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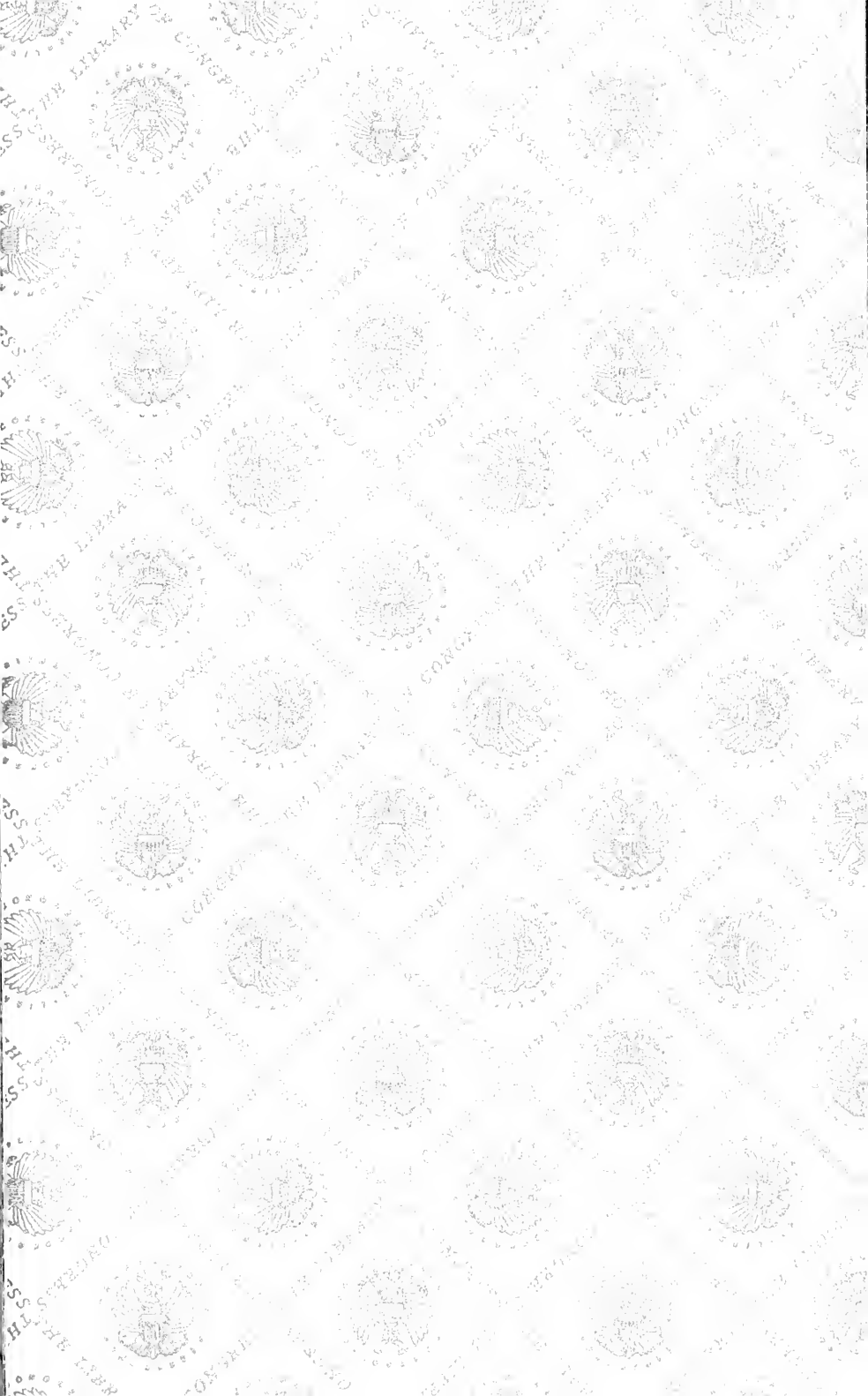
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A SERMON,

COMMEMORATIVE OF

NATIONAL BLESSINGS,

PREACHED IN THE CENTRAL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

APRIL 13, 1862.

