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Marietta, Geo

SERMONS

OF
Marietta, Geo

Bishop Pierce and Rev. B. M. Palmer, D. D.

Wells Couvray

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

AT

MILLEDGEVILLE, GA.,

ON

FAST DAY, MARCH 27, 1863.

BOUGHTON, NISBET & BARNES, STATE PRINTERS
MILLEDGEVILLE, GA.

1863.

THE RAINBOW ROUND THE THRONE; OR
JUDGMENT TEMPERED WITH MERCY.

A DISCOURSE
BEFORE THE LEGISLATURE OF GEORGIA,
DELIVERED ON THE DAY OF
FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER,
APPOINTED BY THE
PRESIDENT
OF THE
CONFEDERATE STATES OF AMERICA,
MARCH 27TH, 1863.

By B. M. PALMER, D. D.,

OF NEW ORLEANS, La.

DOUGHTON, NISBET & BARNES, STATE PRINTERS,
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PROCLAMATION BY THE PRESIDENT.

It is meet that, as a people who acknowledge the supremacy of the living God, we should be ever mindful of our dependence on Him; should remember that to Him alone can we trust for our deliverance; that to Him is due devout thankfulness for the signal mercies bestowed on us, and that by prayer alone can we hope to secure the continued manifestation of that protecting care which has hitherto shielded us in the midst of trials and dangers.

In obedience to His precepts, we have from time to time been gathered together with prayers and thanksgiving, and He has been graciously pleased to hear our supplications, and to grant abundant exhibitions of His favor to our armies and our people. Through many conflicts we have now attained a place among the nations which commands their respect; and to the enemies who encompass us around and seek our destruction, the Lord of Hosts has again taught the lesson of His inspired word, that the battle is not to the strong, but to whomsoever He willeth to exalt.

Again our enemy, with loud boasting of the power of their armed men and mailed ships, threaten us with subjugation, and with evil machinations seek, even in our own homes and at our own firesides, to pervert our men servants and our maid servants into accomplices of their wicked designs.

Under these circumstances, it is my privilege to invite you once more to meet together and to prostrate yourselves in humble supplication to Him who has been our constant and never failing support in the past, and to whose protection and guidance we trust for the future.

To this end I, Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States of America, do issue this, my proclamation, setting apart Friday, the twenty-seventh day of March, as a day of fasting, humiliation and prayer, and I do invite the people of the said States to repair on that day to their usual places of public worship, and to join in prayer to Almighty God that He will continue His merciful protection over our cause, that He will scatter our enemies and set at naught their evil designs, that He will graciously restore to our beloved country the blessings of peace and security.

In faith whereof, I have hereunto set my hand, at the city of Richmond, on the twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-three.

JEFFERSON DAVIS.

By the President:

J. P. BENJAMIN, Secretary of State.

SERMON.

And behold a throne was set in Heaven, and one sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an Emerald."—*Revelation, 4th chap. 2, 3 verses.*

It should not surprise us that the New Testament canon, like that of the Old, closes with prophecy, which spans indeed the whole arch of human history. Springing from the bosom of the first promise which broke upon the despair of man after the fall, it spread the bow of hope over forty centuries until the appearance of the woman's seed. From the Redeemer's cross, as a new salient point, it again overleaps intervening ages till in the glories of the second advent, history shall reach its consummation, and time itself shall be no more. John, the last of the Hebrew seers, is accordingly shut out from men to see visions of God, in the isle of Patmos. Through a series of prophetic symbols, he depicts the fortunes of the church, her final triumph, and the destruction with which her adversaries shall be consumed. The book of Revelation therefore affords a rude outline of the history of mankind; so far, at least, as this is implicated in the progress of the church. Antecedent however to these disclosures, a view is first afforded of God upon his throne, invested with awful majesty and power. A door was opened in heaven; and behold, a throne and one seated upon it, whom the entranced Prophet is not permitted to describe save under the allegorical symbols of the jasper and the sardine stone. These represent those Divine perfections, which are conspicuously illustrated in the government of the Universe: the blood-red color of the sardine symbolizing that retributive justice, which vindicates the majesty of the Divine law through the punishment of the transgressor—and the jasper, clear as crystal, as appropriately typifying the matchless purity and holiness of God, which is his glory.

But the most remarkable feature in this scene is "the rainbow round about the throne," with its predominant green so refreshing to the eye, "in sight like unto an Emerald." This symbol, purely historical in its character, admits a more certain interpretation than the two which preceded. You remember that after the deluge God set his bow in the clouds, a sign of the covenant into which he had entered with Noah, the second father of our race, and a seal of the promise that he would not again destroy the Earth, with a flood. From that day, the rainbow has been recognized as the emblem of mercy, and of mercy returning after judgment. The import of this remarkable vision is therefore easily deduced. Before opening the seals and sounding the trumpets in which the whole future administration of Providence is implicitly contained, the Prophet is called to be-

hold Jehovah as a God of law, yet ruling in mercy ;—seated indeed upon the throne and displaying the symbols of his righteous supremacy, yet ruling beneath the sign of the covenant which pledges to sinful man his compassion and his grace. It is therefore not a government of naked and absolute law which John is commissioned to unfold ; but of law as it is tempered by grace ; and we utterly fail to understand the dealings of God with the human race, if we overlook either of the two elements of justice and of grace, which enter as factors in the whole economy of Providence.

