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1861



Reliance on God, our Hope of Victory.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON THE

DAY OF FASTING AND PRAYER,

SEPTEMBER 26th, 1861.

BY REV. W. R. GORDON, D.D.,

PASTOR OF THE REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, SCHRAALENBURGH, N. J.

BY REQUEST.

NEW-YORK:

JOHN A. GRAY, PRINTER, STEREOTYPYER, AND BINDER,

FIRE-PROOF BUILDINGS,

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## RELIANCE ON GOD, OUR HOPE OF VICTORY.

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ISAIAH 8 : 11, 12.

“ For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying : Say ye not, A Confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A Confederacy ; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid.”

WHEN the Hebrew people had become so distracted by political strife, as to split up among themselves into factions and contending parties, the result was a series of civil wars that kept them in a whirlpool of national troubles for many years. Two kingdoms had at length been established, known as the kingdom of Judah, embracing two tribes, and the kingdom of Israel, composed of ten, who had revolted, when their sorest difficulties became sources of mutual and bitter vexation. In the Old Testament, the principal events of these wars are briefly noticed ; but the messages sent them from God on political affairs, by his prophets, are recorded more at large.

The circumstances giving rise to the text, are briefly these. The King of Israel conspired with the King of Syria to overthrow the King of Judah, and overrun Jerusalem. This occasioned great fear among the Jews, and prompted their leaders to seek a similar combination of forces with the Assyrian Power, lest their enemies might prevail. There was, moreover, known to be a number of the men of Judah secretly in favor of

the enemy, who encouraged them by the report, that a large body of such men existed all in readiness to aid the confederacy against Judah ; and this additional trouble so discouraged the King of Judah, that he and his counselors were the more desirous to associate with them the Assyrian armies ; that they might successfully resist this wicked confederacy, formed to subjugate their country and take their capitol.

In this state of things, God sent Isaiah to Ahaz, King of Judah, to assure him that the confederacy should not succeed ; and also to rebuke him for seeking aid from Assyria, an insulting distrust of God. In connection with his message, the prophet thus pours out derision upon this confederacy : " Associate yourselves, O ye people ! and ye shall be broken in pieces ; and give ear, all ye of far countries, gird yourselves, and ye shall be broken in pieces. Take counsel together, and it shall come to naught ; speak the word, and it shall not stand, for God is with us." Then, turning to his own people, he assured them that God had instructed him not to walk in the way of some of them, who would turn Judah from reliance on Him, persuading them to look to Assyria, and that God had inspired him to proclaim to them this : " Say ye not, A Confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A Confederacy ; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid." That is, listen not to those who would persuade you to treason against God and the country, by trusting to a device similar to that of the ten tribes. To all them, to whom traitors say, A Confederacy with Assyria, say ye not, A Confederacy ; forbid it. Tell them not to fear the terrible front of the Confederacy made by the King of Israel, nor be afraid of this combined power.

Such appears to be the meaning of the text ; and I



have chosen it because of similarity of circumstances between the government of Judah resisting the encroachments of a Confederacy contrived by the revolted tribes, and our own Federal Government resisting the encroachments of a Confederacy of revolted States in our Union ; and also to show, that our hope of success, justified by the righteousness of our cause, must be placed in reliance upon the Lord of Hosts.

Under the trying circumstances of this amazing conflict, we are called upon to invoke the aid of the Almighty, who holds all circumstances and all successes in his own hand. In the beginning of this trouble, President Buchanan issued a proclamation to the people, inviting them to the specific duty of fasting and prayer. As loyal subjects, we gladly obeyed. President Lincoln has repeated the invitation, and as loyal subjects, we again gladly obey. As for the course I take in conducting the exercises of the pulpit on these occasions, I act in obedience to my own sense of duty. I feel myself now bound to speak pointedly on the subject of absorbing interest which is brought this day, by our highest national authority, before the Church.

The Church of Jesus Christ in this land has enjoyed protection and peace, from the beginning of our national Government. She has been allowed to pursue her appropriate work, not only without hindrance, but with all the encouragement she needs. In turn, the government and interests of the nation have grown up compactly into a mighty power, invested with an acknowledged commanding importance among the nations of the earth, largely owing to the prevalence of Christianized public sentiment, to which she is indebted for moral excellence and national efficiency. This country, we repeat, is peculiarly indebted to the Church of

Christ for every thing which may be counted in, as an element of its marvelous prosperity. With our civil government, the Church, in none of her denominational branches, has been connected by the interlacing bands of state policy and ecclesiastical usurpation, yet all that the Church has ever asked she has had—a free, untrammelled scope among men, to instruct, enlighten and save the soul; a fair opportunity to form the moral elements of good citizenship in private character, thus making the subjects of civil government better qualified for their duties to the State, by the force of inwrought Christian principle, and the inculcated activities of Christian practice in all the varied relations of life. The result has been most happy to the spiritual and material interests of our people. Here, for the past eighty years, the blending streams of freedom, prosperity and peace, have irrigated our fair inheritance; the security of private rights, the liberty of conscience in any chosen form of worship, the diffusion of educational benefits, the encouragement of all sorts of agricultural, mechanical and commercial enterprise, the liberal patronage of arts and sciences, and whatever has been invented for the comfort and interest of our people, or for the benefit of the world, have met with approbation and aid for the utmost good. Here the spiritual enterprises of the Church have been carried on in various forms, largely influencing our inhabitants to the attainments of the better citizen; while the State, on the other hand, has upheld the Church by a strong, moral sentiment, and a disposition to favor her institutions, and encourage every denominational effort, put forth within the acknowledged legitimate sphere of her operation. Thus Church and State in our land, are more intimately and more fittingly bound together

