

413

Duke University Libraries
Fast-day sermon
Conf Pam 12mo #476
D990594913



RBR
Conf
Pam
12 mo
#476

FAST-DAY SERMON,

Preached in the Good Hope Church

PREACHED IN THE GOOD HOPE CHURCH,

Church

LOWNDES COUNTY, ALABAMA,

THURSDAY, JUNE 13TH, 1861.

BY REV. T. L. DE VEAUX,

STATED SUPPLY.

WYTHEVILLE:
D. A. ST. CLAIR, PRINTER,
1861.

Correspondence.

GOOD HOPE, June 23, 1861.

Rev. T. L. DE VEAUX:

DEAR SIR—At a meeting of the congregation of Good Hope held this day, on motion, it was unanimously *Resolved*, "That Rev. T. L. De Veaux be requested to furnish for publication a copy of his able and highly interesting sermon preached before them on Fast-day, Thursday the 13th inst."

The pleasing duty of making known to you this resolution devolves upon the undersigned as a committee; and allow us to express the gratification we experienced during its delivery, and to add our personal solicitations to those of the congregation we represent.

To Rev. T. L. DE VEAUX,
Lowndesboro',
Lowndes Co.,
Ala.

Respectfully yours,
C. E. REESE,
WM. LYMAN,
S. K. PHARR, } *Committee.*

LOWNDESBORO', ALA., July 2, 1861.

Messrs. C. E. REESE, WM. LYMAN and S. K. PHARR, Committee, &c.:

GENTLEMEN:—Your kind communication of the 23rd ult. informing me of the resolution of the Good Hope congregation with reference to the publication of my sermon preached before them on Fast-day, has been received. The sermon referred to was hurriedly prepared, with but little opportunity for revision. The unanimous request of the congregation, and the fact, that said sermon is a *plain* and *practical* exposition of the necessity for confession and supplication before Almighty God, and *may* avail somewhat in awakening christians to a sense of their obligations, are considerations which demand attention. While it is with much hesitation I am induced to comply, it is yet with the trembling hope and fervent prayer, that God will bless it to the spiritual good of some, and the promotion of the cause of Truth. The manuscript is at your disposal.

With christian regard, yours most truly,

T. L. DE VEAUX.

P 2 m
12 m
#476

10/12/34
Flowers Col.

SERMON.

DANIEL ix: 19.

“O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God.”

PROSTRATION of the heart before God is at all times a solemn and impressive spectacle. It is an act signifying a renunciation of self-dependence and self-reliance—an act directly and distinctly recognizing and acknowledging the Supreme Existence, and our dependence upon, and obligations to Him.—But while the prostration of the individual heart before God is an act of deep and solemn significance, the attitude which the national heart assumes, when it bows in confession and supplication, is a spectacle involving a thousand-fold more solemnity. In the one case a *person* bows and is accepted; in the other a *nation's* great, throbbing, passion-stricken heart is laid upon the altar, and opened publicly to the scrutiny of Almighty God. It, too, is an act recognizing the Supreme Existence—acknowledging His sovereignty as the Overruling Power in the affairs of nations, and the entire dependence of the national body upon Him for guidance and direction.

How solemn the spectacle which *this* great nation presents to the world to-day. A nation with its conflicts, its contentions, its mighty emotions, its fears, its tears, its passions and its sorrows; its resoluteness, its confidence, its might *and its right*, suddenly pauses from the contemplation of its social and political relations, turns its eyes from the battle-field, closes its ears against the dread battle-cry, and comes with an humble heart and tear-moistened eyes to the throne, and there raises its hands in penitent confession and supplication to Almighty God. A nation *bold in defence of the right*, throws away its pride, and, as a little child, prostrates itself upon its face in the dust, to “deplore its sins, to acknowledge its dependence, to swear allegiance and to confess its responsibility.”—Seek the mount-

ain's brow, and with tearful emotion let your souls feast upon the glories with which the early morning sun bathes nature first awakening from her night's repose. See the glittering ornaments with which she comes forth bedecked. Hear her thousand voices all attuned to melody. See the glad smile which renders her face radiant with beauty. You call it grand—sublime!—but turn your eyes to yon lowly, kneeling figure, with face bending earthward, and form all robed in penitence, and watch the troubled pulsations of that proud, mighty heart, and hear the cry which proceeds from those trembling lips: “*O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do;*”—and the sight quickens the intense emotions of your hearts, and *hushes* to silence the rapt exclamations of praise which tremble upon your lips; while you stand *silent* with awe and wonder and admiration. In that form kneeling in penitent attitude—*our own beloved penitent Land—our cherished South*—is embodied a majesty—a sublimity—that far exceeds utterance and surpasses conception—*a nation lies there*, in whose great heart the hitherto frozen fount of penitential tears has been broken up—whose voice is as the voice of them that weep bitterly. A *nation* has descended from the throne of its haughtiness “high and lifted up,” to bow the knee in the court of the congregation of mourners. Let the voice of levity and merriment be *hushed* while a *nation pleads with God*. Let the feast, and the dance, and the sounds of gayety be *banished*, and let a universal silence prevail: *for a kneeling nation confesseth unto Jehovah of hosts*.

