

Sermon 7 Isaiah 5.4. B~n

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Isaiah.5.4.

What could have been done more to my
vineyard, that I have not done in it?

Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth
grapes brought it forth it forth [sic] wild grapes.

in respect
These words were originally spoken of the Jews but
are equally applicable to any people highly favored
of God. It may then be applied to us as a nation, a
state or a community;

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for God has bestowed upon us many distinguished blessings, and does demand the precious fruits of rightness and love; for where much is given, much is required. We should always be mindful of his goodness and recount his mercies and blessings with gratitude and praise. And while we do this, we should at the same time seriously inquire whether we have been deserving of such blessings and distinguished favors, and if there is not also much reason for humiliation and repentance

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before him for abuse of his mercies and neglect of his grace. To-day we are particularly called upon to humble ourselves before him, by fasting & prayer, to implore his mercy and forgiveness, deprecate his judgements, and humbly ask a continuation of his blessings. In order more clearly to understand our duty and obligations to him who wields the destinies of nations as well as individuals let us consider the following particulars.

- I. The distinguished blessings

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conferred upon us.

II. What might be reasonably expected from us.

III. The fruits produced.

The above propositions seem to be clearly suggested in the text and carried out in full, would fill volums [sic]. We can take only a slight survey of the most prominent ideas on the present occasion; and

I. The distinguished blessings conferred upon us.

That these are great and invaluable must be admitted by every reflecting mind, and

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calls for a continual tribute of a nation's gratitude. None can duly appreciate these except those who have been deprived of them; and hence we are not suitable judges, being always in possession [sic] of them. Some of these distinguishing mercies and blessings are the following.

1. We are permitted to worship God according to the dictates of our consciences.

That God by his Providence superintended and directed our national affairs, in laying the foundation & establishing our

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indepenence [sic] cannot be doubted. In those transactions which formed the various scenes of national glory, the finger of God is clearly seen; for nothing short of a kind and almighty Providence, forefathers could have carried our through with such an unequal and bloody struggle. About one eighth of the present population without means or money contends with one of the most powerful and warlike nations on earth and ultimately in triumph. The finger of God was seen in all this glorious struggle; and equally

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clearly was it visible in establishing the principles of our national compact upon such wise and broad basis, as far to exceed all human calculation. Though we had wise and good men of clear and penetrating minds, yet is not all probable that they could see the powerful working of that instrument called the Constitution through all it [sic] diversified windings, and intricacies, binding together one of the most powerful people on earth; and yet so elastic as to extend over an immense territory, embracing people of every lan-[sic]

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of every religion, of every interest civil and national feelings, & yet none feeling its galling influence, but enjoying perfect freedom of action in all things pertaining to their own happiness & the publick [sic] good. It is impossible that the wisest of men should have been able to foresee all these things, which are so clearly developed now that wisest of statesmen of foreign countries look upon the wisdom of our constitution in its operation [sic] with wonder and admiration.

Here they see a numerous pop- [sic]

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population daily increasing by multitude [sic]
swarming from the old cuntries [sic] with all their
national peculiarities, each pursuring [sic] a course
agreeable to his own wishes, governing themselves,
yet governed with great strictness, and propriety.
Here then is displayed something more than human
wisdom something more than human segacity [sic]
could suggest or human ingenuity could devise.

Here each one sits under his own vine and fig
tree, and worships the God of his fathers according to
the dictates of his own conscience and

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no one to intermedle [sic] or make afraid. No lordly priesthood to dictate how he shall worship or how he must understand the word of God; but he reads for himself, judges for himself, and worships ~~for himself~~ according as he understands that word, and the dictations of an inlightened [sic] conscience.

2. Our rulers are the peoples choice.

In other countries men become kings princes and rulers by birth and not by merit.

The king is honored and applauded because

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he is a king and not on account of merit and distinguished talents for usefulness. In his exalted station he is placed by the ordinary course of nature, and is entitled to no more praise or blame, in the case than a man because he is borne [sic] an American, an Englishman, or a Hottentot, which incident he was neither the agent in accomplishing, nor was he able to prevent. In that event there is neither merit no [sic] demerit. Yet because this is the fact in respect to him, they applaud and honor him as though he were of a superior order of beings.

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This foolish order of things gives rise to a great multitude of idle and worthless beings sustained at a great expense of the people and honored because they are of high birth, Hence the great difficulty of rising from low to high stations of merit and usefulness. The poor cannot rise and hence they do ^{not} advance in the scale of moral beings because there is nothing to stimulate and encourage them. They must remain in that low and degraded state from generation to generation, for so strong is the line of distinction drawn between them that different classes are not allowed even to eat together. Not so with us. The wisdom of

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our laws and customs are such that every man of suitable character and ability is eligible [sic] to the highest gift of the nation. Hence there is a constant stimulant and a powerful cause operating [sic] to spur him on to distinction and usefulness. Though there are some, who are raised to high and honorable stations who are unworthy, yet this is not a defect in theory but in practice.

These cases we must expect in this imperfect state of human society; but their occurrence will diminish [sic] as moral improvement advances.

3. We are highly favoured with

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the freedom of the press.

The power of speech is given to man for wise and benevolent purposes. By it he communicates his thoughts to others; which adds much to his usefulness and happiness. But so limited are his associations that without other means of communicating his thoughts, his usefulness must be greatly circumscribed. Means to extend his usefulness a hundredfold we find in the press. This powerful engine of good we have at our command, and using it properly we may exert an influence

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over millions whom our voice could never reach.

This powerful agent in some countries is interdicted and even the freedom of speech is prohibited. If men are oppressed they dare not murmur, if they have made any new discoveries they dare not disclose unless it be in exact accordance with the powers that be. Hence such nations as is the case with Spain, pass on from generation to generation with little or no improvement in science, morals or religion.