than in any other ; not by the unnatural constraints of legal union in civil and ecclesiastical policy, but by the various strands of love twisted into a cable, which holds all the earthly hopes and loyal hearts of our people together, just as a noble ship is held to her anchor in some sweetly becalmed and beautiful harbor of peace.

It is not, therefore, to be expected that the voice of the Christian pulpit can remain silent, either willingly or by constraint, when by any combination of circumstances, this happy state of things is imperiled. Such silence would be base ingratitude, an unseemly want of sympathy, a criminal indifference to the dearest earthly interests of Church as well as State ; it would be treason to all acknowledged obligation of individual responsibility, it would contradict the uniform practice of prophets and apostles, and the uniform inculcations of holy writ. The General Synod of our Church has loudly and fitly spoken, so have other and larger bodies ; but multitudes of churches connected with these various bodies, have sent forth their individual utterances long since, and up to the present time. You will bear me witness, that I have not discussed any subject of state policy, nor any political question of the day in this pulpit. Through the course of my ministry hitherto, I have never done so, simply because I preferred always to give preference and prominence to higher themes on the Sabbath day ; and hence my references to civil matters have been rare, and only incidental at that ; but the time has come, when the example of the Church in the revolutionary days of our Republic will be, and ought to be followed. Whenever the State, in her distress, looks to the Church for moral and religious succor, she shall have it ; and I suppose that every man will be generous enough to allow that no minister

ought to forfeit his respect, by acting from motives of personal advantage to be gained through any tortuous policy. At all events, as a minister, I am responsible to God, and not to man, as to the duties of my calling; and this fact must always prevent me from being intimidated, or coaxed out of that course which my own convictions designate as my line of duty.

The State paper which has invited the millions of our Union men to the unanimous observance of a day of fasting and prayer, has probably been read by you all. In obedience to its suggestions, we have assembled to ask and implore Almighty God to bring our beloved country out of her present conflict un mutilated, and to crown the efforts of the present Administration to prevent its dismemberment, with success. Here allow me to say, that the question which now upheaves the heart of the nation, is not a political question. He who asserts the contrary, does not know what politics mean. It is purely a question of patriotism. Party politics has nothing to do with it, as is evident from the fact that all good and loyal men of all parties have buried their political differences, for the present, out of sight, and have united in the common cry: "Our country, our Constitution and our laws." Patriotism is not only an instinct of the human heart, not only one of the channels through which human love rolls its constant tide, but it is a part of our religion, for that requires us to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, as honestly as to render unto God the things that are God's. And I believe that a man who, from any consideration, would be a traitor to his country, would by that fact become a traitor to his God; for God has made men the subjects of civil government, and their political duties he has prescribed in plain, direct, and

imperative language: "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers, for there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation." This was Paul's politics; the politics of no party, but the politics of general principles that lie at the bottom of all governments; and this, moreover, is the politics he instructed ministers to preach. "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, showing all meekness unto all men." So Peter taught. "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well." Now, if such were the directions to Christians under heathen governments, how much more are they binding upon the subjects of a government whose policy and laws are regulated by the principles of the Gospel! Therefore, I repeat the general truth, that disloyalty to one's country is disloyalty to God.

This is the crime of high treason that covers and saturates the whole of our Southern Confederacy, as I shall prove; and as the text is a divine proclamation against treason, it is a guide to the pulpit in our expositions of the duties we owe to the State and Government under which we live. The Apostle declares, that "Magistrates are for the *punishment* of evil-doers," whether their number be small or great; and if it be proved that such is the character of those now in arms against the most beneficent government that the light of heaven ever shone upon, as numbers do not give re-

spectability to crime, it follows, beyond all cavil, that the civil war in which we are engaged is, upon the part of the Government, a war of resistance to traitors, and a war of defense against treason. Such being its character, it is a righteous war; one in which we are warranted to rely upon God for aid, and one in the behalf of whose success public fasting and prayer are eminently proper. But if, on the other hand, as rebels say, it is a war of aggression, a war of spoliation, a war prompted by the lust of conquest, whose end is the destruction of Southern rights, then our fasting and prayer are offensive in the sight of Heaven, and our armies ought to be routed and slain. In the present critical position of our national affairs, no man can be neutral and guiltless, any more than he can be indifferent with regard to right and wrong. Therefore, the morality of this question brings it fairly and fully within the province of the pulpit for discussion; and further, as we are responsible to God for the opinions we form, and the side we espouse, it is of the last importance that we avail ourselves of all the light we can get, to aid us in gaining right conclusions. With this view, we proceed to prove that our cause is *just*; by arguments that seem to us infallibly sure.

