No. 129.

On the want of religious gratitude.

A Thanksgiving Sermon.
Psalm CVII, 8. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"

Such is the devout ascription of the royal poet of Israel; yet in this day of incredible gratitude it may lead us to some useful reflections. The wish so ardently expressed implies that we are not so often found to praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men, as we ought. And I would ask, my friend, how it comes to pass, that ingratitude is so difficultly estimated with regard to men and to God? In the intercourse of life, if there is any one crime, so much more than another is branded with infamy, it is ingratitude. No excuse for it can be heard with patience: we shut it out...
from the privilege of making a plea, because we suppose it to indicate a state of heart, we admit no justification. Providence to kindness is one of the best things to which we are disposed to grant the least indulgence. He who is held up is made happy by the bounty of another; yet remains cold and ungrateful under the reception of these favors, is regarded as occasion, deserving the name of man. He carries a heart, against the best importunities of humanity, he cannot really hold fellowship with his brethren. Of such are some cases of prominent, public utility. He has been preserved by the efforts of a king; could you ever think of the worth and difference, could you ever think of it, he with the amount of care of gratitude? And why not, then, that when we deem it so indispensable to be grateful to earthly friends, we should pass our days without regard of our best most kind friends, that when the best feelings of our nature construe us to acknowledge and remember our obligations to the Father, whose bounty these, whose essential have saved our lives, we should so easily forget what one

ever to think. Being, whose bounty covers each day, without whose power we should instantly relapse into that nothingness? This seems to be one of the wonder ful inconsistencies of man, serves as one among nations to witness how he can be at once enthralled in his prin cipal affections without being touched with theconverted.

Of a stranger on earth were introduced among us, as made acquainted with our situation, would the belief that man should be grateful to man, unforgiving forget that the favors of earthly benefactors falling when his heart should melt it into tenderness, while those of the Heavenly Benefactor fall like dry leaves in the background. As the next mind becomes of 63 are forgotten? I do not mean to say, that we more no religious gratitude, that we never feel suddenly of the kind, when we reflect in the memory of God’s condescension upon Him. I doubt, if there be any one so entirely steeped against good, that his heart is not times more to present a sincere offering of praise to Him, whose goodness comes upon us both as the mo ments of our existence. But what I mean is, that
our gratitude to God is not so lively a sentiment as our gratitude to man, that the same person, the same act, the same consideration, may be continually introduced into our thoughts, and seem to be constantly present to our minds. It is true, we profess to return thanks to God for his goodness, as well as for his kindness; but, publicly at least, we do it in a more solemn manner in the temple of the most High, for our offering of thanks with the numerous gathering of men who ascend from all parts of our commonwealth. 

So much the better, as far as all our acts may be acceptable to the Reader, we may apply them to the consolations of those who surround the throne, and cry, 

"Hear, O Lord, struggle and the voice of thanksgiving, and the voice of more than a conqueror.

"Let us give thanks to the Lord, because he is good; because his mercy endureth forever." 

It has been a custom, honorable to the piety of our forefathers, who commanded it, and worthy ever to be perpetuated by our descendants, to set apart a day to express gratitude to God at that season when his goodness appears abundantly in the harvest, in all its means of enjoyment. But as in this, as in all other forms of gratitude, a day to be degenerate into mere form, which the spirit of that should animate them have fled. The spirit of excitement of a festival holiday has an effectual check upon the heart, while all of the effect is felt, on the other hand, on the same day, the day of thanksgiving, the thankful emotion, the genuine spirit of the heart, is the result of that joy, the genuine spirit of thanksgiving.

"Let us not forget the God in whom we have no confidence, nor are we thankful to every one else who has been our dependance, nor to make us thankful to every one else.

"Let us give thanks to the Lord, because he is good; because his mercy endureth forever." 

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be cheerful & happy. I shan’t confine my remarks to the present occasion, or to any particular occasion. I merely observe that in general we have not that day feeling sense of gratitude to God, an emotion, omission, tell us more ought to cherish. I have thought it might be appropriate to the scenes of this day to make a few observations upon the causes of the sentiment of religious gratitude.

