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COMFORT IN TRIBULATION.

AN ADDRESS

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REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH, STAPLETON, S. I.,

SEPTEMBER 26th, 1861,

A DAY KEPT AS A NATIONAL FAST,

BY APPOINTMENT OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

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BY THOMAS H. SKINNER, Jr.
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New-York :

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH, 683 BROADWAY.

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STAPLETON, Sept. 30th, 1861.

Rev. THOMAS H. SKINNER, Jr. :

DEAR SIR : The undersigned, who listened with great satisfaction to your admirable and timely Address delivered on the recent Fast-Day, September 26th, deeming a wider circulation of so thorough and able a resumé of questions now agitating the country, most desirable, respectfully and earnestly solicit a copy of the same for publication. Encouraged by your well-known and intelligent patriotism, we sincerely hope that you will accede to our request, and oblige many friends, who, in common with yourself, love, labor, and pray for our beloved country's triumph over the most wicked and causeless of rebellions, and for her peace and prosperity.

Yours very respectfully,

J. H. SINCLAIR,
DAVID THOMPSON,
WILLIAM SHAW,
SAMUEL WANN,
ELWOOD TAYLOR,
J. T. VAN VLECK,
R. L. ALLEN,

E. A. LUDLOW,
A. N. GUNN, M.D.,
JOHN R. SMITH,
WM. HOWELL TAYLOR,
JOHN D. DIX,
E. S. SAXTON,
T. C. MOFFAT, M.D.

STAPLETON, Oct. 1st, 1861.

Messrs. J. H. SINCLAIR, DAVID THOMPSON, and others :

GENTLEMEN : The Address which you ask for was designed only for the Pulpit ; yet I reluctantly yield it to your disposal, hoping that its publication may, to some extent, further the object for which it was prepared.

Respectfully yours,

THOS. H. SKINNER, JR.

COMFORT IN TRIBULATION.

THE Chief Magistrate of the nation has summoned it to the public observance of a day of humiliation, prayer, and fasting. He has done this not merely at the bidding of his own heart and conscience, but at the request of both houses of our national Legislature, made to him in a very unusual form, through a joint committee. Never were the people more solemnly called upon to acknowledge their dependence upon the Supreme Ruler by the confession of their sins, and the supplication of his favorable interposition. With all our hearts and minds we should respond to the summons, and in the sanctuaries of Divine worship confess and deplore our sins, and accept the humiliation of our pride and self-confidence, adoring the justice and imploring the mercy of the Most High.

Called, in the providence of God, to address you to-day, I am not unconscious of the responsibility thus imposed upon me; and with deference, though with no distrust of their truthfulness and importance, submit to your candor the statements and considerations which I have prepared.

Should the line of thought be somewhat different from your anticipation, and present more cheerful hopes and prospects than you have been inclined to indulge, it will, I trust, embrace reasons why you should not hastily set them aside as unworthy of your acceptance. Ordinary civilians are confessedly incom-

petent to form just judgments of military and naval plans and projects previous to their development and execution, but they ought not to be incapable of appreciating the moral and spiritual principles which justify on our part the colossal struggle that is now shaking the nation to its center. It is by these, and by these alone, that the national heart can sustain itself amid the clouds and darkness that overhang the country. If the ground on which this Union rests is composed of merely material elements; if its territory and rivers and oceans and lakes, its iron and gold and lead and copper, its trade and commerce and wealth and population, its laws and treaties and armies and navies—if these constitute the basis of our hope, our bulwark and defense, we do well to be alarmed and despondent. But if all these rest upon a deeper foundation; if the inner life of our Union and liberties is spiritual and divine; if the historic strength of the nation is religious and Christian—then we may be assured that our present tribulation will not only be temporary, but that it will purify and adorn the sacred temple of human liberty which God has erected upon this continent. Thus may the waters of strong consolation be struck from the spiritual Rock on which our Constitution and Union and all our material power are founded. God's hand in this vast and terrible insurrection is lifted up on high, and that with a design, which, unlike the writing on the wall of Balshazzar's palace, needs no inspired prophet to interpret. The monster, conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, which has essayed to undermine and demolish the stately fabric of our freedom, confined and surrounded as by a wall of fire, we may be confident, will sting and consume itself; and the power be taken from all who worship the beast, to destroy or ultimately to hurt in all this holy heritage of God.