No topic seems to me, my Hearers, more appropriate to the solemnities of this national fast than this commingling of mercy with judgment in the administration of God's government over men : a topic full of consolation in the darkness of the present hour, whose timely exhibition may perhaps serve to check those extreme and despondent fears which a too exclusive view of our sinfulness as a people cannot fail to arouse. But as the comfort it may impart depends upon our conviction of its truth, I must be allowed to establish it as a doctrine, before attempting to infer the support which it brings to our young and struggling nation.

1. *In the first place then, it is involved in the primary fact that God's special purpose in the creation of man is to illustrate through him the riches of his grace.*

It were idle to conjecture how many orders of intelligent beings God may have created, to inhabit the innumerable worlds which science reveals to us distributed through the immensity of space. Nor, were this even known, were we furnished with information of the conditions under which they live, nor of the modifications of the one eternal law by which it is adapted to their peculiar characters and circumstances. Such speculations are as unnecessary as they are rash. The scriptures plainly reveal the existence of two distinct classes of created beings, and sufficiently unfold the purposes they subserve in the comprehensive economy of the Divine government. The destiny of angels stands closely associated with the honor which God secures to himself through the administration of simple law, while the history of man equally developes the riches of the Divine love and grace. In regard to the former, there is no room for mistake: I need not remind you that law consists essentially of two parts—the precept which guides, and the penalty which binds. The precept comes, first in the order of thought, and with its unerring finger points out the course which it becomes the creature to pursue. It states with infallible precision the relation of the subject to the law-giver and the claims of the latter upon the service, worship and love of the former. Then follows the penalty, as the exponent of the Divine authority, and binds these duties upon the conscience. The two cannot be separated without destroying our very conception of law. For

if the penalty be removed, the precept degenerates at once into mere counsel or advice : or if the precept be withdrawn, the penalty sinks down into a blind and arbitrary threat. It is the union of the two which constitutes the formal nature of law. Now precisely corresponding with this distinction in the law itself, we have two classes of angels, whose whole destiny is respectively linked to one or the other of these two elements. The Holy angels, who passed successfully through their period of probation and are now confirmed indefectibly in blessedness forever, illustrate the glories of the law as these are reflected through a sinless and perfect obedience of the precept ; while the fallen angels, who first raised the standard of revolt in Heaven and were hurled from their several thrones into the abyss of hell, shall forever illustrate the terrors of that curse which is denounced against transgression. The whole history, both of the one class and of the other, is an eternal exposition of the law, practically exemplifying the results both of obedience and of sin. No purpose was ever formed in the counsels of God for the restoration of such as are fallen ; no sacrifice ever smoked upon the divine altar for the expiation of their guilt ; no offer of pardon even solicited them to the exercise of repentance : no Divine spirit ever breathed upon them in their trespasses and sins, quickening them into life : but “having left their own habitation, they are reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, to the judgment of the great day.”

A sufficient exemplification being once made of the majesty and glory of naked and absolute law, the infinite God was under no necessity of repeating Himself ; and a very different purpose is accordingly disclosed in the creation and history of mankind. The superscription over this dispensation is LOVE : “for God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life ;” and the song of the redeemed forever in Heaven is chanted “unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood.” The whole record, as begun in time and continued throughout the ages of the future, is a record of infinite and sovereign love. As through a dispensation of mere law over the angels, God discovered to the universe his holiness, justice, and truth, so by his method of grace towards man he opens the treasures of his infinite heart, disclosing the depths of his tenderness, his boundless compassion, his inconceivable mercy and grace. It is therefore a more interior display of the Divine perfections than had before been made—the climax to that revelation of his power and Godhead which was written on the frame of nature, and the complement of that which was engraved on the tables of the law. “The mystery, which from the beginning of the world had been hid in God,” is now revealed ; “to the in-

sent that now unto the principalities, and powers in heavenly places might be known, by the church, the manifold wisdom of God." All the arrangements therefore in the creation of man look to the evolution of this stupendous method of grace. For example, the human race was not fashioned in the mass, as were the angels; nor thrown, like them, upon an individual probation, to stand or fall each for himself alone: but was slowly developed in the lapse of years from a single parent stock—the first Adam being the precursor and type of the second Adam, the Lord from Heaven, who should restore the ruin effected by his dismal fall. Mysterious too as was the introduction of sin, a problem utterly insoluble by human wisdom, yet as a cardinal and admitted fact it is, in a broad and comprehensive view, the necessary antecedent of that grace which shall look upon the suffering and lost, and devise the method of their recovery. It forms no part of my purpose to particularize the details of this wonderful scheme; but only to signalize the general fact that this world was built as the theatre of grace, and man was created that in his destiny it might be unfolded. Let it be borne in mind that grace, like law, must have an historical outworking. In the fortunes of angels law worked out its results, the supremacy and righteousness of God became substantive facts and actual portions of the history of the Universe: so God will not content himself with the mere exposition of his grace as a silent and dormant perfection of his nature. Like his holiness and his truth, grace must be wrought out as a potential and substantive fact; only thus can it be kneaded and pressed into the Divine administration, and become equally with justice an element of his government. The mighty architect by whom this principle was elaborated in the forge of his own dreadful passion and bloody death, was the Lord Jesus Christ. By an obedience greater in its proportions than the aggregate obedience of all the creatures, he vindicated the law's injured majesty; whilst through his vicarious endurance of the penalty, he brings out the tenderest affection, of the father as a God of love. In the final application of this grace once historically developed, both angels and men are brought together in one glorious body, over which Christ presides as the head—the high-priest of their worship, gathering their praise into his golden censer and waving it before the eternal throne. Henceforth it is an integral principle of the Divine government, seated by the side of law in its administration both in Heaven and on Earth—and God shall rule forever over the redeemed, not simply as a king over his subjects, but as a father over his sons. If then the primary design of God in the creation of man be the revelation of his grace, surely this grace must interpenetrate his entire history. The record may vindicate the supremacy of law, but of law as it is tempered by mercy. He who sits

upon the throne may be to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone ; but he will sit and reign beneath the sign of the emerald rainbow.

