

“The good hand of our God upon us.”

A

THANKSGIVING SERMON,

PREACHED ON OCCASION OF

THE VICTORY OF MANASSAS,

JULY 21st, 1861,

IN THE

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NORFOLK, VA.,

BY

REV. GEO. D. ARMSTRONG, D. D., PASTOR.

NORFOLK, VA.,
PUBLISHED BY J. D. GHISELIN, JR.,
No. 6 WEST MAIN STREET.
1861.

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AUGUST, 1861.

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S E R M O N .

"The Lord is my strength and my song, and He is become my salvation : He is my God, and I will prepare Him a habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name."—EXODUS xv, 2, 3.

On receiving official intelligence of our recent victory at Manassas, the Congress of these Confederate States unanimously

Resolved, That we recognize the Most High God, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, in the glorious victory with which He has crowned our arms at Manassas, and that the people of the Confederate States are invited, by appropriate services on the ensuing Sabbath, to offer up their united thanksgiving and praise for this mighty deliverance."

In the first published official account of the first important battle of this war, the battle of Bethel, Brigadier-General Hill concludes with the words: "Our Heavenly Father has wonderfully interposed to shield our heads in the day of battle. Unto His name be all the praise for our success." There is a heartiness in the recognition of God's "good hand" in these words, which make this dispatch unlike any other official dispatch from a battle field I have ever read.

I have seen three private letters, from three of our soldiers, written on the battle field at Manassas, in every one of which there is the distinct recognition of God's good providence in that battle, and this, though not one of the three is a professor of religion. "It is with feelings of joy, and thanks to Almighty God that I am still alive, I write you these lines," are the words of one. "I was knocked senseless, and they trampled all over me before I was carried off the field: but I am safe now, I thank God for that," are the words of another. The third, who fainted from exhaustion near the close of the battle, and recovered his consciousness to find himself in an ambulance with the dead and wounded, writes: "God must have watched over and protected me, for, surely, I was in the very jaws of death."

These facts, and others of similar import, which I might

mention did it seem necessary, show that the impression is wide-spread, if not universal, among our people that God, even the God of our fathers, is with us in the contest in which we are engaged. The wide extent of such an impression as this, though not conclusive, is strong presumptive proof that it is founded in truth; and what I purpose on the present occasion is—

To place a statement of the Christian Doctrine of Divine Providence, and certain facts in the history of this second "war of independence" side by side; that we may see just what foundation there is for this impression; and, consequently, what call there is upon us to render thanksgiving to God to-day. If it is right that we should repeat Moses' song of thanksgiving, of which the text forms a part, let us sing that song "with the heart and with the understanding."

In fulfilment of this design, I remark—

1. The Scriptures teach us that God does exercise a providential control over the seasons, rendering them propitious or adverse to the designs of men.

To this, as a doctrine universally believed among the heathen, as well as taught in Scripture, Paul appeals in his words: "Nevertheless He (*i. e.* God) left not Himself without witness, in that He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." Acts xiv, 17.

At the time this present contest first began to appear to us all inevitable, our necessities as a people seemed to require peculiarities in the season almost impossible of fulfilment. Abundant crops, especially of grain, were necessary, and, to secure these, there must be "rain from heaven." Defences were to be erected, an army was to be gathered, and equipped, and disciplined, and brought into the field; and, for this end, we needed fair weather; more especially, in view of the fact that many of our troops must be put into the field without a proper supply of tents to shelter them there.

How wonderfully God's "good hand has been upon us" in this matter appears in the result. This year, we have not had the constant succession of rains which we are accustomed to speak of as "the long, wet season in May," and yet God has "given us rain from heaven" enough to secure us what is admitted on all hands to be the most abundant grain crop ever gathered in the Southern States. Our barns are full. We have enough and to spare. And we have had so much fair weather that our defences have progressed with sufficient rapidity to secure all important points against the attacks of the invader. And we have been enabled to gather, and discipline, and bring into the field a military force which has given to the largest and best equipped army that has ever been gathered in this Western world a defeat, of which an eye-wit-

ness, and one competent to express an opinion, says: "History records no such defeat for the past century—no rout so utter and complete as that of the federal forces at Manassas." (Mr. Russell, as reported in the "Baltimore Exchange.")

Surely, for this season, so strangely propitious to us, we should render thanksgiving to God to-day.