War, and especially civil war, is one of the greatest scourges that can afflict any people. It brings every thing with it that can intensify suffering and distress; a malignant evil that eats into the vitals of the body politic; therefore, nothing is clearer than this truth, it should never be resorted to, even in the defense of asserted rights, until all other available means for rectification have failed. No discerning mind will dispute this, for it is a truth of simple intelligence, admitting of no supportable contradiction. We repeat, in no case

ought war to be begun, until every other means has been exhausted for the redress sought by the complaining party, even if the complaint be well founded, the injuries palpable, and the proof clear. Then, and not till then, is it proper to appeal to arms. But a war of *defense* is to be regarded differently. When an attack is meditated, or where hostilities have already commenced, duty is clear; as in the case mentioned in sacred history to which our text refers. A vigorous defense must be made, if duty be done. This is so plain, it will bear no comment.

The question, then, with us to-day is simply this: Is the character of this lamentable war such as will clearly justify us to seek the aid of God in behalf of our arms, by fasting and prayer? May we rely upon His help, if we depend on that alone, for victory — as did the King of Judah in his defensive war against the confederacy of the revolted tribes? We reply, YES; without hesitation, YES; after candidly looking on the other side in search of a single respectable apology for its beginning or continuance, that will bear sifting. What are the facts in the case?

Peace, prosperity, and happiness, like the sunshine, for a long series of years, have covered our magnificent country. Suddenly the sound of *secession* falls upon the public ear. In a few months several States, to our amazement, revolt. They profess to have resumed their State sovereignty, and to have *seceded* from the Union. They construct a rival Federal Government. They take our Constitution, and alter it to suit their purposes. They organize a large army. They take possession of the property of the Union. They plunder one of its mints. They refuse to pay their debts to the Northern States, amounting to hundreds of millions. Their

President issues letters of marque and reprisal to privateers to prey upon our commerce, and to capture our vessels, and to confiscate the property of Northern citizens. They announce their intention to take the Capital, and oust the lawful Government! Each of these acts is a declaration of war; but to put the matter beyond dispute, they fire upon our flag, and reduce a fort by rebel batteries. These outrages follow in quick succession, and for months, are borne with in the hope that reason would surmount the madness.

To meet this stupendous rebellion, in obedience to his oath of office, and his imperative, constitutionally prescribed duty as President, Mr. Lincoln has called upon the Northern States for armies to suppress it, and for every available means to put down organized treason, whose magnitude and audacity have appalled the country. At first blush, the world of common-sense would say, this outbreak is the overt crime of an unholy armament of treason; and this war a defensive war, a righteous governmental measure to overthrow and crush rebellion. Such is my belief, and I proceed to assign my reasons.

I. *This war was commenced as a war of aggression upon the Federal Government, by rebellious States leagued in treason;* AND COMMENCED IN CRIMINAL HASTE.

Whatever the complaints of the South against the North, just or unjust; whatever their injuries, real or imaginary; besides being constitutionally bound, they were, in all senses of Christian principle, honor, duty, and loyalty, bound to attempt a settlement before inaugurating civil war, the worst evil that can befall any people. Had the unanimous voice of the South been



fairly obtained for secession, which was not the case, they were bound first to draw up a bill of grievances, and submit it to Congress, or to a convention of States demanded, and upon this bill ask for a peaceable separation. Had they taken this preliminary step, and had been refused a hearing, and a fair chance to gain a peaceful division of the country, then it would have been time enough to assert the untenable doctrine of secession; then it would have been soon enough to have taken by violence the forts, and arsenals, and navy yard, and other property of the Federal Government, which in no sense belonged to them, and appropriate the same to their own use; then it would have been early enough to have denied that Government its constitutional right to carry provisions to a beleaguered garrison of starving men on its own soil, located there with no intent to invade, or in any manner interfere with the rights or immunities of the South; then it would have been soon enough to have fired the first gun, by which they opened the horrid atrocities of a war, they well knew would bring all manner of evil upon the whole country. This they were imperatively bound to make the initiatory step, because the rights of the South are just as amply protected by the Constitution as those of the North; and on all hands, conceded to be as much entitled to defense by the entire force of the Federal Government. If, in their judgment, these rights, or any of them, had been invaded by any one or more States, or by any law inimical to their interests, they had their remedy as aforesaid; and if that had failed, then there would have been some show of reason for commencing this war against that Government, with the avowed purpose to destroy it.

