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THE CHURCH
WENT THROUGH A WAR

W. SPOONER SMITH

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HOW ONE CHURCH WENT THROUGH A WAR

BEING A SELECTION OF SERMONS
FROM THE NOTE BOOK OF THE
OCTOGENARIAN TRAVELLER

W. SPOONER SMITH

Author of "Travel Notes of an Octogenarian"



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PREFACE

These sermons were written over fifty years ago, during the stress and conflict of a great civil war. They are not published because the public responds to this class of writing, but because they are charged with the life throes of brothers in conflict, they are alive with the instincts and anxieties of differing views, and because it was thought that words written at the time might preserve some sense of that vital four years' crisis to a generation that can learn of it only from the fathers.

This year the author of these sermons has joined the great majority of those who have left a debt of gratitude to their descendants for a preserved and united country.

May not the final message of peace and victory bring a note of hope from the past to our warring world?

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HOW ONE CHURCH WENT THROUGH
A WAR

HOW ONE CHURCH WENT THROUGH A WAR

A WAR SERMON

PREACHED AT GUILFORD, JUNE 9, 1861.

Curse ye, Meroz, said the Angel of the Lord, curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof: because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the Mighty.—Judge v. 23.

Brethren and friends, in the time of our providential separation as people and pastor a great change has passed on the face of our beloved land. The little cloud like a man's hand which rested in our horizon without exciting serious apprehension, has risen and grown and made all the heavens black with clouds and wind. War great and threatening is actually upon us. A time of anxiety and trouble such as we had never anticipated has come. We cannot if we would,

keep our thoughts from the great and dreadful fact. We should not, for we all have individual relations to it which it gravely concerns us to know. You have doubtless all meditated deeply upon this matter, the ministers of the sanctuary have doubtless from time to time given you the counsels of God's word respecting the duty of the hour, but you will permit me while the storm is in no wise abating but rather assuming more and more portentous dimensions, to briefly reconsider in the light of God's word the duty of the man of God in this eventful crisis.

This call to arms has surprised the Christian sentiment of the loyal nation, fixed with deep prejudices in favor of peace. The profession of the soldier was fast becoming outlawed. Christian people were finding it more and more difficult to harmonize participation in any war with the spirit of the gospel of the Prince of Peace. An army of thirty thousand men was by many regarded as an almost useless appendage to a nation of thirty million souls.

This strong sentiment against all wars stands foremost for examination in an inquiry for the

way of the Christian citizen's duty. If God says all war is unjustifiable and wrong, then what else may be urged from other deductions? the question is settled for all the people of God. If God forbids they must not fight or help unto any fighting.

But is that the law?

Thou shalt not kill, no more forbids all exercise of violence than it abolishes the scaffold. There is legitimate force of violence that must be exercised by the blow of the executioner, by the carnage of battle.

The word of God recognizes in this world of lawlessness the necessity of the sword of law. Society has been often helped by battles, even as the atmosphere we breathe is purified by storms.

Was not God's ancient people accustomed and under divine command accustomed to the camp and the battlefields? Was not chosen Israel *indeed* a church militant, did not God teach their hands to war and their fingers to fight? Were there not men of even great powers renowned also as men of blood? Were not Abraham and Moses and David and Joshua and a great mul-

titude of worthiest worthies leaders of armies? It is even so.

Then if we look into the future as forecast by the prophet of Patmos, is it not by the throes of conflict that the blessed age comes to its birth? See we not that it is, by the marshalling of host again even to the last, by overturning of wars that must needs be, that He whose right it is shall at last come to His right and rule the whole earth? Not that this conflict is in itself good, not because the sword converts and sanctifies but because with other agencies it must needs be,—a necessary evil. The storm that strews the seas with wrecks is better than the fatal poison of universal stagnation.

We settle down to those conclusions by studying the spirit of the sacred record.

We see there no sweeping condemnation of all war, but on the other hand we see the sword in the hand of many a faithful servant of the Most High. We see also an express necessity of war recognized, a time given unto it, and a large place given unto it in the economy of the world's redemption.

But our text gives us a case where fighting was not only according to the will of God, but where they who declined it were cursed. The offense of Meros was that it did not respond to a proclamation of war, because it did not arm and dare and fight. Because it did not with weapons win and come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty, it was cursed bitterly, cursed by the Angel of the Lord.

From this then we learn that there are times when it is not only right to gird on the sword, but also that there are times when to withhold one's self from coöperation with demonstrations of warfare is utterly unjustifiable in the sight of God.

Christians not only may fight, but out of the signs of the times they may sometimes read the clearest indications of the will of God, that they go up to conquer or die upon the field of blood.

The question then becomes narrowed down to this. Is this one of those emergencies when we are called to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the Mighty?

We choose in answering this question to con-

sult the Word of God. From that we are sure that government is ordained and sanctioned by Him who is the soul of all authority. Order is heaven's first law, and as heaven comes down to the earth there is the infusion of this same spirit. A bad government is better than anarchy, and as a rule the institutions of the nations have been as good as they could bear. With allowance of exceptions, the regulations, the laws of a community are the expression of its highest practical wisdom. So inspiration might and did honor the bloody scepter of Nero; Paul himself a victim of executive injustice, under God enjoins a spirit of submission and loyalty and honor to all that are in authority, he under God indicated the sword of government as a power that must be exercised in the earth. We have had a government, it has been just, equal, kind, beneficent, abounding in prosperity, prolific of blessing, more than ever a government was upon the face of the earth.

It had in itself the means and the disposition to modify its provisions, change its regulations, for the redress of every grievance that might be made to appear. If God would have no rebel-

lion against the cruel tyranny of Nero, the harsh ambitious despotism of Rome, if he endorsed their commission to bear the sword of authority with all their abuse thereof, then we may well believe God stands by law here, and that he will justify self-defense, and its rightful jurisdiction to it, and that if he has a people who will not come up to his help, and sustain such institutions as these, he will curse them.

Whether it can be understood elsewhere or not, it will be understood here that we are standing for the very existence of that divinely sanctioned institution of government. We know, if this goes, God's best blessing to us is gone. If we cannot retain this, we lose all. We know if institutions ever deserved to be defended and perpetuated at the cost of treasure or of our blood, those of ours must come into that count. And be it observed that here the responsibility for the exercise of authority and the preservation of power are not resting upon one or a few men, but that each man is a sovereign with a measure of duty of sovereignty.

It is ours not only to *honor* and *obey* but also

to *enforce* and *defend*.

Who are to exercise the violent powers, who are to go to the post of danger, who are to make sacrifices? The *people*, all who receive the blessings of these popular institutions. If now God is on the side of the laws, then we are imperatively called upon to fight. For the time has come when mad rebellion assails not only the just laws, but the very vitality of the government. To bear more is wicked consent to destruction. Fierce blows are being aimed at the bond of constitutional authority, which being severed we fall into helpless anarchy or despotism. Then we know that it is of God that a government like this with such a record of history, with the letter of its constitution and laws so commending itself to all sense of justice, righteousness, beneficence, it is of God, that such a government should resist to the last with all its concentrated force, rebellious hostility. It is of God that the executives proceed to condemn and punish all transgressors of these just and wise and necessary regulations, to see that violence and theft and dishonesty and murder and all crimes be visited with their appropriate

penalties, and when evil does band into armies, and undertake gigantic villainies, then the Republic must send her police by regiments, numbers on numbers, with all necessary and fitting arms and appliances, till, though it be over battlefield after battlefield, traitors and rebels are utterly overcome and duly punished. Such a work as this, though it be done in blood and fire, we feel has the approbation of him who concedes the right of coercion to the sacred institution of government.

This great and dreadful strife we *know* was *necessitated* of rebellion. Thank God that on the dear, blessed stars and stripes there is yet no stain, they have only waved to bless, and they float to-day in the grandeur of the noblest forbearance, that power ever exercised toward wicked, insolent outrage.

This carries us beyond the consideration of the fact of rebellion and the necessity of its repression to the nature of that rebellion.

Now it is a fact that eight or fifteen states of this confederacy are persuaded that they cannot live without slavery, if they see it as they de-

clare only inferior to the Christian religion in its beneficent effects upon society. If they could not be content till they had established a system of government resting upon this one boasted foundation, if thus they had resolved to take practical issue with all humanity, and build up from corner to top stone one grand despotism, even then they need not have gone into rebellion. Had they sought constitutional and peaceable means of severance from the states that believed in another gospel, that end could have been attained. Union under those circumstances never could or would have been enforced. But, doubtless because of the lack of that unanimity, the leaders who have for years been infatuated with the vision of a great slave empire, resolved to try rebellion as a short road to disunion and independence.

And *such* a rebellion marked with such unscrupulous disregard of all rights and interests but their own, such falsehood, such dishonesty, such treachery, such violence and insult! We search the records of civilization in vain to find its equal, not in anger, but in pity and amazement we look upon a people crazed with passion, lashed

to fury by ten thousand lying representations. For six long months our government looked for the groundless excitement to pass away, most seditious and treasonable language was tolerated almost unrebuked in the halls of the Capitol, words and acts were endured which in any other civilized nation would have brought their authors to sudden punishment.

Not till she felt the dagger of the assassin seeking her very heart did the Republic spring to the defense. God be praised that the nation awoke to its fearful peril! God be praised that she became not a victim to her love of peace and faith in her foes! God be praised that we still have a government still mighty to command, protect and defend!

The loyal nation, by all its habits and predilections, is for peace, the interests of the people bind them to an industrial and commercial repose with chains of gold, our President, Cabinet and Governors are all men of peace, there is no fear of military ambition, no anger or revenge burns in the popular mind, there are no gains in treasure or territory to be gathered by the sword, yet

here are mighty states vying with each other in a great and solemn devotion to their country—to their God, in the readiness and unanimity with which they give themselves to the dread work of war!

The nation by unparalleled outrages has been roused to a full sense of its governmental responsibility and functions. Constitutional order must be reëstablished on immovable foundations, evildoers must be punished, the oppressed relieved, and through the land and through the world it must be proclaimed by acts of might, that free institutions are not only benignant but also self-sustaining and enduring.

We must do this. Is it not the voice of God that commands it, that the nations need not in despair turn from the hopes aroused by our splendid history,—to the fate of anarchy or despotism?

The Christian soldier is, under God, the servant and guardian of that more than *royal* or imperial order, even the seat of *law* and *liberty* which sacrifice and blood established here. He fights against injustice, violence; he fights the enemies of humanity. He fights for order and

equity. His blows and blood shall give emphasis to the best code of enactments that have yet been given into the world. Yes, laws must be lifted up from their dishonor, or in time we shall become the victim of the rapacity and violence that as yet has been meted out to a few of us.

We believe God is calling the people to the sword and not only because there is rebellion, but because it is the wickedest and most unjustifiable rebellion upon record. Wicked because its root is in human oppression, wicked because its every advance is marked with outrage, wicked because meant to be destruction to the best government the world has ever known, unjustifiable because there has been no provocation, the very arch-traitors themselves having been chief officers and councilors, leading spirits in the government, up to the time the great rebellion was instigated.

If the curse of God falls upon men because they fail to apprehend the signs of the time of war, because they come not up to the help of the Lord against the mighty, then let men think well before they speak or act against the present

policy of our government. It is perilous to seek peace when God summons the hosts to battle.

But, says the timid man, What is the use of fighting? If nothing more, call out your police and make one honest and determined effort to restore order. The policeman may not get the advantage of the desperate burglar or murderer, yet nothing excuses him from the effort and the peril of the encounter. Men with the mighty inspirations of a noble cause may chase each his thousand, but if they fall, their blood shall fight the battle on. Is there not recreant meanness when men fear to do and dare with God and all that is good on their side?

But states may not, cannot, be coerced. The fact that States are in rebellion is a supposition, not a fact. But if it were so, what? Can a state make wrong right? May not a state be punished just as much as the individual man? Can it not be brought to terms? That is a matter of strength to be better pronounced upon after trial. The probability is that, other things being equal, the stronger power will enforce its requirements.

But this touches not the facts in the case. So

far as can be ascertained not more than one state is yet by the legitimate vote of the people in rebellion with the federal government.

What power on earth but that government can reach and free from oppression and coercion its own willing subjects? Terrorism and misrepresentation are all the nerve and power of this insurrection. Does God absolve us from this service of duty and mercy? The forcible dissolution of this union will leave a wound by which the passion part will bleed to death, the dissolution that the south sought to be carried by foul and violent means, will plunge a loyal majority, loyal if they might speak in virtue of all the facts in the case, into untold calamities. The world knows and we conclude from the information we receive that a majority of the people of the seceded states know that with the union the south loses all. So that out of pity to good men and true, out of compassion for our brethren who have been wickedly wrought up to hate us, God calls us to go as we only can go now in armies and tell the loyal men of the South that we love them still, that we came to join hands and hearts

with them against a common enemy. Fail in this duty and henceforth we are two maimed, hating and warring nations. Do we not already see something of the outcome of this wise policy, which the bayonet only can carry out? Maryland is saved. Missouri is saved. Kentucky we trust is doing well. Even Virginia is being reclaimed. Our brethren in Tennessee, fearfully environed and beset, are struggling manfully. With these indications apparent, we scout the miserable twaddle about the coercion of States, and the mischief of the war, and believe it is the voice of divine wisdom which calls upon us to give to the government men and means to enable it to do its duty of defense, protection and enforcement of the laws. The gate through which the true and lasting peace must come is to be opened by force. These daring mischief makers must die or go into exile. An overwhelming military force only is sufficient to enforce that decree. Become special policemen for a while till the mob is dispersed, employ your individual influence and resources for the good cause or never use or claim the services of law or officer. He that cannot help

his country in the time of her trouble deserves not her protection and help in the day of his own trouble. Such as he are given over of the Angel of the Lord to the curse of God.

Have we not further intimation that this foul rebellion should not succeed but be suppressed in the fact that God has made us one people? This was the original ordination. Common language and faith, common sympathies and trials and interest, by these God made of us the United States of America. Since then we have learned how strongly by ocean and wind and lakes and river we are bound together in geographical unity; nature not only affords no natural boundary for two nations, but will not suffer her bonds of union to be broken. And besides this, steam and telegraph have done away with the dissevering influences of distance and time. So joined are the States in one nationality, nothing but the most unnatural and violent influences can pronounce disruption. And were this effected, there is every probability that the continuance of that condition would be uninterrupted warfare. Thus we read in all these signs the decrees of nature and providence,

that the union must be preserved and the laws enforced, though it cost, as all high duty does, a great price. Further, do we not recognize God in all this wonderful and unlooked-for movement about us? Who hath brought light out of the darkness, strength out of weakness, harmony out of discord? It is the Lord Almighty alone that with the signs of the times is writing out the promise of our salvation.

Month after month all things seemed to be going wrong, so complicated were our affairs and so hopelessly deranged, that men all confessed themselves unable to see any way of escape. As never before the party of the nation despaired of human dependence and turned unto the Lord, and He, out of the weakness and folly and the wickedness of man, at length caused a word to go forth that in one way made timely millions of apparently demoralized and divided people to spring to their feet as one man, forgetting all their animosities, thrilling with one and the same new-born resolve and hope and love, seeing eye to eye, working hand to hand, brethren as they

never were before. This is indeed the Lord's work and it is marvelous in our eyes.

The governors willingly offered themselves among the people. Except where traitors had poisoned the air and deceived the hearts of the people, did the children of the Republic fail to respond to her call, "Vox populi, vox dei"? It is of God this marvelous uprising, he is calling us to his help—to his help against the Mighty.

Finally we recognize this call for devotion to the nation to be that of God, because most brief, effectual, and least harmful war will come of the most formidable demonstration of military force. Let countless bayonets fill the hearts of traitors with consternation. Help the government to show by brave, enthusiastic armies how strong she is and how summarily she can punish; help her to show to her now weak and oppressed children that she is able still to protect them. For the very dread of war and its great calamities make the authorities so formidable that none shall venture war.

God be praised under his lead that we are going to do our duty as loyal Christian citizens.

Thus we will write law and liberty in plainer characters upon the field of our noble flag, and cause it to wave evermore over our broad land, a symbol of terror to the rebellious, a joy, a glory, and a refuge true and sure for the loyal and the free.

A SERMON

PREACHED AUGUST 18, 1861.