2. The union of mercy with judgment in the government of this world, is more determinately proved by the fact *that the whole administration of Providence is specially committed by the Father to his son, Jesus Christ.* No utterance of the Pulpit can be more timely and impressive in the ears of this young nation now struggling into birth than the testimony that God has laid the government of this world upon the shoulders of his Son, whom therefore it becomes us to recognize as our sovereign and Lord. The fatal error of our fathers, in totally ignoring the existence and supremacy of God in the great act of incorporation by which the several States of the old American Union were linked together in a common nationality, has been partially retrieved in the new Constitution of our own Confederacy. Thanks be to God for the grace given to our rulers in receding from the perilous atheism of our forefathers ! and the heart of this christian people throbbed with unutterable joy, when at length the nation as such found its God, and wrought the recognition of his being and providence into its organic and fundamental law. May he who is ever jealous for his own glory look with favor upon our repentant confession of his name, and cover us beneath the wings of his protecting care ! But, my Hearers, the whole truth has not yet been acknowledged even by us. This national confession fails to define whether the God whom we invoke be "Jehovah Jove or Lord,—whether the God of the Pantheist, the Pagan, the Christian, or the Deist. It does not cover the mighty truth that the king, whose footsteps are seen in all the grand march of history, is God in Christ—ruling the world by the double right of creation and redemption, by the Father's grant and by the purchase of his own blood. Certain it is, no government will ever prove stable which denies the authority of this "blessed and only Potentate, the king of kings and Lord of Lords." The lessons of the past are lost upon us, if we fail to discover in the revolutions of Earth the voice of him who says, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn it, and it shall be no more, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it him." It is ours to take this young nation as it passes through its baptism of blood, and to seal its loyalty to Christ at the altar of God. He, "under whose feet all things are placed" as "the Head over all," He it is who "ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" : and little as Statesmen may reckon of it, He will break the nations with a rod of iron until His supremacy be acknowledged, and the kingdoms of this world consent to "become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ."

This claim of the Savior to universal dominion is fully

asserted in the sacred volume: and as it is a truth which I desire the christian people of this land to lay upon their conscience, permit me now to adduce only a few of its most pointed testimonies. In the solemn hour of Christ's departure into Heaven, while yet His sacred feet pressed the Mount of Olives, and before the clouds received him out of the sight of his disciples, he bases the commission of his church, the great charter under which all her immunities are held, upon the Father's grant to him of absolute dominion: "all power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth—go ye therefore and teach all nations." Matt. 28: 18, 19. Prior to this, in one of his discussions with the cavilling Jews who sought to kill because as they said "he made himself equal with God," he reasserts his supremacy as the necessary consequent upon his Divinity: "for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honor the Son EVEN AS they honor the father, as the father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; and hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man." John 5: 22, 27. So too in his prayer of intercession uttered just before his crucifixion, He challenges this right immediately at His Father's hands: "as thou hast given him power over all flesh." John 17: 2. The inspired Paul doctrinally affirms this claim in the most explicit language, in several of his epistles: as in Ephesians 1: 20, 23, "and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church." And in Phillippians 2: 9, 11, "wherefore also God hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus is the Lord to the glory of God the father."

Nor is the prophetic record of the Old Testament silent upon this point: for Daniel testifies, "I saw in the night visions, and behold one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him—and there was given him dominion and glory, and a kingdom that all people, nations and languages should serve him; his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed": "and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."

Dan. 7 : 13, 14, 27. The evangelical Isaiah, too, lifts up the voice of the ancient church : "unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders ; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth even forever." Isa. 9 : 6, 7.

It is moreover not a little significant of Christ's supremacy over the earth, that in the great assize, when the throne shall be set upon the clouds and the books shall be opened, it is He who shall sit and judge both the quick and the dead : "for God hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained ; whereof he hath given assurance to all men in that he hath raised from the dead." Acts 17 : 31. Finally the lonely Seer of Patmos turns his telescopic gaze into the heavens and reveals the grand Assembly in their solemn worship around the throne : "and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands, and every creature which is in heaven and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, heard I singing, blessing and honor and glory and power be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever and ever." Rev. 5: 11, 13. Such is the testimony rolling up in one grand volume from the Scriptures of God to this Headship of Christ over the nations. The ancient bards of the church with inspired ecstasy woke the prophetic harp to this song. Its music floats upon the air through the whole night of the preparation, till Apostles catch and swell the strain with kindred and responsive notes. The church, "with songs and choral symphonies," bears the anthem on until it breaks at the foot of the judgment throne : and its dying echoes are caught up into heaven, the aisles of whose vast cathedral ring with the pavan of triumph. "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever." It is a truth full of refreshment to the pious that the government of this world is not in the hands of "the unknown God," under the administration of cold and inflexible law ; but in the hands of God in Christ, who rules not only as the creator but as the restorer. The same hands which uphold the frame of the Universe are also stretched in peaceful benedictions over the guilty and the lost. The whole scheme of Providence is committed to Him who once bowed his head in anguish under the load of human woe. The clouds which seem black with wrath as they hang around the seat of stern and unrelenting justice, are tinged with a softer hue as they curtain the throne of our Imman-

uel, God with us : who moves the vast machinery of his Providence in subordination to that plan of grace which he once died to execute, but now lives forever to administer. So then "we are not without law to God, but under the law to Christ." The Lamb is in the midst of the throne : therefore it is encircled by the bow of the covenant, "in sight like unto an Emerald."