But they did not make such a bill, nor attempt this appeal, because such was not their intention; for their leaders, acting as conspirators, long ago began this secession movement in the dark, as we shall presently prove; they ventured, in the outset, upon the boldest treason that the world has ever seen, before the last Administration went out of power; and without submitting their alleged grievances to any deliberative body, immediately flew to arms, as we now know, according to *preconcerted* plans, without any justifiable reason at all. Reasons, good and strong, they indeed professed to have, and to put forth, now and then; but none knew better than these leaders, that it would not do to venture them into the ordeal of discussion in a convention of States, or even to submit them to the votes of their own people unterrified; none knew better than themselves, that they should most miserably fail to sustain them, in the face of historic fact, incapable of being gainsaid. This was the cause of their precipitate and criminal rashness. They did not want any thing but *secession*, no matter what interests outside their own might be imperiled. A calm and fair discussion, in all probability would have been fatal to the scheme, and therefore they would not hazard it, but rushed their States into treason and armed hostility. This, too, was contrary to the advice of one of their most enlightened statesmen, who discouraged, and well nigh denounced this movement, as utterly unwarrantable and suicidal. The Vice-President of our Southern Confederacy, before he became the subject of such circumambient glory, made a most urgent appeal *against* secession, in the Hall of the House of Representatives, in Georgia, on the fourteenth of last November, a part of which I quote to prove that the South shall be condemned out of her own mouth:

“By the law of nations,” said Mr. Stephens, “we are bound, before proceeding to violent measures, to set forth our grievances before the offending Government, to give them an opportunity to redress the wrong. Has our State done this? I think not. Suppose it were Great Britain that had violated some compact of agreement with the General Government, what would be first done? In that case, our Minister would be directed, in the first instance, to bring the matter to the attention of that Government, or a commissioner would be sent to that country to open negotiations with her, ask for redress, and it would only be after argument and reason had been exhausted in vain, that we should take the last resort of nations. That would be the course towards a foreign government, and towards a member of this confederacy, I would recommend the same course. Let us not, therefore, act hastily in this matter. Let your Committee on the State of the Republic make a bill of grievances; let it be sent to those faithless States, and if reason and argument shall be tried in vain, all shall fail to induce them to return to their constitutional obligations, I would be for retaliatory measures. This mode of resistance in the Union, is in our power. It might be effectual, and if not, in the last resort, we would be justified in the eyes of nations, not only in separating from them, but in using force.”

Thanks to Mr. Stephens for that speech, made only two and a half months before he was dignified as the Vice-President of a Confederacy, which, by his own showing, can never be accepted as honorable in the eyes of the world; because the only course which could bring over their guilty heads a shadow of an excuse upon moral or legal grounds, for a disruption of this Union, the leaders of Southern affairs failed to pursue;

not by accident but by design: and each of them, equally with Mr. Stephens, saw that this course was the only right one; but because it was full of peril to their nefarious scheme, they refused to follow it.

It is remarkable what great changes are wrought in some men's reasoning powers by vaulting into office. When Mr. Stephens became "Vice-President" of our great Southern Confederacy, he made another speech, in his own State, of a very different character; yet in that, speaking of the "Old Government," he distinctly says: "The President seems to think that he can not recognize our independence, *nor can he, with and by the advice of the Senate do so. The Constitution makes no such provision.*" Again, thanks for this admission, in which the author utters what every Southern politician knows to be true. Now put alongside of these opinions of "Vice-President" Stephens, the official oath of President Lincoln; the constitutional rights of the Federal Government; its definition of treason long accepted by the South; and finally the imperative duty of self-preservation, the voice of "the first law of nature;" and we affirm you have come to the end of the argument. This Rebellion is as wanton and wicked, as it is destitute of the semblance of justice, and indefensible by reason and conscience. And when it added outrage to insult, by opening its stolen cannon upon us, it forced the war upon the General Government as an unavoidable measure, and as a war of defense, which there was no honorable, no justifiable means of escaping. We are therefore plunged into civil war, against the will of the North, and against the will of the General Government. We can not help ourselves. There is but one way in which we can move, and that is, onward vigorously to crush out this Rebellion by force of

arms; for by their own showing the seceded States are rebels, and it is both morally and legally wrong to treat with rebels in the attitude of hostility, and under the guilt of a breach of faith like this, of more than ordinary foulness. Therefore we are justified in seeking aid from Almighty God by fasting and prayer.

II. Another reason we assign for the truth of our position is this: *The war now forced upon us is the work of tyranny combined with treason.*

Legislatures and conventions are servants, not masters of the people; and whenever they attempt to *force* the people by intimidating measures, they become tyrants as well as traitors. Such is the bad eminence of these Southern bodies. Whatever may be thought of their competency to originate, it is manifest they can not *consummate* secession. No ordinance to that effect, if valid at all, can be constitutionally valid without its being first fairly submitted to the votes of the people; for as they alone have the power to create, so they alone have the power to dissolve forms of government. Now this matter of secession has not at all been given to the Southern people for their decision, except, perhaps, in one instance of a single State. This is a fact too well known to be successfully denied; hence these legislatures and conventions, assuming tyrannical power, were traitors to their own State governments no less than to the Federal Government; and having overawed and overridden the people, their constituents, they have stamped this whole movement as a wicked Rebellion, without any relief even from the plea of State sovereignty—a doctrine a thousand times exploded. Just a word on this.

No State of this Union can be *sovereign*, beyond the

limited sphere of *reserved* rights. But secession is not a reserved right. It is not found in the Constitution. It could not have a place there, because one object of the formation of that instrument was to *exclude* it, and this was the great improvement upon the old Articles of Confederation. Besides, no government can be supposed to provide for its own dissolution; the thing is absurd. This assumed right of secession is accordingly hooted at by the judgment of the world. No statesman, no man of enlightened views, ever ventured his reputation by attempting to vindicate it, until our Southern citizens found it a convenient pretext, in the absence of sound reason, to justify their consummate wickedness. Every president, every cabinet, every party, at one time or other in our national history, has disclaimed it as a political absurdity too gross for grave defense.