THE DAY RECOMMENDED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES
AS AN OCCASION OF SPECIAL THANKSGIVING FOR RECENT
NATIONAL VICTORIES, AND OF PRAYER FOR THE
WOUNDED AND THE BEREFT, AND FOR FUR-
THER BLESSINGS ON OUR CAUSE.

BY REV. F. F. ELLINWOOD,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH.

ROCHESTER, N. Y.
PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.
1862.

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Rev. F. F. ELLINWOOD ;

Dear Sir :—The undersigned were highly pleased with your discourse delivered in the Central Presbyterian Church of this city, on Sabbath morning, the 13th inst. Many others have also expressed great satisfaction in that discourse and, with us, desire to see it published. Will you, therefore, have the kindness to furnish us with a copy for publication ?

Respectfully,

GEO. W. PARSONS,

A. M. HASTINGS,

J. E. HAYDON,

E. CHILD,

FREDERICK STARR,

WM. ALLING,

J. H. BREWSTER,

WM. A. HUBBARD.

Rochester, April 21st, 1862.

GEO. W. PARSONS, A. M. HASTINGS, and others :

Dear Brethren :—I defer to your judgment and accede to your request, appreciating the kindly spirit in which it is made. The discourse named in your note is herewith placed at your disposal.

I remain your ob't servant,

F. F. ELLINWOOD.

Rochester, April 24, 1862.

SERMON.

“LORD, thou hast been favorable unto thy land.” Ps. 85: 1. “For the shields of the earth belong unto God.” Ps. 47: 9.

Every blessing which God confers upon us is worthy of thanksgiving. Coming from Him it is a religious gift, demanding a religious gratitude, and is therefore a suitable theme for thought or discussion at any time or place.

Some one has said that true piety consists not so much in doing specified religious things distinctively, as in doing the common things of life—all things—in a religious way. Whatever is referred to God, done for Him, ascribed to Him, is a part of every day religion. The battle with the Amelekites was as truly a work of faith as the erection of the tabernacle.

The Chief Magistrate of these United States has called upon us to mingle in our worship to-day the joyous notes of praise to God for national blessings, and the expressions of prayerful sympathy for those by whom our common triumphs have been dearly purchased. Our hearts respond to this timely proclamation. We feel that there is a greatly accumulated indebtedness to the God of battles, before whom months ago this nation so solemnly spread out her pressing wants; and there is no reason why such blessings should not be acknowledged in the same devout spirit as if they had been conquests of another kind.

We have perhaps for some time past looked too exclusively upon the human aspects of the great rebellion, and the merely human probabilities of its suppression. We have learned to read of victories, and only victories, and to praise *men* for them—and such praise is just in its true subordination—but we have, in some degree, forgotten to appreciate the help of God. I rejoice, therefore, that the President has again recalled public attention to a religious consideration of our affairs—turned our thoughts from the newspaper, the map, the daily and hourly discussion of meas-

ures and chances and prospects, to Him who is the sole author of good, and who must still be our supreme trust. I rejoice, too, in the fact that amid the hardening influences of war, rendering men forgetful of, if not indifferent to, the misery and suffering which even victory costs, he has appealed to the people to remember specially in their prayers and sympathies the wounded, the impoverished, and the bereaved. I rejoice, moreover, that for future successes he enjoins upon us still to look to God who orders the circumstances and weighs the chances of the battlefield, and who can ordain either victory or defeat.

It is very certain that as a people we do not realize the wonderful transformations through which we have passed within one short year and a half.

European nations, who have so often wondered at our excitability, might now stand amazed—as they do in fact—at the quiet, matter-of-course way in which we sit down at our firesides and read, two or three times a day, of new victories that affect the destinies of millions, and still move calmly on our way without an hour's interruption of business or a moment's loss of sleep.