And it came to pass when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt. But God led the people about, through the way of the wilderness of the Red Sea.

In sacred history the two elements of affairs are seen working along together. There appears the thought of God and the thought of man. The works of God and the works of man. Profane or uninspired records present only the human side. Hence the vast superiority of the Bible as a means of gathering practical wisdom from the past. In the one case the Lord is present declaring his will and expressing his approval or disapprobation by the prosperous or adverse course of events; in the other, man is magnified, human conduct passes

unchallenged, and vicissitudes of fortune remain greatly unexplained. While there is this great difference between inspired and uninspired narrative, yet there is thrown a general interpretation upon all human events and action from the revelations of sacred history. In connection with individuals and national history there are declaration and illustration of the principles of the divine will and government in the world. God has given us a key by which the mysterious hieroglyphics of this ever-changeful world life may be at least in part interpreted. In the old Bible story there rests forever the light of the mind of God. This is the light by which all our ideas must be tested, where the true and the false are made apparent. It is a kind and gracious provision of God that in great exigencies, in time of doubt and fear, when the great world is convulsed and men feel that they are making history and making way for the time to come; that then they may read out the waymarks of righteousness and salvation from a God-given chart of this human life. The Bible, thank God, is an all-sufficient storehouse of wisdom for all possible vicissitudes

of time. In the Scriptures there are counsels goodly and divine and confirming and encouraging, as well as admonitory for these solemn and distressing times. Happy are we if hereunto we find day by day our daily bread, if in the trying weeks we live upon the fitly adapted word of God.

By the printing of our text we turn our thoughts to the time when God made Israel a nation. A family, the chosen seed, went into Egypt, in the disintegrated, unorganized condition of servitude they continued there, till by the hand of Moses they went forth, proud, marshaled and self-directed, to enter upon their natural career as the peculiar people of the Lord. By mighty signs and wonders their deliverance was wrought. God in clearest manner called them, and set them on their way toward the land promised to their fathers. With power and favor, with help and hindrance, with salvation and distinction, God drew a line of wide and everlasting separation between the children of bondage and their proud and hard oppressors. Around the exodus there seems to gather a word and power

of divine adoption sufficient to bind the graciously befriended people unto everlasting faith and obedience.

There in the first outset from Egypt it had been easy to venture the prophecy that it were in the will of man and the purpose of God, that the shortest and most expeditious route should be taken to the land of promise. And this, if we may so speak, appears to have been the divine preference. The direct way was avoided by the command of God, lest they should see war and through fear turn back again to Egypt. Safe beyond the Red Sea, Israel receives the law from Sinai, and those special directions that were purposed to distinguish them from every other nation. A year passes and the people of God stand upon the threshold of their promised inheritance and rest. Men are sent to search the land, all things are ready for the desired consummation. Egypt is forgotten and the wilderness is passed. Floods of milk and honey and wonders invite them to the grand heritage of their long-cherished hopes. But even according as the Lord had spoken, the people see war, are smitten down with

apprehensions of the giant that is in the land and their weak hearts turn back towards their miserable bondage again. In the gloom of the hour they murmured, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt or would God we had died in the wilderness." "And wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey? Were it not better for us to return into Egypt?" In vain did Moses and Aaron fall on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the children of Israel. In vain did Joshua and Caleb, who had searched the land, rend their clothes, and plead, saying, "The land which we passed through to search is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it to us, a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel ye not against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us; fear them not." All the congregation bade stone them with stones. Therefore, the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle

of the Congregation before all the children of Israel. And the anger of the Lord broke forth. "How long will this people provoke me? How long will it be before they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with the pestilence, and disinherit them, and I will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they."

Thus heavily fell the indignation of the Lord. Then the people repented, saying, "So, we be here, and will go up into the place which the Lord hath promised, for we have sinned." But it was too late, the mischief was accomplished. Moses answered, "Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord? But it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies, because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord would not be with you." Yet they persisted and went up to battle, but were smitten before the enemy. Backward they turned in defeat, back to the wilderness to wander and to die. What a day of grief, anguish and shame was that; humbled before God and their enemies,

they enter the forty years of their first great national calamity. This is a remarkable passage of sacred history and it has its important lessons.

I. There is here set before us one of the necessary conditions of national existence. The divinely imposed obligation of asserting its authority and of making its way by force when opposed, or in other words the duty of facing war.

This was a new thing to the children of Israel. Hitherto they had been only slaves, held only to the responsibility of toil. They had taken no part in national affairs. The management of the state was in other hands. Brick-making had been the great necessity of their subordinated and unorganized condition. But now they had been given a place among the nations of the earth. Power had been conferred upon them, for self-government and self-defense and self-assertion.

The responsibility of braving and overcoming opposition great, grave and dreadful was imposed upon them. Thus it clearly appears, for with all the great interposition of the Lord in their behalf, God in the plagues of Egypt, God in the overthrow of the pursuing enemy, God in

the miraculous provisioning of their wilderness march, God in the guiding pillar of cloud and fire, they were not relieved of the duty and the perils of warfare. It was the purpose of Him who had called his people out of Egypt that they should occupy the already inhabited land of Canaan. He that overwhelmed the hosts of Pharaoh could have swept it clean, and made it ready for the peaceful occupation of his people, all the land that he ordained for their inheritance.

The sword of the Lord could have cleared the way, he could have led them so that they should not see war in its threatening and its horrors at all. But this it did not please him to do. He made them a nation and gave them the sword to bear. If their rightful way was obstructed, they must hew it clear by force. They had come where the next onward step towards the fulfillment of their desires and the divine purposes was war, severe and bloody strife. It was an exceedingly good land, and God bade them enter in and possess it. But a strong people dwelt in the land, and the cities were walled and very great and there were the giant sons of Anak. Against this formidable

opposition they were to cast themselves and pay a price of blood before entering into rest and abundance. To us the pathway of their duty is very clear. With firm faith in God, fully persuaded that he was with them, they with one heart should have exclaimed with Caleb, "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it."

II. Illustration of national temptation in the face of war.

The duty of the children of Israel at this time was to obey the voice of God and to take council of nothing else whatever. They were to do without hesitation or doubt what obedience required. But with war in the path it was hard to go on. There was the great and strong argument that ever appeals to human sympathies. War is inconceivably dreadful. The woes and the pains of the horrible battle work none can look upon unmoved. No easier was it to the people of three thousand years ago to wrestle with the apprehension or the reality of a state of warfare than for ourselves. Experience teaches us the force of this appeal. Besides, the odds were against them.

They were a nation of Colonies, they had never been skilled or disciplined to the use of arms. The temptation was here to look on the human side, and there were great grounds for the apprehension that they would be vanquished and suffer all the calamities of total defeat. Their dark forebodings are shadowed forth in their despondent cry, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us into this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey; were it not better for us to return into Egypt?"

Anything is preferable to war—bondage, death in Egypt, death in the wilderness. No good can come of it, only evil. So the multitude reasoned and they thought they reasoned well; they were ready to stone any man, even the godliest of them all, even Moses and Aaron and Caleb and Joshua, who dared to urge courageous, energetic, immediate guiding to the battle. The temptation of fear was so great, the reasoning of apprehension was so strong, that God and the pointing of duty was well-nigh lost to sight. Those who believed that this was a matter of right and wrong to be settled at a higher tri-

bunal than that of mere human sympathies and human fears consisted of just four men. They withstood the temptation, Moses and Aaron and Joshua and Caleb, not because they were less human and not because they delighted in the scenes of blood, but because they knew there could be something worse even than war, yea, because they believed that when duty and God demanded it there was nothing better than to go out to do valiantly in the name of the Lord, therefore they expostulated with the panic-stricken, murmuring and falling multitude, saying, "Rebel not yet against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land, for they are bread for us, their defense is departed from them, and the Lord is with us, fear them not." But the temptation prevailed, anything is better than war, swept down all opposition. We see it to have been a temptation. They thought they were wise for the time. They thought they were pleading for humanity. They thought not that they were disregarding the waymarks of God.

III. We look on a nation's fall. Israel forgot God, remembered not his wondrous words

and works. Through fear of the enemy, for lack of nerve or heart for stern duty, she drew upon herself the fierce wrath of God. The sin was fear to fight, dread of war, low, inadequate conception of human affairs. How fierce the outburst of divine indignation! How long shall this people provoke me? How long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed among them? I will smite them with pestilence and disinherit them. And all this on the human side, because the people judged it prudent to avoid a war and retreat into the wilderness. Because they did not see what good could come of fighting, because forsooth they were good, quiet, yielding, peaceful men, because they counted the cost of war and pronounced it the greatest evil of the world.

This on the one side, but on the other because they took not high council of God, because they ignored all the higher and nobler obligations, because they saw not something of more worth than life, because they were not willing to sacrifice themselves for the attainment of that blessing which God had put before them, for their chil-

dren forever, because they were so unequal to their duty and their opportunity, therefore was it counted unto them as their grievous transgressions.

IV. A nation grievously punished. What are the burning words of indignation which Moses the Mediator hears? What causes his anguished expostulation? What fixes the final decree which sends the wanderers back into the wilderness to die? What forfeits Canaan to a generation, and withholds it from the people forty years? What checks prosperous advance? What disappoints the nation's brightest hopes? What draws down misfortune, calamities, heart-crushing reverses? Wherefore this disastrous condition of affairs? This is the grievous punishment, this is the reward of transgression. Dread of war was the temptation, faithless faltering was the sin; even as the Lord foresaw it, they saw war, repented and turned back.

V. How speedily was the irreparable mischief accomplished. Great opportunity, the time for duty is exceeding short. At the stern and wrathful words of the Lord, Israel repents, sways her-

self up once more in the remembrance of God, is ready to dare and to do. But it is too late, the doors are shut. Unbelief has done its work of cursing. Though they go up to the battle, now God is not with them. They are vanquished, crushed and broken in spirit, they set their faces towards the great and terrible wilderness.

To sum up the moral of this Scripture is that great war sometimes disputes the progress of a nation, the good land is beyond it, temptation is before it; the wilderness of the curse of God receives the people that falter before the great, stern duty of the hour.

Are we a people in the temptation of beholding war to-day?

Our fathers under favor of Heaven escaped out of foreign bondage, and were constituted a nation. They set their faces towards a better order of government than had yet been realized in the world. They escaped from Pharaoh and fought the first battle, but the great, final struggle beyond which is the political Canaan, the land of largest liberty and strongest order, has been reserved for us. The great triumph of lib-

eral institutions is yet to be consummated. A mighty rebellion has risen in the land, a most wicked and unjustifiable rebellion, and it has set up before itself the front of most formidable war. Now no God-fearing, loyal man can honor authority, or authorities, none of us can pray for our rulers, as we are commanded to do, no man can discharge the full duty of a good citizen, except he prays towards successful warfare, except he does a part of that work which is made complete, in the destruction of the armies of the rebellion with sword, bayonet, cannon, the most tremendous and effectual managing of force. It is a temptation of the devil to cry peace in the faces of the supporters of this government as if they had the power of peace. They have it by only one way, the way that Israel had to get into the promised land, to conquer it. What if the sight of this fearful struggle almost breaks us down, what if many reason in fearfulness, that they are many and strong, what if we even stand to the enemy as the timid brickmakers of Egypt, to the giant of Anak. What if on the human side the chances of success are all against us, still we may not hesi-

tate. Then did Israel and others sin and were dreadfully punished.

On this people must go, without fear, with high faith, that this is the way and that God is with them. The hour has come. But it is not yet fully apparent whether the councils of Moses and Caleb will prevail or whether the fearful cry of a false, wicked and fatal peace will prevail, whether the nation in its might will go forward or turn backward, whether after victory we shall have rest and security in the good land, or whether we fall back into the wilderness of anarchy and misrule.

Will the people have heart to put forth the adequate earnestness and tremendous energy, necessary to destroy the great power of lawlessness that has put itself in the way? Fearfulness and falling is the great sin, death, destruction of government, and a wilderness of woes the penalty. Duty is forceful restoration of order, the destruction of the enemies of peace and the state, and the reward, a government more like unto God than any the world has known, both gracious and strong.

Let it be remembered that exhortations for peace are for traitors and not for loyal men, that anything but faithful, forceful, just dealing with rebels is wrong, that all appeals to the sympathies of nature or to our fears are to be resisted and overthrown by firm, strict, stern adherence to duty and faith in God.

Be courageous, firm, keep rank, go on, fear not the multitude or the giants. Let not the Bible be turned against you; are not men of God men of war, when duty and God bid them fight?

The people that would not fight excited the indignation of the Lord so that he was tempted to destroy them all and make a greater nation of the man Moses, who exerted his utmost influence, urging a forceful entrance into Canaan.

If our government comes crippled out of this war to a miserable compromise with traitors, if it stand beyond the struggle otherwise than glorious, stronger than ever, it will be because through fearfulness and effeminacy or worse reason the people have denied a fair sympathy and support.

A SERMON

PREACHED THANKSGIVING, NOVEMBER, 1862.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness; come before his presence with singing. Know that the Lord he is God; it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people and the sheep of his pasture.

Enter into his gates with thanksgiving and unto his courts with praise, be thankful unto him and bless his name.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? cried the captive bands of Zion as they wept by the waters of Babylon, remembering in their grievous bondage Jerusalem desolate and friends and children mingled with the dead.

So now, while the Lord has covered our Zion with a cloud and cast her down from heaven into the earth, while all that pass by hiss and wag their heads, saying, "Is this the land that men call

The Perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth." This is the day we looked for, we have found it, we have seen it, while decimated congregations and vacant places in the home circles are telling so touchingly and sadly of the many dear ones absent or dead. This festal hour hallowed and clustered about by so many precious associations and memories, turns with mute but moving tongue, to recount how much is wanting, how much is lost. Yea, the flower of our land and the idols of our hearts are languishing in the dreary hospital or toiling on the forced march, or it may be worshiping where the incense is the rolling war cloud; the music is the rifle's sharp rattle and the bursting shell and the cannon's sullen boom; and the offering is blood and life; while in the troublous and agonizing thought of the hour, there cometh up the thought, "How can we sing the Lord's song to-day?"

Yet this is the old Thanksgiving day of our fathers, they kept it well through all their stormy and troubled lives. We wipe away the tears, and we quell our fears, and come before the Lord with singing. We will enter into his gates with

thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise; we will be thankful unto him and bless his name, for, if we will consider, we can still sing of the mercy and judgment of the Lord.

Before turning to a review of the year, it becomes us to call to mind the fact, thus nationwide or individually, all our good is by the grace and mercy of the Lord, and all the evil we know, far less than our deserving, and this also, that whatever we may see favorable or desirable is God, shaping, ordering. Thus first we remember our place as offenders, and take human offers as the expression of God's overruling will.

Of all the broad, fertile garden of our loyal land, the record of the year may be thus noted down. "Thou, Lord, hast visited the earth and watered it. Thou didst greatly enrich it with the river of God which is full of water; thou preparedst corn when thou hadst so provided for it, thou wateredst the earth thereof abundantly; thou settledst the furrows thereof; thou madest it soft with showers; thou blessedst the springing thereof; thou crownedst the year with thy goodness and thy paths dropped fullness. The pas-

tures were clothed with flocks; the valleys also were covered over with corn; they shout for joy, they also sing." Our barns are filled, affording all manner of store. Happy is that people that is in such a case. Ah, we need to hear famishing little ones pleading in vain for bread, in the fearful winter of famine, to realize how precious and good is the gift of God in a plentiful harvest. The granaries of the land are full, for this praise the Lord, praise the Lord.

We will not forget to give thanks to God that no pestilential breath has been sent upon our cities and towns; the healthfulness of our vast armies, many of them in very exposed localities, has been wonderful. The hope and the prayer of the enemy has been that this angel of God's wrath would come down and fight for them with the resistless subtle sword of destruction, but while the dreaded fever has made ravages on the southern soil, there have been defenses that we will ascribe to the Lord around about our camps. The oft death laden air of southern coast and river hath breathed with friendliness on the champions of national order. The Norfolk of '53 was not

the Norfolk of 1620, for this we give most hearty thanks unto him who tempers all the winds of heaven.

