

Light in Darkness.

A DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED IN THE

STONE CHURCH, CLINTON, N. Y.,

Before the United Congregation of the Methodist, Baptist, and Congregational Churches,

On Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27th, 1862.

BY REV. S. W. FISHER, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF HAMILTON COLLEGE.

CLINTON,

M. S. RAYMOND, PRINTER,
1862.

CORRESPONDENCE

CLINTON, Nov. 29, 1863.

Rev. S. W. FURZE, D.D.,

DEAR SIR:—We, the undersigned, representing a large number of those who listened to your Discourse on Thanksgiving day, earnestly solicit a copy for publication, believing, as we earnestly do, that the truths so impressively presented by you, are worthy of a permanent record and a wide circulation.

Respectfully yours, &c.,

HENRY BOTYNTON,
JAMES S. COOK,
EDWARD NORTH,
J. G. STEARNS,

G. S. WILLIAMS,
A. D. GIBBLEY,
H. P. BRISTOL,
Wm. N. COBB.

SERMON

"Thus saith the Lord; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not.

" Thus saith the Lord; Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy.

" And there is hope in thine end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come again to their own border.—JEREMIAH XXXI, 16-17."

" Wherefore glorify ye the Lord in the firm, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea.—ISAIAH XLIV, 25."

In connection with the CIVIL PSALM.

There is no exercise of the mind more difficult or more salutary, than faith in God in the hour of trial. To recognize the divine goodness in the midst of affliction, to trust him for the future when adversity scowls upon us, is no small attainment. Easy enough is it, when every thing is bright and joyous, to render thanks unto the Author of every good and perfect gift. But when the clouds darken above us, and the thunder of his voice is heard, to see the sunlight beyond, to grasp by faith his strong promises so that the soul shall rest calmly and rejoicingly upon them, this is the highest exercise of a christian manhood. Yet this is the very effort, which, in the passages I have read to you, God calls his people to put forth. When Israel in the person of Rachel, mourned for his children because they were not, God's voice is heard, commanding him to cease from mourning, and to do this on the sole ground that there is hope in the end—that God himself is engaged to sustain his cause. And so, in the midst of desolation, when "the city of confusion is broken down, and every house shut up that no man may come in, when all joy is darkened and the wirth of the land is gone," then the Church is exhorted "to

lift up her voice and sing for the majesty of the Lord, to glorify the Lord in the midst of the sea, even the name of the Lord God of Israel in the isles of the sea." And this same duty of trust in God and giving thanks to him in the midst of afflictions, is recognized and enforced in a variety of ways all through the scriptures. This 118th Psalm recounts the beginning of God's mercy to his people in opening the way for their return from captivity, and it exhorts the church to give thanks to him for this and trust him to complete his work in the perfect emancipation of his people from the thralldom of Babel and their restoration, in all their former glory, to their ancient home. This the church has done all along through the night of persecution and suffering; when outwardly all was gloom, these souls elevated by the inspiration of a heaven born faith, grasped the promises and rejoiced in the prospect of a deliverance veiled from the eyes of worldly men. And it is a remarkable fact, that this very custom of Thanksgiving, in obedience to, and accordance with which we this day assemble, had its origin, not in a time of prosperity, but in an hour of sorrow, and gloom. "The early settlers of New England, disheartened by the difficulties of their new enterprise, had again and again appointed a day of fasting and prayer. They had dwelt upon their trials, until the hearts of not a few waxed faint, and not a few longed to return to their old homes. Thus when it was again proposed in the Assembly to proclaim a day of fasting and prayer, a plain farmer rose and remarked that the inconveniences suffered, and concerning which they so often wearied heaven with their complaints, were not so bad as might have been expected, and were diminishing every day as the colony strengthened; that the earth began to reward their labors, and to furnish liberally for their sustenance; that the seas and rivers were full of fish, the air sweet, the climate wholesome; above all, they were in the enjoyment of lib-

erty, civil and religious. He therefore thought, that reflecting and conversing on these subjects would be more comfortable, as tending to make them more contented with their situation, and that it would be more becoming the gratitude they owed to the Divine Being, if instead of a fast, they should proclaim a Thanksgiving. His advice was taken; and from that day to this, they have every year observed circumstances of public happiness sufficient to furnish employment for a day of Thanksgiving."