It may be doubted whether the American character can ever be fully and satisfactorily explained on any hypothesis or by any theory. At least, the strange and unexpected phases which it has exhibited within the last two or three years have defied and confounded all generalizations and speculations and vaticinations. And it is no matter of surprise that the able correspondent of a foreign journal, after spending many months in attempts at American portraiture, has at length retired from the field and the undertaking in despair. Still we do not greatly regret this versatility of character; for if only our uprisings be not faithless toward Heaven, and our quiet acceptance of glorious events be not wanting in devout gratitude and appreciation, we may look for a time when these diversified elements will be fused into a national character the more vigorous for its almost contradictory constituents. If the favor of God attend our development all will be well.

In order the more clearly to understand how great things a favoring Providence has done for us, let us compare our present condition as a people with that in which we have found ourselves at three different periods within eighteen months.

I.—We recur to the autumn of 1860, and the winter that followed—that dark period when every man that loved his coun-

try was heart-sick at the calamities that had actually overtaken her, and at the clouds of still darker portent that lowered threateningly all around her horizon.

On the 20th of December, 1860, the State Convention of South Carolina, by a unanimous vote of one hundred and sixty-nine, drove the first entering wedge of secession into the trembling fabric of our National Union. By the aid of the magnetic wires, (which should never have been cursed by such a use,) the entire Republic was made to feel the shock almost at the same hour. That very day, Mr. Garnet of Virginia, rose in the House of Representatives and insolently announced to the Speaker that "one of the sovereign states of this confederacy had, by the *glorious act of her people*, withdrawn from the union," and so low and abject had the spirit of the American Congress become that Southern members were allowed to applaud this treasonable announcement without even a word of protest. That evening the bell-rings and bonfires, and mass meetings witnessed in other state capitals and chief cities of the South gave full proof that the work of dissolution had begun in earnest.

In rapid succession commissioners passed from State to State, openly inviting fellowship in treason; conventions were called by every means, constitutional or otherwise, and State after State was formally numbered with the rebel "confederacy." Forts, arsenals, dockyards, &c., belonging to the United States were forcibly seized, and treason in the departments, in the army and the navy, became so common that a bewildered people knew not in whom of all their public servants it was safe to trust.

Leading men of the nation were even then secretly negotiating in other lands for the munitions of war, and courting foreign sympathy and help in the ruin of their country.

Meanwhile members of the cabinet, under solemn oaths of office, one after another resigned, revealing their gigantic frauds as they withdrew. One, whose name it were almost a profanity to utter, had stripped the national armories for the ends of treason, and another had purposely embarrassed and crippled our finances with the same design. Senators still under pay of the government, used their whole influence to thwart and weaken that government, and when neither acts nor insolent words could accomplish more, they disdainfully withdrew to take up the sword in the desperate cause of national ruin. Hope seemed well nigh

extinct,—the more so, as the chief executive of the government proved but the pitiable embodiment of imbecility. The administration was utterly paralyzed and worthy of contempt, the people were bewildered, the world astonished. Foreign jealousy pronounced, with ill-disguised satisfaction, the sentence of our national doom, and wrote already our praiseless epitaph; and the snows of winter, then just gathering over our beloved land, seemed the winding sheet of all that we had so highly prized.

Though we had a strong confidence that God would in His own time and way, solve this strange problem for the ultimate advancement of civilization and the good of His own cause, yet it seemed a long, dark process that must accomplish it. Human sagacity was foiled and baffled. Peace conventions were mere child's play; and compromises, however numerous proposed, however skilfully framed, however strongly backed by petitions, pleased nobody, accomplished nothing, and only afforded time for the enemy to mature his plans and perfect his preparations.

“Will the new President be successfully inaugurated? Can he be?” were questions which at length assumed a very grave aspect, for foul conspiracies were on foot, and the national capitol was threatened with destruction. Moreover, the disease of the Republic, as Cicero would call it, seemed not merely local but constitutional and all-pervading. A secret cabal, worse than Cataline's, was every where present. There were treasonable men and treasonable presses in every State in the Union, and the South hoped that corruption enough would be found in the North to aid and abet the work of dissolution even to entire success.