3. *This truth receives its final confirmation from the institution of the church, and the relation she sustains as the guardian of the State.* The mediatorial kingdom of Christ, if I may so express myself, extends in a double direction and may be viewed under a twofold aspect. Its more immediate jurisdiction is over the visible church, a society drawn together out of the world and in which the heirs of glory are trained for heaven and happiness hereafter. Over and within this church, Christ presides with a supreme and exclusive authority. In his legislative power, he enacts every law by which she is to be governed ; in his Executive authority, he appoints the officers for the administration of the same, and calls and qualifies them for the discharge of their high and solemn functions ; in his priestly jurisdiction, he institutes her ordinances of worship ; and in the supremacy of his Headship, grants the charter by which all her privileges and rights are held. In this pure theocracy, the mediator alone is king : and they are guilty of flagrant usurpation who exercise any other power but that which is simply ministerial and declarative. No earthly guide has any function but to expound a written constitution, and by spiritual discipline to enforce obedience to a spiritual and unseen ruler. But in order to extend the domain of this church until she shall embrace all nations within her pale, the Mediator wields that wider authority presented in the foregoing section—"angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him." Hence Christ himself as we have seen predicates the commission of the church upon the fact that "all power was given to him in heaven and in earth" : and the Apostle testifies, that "he is made Head over all things to the church" ; which, as his body and fullness, sustains a more intimate and peculiar relation to himself.

Now this church, from the very design of her founder as the depository of his grace and the school for the spiritual training of his people, must prove the conservator and guardian of the world lying without her pale : and in the economy of Providence, the righteous are found intermingled in all the relations of life with the wicked, who are often spared the judgments which they have incurred by reason of this connexion. Thus even guilty Sodom, the cry of whose wickedness had gone up to heaven, would have escaped the vengeance of brimstone and of fire, had ten righteous persons been found in her ; and through the want of only these ten righteous, "the smoke of the coun-

try went up before the eyes of Abraham "as the smoke of a furnace." All history moreover attests this guardianship of the church over the State: for the records of ancient and modern times will be searched in vain for a single instance in which a nation has been destroyed, holding in her bosom a pure and uncorrupted church. She is the salt of the earth, the light of the world: and so long as with sound doctrine, and a pure worship, and uncontaminated ordinances, she fulfils the mission to which she is appointed, just so long will the nation which enshrines and protects her be sheltered from destruction. The casket is preserved for the jewel it contains: and thus in every age the church of God has proved the Palladium of the State, the guardian of its honor and its life. The Hebrew nation, for example, was kept intact so long as to it "pertained the adoption and the covenants, and the service of God and the promises": but from the moment the church was withdrawn from its embrace and sent forth upon her grand itinerancy over the globe, its nationality was destroyed and they became a people "peeled and scattered." Not only so: but through long centuries the proud Empires of the East revolved around this small but important nation, as satellites around their primary: and the sole clue guiding us through the mazes of their history is furnished in the relation they sustained to that ancient and venerable church. What is still more remarkable, not a single nation which once showed kindness to the people and church of God has been suffered wholly to perish from the earth; whilst every Power that lifted itself to persecute Israel has gone down a mournful wreck beneath the waves, leaving scarcely a trace of its existence behind. Egypt, which once cradled the infant church amid the bulrushes of her own sacred Nile, is still extant among the nations: and Persia, which opened the two-leaved gates and struck off the fetters from captive Israel, has been preserved amidst the throes of revolutions and the convulsion of Empires to this very hour. And who shall say that, effete as they now seem to be, both these kingdoms may not be reserved by the God of the church, because of ancient kindness shown to her, to play some distinguished part in the unfolding history of the future? But where is Syria, which once challenged Jehovah as the God of the hills and defied his power to protect Israel upon the plains? and where is Assyria, which led forth the tribes to hopeless captivity and bondage? And where is Babylon with her palaces and hanging gardens, once the wonder of the world, under whose tyranny the daughters of Zion were compelled to hang their harps upon the willows and refused to sing the Lord's song in a strange land? These mighty kingdoms, whose wars of conquest once filled the pages of the world's history, have sunk into such utter oblivion, that but for the fragmentary notices of them embalmed in the

records of the church herself they would now be lost to the knowledge of mankind, as though they had never been.

These are portentous facts which a cultivated statesmanship will be compelled one day to recognize and gather hints for its own guidance. For doubtless if in modern days the Prophet stood, as of old, by the side of the historian, with an inspired interpretation of passing events, we should see now as then that the State lives in the purpose of God for the sake of the church, and under the protecting shield of her covenant achieves its destiny. With the key furnished in the books of the Old Testament, we cannot fail to see that all history is but an exposition of Providence, as Providence is the interpretation of history. They are the two poles of the same truth: Providence aside from history is a blind enigma—history apart from Providence is a senseless fable. Both find their solution in God's purposes of grace as unfolded through the church: and He who guides the fortunes of that church sways over the world a sceptre of love—"justice and judgment are the habitation of his throne," but "mercy and truth go also before his face."