My friends, we as a people, are passing through scenes the most trying of any we have witnessed since we became a nation. We cannot lose sight of the fact that we are engaged in war,—a war that comes directly home to the hearth and the hearts of the people—a war within our own borders, with a portion of our own nation,—a war that involves an immense amount of treasure, and that which is of infinitely more importance, an immense sacrifice of the best blood of the people. We cannot lose sight of the fact that all through our State and the Union, Rachel is weeping for her children, because they are not. Clouds and darkness are round the Republic, thicker and darker than ever before enwrap her. Her integrity, nay, her very existence is imperilled. The principles that underlie our institutions, the vital elements that have given us character and success, are all involved in the contest. At such a time as this, when there is wailing in a household, when thousands of our sons are on the field of battle, and hundreds languishing in hospitals and prisons, when as yet no victory decisive of the great struggle crowns our arms, when, indeed, hope deferred has made many a heart sick and faint;—at such a time we are summoned by our chief magistrate to render united thanks to our Heavenly Father, for his manifest mercies to us as a people. We accept the summons; we see in it nothing incongruous, nothing unbecoming a magnanimous christian people. We need to deep-

on in our hearts the sense of the great kindness of our God to us as a nation; to rehearse his manifold blessings; to gather instruction from his providence, and invoke his blessing upon our country.

But before we proceed to a specific enumeration of some of those things which are adapted to awaken our gratitude, permit me to present two thoughts which will give character to this discussion.

The first is the fact that God is sovereign—sovereign in all our affairs. If God be regarded as a mere set of laws; or as a being who having set the world in motion, has retired from the direct supervision of its forces and the intelligent beings on its surface, then this service is meaningless. The truth that Nebuchadnezzar learnt amidst the fearful trials of derangement; the truth that God rules in the armies of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth and soon can stay his hand as he puts up one or pulls down another; this direct and practical sovereignty that controls the greatest and cares for the least, is the vital truth which we are this day to recognize. We are to come to him as the supreme and real arbiter of our destinies; the being whose all powerful will flashes along the fibres of nature, controls and directs the operations of intelligence and is alone capable of making the worth of man work out that which shall redound to his praise. With this truth firmly held, our gratitude has a fit object of adoration, our faith a personal God on whose promises it can rely. Without this our present is a transient dream; our future, darkness and gloom. God is the sovereign of nations; his hand is seen in all history; the affairs of this world are all conducted according to a grand plan, which hereafter will stand forth in light as the wisdom of the Infinite and Omniscient God.

With this recognition of his sovereignty, we conjure a firm belief in the justice of our cause. This does not imply that we approve of everything in the manner in which this cause has been conducted. Men are fallible. The greatest and the least are comparatively ignorant and short-sighted. They are not only liable to err, but under the impulse of prejudice or passion, to do wrong. And it is not at all required of us, to be blind to their mistakes, or to imagine them immaculate. Nor is it implied that we are superior to others in virtue. Such an assumption may or it may not be founded in fact; but in either case, it is not for us to make it. To arrogate superiority in these respects is the part of Pharisaical self-righteousness, dishon-

orable to God and degrading to ourselves. We have our own sins to answer for, and they are numerous and aggravated enough to make every christian patriot loathsome himself in the dust. We cannot measure the light or the darkness, which aggravates or diminishes the guilt of those in rebellion; but we can measure that which we enjoy, and judged by this, the humble christian will dare boast of his excellencies, or magnify his innocence before God.

But it does imply that our cause is truly just; that this war was originated by those, some of whom committed both perjury and treason in the same act; that they actually did, and meant to strike a blow at the heart of the most beneficent Government time has ever seen; and that in seeking to repel the blow, we are acting on the same principle which justifies society in seizing and punishing those who prey upon the property, the reputation, or the lives of citizens. War is always a calamity for the time; but the guilt of it rests upon those who, for insufficient or wicked reasons, originate it, and on those who, in the confidence of right, seek to repel the assault. It is in this confidence of the rectitude of our cause, we assemble in this holy temple to render thanks to our great Sovereign. Appreciating this, we know that we may appeal with all sincerity to Him whose omniscience reaches all hearts. Take this away and our offerings would be polluted, our sacrifice an offense to the Most High. But with justice and right on our side, religion may shed its benedictions upon us and in the midst of sorrow and calamity, we can calmly look forward with hope to the end, since the Lord of Hosts is with us.