The last days of February came, and for the first time in our history a President elect was compelled to enter the national capitol secretly to elude the assassin's deadly thrust. It was our darkest hour. Never since her first great struggle for political existence had our country been so cloven down and humbled in the dust before the nations.

Now, as we turn from those dark and ill-boding scenes to the spectacle which our country presents to-day, and mark the contrast seen at Washington, and indeed everywhere, and as we remember how little of all this our short foresight could then have even conceived or hoped for, how shall we express adequately our gratitude for what God foresaw and has thus far accomplished?

“What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward

me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon His name. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all His people."

II.—There is another period with which we will contrast our present condition. One year ago this day, the 13th of April, Fort Sumpter was reduced. One year ago to-day that brave garrison of seventy men, worn and famished, and preventing suffocation only by wet cloths upon their faces, yielded at length, though honorably, their position to a numerous foe. There is something dreamlike in the retrospect, as we recall the events that so rapidly followed that day, and the spirit that pervaded different parts of the land. The South were jubilant, not understanding yet the able strategy by which their arms had been purposely diverted from an assault upon the capital at the mere cost of a Southern fort, and at the same time the full responsibility of beginning the war laid at their door. Nothing could exceed the complacency and hopefulness of the conspirators, and the arrogance and contempt with which the old union was treated by the rebel press after the "brilliant victory" of Fort Sumpter.

The step had been taken thus hastily as a means of uniting the South, but, alas! for the rebellion, it had in an astonishing manner united the North. Had the fatal lethargy of the loyal States been suffered to continue undisturbed, the slow and insidious poison of disunion might have accomplished its most destructive work, but with the first shock of actual war the great North awoke, and that very hour the real hope of secession perished.

The true friends of the Union were everywhere roused as one man; party was forgotten; all waste of time with compromises was at an end. Lurking treason in loyal States was compelled to hide its head, money and men were offered on every hand, and within three days the administration saw that which it desired to see more than all things else—saw itself firmly and nobly sustained by the unanimous, devoted, sublime patriotism of a perfectly united people.

Still whatever assurance this grand uprising might give of ultimate success, there was for the time most imminent danger. On the 15th of April, two days after the fall of Sumpter, President Lincoln issued a proclamation calling for seventy-five thousand volunteers, and commanding all rebellious combinations to disperse within twenty days—a command which, though not very

likely to be obeyed, still had the effect to stamp the insurrection with its true character, as such, before the country and the world. While from the free States the response to the call for volunteers was prompt and hearty, the governors of Missouri, Kentucky and Tennessee (where are those governors now?) returned insulting refusals which seemed little better, and finally proved *no* better, than open endorsements of the rebel cause. Then came on days and nights of most fearful anxiety. Washington was in imminent danger, and must at all cost be garrisoned. The departments must be sifted of traitors ere it should prove too late. Baltimore and Maryland must be opened for the passage of troops, an army must be created and hastened on to the seat of war, secret intrigues must be ferreted out and their telegraphic communications seized upon and broken up; and not the least of all, our foreign relations required to be readjusted, and the world to be convinced that, as a nation, we still intended to live.

Meanwhile the commercial interests of the country were well-nigh paralyzed. Securities in many States had become utterly worthless, and of course involved the failure of countless banks. Southern repudiation, too, added its outrages to the general distress, and thousands who had lived in affluence were reduced to penury.

We look back with shuddering upon those anxious days, even as they were known to us here in Rochester, and we have never realized a tithe of the sacrifices and sufferings of this war as compared with other places; yet even here an ill-boding solicitude was felt by us all, so deep and so heavy that we pray God that we and our country may forever be spared from its recurrence.

