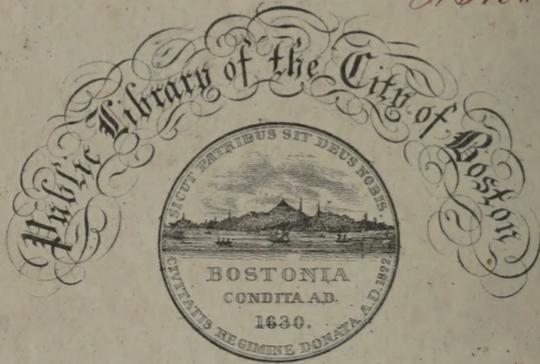




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S E R M O N

DELIVERED IN THE

Central Presbyterian Church,

Charleston, S. C., Nov. 21st, 1860,

BEING THE DAY APPOINTED BY STATE AUTHORITY FOR

FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

BY REV. W. C. DANA.

Bro: of D Dana Publisher

*(native of Newburyport, Conn.) 25 years
resident in this City*

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CHARLESTON, November 21st, 1860.

Rev. W. C. DANA

Dear Sir,—In behalf of the members of your Congregation, we request, for publication, your Sermon delivered in accordance with the request of the Governor, to observe this day as one of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer. Their wish, unani- mously expressed, will, we trust, secure your consent. The good to be done by its perusal, is our only excuse for asking of you a publicity foreign to your nature.

Yours, with much respect,

LEWIS M. HATCH.
EDWARD SEBRING.
HENRY M. BRUNS.

CHARLESTON, Nov. 26th, 1860.

Gentlemen,—I do not feel at liberty to disregard the unanimous wish of the Congregation, and therefore place the Sermon in your hands. The propriety of thus yielding my own preference will be vindicated, if the publication shall prove in any degree useful.

Very respectfully yours,

W. C. DANA.

Col. LEWIS M. HATCH,
EDWARD SEBRING, Esq.,
HENRY M. BRUNS, LL. D. } *Committee.*

S E R M O N .

PSALM XX, 1. The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob defend thee!

We may well believe that the Bible was given for all ages and for all nations, when, on this day, in a crisis unprecedented in our country's history and in the history of the world, we find our best thoughts and wishes expressed for us in a Psalm composed on the soil of Palestine nearly three thousand years ago.

To-day this State draws near to God in supplication; and all who seek her peace may well invoke blessings upon her in the words which inspiration has supplied. "The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble! the name of the God of Jacob defend thee—send thee help from the sanctuary, and strengthen thee out of Zion—remember all thy offerings, and accept thy burnt sacrifice—grant thee according to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel! We will rejoice in thy salvation, and in the name of our God we will set up our banners; the Lord fulfil all thy petitions!"

The purpose of our assembling this day is thus expressed in the Proclamation of the Governor of the State: "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."

"The clergy and the people of all denominations in this State are invited 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."

Here, in this house of God, only the moral and religious relations of our political position can properly come under review; and of these we wish to speak under the fullest sense of responsibility to God.

The great question, and that which meets us at the outset, is, *Are we right?* Is our position one on which we may properly ask the Divine blessing? Any doubt on this point would necessarily silence our prayers—or, at least, give them a new direction.

What, then, *is* the crisis that has brought us together this day to implore Divine help and protection? It is this: In the providence of God, the people of this State are compelled to consider distinctly, and to decide promptly, whether they will, or will not, permit a *foreign and hostile government* to bear rule over them. This is the whole question.

A *foreign* government; for the political party that is to wield that government is as foreign to Southern soil, as is the government of England, of France, or of Spain. A *hostile* government; for the party that, by its majorities in the Northern States, succeeds now to power, has drawn its life and breath and being from the principle of hostility to the vital interests of the South; hostility to those institutions which the Word of God recognizes and regulates, and which his Providence has here made a necessity—institutions which, directly or indirectly, involve the welfare of

every class and every individual in this State, and without which it would be given over to famine and desolation.