II. The Scriptures teach us that God does exercise a providential control over all that immediately concerns the preservation, or cutting short of human life: It is His hand that guides, and His power that controls "the destruction that wasteth at noon-day" as well as "the pestilence that walketh in darkness."

"Thou (God) turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return ye children of men." Ps. xc, 3. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your father. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows." Matt. x, 29, 31.

From the battle field of Bethel. Brigadier-General Hill wrote: "Our Heavenly Father has wonderfully interposed to shield our heads in the day of battle." In that battle, in which some thirteen hundred of our men were opposed to four or five thousand of the enemy, during a battle of several hours, we lost not one killed, but one mortally wounded (Wyatt died after the battle was over), and seven or eight slightly wounded, whilst the enemy lost so many that they have never been willing to publish the official account of their loss, but, judging from what I have heard and read from persons in the battle, and in the neighborhood for several days after the battle, I should say not less than five hundred in killed and wounded—probably more.

In all the attacks which have been made upon our batteries about Norfolk, on the south side of James' river, including the several attacks upon Sewell's Point, Pig's Point and Day's Neck, together with the firing from the Quaker City upon private houses, and at our cavalry on the bay shore, and the firing from the great rifle cannon at Fortress Calhoun, not one of our men, thus far, has been killed or seriously wounded. How many of the enemy have been killed I know not, but, taking their own published statements of their own case, they can show no such record as ours.

From the recent battle at Manassas, in which those best informed on the subject estimate the force actively engaged on our side at fifteen thousand, whilst the invading force actively engaged amounted to thirty-five thousand, we have not yet learned definitely the number killed and wounded on either side; but, after having seen several private letters from persons in the battle, and conversed with some who have returned from the battle field in the last few days, as well as read carefully the published accounts of the engagement, I do not hesi-

tate to express the opinion that where our loss is numbered by hundreds, the loss of the enemy will be numbered by thousands.

And such has been, in general, the result in the battles of this war; with the single exception of the reverse to our arms in the engagement at Laurel Hill—a reverse inconsiderable in its consequences, since the enemy has not been able to cross the mountains; a reverse to be remembered only because of the death of the gallant Gen. Garnett and a few of his brave companions in arms who met death at his side.

Compare this with the history of the brilliant campaign of Napoleon III, in Italy, the summer before the last—and I select this campaign because the same differences characterize the parties engaged, which are sometimes cited to explain the unequal loss in the present conflict:—the French, from natural disposition and previous habits of life, were better soldiers than the Austrians, and they certainly were led on by better commanders. They conquered: and yet, in the decisive battles of Magenta and Solferino, the loss of the French was almost as great as that of the Austrians.

Why is our case so different? I can give no explanation of the fact but that contained in the words of General Hill: “Our Heavenly Father has wonderfully interposed to shield our heads in the day of battle.” To Him let us render the thanksgiving due to-day.

III. “The right man in the right place,” such as the great and good Washington, in the days which tried our fathers, is to be regarded as a gift of God to a people.

“God is judge; He putteth down one and setteth up another.” Ps. lxxv, 7. “By me kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth.” Prov. viii, 15, 16. Of Cyrus, God says, by the mouth of Isaiah, “For Jacob, my servant’s sake, and Israel, mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name; I have summoned thee, though thou hast not known me.” Isai. xlv, 4.

Do I not express the thoughts of your hearts, my hearers, when I say, surely, “God’s good hand has been upon us” in giving to us the men who to-day guide our councils and lead our armies?

The leaders of our armies, by their admirable generalship, have already secured the enthusiastic confidence of their troops and made for themselves a name in history.

The members of our Confederate Congress have exhibited a statesmanship and a pure and lofty patriotism which, in all coming time, will associate their memory with that of the fathers of our first revolution. Who of us is there that would not be shocked—I do not say, surprised; but *shocked*—at the bare proposition to appoint among them a Committee, such as has recently been appointed in the Federal Congress, to inves-

tigate alleged abuses of power and peculations upon the treasury, and frauds by members of their own body and others in power?

Of our President I will say nothing but to remind you of what recently occurred at Manassas. When, after many hours of hard fighting, Davis appeared upon the field, it is said that "men who lay there wounded, bleeding and exhausted, waved their caps as they lay, and cheered him as he passed; and where their ranks had been broken, and the men were somewhat scattered, when they saw the President of the South in their midst, they shouted, they would follow him to the death, and rallied once more for the last and successful onslaught." Call to mind now the character of our army, made up, as it is, from all classes of our community—our fathers—our husbands—our sons—our brothers—the very flower of our Southern people—and I can conceive of no more emphatic declaration than this, that, in the judgment of the people, our President is "the right man in the right place."