In reviewing the topics suitable to the occasion, we need not limit ourselves to the present. The present grows out of, and is formed by the past. Nations are educated by divine Providence, either to illustrate some great idea in themselves, or as subsidiary to such an illustration in some other Nation. Just as Greece was set apart to illustrate the operation of intellectual forces divorced from true religion; and as the Northern Barbarians were prepared to overthrow the Roman Empire, that out of its ruins might arise a new style of civilization, so God has been educating this nation for a special work in history. It is this link after link in the chain of human development wrought out and interlocked by the Divine hand. I wish, therefore, first to call your attention to the manner in which God has been forming us as a people, for the purpose of awakening gratitude for the past and hope for the future. This nation

has a peculiar origin, and very remarkable development. Planted here in a wild soil, were the Presbyterians of Scotland, the Puritans of England in one place and the Cavaliers in another, the brave Hollanders, the suffering Huguenots, with many from the land of Luther. With different characteristics they all held to the same Protestant Christianity, and were largely animated by the same ideas of liberty. As they advanced under the same general influences, as they intermingled by the natural process of emigration, and at length they became fused together under the hot fire of the Revolution, they developed a peculiar style of Christianity and freedom. Out of these fruitful elements, combined by a Divine hand, all that is excellent and great in our nation has grown. We thank God for such an origin; we thank Him for their prayers, their sacrifices, and the influences they have sent down upon us. We can no more separate ourselves from them, or arrogate to ourselves alone, what is good in this nation, than the tree can separate itself from its roots.

Now do we lose sight of the introduction of that anomalous and foreign element, the sun-dryed children of the tropics. Not for themselves were they brought hither; but to constitute a part of our discipline; to test our principles, to kindle the fire out of which our Christian republicanism is to come forth purged of its dross, and then when this work is accomplished, bear back to the land of their fathers, that living agency through which an unfeigned Christianity will fulfill the grand prediction, that "Ethiopia shall stretch forth her hands unto God."

And here you will notice that our development has been almost entirely peaceful in character. We have not been a nation of fighters; our land, like that of the wild Arab, against every man. We have not reared great generals. This is not our distinction—this is not our mission. The glory of our nation is the manhood and elevation of the masses; not the development of a few great intellects, while the multitude remained as dumb-driven cattle. We have had forces to contend with, but they have been those of nature, and the prejudices which came down to us from the past. We are to be, as we have been inconquerable; but it is not through the agency, save in a very subordinate degree, of cannon and bayonet; it is the illustration, through the magnificent operation of our Institutions, of great ideas, that is to batter down oppressive powers. On principles consolidate this. They compel us to respect humanity, to respect national and individual manhood; they oblige us to

be the brother and not the tyrant of our race. This is the path along which God has led us. Instead of allowing us to sink into that efficiency which is the fruit of despotism and the ruin of humanity, we have been compelled to struggle with difficulties that have made us hardy, earnest, independent, manly. The distribution of property, the open prices that energy and integrity may win, the forests to be subdued, the homes to be created in the wilderness; these are mighty incentives to industry and high attainments. With these are our school-houses at every corner, our churches sustained by the voluntary efforts of the people, giving to them an intelligence, morality and religion that lifts them into a higher sphere than any nation has heretofore attained. Under those conditions we have risen, in little more than two centuries, from absolute poverty and a handful of emigrants, to be the richest nation on the globe in the wealth held by the masses, and in numbers and resources equal to the most powerful of the old world. Under those conditions literature and scientific culture have grown up and extended themselves with astonishing rapidity; while in the arts which concern directly the comfort of the people and lift them up, we recognize no superiors. Along this path we have developed a peculiar form and degree of civil and religious freedom, making us at once the admiration and the joy of those who love humanity, and the terror of those who build themselves upon the degradation of that humanity.

In this path of peaceful conquest, religion has assumed a special power and gone forth with new life to fulfill the ascending command of Jesus. And finally, in this our normal state of peace, we have revealed an energy, an enterprise, a power both of acquisition and impression, which prepares us for any emergency, and qualifies us to make our principles respected and powerful in any quarter of the globe. Thank God, today, citizens of this republic, for all these capital blessings which life past bears to us. Let not the darkness which settles about us just now, hide from you all that God hath done for you. Remember your origin; remember the way along which God hath led your fathers with his pillar of cloud by day and of fire by night; look out and see the light to which he has elevated you, not to lead you down into chains and night, but that at length through this transient storm of blood and fire, you may be stronger to bless the world. Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears, for thy work shall be rewarded, and there is hope in thine end, with the Lord.

