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Smyth, Thomas

The Sin and the Curse.



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THE SIN AND THE CURSE;

OR,

THE UNION, THE TRUE SOURCE OF DISUNION, AND OUR DUTY IN
THE PRESENT CRISIS.

A DISCOURSE

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE

DAY OF HUMILIATION AND PRAYER

APPOINTED BY THE

GOVERNOR OF SOUTH CAROLINA,

ON

NOVEMBER 21ST, 1860,

IN THE

SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, CHARLESTON, S. C.

BY

REV. THOMAS SMYTH, D. D.

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PROCLAMATION.

Whereas, it is proper and becoming a people who acknowledge the hand of God in every event, and bow in reverence to His will, and who desire to imitate the noble example of their forefathers, not only in resistance to oppression and injustice, but in supplication for Divine aid and counsel in this momentous crisis of our country's history, to implore a continuance of His favor and interposition to protect and sustain us in all the trials we may be called upon to undergo, and the dangers to which we may be exposed: Now, therefore, I, WILLIAM H. GIST, Governor of the State of South Carolina, in obedience to a resolution of the General Assembly, appointing WEDNESDAY, the 21st instant, as a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, make this my proclamation, inviting the clergy and people of all denominations in this State, to assemble at their respective places of worship, to implore the direction and blessing of Almighty God in this our hour of difficulty, and to give us *one heart and one mind* to oppose, by all just and proper means, every encroachment upon our rights.

Given under my hand and the seal of the State, at Columbia, on the 13th day of November, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and sixty.

WM. H. GIST.

21401



DISCOURSE.

DANIEL IX, 11, 14—"Yea, all Israel have transgressed thy law, even by departing, that they might not obey thy voice; therefore the curse is poured upon us, and the Lord hath watched upon the evil and brought it upon us."

God is governor among the nations, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the high and mighty ruler of the Universe, doing whatsoever it pleaseth him among the armies of heaven, and the inhabitants of the earth—none, with impunity, daring to stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

This great practical truth is embodied in the wisely worded proclamation of a most seasonable appointment, by the present Governor of South Carolina, His Excellency W. H. Gist, as follows:

"*Whereas*, it is proper and becoming a people who acknowledge the hand of God in every event, and bow in reverence to his will, and who desire to imitate the noble example of their forefathers, not only in resistance to oppression and injustice, but in supplication for divine aid and counsel in this momentous crisis of our country's history, to implore a continuance of his favor and interposition, to protect and sustain us in all the trials we may be called upon to undergo, and the dangers to which we may be exposed. Now, therefore, I, William H. Gist, Governor

of the State of South Carolina, in obedience to a resolution of the General Assembly, appointing Wednesday, the 21st instant, as a day of Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, make this my proclamation, inviting the clergy and people of all denominations in this State, to assemble at their respective places of worship, to implore the direction and blessing of Almighty God in this our hour of difficulty, and to give us *one heart and one mind*, to oppose, by all just and proper means, every encroachment upon our rights."

THIS THEN IS A DAY OF FASTING.

Fasting has been universally adopted by all nations as an expression of consciously-felt sin and sorrow, through which, by the suffering and impoverishment of the body, the mind is led to realize man's helplessness, dependence and want of all things; and the conscience and heart to come in humble contrition before an offended God, under whose judgments they may be suffering, and whose gracious providence alone can either remove them, or in the midst of judgment remember mercy.

THIS IS ALSO A DAY OF HUMILIATION.

This implies calamity, fall and ruin; sin and sorrow; contrition and confession; and the recognition of God, whose righteous indignation has brought all upon us.

BUT THIS IS FURTHER A DAY OF PRAYER.

This implies that God can, and that God alone can, help us, and give us true repentance and unfeigned humiliation; that God, alone, can avert all the evils that might come upon us; impart wisdom to our counselors; and give to all our citizens unity of purpose and plans. It implies that God can influence our sister States—who are alike interested—to stand or fall with us; and cause other States to acknowledge his power and presence in this national calamity, and to do justly, and

act righteously and peaceably before him. It implies, further, that God can, and that God alone can, incline the hearts of foreign nations to recognize our true posture, purposes and plans; and his purposes concerning us; and to fraternize with us. It implies, in short, that God alone can mitigate inevitable disasters and suffering: give us patience and perseverance under all adversities; and secure for us a peaceful, prosperous and happy issue out of all our troubles.