I arrest here all doctrinal discussion, reserving space for the application of this established truth to the circumstances in which, as a people, we now stand before God. Can we determine whether the sufferings of our beloved land fall upon it in the way of penal judgment or of paternal discipline? Upon the dark back-ground of the cloud which now hangs so low and drenches it with sorrow and with blood, can we discover the sign of the rainbow, the emblem of mercy and of hope? To these questions, I will return the long-pondered and deeply cherished convictions of my own heart: and may God help me this day "to speak comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, and that she shall receive of the Lord's hand double for all her sins"!

1. In the forefront then of all I have to say, I recognize *in the schism which has rent asunder the American people only a new application of the law by which God has evermore governed the world; that of breaking in two a nation which has grown too strong for its virtue, in order to its preservation and continuance.* The charge of rebellion, so clamorously hurled against us by our former political associates, is sufficiently grotesque; considering that, among the first principles laid down by their fathers and by ours, it was clearly announced that "governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed"—and that "whenever any form of government becomes destructive of the ends for which it was instituted, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to affect their safety and happiness." The Philosophic historian, when he shall come

to write the history of our times, will not be able to suppress a derisive smile, as he suggests that such a charge, coming from such a source against those who only sought to "dissolve the political bands which connected them with another people," vacates the very principle upon which the first American revolution was justified before the world, and convicts these parties of the very guilt they attempt to fasten upon us—and perhaps constructs a safe plea for England, if she should so please, to resume her rightful sway over a people who now confess the fatal sin of revolutionary sires. Upon this however it does not become me here to dwell. I base the vindication of the South upon a far older record than the Declaration of 1776, and assert her rights under a more authoritative charter than the Federal compact. I affirm then that in the organic law under which human governments were constituted by God, not *consolidation* but *separation* is recognized as the regulative and determining principle. If we ascend the stream of history to its source, we shall discover God dividing the earth between the sons of Noah, "every one after his tongue, after their families, in their nations"; and with such remarkable precision that to this day we can trace "the bounds of their habitations," even as they were originally appointed. Indeed, the outspreading landscape of all history is embraced within the camera of Noah's brief prophecy; showing how from the beginning God not only distributed them upon the face of the earth, but impressed upon each branch the type of character fitting it for its mission; Shem, as the conservator of religious truth; Japhet, as the organ of human civilization; and Ham as the drudge, upon whom rested the doom of perpetual servitude. Let it be observed, moreover, that the first public and recorded crime of Post-diluvian history was the attempt to thwart God's revealed purpose of separation, and to construct upon the plains of Shinar a consolidated Empire whose colossal magnitude should overshadow the Earth. "Go to," said they, "let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole Earth." The insane enterprize was only checked by the immediate intervention of Jehovah, breaking the unity of human speech, and thus separating the conspirators by the most impassable of all barriers. The explanation of all this lies upon the face of the story. Having covenanted with Noah that he would not a second time destroy mankind with a deluge, God must restrain human depravity that it may not rise again to the gigantic proportions of the Antediluvians. This is done by the institution of civil government; the germ of which was planted in the Death penalty, "whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," and that human magistracy might prove a more effective restraint upon wicked-

ness, the race is distributed into sections, each living under its own constitution, government and laws. These communities in their turn, check and restrain each other : and it has been by balancing nation against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, that God has held under a measure of restraint the super-abounding wickedness of the world.

When therefore we are aspersed before the tribunal of nations as "rebels" against the Federal Government, I leave the Statesman to lay his hand upon the great instruments drawn up by our forefathers and from them to justify the South ; but I ascend to that fundamental law, by which in the first organization of society God constituted civil government, and say that this law of separation is that "law of nature and of nature's God which entitles us to assume a separate and equal station among the powers of the Earth."

There are but two restrictions, so far as I am aware, upon the practical assertion of this abstract right. The first is, that old political ties shall not be sundered without cause ; for the perils of revolution are not to be encountered, nor are the foundations of civil order to be broken up, at the bidding of mere caprice. The second is, that no people shall adventure the hazards of a separate nationality, which does not possess within itself the elements of national greatness and strength : for the law of distribution established by God was never intended to break the race into fragments that should be incapable of government and self defense. As to the former of these, the South is prepared to carry her cause, with an unshrinking conscience, before any tribunal human or divine. As to the latter, she is now patiently upon her probation and will bide her time, I trust, without the quivering of a nerve, until her vacant seat is filled in the Congress of nations. With a broad land diversified by almost every variety of climate and soil, and rich in all the products which man needs for sustenance as well as in those great staples, which must yet control the commerce of the world, and with a race as heroic and enduring as ever took upon its spear the guage of battle, the South will not cower beneath the hardships by which a truly historic people proves itself worthy of a truly historic mission.

It is thus seen to have been the established policy of the Divine administration, from the first constitution of civil society, to govern the world by a balancing of power among the nations, through which a reciprocal restraint is exercised by them all. The same principle is further illustrated in his ordinary discipline over single States, thwarting the tendency to centralism which builds up massive and colossal empires. Through all time, nations have been formed first by agglutination, and then by separation. In their original weakness, the most heterogeneous elements are com-

bined, and held together by the pressure of necessity ; but in the lapse of time, concealed differences spring up which no political chemistry can make permanently to coalesce. No man, for example, can read the debates under which the the American Constitution was framed, without the conviction, that from the beginning two nations were in the womb —differing widely from each other in their social institutions, in their views of government, and in the very type of their civilization. The period of gestation might be long, but the time must arrive when they should come to the birth. Thus, by natural cleavage, a nation is often divided into two, whenever the mechanical pressure of an outside necessity becomes too full to resist the separating force between the discordant parts within. Not only so : history mournfully attests how rapidly a nation may outgrow its virtue ; until, corrupted by its own aggrandizement, it ceases to be a minister of God for good, and becomes a terror and a scourge to all mankind. In this event, but one alternative presents itself : either to let the bloated mass alone, until like the Roman empire, it falls to pieces through its own decay ; or, by a timely rupture, to weaken its power and set the dismembered parts upon a new career of virtue and of life. In this view, the rupture of this once great American nation is anything else than a public calamity. It had grown too great to be good. The prize of political ambition was too large for the virtue of our statesmen ; and God in his mercy has sundered it in twain, as the only method short of a miracle by which to save it from utter ruin, and allow another golden opportunity to fulfill the high mission undertaken by our fathers.