My Brethren, what is the object of our convention here to-day? It is not a Sabbath service that calls us to the sanctuary; not a Sabbath service which invites us to throw aside the implements of our toil, and to rest our minds and bodies from the active social duties which devolve upon us; it is not to celebrate with joyful anthems of praise and thanksgiving some great achievement, or some brilliant victory, or some anniversary of past triumph won from a powerful and malignant foe in “times that tried men’s souls;” but the season is one of extraordinary solemnity, and every one here to-day should with earnest heart enter upon the duties which it well becomes us to perform. You, my hearers, are members of our kneeling South; and it becomes you to consider *well* upon the attitude of humility you confess to assume by your presence here to-day. The day has been set apart by the authorities of the Common-

wealth as a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer. The country in view of the serious difficulties which beset her on every side, and in view of her own impotency apart from divine aid, comes to the Throne, and puts her cause into the hands of God. *Her object is the favor and protection of the God of nations.* Now, how is this object to be attained?

The point which I would have you consider is that *confession and supplication must precede the attainment of desired blessings from God.*

First, then, we must humble ourselves in *Confession* unto God, in the capacity of *Individuals* and as a *Nation*. As *Individuals have we naught* to confess? Are there not sins to be acknowledged and deplored? Are we guilty of no *omissions* in duty? Have we no *positive* transgressions to account for before God? Answer not hastily. Put conscience on the stand, and make a record of her testimony. We have been favored with high privileges of a *temporal* character. Look abroad over the world, nay, over our own land, and in our own midst, and see the many wretched, starving, ragged, naked forms, bowing down in want, whose miserable hovels have been erected in the very lowest haunts of crime, and in the dark noisome depths of degradation, surrounded by all that makes humanity shudder and turn pale. Come up still higher in the scale, and see how many there are of the deserving, the godly and the excellent, who are yet the victims of abject poverty, whose souls are sometimes almost crazed with the heart-rending cries of their famishing children begging for bread to satisfy the cravings of hunger; while their own pale faces and emaciated forms, tell of the endurance of sufferings, which those who feed upon the fat of the land have no conception of, or care for: compare with these, my hearers, your well-filled granaries, your fine well-watered lands, and your persons and homes surrounded by unnumbered comforts, and teeming with the blessings of life—all gifts from the hand of a kind Providence. "*Who maketh thee to differ*" from them "*and what hast thou that thou didst not receive.*" Have you acknowledged them as gifts from the "*Giver of every good and perfect gift,*" in the morning and in the evening sacrifice? Have you not the charge of *unthankfulness* to answer for? Then this is a great omission which you have to confess here to day.

You have been favored not only with temporal comforts, but

God has blessed you with high religious privileges. The Bible not “*chained to the wall,*” nor sealed with the seal of prohibition, has been yours to study. It contains a record of the Divine will and the Divine plan suited to the necessities of your souls, and is he “*power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*” There you have a record of the life of sufferings and sorrows and griefs and agonies, and the shameful death, of *God’s own Son whom He sent to die that you might have life.* Is there, my dear hearers, no charge against you with respect to this Book of Divine instruction? Have we attended strictly to Christ’s direction to “*search the Scriptures*” and to Paul’s exhortation “*give attendance to reading;*” or has the Bible lain as a heavy weight upon our hands; or does it decorate, *as an ornament,* the parlor table, or is it laid carefully aside with only the companionship of the *moth*? These are grave questions which address themselves to every one of us; and it may be, God intends to punish this *gross omission,* with which many of the people of our land are shamefully chargeable. Be assured that God does not dwell in any heart which is not *animated* with Bible principles, and which does not hold communion with him through that medium. “*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.*” My Brethren, do not our consciences testify against us, that we have been *strangers* to the Bible, when it should have been our daily companion?