No God-believing and God-fearing mind, can question the sad and melancholy fact that God's curse is poured out upon us, and that the Lord has watched for the evil to bring it upon us. But mark our distinction. This curse is upon the nation, and not upon the constitution: nor upon the union, nor upon the government under that constitution.

That constitution and constitutional compact was, and is, and ever will remain, in all history, and to the end of time, great, glorious and free.

That constitution was found sufficient to produce, perfect, preserve, propagate and prosper these United States in a progressive and ever augmenting greatness, beyond all parallel in the history of the world; and it is sufficient to have sustained that growing development; and to have encircled with a halo of glory, inscribed all over with the stars and stripes, the mightiest nation of the earth, shining more and more resplendent in its greatness and glory.

The constitution of the United States has been admitted, the world over, both by Statesmen and Philosophers of every school, to be an embodiment of wisdom, patriotism, sagacity and prudential foresight and moderation: of sterling good sense; and of religion without restriction upon the full exercise of conscientious differences.

Our fathers signed it amid the solemnities of religion, and in the awful silence of a realized futurity; amid the grim spectres of war, famine and wasting desolations; and in the firm intrepidity of martyrs. Having ratified their signatures with their blood, they bequeathed it, together with the name, character and farewell address of Washington, as a priceless inheritance to their posterity in all future generations: and thus handed down the States, united under that constitution—as a land of promised rest, recompense and great reward, flowing with milk and honey, and under the peculiar patronage and protection of heaven—to all the downcast and downtrodden nations of the earth.

My brethren, that constitution is still our boast and glory, yea our consolation and strength, in this day of disaster and disruption. We love and cherish it still. We love it, even in death. We bow in reverence before the shades of the mighty dead, who stand this day as mourners around the bier on which it lies shrouded in grave clothes, pale in death, and soon to be committed to an untimely and dishonored grave. Our faces, like theirs, gather blackness, and our hearts even bleed within us.

How doth the nation sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow! She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary! She weepeth sore in the night, and her tears are on her cheeks. Among all her lovers, she hath none to comfort her. All her friends have dealt treacherously with her; they are become her enemies.

When I was a child upon my mother's knee, I heard the praises of thee, my adopted country! In my childhood's visions thine image rose proudly magnificent before me, towering aloft to heaven, and spreading thy branches over the seas! Boyhood's sports were jubilant of thee, and

manhood brought with it eager expectations of becoming inseparably thine! Here for thirty years I have heard from every lip, on every festive occasion, the praise of thee! Language was too poor, all analogies too feeble, all pageantry too trivial to adorn thy majestic person, and to illustrate thy fame! The infant lisped it in the cradle, and the child shouted it in his sportive gambols. The boy heralded it in his mimic warfare and oratorical declamation. Men marched to the music of its stirring sounds in gay review, or in the dread and deadly clash of death-giving battle. The bells tolled it. The martial band gave to it the symphony of its most melodious music. It ascended from the pulpit to heaven in grateful thanksgiving and praise; and thence, also, it sounded forth to patriotic hearts in words of counsel, admonition, and prophetic warning. It mingled with the incense which arose from every household. It soared upon the wings of every private prayer; and was breathed forth in thousands of silent or out-bursting ejaculations. It gave softness to the bed of the weary; security and solace to the disheartened; and illumined with joyful exultation the departing hour of him who, with or without any other legacy, could transmit to his children an unimpaired and unparalled political heritage.