Casting my eyes upon the map of this continent, I confess to you my amazement at the egotism and folly which but a little while since I shared with all of my countrymen, in supposing that one nation could be virtuous enough to control such a territory. Already we had stretched our hands from sea to sea, and the whole boundless continent was in the grasp of our thought. Surely only the most overweening self love could have deluded us into the hope that such a domain could ever be the heritage of a single people. We have sinned against God in the idolatry of our history. We have looked out from our palaces and towers and said, “ Is not this great Babylon that we have built for the house of the kingdom, by the might of our power and for the honor of our majesty.” God has severely yet mercifully chastened this ambition ; and for one, I accept this great schism as the opening of a new career ; and pray God that the foundations of our public virtue may be laid deep in a sense of dependance upon his overruling providence and grace.

2. *We make our appeal to Him who rules beneath the rainbow, on the ground, that, touching this controversy between us and our foes,*

we are blameless. Our sins and the sins of our people before the God of heaven we sincerely confess and bewail ; acknowledging that "unto us, to our kings and to our princes belongeth confusion of face, as at this day." But, touching those who have drawn out the sword and are pursuing us with slaughter and with fire, our protest is in the language of the Apostle, "We have wronged no man, we have defrauded no man." Through the five and eighty years of our united history, we have never broken the covenant sworn for us by our fathers ; though a partial and unjust legislation has discriminated against us, turning the products of our fields into their coffers, and draining our wealth to build up the palaces of their merchant princes—not for causes like these have we dissolved the bonds of political alliance with them ; though a furious fanaticism has, through forty years, assailed our social organization, and threatened to light the fires of insurrection in our very homes ; though the ban of excommunication has been pronounced against us sitting side by side with them in the church of God, and they have industriously kindled against us the resentment of the civilized world for that which was originally fastened upon us through their cupidity alone : yet have we met this storm of rebuke and blasphemy only with cool argument and with written protests. Not until the last moment, when a sectional party elected upon a sectional platform avowed the purpose, by the power of legal majorities, to overthrow the entire framework of our society, did the South arise to acquit herself of the outrage meditated against her own posterity. And what at last is the crime for which we are now hunted as the partridge upon the mountains, and are libelled as rebels and traitors before the world ? Only the crime of a peaceful withdrawal from those who would not agree to walk with us in the faith and according to the covenants of our fathers. This absolutely is "the head and front of our offending ;" that as Abraham said to Lot, so we have said to them, "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen—separate thyself from me : if thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right ; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." We have never envied their prosperity, nor coveted their possessions ; we have never wasted their soil, nor pillaged their homes ; but, standing upon our own hearth and by the side of our own altars, we have poured forth the best blood of our land in defense simply of liberty and life. Never did a people enter upon war with greater reluctance than our own ; and, firmly as they prosecute it, when forced upon their acceptance, never would a people more gladly sheathe the sword and return once more to the pursuits of peace. Though our towns smouldering in ashes, our cities trodden by the heel of the oppressor ; though our

dismantled homes and pillaged fields ; though the graves of our martyred sons, and the silent grief which sits upon every shaded hearthstone, all make their mute appeals to us for retaliatory vengeance ; still, with the festering memory of a thousand wrongs which cannot be breathed even in whispers to the ear, this people would, before God, hail the kindly dove which should bear to them the olive branch of a safe and honorable peace. This is our pleading before Him who reads the secrets of all hearts, and who cannot be deceived by the mere protestations of the lips. Separated from the North by the recollection of wrongs, which cannot be forgotten so long as memory and tradition shall last—separated by a sea of blood, which now rolls its deep, broad flood between the two—separated by the tombs of our dead, rising up like a breastwork of defense around this consecrated land—separated, most of all, henceforth and forever by the decree of God worked out in solid and imperishable fact, the dream of reconstruction cherished by our foes is dissipated before the high resolve of our people as the mountain mist is dissolved before the morning sun. But a just peace, drawing after it the blessings of life, liberty and happiness, is the boon for which we daily pray before Him whose merciful prerogative it is to succor the oppressed and to bring the tyrant low.

3. *I derive consolation further from the marked interpositions of God in our favor, during the present struggle ; coupled with his frequent disappointment of some of our reasonable expectations.* The stress of the argument lies in the intersection of these two correlated facts. One of the most remarkable features of this war has been the utter failure in the prognostications of some of our most sagacious statesmen. Calculations based upon the most settled principles of political economy, or founded upon the largest diplomatic experience, have fallen to the ground ; hopes antecedently the most reasonable, time has more or less completely shown to be fallacious. It was thought by many, in the outset, that the revolution would be accomplished without unsheathing the sword or spilling one drop of human blood. The expectation was one to which the civilization, not to say the religion, of the age should have responded. Then it was urged that cotton would assert its vaunted supremacy, and the embargo upon our ports would bring the world as suitors to our door. Then, that European jealousy of American expansion would seize the occasion for the humiliation of a hated rival, by the immediate recognition of the dismembered fragment of that proud empire. Then it was whispered that French sympathy and the Napoleonic policy would bring the expected intervention, and commerce once more find its healthful circulation through our unsealed harbors. When all these failed, men turned their eyes upon our foes themselves, and mulctured the greedy despotism of