But even on the supposition that secession is a reserved State right, because the act was not done by the voluntary popular vote of the South, it is null and void by this default alone. Nor can this position be rebutted by the plea that secession was not opposed by the people, since many and reiterated complaints were made all over the South on account of the usurpation. One of the protests of Southern loyalists, at a popular meeting in Alabama, before secession was urged upon that State, will serve as a sample of the bold, outspoken voice of a part of the Southern press and people, when it could not be entirely smothered. "Secession," they resolved, "is inexpedient and unnecessary, and we are opposed to it in any form, and the more so since a majority of the slave States have refused to go out, either by what is called 'Southern coöperation' or 'precipitate secession,' and that *the re-*

*fusai to submit the so-called secession ordinance to the decision of the people is an outrage upon our rights and liberty, and manifests a spirit of assumption, unfairness, and dictatorship."*

I am responsible for the facts I give you ; and had I time, I could quote many, going to show that the refusal to have this business intrusted to the people was a wide-spread matter of complaint, and only to be accounted for by the fears of their leaders that this just measure would be likely to result in defeat. Secession is therefore not only unlawful in itself, but having been precipitately urged against the will of a large portion of our Southern citizens, was carried over their heads by violent and unlawful means. Such being the case, no one should fail to see that it is treasonable and criminal to the last degree of wickedness ; and that the Federal Government could not do otherwise than use every effort to suppress it, without being utterly faithless to the high end of its own creation. Therefore, the justness of our cause is the ground of our hope, that the aid of God will be granted us in answer to prayer.

III. Another reason for the support of our position is found in the fact that *this war was justified to our Southern people by the grossest hypocrisy on the part of their leaders.*

The reasons assigned for the outbreak just at this time, are utterly without foundation. Ask secessionists, "Why is the South now in arms against the North, and against the Federal Government?" You will find the answers to be as various as they are unsatisfactory. In general terms, we are told, it is "for the defense of Southern rights." But what are these? Every seces-

sionist speaks of them, but not one defines them. Their language is vague, because their perceptions and notions are variable. What are *the* Southern rights? Do they converge in the general legal right to maintain slavery unmolested and unimpaired in the States that have it established by law? If so, then no one disputes that right. Although heart and soul opposed to American slavery, I do not dispute it. It is their *constitutional* right; and it has neither been denied nor invaded by any State of the Union; nor is it denied or threatened by the present Administration. This and all other State rights are secured to them by the Federal Government, while they are loyal to the Union; and if need be, must be protected by the arm of the nation's power. And to give every possible assurance, beyond which demand can not go, this right was affirmed and offered to be made perpetual by the last Congress, by the enactment of an amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing it forever.

Do they assert Southern rights to be comprehensive of the right to take slaves into all the territories of the United States? If so, they have that right. The Supreme Court, a few years ago, decided that the citizens of the slave States can, at will, take their slaves with them any where into all the territories of the United States; and this decision, whatever may be thought of it, has never been resisted; and the right claimed is, at this hour, the law of the land; and the whole power of the government is pledged to maintain it, dislike it who will. Congress, at its last session, organized three new territories, and not a syllable of restriction upon the transportation of slave-property into either of them is found. Notwithstanding the outcry of insincerity, there is not a territory of the



United States where the slaveholder may not go with his slaves, and all of them very well know it.

Do they mean by Southern rights the right to recover fugitive slaves from the free States? If so, all obstruction is virtually taken away. With respect to complaints made on this head, Congress and the Northern States have made all the concessions they could make for the sake of peace. Just look at the history of the past. The South wanted a more stringent fugitive slave law in 1850, and she got it. She complained of the Missouri Compromise, and although mainly brought about by Southern politicians, after thirty-four years of agreement to its provisions, on becoming dissatisfied, it was repealed by Congress to gratify her. She wanted a legal decision upon the territory question, in her favor, and the Supreme Court of the United States on one of the side issues made in the "Dred Scott Decision," pronounced an opinion agreeably to her wish. This decision she insisted should be carried out in the formation of new territories, and it was done at the very last session of Congress. She also wanted a stronger guarantee against possible amendments to the Constitution prejudicial to the slave interest, and it was given. She demanded the repeal of State laws obstructing the surrender of fugitive slaves; and even after this revolt had commenced, these laws were, for the sake of peace, repealed. There is, therefore, not left the shadow of a reason for their violence and outrage; and the clearly proved duty of the Federal Government to put down this Rebellion by force of arms is beyond dispute; and strong is our encouragement to seek the aid of God for success, by fasting and prayer.

IV. The last reason I shall assign for the truth of our position is, and must be forever conclusive. *This*

*war is the ripened fruit of an old conspiracy—a conspiracy, by Southern politicians, twenty-five years old.*

None of the reasons which I have named, put forth at first, for the delusion of the South by its leaders, was ever meant to be a valid reason at all; and now that secession, as they suppose, is an accomplished fact, they boldly admit their duplicity, though not in words to that effect. They now tell the country that such were not the reasons at all, but something else! They admit the fact that this secession movement has long been in progress, that the scheme has long been concocting, that efforts in this direction have long been made, and that the late change of Administration was seized upon simply as a favorable occurrence to consummate their project. Now for the proof. Let us go back a little.