And must we take up the lamentation and say, from this glorious constitutional union all the beauty is departed! This nation hath grievously sinned, therefore is she removed. All that honored her despise her, because they have seen her nakedness. Yea, she sigheth and turneth backward. She remembered not her last,—her chief and purposed end,—therefore she came down wonderfully. She had no comforters. For these things I weep. Mine eye, mine eye runneth over with water. Mine eyes do fill with tears. My bowels are troubled for the destruction of

the daughter of my people. How is the gold become dim, and the most fine gold changed! The crown is fallen from our head. Woe unto us, for we have sinned!

My brethren, in this calamity the whole world sympathizes. That sun of liberty, whose rays shone so brightly over every land and sea—which went forth on its mission of glad tidings to the ends of the earth, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race—has gone down while it was yet day. The brightest example of free constitutional self-government, and the last hope of a Republic based on universal equality, liberty, and fraternity, — the cynosure of all nations,—has darkened into a dreadful eclipse, and left a tempestuous sea, to be navigated by foundering barks, without chart, compass or rudder. Woe, woe, woe to the inhabitants of the earth!

To whom, then, and to what, is all this misery and destruction of the hopes of man to be attributed? Not, my brethren, to any one political party, — not to any present political excitement,—not to the recent triumph of sectional pride, and its meddlesome interference with an institution altogether beyond its interests, authority or control, and its traitorous disloyalty to the sovereignty of the constitution, and of Southern as well as Northern States. This is only the result,—the consummation of a tragedy which has been long progressing to its last act,—when the curtain fell upon the dismembered body of the Union.

In the overwhelming mass which, like an avalanche, swept away all existing landmarks and barriers, there was a conglomeration of all possible variety of materials, — atheists, infidels, communists, free-lovers, rationalists, Bible haters, anti-christian levellers, and anarchists, — many of whom had no interests at stake, and no principles to

restrain them within the limits of constitutional truth, justice or propriety.

But beside these, there were a large number of God-fearing and Christ-loving, conscientious people, of whom we must bear the testimony of Paul, that they have a zeal for God, and seek his glory and the good of man, but not according to knowledge.

They pervert the golden rule of our Saviour. That rule was designed not to impart to men the first principles of justice, of right and wrong, but, on the assumption of their existence, to guard us against the perverting and blinding influence of selfishness, pride, passion and prejudice. Interpreted as these people apply it, that rule would lead to absurdity, injustice, or to impossibility; to the overthrow of virtue, chastity, honour, honesty, and all the rights of law, property and power; and instead of requiring us to do to others *only* what, in their circumstances and relations, we would have a *just* and *reasonable* right to expect, in view *both* of *all their* and *our own best interests*, it would require us to do what others desired, though their selfishness should demand the sacrifice of virtue, chastity, property or power. Verily, verily, they have put into the hands of an unrestrained populace a double edged sword, which will yet pierce through their own soul.

They have perverted and prostituted the Bible. They have done this by subjecting it to the private interpretations of men; to the developments of philosophy, falsely so called; to the licentious and atheistic spirit of a liberty which knows no restraint and no authority, human or divine; and, by thus converting the Bible into a law, binding, according to their view of it, upon God and all other men beyond themselves, instead of being an

infallible and unalterable standard of right and wrong, truth and error, of what is to be done, and what is not to be done, and a standard imposed equally and alike upon all men, bond or free, and to add to, or to take from which is alike cursed of God.

They pervert the great doctrines of personal responsibility, liberty of conscience, liberty of thought, liberty of opinion and liberty of action. This they do by requiring all others to adopt as God's truth, that which is believed to be beside and contrary to Scripture; and by assuming that they are responsible for the opinions and conduct of other men, who are, nevertheless, independent of them, and free to will and to perform within their sphere of action, without any other interference than their own conscience, and the word, will and providence of God.

They pervert truth, justice, honor and good faith. This they do by availing themselves of opportunity, under a bond of mutual, written, and strictly limited partnership, to act contrary to the terms of that partnership; to the injury and destruction of their confiding partners; and by attempting, through that violated bond, to coerce unwilling and injured parties to remain and suffer insult and injustice under it.