To a government, thus foreign and hostile, we owe no fealty. Our fathers founded a Federal Union—a Union based on a covenant, or compact, whose terms are plainly written out in the Constitution of the United States. Wherever the faction, now in the majority in the Northern States, has been in the ascendant, it has, by State laws, openly and defiantly trampled upon those provisions of this Constitution which are most essential to the peace and well-being of the Southern States.

There is no need to call from their graves the mighty dead, to teach us that “a compact broken on one side, is broken on all sides.”

That covenant, on which the Federal Union was based, being deliberately and perseveringly violated, that just and friendly feeling, which was originally the vital spirit of the Union, being now exchanged for determinate hostility, there remains—or will soon remain—to the Federal Government, in its aspect toward the South, nothing but *naked power, divorced from right*.

The same principles that impelled our great ancestors, in their day of trial, to *shake off* (not without sundering many pleasant ties of early recollection) a *foreign and hostile government*, now dictate the same course to their sons.

Those States in which the dominant majority, whether from misguided conscience or party virulence, thus deliberately sets at naught those provisions of the Constitution which were placed there as the special safe-guards of the South, and without which the Union would never have existed—those States have *no right* to exercise one particle of sway over any Southern State. Not one of them ought to have any share, directly or indirectly, in governing South Carolina.

The Northern and the Southern States are, by their different institutions, so far distinct nations, that the possession of the Federal Government by a Northern political party implacably hostile to Southern institutions, and persistently reckless of constitutional restraints, is, of itself, the most odious and the most dangerous form of *foreign aggression*; the most odious, because the forms of free government are made subservient to purposes directly antagonistic to those for which that government was constituted, (a "more perfect Union"); the most dangerous, because that aggression is gradual, stealthy, insidious, in its movement, so as least to alarm and arouse to united resistance those whose safety is threatened, whilst yet, as long as nominal Union lasts, they are despoiled of their natural resources of defence.

What a position for the South! To hang dependent on the justice, or the *mercy*, of a party foreign to her soil, and hating her institutions; and such a party, in respect to constitutional restraints, as this has shown itself to be!

What may have seemed, but fifteen days ago, a political *heresy*, is now a political *axiom*—"The South alone should govern the South." Only under her own protection are her rights and interests safe.

We have made no war upon those hostile States. We seek not to interfere in any manner with their institutions. More than this, we wish them well; we honestly desire their welfare; we desire that the wisdom and justice and conservatism in those communities, long whelmed beneath the wild waves of fanaticism and party violence, may come again to the surface; we mourn that the just and friendly and patriotic among them—and thousands and ten thousands of such there are, and many noble spirits there have struggled manfully, but ineffectually, for the Constitution as our fathers transmitted it to us—we mourn that these should be involved in a common suffering with those whom blind or "malignant"

philanthropy, or virulent party spirit, has made, on a great scale, the architects of ruin. And even for those misguided masses, that have been the dupes of fanaticism and falsehood (for falsehood and deception have been the great agents of this war upon the South,) we wish nothing worse than this, that the light of truth may guide them out of their delusions. They could not have been thus our enemies (and their own)—had they known how to read their Bibles aright, and been willing to test their favorite notions by the unerring standard—that Divine Revelation, which substitutes, for an impracticable agrarianism and equality, that justice and equity, and good will and kindness, to all, whatever be their station, which are the true, the Christian remedies for the inequalities which Divine Providence has ordained.*

It is permitted to us, then, my brethren, as we approach this day to the throne of Divine mercy, to feel that it is a righteous cause on which we invoke blessings.