It becomes us also to be devoutly grateful that the industries, the work of the nation, which is the daily bread of the million, has been so little disturbed by the gigantic civil war which is going on. Though the waves of martial forces are gathering and breaking with fearful shock along a line of a thousand miles, the toll of the supportive labor of the land is steady and firm. We are menaced with no enforced idleness, with its train of terrible destitution and suffering. The country is full of bread, and all accommodating business is passing it around to every mouth. The strange phenomenon appears of a nation lightly supporting a gigantic war in its midst which is paralyzing the labor and commerce of nations three thousand miles away.

Again we are devoutly thankful to God this day for the wonderfully sustained spirit and the loyal states. This hitherto hath saved us from the incalculable calamity of political dissolution and anarchy. A government of acknowledged

authority is arbiter supreme in the midst of ten thousand conflicting interests, a defense of the weak, a concentration of the popular will under the guidance of truth and justice, is an institution of priceless value. For its conservation blood and treasure may be poured out almost to any amount, for without an acknowledged authority there is no security for life or possessions. Whatever the design of this great rebellion, its success is not merely the forcible withdrawal of so many states from the union, but a mortal wound to constitutional authority. If it is a revelation of the fact that law is no longer supreme, then it may be state against state, section against section, party against party, aye, man against man, not by appeal to justice and reason, by gentle and peaceful methods, but by appeal to brutal, bloody violence. The action of the uncorrupted American people for the last year, according to this standpoint, furnishes one of the sublimest spectacles in history. What is it? A passionless devotion of their all to the support of a principle. We feel safe in the assertion that a great people never fought a great war so free

from the spirit of anger. Yet withal the national heart has shown no faltering in the face of multiplying and enlarging difficulties, delays, disappointments, defeats, and the threatening of most formidable hostile collisions. After the 75,000 went the 500,000 men, and after the 500,000, 50,000 more, and after the 50,000 went the volunteers, 300,000 more, and after them there have just gone up 300,000 soldiers more, making in all for the period of about a year and a half almost a million and a half of men; besides these untold thousands more have manned the fleets and gone to defend and to conquer on the coasts and the paths of the great rivers. So many in the land had the heart to go and offer themselves as a living sacrifice if need be on the altar of their country; and the fathers and mothers, the wives and the children, the brothers and sisters, had the heart to send them forth or let them go. Yea, the great mass of this people of an unwarlike and peaceful race and aged by word and work, have thus been holding steadily on from month to month in the inflexible purpose of defending and vindicating the government of their fathers. Allowed

that all is not the purest gold of patriotism, take into notice the luke-warm zeal, and the opposition, yet withal how good a thing is it that so many great states have stood so well and so strongly together, under such a pressure and at such a costliness. Thank God for this bulwark around liberty and law. This hath indeed been a year of great hardship, of suffering, of sorrow, stern, rugged, living it hath been, but it hath been one of the most heroic and noble of the years of the Republic. Corruption and wickedness and weakness have indeed been thrown to the light by the great seams which tremendous convulsions of the times are opening, yet the demands of the day have found the men and the women that make nations great and strong and noble; ever it is in this world that the best and noblest works are done in grief and pain. For the great offering that the men and the women of the land have had the heart to lay upon the altar of their country, we praise Him in whose hands are the hearts of all the children of men. We call to mind to-day, as we review the year, that while putting forth such effort to quell this most un-

natural and desperate rebellion, a strange malignity has frowned upon us from foreign lands. The complication of affairs and the temper of times is such that we cannot but most fervently thank the Lord that we are yet preserved from a war into which would go such desperate and tremendous energies and passions and out of which peace would not come till there had been tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the world. (War with England would be a war of all passion, of pride, of hate, of revenge.) (The Lord give her still the grace of tolerable decency, the Lord lead us not further into temptation.) The combined navies of two of the leading powers of the world have seemed ready for months to be let loose upon our too defenseless shores, and to unequal conflict with our gallant and devoted navy, but the Lord hath held them back thus far while rising fortifications, heavy guns and formidable ironclads are multiplying potent arguments for keeping the peace.

Again, success has attended our arms. One year ago and the martial line of rebellion was advanced very near the borders of the free states.

The pressure of our armies has crowded this line backward to the borders of the gulf states at the west, while the most important points upon the coast have been repossessed and held in a resistless grasp. With the mixed fortunes and unexpected protraction of the struggle for Richmond, we almost forget the evacuation of Columbia, and Bowling Green, the fall of Fort Henry and Fort Donaldson, the capture of No. 10, the repossession of proud Nashville and pestilent Memphis, the victories of Pea Ridge and Shiloh, the important and successful operations upon the Atlantic coast, which have raised the glorious old flag over Norfolk and Portsmouth, Newbern and Macon, Pulaski and Port Royal, that daring and gallant enterprise which gave us back the great metropolis of the southwest. All in all, it has been a year of success. Another twelve months of such pressure would utterly crush and destroy the power of the rebellion. The work is much larger than was thought when it was undertaken, but it is being steadily accomplished. Here is great reason to give thanks to the God of battles for the victories which through our people,

and our army and our navy, He has organized for us, and especially that He hath inspired the nation unto that vast preparation of military and naval power, which is but now making a fresh and simultaneous movement upon every army and every stronghold in the revolted territory.

Yea, for the fortunate, wholesome and the well-timed reverses that have in the course of events been made to arouse and forewarn the nation of the threatening danger; thus the occasions of future triumphs, and for the wooden gunboats that relieved the disaster of Pittsburgh, for the appearance of the little but unconquerable *Monitor* in the Chesapeake, to turn the fortunes when our men-of-war were being crushed in like shells, and sent to the bottom or driven aground. For these striking interpositions, we give thanks unto the disposer of all events. But there is another and devout rejoicing for to-day.

Under whatever disguise he may appear, we know that the devil which is so grievously exciting all the broad land is the cruel, abominable and hateful system of human slavery. Thus poisoning

the minds of the people, slavery has rent this great nation asunder. The champions of human bondage smote at the government and stirred up this most calamitous strife. Well, it is good at this stage of affairs, however other things may go, that there are most incontestable evidences that slavery is being destroyed. This has been a year of jubilee to unnumbered thousands of the children of bondage. And what is more than the emancipation of a few, slavery has lost friends this year. The war has levied most effectually upon the nature of the system and has made converts like the drops of the morning dew. Fifty years of assailment by reason, argument, moral suasion could not have achieved what the stern, resistless lag of war has effected in a few short months. The great Missouri is virtually an anti-slavery state to-day, and there is conclusive indication that Kentucky and Tennessee and western Virginia and Maryland and Delaware will soon reconstruct their politics on the great issue of freedom or slavery, with the first vote in the glorious cause of emancipation. We have lived fast of late or we had not come to see the en-

slaved of Kansas represented in the Congress of the United States by anti-slavery men. This is not all, in about thirty days more the law of this land will be liberal as never before. Near a million of men in heavy battalions and in the panoply of war will move on, on the great crusade of freedom, bearing and enforcing the grand proclamation of the first president of free America to the millions who with unwilling hands are upholding this great rebellion.

Was it so that heaven could not tolerate the slow removal by peaceful means of this worst of all villainies, but suffered it to provoke beyond endurance a nation in arms that it might, as it were, be destroyed in a day? Oh, it is good to see this hideous monster recoil from the encounter which he has provoked, it is good to watch his flowing blood, it is good to see him making ready to die. How different this than if a free state had fallen under the domination of slavery. The battle is going for the right. Yea, we rejoice to welcome the time when the Republic shall be liberty and not a lie. The day is advancing when many a waiting Simon shall cry, "Lord, now let-

test thou thy servant depart in peace for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.”

But I will detain you only by one or two suggestions further.

Let us not forget this day that there have been great dangers and wars unsuspected and unseen, from which our God hath kindly and mercifully preserved us, during this solemn and eventful year. Could we retrace the pathway through which the nation has passed, with all its surroundings and possibilities, we should doubtless be filled with wondering, trembling and most profound gratitude to God, for his protecting and guiding care. We should see doubtless what a little thing, how many times would have brought disaster, and how many times little things and great things in the providence of God saved us. We may be sure great grace unseen has been mingled into our national affairs. By the salvation of the Lord we stand to-day far more than we think. O forget not that our ship of state has a piloting that regards breakers and shoals, and a thousand dangers that no human eye ever detects. The holy faith of our fathers was that

the keeper of the nation is the Lord.

Finally, our religion, all that we learn from it of the economy of God in the affairs of the world gives us the assurance, that every troublous time, every great and grievous crisis is big with unexplained blessing to the future. The light of the world and of eternity to mankind was born of the darkest day in the history of time, the crucifixion of Jesus, the bright day comes of the stormiest night. Life begins in the suffering hour.

Therefore be ye not troubled when ye hear of wars, for these things must needs be. These commotions are transition times, in them old things pass away and all things become new. Yet men are apt to be terrified and despondent at the grievous present, and forgetful that God is even there and thus at work bringing in some better day. Just what it may be we cannot say, but it is a part of our faith in our God to believe that this great war will bring good to the nation that in no other way could come, and good commensurate with its costliness. For this precious faith that makes all evil prophetic of coming good, that transmutes the cost and suffering of this sad

day to a far more exceeding weight of gain and blessedness, we praise the Lord, for faith's hopeful and glorious solution of our present great troubles, we sing aloud our thanksgiving song.

Shall I touch upon a sudden and more tender theme, shall we speak of the noble beloved and fallen? The blood of our kindred hath reddened the war sod. Many an honored and useful and beloved one joined the rank of marshaling patriots to return no more except as the dead return. In view of the sufferings of the camps and in view of the dreadful battle bolt, how many home heart strings are torn? The untimely fate, the hardships, the anxiety, the grief, of these things—what shall we say?

Is this what I see? A rising thankfulness, solemn and strong, loftily towering above the wreck and grief of the present hour, with streaming, but courageous eyes fixed upon duty, counting humanity God, rendering sublimest, purest human praise. It says in suffering strength, "Let it not be changed." Recall not the early fallen, it is well. The loss of precious life is a living lamentation. But the generation shall not find to its utmost

limit a better, a nobler dying place or time or cause. For this are these dead blessed, honor and affection cherish the names which such a death hath sanctified. Call not the soldier back from his hard and perilous mission; he would not come. In his hours of faith, these sacrifices here, there, are a noble offering; blessed are they that can, that do render them. To this every right moral sense cries amen.

Grief rejoices to-day that its blood was of such a temper to be stirred, of a temper to pour itself out for something better than life.

Honor to the cherished dead; courage and cheer to the unforgotten absent ones, sympathy for all the martyrs of the day. And for all this spirit, and life, and dying, give thanks unto God, for in such as this is the true excellence, the salvation and glory of our land.

Yes, praise the Lord that though the foeman complains of scanty harvest, plenty has been poured over all the loyal states. Though millions in foreign lands to whom work is daily bread, are thrown out of employment to dependence or starvation, all-sufficient business makes

hopeful provisions for passing the wintry season through. For this praise our God, because the angel of death hath breathed no angry all-withering desolation in our borders or upon our great armies; praise the Lord, because the people have been vastly devoted, and courageous, hopeful and have given with such unanimity to the conversation of their government, for this, bless His name who commands the inspirations of the popular heart.

Because of foreign foes kept in unavailing non-intervention, for keeping for us the peace of the great world in this great day of misfortune and exposure, because of this make mention of the great goodness of Him who rules the affairs of the nations.

Because of the victories and this present vast organization for victory, praise the God of battles.

Because the great curse and erring of our beloved land is getting his mortal thrust and is about to die, praise the Lord, praise the Lord, who suffered the fiend in his great passion to tempt his own seeming destruction.

Think of the unseen danger through which we have come and praise Him whose eye watcheth and whose hand guideth over the dark and dreary and stormy waters of national revolution.

Go up on the watch tower of your holy faith and welcome the new nation, whose great cry is prophetic. Think of the day, so bright and inspiring and good that God is about to flash upon this night and praise Him who moves in mysterious ways His wonders to perform.

Measure life from its true standpoint, and thank the Lord that for the lost, for the absent, for the sadness and grievousness of the present day all is well.

The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice, yea, rejoice alway.

ON THE DEATH OF CHARLES BENTON

For none of us liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself.

For whether we live we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.—Rom. xlv. 7-8.

It is really true that all men are consciously living unto the Lord. In character of moral action, in a spirit of entire subserviency to God, is all the world moving on. Are there none holding themselves as their own and seeking their own? And are there none forgetting God and living for themselves? Surely it cannot be said in full, absolute, unconditional sense that no man liveth to himself, that all mankind in spirit and purpose are the Lord's, for it is common to claim all of one's life, and all of attainable things as one's own, without condition. It is common to put God out of all proprietorship or claim

here. And it is common to set action against the clearly proclaimed commandments of God. Much, much, oh, how much of the thinking, the willing and working of the human heart is selfish and wicked! What a warfare has been waged and is still kept up against those commandments which are only holy, just and good. What a controversy the generations of our race have maintained against the law and gospel given from God! Shall we then conclude from the lives of unbelieving, self-seeking and wicked men that the declaration of our text has substantial limitations?

Shall we say that some men do take themselves out of the Lord's hands and withhold themselves, living and dying and furthermore from any subserviency to his will and purpose? No, this rather, that while here now in a measure a man may in his own consciousness and in the character of his actions live and die unsubordinated to God, yet the man is yet in the controlling and disposing hand of the Almighty, his living, his dying, are at the arbitration and purpose of another will than his own. Though a man may resist moral

laws he is as nothing before the divine decree, the executive will. Pharaoh withstood the command of God, repeatedly hardening his heart, but withal we see the life and the death of this great, proud and willful king were woven into the web of God.

So the crucifixion of our Saviour was the most wicked and heaven-daring work of man's guilty hand, yet the life that killed the Holy One and just, this very crucifying will and force was made of God to bear onward, more than His creative, even His greater redemption glory. These cases are sufficient to show us that God has wisdom and power that can make wicked, unconsecrated life help on His grand designs and work His sovereign will.

Perhaps here is to be found, as nearly as we can receive, the solution of the great problem of the permitted existence of evil in the universe.

Why does God allow wicked life? Is it not worse than useless, an unmitigated curse? To those who will do it, yes, but, nevertheless, all the life and the death and the after-death of even wicked men, shall be made, like the sin of the

betrayal and crucifixion of Jesus, to glorify God and the work and kingdom of His grace. We think we see useless things in the material and moral world, yet must it not be a prerogative of infinite wisdom to turn everything to account? Here is some light for dark places. Are there wicked men, single handed or bound together, causing mighty mischief and plunging nations into dreadful sorrows? God has them yet in hand and He shall follow after them, make their wrath to praise Him, turn their curseful doings into some great future good, and, in the day which best befits God's beneficent purpose, they shall fall and die. Give the wicked into His hand. No man liveth to himself and no man dieth to himself, but all, whether living or dying, are the Lord's.

Yet while it is true that no man liveth unto himself or dieth unto himself, however much he may think or strive so to do, but is made, by the infinitely wise and great disposer of all events, who worketh all things according to the counsels of his own will, to subserve by his continuance in this world, by his departure out of it and his

existence beyond it, the purposes and the glory of One, of whom he thinketh not, and for whom he careth not. While God is wide around and high above, able to make all things praise Him, the declaration of this fact was made by the apostle in the text, to believe, and is, therefore, not to be considered in the light of a general faith in God and of natural religion, but as related to the Christian faith and the Christian life.

To those who are ready to receive it and happy to assent unto it, Paul said, None of us liveth unto himself and no man dieth unto himself. For whether we live we live unto the Lord; and whether we die we die unto the Lord; whether we live, therefore, or die, we are the Lord's.

They belong unto God, they were not their own. The highest purpose of their existence could not be found related only or chiefly to themselves. They were pointed to something higher than life, to something nobler than self. The glory of God was the meaning of things. The reason of changes that should be ordained unto them. And thus the Lord was magnified not alone by creating right of supreme worth but

by virtue of the divine redemption in that Christ died and rose again that he might be Lord, both of the dead and the living. Creatureship and a most marvelous ransom purchase gave our every believing soul to be made unto the praise of the glory of the grace of God. Enough was seen and felt of the love of God, and the wisdom and the excellence of his plan and way, to make it the most favorable and desirable condition to be completely at his disposal.

What order this faith of their Redeemer God, above all and in all, wrought with a seemingly chaotic wonder and chaotic life.