Suffer me now to call your attention to the way in which God has permitted this nation to be led up to its present position. The preparations for the great events which are now being enacted have been twofold, in ideas and national interests. In the review of the progress of ideas, I shall speak simply as a minister of the gospel, in order to bring before you the way in which our Heavenly Father has led us. It is the part of the intelligent Christian to trace His hand in those great events of history which have exerted a marked influence upon our character and progress as a nation. If we go back to the era of the Revolution and the Constitution, we find the men who then stood foremost as the representatives of the nation, evidencing their faith in the truths of the Declaration by public and private acts in correspondence with them, and illustrating most clearly the true spirit and genius of the institutions they labored so successfully to establish. The ordinance of '81 and '89, consecrating most of what was then our territorial domain to freedom—the law prospectively abolishing the slave trade—the gradual abolition of slavery in the Northern and Middle States, and the emancipation of their slaves by a number of those resident in the South—all attest the sincerity of their convictions and their expectation that the progress of our institutions would quickly remove the adverse element which had been planted on our soil. This element however, through the invention by Eli Whitney, of New Haven, of the cotton gin, and the acquisition of the Southwest from Spain, acquired new strength and wonderful expansion in the States on the gulf. This, too, was one of those things permitted in the providence of God for wise purposes. The first great controversy which enlisted the passions of the nation, and arrayed this element against the progress of our free institutions, arose on the admission of Missouri in '20 and '21. It issued in the adoption of a line north of which freedom should work as it willed, South of which slavery should people the territories and work as it pleased. Thus came the great controversy in respect to Nullification, in '29-'30, originated by the same spirit, but with another formal object. This gave us the magnificent discussions of Webster, and the profoundly conclusive proclamation of Jackson, written by Livingston. It originated also, as is well known, that secret conspiracy which for 30 years has been gathering its resources and maturing its plans for the destruction of the Union. Next we have the admission of Texas, the war with Mexico, and the acquisition of a vast tract in the west, followed by the re-

enactment of the fugitive slave law, which however correct in principle was made unecessarily offensive to the North in its form. Then came the repeal of the Missouri compromise, the fearful struggles in Kansas, and the final appeal to the ballot box, which issued, through the efforts of the leaders in this rebellion dividing the party that had stood by them, in the election of our present chief magistrate. I give you only the outlines; the details are familiar to you all. Meanwhile, in spite of the prodigious expansion of the cultivation of cotton, and with it of slavery, the free inhabitants of the North had advanced her population and resources with vastly greater rapidity. In commerce, in manufactures, in arts and sciences, in colleges and schools, in towns and cities, in population, in enterprise, in all that constitutes the elements of a high and advancing civilization, the free states had made unsurpassed progress. Now the point on which I wish to fix your attention as specially pertinent to this occasion, is the fact that while these opposite developments were quietly working their way, the ideas of constitutional freedom in its inherent opposition to slavery, were kept before the people. By all these discussions, consequent upon these several events, the great principles which underlie these opposing institutions, were illustrated and enforced. There was, under the providence of God, a gradual training of the mind of the nation—a solid, intelligent preparation for the conflict which sooner or later the genius of oppression, the foe of equality and liberty, would force upon us. It was not to be sprung upon us suddenly, without preparation. The purpose of God thoroughly to test our institutions, and reveal their true character, would be best effected by educating the people to a full appreciation of their character. Thus when the conflict came, the issues should stand out boldly, singly, unconflicted with other and perplexing questions. And so when the time had come, he suffered the leaders of this rebellion, the very men who had sworn allegiance to our Government, and who for years had administered it, to make slavery the corner stone of their confederation; their pretext, the constitutional election of a president not in sympathy with their views; their first assault upon a vessel bringing supplies to a starving garrison; and a fleet built in the waters of the Atlantic by the treasure of the Union, and manned by her soldiers in obedience to the constituted authorities of the Republic. Now we say it is a matter of devout thanksgiving this day to Almighty God, that he has so ordered the preparations for,