Nor would we willingly repeat the experiences of the period immediately following that just named—the period of flags and intemperate and wasteful zeal, of shoddy outfits and superfluous pistols, of crude civil soldiering and newspaper generalship, of congressional pressure and so-called “political necessities,” of general vain confidence and Godless irreverence, and all those untoward influences which led finally to the sad culmination of a Sunday battle at Bull Run. We contrast the present with those two or three months, and are astonished to see how much the lessons of so brief a history have done for us. The nation seems as a *power* at least—to have passed from the flash and frivolity of a crude boyishness to the solid maturity of manhood in the short space of

a few months. Never had there been such symptoms of weakness as then : never have there been such proofs of power as now. At no former period in our whole history have we been in a position that promised so well for the stability of our institutions as to-day. These institutions have always won for themselves a theoretic commendation. They have been thought, by friends at least, to be happily and wisely framed. Fourth of July orators have exalted and glorified them with no fear of refutation, for previous to all severe tests they flourished of course. But never till now have we been able, before friend and foe, to pronounce them fully adequate to the most trying ordeals that a nation is ever called to meet. We have not perished, as was predicted, by the impatience of the mob. We have not been wrecked by financial panic and bankruptcy, as was so ably planned for us by the foreign journals. We have not rebelled at taxation, and it is to be hoped that few of our citizens will be found sordid enough even to raise a murmur. Public confidence in the government has not failed, and now, even while our wide domain is being shaken by two or three battles, a week commerce is steadily reviving. By the favor of God we have been the first among nations to disclose a patriotism that can array *three quarters of a million of volunteers*, and despised as we were a few months since, the inventive genius and fearful prowess of our iron "cheese box" have virtually demolished the wooden hulks of all Europe's boasted navies.

We will not speak exultingly, (for surely we have been low in the dust,) but with encouragement and gratitude.

We have been in the furnace not in vain. Much dross has already been removed, and we hope that when that end comes which will come, much that yet remains will have been purged away.

And one noticeable improvement which we see in contrasting the present with the period last referred to, is that which pertains to the public recognition of God's law. The war, so far as we are concerned, is now being conducted in a manner more in accordance with Christian principles. Let me read, just here, from one of our secular papers—a copy of the *New York Times* published two days since. I always like to quote such testimony from secular papers, because I regard it as one of the hopeful

features of our country and our age. It is taken from an editorial article, entitled "*Sunday Battles*," and reads as follows :

"The late terrible struggle at Pittsburgh adds another to the long list of Sunday battles. The facts are so clear in this and numerous other conflicts, and the results have been so uniform and decisive, that comment is not only warranted but demanded, alike by philosophy, patriotism and piety. The general statement can not be gainsaid, that the more important movements of the National forces, in the early stages of the present war, were made on Sunday; and that they were undeniable failures. Patterson's column was constantly notorious for its manouevring on Sundays—and for little else. Big Bethel, Bull Run, and Ball's Bluff were the great blunders and defeats of attacking armies on Sunday. All these engagements, excepting Ball's Bluff, under the now imprisoned Gen. Stone, preceded Gen. McClellan's noble Sabbath order. Thenceforward the rebels have made the Sunday assaults, with invariable loss of the battles thus waged. Mill Spring opened their career of Sunday fighting, which closes with Pittsburgh. The battle of Winchester was begun on Sunday morning. The first of these battles cost the rebels Kentucky; the second, the valley of Virginia; and the third, the Mississippi valley. The *Merrimac*, too, after its destructive Saturday's raid, ran a muck against the *Monitor* on Sunday, and has spent a month in repairing damages.

"Add to the facts, that most of the Generals commanding, whose names figure as assailants in these battles, were slain in them, or are in disgrace on account of them, and there is food for reflection in these bits of history. What has become of our Gen. Pierce, of Big Bethel memory? What of Gen. Stone? Where are Zollicoffer and Sydney Johnston? In short, since we have ceased the business of Sunday fighting, and the rebels took it up, we have had only victories to record, and they only defeats and surrenders. Fort Donelson and Island No. 10 were our Sunday morning benison on weekday prowess.