Nothing seemed to keep time with every known thron or plan, the wisest arrangements of action were often frustrated, the living and the dying seemed at war with their order of well-doing, thus left alone to the management of themselves and the world, almost everything seemed in a discouraging confusion, but assured of the particular providence and the all-embracing oversight of Him, their Saviour God, assured that all things, even all the living and the dying, did and would work perfectly into his beneficent and glorious

plan.

Thus they found great peace, hope and confidence towards God. But this was not all.

The truth was used of the apostle in the form of an exhortation. The doctrine is in all things bound to glorify God. Thus must the believer hold his life. He must strive to make it holy, and thus best to befit its use of God. This is the ideal. All that belongs to existence has its highest meaning and service in what God shall do with it.

Be the spirit and action of life confirmed to the will of God by all endeavor. No man liveth to himself. Realize that consecration. Make the consciousness conform to the great fact.

Then again make the glory of God the end of all things in personal intent.

Living and dying in its manner and time have reference in thought not to what may seem on the human side, but rest the control of these changes with Him who best knows the times and the seasons.

Hereby is marked the course to Christian perfection. All done and held as unto the Lord.

When from an acceptance of the doctrine to the writing of the doctrine in the heart and life a man has gone, the same is become a perfect man in Christ Jesus. In the way there must be found deliverance from impure and selfish motives. A getting at the answer of the prayer, "Not my will but thine be done." A readiness to give up all things even unto life, when that shall be required.

Though this realization of living and dying unto the Lord is the effort and the ever-to-be perfected work of the believer, it is the privilege of the soul from the first moment of its reconciliation to God by faith in the atonement of Jesus, to be apprehended as God's own child, thenceforward, everlastingly. Though in the infirmity of the flesh, in the pressure of temptation, the man may be unequal and unjustifiable to his privilege and obligation, yet the Lord is ever faithful to his covenant. The adoption holds from the day of the first surrender to Jesus.

It is from this standpoint let us consider the doctrine of our text, as setting forth the relationship of God to the believer. The authorized as-

urance of faith is, "We are the Lord's," living or dying, we are the Lord's.

I. This then is an assurance of divine guidance. The Lord will lead His own. The world to them as to all often seems a perplexing maze and the right way is not clear; often the children of God may seem to themselves to be groping their way in the dark.

But whatever it appears to themselves, an unseen eye is evermore guiding them, and wherever He most needs them and it is best they should be, there they shall be found. They will be made to hear most pleasingly the voice that should call them. They will be made to feel most patiently the motives which should influence them. They are the Lord's, for use, and this use all baptized in love. They shall live where their good Lord will, and they shall die where their Lord wills. All this matter hath particular direction of what a blessed assurance this is in respect to Christian friends, in respect to our unknown course in this bewildering world. Pass over days in the walks of peace, or find where our place is in the toilsome march, in the storm of battle, or in the trying

languishment of the hospital, or in any place or condition in which God calls his own. It is the privilege of the people of God to know that with such experiences they should go.

II. There is assurance here of God's unfailing care. If all this living and dying is with the Lord he will provide.

Whatever of grace or strength the place or the condition shall demand, God will give unto His own. The life may appear exceedingly hard and bare; it may be amidst extreme hardships, and it may be far sundered from dearest fellowship. The comfort and strength that come of the heart and hand of earthly friendliness and love may be wanting. This, while life's hard battle is being fought on through dust and heat and weariness and dreariness, or this race loneliness while heart and flesh are failing, while the mortal faithfulness comes on and the death dew gathers on the unsoothed brow, yet He, the best, the only effectual helper and provider is there. He it is that serveth as they struggle. So shall the struggle be and He is able and faithful to make it good. Friendly, overflowing human sympathy for the children of

God in hardness of life or in apparent forsakenness and death is in danger of forgetting that He is there. Could we, with spirit eyes, look into the furnace of their affliction, we should see one like the Son of Man, with them living or dying; they are the Lord's. How much sweet peace with God, what precious powers of holy communion could the ways of this great war speak if they had a voice! Out of the dark places how the light of God is shining to angels' eyes! Then what glorious visions of spiritual things have spanned ten thousand hard and dreary hospital couches, where the ever faithful one hath remembered his dying ones. Do we need to be reminded that He can be the all-sufficient minister of strength? Do we need to be reminded not to magnify our human instrumentality and not to dishonor the resources of divine love and power? Methinks there comes up out of the great tribulation, as it were, many a triumphant voice, crying for the fulfillment of the promise, "Living or dying, we are the Lord's."

Hereby let comfort be taken for those whom the providence of God, in this day of trial, have

for duty or suffering been sent far away from the blessedness of home and the services of affection. Their God forgets not their need. For this their living and their dying may be enriched in mercy and grace and deeper, more substantial good, than the duty of less hardness, or the dying less apparently grievous.

It is Jesus makes life truly blessed. Where He is it is well. It is Jesus, not father, mother, sister, brother, friends, that makes the dying bed soft as downy pillows are.

If we would have faith of this ourselves, and those we love, how much of the fear, the anxiety, and the mourning, would be turned into confidence, peace and joy. The Lord will and evermore careth for His own. In the light of this word the weeks of languishing through which our brother went to his early grave lose their dreariness, and where the watchers sat not we see Him watching most tenderly, and soothing the weary soul with the words most precious and sustaining, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." It was our youthful brother's religion that took him into the army. It was duty, and duty only, that led him

towards the field of blood. It was his God that ordained his last living and dying thus, and it was his God, we are assured of it, that proved faithful to him through it all, a very present help in his every time of need.

And as with him so we believe it to have been with others who have fallen in the faith of Jesus. They were far from us, but God was not far from His own.

III. It is here that we get grand and inspiring views of God and the great kingdom of God. One in which our poor life is kindly and gloriously exalted by consenting and participating with the out-working beneficence and glory of God. What is life but a transient dream, eating and drinking to-day and dying to-morrow! It is a little matter that begins in the cradle and ends in the grave. And is this all it is, and all the greatness and the good that concerneth us? No, no, God, the eternal God, and our Saviour, appears, working out with us and by us the most beneficent designs. What they are in the definite and particular we know not, but it is on from glory to glory. God, with all celestial powers,

is moving for a grand, all-satisfying and enduring future. He is the great Master worker. Now of that which pertaineth unto the believing man there are three things: The living on the earth, the dying and the after-life. All is the Lord's, all shall be made in His hands to work together for good. He marshals all this being. So apparently by accident, he times the living and arranges the hour of departure and assigns to immortality, not as an indifferent matter, but so that the living may have perfectness in itself and also that it may harmonize with the developments of the great spiritual kingdom which is being established.

We sometimes think we see good men die too soon or live too long. We think we see last hours unfortunately conditioned. But herein we are passing an unauthorized criticism upon the prefects for ordination of God. God could, if he would, give us a most satisfactory reason why so many of His people were in the most repulsive life of military service to-day, why He made it duty for them to go and endure hardness. God could give a conclusive reason why so many thousands

of His dear children are to-day in hospitals, why so many have passed far from dear home and its sweet joys. These things are needful. They that suffer and die shall be satisfied when hereafter they shall see them clearly.

A SERMON

Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.—Matt. xxiv. 35.

Ancient writers, commenting on Dore's celebrated representation of our Lord's descending the steps of the Prætorium, on his way to the crucifixion, says it indicates a perfect calmness upon his face, an utter ignoring of his terrible surroundings and a far-away look in his solemn eyes, as if his heart-strings were yet vibrating to the lamentation over Jerusalem. This striking feature of the rendering of the great artist may seem original and unauthorized at first thought, but it is in special accordance with evangelical records of the passion week. First upon His memorable triumphant entry into the Holy City. When, with palm branch and loud hosannahs, that vast multitude came to that turn in the way where the unparalleled splendors of that peerless city burst, at once, upon the view, there was wit-

nessed a most surprising scene and one in the strongest possible contrast with that exultant and joyful occasion. For, then, when Jerusalem seemed at last to recognize her king, He himself, in that open and admiring public gaze, burst into tears, and cried out in despairing grief, "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least, in this, thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace, but now they are hid from thine eyes. For the days shall come upon thee that thine enemies shall cast a trench around thee and compass thee around and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground and thy children within thee, and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another, because thou knowest not the time of thy visitation." This was on Monday. On Wednesday the solemn and terrible arraignment of the scribes and Pharisees for their obdurate unbelief closed with these prophetic words, "Wherefore, behold I send unto you prophets and wise men and scribes, and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye shall scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed

upon the earth from the blood of Zacharias, the son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets and stonest them which are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings and ye would not. Behold your house is left unto you desolate." Later, also, on the same day as they were departing from the temple some said, "Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here?" And he answered, "Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another which shall not be thrown down." And thereupon, in a private conference, he told his wondering disciples many more things about those days and the signs of their coming. Again, finally as Jesus was being led away to be crucified, followed by a great multitude of people, and women which also bewailed him, He, turning unto them, said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, weep not for Me but weep for yourselves. For, behold the days

are coming in which they shall say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the paps that never gave suck, when they shall begin to say to the mountains, Fall upon us, and to the hills, cover us.' "

Thus the rejected Messiah set forth in grief and tears a definite prediction of a great judgment to come. And it is important to notice that the immediate and special application of the familiar words of our text was to emphasize the certainty of the fulfillment of those predictions. He gathers, as it were, the visible universe unto the sweep and energy of His expression and assures His astonished and incredulous disciples that Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his words about this particular prophecy shall not pass away. Things so real, fast and eternal as the very universe itself *shall* pass away, but His words shall not pass away. Thus we come to the subject in hand. The historical verification of these words of Jesus.

In instituting this inquiry it is in point to observe that never did solemn warning fall more utterly dead upon the empty air. The exultant

Sanhedrin slew the prophet and rejoiced. Religious Jerusalem had relief in the thought that a formidable deceiver and blasphemer had been put out of the way. All together, lightly and securely, the multitude lifted up its mighty voice and cried, "His blood be upon us and our children."

It must be allowed also that to human appearances the fulfillment of such a prophecy was exceedingly *improbable*. The Jewish nation, at large, despite of all previous losses and disasters, never had been so strong in the world, and it was still manifestly increasing in numbers and advancing in influence. This people, intensely clannish and exclusive as they were, were nevertheless also, even before their last great dispersions, more generally and largely represented throughout the known world than any other single race. And those communities were noted for their thrift, force of character and influence and their loftier and purer religious faith was ever strongly attractive to honorable men and women throughout the heathen world. But always and everywhere the heart was true to the land of the fathers, and

its ceaseless and passionate refrain was, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy"; and, by the spirit of that loyalty, the entire Gentile world was, in a certain real sense, put under tribute as the frequent pilgrims brought costly offerings upon the Holy Altar. At home, no hostile hand had been laid upon the state so heavily as to cause any permanent arrest of essential prosperity. Under the Herodian dynasty, even, that evil and bloody house, a new city had been inclosed outside of ancient Jerusalem, and the temple itself had been rebuilt and readorned with surpassing magnificence. The spirit of nationality had never been more vital, old traditions never more cherished, and the splendors of the ceremonial ritual never more imposing. Be it, indeed, that all was sadly carnal, misled and perverted to such a monstrous extent, even as to effect the deification of a Herod and the rejection of her own Messiah, yet, notwithstanding, all was taken as moving on to that confidently expected day when the chosen race

should irresistibly and gloriously dominate the world. True, after straining the resources of the empire as no other people in her long career of conquest, the Roman yoke was upon her neck, as it was upon all the world. Yet her proud spirit was still unbroken. That subjugation was no menace of destruction, but contrariwise. For the policy of Rome was neither to hesitate nor avenge, but was, to a remarkable degree, considerate and tolerant to all peoples, religions and gods. It was one secret of the extent and duration of the empire that it so far harmonized its supremacy with the prosperity of tributary nations. In any probable event the destruction of a gem so peculiar and unique and brilliant as was Jerusalem in the imperial crown, was nothing less than the grossest wantonness and folly. It had been called the perfection of beauty, the joy of the earth. It was a great mountain fortress. There the Jebusites had held their ground for four hundred years after the conquest of Canaan by Joshua and then finally the victorious arm of David made it the lion of sacred literature. It was styled the habitation of Jehovah, from whence he looked

upon all the inhabitants of the world. Its kings were higher than the kings of the earth. Thus its physical elevation fitly typified the security, pride and confidence of its inhabitants. According to a curious and expressive Rabbinical figure, the world is like an eye. The white of the eye is ocean surrounding the world, the black is the world itself, the pupil is Jerusalem, and the image in the pupil is the Temple. This proud metropolis was then a thousand years old and had risen Phœnix-like from the ashes of every destructive conflagration. All that marble, brass, silver and gold, and elaborate and exquisite workmanship could achieve had been lavished upon this chosen city of God. The Temple, the only place in all the world where sacrifices might be offered unto the only living and true God, was in its structure and habiliments, as a high organ correspondent to its singular and lofty claims, appearing in the distance like a mount of snow fretted with golden pinnacles. In the extent and grandeur of its proportions, as well as in its decorations, it far exceeded any edifice of its kind at Rome. The deliberate and final judgment of history is that the

whole city at that time as far surpassed Rome in grandeur as it fell short of it in size and population.

Add now to these natural grounds of assurance the glorious things spoken of Zion by the prophets of old and the exultant sentiments of the inspired psalms, whereby it became a part of holy worship to sing in strains like these, viz: "Walk about Zion and go round about her, tell ye the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following. They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion which cannot be moved but abideth forever. As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people forever." Such was the array of argument and presumption confronting the word of Christ that day when, as the worst of malefactors, he hung nailed upon the cross.

Look we now to the evangelical records for a historical counterpart as full, clear and indisputable as the prophecy itself. It is nowhere here to be found. Though the chronology of the New Testament embraces this memorable event there

is a profound silence about the whole matter, like that constrained silence of inspiration so noticeable in other cases, where human heart, hand and tongue would be most demonstrative. Nor can it be discovered that the early Christians ever made any provision whatever to report to succeeding generations when or how ancient Jerusalem disappeared from the face of the earth.

Yet, nevertheless, in the course of events, signal witnesses were provided, and records were made, and they will both stand unimpeached and unimpeachable so long as men credit human history. Extinguish Christianity and all her records and there will yet remain the unquestioned fact that Jerusalem was miserably destroyed. For, the story is neither by intent, author or bias, Christian. It is simply profane history, such as requires no faith in God or religion to accept. But it is a narration more fully circumstantial and realistic than exists of any other like event in the history of the world. Not Babylon, nor Tyre, nor Sidon, nor Athens, nor Carthage, nor Rome itself has had her supreme catastrophe thrown out in sharp and horrible relief and made such a common inci-

dent. How abundantly and how clearly both from the eyes of Josephus, who was an eye witness upon the ground, and from the matured deductions of historians, as well as from the fact of the timely flight of the Christians of Jerusalem from the doomed city,—we have not time to tell how abundantly and clearly its distinctive features and incidents are identified with the course of events. But that identification is without question we have not time to demonstrate, but pass at once to the culminating movements of the monstrous tragedy.