But how different with us to become

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greatly good and extensively useful.

Add to this our means of general information, by means of our literary institutions, no nation can be found on earth so well fitted and abundantly supplied with means of rising to distinction in honor, and moral excellency as the United States.

II. What might be reasonably expected from such advantages and blessings.

1. Gratitude from every bosom.

It is a well established principle

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even among savages, that gratitude is due to benefactors. Among them we have some of the most extraordinary instances of a grateful [sic] heart unto those who have shown favors and performed acts of kindness.

Expressive of those grateful [sic] emotions kindled in the breast for even small, favours, great efforts have been made and great sacrifices sustained even by the poor Indian in favor of his benefactor. He reads the volumn [sic] of nature to obtain

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a knowledge of his duty. He sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind. He hears his awful voice in the thunder and feels his own weakness and insufficiency, and look to the Great Spirit for protection. On the mountain's brow, on running stream, on the bosom of the ocean [sic], on nature's broad expanse, and on every tender leaf which tumbles in the breese [sic] he reads in indelible characters. Gratitude due to the Great Spirit and to every benefactor. The same volumn [sic] is spread open before us, who possess enlarged vews [sic] from our superior

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advantages, and gather in more sublime instruction.
great, sublime and instructive as it may be
In addition to this ^ we have open before us, the
sacred volumn [sic], a revelation of himself; on every
page is impressed his character, his natural and moral
atributes [sic], and everywhere inforcing [sic] upon
us our duty, obligations, and gratitude due to him.
Nature and revelation both inforce [sic] this duty in
terms clearly as if lit up by a sunbeam, and
conscience unites its testimony, and strongly pleads
for God. In view of these circumstances what people
on earth are under stronger obligations

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than we to render praise love and gratitude to God our munificent Benefactor? God is just and demands it; he is good and bountiful to us, and he deserves it; we are dependent and constantly receiving of his bounty and should we not meet his rightful claim, we are exceeding guilty and no longer worthy of his protection.

2. Freedom from all intemperance and oppression.

Whatever may be our condition in this respect, it is certain the advantages we possess give

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us sufficient light and instruction on these subjects, to know our Masters will, and if we do it not we must expect to be beaten with many stripes. We have seen and we know the debasing influence of intemperance, that it changes man the image of God into a brut [sic] and renders his house which should smile with plenty and happiness, a scene of want, wretchedness and misery. It has been the united effort of the benevolent, the philanthropist, the patriot and Christian for years to stay the torrent of intemperance, but many have died without beholding

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the bright prospect which now beams upon our eyes.

Many the projects proposed by the wise and philanthropic to quench the devouring flame of intemperance [sic], while some measures have overreached the proper limits of public sentiment and retarded the work and object designed others have fallen far short of accomplishing the end intended, but in the midst of this storm of conflicting sentiments God has been at the helm, conducting the temperance barque over a tempestuous sea, and now has anchored it as we believe in a safe harbor.

Twenty

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five years ago, such a law could not have been sustained as we now have. It is true we have passed through many a hard struggle [sic] and obtained through Divine aid what seems to be the only true basis [sic] on which to erect our temperance fabric [sic]. As God has thus favoured us and enabled us to lay the foundation with true and imperishable materials, he expects that we will build [sic] on it, and erect a temple of true temperance, which shall be more durable than the monuments of fame, though built of marble. It is therefore to sustain the law to

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~~us sufficient light and instruction on these subjects to~~
~~know our Master's will~~ to the utmost of our power; in
informing ourselves that we might be supplied [sic]
with proper materials to meet objections and of
instructing those who need instruction and silencing
those who may cavil. God expects this, and with
reason too; for he has given us what we have need for
years, and what we have asked in prayer, for a long
time, but now to abandon the rich boon so long
desired, must show our pretintions [sic] to be
hypocritical [sic]

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and all our actions in the cause of temperance a farce.

3. He expects universal love & attachment to his worship.

This a reasonal [sic] expectation for it is the principal means by which he carries forward his benevolent designs for meliorating the condition of man, and fit him for heaven. Through this instrumentality are we indebted for our high and exalted privileges as a nation. Had our forefathers when they landed at Plymouth, erected reason as their standard and Deity, where would our

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glory as a nation been [sic] but among the things which never existed & our nation [sic] character worse than that of infidel France.

The influence of a love and attachment to the worship of Almighty God, is clearly seen in the fact that New England gives character and tone to the greater part of this great and powerful Republic. The West is mostly under that influence. Their clergymen, presidents of their Colleges, their statesmen & Judges are mostly of Puritan origin [sic] & mostly educated in New England. But what is New England compared to other

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portions of the Union? She is younger than some
portion, inferior in soil and climate, but her love of
Sanctuary and worship of Almighty God in spirit and
in truth, her ardent love of liberty and freedom of
action has given her a high place in a nation's
influence, and a power which will be felt as long [sic]
Plymouth Rock will be remembered and the name
Pilgrim Fathers, falls with pleasure upon the ear.
God has reason to expect that we shall emulate the
example of our pilgrim fathers, and love his worship
as they loved it, from which through him so

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many blessings have fallen to our beloved country.

III. The fruits produced.

Among so many blessings to which we have merely glanced our minds, it must be expected that a great and glorious harvest of precious fruits must have been gathered in, and all roots of bitterness and of sour and unwholesome fruits long before this been rooted out.

That there has by the fostering hand of God, been much good fruit produced must be admitted, but that there has and is constantly

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growing much fruit which is unwholesome and
injurious is equally certain.

1. Neglect of God's service

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2. Intemperance and vice

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3. Oppression and slavery and their attendant
evils.

“ “ “ “ “

B~n April 8.1853

Audience 61. Snow deep