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A SERMON

DELIVERED BY

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PASTOR OF ST. JAMES' CHURCH, CONCORD, N. C.,

JUNE 13, 1861.

Day of Humiliation and Prayer,

AS PER APPOINTMENT

OF

THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES
OF AMERICA.

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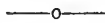
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SERMON.



“And Abraham said unto Lot, let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.” Gen. xiii: 8, 9.

In obedience to a Proclamation of the President of the Southern Confederacy, setting apart this day, as one of humiliation and prayer, we are assembled to humble ourselves before Almighty God. The clarion of war has been sounded in our once peaceful land, and the cry now is—to arms, to arms! Every where may be seen troops marshaling themselves, and making ready for the conflict. It is now mete for us to call upon Him who presides over nations as well as individuals, and devoutly ask Him to guide us through the coming struggle—for, “*If God be for us who can be against us.*” There are but two means, in human power, to prevent strife between individuals and nations, when either feel aggrieved and dissensions have arisen—concession and separation. If concessions cannot be made, then separation must take place, or a collision will inevitably follow. Human nature is so constituted that it will resent a real or supposed wrong.

The text affords us an illustration how men acted many years ago in order to preserve peace. The characters brought to our notice are by no means insignificant, one of them in holy writ, bears the significant appellation of “*Father of the faithful,*” who said to his nephew, “*separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.*” From this, we see that when concession was not practicable, he sought peace in separation. We see nor hear nothing here of sustaining “the Union” and of wild devotion to the “stars and stripes”—surely a word from Abram

would have quelled the strife of the herdsmen, but we hear not a word beyond that of "*separate*."

From the principal laid down in the text, I proceed to the following reflections :

I. *The separation of the slave from the free States should have been done in peace.*

So far as the separation itself is concerned, I look upon that as inevitable, independent of our present troubles—for it is not conceivable that a people so differently educated, and with such antagonistic interests to be served, could, for any considerable time, remain united. We are two people in education and interests, and must be so in government in order to live happy. The protecting Ægis of the same government can never preside over such a heterogenous mass, without showing partiality to one party or the other; then, of course, strife must follow. Nature and nature's God has marked us out for two nations. The people of New England differ from the people of the South as much as do the inhabitants of Old England, with the exception of their being accustomed to monarchy. With these and other considerations :

1. The present war is, of all things, the most unnatural. Reason would direct one of these sections to go to "*the right*" and the other to "*the left*" and make themselves as happy as they could, rather than go to war, and after spending an immense sum of money, and after losing many valuable lives, and suffering great deterioration in morals—have to separate in the end. Better do so now—no good can result from this war that might not have been secured without it; and upon some one rests the responsibility of having inaugurated it—a fearful retribution awaits some one for this unnatural strife. No sane man would make war upon his own family, and he who does so, is a madman, and fit only for bedlam. And yet, such is the nature of the present war, declared by Mr. Lincoln, against the South. It is said that the mother of the wife of his own bosom is in, and in favor of the South, and that he has a brother-in-law serving in the Southern army. The condition of this man is only the exponent of the condition of thousands involved in this unhappy contest, and after the fury of battle is over, and the smoke driven away by the winds of heaven,

may be seen brother, son or father weltering in his own blood—before such a picture, humanity grows pale and turns away in horror. The strife inaugurated by the government, at Washington, is only a repetition of the conduct of Cain on an enlarged scale, and may we not expect God to put His mark upon it, as He did on Cain.

2. Civilization and christianity demand a peaceful separation. In the latter half of the nineteenth century—after the human mind has made so many brilliant achievements, and thrown an inextinguishable glory and lustre over the arts and sciences unknown to the ancients—how humiliating to see one of the most enlightened nations of the world engage in the hellish purpose of a fratricidal war. Were it not for the deep corruption of the human heart, the present unnatural conflict must remain an enigma forever; that, and that only, affords a satisfactory solution of this fiendish war—and of the appearance of this hydra monster in mid day splendor of civilization. With what consternation would, the intelligence of a war breaking out between England and France, fall upon our ears, and how much greater the alarm, should we hear that one half of England had proclaimed war against the other—we would then conclude the foundation stone of intelligence was giving way, and that the fair tree of knowledge affords no remedy for human grievances. But stop, it is not the one half of England that has proclaimed war against the other—it is war declared against one part of the once U. States by the other—how must this intelligence fall upon the ears of enlightened Europe? Will they not ask, if a nation so renowned for inventive genius—if the land of Washington, Fulton, Morse and Mills, could not have devised a plan of adjusting their national grievances? How all our vaunted pride and boasting of our free institutions must be humbled in the estimation of Europe—the hopes of all true lovers of liberty must begin to wane as they look at the unhappy condition of that country, once known as the home of the oppressed of every land. They may well conclude that the protecting ægis of liberty is about taking its final flight from our once happy country. If the South falls in this struggle, with her fall will go down the cause of liberty on the American continent, and