As the rejection of the Messiah had been general, both at home and abroad, so in like manner, a common calamity seemed to overtake the race. Says Milman, "It might seem as if the skirts of that tremendous tempest which was slowly gathering over the nation, country and the metropolis of the Jewish nation broke and discharged their heavy clouds of ruin and desolation successively over each of the more considerable though remote settlements of the devoted people." Roman sentiment, both official and popular, heretofore essentially indulgent and liberal, became hostile, and

finally under the infamous administration of Florus the tributary yoke was made to gall and torture to a degree to madden into insurrection a far more long-suffering people. Popular animosity thus encouraged seemed everywhere let loose upon an outlawed race, until at length the wantonly outraged and infuriated Jew hurled back defiance in the face of a world in arms. And thus without an ally or friend, or hope of favor, he himself gratuitously aggravated and embittered the conflict. But the fearful odds and the ultimate hopelessness of this unequal struggle were but the least part of the untowardness, the discouragement and misery of that fateful time. For never did a nation rush headlong into a great foreign war in such a deplorable condition of civil strife. Not only was there no acknowledged or organic unity, no comprehensive system of action or defense; on the other hand the energies and resources of the country were being wantonly consumed in a desperate and relentless civil warfare. Assassination was rife and its stealthy mysterious hand struck down even the High Priest himself within the sacred precincts of the Temple

itself. Brigandage under the lead of many false Messiahs added to the miserable confusion, while a grievous famine of five successive years' duration came with its woeful aggravation of the national calamity. Indeed every possible adverse element seemed mingled in that bitter cup which was to be drained to the dregs by that doomed generation. But the amazing vitality and energy of Jewish patriotism, though so immensely handicapped and embarrassed, withstood the pressure of the imperial arms for three bloody years, but, though slowly, yet with irresistible advance, the veteran legions of Rome gathered in upon the desperate insurrection, step by step, and stamped it out with exterminating vengeance on the 13th of April in the year of Our Lord 70. Titus encamped before the walls of the Holy City itself. This advance fell upon the time of the great feast of unleavened bread. A vast multitude of pilgrims encamped outside the walls crowded within the town, where now packed together, according to the estimate of Josephus, were 3,000,000 of human souls, a number large enough at least to strain to the utmost all the accommo-

dations and resources of the beleaguered city. Consider, furthermore, that within that crowded space three hostile camps shared control of affairs, only suspending assault upon each other under pressure from the outside foe, and it needs no vivid imagination to forecast the inevitable and unspeakable horrors of the situation.

It goes without telling that the details of that five months' siege are wearisome and sickening in countless cases of extremest misery, anguish and horror. This was one of those awfully calamitous times when not only all the holy dictates of religion but also all the kindly instincts of the heart seem in suspense and human beings live, ravage, fight and die, like savage beasts. Suffice to say that no skeptic can ever claim that the fulfillment was inadequate to the prophecy. We hasten past that holocaust of famine, blood and fire to the end. Nearly a million and a half of human beings perished during the siege. Some of the tallest and most handsome of the captives were reserved for the triumph of Titus. The aged and infirm were put to death in cold blood. Of the rest all above seventeen years of age were

sent to the mines of Egypt or reserved for gladiators, who singly or in companies were compelled to slay each other or were slain by wild beasts in the theaters of Rome for the amusement of their conquerors. The whole city, says Josephus, was so thoroughly leveled and dug up that no one visiting would believe it had ever been inhabited. That was the most blood-stained soil on the face of the globe. Seventeen times had this devoted city been besieged, six times had it been captured. This was its second and final destruction as a Jewish city. On the merely human side the record which the Israelites had made as a nation was as heroic and glorious as has ever been achieved by the sword. But mortal might and courage are vain against the supernal decree. The end had come. The entire country of the subjugated race was confiscated, and remains unredeemed to the present day, and the Jew was thenceforth through long centuries to be an afflicted and helpless alien in the land of his fathers, or wander in an unfriendly world. When next rebuilt Jerusalem was a heathen city and the oppressed and helpless remnant of Israel was obliged to divert its annual tem-

ple tax to the support of the idolatrous rites of Olympian Jove upon the very site of its own Holy Place. The Temple fell, never more there or elsewhere to raise again, and the Altar and the priesthood were forever buried under its ruins. Thus temple, Altar and priesthood forever lost, there could be no more sacrifice for sin. It was needed no more, for the Lamb of God had been offered up for the sins of the whole world.

The requiem of Zion is most fitly sung in the sublime strains of her own Holy Oracles. How hath the Lord covered the Daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel and remembered not his footstool in the day of his anger. The Lord hath swallowed up all the habitation of Jacob and hath not pitied. He hath thrown down in his wrath the strongholds of the daughter of Judah. The Lord hath done that which He devised, He hath fulfilled his word that He commanded in the days of old.

Therefore that which hath been done, that which hath been suffered, that had been witnessed to by unbelieving eyes, reported by unbelieving

tongues and fully accredited by an unbelieving world has in strange ways and astonishing minuteness, as well as exhaustive completeness, fulfilled these words of Christ which when spoken were scarcely credited by his most devoted followers. Through the cries and tears and torn heart strings of divine compassion the secret of the doomed escaped to the world. He who came from God first of all to save the Holy City, who yearned over her with an inexpressible and unquenchable love and despairingly recognized the obduracy of her guilt, bathed her streets in unavailing tears for the great day of her visitation when it was forty years away. In any supposable case could there be a stronger course of reason, a more formidable array of improbabilities, a more sincere insistence of the mind than that which here combined to dispute and deny the words of Christ? All assurances in earth and heaven were that that consecrated place could not be destroyed, as soon should eternal truth and the only Living God Himself pass away. But the great reversal has come. The record has gone unquestioned into the world's history. Everything here that withstood

his word has passed away, and their ruin is monumental of the eternal verity of the words of Jesus Christ as they concern the interests and destiny of human kind.

Is there not here solemn admonition of most practical kind, and is not the number to which it appeals larger by far than all the professing Christians of the world? If all the words of Jesus Christ are to be completely vindicated, how tremendous are to be the revivals of soon coming times! What havoc is to be made in human expectations and the destinies of millions of human souls!

The opposition to the words of Jesus Christ to-day, with all its doubts, its questionings, its unbelief, its philosophy, its reasonings, its criticisms, its scoffs, its ridicule, great, deplorable as it is in its influence upon the young and the old, making so easy, so natural, so reasonable and comfortable to practically disregard all warnings and invitations, this great popular discrediting of Christ and His word is yet in reality and substance but the repeating in history the presumption and confidence of the millions which it then misled! Then

is it not time for the wise and the prudent to put themselves out of the way of opposition to such words as these? Who should choose to enter into conflict with him whom the justification of human history has made so formidable? Woe, woe to him whom Christ declared to be in the way of destruction, though all the world may gainsay and deny!

Blessed, forever blessed, is he to whom the eternal words of Jesus Christ are a refuge, defense and an eternal hope.

A SERMON

PREACHED JUNE 26, 1864.

And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that ye be not troubled, for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

Without entering into a particular discussion upon the interpretation of the chapter in which the text is found, observation of one or two plain facts will prepare the way to the object in view.

1. These words are addressed to Christians.

2. To Christians in respect to troublous times, to wars and rumors of wars. Where these conditions occur there can be nothing to forbid the application of the exhortation or declarations here given.

I. First, then, be it observed that the assertion is made to believers that they shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, and an imperative, positive predication. It is doubtful whether there ever lived a generation of Christians who were not

more or less tried by rumors or scenes of bloody strife. Though by precept of the gospel and the spirit of the new heart made to abhor blood and violence, rendered by their religion to be most painfully sensitive to all discord and conflict, yet the very Prince of Peace himself assures them that they are bound unto the necessity of experimental contact with that which their souls hate. Before that generation passed away to which Jesus then spake there came upon Jerusalem and Judea one of the most grievous and bloody wars that ever afflicted the Jewish nation. In the destruction of the holy city was mingled every element of bitterness and suffering, perhaps, that was ever poured out for people. If we remember that the Jewish Christian was indissolubly bound by blood and affection to his native race and land, that his faith in the Son of David had not extinguished but intensified and ennobled his patriotism, so that doubtless in view of the sins of his country he could but say, "With all thy faults, I love thee still." We may well believe that every success of the heathen Roman, every defeat and disaster and calamity of his countrymen in that

long and dreadful siege, which at last came to a close in the utter humiliation and overthrow of the nation, was naturally a most afflictive and troublous course of events to the yet unalienated Israelite, who in the person of Paul, the persecuted, could wish himself ever accursed from Christ for his kindness according to the flesh. Of those things which should make both their ears tingle they should hear. The church which succeeded that time of tribulation was passed under the affliction of the wars of the Roman Empire, which knew no permanent repose until the sun of her glory and existence went down in blood and fire. Directly or indirectly the church has experienced terror and hurting by the sword on all its way down the warring ages. Bloody strifes have invaded her peaceful habitation, taken up her benevolent purposes, destroyed her hopes, wasted the blood of her sons, and in untold ways tended to increase her anxiety, distress and suffering. No strange thing has befallen us in that way that touches home to the quick, we are made to hear from day to day, week to week, month to month, and year to year, of war and war and rumor of

war. They are a part of that sad experience which the Lord said long ago should be. The desires and prayers and efforts have not been able, are not able, and shall not be able, to prevent that bloody strife. Ye shall hear of it and know of it, my people, that it may be a part of your expectations on the earth. We tremble, we mourn, we are tempted to distress and despair because of what we hear of this great and grievous and threatening and wasting war. But this war is the command of the Lord and the foretold of the Lord, that which by providence and grace this generation of Christian men and women were ordained to hear and know. It is a part of those decrees to which the instructions of our faith prepare us to bow, that which God is pleased to say shall continue in the world.

II. Next we have direction as to the state of mind with which we meet this disturbed condition of human affairs. *See that ye be not troubled.*

This cannot mean a dead and unbroken insensibility to the issues of war, for there have probably been but few struggles in respect to which intelligent sympathies have not been enlisted upon

one side or the other so as to cause a solicitude for one of the parties and sorrow for its disasters. It cannot mean a callous indifference to the human suffering involved. There may be a quietude and carelessness in view of most momentous and bloody convulsions which are simply monstrous, reflecting anything but credit upon heart or head. Sympathies and intelligence naturally causing anxieties, fears, and sorrows are all unrebuked and commanded of him who himself wept, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.

Upon the human side as respects sufferings and jeopardy of that which is good, Christians are most delicately and acutely sensitive to all the disturbances of war. Supernatural benevolence is not indifference to that which increases the burden of human war, or drives its bloody plowshare apparently so destructively among the roots of most of the interests of the world. The sensibility which in times of war disposes towards a painful solicitude for the result, that disposes the heart to enter with strong sympathy into the sorrows and woes of the time, is creditable and well. It bespeaks the larger soul, the more refined and

elevated sentiments. This indicates that noble virtue humanity, the love of man. This mind was in Jesus, by it he sorrowed, suffered and wept for the world. Therefore, the sin is not in the stirring of troublous emotions, but in not causing the diviner sentiment of faith in God to work upon and direct them. The words indicate the mastery and control of tumultuous and disquieted feelings. See that ye be not troubled. The danger is that sight and sense will get above faith, that in the stormy and distressful scene that voice will not be heard which speaks in every fearful hour, "It is I, be not afraid." Be in sympathy with the best, let your heart be measurably rejoiced or depressed by the course of events, unrebuked, be not hard of heart in view of the wars of the times. Wrestle if you would with strong crying and tears in respect to what you suffer and fear if you would, be sorrowful and very heavy, weep with those that weep, thereby do you show the sensibilities of a Christian soul, yet never have that dark unconsolable trouble of a faith in God lost. Feel, but evermore resist all the suggestions and conclusions of hopeless and gloomy

unbelief.

See that ye be not troubled. There would be no fitness of the injunction but for the exceeding great exposure to that wretched condition. It is because these wars and rumors of wars are so exceedingly troublous and discouraging, because of the cost and the blood and the suffering, because so many delays, reverses and disappointments, because of the very discouraging cost and the conjunction of wants, because we are ready to despair of all good and to give up all hope, because a mighty and almost overpowering trouble is magnifying itself to the possession of our entire consciousness, that God comes to help, giving us permission and command still to bear up. That is a steady, firm, strong, substantial peace that comes by occasion of trouble. Nothing is so stable as that which is established and held by two strongly counteracting forces. They know what faith is who have doubted. They understand security who have had fears, they enter into the blessedness of joy who have tasted the sorrow. So they realize what it is to be untroubled in God, who have felt what trouble is.

The cloud and the storm and the whirlwind are in the air, but through this very medium in which they act there is a rising to the bright and peaceful scenes above the clouds.

“See that ye be not troubled.”

What a blessed commandment in days like these. Trouble is dreadful, this our great tribulation who can estimate its unspeakable grievousness; almost every sight and sound seems to say, “Ye do well to be troubled and only so,” but God speaks down in sublimely reassuring tones, saying, “See that ye be not troubled, keep courage, hope, endure, let not your hearts be troubled.”

III. The next point is the affirmation of the necessity of wars and rumors of wars, as a reason why believers should not be discouragingly troubled by them. All these things must come to pass. This is not a blind, reasonless, purposeless and cruel fate, but the wise and good sovereignty of Almighty God. Aside from the Gospel of Christ, there is no ground for the confidence that the divine judgments towards this world would be ordained in vices of the well-being of a rebellious race, but in Christ there is

a practical pledge and assurance that the necessities of God's action as related to mankind shall be in the interest of mercy and salvation. This must be in the dispensation of grace and by the law of peace and good-will to man.

Predestination towards the believer is set in this way. If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own son, but delivered him also freely, gives us all things, all things for good, and that extends to that which is grievous as well as to that which is joyous for the present. And all is now from God for all the world, all the decrees of God, by this stormy declaration God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son unto the world to condemn the world; but that the world, through him, might be saved. So knowing the great mercy of God in the Gift of his son to the world, we are compelled to believe that whatever he fixes to come to pass is also in the interest of mercy and love, for God's work is consistent and harmonious. Therefore, do we know that whatever

he declareth by word or providence must be, is the best thing for all the world to come to pass. It is an infinitely wise and unspeakably kind necessity. What a comforting interpretation to give to troublous things. Divine sovereignty alone clothes grim and cruel war with a mantle of prophetic beauty and light. The Father on high saith to his distressed and trembling children, be calm, let not your heart be troubled, these things must be, they are best, should not the wisdom of an all-merciful God be endured, though it roll past in the horrid storm of war? Shall we unbelievingly inquire how these things can be? Shall we say God is not able to prove that all these things are not against us? Rather let us believe the judgment of God a great deep, past finding out, till he himself is pleased to make them plain. We will wait in peace for the great day when with wondering admiration we shall praise the Gracious disposer of all events, for even all the tribulations of the world. Great shall be the glory of God in that he shall show so much good to flee from the apparently useless and destructive things.

Even more appears something of the mission of the wars and rumors of wars that are commissioned of God in the earth.

In these bloody and violent scenes are the vastest and most vivid expressions of human depravity. Hereby are made to appear the deplorable consequences of wrong acts and principles. War punishes sin, humbles the pride of man, teaches human dependence and insignificance, and reveals the will and power of the Almighty. War sweeps away the pestilent vapors of moral evil, a stormy breath of blood and fire. War overthrows political and social despotisms. War reveals the need of an almighty refuge, purifies the souls of the sinners and takes them from this world and becomes to the wise an illustration of the principles and facts and the provisions of the divine government. It makes a part of the great tribulation through which those that are made white enter into the rest of God. But how little is all this, or all that can be read out by human wisdom in inspired precept compared with that which omniscience beholds when he says these strifes and bloody scenes must

come to pass? What constrains Almighty God to the permittal of this great day of suffering, desolation and fear? Is it not the vision of better things, is it not the joy to come which says of all this grievous train, these things must come to pass? Thus we interpret this mind of God.

And the concluding part of our text sets up the future in the form of a watchword for grievous times. "The end is not yet." Not amidst the confusion, distress and destruction of war is the final result. To chaotic violence all things are not tending. This is the mediate and transitory, the means not the end. It is a part of our faith in our holy religion to be assured that by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ the world's affairs shall end well, that all things now apparently good or bad are under divine mercy and power converging and combining towards a far more heavenly state, that these disturbing overturnings are for the bringing in of a better kingdom. We have no right to hold the salvation of the world which God has undertaken in such earnest, and so costly, to be anything less than a final success. The divine Redeemer "shall see of the

travail of his soul and be satisfied," and the provision and the call was for the world. That many souls shall perish we have reason to believe, but we are not authorized to believe, that at the last count of all the generations of time, lost will be a more appropriate term to the great multitude for whom Christ died, than saved, and in the fullness of time the Gentiles shall come and be gathered in. Christ was crucified, but he lived again, the world tastes of miseries and death and destructions in wars and rumors of wars, but this is not the end, it is on the way of tribulation and glory, of truth and life, of distresses and comfortings, of war and peace, say it over in the dark and stormy and fearful night, when impenetrable gloom serves to envelop all earthly affairs. When the gates of hell seem to prevail. The end is not yet, the end is not yet. A morning cometh, often this morning glorified by the night and the storm. The economy of grace substantially applies to the world, the light afflictions which are but for a moment work out the weight of glory, far more exceeding. After the great war and wars, peace profound, wide as the world, just

heavenly and blessed. May we not say it the warfare of the world is God conquering a peace, forces of God energizing on to the effectual and perfect pacification of human society, though it may be torn and cast down for dead, yet thus the evil spirit goeth out. This hopeful view we have of the race in the mass. But in more emphatic and unqualified sense it may be said to the people of God distressed and afflicted by wars and rumors of wars. The end is not yet. We shall not look upon conflict, sorrow, suffering and devastation forever. Disturbed government, rioting, rebellion, lawless and cruel violence, shall not make your surrounding forever. These things must come for a little time, but be not troubled as in the midst of a disastrous and irretrievable calamity. Through this experience it pleased the all wise and most merciful Father to take you to the everlasting kingdom of Peace. These wars of man magnify and will for all eternity magnify and enhance the peace of God. Thus it standeth to the people of God. Indeed after the war, and the wars, peace shall come, everlasting rest. That is the end. Jerusalem is the destina-

tion, Jerusalem the habitation of peace.