"Nor are these isolated historical facts. History is full of them. The British forces assailed us on Lake Champlain and at New Orleans on Sunday, and were defeated. We assailed them at Quebec; our army was repulsed and its leader slain. We began the battle of Monmouth, and had the worst of it. Napoleon began the battle of Waterloo, and lost his army and his empire.

"We content ourselves with the simple collation of these suggestive facts. Let them go to swell that mighty volume of testimony to the supremacy and stability of a law as old as creation, which claims quite other use of one-seventh part of time than the work of willing human butchery."

Brethren, let us thank God for these facts, and for this recognition of them by an influential political paper. Have we not great encouragement to pray that when the last cloud of war shall have passed from the sky, and the last booming thunders of civil strife shall have wasted their echoes into silence, we may see the claims of all religious truth established on a firmer basis among us than ever before!

III.—I wish to contrast the present hour with still another period embraced within the past few months. All know how the year 1862 began. A new and darker storm had appeared rapidly gathering over the sea. After having, as we supposed, passed through the most trying stages of this great civil war, and settled into the quiet and uniform belief that the rebellion would be successfully put down, we were threatened with a vaster and more ruinous struggle with Great Britain.

By an unforeseen circumstance we seemed driven to the alternative of choosing between a foreign war or submission to an arrogance intent upon our humiliation and disgrace. Whether there could be an honorable escape from the dilemma was a grave question. On the north of us as well as on the south were bitter animosities and warlike preparations. All Europe looked with intense interest upon the "situation," and trembled at the possibly fatal result to us. Americans abroad probably never before experienced so much of anxiety and suspense—not to say shame and reproach for their country's sake. And even when the *one* fruitful cause of strife had been removed it was still felt that some other—a pretext at least—would be found, and that we should yet have war. The blockade of southern ports was looked upon with growing impatience by the commerce of Europe, and as very little had been accomplished for some months toward quelling the rebellion, there was apparently great reason to fear that foreign interference would sooner or later complicate our affairs.

What, then, has a favoring Providence done for us in three months? The last threatening indication of a foreign war has been swept away, the question of breaking the blockade has been decided in the negative by both England and France. Our neighbors over in Canada have relaxed their evening drill and become our admirers, and everywhere the preponderance of outside opinion and sympathy, after so much oscillation, appears to have settled at length into a fixed conclusion against a pro-slavery rebellion and in favor of the stars and stripes.

Meanwhile a series of successes seldom if ever equalled in the history of warfare, has crowned the national arms. Since the 1st of January, or within less than a hundred days, we have had recorded the victorious battles of Pikeville, Mill Spring, Fort Henry, Roanoke Island, Fort Donelson, the strategic reduction of

Bowling Green, the occupation of Nashville, the advance on Martinsburgh, Leesburgh and Charlestown, the decisive battle of Winchester, the raising of the Potomac blockade, the bloodless reduction of Columbus, the terrible but decisive battle of Pea Ridge, the forced evacuation of Manassas, the taking of New Madrid, the strikingly providential arrest and vanquishment of the Merrimack, the storming of Newbern, the capture of Fernandina and other places on the Florida and Georgia coasts, the taking of Beaufort, the wonderful successes at Island No. 10, and last of all, the close and sanguinary but decisive battle at Pittsburgh Landing.

Now we are a very nervous people, and while God has given us this unparalleled series of successes in our country's cause—more than a score in number—there are doubtless not a few who feel that the number should have been fifty instead of twenty; and had it been fifty, they would probably say a hundred. But God grant that we may not tempt Him with unreasonableness and ingratitude after such manifestations of His favor!

This is certainly making history very fast. Many and great have been our successes, let us not the less appreciate them because they are many.

That which we prayed for months ago, and have continued to pray for from time to time, has in great part been fulfilled: let it be this day joyfully and gratefully acknowledged.

Nor will we forget the numerous circumstances which have peculiarly illustrated our dependence on the help of God in securing these results.