In the South-Carolina Legislature of 1850, the following significant language was used by her statesmen:

Mr. Lyles said, speaking of the remedy for alleged evils: "The remedy is the union of the South and *the formation of a Southern Confederacy*. The friends of the Southern movement in the other States look to the action of South-Carolina; and he would make the issue in a reasonable time, and the only way to do so was by *secession*. There would be no concert among the Southern States *until a blow was struck*."

Mr. Sullivan said: "He thought there never would be a union of the South, until this State *strikes the blow* and makes the issue."

Mr. Richardson said: "We have no alternative left, *but to come out of the Government*."

Mr. Preston said: "He was opposed to calling a convention, because he thought it would impede the action of this State on the questions now before the country. *He thought it would impede our progress towards dis-*

union." "He had adopted the course he had taken on these weighty matters simply and entirely *with the view of hastening the dissolution of the Union.*"

Mr. Keitt said: "He would sustain the bill for electing delegates to a Southern Congress, because he thought it *would bring about a more speedy dissolution of the Union.*"

These outspoken, treasonable sentiments, mind you, were uttered in 1850. Eleven years after, (1861,) in a "Sovereign Convention" assembled at South-Carolina, the revelation of the conspiracy, as running far back in the past, is more definite; and the falsity of their popular reasons more distinctly admitted.

Mr. Parker said: "The public mind is now made up to the great occasion that now awaits us. *It is no spasmodic effort that has suddenly come upon us, but it has been gradually culminating for a long series of years, until at last it has come to that point when we may say the matter is entirely right.*"

Mr. Inglis said: "*Most of us have had this matter under consideration for the last twenty years, and I presume we have by this time arrived at a decision upon the subject.*"

Mr. Keitt said: "*I have been engaged in this movement ever since I entered political life.*"

Mr. Rhett said: "*The secession of South-Carolina is not an event of a day. IT IS NOT ANY THING PRODUCED BY MR. LINCOLN'S ELECTION, OR BY NON-EXECUTION OF THE FUGITIVE SLAVE LAW. IT HAS BEEN A MATTER WHICH HAS BEEN GATHERING HEAD FOR THIRTY YEARS.*" "The point upon which I differ from my friend is this: he says he thought it expedient for us to put this great question before the world upon this simple matter of wrongs on the question of slavery, and that question turned upon the Fugitive Slave Law. Now, in regard

to the Fugitive Slave Law, I myself doubted its constitutionality, and I doubted it on the floor of the Senate." Shame on the traitors !

These are precious expositions of the duplicity of the leaders who beguiled the people by persuading them that the election of a "sectional President," and other false reasons I have mentioned, should precipitate secession, otherwise they were ruined. And they give force to an article published in the *Richmond Enquirer*, a leading oracle of the South, in 1856, which says: "From the attempt at nullification by South-Carolina in 1832, which was defeated by the stern determination of Gen. Jackson, the design has been secretly cherished by a knot of conspirators at the South, of destroying the Union whenever the men entertaining this design should no longer be able to control the Government. So long as they could enjoy its honors and emoluments, and use its prestige, its treasury, its armory and its navy, for their own purposes, they were content that it should stand; but the moment these were wrested from their grasp by the will of the people, that moment the Union was to be destroyed."

Mr. Everett, not a Southern politician, but cognizant of their plans, declares that he was "well aware, partly from facts within his personal knowledge, that leading Southern politicians had for thirty years been resolved to break up the Union as soon as they ceased to control the Government, and that the Slavery question was but a pretext to keep up agitation and rally the South." Agreeably to this statement, when the "Ordinance of Secession" was passed in South-Carolina, Mr. Gregg said: "*We have now accomplished the work, after forty years*"!

In 1836, twenty-five years ago, a political novel, a

copy of which I have, was published by Beverley Tucker, a Professor in William and Mary's College, and a bosom friend of John C. Calhoun, called "The Partisan Leader: a History of the Future." The dress of the novel was simply to save its author from the penalty of treason. Dated a score of years ahead, it describes the Southern States in a grand simultaneous movement of secession, issuing in complete success. This event, described as then happening, it was thus covertly predicted, would happen. It goes on to unfold an imaginative programme of a grand Southern revolt, and certainly the plan of the campaign, mapped out in 1836, has been closely followed in 1861!

These are the evidences, and more might be given, that the present Secession movement is the bursting of the shell of a foul conspiracy a quarter of a century in its progress. And although we have been blind to the fact, now that the missile has burst, we can easily trace out the connections and meaning of past Southern measures. Secession was the controlling idea that shaped all their plans during this length of time; and notwithstanding, by the advantages of the Federal Government, the Southern States have grown in prosperity, and have gained the power they now so flatulently display, it was their design to expend it in the completed ruin of their political saviour. Baser ingratitude, viler villainy, grosser treason never sickened the human heart. Therefore, by every principle of righteousness, this war, upon the part of our Government, is a just war. It ought and must be urged, until every head of this Southern Hydra is crushed.