1. The first reason why we are not more grateful to God shall mention is the habit that we are easily fatigued by trifling at second causes. All our blessings come to us by the operation of certain means; I looking to but these, than these means, we forget the power, in which they are imitated on. We know the means mercy, the object to our sense; we never appear directly applicable to his creatures, but why on the course of the government and the exercises. God, if we may so say, resides behind the means, they are at the agency of his instruments. The effects of his power, "To make this world for good, while nature then happiness might be destroyed. But how has he accomplished this? On, on shall take place this design by accomplishing? He does not work for it directly with his own hand; he does not exercise intelligence to produce every effect; he does not stretch forth his arm with an intimation for every benefit with the blessings upon his creatures, and every object as he accomplishes in the world. In a word, it is not He, the Arm of the universe, but his instruments. He hides himself in the storm, he covers himself in the cloud, he hides himself in the tempest; who may see those the messengers of God, but our eye cannot rest on the Invisible himself. This is the economy of the universe: God appears in the means not he rises; he brings about his principles through the labor of his creatures. Such being the case if we bring this blessed from the eye of man, in the perfection of glory of our views we are every day to the sight with second causes, if forget the great first cause. We are obliged to use certain means to obtain all the blessing we enjoy, yet it is these means, not only all our thoughts we repent us not to remember that there is a secret behind them, greater than all, above all. Thus with respect to the benefits we enjoy from the influence of the heavens, from physical sciences, we ascribe them at once to the established course of nature.
as we call it, without regarding the invisible hand, which, at first settled, fixed her moment, subject to common
that cause. The earth is refreshed by the rain, of that
descends from the clouds, if these clouds are freely
produced by the exhalation of vapors, if this by the long
maturity, the circulation as ever going on. The amazing
to reason of futurity, of the earth, as the noble rounds under
its operation, exposes her surface to his rays in just that degree
at those times, where necessary to call forth in respect
of productions. Then come the labors of man; he must
hew the ground, sow the seed; if watch over the growth of
of haying through the season, till the yellow harvest
smiles upon him. Now he sees, this regular course of
things going on according to certain established laws,
are daily fall into the habit of looking on further,
leaving the effect of the account in his amazement,
consequently no gratitude to him as existing in one
mind for the blessings, which come to us through some
long course of preparation of means. And so with respect
to the benefits where enjoying the labor of kind
ness of parents, relatives, of friends. we are apt to con-
sider ourselves as lying ends; allegories to bring
without considering, if it is that gave us those
friends, if put them in a condition to do us good office.
And so it is with all the blessings of life; the immedi-
ate, and the ultimate cause, attract all our attention.
We are in the condition of a man, who should follow the
course of a river, if desire it, he may pass it in an extreme
plain, if they confined in a narrow channel, in which the
flowing by the agitation of a cataract; on a man would
probably regard the first turning of the stream, where
it might be concealed from his eye, as the origin of the
river; should he ascend the cataract would produce
similar illusion, having reached the source at least,
he would consider it the mountain from which it issues,
as the primary cause of the river; he would, on however,
reflect, that the beds of the mountain must be
exhausted by or constant of a stream; he would observe
the accumulation of clouds, the rains, or that, and the
drained mountain would yield no water. Thus to his
imagination the clouds become the primary cause, but
these are brought about by the winds, the opposite to the
great seas, by the sun which causes them from the sea. Whence,
Then comes this power in the soul? Thus be arises to a first cause to explain all these phenomena... And this it is with us; we may follow the cause of our blessings arise from one cause to another; but the evil is that one step too soon. We do not carry our hearts to the great first cause; consequently we gratefully trace back most of the original source, is evidenced in intense hate sources. But then this is one cause; we think a fruitful one, of our want of religious gratitude. If then we would remove this obstacle to our gratitude to God, let us lift our minds above all the means & instruments by which benefits are conveyed to us, and the those come by the established course of nature, or from the hands of our fellow creatures, let us always raise our thoughts in a step higher scene to God, the original Giver. Do the kindness of benignity of our fellows draw us as grateful sentiments? Can we then look forth on scenes who implant these kind affections in their breasts, and gave them the inclination of the heroes to befriend us? But let us never forget that the chain of all our blessings, if we trace it through all its windings, will be found ultimately to be fastened to the throne of God.