Proof after proof has been afforded of the weakness and shortsightedness of men even in their best endeavors. Storms at sea threatened to destroy, and might have destroyed, each of the two great naval expeditions to the Atlantic coast. But for a favoring Providence the fate of the great Spanish armada might have been their fate. Again, at the battle of Winchester, if the enemy's reinforcements had reached the field in time, we should have been defeated; while, at Pittsburgh Landing, if *our* reinforcements had *not* arrived in time we should have been defeated.

Again, but for the providential coincidence (it was merely such) that brought the *Monitor* to Hampton Roads just in the hour of need, the utmost devastation might have been carried into our navy and, perhaps, our great seaport towns. And what shows

peculiarly on how many unforeseen influences a victory may depend, and how little, therefore, can be predicted by any but the All-seeing One, is the significant fact that in all the great engagements of this war, the party which seemed for a time victorious, and was confident of entire success, has at last been vanquished. It was so at Bull Run; it was so at Pea Ridge; it was so at Pittsburgh Landing. Indeed every commander, however great his skill and however numerous and brave his forces, has always reason to feel, when entering the battlefield, that there are elements of success—chances, if you please—which lie entirely above his reach and beyond his control. And this being true we, in our safe homes and churches are called upon to look constantly for Divine guidance and help on behalf of our officers and our troops.

But in looking over the various aspects of this great struggle through which our country is passing, I recall some matters of thanksgiving not contemplated in the public proclamation. The President has called upon us to make grateful acknowledgment of our victories by sea and land, and our escape from foreign intervention.

But I think we ought to thank God for the President himself—so wise and intrepid a helmsman in this unparalleled storm. He was placed in office, humanly speaking, by a party, but in another view far above parties, he was raised up of God for these eventful times. The force of events, the co-operation of all patriotic men of whatever name, and especially the favoring hand of Providence, have borne him above all platforms to the noble and sublime work of saving a great nation from peril.

Since the days of WASHINGTON so urgent and difficult a crisis has not appeared; since the days of WASHINGTON so remarkable an adaptation of a great man to a great mission has not appeared. We find in our honored executive no one striking element of genius, perhaps, but he presents what is better, the happy union of strong common sense, great prudence on delicate and difficult questions, undaunted coolness in perplexity, and an energy of decision that can, when need be, take the responsibility and move forward, and make others move. This choice combination of striking characteristics, how seldom found! And we bless God that He has united them all in the character of one whom He has ordained and schooled for the peculiar requisitions of this hour.

And in connection with our avoidance of foreign intervention, which is named in the proclamation, do we not owe a debt of gratitude to Him who made and endowed all men, for our able and successful diplomacy with other powers during the past few months?

It is not necessary for you or for me to be in all respects an admirer of our Secretary of State, but I know that there is candor enough in this audience for a perfectly unanimous acknowledgment of that masterly statesmanship of which the nation may well be proud, and which, divinely ordained as we believe it was for this peculiar international crisis, should call forth our thanksgiving and praise to God.

Another thing which we should not fail to note with grateful satisfaction, is the series of judicious steps which have been taken with regard to Slavery. What could have been more difficult than to treat properly this delicate matter in the present juncture of our affairs? The sentiment of Europe, and the hot haste of a fanatical few in this country, have constantly pressed the subject of emancipation, at whatever cost to the general objects of the war. On the other hand, the advancement of opinion in the border States has been exceedingly slow in reaching even its present stage—demanding not only great prudence, but frequently a delay even in that which the government had a right to do at once. But what have we seen to admire and rejoice at? In the first place, the strict adherence of the administration to thoroughly constitutional ground in all measures whatever; in the second place, the proposal to gradually purchase the slaves of such States, and such States only, as might desire to dispose of them; in the third place, the act passed by so large a vote for the abolition of slavery in the District of Columbia, and, in the fourth place, the incipient negotiation of a treaty with Great Britain for the utter suppression of the African Slave Trade. These, taken separately or together, are steps of prudence and constitutional equity, and yet steps of incalculable promise for our country and the world. We may well discountenance and rebuke all ravings of a hot and inconsiderate haste by whomsoever manifested, while we thank God, rather, for these firm and solid, and real advances in the right direction.