As I have already said, politics have nothing to do with this question. It is entirely a question of patriotism, a question of "country, or no country," a question of our continued republican existence. Let this Govern-

ment be fairly broken up, it can never be reconstructed. We shall then sink into the imbecility of helpless weakness resulting from dismemberment. By the consolidating power of a Federal Government, in whose constitution the political heresy of secession is not found, we have grown up a mighty country, commanding the respect of the world; but only let this execrable conspiracy succeed, and the very map of our national territory will show that all the prosperity, dignity and glory over which our good old flag yet waves, shall forever depart. Where is there a true patriot that will consent to this terrible disaster? Where is there a man among us so destitute of generous impulse, so lost to the happiness, hopes and political prospects of his own children, that can wish to outlive this dire calamity? Where is there one so hopelessly blighted in the attributes of manhood, as to bid God speed to this hateful treason? Surely it would be quite impertinent to prove that our country is worth preserving. Here our fathers lived and labored and died. Here their graves are kept green by the careful hands of filial affection. Here are all our earthly hopes, and shall we let this noblest of all Republics perish, founded by the wisdom and cemented by the blood of noble sires? Shall we consent to throw away the blessed inheritance given us by the God of nations, a land of happy homes and Christian privileges, the like of which the world has never seen? No, perish the thought! No, rather let death seal my eyes, than that they should be open for an hour upon the dismemberment of my country. If she must perish, let me perish with her. Then let this war go on. It is a holy cause, it is, on our part, a war in defense of law and order; a war not of aggression, but of preservation; a war not of invasion, but of resistance to

intensified wrong; a war for the perpetuity of invaluable blessings which God has given us to *protect* as well as to enjoy. I know no North, no South, no East, no West; the Union of all is the pledge of our country's continuance, and the severance of either the knell of her political destruction. If, then, Southern madness decrees that we must have war, with all its afflictions, as the price of preserving the Union, then let it come. We accept it, and appeal to God for his aid.

When I look back but one brief year, and think of the extending prosperity and prospective abundance which covered our dear country, like the dew-drops of morn glistening to the sun; when I think of our America, the home of liberty, blessed by the lips of mankind, honored by the vote of the world, thrust down into this unexpected tribulation; her gallant sons slain in battle; her tears of mourning and woe wrung out upon every hearth-stone; prostration and distraction marring and wasting her substance; anxiety and apprehended dangers destroying individual peace, and tearing up by the roots social comforts, and casting a horrid gloom, like the pall of death, over her people from ocean to ocean; when I think that all this misery is the work of two or three scores of heartless traitors, whose wretched motive springs from disappointed ambition, and whose diabolical effort is to cut their way through, by the sword of civil war, to seats of power, and places of eminence which they have not the virtue or moral worth otherwise to gain, I can not but look upon their thickening guilt like that of Judas Iscariot going forth, with his traitorous band, in the hour of night, to extinguish the beneficent career of the Saviour of men. I look upon them with unspeakable loathing, as the worst of all bad men that have ever

cursed the world. May Heaven forgive them, while the Government shall be able to punish them to the full measure of their deserts.

But, then, we are told, in the most pitiful whine of hypocrisy, that the Federal Government has itself opened this unnatural war. The sage Commissioners, whom rebels in arms had the impudence to send to Mr. Buchanan, to treat for *their* portion of the common property, speaking of the noble Anderson, said: "He abandoned his position, spiked his guns, burned his gun-carriages, made preparations for the destruction of his post, and withdrew under cover of the night, to a safer position. This was war." Will any one expect common sense to reply to such imbecility as this? What an absurdity! An Anti-Administration meeting in Kentucky, by a unanimous resolution, has spoken the real truth in these words: "*The Confederate States by overt acts have commenced war with the United States.*" That is the fact, die-sunk into treason's brow of brass. A more atrocious calumny was never uttered, so plainly apparent, that it is not worth a formal denial. The wholesale plunder of the public property, and the stolen guns of the South roaring against Sumter, opened this war; and, as we have seen, such was the *design* from the beginning. Nay, SECESSION IS WAR; and history will forever settle that matter.

By the evidence produced, I think I have now clearly proved, that we are fully justified in calling upon God for success in this great national struggle. However righteous our cause, the spirit of the text forbids us to place confidence in army or navy, but in the power of the Almighty, who holds in his hand the destinies of all nations.