And, furthermore, as God says that wars must be at the last, when looking on the great whole we shall not regret for the warfare of the world, however grievous it may have been with its beginning, its issues, its security, its protraction, in the times of settlement, for first and last under God they each and all were instrumental in advancing the kingdom of God in the earth. Though not one of these struggles was wholly justifiable respecting man, though every one was directly or indirectly caused by sin, and carried on in sin in a great measure, though at the time many appeared too costful to us, without good results, failures as respects best purposes, and ended in an unrighteous peace or wholly disastrous. I say, however these bloody struggles may have been related to human responsibility and however they may have ended at the time, yet at the last, when viewed as a part of God's providential dealing with the world, they that see as God sees and feel as God feels will be satisfied with the agencies of the bloody struggles of human society. They will feel that if they had not

occurred, or been otherwise, that the God of war, the Lord of Hosts, had discarded them, it had not been so well. Other things being as they were, these very same bloody struggles had a necessary relationship to the highest good of mankind and the glory of God.

Therefore, withstand the depression of the present hour, bear up amidst all the apparent disasters and delays with the watching. The end is not yet, the end is not yet. These are the strong doctrines with which our souls should be guided in these troublous times.

It is a tendency to cultivate as much as may be a callous indifference to that which occasions distress. To withdraw from sympathy with the afflicted; and to secure repose by narrowing the ways of solicitude to that which is merely personal and selfish. But Christ contradicts one in the spirit of a religion of universal love, and sympathy rebukes the other. There shall be perilous times, there shall be trouble, that is the kind of life that Christians are to look for, and the law of Christian love is to be sensitive to all that interests humanity, to weep with those that weep.

He is a fool or monstrously heartless who can live in times like these when tremendous changes are passing on, when great interests are at stake, and slaughter and sorrow delaying the land, and not feel the dangers and wars of the day. Human benevolence looking upon these sad and threatening scenes, interpreting them according to their seeing, will be disquieted and anxious. Wars embarrass less or more apparently every good cause, in themselves they are demoralizing and destructive. They fill the land with suffering and agony. Therefore, the Christian looks with the keenest and most painful solicitude to all developments that tell upon the extension of strife. The good man is troubled, he feels the mad tossing of the dreadful sea. God speaks to calm his soul, yet sees to it that "ye be not troubled, those things must come to pass. You cannot keep back the wars with their vast trains of present war, you cannot manage them, but do not be afraid of them. I ride upon the whirlwind and direct the storm. Stand up strong against the evil tidings, endure the tribulation in patience, the end is not yet." To hear that voice

addressed to faith and by the confidence of it to keep down the excited, turbulent fears and anxieties and to endure without despondency the reverses and delays and the losses and the bereavements and the present desolations, that is Christian force—and a bit by which excitement and fears of the maddest tones may be kept subdued and composed.

These almost measureless troubles of ours may enlarge themselves yet more and more every hour, till there shall be a tribulation such as never has been since the beginning of the world to this time and such as shall remain. Such a day is doubtless somewhere in the future for us or those that are to come afterwards. Yet what then? The voice of our God unto all that believe in his name is, behold I have foretold all things, but be not troubled, be not overwhelmed with fear and despair. This the watchword through every dark, stormy and portentous time. The end is not yet.

A SERMON

March 15, 1912. WRITTEN April 30, 1863.

“Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?”

These are the words of the Lord unto Moses, revealing something of the future of Israel. They serve as a key to the varied fortune and misfortune of the chosen people. Over Israelitish and Jewish history might be written this generalization—God and good—ungodliness and evil. Here we have illustration of the law and accountability of nations that know the Lord. Observe this, that God made the divine commandments or principles revealed superior to any and every other obligation, and held them firmly there. That which he insisted upon, enforced by repeated injunctions and repeated judgments, as well as favors, was unqualified obedience and service supreme unto himself. God as God on unquestioned authority was to be acknowledged always and in

every thing. The obedience of Abraham that could honor the authority of God against so much apparent and felt opposition, was the service in which the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob delighted. The discipline of the chosen people was to teach them, and others, through them, that God is to be obeyed as God. He commanded the hosts to go forward when so to do apparently was to enter the engulfing sea. He bade the people be of good courage and fight when their fears counseled them to turn back, and he bade them turn back in his displeasure when they presumed to go up against the enemy without divine permission, and forty years in the wilderness and disastrous defeat in battle taught them how costly it was to swerve from the word of the Lord.

Time does not allow the enumeration of the times and ways in which results showed that the course of the people should be directed, not by dictates of worldly prudence, not by expediency, not by any or every thing that might make itself felt in the case, but only by the sure word of God. Why it is a reasonable, a simple requirement—nothing less is fitting to the conditions of the case.

God so far as known must be God. Yet continually were this people lifting up to equality with divine authority or to superiority over it, or mixing up with it other considerations. When trouble would be sent upon them, in the discipline of which they would consider their great sin of banishing God from their hearts, and put the humble and confessing inquiry, "Are not these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?" "The children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord" and "The children of Israel cried unto the Lord." Ten times these two alternating sentences occur in the history of the time of the Judges, showing the stubborn waywardness of the people and at the same time the reasserted authority of God.

Great calamities have come upon this nation. No man can see the end of them. What is this? Have these evils come upon us because our God is not among us?

There is with us all the knowledge of God that Israel ever had and a great addition besides, the light that came of the old dispensation completed and of the revelations of God in Jesus Christ.

According to this light is there fidelity to God?

Does the nation know, and love, and dare to practice the divine commandments in all circumstances and temptations? Is it enough to prove that a thing is right in the sight of the Lord to command for it general recognition? Is this people valiant for truth and righteousness, equity and justice? Are there no higher motives than divine sanctions? It is not to be allowed that there are strained and overdrawn tests. They can seem so only to those who acknowledge not the revelation of God in the Scriptures.

These questions sweep a very wide field. It is only possible on this occasion to examine a part of it.

This being a national day, it is proper to view things in a national light.

I shall not make violent and unnatural effort to avoid that matter which is so widely acknowledged as the immediate cause and occasion of our present troubles and which is so directly thrown upon our notice by the words of the Lord indicating what such days as these should be. "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens,

and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke.”

Is there a man in this presence who is ignorant of the peculiar regard that the Lord has declared for the poor and the oppressed? Is there one who does not recognize our God as the commander of justice and mercy? Can there be for a moment doubt that the spirit of the new dispensation, so forcibly set in the golden rule, “As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them,” is one of benevolence and love? Yes, we do know it, that God and Christ were never on the side of oppression, injustice and wrong, but that there is a declared and enforced law against these things.

Herein, then, before God, before his plainly intimated will, this Nation is under condemnation. The nation is an oppressor in the earth, and that under peculiar circumstances of aggravation.

In this nineteenth century, in the brightest light of revelation and civilization that has ever shone upon the world, when people after people in Christendom have been and are being shamed out of such inhumanity and ungodliness, yea, after our

nation in most solemn and deliberate way had made declaration as of a newly discovered truth, to be a harbinger of blessing to all the earth in this wise, "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain invaluable rights. That among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." In and after all this the United States of America has stood before the world as having within itself one of the most oppressed systems of human slavery in the world. Equal men, having right of life, liberty and pursuit of happiness, have been allowed no control over their own life, have been despoiled of their liberty, bought and sold and made as subservient to the interest of masters as the very beasts of the stall. These whom God created as men and women; whom Christ redeemed with his precious blood; among whom have ever been a large number of those who exhibit brightest evidence of being born anew into the spiritual kingdom as sons and daughters unto the Lord forevermore; these people grown at last to be more than four millions in multitude, it has pleased this nation, in its

collective capacity, to grind into the most grievous oppression—acting thus in the sight of God and man a monstrous hypocrisy and a lie. Of God we may be sure that we are holden for this, for more than eighty years of self-controlling power and boundless prosperity was given to the country, whereby she might have repented and purged herself of the abomination. Had the people the heart to do this, it could have been done, years ago, and slavery, which is upon us in terrible retribution, might have been extinguished.

Suppose the Constitution had been against the abolition of such an institution as some affirm—are the people not able to change the Constitution?—but that has not been the difficulty—it has been the choice and sufferance of this nation to hold on in this offense against God and man. The people have not considered the oppression of the poor, they have been willing that millions should toil unpaid—they have steeled their hearts to the cry of the children of bondage, they have chosen not to regard that which stirreth pity in the heart of the Lord. Therefore, slavery by the nation has been suffered to continue till it has become

a great curse to all the nation.

But is there no pleading of irresponsibility here? Not much, for North as well as South has been most unfriendly to this colored race. But one state in the Union recognizes its political equality in the negro. While the popular prejudices—the common treatment of this people and the most inhuman and outrageous enactment against them on the statute books of many of the States, prove that it is deeply set in the hearts of this whole people to trample upon this unfortunate race. We must go farther than this acknowledgment. The religion of the so-called free states has been of late years constrained in respect to the wrongs and rights of this people, North as well as South. Under the plea of expediency, political and religious convictions have been suppressed and overruled, and the ten thousand entanglements of lower considerations have gradually led the people in their great majorities to feel that this was a little matter, or that wrong was right.

But the developments of the great struggle that has been passing in which the very existence of

the government is at stake has demonstrated how reluctant the government and people are to being brought upon the ground of simple justice to this injured people—how forbearing we are to slavery. Yea, to this hour, though at such cost of blood and treasure, who knows but if the war might stop the outrages of the slave power. Would all be forgotten—and the unoffending children of bondage be sternly thrust down to a more hopeless and intolerable oppression than ever? Oh, it is astounding, this stubborn clinging to the side of oppression against the oppressed! To what a point has this grievous war brought the nation—the loyal nation? Why to this, forsooth—that it is willing that slavery should be destroyed if thereby the country may be saved! Willing to do an act of simple justice—willing to conform to the principles of the divine will if the country can be saved thereby—but also willing and ready if that seems the shortest way for us white people out of war—and cost and trouble, to quit money-making time, ready for this to consign the whole colored population of the land to sacrifice. Yes, do you not see it; it is only

self-preservation that has driven this people towards even the forms of acts of justice toward the enslaved of our land. Still it is the old principle of expediency.

The public sentiment of the North would not sustain the government a moment in any course of simple equity toward the oppressed of the land. It is not zeal to work righteousness that is now loosing the bands of wickedness, undoing the heavy burdens—letting the oppressed go free and breaking the yoke so far as it is being done, but it is to be the terrible alternative of events which are saying, too clearly to be mistaken, *this do or perish*.

Do we not see in this revolt that it is because our God has not been with us that this evil has come upon us? If the whole nation had heeded only the law of God and the spirit of Christianity in this thing, this root of bitterness, this deathful poison of our national life, would long ago have been removed, or if where there was the conviction of truth and righteousness, there had been courage to stand up for God and make protestation in every lawful way, oppression had never

become so bold and violent. It was because there was more of God in the heart than was made to appear that rebellion was ventured. It was this sufferance of wrong that invited the outrage of the enemy. We see the long disastrous mistake, the sin that has drawn down judgment upon us. The people did not stand fearlessly up for God. The Cotton Gin made slavery profitable, with profit it grew strong, with strength it became defiant and threatening, with that it intimidated good men, and altogether by selfishness and lust and expediency even the best of the nation has been drawn far away from God in this thing. It is time to go back to the only sure and safe ground—to do right is to obey God as God—to ask no permission of man or time or circumstances, to serve the Lord. In this thing to take this ground, the part of the wronged and the oppressed, against injustice, all its spirit and works, because against all these things the Lord hath plainly declared himself.

What is required of God is that a man's heart shall be with him and that he shall work for him not in the stealthy ways of expediency, but con-

fessedly and openly, doing unto the Lord what is right, leaving results to him. Who will deny this here to-day, that so far as this wronged and oppressed people are concerned—South or North, in bondage or in friendless freedom—it is the part of every God-fearing man to stand by them by all means in his power, by wind and dew, willing to be known anywhere and everywhere as their friend, as a friend of all God's part in the world? It is time for Christian men to free themselves from all entanglements and to act as under God in all their political responsibilities,—they may get reproach, they may make minorities (that has ever been the condition of those who feared God alone in this world), but they will keep themselves from the condemnation and mischief of other than service of the Lord.

But perhaps some weak brother is troubled with that sophistry that, but for the opposition to slavery, there would have been no trouble. It is the Abolitionists that have made the war and we might have peace at any moment if we would only yield. That perhaps is in some sense true. Let wicked men have their way and they will not

be enraged by opposition. For instance, it is very pleasant for the oppressor that he be allowed to perfect, without interference, all arrangements to the working of his system. Very pleasant if you will help him keep his slaves in subjection, if you will never mention the fact that they are of God designed for aught but toil and subserviency, if you will, on the other hand, preach to them that God and Christ mean that their masters should find their earthly mission, making them as the brute. Yes, in good temper the Devil himself will keep for the time being if men will agree with him to cast God out of the world, if they shall consent to the banishment of every memento of God and abjure all the principles of his government, but what then, when God is driven out—when all is given up? Will the world have a good time of it? Allow the assumptions of slavery, surrender all this fine land to the chain and whip, people it all over with the enslaved and to every enactment of this despotism say amen,—then have you done a favor to the land? You have averted a war, but given millions to the

curse. No! No! This is not the peace that God bids us seek. Hold fast to him and the principles which he has made known, stand up for him, be valiant for the truth.

NATIONAL THANKSGIVING SERMON

PREACHED IN GUILFORD, CT., Aug. 6, 1863.

Hitherto the Lord hath helped us.—

I Sam. vii. 12.

The way of our thanksgiving to-day is through the deep cypress shade of our noble dead, along the extended ranks of our scarred, maimed, and disabled young men. Yea, from the midst of the separations, woes, and anxieties of a yet appalling and incalculable civil strife. Strange, unwonted thanksgiving! It is not for the rich harvest, the glad festival of the prospered year, kept in the delightful reunions of our scattered families, after the hallowed order of our honored ancestry.

But it is of its kind, the solemn thanksgiving of war. It is the grateful recognition of the God of battles, who presides over the destinies of nations, for the signs of His mercy in the midst of shaken things in the course of irresistible events. The Chief Magistrate of our nation has appointed

this day for thanksgiving to God because hitherto He hath helped us. It is for us, therefore, in this place and at this time to trace the course of military events as illustrative of the Divine favor. In so doing we need not shut our eyes to the great sacrifices of life, limb, and liberty. We may face the incalculable woes and miseries of these years of civil war, and give most heartfelt thanksgiving to God, who has enabled this people to do, and to suffer, so much to save their precious national heritage. Thus they have shown themselves worth saving. When this generation is all gathered unto the fathers, they, whose heroism, sacrifices and sufferings, voluntarily taken, have saved and more than restored all, will be the glory of their day. We may live and escape sorrows and sacrifices, but to them, and those that follow in that way, will redound the immortal honor of saving their country in the time of its mortal peril. Therefore we may devoutly thank the disposer of all events that enough of the heroic, true, and faithful have been found to save the day until now.