a military despotism take the place of popular government—the most wretched of all governments. Shall we not hope that the nation, claiming the intelligence and the high regard for the christian religion ours does, will yet fall upon some plan, by which peace may be restored, and the hopes of mankind be revived? If wild fanaticism would give way to sober reason, this could be done—though separated, the olive branch of peace might wave over us. But as it is, the North is frantic with rage—with an apology of a man to occupy the chair of Washington. From this medley no one could expect a rational solution and adjustment of our present troubles. At this moment, I would hail as a God-send the mediation of some of the great European Powers—the North is contending for a shadow—her sceptre has departed from the South, never to return—perhaps if told so by France or England, reason would return to her.

The claims of christianity certainly are very powerful, and should have great bearing in determining our present troubles. This nation is neither Pagan nor Mohamedan—we are a christian people—our enemies make loud pretensions of love for the christian religion—let them now prove their *“faith by their works,”* and as they first proclaimed war, be first to offer peace.

The prosperity of all our religious operations demand a course of this kind—how melancholy to see the cause of Christ crushed by the iron heel of war—the church must bleed at every pore, as this unholy war progresses—congregations be stripped of their members and made food for war—ministers driven from their pulpits for want of support—Colleges and Theological Seminaries shut for want of students, and should this unhappy contest continue long, no human mind can conceive the injury done to religion. This, above all other considerations, should lead our enemies to offer us peace, and us to accept it when offered. We are under no obligations whatever to offer peace, as we only have declared war in self-defense, all the South wants is to be “let alone.”

3. Humanity demands a peaceful separation. From the immense armies that are gathering at different points, and from the scientific improvement in all the implements of war-

fare, as well as the implacable hatred of one party for the other, should a collision of arms occur we may naturally look for great destruction of life. Would it not be well for our enemies to begin to count the cost before any more blood should flow—before this nation is converted into one vast slaughter house. True, we are threatened with “subjugation and extermination,” but when the work shall begin, our antagonists will find the business of extermination rather fatiguing, and very bloody. What folly! what madness to talk so. To subjugate and exterminate ten or eleven millions, when Great Britain could not conquer three millions—remember our enemies have but very little better advantages than Britain had in the Revolution. Still, if this war continues, it must be very bloody—all history proves a civil war the most desperate and destructive to human life. Hence, humanity requires a peaceful separation in order to prevent a waste of blood.

4. The South has given the North no just reason to make war upon her.

The North says the election of Abraham Lincoln, as President of the United States, on the 6th day of November, 1860, by a fanatical party in the North, upon a certain political platform inimical to the South, was not sufficient cause for the South to secede. In answer to this, I say, that the secession of the South, or any part of it—the bombardment of Fort Sumter, under the circumstances, was no just causes for Abraham Lincoln to declare war upon her. I leave the North to settle this question upon the principle of justice to God and man.

To say nothing of ethics, prudence should have induced the North to have made some effort at conciliating the South after the election in last November; but to the everlasting disgrace of the Republican party, when applied to for some guarantee, respecting the rights of the South, they sternly refused all efforts at conciliation. The South then had but one alternative left for safety, and that was in secession, for which act, the North very piously declared war upon her. Now, “we shall see what we shall see.” Had the North, at the proper time, made suitable efforts, this whole trouble might have been avoided—the North still has peace or war in her

own power. I repeat, that the South has not given the North sufficient cause to declare war against her, to leave a Union whose articles of agreement had been violated again and again, without either shame or remorse, and for which there was no redress, surely these violations of the original compact, annulled the agreement, and opened the way for the several States to resume their sovereignty as independent communities, whenever they might think proper to do so.

1. Whenever any contracting party fails to comply with the articles of agreement, the contract becomes null and void, and the contracting parties absolved from their obligations to the agreement. This is precisely the condition of the old government. Because the South wishes to enter into another Confederation with such States as may feel inclined to join for mutual protection—this act, the North considers a *cassus belli*—a cause for war. Now

II. *A peaceable separation of the South from the North would be productive of good to both sections.*

1. The North could carry on her commercial and manufacturing interests. These, in case of a peaceful separation, need suffer no material change, from the fact that they have the cotton mills, and other mechanical establishments for carrying on the various manufacturing purposes. This would be greatly in their favor in case they had consented to a peaceable separation. But, if they persist in this war, the South will manage to take care of herself and of her own interest. They will lose more than they will gain, placing the war upon a commercial footing.