But, oh! the fearful thought! It may be that on

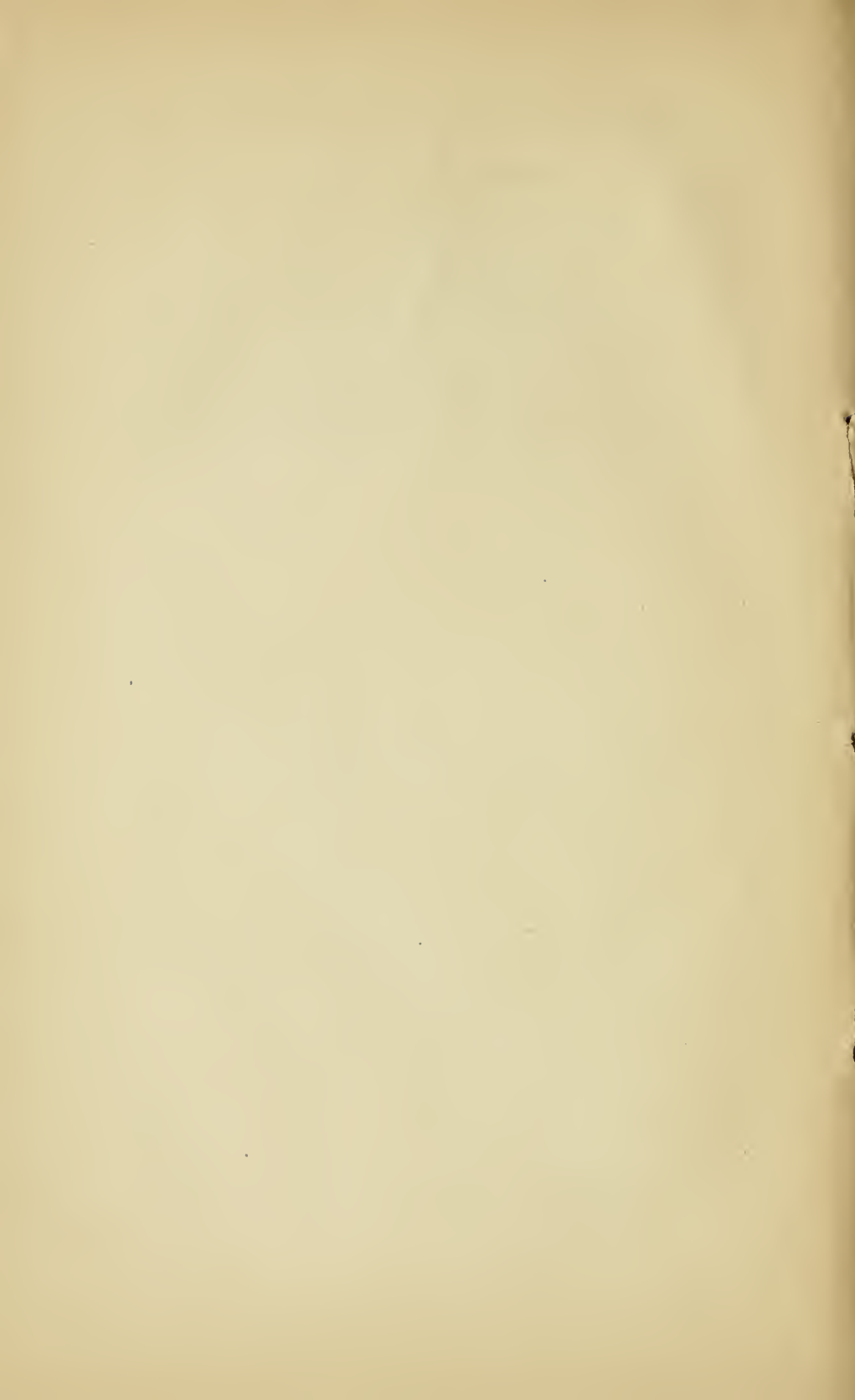


account of our national sins, and abounding wickedness, God in his providence may be implacable, because base ingratitude has used distinguished mercies as circumstances favorable to the increase of vice. Such has been the case in ages past, when the mightiest monuments of human pride have fallen, and God has thereby shown that the wicked shall be punished by the wicked. Therefore, should our infatuated enemies triumph, that fact would be no proof that they are right, and we wrong, in this lamentable conflict. Egypt enslaved Israel. Nebuchadnezzar triumphed over Judea. Russia blotted Poland out of the map of Europe. Might does not make right. This war is a scourge for our nation in the hand of God, and likely it will be well laid on. Be it so, if He sees fit; we have deserved punishment. But God has much people here, whose is a rational hope, that he will, in wrath, remember mercy. That the people may humble themselves under an afflictive sense of our great provocations and sins, our President has appointed this day for fasting and prayer; that it may please God to pardon our iniquities, and, for the good of the world, to spare our hitherto happy land; and to give success to our arms in quelling a monstrous rebellion; to help us to quench the devouring flames of treason, and to destroy the plans of perjured treachery, whose aim seems to be, to put an extinguisher upon the world's last candle of hope—Republican Freedom.

Let us, then, devote this entire day religiously to patriotism, to private and family prayer, in behalf of our dear country, now staggering under the shocks of civil war. Our duty is not exhausted by attending this service. Let each one for himself bewail his own sins, and his country's sins, earnestly beseeching God, for

Christ's sake, that our Administration may soon succeed in breaking the heart of this rebellion ; and that our dear old flag—God bless it—may continue to wave over every hamlet in our land ; its stars on the blue, truly representing an unbroken family of States, divinely upheld in the political heavens, like the planets of our system, enlightened and preserved by the great central sun of truth ; and its stripes, the perpetual reminder of an old proverb : “Stripes for the backs of fools.”







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