But, besides these perversions of fundamental principles, these good and well intentioned people are willingly ignorant of, or practically ignore, the prescience and providence of God; the fore-knowledge and fore-ordination by God, of whatsoever cometh to pass, so that not even a sparrow can fall unheeded to the ground, nor a hair of our heads be unnumbered, nor any event happen by chance. They forget that government is from God; that the powers that be are ordained of God; and that we are to be subject to every

ordinance of man, not only from fear, but for conscience sake.

They forget that man and this present world are under the curse of sin; that trial and temptations difficulty and distress enter into the very warp and woof of this present state; that God's judgments are scattered abroad over the earth that its inhabitants may learn righteousness; that God maketh even the wrath and sin of man to praise him, and out of great evils and privations bringeth greater good.

They forget that the condition of slavery has been and is recognized and regulated by God, who first ordained that it should come to pass as a penal infliction upon a guilty race, for the mitigation of greater evils, and for the good of all; that he has twice embodied it in the moral law, and has thus environed it with immutable and eternal sanctions; that men perfect before God, friends of God, and beloved by God, lived under it, ruled over it, and consecrated it with God's blessing, promises and protection; that the Saviour of the world assumed and acknowledged it, and chose from under its polity his apostles, disciples and friends; and that the Scriptures of his inspiration are closed and sealed up from all addition or subtraction—by men of perverse minds who would be wise above that which is written, and wiser than God—with the recognition and regulation of slavery as a civil and domestic institution.

They forget that God is in this whole matter; that *against their most earnest wishes* he brought this institution into these Southern States, where he had prepared a soil, and has provided a seed, whose fruit now supplies food and raiment, with a home and home comforts, for millions of slaves, for millions of masters, and for untold millions in every nation in the whole earth, *themselves included*; while its culture and

climate are healthful to the slave, and fatally hurtful to all others.

They forget that under the fostering care of these Southern States, and of this legally bounded institution, these people have multiplied in a ratio greater than their masters; that they are healthier and happier than any other laboring class on the face of the earth; and that the gospel of Christ preached to these poor, has come to them with more of the power of God, unto their present peace and everlasting blessedness, than the missionary labors of all Christendom, in all the world beside, though greatly blest to great and glorious results, have as yet accomplished.

For all such persons, let us exercise pity, sympathy, and forbearance. "They have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge."

For that large, respectable, and heroic body of conservative and faithful friends, who, like Eddystone lighthouse, have for thirty years stood firm, though alone and in mid-ocean, against the whole force of the winds and waves of boisterous fanaticism, let us cherish gratitude and praise, and erect for them, monuments in the fleshy tablets of our hearts.

And what, then, remains for ourselves? Let us learn and profoundly contemplate that secret seminal principle, which, having been conceived, has brought forth all the iniquity and mischief under which our country lies overwhelmed.

My brethren, I am not here to speak to you as a politician, or as a philosopher. I am here in God's name and stead to point out to you the causes of his anger, the sources of all our past and present dangers, the proper ground for humiliation and repentance, and our present and future course as Christian patriots.

Now, to me, pondering long and profoundly upon the course of events, the evil and bitter root of all our evils is to be found in the infidel, atheistic, French Revolution, Red Republican principle, embodied as an axiomatic seminal principle—not in the Constitution, but in the Declaration of Independence. That seminal principle is this: “We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; and that to secure these rights, governments are instituted by God, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,”* and so on to inevitable consequences.

Now, though God is here introduced, the Declaration is Godless. God is introduced to give dignity and emphasis; to create man, and to ordain government; and then He is banished. The sceptre is torn from his hands, and fictions are substituted for facts.

All men are not born equal, in bodily constitution, size, sex, or capacity; nor in mental faculties and endowments; nor in emotional susceptibilities; nor in moral tastes and judgments; nor in social position; nor in their relations to law and government. The only equality is, that all men are born in sin; children of wrath, even as others; lost, and yet redeemable; and that as society, government, and parentage are all of, and from, God, so do these determine every man's rights, responsibilities and duties, and are to be submitted to, by all men equally and alike, as the ordi-

*Since writing, I find that John Randolph, of Virginia, said, that there was poison hid, from its origin, in the present Constitution of the United States; and being warned beforehand, by the departed voice of this remarkable but able man, let us avoid a like evil in forming our new Constitution.

aries of God, and that, too, not only from necessity, but for conscience's sake.