and the actual initiation of this great conflict, that the principle on which it is conducted should stand out so boldly—a principle on our side in harmony with his word, and our highest convictions of duty. We thank him, since it was necessary this war should arise, that he has educated the people into a just understanding of its nature, and suffered the enemies of the Union to stand forth revealed in the bald character of traitors. On no other principle but this could the conscience and intelligence of the North have been so thoroughly enlisted. On no other could religion have shed its benedictions upon our cause. If resistance to tyrants is obedience to God, resistance to a just and beneficent Government, adopted and approved by the people themselves, is obedience to the devil. And when this resistance is in effect, an attempt to overthrow the fabric of the best Government on earth, drawing after it chaos, conflict and death, to multitudes, in order that a few men may forge chains upon the necks of millions, then it becomes as daring, presumptuous and wicked as the rebellion of Lucifer and his associates. Let us thank God to-day, that in this conflict the path of duty, honor and salvation for the nation has been illuminated by his providence, and made so clear that none but those wilfully blind can fail to discern it.

But there is another kind of preparation—a material preparation for this conflict which demands our gratitude. The increase of the solid resources of the Northern States within the last thirty years has been incalculable. Nor has this increase been all in one direction, as at the South. It has sprung from the combination and reciprocal action of all the forces which make a people strong, independent, enterprising and virtuous. It has been the product of a people working in all the departments of industry open to invention and intelligent toil; so that if all the rest of the world were blotted out to-day, we should still stand strong, and rich in all the chief elements of national prosperity.

In connection with this another fact is to be noticed. The war with Mexico was followed by the acquisition of California, and California for ten years and more has been pouring her gold into our laps at the rate of more than forty millions a year. The effect of this has been to render our banking capital more steady and available, while it has assisted materially in paying balances due by us to the manufacturers of the old world. In this respect God has brought good out of evil, and placed us in a position of far greater power for this contest.

Following this era is another fact of marked significance. For years the nation had basked in uninterrupted prosperity. The natural consequences followed. The years '55-6, and early part of '57, witnessed an immense increase of importations of mere luxuries, and a still greater expansion of business and the spirit of speculation. We were growing rich and luxurious. Expenditures soon over-past our incomes. Then, in a moment, the revolution came. Starting from the failure of a banking house in Cincinnati, it spread over the continent and penetrated into foreign countries most intimately connected with us in trade. Disasters at the time, laying many a proud tree low, the storm purified the atmosphere and brought health to the people. Importations suddenly diminished, speculations ceased, merchants and manufacturers contracted their over-expanded business, economy took the place of prodigality, the worship of money gave place to the worship of God, and a glorious revival of religion spread over the land, bringing hundreds of thousands to the feet of Jesus. Now mark the result. In 1860-61, when this war commenced, the entire North was in a better, sounder pecuniary and moral condition, than for years before. Debts had been paid, business ran in narrower but more healthful channels, and the nation was prepared to do and suffer, whatever God should order to maintain the Government. Let the skeptic attribute all this to chance, but let us this day recognize in it the hand of a loving Father, preparing us as a people for the fiery trial through which it was needful we should pass.

Still another fact in this connection claims our attention. The harvests of '60 and '61, were uncommonly fine. That of '60 has no parallel in the history of the country. A single product, and that the least regarded, the crop of hay, was worth more than all the cotton of the South. Now while God had given us such precious seasons, in Europe the harvests were greatly deficient. A demand at once arose for our surplus products, and exportations increased beyond all precedent.

Put now these three things together, the influx of gold, the economy and freedom from debt produced by the revolution of '57, and the exportations of our large surplus products to meet the unexpected wants of other countries, and you have the secret of that sound financial condition, that solid credit, which enabled our moneyed corporations to loan their millions to the Government in its hour of need, and strengthen it though burdened with a debt of eighty

diffidence left by the previous Administration; to gird itself for the war and stand firmly until it could draw upon the resources of the loyal people. Let him who will attribute all this to happy accident; I love to see the hand of him who sits regret above the forces of nature, kindly preparing us as a people to stand up under the assaults of our enemies. And I call upon you, christian people, to praise him, amid the fires that desolate so large a portion of our land, for these his manifest acts of kindness.