Yet, however firm we may be in this belief, we shall still find ample reason to consider solemn humiliation before God as appropriate to this day. We cannot but deplore the infatuation and madness which so soon have torn down the pillars of that noble edifice which our great fathers erected. We cannot but feel a pang, as we stand amid those crumbling arches, which we once hoped might endure for centuries. We mourn over those sins, of what has been to us all our lifetime a common country, which have called down the judgments of Heaven upon this fair land, on which Divine benefits have been so lavishly showered. And what comes more closely home to each of us, is, that we can never approach the throne of heavenly mercy to ask protection from calamity, to supplicate help in trouble, without the consciousness that all those supplications should be prefaced by sincere and humble con-

* Ephesians vi, 5-9; Colossians iii, 22-25, and iv, 1; 1st Timothy vi, 1-5; Titus ii, 9, 10; Philemon; 1st Peter ii, 18-20.

fession of our sins. We are not worthy of the Divine favor which we implore. We deserve the chastisements of Divine Providence. And whether calamity descends upon us through the mighty agencies of the natural world, the earthquake shock and the devastating flood, or comes to us through the wild raging of human passions and the tumults of a hostile people, it still has its commission from God; and it is for us by penitence, by confession of our sins, by humble prostration before God, to seek, that his just anger may be turned away, and that his Almighty arm may be stretched out for our protection.

It is "a day of trouble;" for however bright the prospects that may fix our eye in the distance, all admit that the immediate future is dark.

"The Lord hear thee in the day of trouble!"

"The name of the God of Jacob defend thee!"

It is to be feared, that often when the protection of the Almighty is nominally invoked, there is still in many a heart a latent scepticism as to the reality of such help being given in answer to prayer. A vague impression may exist, that whilst in human affairs human agency is real, Divine agency is but nominal and imaginary—a fantasy of the mind, the offspring of a weak and unreasoning credulity. But let us look, for one moment, at the present crisis, see what is needful now for our safety and welfare, and then ask ourselves the question, whether Divine Providence has not plainly the control in respect to all that so deeply concerns us.

Unless the Almighty has left his throne, abdicated his government, ceased to be the Omnipotent, then he orders the external events, he directs the circumstances, which have so much to do with our earthly destinies. Not only this, but he sways the minds of men, not alone through the agency of those external events, but also, as all Christians believe, by an influence upon their hearts within, both alike in harmony

with their free agency. Often the destinies of nations, evidently to the eye of man, hang on the most minute and apparently casual incidents. An insect may cause the death of one on whose life depend influences that control millions. Moreover, external events, ordered by Divine Providence, as manifestly contribute to form the character, and to direct the voluntary purposes, of those who guide revolutions, as they do to marshal the circumstances and contingencies in which those revolutions have their origin. The culture of a plant which ministers to the necessities of the world, becomes a controlling power in the politics of nations. And as respects the moral elements of the political world, who can doubt that Divine Providence sways also these? How dependent are individuals, communities, nations, on a power and wisdom higher than their own, to secure their welfare!

What need we, in this momentous crisis, in order to the attainment of the results we wish for?

We need one heart and one mind among ourselves; and this, indeed, to an unparalleled extent, has been already granted; we need unanimity in the States contiguous to us, and of like interests with ours, that so, through God's mercy, the land may not be desolated by civil war, and stained with kindred blood; we need, in all our counsels and in all our acts, courage and wisdom—wisdom and courage—both alike indispensable, (for courage without wisdom is blind and suicidal, and wisdom without courage is halting and imbecile;) we need the firmness that takes “no step backward,” and the self-control that restrains from all wild license and uncalled for violence; we need the patriotism that, in the darkest hour of trial and calamity, can do all, and endure all, that a high and unselfish sense of duty prompts: and what is all this but to say, that we need a Divine influence to inspire noble qualities in human hearts, and an Almighty Intelligence and Will, to guide them all, and

to overrule all external agencies and events, to a safe and happy consummation?

The issues of things are with God. May He, in his infinite mercy, grant all the blessings that we need, in answer to prayer: that so, when these dark clouds shall have rolled away, we may, in this sacred place, render praise and thanksgiving to His most holy name! Amen.