ANARCHY

Popular government is, even yet, regarded as an unsolved problem by many thoughtful men. Our government is committed to this experiment of self-rule. More than a decade less than a century is too short a time to settle so grave a question as this. But the trust is committed to the people—there is no power above them to direct, coerce or control. Will order or anarchy be the outcome? We are numerically and geographically a great nation. People of all races of mankind are here—the good and the bad—the wise and the ignorant—all with equal political rights. The bad man, and the good man, and the foolish man have an equal vote. None can deny that there is a perilous venture here. Will the many win where the selected few have so often failed? During this more than two years of civil strife, in the fierce conflict of opinions and forces, a test of our democracy is upon us. A question deeper than politics or administration is faced—the deepest of all vital questions—this government or no

restraining government at all. Democracy is breaking away into chaotic anarchy. Is there, can there be, such a crime as treason in a popular government? Is not every man a law unto himself? Is the American Republic a government, a state, a coherent power? Or is it "but the unsubstantial fabric of a dream"?

The southern rebellion is ultimate anarchy. The New York mob was anarchy broken loose, and, for a little, supreme—the hell of a world without law. It was an object lesson, well timed, even with its fiendish outrages. Sound Americanism had a wholesome and stimulating vision of what it was fighting for. Let us thank God that this horror was but for a moment, and for the mighty resolve it quickened that free America should endure.

The great rebellion was organized, armed, and made ready for action, while the loyal nation slumbered and slept in a well-nigh fatal security. In view of the condition of the country a little more than two years ago, the necessity of a startling arousalment of the union sentiment is most apparent.

The ground of that confidence was the inability to believe that a formidable resort to arms was possible. That deplorable security gave the great rebellion its chance. There was danger, and the North must be aroused or all were lost. And the warning came. And it was just enough to reveal peril, and fix the purpose, and arm the Union for the impending struggle. Sumter fell and the loyalty of the nation sprang to its feet when the old flag was trailed in the dust. Rumor was that a great army was about marching on Washington. An unprecedented host of 75,000 men was summoned for the defense of the capital, and the vindication of the government,—in three months' holiday! The foe was but a few thousand misguided men who would never venture battle against so great an army. That first wave of patriotism broke in ignominious flight from the battle of Bull Run. But this surprisal of defeat and shame stung the loyalty of the nation to agony. But defeat though it was, it sufficed to save our capital. Three months from Sumter and a triumphant rebel force stampedes the national army to the forts of Washington!

Yet, with all, the first Bull Run was one of the greatest mercies of the war. It woke up the nation. Now it grasped the gravity of the situation. And it was ready, and equal to its opportunity. Men and money began to come in by millions! Traitors and croakers were shamed from sight. Life was lifted up into the grander ranges of aspiration and devotion. Men and women were ready to do, to sacrifice, to suffer, to die! All because they saw and felt and wanted something better.

Now what has prolonged the war and prevented a premature and a disastrous compromise? What has kept in suppression that peace that would have bartered every principle and every price for simple peace?

SLAVERY

There is another line of retrospection too important to be overlooked at this time. It concerns a race that has unwittingly been the deepest root and occasion of all this calamitous struggle. Without the slave there had been no North,

no South, as we have no hostile East or West. He was delivered to the colonies, needing laborers, an evil fate, by the slave trader, not of his own will as a slave. He increased in numbers and service wonderfully. But to what is called the North, human slavery early became a curse and a crime. But to the South it was the pillar of the state, and a peculiar glory of its institutions. Hence, in the course of events, the great war. But neither North nor South, as antagonistic powers, made any mention of the great bone of contention. But the status of the slave, in spite of all efforts to ignore his presence, was yet a stubborn fact in the situation. Most especially did the Federal administration keep as far aloof from it as possible. The Federal soldier also had not come to fight for "niggers." But it was not in human power to put the slave out of the course of events. Here also rebel successes were a mighty factor in respect to the status of the slave population. In due time it became clear to the loyal nation that its own salvation called for the helping hand of the black brother. The abolition of slavery was of God. Man had part

in it as to the way of his own national salvation. Adopted by the Union, uniformed and armed, the slave proved himself a man and a man for his time. He conquered the prejudice of the world. At Port Hudson, Millikens Bend, and Morris Island he put his heroic record into the annals of his country as a free man. The grand Proclamation went forth through the whole land that where waved henceforth the stars and stripes all men should be free.

The peril of the nation from the beginning of this great struggle has been putting two very grave questions—Is there the *will* and is there *power* to save the state? Up to this time—more than two years of great war—there has been made apparent a great *purpose* and a great *power* of national salvation—but not enough to make that salvation evident.

To sum it up why are we so courageous and hopeful to-day?

I. We now know our enemy—how desperate and destructive its purpose—learned by dear experience.

We know that a mighty power is bent upon

the destruction of our free government at any and every cost. It will use every possible means, fair or foul, to destroy the Republic.

II. We have come to some wholesome and adequate estimate of the enemy's *power*.

We have seen our boasted army under an over-vaunted leader shattered and ignominiously driven from the strong fortress of the foe—our own capital but just escaped from triumphal host once and again, an invasion of the loyal states barely turned back by bloody Antietam, the carnage and repulse of Fredericksburg, the blasting of eager anticipations at failure of Chancellorsville, our commerce burned upon the high seas. Berrysville and Murfreesboro, sanguinary and doubtful, gave little comfort, while the battlements of Vicksburg and Port Hudson blockaded the lower Mississippi and the great southwest. It was a long year of grievous disappointments and costly struggle. And, worse than all, a second great army of invasion carried itself unchecked into one of the greatest of the Union states. In calamities and menaces like these we approached the

eighty-eighth anniversary of our national existence. The obliteration of that anniversary, with all that it signified, seemed to impend. Gettysburg was essentially a Fourth of July battle. It was a masterly, heroic battle of veteran forces. At its bloody close the stars and stripes waved over all the stricken field more triumphantly and gloriously than ever and the beaten foe retired not ingloriously from a daring adventure. Unwittingly, Lee's great army of secession and disunion had lent themselves to the reconsecration of the grand anniversary of the Republic. This was enough to satisfy but more was to come. That same day Vicksburg surrendered to General Grant, and her garrison of 30,000 men, and, to crown all, Port Hudson, the last fortress on the Mississippi, also was taken, and the great waterway was cleared to the Gulf!

It is in point also to note how barren and ineffectual have been the successes of the enemy. He has not even held his own. The great exploit of the invulnerable *Merrimac* opened no port and secured not the conditions of her own safety. And what of the successes, great and small, in

Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Arkansas, Louisiana? Not in all those states, all of them once in rebellion, is to be seen a permanent trophy of success. They have secured no territory, but have lost state after state. Columbus, Bowling Green, Nashville, Memphis, fortified bluffs and islands on the western waters without number, Portsmouth, Norfolk, Roanoke, Newbern, Pulaski, Port Royal and the metropolitan southwest. How almost less than nothing stands to-day as monuments of rebel successes! While the reaction of the temporary advantages react and smite upon them in the swelling armies of the North! But the trend of the Union has been onward and firm in the face of all opposition. Our defeats have been written in the sand, to be obliterated by the rising waves of reaction. It surely is of the grace of Divine Providence that the enemy has been unable to gain by its successes and our cause has not lost by its reversals. Do we not see a hand working on, slowly it may be, but so, most completely to root out altogether the great bitter root of all our trouble—*human slavery*? Is not a consummation like that worth working

for, suffering for, waiting for?

All and all did we ever have such occasion for
a great national thanksgiving as to-day?

THANKSGIVING SERMON

PREACHED AT GUILFORD, NOV. 26, 1863.

“Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our Salvation.”—Psalm lxxviii, 19.

All that is necessary to put us in a frame of holy thanksgiving, if our hearts are right towards God, is a recognition of the multitude and the magnitude of the benefits of the Lord towards us. The best Thanksgiving sermon (for this hour) is that which brings to mind most of the goodness of God (in the passing year).

But it is no more possible to number up and recount the benefactions of providence, than to count the raindrops that fall, or measure the light that is poured down from the heavens, or take note of the almost infinite fruitfulness and adornments of the world. Our life enters upon the inheritance of all the past made great and rich by creation, skill and power—a past, even

as related to this earth, full of a kind and bountiful providence where in their vast storehouses were laid the gold and silver, the iron and the coal and all that multiform wealth, by which the prosperous world makes its way from age to age. *The present is ours*, horizon round and to the zenith, filled with overflowing redundancy, of growth and beauty and glory, and the future, typed in the present but a far brighter world in the vision of hopeful expectancy. These three mighty tributaries, that of the past, the present, and the future,—each gathering the waters of its boundless continent—meet and mingle their floods in the ocean of our passing life. These depths on depths, these far rolling billows, these heaving floods! Can we trace the tides back to their every fountain? Can we resolve the mighty commingled main, even into its Amazons? This year of time has rolled and heaved and tossed, the voice of many waters. We look out upon the deep stormy sea,—we feel its swell,—the beating of its mighty heart, yea, its floods are moving in all the channels of our being,—but can we tell what God has sent by the raindrop, what

by the rivers, and what from the fountains of the great deep? Can we map out and make this ocean, and say, thus came this and thus came that? No, the assimilation is too perfect, the volume is too vast, the sources are too many, too far removed, and from too far sundered climes, to tell in what proportion the one kind or the other, the little or the great are made into one great living, moving, whole. But this restless, changeful, vast and sublime sea of human experience, God throws mighty currents together. He only knows what has filled the rounded year,—what is the particular reward of thanks, part for part. This we know that as individuals, communities, states, in God, in his care, by his power, inspirited by his breath, upheld by his world, moved upon by sunshine and rain, night and day, summer and winter,—touched by individual, social and national interest, tremulous with profound sensation as the resistless will of the divine purposes thundered along the track of time, gladdened or saddened, as the air that breathes as from many lands—thus in way and spirit and kind too strange and many for tongues to tell,—In

God we have lived and moved and had our being. Thereupon recognizing the fact that much of the goodness of God is only experience, not by us traced, and perhaps not traceable to its particular instrumental cause.

We may pass to speak of some of the rivers that have poured themselves into this sea. As looking upon a landscape, we feel the effect of its combined power, while if called upon for description, our attention would be called to the more striking features of outline and coloring, yet perhaps overlooking the little and the subtle things, that perhaps have most of all to do with the feelings. So it will be in recounting the subjects of our yearly thanksgiving. Blessings large and good we shall find, but many a cause of great gladness experienced will be overlooked. Those intangible things, the flow of spirits, the inspiration that breaks on us and makes the heaviness leap with a bound,—that relish of life that comes upon us we know not by what or how, only that we feel an ecstasy of living blessedness, those gifts of gladness that seem not attached necessarily to any particular outward fact or condi-

tion, will not come in our way,—so that to all that can be told we may add gratitude for the good unspeakable.

We begin our song of thanksgiving in the glad harvest hymn.—Every season our bountiful God comes forth and spreads the boards and fills the garner of the world—Every year a fresh wave of creative power in indescribable loveliness, in substantial and delicious fruitfulness, passes over the earth. What a ministry to human support and gladness! Is this a little thing? Nay, verily, for it is our life. Herein the Lord lays the foundations of all human prosperity and enjoyment. Ours is emphatically a land of plenty, a very good garden of the Lord, and faithfully does he serve unto it. Always enough, so that no people live so lavishly and freely as ours, and besides the overflow of our garner goes forth in burdened channels to gladden the nations of the earth. There has been but two years during the last forty, in which the exports of bread stuffs and provisions from our shores have fallen short of ten million dollars' worth in value per annum. While on the other hand some seasons

have contributed to foreign support sixty or seventy millions' worth. The exports of this kind for 1861 amount to over 94 million dollars.

This vegetable abundance is not merely a comfortable supply for constantly recurring wants, but it is the life and stamina of all business and of every enterprise, even an indispensable condition of moral, benevolent and religious actions. Take away this, our yearly stock in all trade, which is the constant creative gift of God, and we become helpless and bankrupt in everything,—all secular activities and prosperities fail, world-wide and multitudinous charities are dried up at their fountain heads. The human will is powerless for the lack of the wherewithal to feed it, and the instrumentalities of its work.

Though fruitful seasons have to do to such an incalculable extent with all human prosperity, there is feeble gratitude rendered therefor, because abundant harvests are taken as a matter of course,—as a necessity of result,—but they are not so. Consider over what a perilous sea, exposed to how many and great dangers, this rich convoy of God is brought safe into port. If it

start too early or too late, if for long days and weeks and months, the varying fickle elements are not held in the exact and true balance, if for one day the cold shall break forth from the frozen North,—if the arid winds breathe too long, or a subtle blast creeps into the skies, or the rot or mildew infect the cargo of the year, or any one of the many near and easily conceivable calamities befall,—the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, the labor of the olive shall fail, and the fields yield no meat, the flock shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls. The hand of the Lord, it is constant and firm that pilots the rich freightage,—the hand of the Lord it is, that turns away the destroyer, and the garners are filled with the labors of the Lord.

Therefore let us not forget his benefits in the bountiful gift of the year to the husbandry of the land—let us not be so foolish as to regard this as a little favor, or to imagine that these are the provisions of our own hands,—Give thanks for the well tempered and the time favored season—Herewith behold the goodness and the

mercy of the Lord.

II. Again the healthful skies. By occasion of human follies, vices, and sins, disease and death are sometimes permitted to make wide and universal havoc, filling the lands with gloom, sorrow and alarm.

In this wise a terrible arrest is sometime put upon all business, and all enjoyment and all life is swallowed up in the fear of death.—But though in much moral corruption, horribly vicious and contaminated in many a locality,—greatly condemned in the sight of God, and to natural pestilent influences exposed, yet the gloom of suffering and death has not been suffered to darken heavily upon the people—Even our armies under the so often fatal Southern skies, have gone surprisingly clear of sweeping mortalities, and the deadly spirit of rebellion has not been suffered to poison the loyal heavens.

But this year, excepting the battle work, quietly and in ordinary proportions, the dead have sunk to their rest and passed away. This bitterness in the cup of mortals has been in dilution and not poured out in the dregs and to overflowing.

Not angrily and horribly has death had carnival through our cities and villages. What a woe, what a calamity, what an embarrassment and confusion of the great purposes and wars of the time, if the people had been compelled to turn all their thought and energy to guard and battle against some fearful infection, attacking man or beast or both.

O bless and praise the all-merciful and long-suffering God that he hath been pleased to spare us the deserved chastisements and works of infectious and pestilential disease.

Not further can we go without touching upon the great interest of the war,—Though we know not famine or plague, war is upon us still and yet we thankfully remember at once, not its heaviest burdens. It has not devastated our fields, destroyed our towns, cut off surplus, or work, confined or blocked business—nor yet suppressed the expression of general cheerfulness or even of gaiety. Much has indeed been sacrificed and sharp sorrows have been endured, but the tone of the public heart is but little depressed. Many weights have been put upon business but it has been

strengthened to bear them. With all the varied and heavy taxations of the day, our old benevolent institutions have not only been sustained, but new and great channels of religious and charitable actions have been opened.

The exigencies of the strife in which we are engaged have necessitated great exertion, but there has been supplied abundant strength and will to put it forth.

We are glad that this stupendous struggle is for a right cause. That humanity and religion bid us stand by it with even all our millions of men and millions of treasures, until against liberty and country no more the enemy shall dare to come. The giant is not hungry or thirsty, nor weary, nor discouraged, nor hurt to hinder him in the least in extending head, hand, foot, or any limb, strengthened and willed, by kind providence, to smite yet more heavily, not yet doubting but strength and endurance will be granted, by the grace of God, to hold out to the end.

The nation has plainly now entered upon a new stage of the great struggle. The first startling shock of the nation was the atrocious and

unnatural fact of war begun upon this best and most benign of governments. Then the very dead almost leaped from their graves in astonishment and indignation. Patriotism burst up in the deserts and flowed forth like rivers. It seemed then that the voices of the indignant millions would at once thunder their unnatural rebellion into everlasting silence. As if the flash of myriad eyes would scorch out the sedition like the sudden lightning. That hour of resurrection past and armed men put themselves in array—but the rebellion stood and lifted up its head, a cold-blooded, long meditated wickedness. War it should indeed be if the Nation dared to arm and defend itself.

Then came the day of decision, the great day of decision. Its revelations were most startling and appalling. Loyalty was confused and alarmed. Great men broke faith and went over to the enemy. Public confidence seemed destroyed—the government knew not whom to trust, treason was everywhere. Gradually and through gloomy days of disappointment, delay and disaster, the lines were drawn with measurable distinct-

ness.

