

**OUR NATIONAL DISCIPLINE: A  
THANKSGIVING SERMON,  
PREACHED IN THE FIRST  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, TROY,  
N. Y., NOV. 26, 1863**

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**MARVIN R. VINCENT**

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TROY, N. Y., NOV. 26, 1863.

BY

REV. MARVIN R. VINCENT,

PASTOR.

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Troy, November 27, 1863.

REV. M. R. VINCENT,

*Dear Sir :*

The undersigned, members of your congregation, having listened with pleasure to the discourse delivered by you, on the 26th inst., and approving of the sentiments therein contained, request you to consent to its publication, and to furnish a copy for that purpose at your earliest convenience. The views so distinctly expressed on the great issues of the day, we think, are calculated to do good, and the cause of Religion and Liberty demands its circulation.

Respectfully yours,

N. S. S. BEMAN,	R. D. STARKWEATHER,
S. K. STOW,	GEO. EVANS,
GILES B. KELLOGG,	E. J. HICKS,
DAVID COWEE,	S. R. SAXTON,
F. S. THAYER,	JONATHAN EDWARDS,
J. W. FREEMAN,	CHARLES A. HOLMES,
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A. H. GRAVES,	WM. F. SAGE,
J. SHERRY,	E. S. FULLER.

TROY, November 30th, 1863.

REV. N. S. S. BEMAN, D. D., S. K. STOW, DAVID COWEE and others :

*Dear Brethren :*—Your request for a copy of my Thanksgiving Discourse for publication is gratifying to me as an endorsement of the views therein presented. Fully convinced as I am of their important bearing upon the issues of the present, I shall rejoice with you, if their circulation shall contribute, in however small a degree, to the diffusion of correct Christian sentiment respecting the interests of our beloved land. I cheerfully comply, therefore, with your request, and forward you the manuscript herewith.

Affectionately yours,

MARVIN R. VINCENT.





# SERMON.

JOB XXXVI: 22. "WHO TEACHETH LIKE HIM?"

Above every other man, the Christian minister is to "stand in the ways and see." While he is to be exempt from the dictation of public opinion as to the manner in which he shall deal with evil, he is to find his most telling texts and sermons in contemporary men and events. Religion, if it have no relation to such subjects, may be useful for angels, but not for men.

The consideration of this fact cannot be omitted from our thoughts, on an occasion like this. Our Thanksgiving will be deep and heartfelt in proportion as it is understanding. A child, when informed that he is heir to a fortune, will be delighted because of the beautiful objects and the comforts which he sees it purchase for him. His gratitude is superficial. It will not be tempered with serious feelings by reason of the responsibilities which come with wealth. His mind cannot grasp the large benefits which will accrue to him ;

the means of mental training, social position, extended culture, large beneficence. And if we shall sit down this day with our minds dwelling only on the more palpable and obvious motives for thanksgiving — our financial prosperity, our well filled barns, our freedom from disease, our extended business — this festival day will leave upon our minds and hearts no deeper impression than is left by any day in which we shake off the fetters of business, spread our tables abundantly, and make merry with our kindred and neighbors. Each merely palpable blessing is a gold rock, peering above the surface, valuable in itself, but chiefly valuable as it points to the mine beneath. Especially is this the case when the palpable grounds of thanksgiving are comparatively few in number; when, to a superficial, and particularly to a faithless observer, it would seem as though there were cause for mourning rather than for thanksgiving; and when men are found ignorant, as well as blasphemous enough to say, like the arch traitor of New York on a similar occasion, they see no cause for thanksgiving. All men will share this error more or less, according as they accustom themselves to look merely at the outward manifestations of Providence. Only as we shall make our thanksgiving unselfish, only as we shall consent to be lifted to a plane whence we

may behold God's great system fulfilling its appointed round, to see our joys and afflictions, not only as sources of pleasure or pain to us, but as the results of forces which must touch us in their revolution, and which have a mission far outside the sphere of our personal feelings ;—only as we shall have faith enough to see God working in shadow, and zeal enough to study laws rather than results, shall we celebrate a true, Christian thanksgiving.

We are not, it is true, to omit our thanks for these *manifest* tokens of Divine favor. For our abundant harvests, for our unexampled prosperity amid the distractions of civil war, for our family blessings, for the goodness vouchsafed to our churches, for the spread of the gospel, for life, and health, and reason, for the ten thousand mercies which have concerned the various, private interests of each family and of each individual,—for all these let the nation to-day send its triumphal Psalm up to the blue arches of Heaven, with full chorus of happy voices, and with the thunder of pealing organs—“ Oh ! praise the Lord all ye nations : praise him all ye people ! for His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.”

But after all, it is *as a nation* that we assemble to-day to praise that God by whom “ kings reign