, life one incessant want, and shame, and dread,—if I could think it necessary to beg for such a family, before such an audience, now that your barns are filled with plenty, now that stern winter is approaching, I should be forced to the incredible conclusion, that this religious service is nothing better than a vain show, an impious mockery! If the pitiable objects of this Society do not plead for themselves, no word of mine can touch your hearts in their behalf. But your hearts are already impatient to express themselves with all the liberality that the case can possibly demand, and why should I keep you waiting?



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