Now, let us trace the progressive development of this atheistic, revolutionary and anarchic principle.

First, it led to universal suffrage—that is, it put the government of this country into the hands of a majority of many—and in some cases, of multitudes—who were ignorant, unlettered, unacquainted with its principles, altogether uninterested in its course of policy, and restrained by no love of truth, justice, or constitutional order.

As a natural consequence, it followed that majorities should absolutely govern, and should interpret and govern even the Constitution. “The will of majorities,” says Jefferson, “is the vital principle of Republics, and from which there is no appeal, except to force the vital principle of despotism.” “But submission to the will of the majority is *not* a principle of our Federal Government. The one principle of that is, *submission to the Constitution*, and the laws made in conformity with it. Submission to the will of the majority, is the principle of pure, absolute democracy, which our government is not. Our written constitutions are designed for the express purpose of limiting, defining, and regulating the power of the majority. And one solitary citizen, with the constitution on his side, has a right to govern all the rest of the nation, until the constitution is changed according to its own provisions.”

Another consequence of this seminal principle was the interpretation of the Bible according to the majority—that is, according to the popular opinion, and the coercive enforcement of this majority-interpretation as a higher law upon all who differ from it.

The transfer of this principle, with its higher law, to the Constitution as a written bond of union was easy. The

higher law, or in other words, the majority-opinion of the Northern States repudiated the Constitution by antagonistic, nullifying legislation, preparatory to the time now arrived, when a majority of the States have carried out their sectional and anti-constitutional interpretation against the minority; and preparatory to a time progressively not far distant, when, by a two-thirds' majority, the Constitution itself might be adapted to the views of this sectional majority.

A further consequence of this development has been the rejection, by many, of the divine inspiration, and infallible, unalterable authority of the Bible, as the only standard of faith and practice, of right and wrong, of sin and duty. Hence, also, the doctrine of a self-developing morality. If God is the same yesterday, to-day and forever, and the moral law as the standard of what is right and wrong is immutable, then slavery, which God made right, authorized, limited, directed, and imbedded in that moral law, must still remain right, and shall be maintained as long, and so far, and for the purposes, which God by his word and providence points out. But on this higher law principle, a majority of his creatures can decide for God, and against God, that slavery is, in its essential nature, absolutely sinful; further, that it is *so* essentially and *hienously* wicked, that in order to overthrow it, compacts may be broken, and robbery, murder, arson, treason, rebellion and massacre with all the hellish crew of bigotry, hatred, uncharitableness, excommunication, calunmy, opprobrious vituperation, are let loose to devastate and destroy.

And what, we ask, could finally be the result of this higher law—that is, this majority and equality-principle—but anarchy, prodigality, profanity, Sabbath profanation, vice and ungodliness in every monstrous form, and in the

end the corruption and overthrow of the Republic, and the erection, upon its ruins, of an absolute and bloody despotism, of which coercion, or in other words, force, is the vital principle. An anti-slavery Bible must have an anti-slavery God, and then a God anti-law, order, property and morality: that is no God but "THE GOD OF THIS WORLD.*"

Now, my brethren, having become originally partners in this primal sin, we are now, however unwillingly, partakers in the penal curse and consequences, and in all the disastrous results of violated faith, and in the aggressive encroachments of a cruel and crushing majority.

True, you found out your sin and misery,—but too late. Thank God, however, not too late, with his blessing, to repent, reform, return unto him, and be governed by his word, will, and providence.

It is your consolation, that your opponents themselves being judges, you have claimed only that which, by the Constitution, was righteously and equitably yours.† Con-

* At the late infidel convention in New York, a *quondam* preacher moved that it be

"Resolved, That creators are accountable to the created, causes to effects, parents to children, gods to men"!