And not the least hopeful and thankworthy feature of this

whole matter is the general harmony of opinion and feeling in regard to these measures.

Thousands of conservative men, and even representatives, of the border States have favored them, and yet they satisfy the better judgment of the great body of those at the North who have not been known as conservative.

Indeed, there is something marvelous in the gradual but steady transformations and assimilations which have been going on in the popular mind during the year past. Do they not constitute the most striking feature of even these times? We have not plunged into excesses by way of retaliation; we have not placed the fire-brand in the hand of the negro; we have not listened to the lectures and reproofs of Mr. Spurgeon or any other conceited Englishman on the subject of immediate and indiscriminate emancipation; and yet we have greatly advanced as an entire people. It has been a healthy change. It has assimilated wide and extravagant diversities in the broader and deeper current of a true progress.

Indeed, apologists for slavery are now exceedingly rare. The morbid and absurd sensitiveness on the subject, once so common, has passed away. All look upon the system as a gigantic curse:—as the undoubted cause of this frightful war, and the prolific source of perpetual strifes so long as it shall exist in a civilized nation. All believe that in this country it has received its death blow, and that by its own treasonable and blood-stained hand. All rejoice in the hope that it will pass away—only praying that it may perish with the least possible shock to our national life, and with the least violence to the constitutional rights of the several States.

But our President, in his proclamation, has not forgotten the thousands who have fallen in this strife, and more especially the multitudes of sorrowing survivors. Over some of the brave dead, more particularly known to him, he has stood and shed the manly tears of a heartfelt sorrow. And he has called upon his countrymen in their various sanctuaries to offer their prayers unto God for that peculiar support and comfort which only He can give to the sick, the wounded, the widowed, the orphaned, and to all whose hearts are weighed down with the sorrow of bereavement.

This is therefore not only a day of national thanksgiving, but

also a day of national condolence. The Christian grace of *prayerful* sympathy (for not all sympathy knows how to pray)—the apostolic injunction to “rejoice with them that do rejoice and weep with them that weep” is, in its substance and spirit, spread out by a chief magistrate before a great nation.

When has such an appeal from such a source been made before?

Oh! let us rejoice together that there is progress in the world. Let us rejoice that, over all these mountains and vallies and prairies where once painted savages hideously danced around their trophies of scalps, the noble and benign ethics of the Gospel find to-day this marked and general witness and commendation.

And we will include the suffering and the bereft even of our enemies in our sympathy and our prayers. Such is the true consistency of the Gospel's requirements. An enemy fallen is, in the eye of practical Christian charity, an enemy no longer. And the woes of our whole country (and it must still be one) rise up before us and touch our hearts to-day. I shall not be guilty of the bad taste of attempting to picture for mere effect the horrors of the battle-field. Most of us know little of their fearfulness, and we would not know. It is probably safe, however, to say that by the dire agencies of carnage on the field, and of sickness in the hospital, not less than twenty-five thousand American youth—North and South—have already perished, while perhaps a still greater number have been crippled or diseased for life.

Some in this audience have lost near and dear friends in this sad struggle, and there is scarcely a city or village or town in the land that has not its desolate homes. For the unknown multitudes of sorrowing ones we offer our heartfelt prayers to God to-day.

And we will not forget the request of our Chief Magistrate, that he and his counsellors, and our armies, may be sustained by a nation's prayers. More than a year since, as he left his western home, he made a similar request of his friends and fellow citizens, and we have had good reason to feel that it was not in vain. It affords us a lesson of encouragement, then, for the future. And as we look forward to the grave uncertainties that lie before us, we should not be too confident—save as our confidence is placed in God. We have had remarkable successes, we may meet with sad reverses, too. There is enough, certainly, in the posture of affairs to render us very hopeful: let us be also prayerful.







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