Another ground of Thankgiving is the unanimity of the people in reference to the great questions at issue, and the vigorous prosecution of the war until this question is fully settled. I do not mean by this an approval of every measure adopted by our national authorities, or the entire manner in which they have done their work. That there exists great dissatisfaction in this regard, is simply a fact; a fact which multitudes in the use of their natural and constitutional rights, have chosen to express at the polls. Incompetent men may have been kept in office, and methods of action adopted, which in some cases have issued in disaster, sorely trying the faith and the patriotism of the nation. But in respect to the assertion of the purpose by all fit means open to us to maintain this constitutional government and preserve this Union, every heart throbs of the nation is strong and clear. The sentiment uttered by the Governor elect of this State expresses the feeling and the purpose of the great masses of the people of nearly all shades of political faith. "When the men of the South made the bayonet and the sword the arbiter, the sword, so far as the present is concerned must be the arbiter, and in our strong right arm it shall strike vigorous and true blows for the life of our country, for its institutions, and for its flag; and as for the division of this Union, I will never consent to it, as long as I have a voice to raise, or a hand to fight for this, our glorious land."

On this principle we have in a little more than a year sent forth, without resort to drafting except in a few instances, more than a million of men. On this principle, towns, counties, and States have given millions to sustain the families of volunteers, or in bounty to the soldiers. On this principle, capitalists have freely loaned their resources to the Government. On this principle, thousands who mourn the loss of those dear to them, on the battle-field or in the hospitals, have thanked God that they were able to make the sacrifice. Here, then, is a unity of sentiment, in spite of the few discordant voices heard here and there, that

calls for the most hearty thanksgiving to Almighty God. Let us praise him that, having prepared the way for the successful prosecution of this conflict, he has so united the hearts of the people in carrying it forward to the end.

And now let us briefly review our present position and see if here we do not find abundant cause for gratitude.

1st, Let us thank God that the war has thus far been kept away from our borders. Not only has this state, but most of the loyal states, have been saved from the desolating tread of hostile armies. War in its actual presence, is a fearful scourge. There may be an Eden before it, but the genius of ruin sits perched upon its banners, and behind it is the Valley of Death. Homes desolated, the products of industry consumed, the labor of generations destroyed, terror and blackness are all in its path. Thank God that our villages smile under this November sun, and our cities stand strong and vigorous with all their teeming populations.

2d, During the year our great intellectual and religious institutions have largely maintained their ground. Our schools and colleges, though not a few of our youth have gone forth to battle, have kept on their way, training the immortal minds that are to give character to our future. While at the South these lights have been almost entirely extinguished, here they have burned brightly, shedding their beams upon the rising generations. Our churches have been manned by faithful ministers, and the gospel has been preached as fully as ever before. Scarcely a single christian enterprise of any great moment has been vitally affected by the war. What a grand, a sublime fact was that revealed at the meeting of A. B. C. F. M., at Springfield, when the announcement came to us that it had passed through the year with little diminution in its income! Yet at this very time the benevolence of our people has poured itself forth freely in the new channels opened to it by the exigencies of our present position. What vast sums have been expended in sanitary commissions, in bibles and tracts, supplied to the soldier; and besides this what multitudes of the noblest of our race have gone into our hospitals or followed the advance of our armies, to administer alike to friend and foe the ministrations of love which have smoothed the pillow of the sick, stayed the ravages of disease, or lighted up with hope the failing heart of the dying! The spirit that animated the heroines of the hospitals of Bulaklava, and gave her name to immortality, has

throbbed in the hearts and served the hands of hundreds of the daughters of America in this self-sacrificing work. For all this let us to-day give thanks to him who has preserved these institutions and inspired the compassion which has animated these noble ones in their ministry of mercy.

3d. It is a fact worthy of recognition this day, that most of our industrial pursuits have been prosecuted with unflinching energy and with a fair reward. The hammer still rings on the anvil, the hands of the people find ready employment, destitution is scarcely known in our cities, the various enterprises of a great people move on with their wonted energy; and if in some cases the shuttle and the spindle in our factories are silent, yet in other directions the energies of the industrious find ample development. On the ocean and the land, commerce, with scarcely a sensible interruption, prosecutes her world-embracing schemes in all her former vigor.

4th. Then, too, how kindly has the summer sun and showers, smiled upon the labors of the husbandman! How rich the glorious harvests that crowd our granaries! How wonderful the Providence that gave us mechanical inventions to supplement the loss of our sons gone to the battle-field, and in their stead gather in the cereals that otherwise would have rotted on the soil; multiplying the hand a hundred fold, and giving to us the bread which may feed the famishing of distant lands! In the single State of Ohio, the wheat crop alone is more than sufficient to pay the interest on our national debt! Thus every where has God made the earth a productive mother, more than supplying the wants of our millions.