We find a similar sentiment in Gerrit Smith's recent "Discourse on Bible Civil Government." He says:

"Dr. Cheever sees no hope for freedom, if the Bible shall be given to the side of slavery. But I see no hope for the Bible, if it shall be proved to be for slavery. *Slavery is not to be tried by the Bible, but the Bible by freedom. All the talk that the Bible is the charter of man's rights is nonsense.* His nature is that charter; and his rights are the rights of his nature—no more nor less—every book to the contrary, notwithstanding. The nature of a monkey determines its rights. The nature of a man his."

What a glorious country would this be, with institutions based on the principle that "parents are *accountable* to their children," "causes to effects," "the Bible to freedom," God to man!!

But this identical doctrine of Gerrit Smith is the egg out of which modern abolitionism has been hatched.—*N. Y. Obs.*

† In proof of this, the following deserves preservation and promulgation:

The Newark *Weekly Journal*, of November 6th, contains a speech delivered by Col. JAMES W. WALL, at Beverly, New Jersey.

tributing more than others to the common welfare, you have asked nothing beyond equal rights, privileges, and property in the common domain; the faithful execution of constitutional guarantees; and the free use of God's word, worship, and institutions, unfettered by the party and partial interpretation of equally ignorant and prejudiced fellow men.

And though it may seem an extravagant assertion, it is nevertheless true, that by the peculiar providence of God towards you, to you is given the high and holy keeping, above all other conservators, of the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible; and of that liberty of conscience, free from the doctrines and commandments of men—which is based upon and sustained by the right and duty of every man to search the Scriptures, to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good:—a liberty

“But looking away,” he says, “from the blackest side of this party, this Republican party is aggressive against the South from the very nature of its organization. It arrays itself against fifteen States in this Confederacy, and from its peculiar principles its triumph must be recognized as the triumph of a party whose political faith is founded upon geographical discriminations and distinctions in the Union, against which the good Washington warned his countrymen.” “Modern Republicanism,” says he, “first made its appearance rising like a spectre from amid the ruins of the political earthquake of '52, that first overwhelmed the Whig party. The Free Soil agitation, which was the first wave of the great catastrophe which finally overwhelmed the party, carried with it the seminal principles, out of which this strange and anomalous creation was born. * * * *”

“I know that this bold, confident, and determined enemy in our front, is sneering complacently, and laughing to scorn all these threats of disunion, wrung from our Southern brethren by the fierceness of the persecution they have suffered, that is threatened if the Republican party succeed. And they ask you the question they conceive to be unanswerable, ‘Do you ever hear the North talk about secession? Oh, no, the North is loyal to the Constitution.’ Now, my answer to all this is, the North has never had any provocation; and I defy any man to lay his finger upon a single point in the history of our Congressional legislation, where the South has ever attempted to infringe upon a single guaranteed Constitutional right of the North. But the Congressional page is blistered all over with just such attempts made by the North against the South. And from the first anti-slavery petition in Congress, as early as 1789; through the fierce agitation of the question calmed down by the Missouri Compromise; and during the stormy period when abolition

of conscience drawing after it liberty of thought, opinion, and conduct, individual responsibility, and individual regality as kings and priests unto God—and a liberty of conscience, which has never existed among men severed from the pure, perfect, and unfettered word of God.

Upon this rock let the South build her house, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. God's word obeyed, and God's will followed, will secure for us that Divine succour, which is greater than all that can be against us.

As it regards your political course, I have but a word to say. I am here to speak to you in God's name and for God, and as standing in relation to God.

Now, the voice of the people, it is said, is the voice of God. But, my brethren, this is true only in the sense that it is permitted and overruled by God, and that it may be instrumentally employed by him for evil as well as for good; for destruction as well as for deliverance. For the proverb is equally pregnant, *quem Deus perdat prius dementat*, whom God would destroy, he first dement, or gives up to some mad delusion; making the wrath of man to praise him, and restraining the remainder thereof.