A few months ago, when the storm which has now broken upon us began to gather thick and dark o'er our heads, many of us exclaimed—O, for such men to guide our councils as the fathers of our first revolution—O, for another Washington. God has been better to us than our fears:—And for our rulers, let us render thanksgiving to Him to-day.

IV. Courage, such as lies at the foundation of patriotism, as well as Christian heroism, the Scriptures teach us, is a gift of God.

"Give us help from trouble: for vain is the help of man. Through God we shall do *valiantly*; for he it is that shall tread down our enemies." Ps. lx, 11, 12. "Blessed be the Lord my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight. My *goodness* and my fortress; my high tower and my deliverer; my shield, and He in whom I trust." Ps. cxliv, 1, 2. "And now Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants that with all *boldness* they may speak thy words." Acts iv, 29.

Attempting an analysis of human courage, with an eye to its immediate origin, I would say—

1. There is courage (understanding the word in its common, comprehensive acceptation) which is the immediate result of peculiarities of mental and physical constitution. Insensibility to sudden or *living* impressions of any kind, strong nerves and unbroken bodily health, enable some men to encounter danger unmoved. Such men, we say, are naturally bold.

Courage of this kind, though not courage of the highest type, is yet something to be thankful for: and is as evidently the gift of God, as is the unbroken bodily health upon which, in part, it depends.

2. There is also a courage which has its immediate origin

in the strong working of evil passions in the breast of man, such as lust, avarice, revenge. And the Scriptures teach us that an influence "from beneath" often mingles itself with the evil passions of the wicked heart in giving to such courage unwonted vigor. Such is the courage which sometimes renders the midnight robber, the assassin, the pirate, utterly insensible to danger.

The influence "from beneath" which mingles with man's evil passions in giving vigor to such courage as this, is exerted through the agency of lying suggestions as to the value and possibility of obtaining the thing coveted, and constitutes what, in Scripture, is termed a temptation of the devil. Hence it is that the men who exhibit most of this courage are to be found among the vicious and abandoned. Would you enlist them for an army? Go to the dram shops and other sinks of iniquity in our large cities and inscribe upon the banner under which you would muster them, some such motto as "booty and beauty."

Such courage as this is often desperate, it is generally cruel, it is always uncertain. Men inspired with it may sometimes fight a bloody battle—they are always liable to causeless panic and sudden rout.

3. There is a courage, which is courage of a higher type than either of these. It has its immediate origin in the better passions of the human soul, such as indignation at wrong, admiration of justice, love of country, love of kindred, love of truth, love of God, all invigorated by conscience—that master power in the human soul.

In courage such as this there is often mingled, with the better passions of the soul, the Scriptures teach us, an influence from above, causing this courage to take on the form of "more than mortal heroism:" an influence exerted, when God's service is concerned, through the agency of revealed truth, and hence often and truly spoken of as the influence of Christian faith. Such is the courage which has sometimes enabled feeble woman to brave the terrors of the rack, and even to sing a song of triumph whilst burning at the stake. Such is the courage of the true patriot and Christian warrior, often frail in body and timid in natural disposition, yet, on the battle field, keeping even pace with him of iron nerve, ready "to do or die."

Among those who, throughout the protracted battle of Manassas, stood firm under the deadly storm hurled upon them from musket and cannon and howitzer, were some personally known to me, whose heroism I can account for in no other way than by tracing it to courage of this last mentioned kind; and letters which I have seen from them, disclosing their thoughts and feelings while the battle raged, have served to confirm this belief. And here, in God's house to-day, I say, thanks be to God for much of that courage which enabled our

fifteen thousand to turn back the thirty-five thousand of the invading force.

V. God, in his providence, when men oppose themselves to His righteous will, often so blinds their judgment and confounds their counsels, that by their own acts they precipitate their overthrow.

Hence David, when sore pressed by those who, without cause, were his enemies, prays: "O my God, make haste for my help. Let them be confounded that are adversaries to my soul; let them be covered with reproach and dishonor who seek my hurt." Ps. lxxi, 12, 13. The general belief of God's exercising His providence in this way is expressed in the oft-quoted Latin maxim, "*Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat.*"

Does the history of the present contest give us reason to believe that God's providence has been thus working for us? Six months ago the people of the Confederate States were a thoroughly divided people. A large majority in Virginia—and the same is true of the other border slave States—were fixed in purpose to maintain the old Union. When in February last we elected a Convention, we elected to it Union men by an aggregate majority of sixty thousand.