In the event of a peaceable separation, the North would be free from the trouble of slavery, and their *pious* consciences would be free from the sin of slavery. Does not any man know, who knows any thing at all, that if the North was sincere in her negro philanthropy, she would bid the slave States God speed in their separation, instead of making war upon them. Then the North would have a homogeneous government, and in her Congress only have the interests of free States to consult, which would very materially lessen the burthen of legislation.

2. The South, in the meantime, could have carried on her

agricultural pursuits. With a government of her own, conscious of being permitted to manage her own institution in her own way—every resource she could command would be developed—new life and energy would be diffused through all her pursuits. Having a homogeneous government also, which would lessen the burthen of legislation. And another important consideration, a matter known to every man in business, the country would be spared a financial crisis every four years, in the event the slave and free States had a government of their own.

For years past, every Presidential election has been attended with tightness in money matters. This would be removed in case of separate governments, and confidence secured.

If we have been correct in the foregoing remarks, (and we think we have,) what can be the cause of the present policy of the Northern government? We have considered the subject in all its possible bearings; for want of time, confining ourself to the most prominent thoughts, and all indicate a peaceable separation as the best course.

But the secret of all this obstinacy must be looked for in the peculiar character of the people of the North. If you turn to history, you will find that the New England States were originally settled by a peculiar people from England, Scotland and Holland, a rebellious and restless people, always fond of liberty, but most intolerable masters when they had the power. Poor Charles the I, fell a victim to the fury of their ancestors, &c. In America, they raised the hand of religious persecution among the colonies. Strange as it may seem, they who fled from persecution were first to persecute. They have been people of one idea for many years. This, in connection with the annual influx of foreigners, who knew nothing of our institutions, are the causes of our present troubles. And hence the unwillingness to let the South go in peace; rather than do so, they prefer forcing a war upon us with a view of our subjugation.

Our enemies disregard the voice of reason, religion and humanity, and with frenzied madness, threaten to bring ruin upon us. And for what? just because we have ventured to resist the fanatical aggressions of the North—borne by us with

remarkable patience for the last thirty years. Like Abram of old, loving peace, and wishing to remain loyal to God, we have taken the only course recognised by Him for the accomplishment of this object—separation. We wish to leave them for the sake of peace, and for the quiet pursuit of happiness.

Since we have sought peace in separation, war has been declared against us by our enemies. Mighty and terrible armies are being marshaled into the service of the Federal and Confederate governments. With great propriety it may be asked,

III. *Why is this war, and for what are we contending?*

1. The North says it is to maintain the integrity of the government in the preservation of the Union and protection of the American flag. In the inaugural of Mr. Lincoln, he declared his purpose to protect the public property, collect the revenue, and preserve the Union, a policy of all things the most foolhardy, a determination fraught with ruin, and ruin only. From the time of the delivery of his inaugural, Lincoln has seen his cause growing more desperate in the South, but with steady purpose he still pursues his phantom. Immediately after the reduction of Fort Sumter, in Charleston Harbor, war was declared against seven States in the South. This remarkable and arrogant production, induced four more Southern States to withdraw from the Federal compact; in fact the entire South is nearly a unit. This act of the South has exasperated the North beyond measure, who, inflated with pride, and burning with rage, wish and labor for our ruin.

This feeling, no doubt, has been inflamed from the false conception of the true nature of the Constitution of the United States, viewing it as a law consolidating the several States into an inseparable Union; whereas, it is only a mutual compact or covenant, and each State an integral member, having separate laws for its internal regulation. Having violated the constitution again and again without the least compunction of conscience, the North with pious modesty tells us fidelity to the Union requires us to submit to their domination. The Union! the Union! is all that can be heard. The North is now in arms against the South, with a view of coercing her back into an unnatural Union. Ministers of the Gos-

pel are proclaiming loudly for the Union in their sermons—men and women, under the garb of religion, either pure or hypocritical, are lifting their hands in prayer that God may prosper their cause in our reduction and acquiescence to the tyrannical rule of those with whom we have no common sympathy. On the other hand, when we turn to the

2. South, it is her violated rights for which she is contending, as expressed in her separation from the old government. Her policy, as declared by her chief Executive in his inaugural, at Montgomery, is that of peaceable separation, simply “to be let alone;” but if war was forced upon her she would defend herself, nothing more nor less could reasonably be asked or given. Blind and infatuated zeal for the Union, “the whole Union,” has forced her to take up arms against her unnatural enemies in self-defence.