Then there is *the duty of Prayer.* In every christian household, every heart should bow before the Father for morning blessings and direction; and in the solemn stillness of the evening hour, in confession of daily sins and thanksgiving for daily mercies. Daily conflicts require daily accessions of spiritual strength. Daily life with its vicissitudes and its mighty duties and responsibilities, requires for its right employment, daily counsel and direction. Any omission of this duty is a tacit denial of our dependence upon God and of our allegiance to Him.—How many of us have to confess to this omission? Have we not all to confess, that “*the closet*” has been too long sealed, or at best *but seldom opened for prayer*? How comparatively seldom does God look upon us in lowly attitude, with upraised hands and eyes and tear-furrowed cheeks, and penitent, sorrowing hearts!

Nor is this all. *There is the Sabbath.* Do we always “*remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy*?”—or do we consider that this

obligation ceases when the *church* has been entered, the *discourse* listened to, the *prayer said*, and we have returned to our homes? *How is the Sabbath afternoon employed?* Do we make *the whole Sabbath* a day of special communion with God?

How is the *Sanctuary* regarded? Is it a sacred, a hallowed, a precious place to our souls? Do we remember when we enter within its portals: "the Lord is in his holy Temple, let all the earth keep silence before him"? Do we consider that we are there for the purpose of holding communion with our Maker? Or do we resort thither because it is *customary*, or *fashionable*, or to while away a leisure hour, or to indulge an idle curiosity? "*Ye shall keep my Sabbaths and reverence my Sanctuary: I AM THE LORD.*"

There are many other solemn obligations which have been too coldly and indifferently regarded by professed followers of Christ. How have our daily observances comported with our profession? There has not been that zeal and devotion to the cause which should have characterized us;—too much of the world—temporal interests and emoluments have been too much the *idol* of our hearts, to which we have paid too much homage.

Where has been the Home altar, and where its precious influences? The education of children in the knowledge of Christ seems to have been regarded by many as a matter of secondary importance; while they—the children—instead of being trained up in the "nurture and admonition of the Lord" have been allowed, as the unbridled steed, to follow the prompting of hearts "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked," with but little if any control or instruction; so that in many places the mournful spectacle is seen of churches sinking with the withering dying bodies of departing aged members whose places are left long vacant. Nor is this all. The children of the Church, ignoring the teachings of the Sabbath School, unchecked by the voice of affectionate home counsel and admonition, when age, and even before age, places them beyond immediate parental authority, "walk in the counsel of the ungodly, stand in the way of sinners, sit in the seat of the scornful" and plunge headlong into follies and dissipations and excesses, unfitted for the duties and realities of life—unprepared for the solemn realities of eternity. The Church—Religion—Society, cry loudly against the evil, and God regards the omission with hot displeasure. Christian parents, instead of estimating religion as

an *essential of a properly regulated home*, in many instances seem rather to look upon it as only an *out-door exercise* to be enjoyed only at the church. Religion pines and languishes in many homes as a sickly plant, never so thoroughly developed as to twine its tendrils around *the family heart*—never exhaling the precious fragrance of holiness—never the Tree of Life to child as well as parent, never the *Home Life*. And so, many other points might be brought forward to exhibit the great necessity for individual confession and humiliation before God. Though we have sinned, and our sins be as scarlet, yet “*if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

But further: *This confession of sin must be attended with deep heartfelt repentance.* Without this the most essential element of true confession is wanting, and it is but an idle mockery displeasing to God and unsatisfying to man. True *effectual* confession is not the mere utterance of the lips, or the eye dimmed with tears which may not flow from the full fountain of the heart: it is something more. *It is an expression of our guilt, together with sincere sorrow for sin, and an utter abandonment of it as displeasing to God, and an endeavor after new and constant obedience in the life.* It is not to be limited to an hour, or a day or a year, but it should be mingled with each breath we draw, and silenced only in death.—Confession is idle and unmeaning unless the thing we deplore and confess as displeasing to God is not utterly and immediately and forever abandoned. The outward life is regulated by the principles within; and although confession is made with strong cries and tears and groans, yet if the sins are not abandoned in the outer life, these demonstrations of grief are utterly valueless and unacceptable, since they are not expressions of inward change:—the confession lacks genuineness, and the voice of confession is the voice of *falsehood*. *The outward change is the only proof we can have of inward change, and of the sincerity of confession.* “By their fruits ye shall know them.” If we would have God “hear and forgive,” if we are guilty of any of the charges I have specified, if any sins rise up to condemn, let us remember for our consolation, there is no “*Anathema Maran-atha*” against the soul that confesses unto God. If we are troubled because of transgressions, let us go to God and confess them with deep sorrow in our hearts and an utter abandonment of them in our lives. *He will forgive.*—

With John we have the promise: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." 1 Jno. I. 9. With David we have the fulfillment of His promises to the penitent: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sins." Ps. xxxii. 5.