In the course of ninety days all is changed. With a unanimity such as was never witnessed in the time of our first revolution, eleven States, embracing one-third of the population, and covering nearly one-half the territory of the old Union, declared themselves independent of that Union, and, confederating together, pledged to each other "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor," to maintain that independence at every cost and at all hazards.

The reality of this change President Lincoln and those who sympathize with him have persistently denied—affirming that the action of the several Confederate States is not a fair expression of the sentiments of their people, but a result accomplished by an active and imperious minority; and thus have they endeavored to make this great mass movement of the South to appear in the eyes of the world a rebellion and not a revolution, and to affix to those engaged in it the stigma of rebel and traitor.

The truth with respect to this matter must ultimately appear, but it is of great importance to us that it may be made to appear speedily, in order that we may have that sympathy from all who love constitutional freedom throughout the world, to which we are fairly entitled. As if smitten with blindness from God, our very reviler has been made to furnish the refutation of his own charges, in his call for an army of 500,000 men and 400,000,000 dollars "to suppress the rebellion." A rebellion in one section of a country, such as ours, which requires 500,000 men and 400,000,000 dollars to be furnished by another section for its suppression, is an absurdity such as the

very schoolboy will laugh at when the excitement of the present times shall have passed away—an absurdity too gross to impose upon any foreign people whose sympathy is worth the having.

The causes of this great change in the sentiments of the Southern people, and, consequently, in their position with respect to the old Union, are briefly these:

In God's providence we have a dependent race among us, sustaining peculiar relations to the governing race. The character and position of this dependent race is such that its safety, its very existence, as well as the well-being of ourselves and children, require that the absolute control of all matters concerning it shall be left entirely in the hands of our Southern people. On the 4th of January, the day observed as a day of fasting and prayer, upon recommendation of the late and the last President of the old Union, I said to you I did not see how we, as honest, Christian men, could answer to God for our act, did we surrender one iota of this control; and I said this, not in arguing the question at issue with the North, but as giving expression to your views and feelings respecting the matter.

That this exclusive control of our own institution and our own people was intended to be secured to us by the Constitution of the old Union; and that the slaveholding States were intended to have an equal *status* and equal rights with the so-called free States under that Constitution; and, further, that the Constitution fairly interpreted does secure these to us, no honest man can deny. That they have been sought to be wrested from us by a party at the North, controlled by men, some infidel in sentiment, others fanatical in religion, and others still unscrupulous in their pursuit of place and power, is well known to the world. In such circumstances, our duty to ourselves, as well as our duty to this dependent race, required that we should demand certain alterations in the letter of the Constitution—not alterations in its spirit and intent, but alterations in its letter, such as would place its intent beyond all question. On these points the people of the Confederate States have been of one mind from the beginning.

Most of us honestly believed that the North, when the question was fairly presented, would accede to our demands, so evidently righteous in themselves; or, if not, would consent to our peaceable separation from them. Others, as the result proves, forming a juster estimate of the purposes and power of the dominant party in the free States, did not sympathize with us in this belief, and hence the division which at first appeared among us. Some of the Southern States took steps for a peremptory withdrawal from the Union as soon as the accession to power of the Republican party, by a purely sectional

and a minority vote too, was rendered certain; others refused to take this step, and remained in the Union, making effort after effort to secure their rights, but defeated in every one. So unwilling were we to open our eyes to an unpleasant truth that, even after Congress adjourned, having refused every offer of compromise, we yet held fast to the hope of an adjustment, and were a divided people.

The attempt of the present federal administration to reinforce Forts Sumter and Pickens, and the call for an army of seventy-five thousand men, to assemble in Washington, in whose midst the South must meet the North and settle the differences between them, made "the scales to fall" from all eyes. In the light with which our heavens were ablaze when yonder navy yard was abandoned in flames, even the dullest of vision could read the inscription written with the finger of God upon the old Union, "TEKEL, thou art weighed in the balances and found wanting."

Thus, through the madness of the Washington government, our divided people became at once thoroughly united, and, as the victory at Manassas has proved, united in time effectually to secure the rights and liberties bequeathed to us by our fathers.