5th. Health, too, in uncommon degree has shed its benedictions upon our households. The silent footsteps of pestilence, as it moves stealthily on its murderous pathway, have been turned aside from our dwellings, and that blessing which crowns and perfects all other temporal gifts; without which they turn to dry ashes in our grasp; that blessing so little valued when enjoyed, so longed for when it is absent; the full and joyous play of all our physical powers, the refreshing vigor that moves heart, muscles, limbs, and brain, with the power of life, this has been ours in a wonderful degree for the past year.

6th. This—not to speak of our freedom from foreign war, at a time so threatening,—in respect to our position in immediate reference to this great conflict, have we not much to which to give thanks to our Heavenly Father?

It has been said that we are pretty much where we were a year ago. But is this so? Is Washington where it was a year ago, beleaguered by foes and the Potomac embargoed? Is Kentucky where she was then with her traitorous Governor plotting against us? Is Missouri, is Tennessee, where they were a year ago? Is the Mississippi, then bristling with hostile fleets, where it was? Is New Orleans, the throbbing heart of the Southwest, where she was then? Is Texas no longer open? Is Norfolk where she was six months ago? Is North Carolina and her railroads just where they were when we met last Thanksgiving day? Is our fleet, through which the salient points of this abnormal confederacy may be most readily assailed, in a better state for successful work than it was a year ago? Are our armies no larger, and no better trained than they were then? It is the prerogative of true greatness to rise with the exigencies that demand its power. Defeat has taught us the character of the men with whom we have to deal, and the nation has risen in its greatness to meet the greater stubbornness of the contest. And is it not a matter for thankfulness, that as we begin fairly to measure the magnitude of this contest for free institutions, God has given us the heart to develop and apply, those vast resources which with his blessing will be ample to plant our flag in all its glory in every city and town now dishonored by the symbol of rebellion?

But there is still another respect in which there has been a decided advance to be recognized by us with devout thanksgiving. The ideas that rule in the convictions of a people constitute the measure of its intelligence and the source of its weakness or its strength. And just as they rise to true conceptions of the real nature of our institutions, patriotism rises in intelligence, it grasps more firmly the principles on which they are built and by which alone they can be maintained; it detects with keener vision the source of the weakness or the strength of those who seek their overthrow; it serves itself with a more determined purpose to maintain what it so intelligently appreciates. When this war commenced, a single naked issue was presented: Shall this Government, reared at the cost of so much blood and treasure, this Government under which a united people had prospered apparently for eighty years be maintained, or shall any factious minority be at liberty, as they may choose to regard it as under? This was the single issue seen and read by all men. And as the war advanced, as our armies trod the soil of the South, we guard

ed their property, we respected their peculiar institutions, we cared for their slaves with as much zeal as we did the lives of their children, and the chastity of their women. We sought to crush rebellion without touching a single interest of the rebels. We wished to exhibit to the world the spectacle of a rebellious people gathered back into the bosom of the Republic, with their every interest and institution preserved in full vigor. But war, though a terrible teacher is yet wonderfully effective. Eighteen months of actual conflict has changed all this. Slowly, out of the discipline of both victory and defeat, and of the actual conflict of the two civilizations in arms, the conviction has formed itself in the minds of millions, that back of the one great issue, there was another which must be decided with it or it never could be decided truly and permanently. Ideas that had floated vaguely and mistily before the eye grew into consistency and definiteness; opinions once conjectural and seemingly rash, settled down into solid convictions, until these three ideas stood forth in the clear sunlight of established facts:

1st. That the institution of slavery nourished the spirit which, in its daring presumption, assailed the fabric of our Government.

2d. That the institution of slavery arms this foul rebellion with all its power to perpetuate the contest.

And 3d. That the institution of slavery, as it has created a civilization opposite to that which the genius of our free institutions has produced, so while it remains in power, its influence must always be pestilential, divisive and domineering; ever seeking to destroy that great inheritance of liberty bequeathed to us from the past. The civilization of liberty has met and grappled with the civilization that owns property in man as its corner stone, its mightiest inspiration. We had thought of these things in our closets; we had whispered them tremblingly to the wind; we had battled around them in our halls of legislation. But war, with its terrible logic, its fierce demonstrations, its hand dipped in blood, has suddenly leaped far ahead of our conclusions, torn off the disguise of the monster, and revealed his spirit in all the horribleness of its accursed nature. We sought not to see it thus. We put our hands before our eyes and hoped it was not thus. But God, in His good providence, became our teacher. He has moved the nation forward to a higher position of thought and intelligence. He has crowned our freedom with brighter glory; He has