Here we find the same religious regeme as in the North : ministers pray and preach in favor of the South ; pious men and women pray that God may prosper our cause, and protect us from the hand of the destroyer. Now the question naturally arises, who is right in this contest? I unhesitatingly say the South. When aggrieved, and no redress was afforded her under the constitution of the old government for her injured rights, she quietly turned aside without bravadoing any one ; and had she been permitted to remain unmolested, the garlands of peace would still hang from her temples. But these garlands have been torn from her brow by rude hands, and civil war with all its fury and devastation, forced upon her, in order to weaken, intimidate, and force her back into the Union.

3. Force can never unite the two sections ; this is out of the question. A union to be worth any thing, must be a union of love and mutual affection, and not one of force and mutual hatred. We have gone too far for a conciliation, even if conciliation was practicable. The bitter feeling engendered from past wrongs, inflamed by the military display of the present hour and for months past, render it impossible for us to fall upon any satisfactory plan of adjusting our present national troubles. We must separate, there is no human power that can unite us now, our union is *forever* broken ; between the

North and South there is a "*great gulf fixed.*" The known laws of the operations of the human mind forbid any hope of the re-construction of the Federal government in its original integrity.

A popular government, to be perpetual, must respect all sections, and protect the interests of all its citizens. There must be no sectional partiality, for in that case confidence would be lost, bitter feelings excited, and a separation ensue.

The machinery of a popular government is very delicate, and requires to be handled with great care; the least disaffection throws the whole business into confusion, and the damage done beyond repair.

The government of the United States was a popular government, but her legislation was partial, and that produced disaffection, which resulted in separation. This rupture can never be healed, and it is worse than folly to think so. The evil done is immense and past all hope of recovery. Violated confidence and alienated feeling will never return and be as they once were. Our separation is complete. "Come weal or come woe, sink or swim, live or die," the thing is an unalterable fact.

REFLECTIONS.

1. The war has been forced upon us, and from past and present indications, we have reason to believe that it will be conducted with great cruelty. The enemy is now on Southern soil, perpetrating the most heartless barbarities—men have been shot down because they have dared to defend their own property in their own dwellings. The lamented Jackson is one of this number. Inoffending women are subjected to a fate worse than death. The rebellion in India, and the massacre of the christians in Syria by the Druses, alone afford a parallel to the atrocities perpetrated by the soldiers of the North, now in and on the coast of Virginia. The only harm the South has ever done the North, is that of giving the North her trade and shipping, from which they have grown rich, proud and insolent. Now the worst the base ingrates can do is too good for us. The soil of the South has already been stained with the blood of Southern patriots in defense of their rights; this may only be the prelude of that carnage that

must follow a collision between the great armies that slowly and cautiously approach each other.

The man that inaugurated this war has shown himself devoid of all principle of veracity—having violated the most sacred promises. Under the specious and alluring pretense of protecting the public property, he called out military troops. Some of these same troops are now menacing Virginia, and outraging her citizens. The fact is, from the conduct of the Federal soldiers, one would judge them sent to destroy, rather than protect the property of the government.

From the unhappy conduct of Major Anderson, on Sullivan's Island to the present time, we have been given to understand that destruction, as well as protection, is a part of their policy.

As this war has been forced upon us, we should be united in the defense of our homes, property, liberty and all that men count dear in this life. The South is the soil upon which most of us were born; in that same soil rest the bodies of our parents and friends; let us be a unit in defense of these precious relics, and preserve them from the polluting touch of the Northern vandals, from whom every spark of humanity appears to have departed; for those who are guilty of plunder, arson, murder and rape, cannot be very humane. The Union and the American Flag should no longer be possessed with charms for any Southerner, but all should hold them as objects of disgust, because they are polluted by Northern fanaticism, mingled with cruel wrongs. The days of Washington and his compeers are gone forever; still the South may yet fill a bright page in history.

2. There should be but one mind and one voice in the South on this great question, either as our adopted or natural home. Unanimity among those who occupy her soil is absolutely required, in order to secure triumph. We may differ in the manner of resistance, but agree on the subject of resistance itself—that is the great question. A man who would turn against the South now, would deserve the fate of Benedict Arnold, from the fact that opposition can do no good, and would result in harm, and only harm.