Had the federal administration pursued a wise, or even a prudent course after the withdrawal of the eleven Confederate States, some might have been found among us who, with proper constitutional guarantees first obtained, would have been willing to see the Union reconstructed—so great is the influence of old associations over human opinions and human conduct; and thus division, a second time, might have been introduced into our ranks. But now, when the mad acts of last April have been followed by repeated infractions of the Constitution on the part of the executive, "such as," it has been truly said, "would have cost any English king, during the last three hundred years, his head," and Congress, instead of impeaching the perjured usurper, has set its seal of approbation thereto. Now, when the purpose has been openly avowed in the Federal Senate Chamber to reduce these Southern States, and among them, four of the original thirteen who fought the battles of our first revolution, to the condition of territories, to be ruled over by governors and judges sent from the North, and none is found to rise and rebuke the foul treason—treason to constitutional liberty—treason to humanity—treason to God. Now, surely, no man can entertain the thought of reunion under the proffer of constitutional guarantees from the North. Such constitutional guarantees—what can they be but the dishonored notes of the bankrupt, the deceitful promises of the convicted perjurer? Should a thought of trusting to them enter for a moment any mind, methinks our very dead would start up

from their graves upon the bloody battle fields of Rich Mountain and Manassas, and rebuke the folly.

Thus, through "the good hand of God upon us," in making mad our enemies, we stand this day a thoroughly united people, with none feeble of purpose in all our hosts; and the foul aspersion attempted to be cast upon our fair fame in calling us "covenant-breakers, traitors, rebels," recoils upon its authors. For this let us thank God as we stand here in His house to-day.

VI. Men instinctively acknowledge God's hand in events which are out of the ordinary course of things, and beyond human control, and Scripture history abundantly testifies to the truth of this belief.

In the late battle at Manassas, ought we not to regard the arrival of General Kirby Smith, with his division, upon the field, at the critical moment when the fortunes of the day seemed hanging as "in an even balance," as a special providence on our behalf? Had his division arrived at an earlier hour, its accession must have proved of far less service than it did. Had it arrived at a later hour, it would, in all probability, have found our troops driven off the battle field, or else maintaining their ground at a sacrifice of life which would have made many a Southern home a house of mourning. But, arriving at the critical moment, it decided the fortunes of the day—the battle was won—"the glorious victory" of Manassas was ours.

The arrival of this division upon the field at just the time at which it did arrive, was determined, in part, by an accident to the train which bore it, we are told. An *accident* differs from a *providence* in this, that it is an event, out of the ordinary course of things, having no causal relation to the purposes of God; whilst a providence is often, also, an event out of the ordinary course of things, but having its source in the purposes of God. Was it an accident, a blind chance, which determined the arrival of that train just at the critical moment when the fortunes of the day were to be decided? Was it not rather a special providence of God, for which we should give Him thanks to-day.

And this is not the only instance of the special providence of God in our behalf in this war. At the very commencement of active hostilities, an unexpected storm prevented the arrival of the federal fleet sent to reinforce Fort Sumter, off Charleston harbor, in time to accomplish the treacherous purpose of those who sent it. From their own showing, it is evident that the Washington Government had come under obligation to give due notice of any attempt on its part to reinforce Sumter, and it is equally evident that it attempted to give that notice in such a way that all practical advantage from its reception should be lost to us, with treacherous equivocation "to keep the promise to the ear, but break it to the sense."

Ought we not to acknowledge God's special providence in this storm? Is it not truth which is expressed in the words:

"Such wonders never come by chance,
Nor can the winds such blessings blow,
'Tis God, the judge, doth one advance,
'Tis God that lays another low."—*Psalms* lxxv.

God's special providence ought to be acknowledged, too, it seems to me, in that sudden change of wind which took place at the time our navy yard was in flames, having been first fired and then abandoned by orders from Washington. Fired at the point at which it was, had the wind continued to blow from the same quarter from which it blew when the torch was applied, the vandal work of destruction had been complete; the finest navy yard in this western world, together with a part, at least, of the City of Portsmouth had been laid in ruins. But no sooner have the federal incendiaries embarked than the wind shifts to a different quarter, and the good service which what remains of that navy yard has done the cause of the Southern Confederacy from that day to the present, bears witness to the worth of the special providence of God manifested in the sudden shifting of the wind which occurred just before day dawn on that, to us, memorable Sabbath morning. Enough was burned to furnish a beacon light to arouse our slumbering people from one end of the Confederate States to the other. Enough was saved to prove of a value to us, which the historian, when our independence is secured and our own navy takes its place upon the seas, alone can estimate.