unveiled the malignant genius which animates the despotism that rears its form on the debasement of our humanity; he has taught us that when these hostile spirits meet in conflict, the scabbard is thrown away and one or the other must perish. In the light of his teachings our cause rises in the majesty of justice, radiant with the glory that crowns a perfected humanity. This consecrates and hallows the holocaust of blood and tears and agony which patriotism offers on the altar of liberty. This lifts before us a grander vision of the future. Never again will twenty millions of people take to their bosoms the serpent whose fangs have sought their life blood. In the night of a power before which earthly forces are as straws in the tempest, they will advance and conquer. The arm that swept the Indians from the shores of New England, and planted there the seed of a noble christian civilization; the hand that nourished our youth amidst perils and hardships till it grew strong in the power of a christian life; the pillar of cloud and fire that went with our fathers through the great travail of the Revolution; the loving kindness that since that time has assisted us to rear so many monuments to his praise, inspiring and moulding us to become a mighty instrument in spreading his gospel through the world; that arm, that hand, that pillar of cloud and fire, that loving kindness, will not be denied us in this, the hour of our greatest need. "There is hope in thine east;" hope for the North; yes, hope for the South! I see the dawn of a brighter day; I see this benign Government, these noble institutions of freedom and religion, grow stronger and purer as they pass through this terrible ordeal. Out of that soil now desolated by the tramp of armies and fertilized by the blood of our sons, I see spring another style of manhood; its fiery heart, its splendid intellect no longer perverted and befuddled by the genius of oppression, instinct with the love of humanity and of Jesus. I see, in the distant future, Africa open her gates to welcome to her long darkened and oppressed heart, her christianized and educated sons from these shores. I see here a united, a free, an intelligent, a christian people of high enterprise, and a genius for world wide influence, filling those valleys, climbing yon mountains, greeting with their morning and their evening anthems, the sun as he rises out of the Atlantic and sinks gloriously in the Pacific main. Then shall we know the priceless value, the peerless magnitude of this our conflict, in the grandeur of its final influence upon the destinies of our race. Then shall we see, as now we cannot, that every drop of precious

Blood shed in this holy conflict was the seed of a noble manhood; that the agony and the sorrow which has wrung so many hearts and darkened so many households, were the throes of a nation, travailing in birth with the life that, under God, is to revolutionize and regenerate the world. Then thou, O sainted Minner, companion of my early prime, friend of my riper years, fallen ere yet the shout of victory had rolled its music over the land thou died to save, with all those christian heroes who from the field of conflict have gone up to mansions of eternal rest, shall know, that not in vain was the sacrifice offered, that out of death sprang forth the life of our glorious Republic, and from these shattered hearts and pale forms, a nation rose regenerated, in the might of high intelligence and pure religious faith, to plant the banner of Jesus over all the shores and continents of our earth.

And now, christian friends, as we retire from this hallowed service, let us go forth cherishing in our hearts those sentiments of christian patriotism, that spirit of devout gratitude and unflinching trust in the arm of Him who is mighty to save, which will prepare us to act well our part as citizens of this great Republic in this our time of trouble; uttering in our hearts the prayer, "We give thee thanks, O, Lord, most merciful and gracious, for all thy manifest kindness to us and our fathers; for all the way in which thy hand has led us, and all the benedictions which have illuminated that way since first our fathers took rest in the wilderness. Give us as a nation grace to repent of the sins which have made necessary thy chastisements; perseverance in peace with other nations who may desire our downfall; let thy spirit animate and guide in the council of our rulers; go forth with our armies; give to our soldiers that courage they need in the hour of battle, purge them from vice and inspire in their hearts an heroic trust in thee, making them instruments meet for the service thou hast called them to perform; give speedy victory to our arms, consolation to those who mourn, and a fit preparation to those who are to fall; *break thou the staff of the wicked and the scepter of their rulers; inspire true loyalty in those who have raised their party-spiritual hands against this Government; destroy all institutions that are opposed to the progress of thy Gospel, and the elevation of humanity; lift up into intelligence and freedom and religion, those who have been trodden in the dust; and bring us forth out of this furnace of trial a people purified and prepared, to illustrate thy glory in the pro-*

clamation of the truth as it is in Jesus, to all the darkened nations of the world. And to thee, O, Lord, will we render the honor and the praise, from henceforth, world without end."