In God's name let us meet our opposing foe with a steady arm and determined blow. They proclaimed the war, now let them first offer peace, which they can have by returning to their homes. We will not follow them in the event they leave us in the possession of our rights.

Let us this day lift our hearts devoutly to Almighty God, who presides over men and nations, and pray him to prosper our arms in defense of our rights—that our enemies may be put to confusion, and driven back from our Southern soil.

War is what we may expect in this world—men will trample upon the rights of one another, and human nature will resent a wrong. These are circumstances as certain as cause and effect. When war comes, some one is in the wrong, and a just God will hold the offender responsible for the injury done—an awful retribution must await an ambitious man, who, for selfish purposes, makes war upon an innocent people. I have no hesitation in saying, that the present incumbent of the chair at Washington, has been influenced from motives of ambition and vain glory, and if this country is to be drenched with the blood of human beings, slain in civil war, their blood will be required at his hands and the hands of his party. We should be prepared to meet those who are determined on our subjugation and extermination, and whose motto is “Booty and Beauty,” (if not inscribed upon their banners, is shown by their actions) a more iniquitous and hellish sentiment could not have originated in Pandemonium itself. Before they run over and fulfill this programme, they will find the work of subjugation a herculean task. May we not expect vengeance to fall upon the base violators of innocence and shameless insulters of purity. The long-suffering of God may cause the sulphurous smoke to linger, already exhaling from the fires prepared to consume this modern Sodom, yet the judgment will, and must come; an awful retribution is in store to be dealt out in God's own way at his own time for these vile inhumans. It may be that the North is given over by Heaven to judicial blindness in order that they may be severely scourged. Upon moral and rational principles, I can see no just reason for the North to make war upon us—reason will forbid the war, if she

would be permitted to do her perfect work. No sane man can think seriously of subjugating the South. That is physically impossible. Religion forbids the prosecution of the war—her mission is one of peace. What must be the condition of those who profess to be wise and religious, yet against reason and religion, persist in an unnatural war. God must intend a scourge for them in this contest, and for that purpose, permits the North to rush madly on to her own destruction. In this strife, the North has all to loose and nothing to gain. An immense debt must necessarily be incurred, and in the end fail to bring back the slave States, and be forced to acknowledge their independence. A people determined, as are those of the South, will not be conquered. Our enemies should remember the warning of lord Chatham to the British Parliament: “My lords, you cannot conquer America.” The sequel declared the truth of the assertion of the noble Lord. In the name of God, with our trust in Him for the protection of our cause, we will bear our arms and meet our foes with such means of defense as He has been pleased to give us. At the same time let us pray for our enemies, and do nothing that may unnecessarily provoke them—it may be that reason will return to them, and that they will desist from their unholy purpose.

Something may turn up yet, in a way we think not, under the directing hand of God, by which a speedy termination may be put to the war, and the vast armies now met for mutual slaughter, disband and return to their homes. Should a conflict ensue and this war last—how many brave ones may fall, and how many hearts made sorrowful, and streams of tears, warm with affection, flow, no one can tell. This picture is too affecting to dwell upon—would to God the degenerate, and I must say, cruel and despotic Abram, of Illinois, would say, as the good and benignant Abram of Urr of Chaldea said to his kinsman: “*Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, between my herdmen and thy herdmen, for we are brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me.*” Such a declaration might not fill a page in history of bloody deeds, but it would send the murderous and licentious troops of the North to their

own homes, to gain a living in some way other than that of waging a cruel war upon the South, while at the same time, it would permit the soldiers of the South to return home and enjoy, with their friends, the sweets of peace and the honest pursuits of life.

Shall we not lift up our hands and hearts to God in devout prayer, that a successful and speedy end may be put to this unnatural war. Surely it is a cause deserving our prayers. God is a hearer of prayer. He can do wonders in a way we know not. O! that the Prince of Peace may interpose and dispel the dark clouds gathering over our land, soon to burst in one mighty crash, so loud and terrible, that the thrill will be felt throughout the civilized world, and the shock of which will be felt by unborn millions for years to come. He that said to the stormy winds and raging waves, "*Peace, be still,*" can calm the passions of men. He that sent His angel, and in one night destroyed the powerful army of Senacherib for the deliverance of His people, can rescue us from the hand of the destroyer, if it seem good for Him to do so. Into thy hands O! God, we commit our cause—deliver us from the hand of our enemies.

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