Yet more remarkable does a special providence appear, as it seems to me, in "the terror from God" which was the immediate cause of the abandonment of our navy yard at the time and in the circumstances in which it was abandoned.

I have been told by navy officers whose acquaintance with such matters renders their judgment worthy of respect, that after the federal reinforcements, carried up by the Pawnee, had been added to the force already there, the yard might have been successfully defended against an attack of ten thousand men. It was abandoned, however, as I have been credibly informed, under the belief (1st) that we had a battery of heavy cannon just ready to be unmasked against it, from behind the little piece of woods which shades the magazine at St. Helena, and (2d) that General Beauregard, with five thousand Southern troops had come to our aid. The reality of this battery, seen by man after man from the foretop of the Cumberland, must have been the clay banks thrown up at the brick-kilns near St. Helena. So far were we from being in a condition to furnish the armament for such a battery, our people, in their extremity, were actually digging up the old rust-rotted cannons

from the corners of our streets, to find something with which to defend themselves. The reality of the arrival of General Beauregard with five thousand Southern troops was the coming of eight hundred volunteers from the neighboring cities of Petersburg and Richmond, to aid us in our time of need, together with the noisy passage of an engine with some empty cars attached, up and down our railroad, throughout the night of the 20th of April. So far were we from being able to attack the yard with a force of five thousand men, I doubt whether we could have raised an armed force of fifteen hundred, even after the volunteers from Petersburg and Richmond had arrived—we had the men, but not the arms to give them to defend ourselves against any attack which might be made upon us.

Compare, now, this portion of the history of the present war with the inspired record of a special providence wrought of God in the days of Elisha. "And when they were come to the uttermost part of the camp of Syria, behold there was no man there. For the Lord had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots, and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host: and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the Egyptians, to come upon us. Wherefore they arose and fled in the twilight" [the very hour at which our navy yard was abandoned] "and left their tents, and their horses, and their asses, eventhe camp as it was." 2 Kings vii, 5, 7.

Surely we have occasion to acknowledge Gods special providence in this flight of the federal troops and ships-of-war from our navy yard, and to render Him thanks therefor to-day.

Such are some of the instances in which, evidently, "the good hand of our God has been upon us" in this second war of independence. As we remember them, shall we not say with David: "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits." Ps. ciii, 1, 2.

With a thought suggested by the name Manassas (or Manasseh), for I cannot regard it as mere accident that our two important battle fields should bear the significant Scripture names of Bethel and Manassas, I will close this discourse: "And Joseph called the name of his first born Manasseh; for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil." Gen. xli, 51. As the excellent Matthew Henry remarks, "In the name he gave his son, he owned the divine providence giving this happy turn to his affairs. We should ever bear our afflictions when they are present, as those that know not but Providence may so outweigh them by after-comforts, as that we may even forget them when they are passed."

The present is a season of sore trial to us—sore trial, especially, in this—that many of those nearest and dearest to us are

exposed to all the dangers of the camp and the battle field. We blessed them as they went forth; we follow them with our prayers now that they are absent from us. God, I believe, has this day guided our thoughts pilgrims to Manassas, that here our faith may learn to say, in glad anticipation of the future—
“God hath made me forget all my toil.”



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The public are notified that, in order to guard against mistakes in the transmission of messages, every message of importance ought to be repeated, by being sent back from the station at which it is to be received to the station from which it was originally sent. Half the usual price for transmission will be charged for repeating the message, and while this Company will as heretofore use every precaution to ensure correctness, it will not be responsible for mistakes or delays in the transmission or delivery of repeated messages beyond an amount exceeding five hundred times the amount paid for sending the message, nor will it be responsible for mistakes or delays in the transmission of unrepeatd messages, from whatever cause they may arise, nor for delays arising from interruptions in the working of its telegraphs, nor for any mistake or omission of any other Company over whose line a message is to be sent to reach the place of destination. All messages will hereafter be received by this Company for transmission subject to the above conditions.

J. R. DOWELL, Gen'l Sup't,
PETERSBURG, VA.

BY TELEGRAPH.

71 From *Manassas* July 24 1861.

Received at New Orleans, *24* 1861.

To *Rev J R Markham*

*We fought a hard
battle I am well
thank God*

J. T. Myers

10/25/61