But *Supplication* as well as *Confession* must precede the attainment of the object we have in view: God's pardoning favor and protection. While we ask God to listen to the voice of our confession, we must also supplicate Him to forgive the sins we confess and deplore. If we confess only, and supplicate not for pardon and favor, our purpose is not answered, nor our end gained. A disobedient child may confess his disobedience to his father, because he knows his father witnessed the act; but while his pride permits him to humble himself thus far, it may yet deter him from the further humility implied in supplication for pardon. Not to supplicate is an evidence of unsubdued pride, or of distrust of the faithfulness of God. Of course *confession of sins*, and *pride* which is the very opposite of that lowliness of spirit implied in confession, cannot agree; and hence until this pride of heart and distrust of God is removed, until humble supplication follows confession, the object cannot be attained, nor the blessing enjoyed. If our confession to-day would be acceptable unto God, and our object attained, we must dethrone from our hearts this demon, *pride*, and with the voice of confession, mingle our earnest, sincere supplications for the pardoning favor and protection of Almighty God. We must descend from our lofty elevations, and clothing our hearts in sack-cloth and ashes, sit down in the vale of contrition and supplication. "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit," a broken and a contrite heart O God thou wilt not despise.— "Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy, I dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." Manasseh whose kingdom was taken from him because of his wickedness and idolatry, besought the Lord his God, and humbled himself greatly before the God of his fathers, and prayed unto him; and God heard his supplication and brought him again to Jerusalem

unto his kingdom." If we, my hearers have aught to be forgiven and blessing to entreat, let Manasseh's course of confession and supplication be ours, and God will "hearken and do." "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but *whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.*"

But passing on, *let us enquire what the condition of the nation is before God.* Is not the South guilty, and has she not much to confess? Are there no stains to be wiped away? Her prostrate attitude assumes that she has much to confess—much from which to be purified. There is yet a hideous amount of corruption, political and moral, to be found exerting an ~~imitating~~ *imitating* influence upon her. She is by no means spotless. The South equally with the North has been made, by Divine appointment, the Custodian of sacred principles, well adapted to subserve sacred ends—principles competent to the establishment of sound pure Government, which, if rightly guarded and administered, might have erected upon a permanent basis a monument of Republican energy and excellence, that would forever have silenced the cavils of rival nations, and elicited the admiration and praise of long succeeding generations.—But how has she fulfilled her commission? True, she has had hanging upon her skirts, and to a certain extent paralyzing her energies, a Northern "*body of death;*" and now perhaps, divested of this encumbrance, she may successfully work out the problem; but past sins in this respect she has to answer for. Go to the ballot-box, and witness the bribery and corruption which might well cause her cheeks to blush—where senseless heads and depraved hearts, shielded by the panoply of wealth, haughtily set up a claim upon the suffrages of the people, and substantiate it by the "*almighty dollar;*"—*where personal qualifications are set aside for personal preferences!* And what has been the result? Instead of sober, dignified counsel and sound judgment, our legislative halls have groaned under the weight of corrupt doctrine, while selfish personal aggrandizement has completely swallowed up all considerations for the national welfare;—and now because of such folly, and neglect of matters of such high importance in both sections, the nation weeps and groans and bleeds. It becomes the South because of this to take to herself "*shame and confusion of face,*" and the attitude of an humble, weeping, confessing supplicant becomes her well. *She will arise from her position, cleansed from these sins,*

and, clothed in the strength of God, manfully vindicate the right, and rescue it from the hand of destroyers.

But this is not all. While deriving incalculable benefit from christianity, she has not upheld with vigorous arm the cause of Truth. Her commerce has occupied a great share of her affections; and properly so. Her agricultural interests have lain near her heart. Her public works, many of them of stupendous magnitude, have busied her hands. The Religion of Christ from which so much national nourishment has been *gratuitously* drawn, has been to a certain extent *subordinated* to these and assigned a *secondary* place in her affections. Until recently she has been content to bind herself by an obligation in a national covenant, in which God was not recognized; or if recognized at all, with an indifference which seemed to regard the introduction of that Holy name as a mere form, void of all significance or solemnity. This indifference to the cause of Christ to which she is largely indebted, increases the necessity for repentance a thousand fold. While the kingdom of this world, and the kingdom of Christ are, and should be, separate and distinct, yet the principles of the latter should be the very foundation upon which this Commonwealth should plant itself.—Her breath should be inhaled from the pure atmosphere of the Bible.—Her sustenance should be derived thence.—Her very life blood should flow from this overflowing fountain of purity. The Government of the Land “ordained of God” should be thoroughly pervaded and regulated by the principles of God’s word. It should be the echo of Bible truth—a *mighty focus* catching and concentrating, and thence distributing through its varied media, the purifying influence of moral truth.