the North will tumble of itself, and the West take reprisals upon the greedy East by the assertion of its own independence. Then, that in the stoppage of all trade, the hungry mob would turn upon the guilty administration by which it was deceived, which should experience the fate of Acteon and be eaten by its own hounds. Then, that in the scramble for political ascendancy, the overslaughed Democracy of the North would raise the banner of peace, and beneath its graceful folds ride again into power. All, all of them genuine vaticinations of what seemed a trustworthy oracle; but all remaining to be fulfilled in the dim, uncertain future; or else silenced under the frown of the grim, relentless fanaticism which, like the Hindoo Siva, rules that land as the destroyer.

Here, then, is one class of facts which, taken by themselves, would seem to infer that we are deserted of God—given over to feed upon the wind, lured on by false hopes to be snared in a more fatal ruin. But over against these lie the frequent and wonderful interpositions of Providence in our behalf, which have wrung the testimony even from scepticism itself, “the Lord is our helper—we will not fear what man shall do unto us.” Consider, if you will, the strange and sudden unanimity of our people, the instant merging of all party feuds when this great issue was declared. Consider the spirit of madness and folly which fell upon our foes in proclaiming war, when a wise forbearance would have drawn a cordon around the seven seceding States, but which precipitated six others into our embrace and bared Virginia’s noble breast to meet the scars and shock of battle. Consider the character of the rulers, military and civil, whom God has appointed to shape the destinies of this new Republic; and the execution upon our enemies of his heaviest judgment against a people, in giving “children to be their princes and babes to rule over them.” Consider, too, the confusion in the camps of our enemies, the rapid suspension of their Generals, the collision between rival chiefs upon the threshold of important movements, and most of all, the delays which have embarrassed their advance, when a sudden dash would have placed in their possession the very keys of our Southern coast. Consider the uniform success of our arms in all the pitched battles of a two years’ campaign, and in which the destiny of this young nation trembled in the balance—and how these brilliant victories have come out of the thickest gloom, and rolled back the despair which was beginning to settle upon the hearts even of the brave. Over and beyond all, consider the outpouring of God’s spirit and the revival of true religion in the camps of our soldiery, and the conversion of such multitudes to the faith of Jesus. But to recount these Providential interpositions would be to recite the details of our long and gallant struggle, from the siege of Sumter to

the second great triumph upon the banks of the Rappahannock. Placing yourselves, then, upon the crest of these contrary, yet overlapping facts, what inference can a pious faith deduce other than this, that God is now disciplining us for a career of renown? In all the disappointment of our most reasonable and cherished expectations, he seems but the more to charge himself with our defense. I cherish the conviction, with all the tenacity of a religious belief, that God is about to vindicate the supremacy of his own power in the establishment of our independence. And it seems to me most fitting, that at the precise juncture when he introduces a balance of power upon this Western Continent, he should renew the salutary lesson taught by all history, that "the Most high ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."

4. *The North cannot succeed in its enterprise against the South, except through the perpetration of a double crime without a parallel in the annals of the world.* I call that a double crime which involves the extermination both of the white and of the black race now upon the soil. The alternative is often submitted to the mind, in the event of defeat, of subjugation or extermination, but practically they shade into each other. Unless I have mistaken the temper of our people, they have definitively made up their minds to be destroyed sooner than be conquered. Their resolution and courage have risen steadily with the magnitude of the struggle; and I cannot conceive of such a race as consenting to wear the yoke of bondage. The conflict will be waged even against the conquerors, in the fastnesses of the mountain or in the recesses of the forest, until the last defender shall sleep in a martyr's grave.

But, setting this view aside as too extreme, have we duly considered what is involved in the milder term, subjugation? This war is but the culmination of a parliamentary conflict, protracted already through more than forty years; a conflict in which the spirit of agrarianism has entered upon the fearful struggle with the spirit of order and of law. When it shall triumph, its victory will be celebrated amid orgies, over which the devils might afford to blush. When the guillotine and sword grow too weary for their work, confiscation and exile will come with their merciful relief. The banished sons of the South will wander in poverty over the earth, whilst their vacant lands invite a horde of agrarian settlers from the lean and rocky globe of the Northman. The Vandal and the Hun will swarm again upon the fair plains of Italy: and, in our generation, the proud and gallant race which now lifts its crest beneath our Southern skies will have melted like a drift of snow, and not a stone will mark the place of its burial. Yes, turn it over as you will, defeat means extermination, and that alone: whether it comes in the murder of the battle-field, where the brave

love to fall ; or in the slow consumption which wastes an exiled people, when proscription and banishment have spilled them both to perish on a foreign soil. For my own part, I prefer not to live if my country be not free. Let us hold it firmly before our eyes—let us flaunt it in the face of our foes, that their success can only be achieved through a deed of blood such as never yet has stained the page of human history. A nation has prepared itself for martyrdom.