2. Another reason why we have not more religious

The proofs of this truth are numerous. They who live, for instance, in the midst of beautiful scenery, in time will almost lose the feeling of its beauty, as if it were not affect them with any thing like the force, with which it strikes a stranger, when he is first introduced to the scene, of all these charms of scenery break at once upon his delightfull senses. Those who spend their days in the neighborhood of great & interesting objects, generally feel very little interest in them; in one case as soon as curiously, it is asserted by a distinguished philosopher, that many
people have passed their lives within a few miles of a spectacle, who with a voyage across the Atlantic and return, would have never seen it. Mention these instances to them, show them some of the habit every person has regardless of what is open or interesting. And the case is the same with regard to the blessings we receive from God. We are accustomed to them, and therefore think little of them. Let us reflect for a moment then gradually we become insensible to the enjoyment of those blessings; we shall be convinced of the truth of this remark. In engaging we are thrown entirely on the care of others. Any effort we make is developed on the subject of the situation. In every present situation of life, we grow up amidst the trials of other situations. We are not able to exact the blessing of God's providence; and so we are in a state of insensibility. The revolutions of the seasons pass away, and our enjoyment of them is lost. We are placed in society, where we are connected by a thousand ties, each one of which becomes a faithful source of pleasure. The means of intellectual growth, of spiritual culture, are lost as from an earliest age, and it is because we have so long been familiar with these blessings, we can not remember the time when we were without them that we so rarely ever consider their magnitude of importance. Good consideration, of course are not grateful for them. It is said that the reason why we do not see the air is because we are in the midst of it. Yes, the reason why we do not think of the goodness of God is because we have always been surrounded by it. We have enjoyed all the advantages of the light of the sun and all the pleasures of the sense of sight, but we have never become insensible to the benefits of them. When our health has long been from our reach, we think little of the value of the blessing. When all we have the light of the eye, but these upon us, we are not to reflect every little in the world of its inestimable price. To us in various other instances. Now in order to remedy this, it is with a view to produce by any habit, however religious gratitude we should at times endeavor to realize what conviction would be more desirable of these blessings. And if we can but bring home to our minds the state of destitution and want, in which it is
then be placed we shall have some faint idea of what we are for the enjoyment

3. One other cause of the want of religious gratitude is, the indulgence of uneasy feelings of bad passing, such as melancholy, despondence, envy, pride. They must be hostile to the spirit of thankfulness, yet they make the soul dead of strong agony, as well as strong to see the other's dear heart. One is a beautiful reflection in water that is bearing itself in black dusting waves, as that the goodness of God should one taste and

shine back from a soul that is agitated by such delightful feelings consuming passions. The indulgence of such a given temper of mind is almost fatal to a deeper performance of the duty of thanksgiving. They are clad with melancholy, and of course look always at the darkest side. It is in vain for them, that their hearts are given to such self-difficult expression, all their joys are spoiling, and sorrow in life is increased to them, all that is good in nature of soul in the constitution of man have one charm for them; all these they look on, if these be any thing in the events of

life, or in the condition of man, or in the form of matter and darkness, upon that the faster a man goes over it, till they have magnified it into some dreadful遭受可怖的 evil, with this life becomes one long day of dependence and pain. And is this, thank ari a just state of mind to

relish emotions of our hearts to the good of God? The

it teaches every thing that might suggest the persons

of thanksgiving praise; it sends us into the inmost mind

in every only and increased to which the good things of life has crowded to maintain the journey of human con

sciousness, but the desire to multiply and augment the soul's

proud sufferings of life, by perpetually the dark deposing reminiscence of those that are past, by picturing out every agony torments just the future, it by opressing one in time ever makes us linger at its wings. And as often as it are likewise sources of anguish to be God's work is never satisfied with this lot, cannot be the soul to that being, who distributes the lots of life, should think he ought to have more; better than he has, of course despises what he does hold. The spirit of fortitude
new springsing is wholly opposed to the spirit of grati
tude. Wherever you will briefly find a man, America
sincerely grateful to God, he is not a contented man.
While we feel that there is something wanting, someth-
yet unattained, it is necessary to happiness, we are ines-
tiable of setting a just value on the means of happiness
we already have. That something unpossessed, unenjoy-
ed, what is the value of the numberless good things we
already enjoy? Thus it is with that many looking
from pride. Envy is the cause of mean, anything but from
every feeling of gratitude to God. — The environment
man never thank you, while there is another man
in the world, who has more than himself. So we
on per to himself as enough to do all the fur-
shoring of thankfulness on his breast. If you must collect
all the happiness of his national existence, besides it
in himself, he will never praise the Lord for his
goodness for his wonderful works to the children
of men. If the poor are made to be grateful to
live must banish all these errors, forcing them
not from our breasts; they are supposed that all the rest, often
it into gather