But when there are two lawful ways open for accomplishing some lawful and laudable end, then the united

petitions, insulting to Southern men and their rights, fell in showers upon the House; on through the brief struggle about the Wilmot Proviso; and on to the final and crowning act, the organization of a strictly sectional party, making war upon their rights. Everything in the nature of agitation; everything in the nature of aggression; everything in the nature of insult to Southern men and Southern institutions; everything in the nature of the whispering of rebellion in the ear of the Southern slave, originating in the North. It is this mad Northern fanaticism—this spirit of never-ending, still-beginning aggression, which has served to aggravate and torture with the neuralgia of apprehension, the keen, shrinking, sensitive nerves of the South, and has given rise to all these mutterings of discontent, these threatenings of disunion."

To this ought to be added the late letter and admirably bold truth-loving and truth-telling speeches of Hon. Caleb Cushing.

heart and voice of a whole multitude may be very safely regarded as the voice of God, saying "Go FORWARD."

Now, as there, perhaps, never was a time when the people of South Carolina were more truly of one heart, and that heart an eager, anxious, throbbing heart, so there never was a time when they had more need to call upon God than now.

We want, oh yes, we want the Spirit to be poured out from on high, as a spirit of wisdom and grace, upon the counsellors who shall be called to guide our ship of State through that Scylla and Charybdis, which, with syren voice of song, or the roar of terrific breakers, endanger our inevitable course.

We want, oh yes, we want Him, who has said, "counsel is mine and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes learn justice." We want this mighty God to appear for our help.

We want the Spirit of God to come as an enlightener and reprove, to show to us as a people our sins and our transgressions.

We want that there should be such an acknowledgment of past error, such searching out of present tampering with evil, such putting away of the accursed thing, that as a people we may plead the promise, (2 Chron. xvi. 9,) "the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him."

A great and mighty king of old, raised up by God to be an instrument for the accomplishment of His own purposes with reference to his people, Israel, was afterwards deprived of reason for seven years, and sent to eat grass with the beasts of the fields, that *he* might know, and that it might be written for *our* learning, "that the Most High

ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whom he will." Now, God, my brethren, is now just what he was then, and in words we all acknowledge it. We call him King of kings and Lord of lords. But, oh! the secret and evil root of unbelief which lurks in many a heart. And with the *words*, God and God's providence on our lips, how prone are our hearts to be secretly leaning on an arm of flesh, on chariots and horsemen, on counsellors and measures rather than on the living God.

Oh how solemn is the warning, "Thus saith the Lord, Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, that maketh flesh his arm, and in his heart departeth from the Lord." Jer. xvii, 5.

But it is said in busy, clamorous reiteration, we want this thing and that thing, and then all will go on prosperously. I will answer thee—"God is greater than man," and if man acknowledge it not, God must make him feel it, for "my glory I will not give to another, saith the Lord of hosts."

Surely, we have had some experience that "boasting is not good," and that there is one mightier than man, before whose providence all the might, wisdom and wrath of man melt away like smoke beneath the sun, or wood within the fire. "Arise," ye people, "and call upon thy God, for the Lord he is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting King; at his wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide his indignation." (Jer. x, 10.)

But we also require a sincere, practical belief that God hears and answers prayer. Consider how appropriately God teaches us this truth. Behold Moses and Aaron, seated on a hill, at the foot of which Israel, in her weakness, contends with Amalek in his mightiness and pride.

His hand is lifted up to God in acknowledgment that the battle is his, and that by prayer his people shall prevail. The flesh is weary and his hand falls by his side, and behold how, in a moment, the tide of victory turns against Israel, and Amalek prevails. But Aaron and Hur are there, the true deliverers of Israel. And how do they deliver them? They lift up his fallen hands and hold them up, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side; and his hands were steady until the going down of the sun.

Brethren, look on this picture and believe it. Believe God's own declaration, that united, believing prayer must prevail. How many are the passages in the history of Israel—search them out and ponder and pray over them—in which the prayer—"neither knew we what to do; but our eyes were upon thee, O God,"—brought deliverance.