The people looked abroad in their first great national distress, for sympathy with their holy cause, but it was only to be surprised and pained by the scornful and threatening attitude of the great powers of the world. They beheld the formidable proportions of the revolt, its strength, not only in the seceded states, but also in northern and foreign sympathy, the probability of a long Civil War and of grave foreign complications. This revelation of dangers and difficulties brought matters to another stage. The people set themselves to the consideration of cost and possible consequences, and inquired what they should do. Confidently was it prophesied by many that the nation would reconsider its action, lay down the sword and make the best terms it could with the encouraged, confident and arrogant rebellion. The real question was, whether the purpose could be fixed, here to maintain the glorious old nationality against the armed protest of the confederate states and the hostile sentiment and warlike menace of allied European states.

That was the question which went into the

round of the last annual elections. At first there were indications of faltering. Majorities began to have an ambiguous interpretation, but when the naked issue was made, and the people were required to say whether they would give up their righteous cause and accept the dictation of any terms, or put their faces like flint against the enemy in all his destructive and wicked doctrines and the utmost of his powers, aided by whomsoever might wish or dare to join hands with him. When the loyal states were asked if they would make a business of sustaining their righteous laws and beneficent institutions against all enemies, till victorious or exhausted,—from Maine to California by thundering majority, with most trifling local exceptions, they said, deliberately, firmly, solemnly, “We will, we will, in the name of humanity, of justice, of freedom, of God, above hope, or fear of man and principles, cease to stand in the way of a righteous peace.”

This not in bravado or loud assertion, but in the silent voice of their deliberate actions. Thus it is said from the South. They see and interpret the signs of a fixed purpose to finish up the re-

bellion by the sword.

This is the unmistakable political position of the hour. The first calm, firm time has come. The people see a formidable array, they expect delays and disaster and disappointment, but there is but one way, Trust in God and on, thereby are we delivered from the distressing doublemindedness and perplexity of the past. Rough and toilsome is the road, it bristles yet with perhaps thrice a hundred thousand hostile bayonets, and is swept by hundreds of guns, but that is our road, and on it we must march, and with bullet and bayonet and cannon, clear the way.

But this purpose has not become so fixed without the favor of providence. Success from the Lord has encouraged the heart and strengthened the arm. This year our assisted sword has cleft the rebellion in twain,—it lies in two bleeding members, with little present prospect of making sound the ugly cut. Unto the quick other military lines are cutting,—into the very vitals of the confederacy the sword is now piercing, turning and tearing in its way, and opening an ugly wound.

We believe as we survive the year, that we

are getting on. The Rio Grande welcomes once more the old unchanged flag, very few are the backward steps while our brave armies are marching on. Yet the battle victories are but a part of our rejoicing.

There is a change of front and the motioning of better signs over the seas. Truth is vindicating our good cause upon foreign shores. The threatening cloud of intervention, which has frowned so darkly upon our horizon during all the struggle, is little by little lighting up.

Surprises are now by favor, rather than by interposed difficulties. Piracy is getting something of its deserved name and treatment. The far-famed names of the muses have a pleasanter look with the broad arrow of Old England upon them. It is a grateful change of affairs to be warned of danger, by better-natured neighbors across the line.

By favor of Him in whose hand are the hearts of kings and peoples, who turneth them as the rivers of water are turned, there is more freedom from fear of foreign intervention than at any previous time during the war. In spite of

the strong feeling against the success and welfare of our government, and desire to obstruct and oppose and dismember the great republic, that is too plain to be mistaken on the part of the great interested and jealous powers, the Lord has caused those without to continue at peace with us, holding back foreign enemies by the restraint of his providence.

It is also a part of our strength and confidence to-day, and therefore a subject of gratitude, that we are so favored in respect to the different branches of government and command. That the nation's purpose and energies have not been confused and weakened by a change of administration—that a man with the physical firmness of a rock and the toughness of a whip-end, occupies that post of highest responsibility which has repeatedly crushed the war-worn veteran,—that through all the rough, perilous and stormy months a strong man has stood undaunted and hopeful at the helm of the state—in his very bearing a tower of strength to the disquieted people—that God chose out a man of all commanding honesty in this day of distrust and put him over us—a man

who is willing to let all the world into a scrutiny of his every act when that scrutiny shall not endanger the public good—a man whom all the wickedness, perversity and opposition and warfare of his enemies and the enemies of the country, have not discomposed or tempted to a single inconsiderate word or act—a wonderfully balanced and passionless and benevolent soul—a man so wise to use the wisdom and strength of all other men—so quick to forecast what the people ought to do, so discreet as to the manner and time of successful action—so independent of all personal or party embarrassment—so true in heart as to the highest interest of the country and the times—and withal so persistent and firm—that friend and foe may ever know just where to find him—such a leader and commander God hath in his mercy appointed for the nation in its most imperiled and stormy hour—for the life and health of such a president in such a time, the people are grateful.

For the noble company of loyal governors we also give thanks—and not least because that good man and true, honored for his ability and intelli-

gence, integrity and fidelity, William A. Buckingham was and has continued to be the Governor of the Commonwealth of Connecticut. For the excellent company of councilors in the high places—for the many able and devoted commanders in our army and navy—who stand out illustrious as the strength and adornment of the national cause—for the noble armies which have been aggregated by the providence of God—inspired to victories—and planted strong in the high places of the field, for the reënforcements, which are in preparation—yea, for all the personnel and the material, the men and the financial resources—all the political and moral soundness and stability of the national cause, we give thanks unto Him who has ordained all.

Nor do we attribute the preservation of our civil and social interest—the safety of life and property from the fierce and uncontrollable violence of popular passion—the preservation of law and order in our towns and cities and states—in the midst of so many and great disturbances, in the midst of so much that is false and inflammatory—that measureless blessing—the continued

security of our families, not primarily to man or men, but to the kind guardianship of Almighty God. That the mob has not risen under the abundant instigation, to burn and pillage and murder everywhere—is because the Lord has made us to dwell in safety—Popular Government, has not thus come to wreck—but we have seen the elements of the political tempest—the terrible agencies of destruction and heard the roar of the breakers—enough to give us a deeper appreciation of the shield that is over us and the defenses around about us and our families.

But we should be strangely blind to the wonders of divine providence in the nation, did we overlook the marvelous revolution of sentiment and action that is going on in respect to human slavery—Here we are led to exclaim, “Behold, God hath wrought!”

We stand now perhaps midway between the old and the new, both wondering at what was and at what is. And are we not amazed now, to see how an institution that is founded in oppression, which makes merchandise in most brutal way of human beings, which buys and sells immortal souls

—an institution abhorred of the philanthropy and the religion of the world as the sum of all villainies, in view of the nature of which even the so accounted infidel, Jefferson, confessed he trembled when he remembered that God was just. I say, “Are we not amazed at the fact?” that this quintessence of despotism has so infused all the nation’s blood and conscience—had so entrenched itself in the very citadel of freedom, had become so sacred in the habits and traditions of the laws and the politics of the land, that when this rebellion broke out and for months afterward, there was nothing held so inviolable and treated with so much delicacy and respect, as this wicked institution, though then notoriously the Mother of treason, secession and war, every other right or possession was clearly seen to be forfeited by rebellion.

But in the Union or in revolt out of it, Slavery was evermore to have its constitutional right, to oppress men or destroy governments, or whatever it willed. This right of wrong was so sacred that it took well nigh two years of disastrous war, in the providence of God to create a sentiment

that even dared to treat slavery like every other forfeited right.

Then three long months were given for this outlaw, public enemy, maker of all sedition, to save itself. The nation as a nation, was it not solicitous that the peculiar institution should avail itself of salvation? Was there not grief and wrath throughout the land because slavery was likely to be treated as an enemy according to its deserts? Have not the people been ready, if God had let them, to make peace to the reinstatement of the sum of all villainies, to its former high place of insolence and power?

What a strange idolatry! Yet peace on such terms the people have not been able to make, because, and only because slavery asked not for it, wanted it not. In the meantime events against which all the people prayed, at which they all suffered and mourned, have been at work upon the public mind. A few of the most eloquent and schooled men in America had been laboring for thirty years to abolitionize the country, but their converts were not like in number to the drops of morning dew, but a war sprung by, and in, the

interest of the evil—a war contrary to the desire of the people, an unmanageable war which no man could frame or direct—a war subordinate only to his direction who rules in the armies of heaven and earth, has abolitionized the land. Even semi-secession, intensely pro-slavery, border states are getting to be the most radical and thoroughgoing emancipationists and immediate emancipationists, to be found. Blood-stained Baltimore has repented and stands on the side of the government and against slavery by ten thousand votes. Missouri and Delaware have wheeled into the line of freedom. Less than ten years ago all the legitimate authority and power of the government, and more under a northern president, were strained to make a slave state of unwilling Kansas. To-day, not according to human plans, not after any leadership, but by this God-fortuned war, all the authorities and powers of the government, the courts, the executives, the army and the navy, in all their hitherto unparalleled formidable and tremendous proportions, are legitimately and necessarily whether they would or no, by the very instincts of self-preservation, on the

side of freedom. God has made the proud, unwilling people favor the oppressed,—yea, to take the slave and gladly welcome him as a needed and worthy fellow soldier and man.

In the meantime the great armies, each obedient to the decrees of heaven, have with their terrible attrition ground forward and backward over great states grinding the peculiar institution to powder. Slavedom has been shaken as with great earthquakes and unknown thousands have gone out of bondage.

Is freedom a good thing? Are equal rights the American glory? Read the handwriting of the Lord on the times—"The year of jubilee hastens on."

But one view more. Yet withal is the land desolate and afflicted. Do we feel, in spite of all we see, and all our reasoning, that these are evil and terrible days? These are not easeful and gainful and boastful times. Treasons are working, blood and tears are flowing. Yes, yes, it is so. But what then? It is in some sort the treatment that God visits upon his own chosen church and people. How did the Lord bless his infant

and early church? With trouble! He gathered from her a noble army of martyrs. He made their excellencies to appear in a great fight of afflictions. He made blood the seed of the church. In his mysterious ways he touched the deep springs of endurance, devotion and actions. So in troublous ways God is touching the hearts of this generation, and a nobler and better life is being lived by the people in this great day of visitations. A noble army of martyrs has been gathered out of the land. Not that all have gone nobly to the war—for if one of the tribe that followed Jesus was base and low, so shall not every company have the bad element also? But it were only what we do know to be just and true to say that a grander and more beautiful life has not been lived in this nation for many a year than that which has crowned and is crowning the earthly destiny of thousands of our young men. We wonder at the devotion, the courage, the lofty manhood that makes the bulk of our great armies. Our eyes have been permitted to behold the truly heroic, the loftiest traits of character, in the living and the dead. In the open-

ings that are made the ambitious forget their self-seeking, and our daughters ever go far away to serve the poor and the lowly.

The nation has never before worked such a power of benevolence. The proud, dry, cold rock of our prosperity has been smitten by the rod of the Almighty, and the waters of life burst forth. Never before was there so much of the holy work, so much clothing of the naked, feeding of the hungry, and ministry of the sick. Verily the days that produce fruit like these are not altogether to be deplored. In the book of remembrance they are written on the earth and on high. Grand and precious will be the history of these very times.

And upon all and with all the converting Spirit of God is dispensed. There is a mystic host continually in our vast marshaled hosts, who marches and camps forevermore in the sight of Israel's sign, the pillar or cloud by day and fire by night. Christian truths and powers never had so beneficently to do with men in arms.

Surely these are not the signs of wrath. It may be the fire of the Lord, but it is the fire which

purifieth.

We have loved this land. We have counted her the perfection of beauty, the joy of the whole earth, foolishly and wickedly boasted much, perhaps, but love deep and devoted we had for this, our beloved country.

But time fails for the enumeration of particulars. Greatly has our good cause been favored in many and very different ways, and strengthened in heart as by the inspiration of the Almighty. A cheerful and inexpressible faith sets itself towards the future, warlike and formidable as it may appear. This is not a matter of self-assertion and boasting, it is both felt and observed. Listen to a correspondent writing from the rebel capital to the *London Times*—a party not partial to us: “No one, who has been conversant with the northern states during the last two and a half years, can have failed to notice with astonishment the faith stronger than death which the Northerners have exhibited in their ‘Star,’ ‘their manifest destiny,’ ‘their religion,’ their alpha and omega, their dreams of dominion from sea to sea, and (to quote Mr. Everett’s

words) from the icy pole to the flaming belt of the equator. No parallel faith has ever been exhibited by the Confederate states in their future. Six great Southern victories in the field and three drawn battles, exhausting the nine principal collisions of the war, the entire absence of any such panic as Bull Run, or Chickamauga, the tried inefficiency of the Federal blockade, the unmolested predatory flight of *Alabamas* and *Floridas* at sea, have altogether failed to inspire the masses of the South with any of that confidence in themselves which neither defeat nor disaster, nor hope deferred, nor illusions dispelled, have ever shaken out of the Northerners. Deny it who may, there is something sublime in this shadowy earnestness, and misty magnificence of Northern faith and self-reliance. Would that I could see promises of future and final Southern triumph in any corresponding quality of the Southern mind."

Such the tribute that an enemy is constrained to render to a cause and people that have borne the distraction, abuse, strange and bitter animosity, of almost the whole world during the protracted

agony of a life and death struggle. Yea, all the nations around have waited in diabolical expectation and hope to witness the dying struggle of the dismembered Republic, but they behold with astonishment that life and faith are waxing stronger and stronger. Far be it from us to glory in this but as we glory in our God. And there is glorying in Him here. Regard for underlying principles explains faith on the one side and the lack of it on the other. One side of this great war had a sustaining cause, the other has none. Can most unjustifying rebellion and barbarous slavery give birth to an inspiring faith? Hatred and ambition lit the Southern fire, and the raging hordes came on to kill and destroy. It was not so with the Northern blood. It thrilled not for war. There was no murder in the loyal heart. There was shuddering at thought of battles and slaughter, and brotherly incredulous smile at the bluster of military array. There was no thought of the sword, until a voice, as from God and the alarmed genius of country, liberty and humanity, whispered solemnly in all the air and bade all the children of duty stand by the imperiled interests

of the hour, even unto blood. How went our heroes to the war? Gentle-hearted sons of peace, they went with dauntless courage and devotion, not to kill but to die if need be. It was not passion that spurred them on, it was not frenzy that nerved their arm, but a cause more holy, more dear than the best things of the earth. We shall forget it never, who have seen it; how passionless, how calm, how free from ambition, how true to duty and fuller of God than ever before, our armies formed. To-day it is the strong, loving, elder brother, quieting and restraining the dangerous delirium of a younger and erring brother.

Even so has a repentant Southern heart figured the strife. No, it is not for love of strife, it is not for ambition and empire, that our young men have accepted hard and horrible war. Not for this have so many of our noblest and best and dearest laid themselves down in the premature graves. What is it then that neither defeat nor disaster, nor hope deferred, nor illusions dispelled have ever shaken out. This deep, unshaken persuasion, that earth in its present interests and its future will bring, and heaven with all its spirit and

laws indicate the work to be done, and pledge success for it. It is the feeling that such a cause must not be neglected, let whatever else may—that it can never fail. This sublimity of shadowy earnestness, this misty magnificence of faith comes of the irradicable conviction that here are precious things, in the conservation of which it is better to give all, and to die, rather than to bear life when they are taken away. Not unto the people be the praise for this faith, its achievements, its cheer, but unto Him who has wrought through them, breathed in them, causing them to have some such encouragement as is felt to-day.

To sum up our rejoicing, now is God in the abundant garners, God in the healthful skies, God in the immunities of the great war, God in the settled single-mindedness of the loyal states, God in providential delays as well as military successes, God in guiding and restraining the belligerent spirits of foreign nations, God in rulers and commanders for the times, God in the elimination and destruction of wicked principles and systems, God in the wonderfully growing unity and strength of the people on the ground of

universal liberty, God in kindly chastisements in stirring the popular hearts to the highest desires and the noblest works, God in the dispensation of saving grace, God in making these and others untold unite in the faith and hope of good things to come.

For the many signs that our God is with us, let there be courage and rejoicing at home and in the field. By these motionings, on, on to peace and the free land.

Our banner is not going down! The hands that bear it are strong. The God of Israel is He that giveth strength and power unto His people.

Blessed be God. Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation.