Patriotism is one of the causes of the object of
gratitude. The application of these, limited to the
number of, will include a wide range. It that applica-
tion does not leave to yourselves, if you see the world, there
applies personally. On these days, when we profess to make
an offering of gratitude to God, let us resolve to move to
search those pure views in our feelings, as those
distant and grateful or make it interesting. On the day
there is a voice coming from the great minds of heaven,
telling us, that it were a sin of small souls to be
ungrateful. Do not you to the situation of our
country, ask you, if this is not full cause of gratitude.

Our own, the American, who does not bless God, that she
is an American, deserves not to stand among God. This
out of the Thanksgiving Season, that our country are
suffering in peace, at least, that her citizens are learned
at home, respectable action, that she is fast moving to
that premonitory stand among the nations of the earth,
all the must, merely one way, America now beginning
to be, what her great men that she would be, a height
an example to the world. She is teaching the nations that
she who teaches the manners that
great lesson, that men can make themselves without fling
into the madness of anarchy. Wherein, the spirit of a
man is willing to rise from the slumber that has
so long crushed it, to break the chains of tyranny, there
the port to America, as the pledge that man can be free.
And every happy, if his example remains, to the mortality
which is the root of freedom from making
in the waves. While other stars of empire are going
as time is passing, his is ascended up a bright
defendant star, and comes from every becoming an ungrate-
ful people. In other times we must decline.
And we in our commonwealth, must we have cause of
uprinct, when we consider the harmony of good fellowship
of our citizens, the privy engagement to them, and
that we have been, by the hand of heaven, continued to us.
At this anniversary of the paying the debt of the
people are debasing in the constitution of our gov-
enments; they have since turned to the people the res-
ult of their deliberations, if the people have enforce
their opinions on what was done before them. If there,
was, the hand in the world where this could or have
been done? No, there is no other country, where the people can
deliberate harmoniously talk of a constitution of the
fundamental laws of the state, to determine how they will be

The absolute dreaminess of painter is before us, of those men
who have not the same fire and vigor, splendid fires, there
are those who are obliged to theirs over a security, patron
a justly nice and hard face. Remember this: I remember God has
been from more kindly in this children, than when they are
doing good to each other.
are teaching the nations that great lesson, that men can make themselves masters of themselves, and rise above the madness of anarchy. Whereas the spirit of

man is striving to rise from the weight that has

of its existence. In our emigration, we have thought of the means of enjoyment, and of the means of happiness.

and the hand in the world where this would have been done? No, there is no other country, where the people are

as harmoniously united as in the constitution of this


and the state of its citizens, how they will be

and a glorious privilege, for one of us can never

in this anniversary, reason to be grateful. Though the

austerity of the future has been greater than usual, yet we

have been saved from the dangers of raging sickness; our

hardest moral means of enjoyment are full and abundant.

\[\text{Ed.}\]


of our citizens, of our privileges, of our enjoyment,

so far as our means, and our desires, continued to us.

At our last anniversary of Thanksgiving, the delegates of

the people were deliberating on the constitution of our go-

vernments; they have since tended to the people the re-

suit of their deliberations; of the people have expressed

their opinion as to what was best for them. Is there,

only, another hand in the world where this would have

been done? No, there is no other country, where the people

are as harmoniously united as in the constitution of this

fundamental law of the state, of its constitution, how they will be

grateful? And a glorious privilege, for one of us can never

in this anniversary, reason to be grateful. Though the

austerity of the future has been greater than usual, yet we

have been saved from the dangers of raging sickness; our

hardest moral means of enjoyment are full and abundant.

\[\text{Ed.}\]
"Tis liberty alone that gives the flowers
Of fleeting life its lasting perfume;
And we are weak without it."

At home, December 6th, 1823.