Away! away, then! get it behind thee as from Satan! oh miserable delusion, that prayer is the resource of inaction, timidity and weakness. It is the weakness of "the worn Jacob," engaging in his behalf the strength of the omnipotent Jehovah. It is the timidity of one who fears none but God; and who acknowledges that it is God who must "put the fear of us and the dread of us upon the nations that are under the whole heavens." It is seeking to secure *before* activity, and *in it*, that which can make every movement tell, and every effort mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. Arise, then, ye people, and call upon thy God; for he has said, "and it shall come to pass, that before they call I shall answer, and while they are yet speaking, I will hear."

But to do this, we want, my brethren, a praying heart. And how shall we get this want supplied? We answer, by PERSONAL humiliation and PERSONAL faith. It is to

general humiliation and faith that we are now called. And oh, what a glorious opportunity is now afforded to the people of South Carolina to acknowledge, before all the world, that "God is her refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble;" and that relying upon him—his word, his will, his providence and his protection—she "will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though the waters thereof roar and be troubled; though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early. The heathen raged, and the kingdoms were moved; he uttered his voice, and the earth melted. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

But still it is individuals who make up a congregation and a commonwealth, and it is only by individual confession and humiliation, it can come before God. And does not the example of Daniel, when his people were in captivity in Babylon, show us that it is the holiest men in a nation who most humbly acknowledge and bewail national and general sins. See him in his closet and on his knees, with face towards the temple, and his hands and heart towards God. Hear him, as the Holy Spirit has given vocal utterance to his prayers, and his Father who heard them in secret, and rewarded openly, has rehearsed them unto us. "We have sinned and committed iniquity." "Oh, Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, and to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee."

Without some such personal sense of sin and humiliation, we cannot fast right, nor can we humble ourselves aright. We cannot draw nigh fervently and with a pure

heart, with holiness and confidence, unto him who has said, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite heart, and that trembleth at my word." Oh, seek, brethren—each for himself apart, and each family apart—seek this spirit for yourself, for this church, for this community, and for our beloved commonwealth.

But to individual humiliation, we must add individual faith. The one great hindrance to faith—to faith in prayer, and to believing, prayerful humiliation—is guilt upon the conscience.

This is what separates between us and God. This is the dead weight which sinks our hearts to earth, when they would rise to heaven; clouds the soul with fear; and benumbs and paralyzes the energies of conscience which if at peace with God, would impart concentration of power to the will, the understanding, and the heart.

Oh, what a blessed day, then, might this become to each one of you if it leads you to search out and discover the reason why *you* find it so hard to believe, to pray, to expect and to confide; if it leads you to see your need of an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; to rely upon his blood which cleanseth from all sin; and thus to find peace in your own soul towards God. Then would you become in deed and in truth, one of your country's best benefactors and defenders, and that, too, although incapable by sex or age for any public or active service in the field, or in the forum—because you would become one of the "Lord's remembrancers," "the worm Jacob" wrestling with God, and prevailing with him to bless us and to do us good, by turning every one of us from our sins to our Saviour, and by sending his invisible and invincible chariot and horsemen, to defend and to deliver us. Then would the voice from heaven cry, and when I ask what

shall I cry, the response is, "Cry unto to her that her warfare is accomplished, her iniquity pardoned," and that though a little one she shall become a thousand, and that though one of the least among the tribes of Israel, she shall become great.

And do I not hear a responsive voice from every heart in this congregation and commonwealth, saying, "I WILL ARISE AND GO TO MY FATHER?"

ARISE AND GO, and thy Father who seeth in secret shall reward thee openly in such untold blessings upon yourself, and upon all the people of South Carolina, so that you shall be able to say to any one who is faint-hearted, and ready to fly from it in this day of darkness and tribulation, in the language of holy Rutherford, in one of Scotland's darkest and bloodiest days, when he himself was privily doomed to death, and when a friend proposed to leave the country, "Let me entreat you to be far from the thought of leaving this land; I see it, and find it, that the Lord hath covered the whole land with a cloud in his anger: but though I have been tempted to the like, I had rather be in Scotland beside angry Jesus Christ, than in any Eden or garden of the earth."

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