There are other evils which degrade the Land and cry to Heaven. Throughout the length and breadth of the land there are certain *licensed* venders, who sacrifice moral principle to a *greedy lust of gain*—who feed the insatiate appetites of misguided infatuated men, regardless of the appeals of frantic wives, the piteous cries of famishing children, or home desolations or the moral effect upon society—who place instruments in the hand of their victims, to dethrone reason and stupify gifted moral feelings—who build upon the ruins of men, and who help to heap wrecks of men upon society, and people eternity with lost souls. I allude to *venders of intoxicating beverages*. Some of these are to be found even holding positions in the church of

Christ! This, the authorities wink at, and testify their approbation with a license!

But further still are our people guilty. Walk down the streets of our large cities and even of our villages, and upon the lips of a very large proportion of those you meet, *the sacred name of God trembles irreverently*; and even little children, following the example of those who should teach them reverence, use it only to add emphasis to their assertions!

Sabbath after sabbath is prostituted to game making and sport and merriment at the will of a crowd, instead of being employed by them as a day of sacred rest and worship. The Sabbatic rest of the fields is broken by the shrill whistle of the locomotive, while the rivers are agitated by the paddles of the steamboat. There are other sins which might be brought to view as cause for repentance, and which clamor loudly for reform. O people of the South wound no more your mother, upon whose bosom you have securely nestled; but bear her, *now weeping and bleeding*, upon your arms to the throne, and while you weep *with* her and *for* her, confess *her* sins and *your* sins *there*, with a spirit of humble penitence, and God will acknowledge and accept the sacrifice, and answer with speedy and abundant blessing. "*If my people upon whom my name is called, shall humble themselves and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and will heal the land.*" 2 Chron. vii. 14. "*Behold I will bring it health and cure—and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth.*" Jer. xxxiii. 6.

But there are peculiar blessings of temporal character having special and immediate reference to the present condition of the land which we should make the subject of importunate prayer. The distracted country calls loudly for peace. She wants not war, and at the sight of blood, shudders and turns pale *not from fear, but sorrow*. She deprecates the scene of war and carnage and blood. *She weeps even while she strikes*. She weeps for departed peace;—*not because she is a coward, but a hero!* Not because she dare not maintain the right, but because she does not want the right to bleed. She has made overture upon overture, and yet her plea is not regarded. Her "*valiant ones cry without—the ambassadors of peace weep bitterly.*" Her foe, "*hath broken the covenant—he hath despised the cities—he regardeth no man.*" But if we cannot have peace, we want *God's favor and protect-*

Review!

ion in the day of strife. For what do our foes contend? Not for principle or right: but they aim the death-blow at our sacred institutions: our happy smiling homes they would consign to the flames: our dearest interests they would plunder and destroy:—and, as the loathsome serpent coils itself around the trembling bird, they would clasp the great, warm, throbbing heart of our cherished land in their serpentine folds, and blacken and wither it under the venom of their malice. That I speak the truth without exaggeration, recent startling developments prove. They would “burn each blade of grass”—they would consume each waving field;—they would desecrate our altars—they would blot out our homes—they would heap indignities and insults upon our helpless families, and leave behind them a scene of blackened desolation!—God save the Land! “No human arm is equal to the crisis. No human eye can penetrate the future.” No human counsel can defeat the designs of these malignant destroyers. “Our only help is in God—from Him cometh our salvation.” Let us, my brethren, awake to the stern realities that are before us. *Now*, if ever, christian obligations should be recognized and christian duties scrupulously performed. *Now*, if ever, is the time to “*watch and pray.*” Let us as christian patriots, awake to a consciousness of the perils that surround our land and our homes. The dangers which assail these reflect upon the precious church of Christ. *Shall Zion suffer?* Shall “spiritual wickedness” triumph over her and trample her prostrate form in the dust? *Forbid it, Almighty Father!* *Let us awake to a sense of our duty with respect to the Church.* Let our prayers constantly assail the Throne.—Let us pray for strength in every emergency. *Let us seek GOD as our all-powerful ally in political and spiritual difficulties.* “Let us scrupulously resist every influence that is unfriendly to the influences of His Spirit. Let us mortify every thought and subdue every passion upon which we cannot sincerely invoke His blessing. “Let us wait long at the Mercy-seat, and remember that “*the fervent effectual prayer of the righteous man availeth much.*”



permalife.
pH 8.5