But what shall be said of the other branch of this alternate crime ? If the experience of the past teaches anything with certainty, it is the fact that, except in the condition of servitude, an inferior race cannot be intermingled with a superior, without annihilation. Under our patriarchal system, the descendants of Ham have thriven in the midst of us, expanding in a couple of centuries from a few thousands to four millions. Their destiny is involved in ours. The morbid philanthropy of the North, which underlies this whole contest as its provoking cause, can work out no other result to them than absolute destruction. The foretaste of this is found in the heartless cruelty which already gives to such as are captured only the liberty to fight. Marshalled into ranks, they are made the breastwork of defense around their white allies ; and the bayonet and the sword are expected to solve the problem of what shall be done with a race who must not be slaves and who cannot be freemen. Alas, for them ! when their protectors shall lie beneath the sod, and a hard, grinding, utilitarian race shall become the masters of the soil ! If the fate of the red man be not theirs, borne upon the flood of white immigration till they are buried in the waters of the Gulf, the slow decay of Mexican peonage will steal upon them by the inch, until the triple scourge of indolence, disease and vice shall sweep them from the earth. My Hearers, whatever may be the complexion of our political guilt, drawing upon our heads the consuming vengeance of heaven, what have these poor sheep done, that these butchers should drive them to the slaughter, and make the earth reel beneath the weight of this stupendous crime ? I confess to you that if this be the fate of the African, I am at a loss to understand the meaning of that Providence which brought him to our shores, and made him thus a member of the household of faith ; and I feel that He who rules the earth beneath the emerald rainbow will forefend this doom of the slave, by the preservation of the master, who, under divine appointment, stands his guardian and his friend. It was said with great power by my brother who preceded me this morning, that in this Southern land the church of God had never been permitted to corrupt the truth committed to her care. I feel the consolation of that suggestive utterance, for I have already argued that a pure church is as the ark of God in the bosom of a nation. But I advance a step further.

and ask, whether four millions of heathen in the arms of this Southern church to be evangelized and saved may not be held as a pledge from the God of the church, that the land shall be spared in which those heathen dwell, until that church shall fulfill its work in training them for the kingdom of glory? It is not reserved to this day, so near the promised millenium, to burden the record of human history with a two-fold crime, which maketh the ears of him that heareth it to tingle.

5. *Finally, our cause is pre-eminently the cause of God himself, and every blow struck by us is in defense of His supremacy.* A thought so solemn should be uttered with due moderation of language, but not in language tamely beneath the majesty of the fact. This causeless and wicked war, on the part of our foes, is born simply of opposition to God and his kingly supremacy over the earth. A bold and infidel fanaticism has assumed to sit in judgment upon the Divine administration. Ignorant of those checks and balances by which God governs the universe, it proposes its puny reforms to rectify the glaring defects it has discovered in the whole economy of Providence. Bounding the patience of the Deity by the measures of their own forbearance, they allow nothing for the scope of that infinite wisdom which sets evil over against evil in this fallen world, and works out the results of a grand probation. In a single instant, and by a predetermined, human theory, the whole machinery of justice and law must be readjusted, or the universe will be laid in ruins at his feet. It is the old story of the vain mortal who undertook to guide the chariot of the sun. This it is, my Hearers, which lends such awful sanctity to our war, that the prerogatives and rights of the Divine Ruler of the world are distinctly implicated. In other ages, nations have often fought for independence and liberty, for the altars and the graves of their fathers, and for the more sacred rights of conscience and freedom to worship God. But we are summoned to stand as sentinels around Jehovah's throne, and to strike against those who have openly impeached his morality and denounced as profligate his government of the universe. Grand as the contest is when our firesides and altars are the stake, it rises into the sublime and awful when we strike for the rights of God and vindicate the honesty of his reign. This will fully explain why the ministers of the Gospel throughout this land have borne a distinguished part in this momentous struggle. It is not simply under the impulse of a lofty patriotism, grand as that sentiment may be: but out of loyalty to God, against whose rightful supremacy a wicked infidelity has lifted its rebellious arm. The moral aspect of this controversy they, at least, understand: and much as they desire their country to be free, with an infinitely deeper fervor do they desire that God should reign. What people, since the

days of the ancient theocracy, ever had such cause to feel that the battle is not theirs, but God's? Let us take shelter beneath the shadow of His throne. God will assert our liberties in the assertion of his rights. He that will not give his glory to another, will not abdicate his power at the bidding of a lawless fanaticism, nor yield his robust justice a prey to a mawkish and sentimental philanthropy. We lay our nation at his feet, and bide his arbitration through the ordeal of battle.

Such are some of the grounds on which I base the conviction that God is dealing with us, not in judgment, but in discipline. It is a day of sore and bitter trial, in which sorrow comes to every home. But it is also a heroic day in which to live. The sacrifices we lay upon the altar of our country are sacrifices laid upon the altar of our God. Patriotism is sanctified by religion and is supported by its faith. We are learning in the same school of suffering with our heroic forefathers, that liberty is better than gold, and honor more precious than fortune. Let our people understand that this war is henceforth simply a question of endurance and of will. The old Saxon word, *toughness*, expresses exactly the quality upon which, under God, all depends. If we have not the nerve to bear immensely more than we have yet borne, we are not worthy to be free. Nations, like men, are made compact and enduring through discipline. Let us have faith in God and in the future; and from our heroism shall spring sons and daughters capable of immortal destinies. Nothing great is ever wrought without faith. The men in all ages who have made history have been men of faith—men who could hide a great principle deep in their hearts, and work it out as a potential and substantive fact, and await the verdict of posterity. Believing in the grand and the true, they could put their heel upon the present, and lifting up the curtain which hides the far-off future from other men, they drew up that future by a magnetic attraction to themselves, and lived abreast of it. Let the pulse of a generous and sanctified patriotism beat in our breasts—doing our whole duty to ourselves, our country and our God, and leaving the issue with Him who sits upon the sapphire throne and rules the world encircled with the bow of his mercy.