We have been so long accustomed to almost every form of national advancement, that the precious lessons of adversity taught by our early history are forgotten. We have lost sight

of the great truth, that there are often richer blessings in calamity and change than in constant success: so that when the clouds of adversity lower over us, and the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon our political structure, we tremble for its safety, and with it that of all our interests and hopes, as though its foundations were as the sand. When our pride is brought low by malignant and wide-spread rebellion, when our assured confidence of perpetual peace under our Constitution is dashed by fratricidal war, and we are bitterly humbled in disgraceful defeats, not only before our guilty foes, but before the civilized world; when the tide of wealth and grandeur ebbs, and disaster waits upon our commerce, trade, business, and enterprise, then we are cast down and overwhelmed, as though God had forsaken us, and we were brought to the verge of inevitable destruction. A temporary defeat depresses us; a slight success elates us; we are tossed up and down on the bloody sea through which we are sailing, and are deaf to the voice of our covenant Guardian walking upon the waters and saying: "It is I, be not afraid." We fail to perceive that in the providence of God, substantially the same principles and precisely the same elements of character which gave courage, endurance, and self-sacrifice to England in her wars with Napoleon, to this country in her conflict with England, to Holland in her struggles with Spain, abound in our nation to-day, and are as mighty to sustain and encourage us as ever they have been to animate others in the past. We need to be taught over again the lessons which our fathers learnt. We need to go through the furnace of affliction, and receive the rebukes of our Sovereign Ruler. The nation, as well as the man, whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth. As we bow beneath his rod, let us kiss the hand that smites us, and with childlike and trusting hearts, let us bless him for his correcting love, and rejoice that he counts us worthy of the sufferings to which he calls us,

and of the glory which, through these sufferings, he is yet to reveal in us as a great and powerful people.

The war in which we are now involved is sometimes viewed as the stern judgment of God for our national sins. It is said that the Divine forbearance is exhausted; that the cup of our iniquity is full; that the day of recompense has come, and the iron scepter of Justice is raised against us; already are we being broken in pieces as a potter's vessel; our glory is departed; our virtue has faded; and this people once so proud and arrogant and defiant, must yield before the imperious dictation of rebellion, and the broken, distracted, crushed North must be divided and distracted still more to give way to the power whose chief strength is the enslavement of a race for whom Christ died. For one, I can not kneel before God to-day under such impressions. I do not doubt that our country deserves destruction from the hand of God. If he should deal with us according to our sins, our fate would not be unjust, though the land should be rocked with an earthquake, and the ground open and swallow up every inhabitant of it. Our sins, as a people and as a nation, are very great and numerous—enhanced by our superior light and blessings. We have no desire to cloak or to extenuate them. Intemperance, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, opposition to parental restraint, covetousness, ambition, pride, arrogance, self-confidence, neglect of the Bible, free-thinking, sectional bitterness and partisan strife, corruption at the very fountain-head of State and National administration, accompanied, in instances not a few, with perjury, falsehood, treachery; and slavery—not as a relation between master and servant, regulated by the Bible, but as a system of human bondage, perverted to individual, sectional, and national aggrandisement. I need not enlarge the catalogue. Our sins, both in their nature and in their number, are great beyond our thought, and merit the severest judgments of Heaven. There is no doubt on this point, and we can not confess and bewail them too heartily.

But our sins, however great, do not surpass the power and riches of God's grace. We need not, we ought not to despair. The confession of sin is one of the declared conditions and warrants of the Divine mercy. When every loyal Christian, every thoughtful citizen thus feels and speaks, and when the sentiment finds unfeigned utterance in both Houses of Congress, and universal expression through the solemn proclamation of the President, and the doors of tens of thousands of churches are opened, in humble acknowledgment of our sins and of our dependence, surely we may and ought to believe that God has neither forsaken nor forgotten us. If there is joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, what joy must there be at the humiliation and sorrow, the penitence and prayers of this young Christian nation, when God raises his hand to chastise them ! Without a murmur at the terrible Divine judgment, the people accept it, and think only of their sins as the cause of our deep national shame and grief, and bow before their offended Ruler and Benefactor, craving his forgiveness and protection. And while they prosecute the tremendous conflict with energy and unanimity, they do it with no malignant or vindictive spirit, but in the spirit of lofty patriotism and religious duty, seeking neither the humiliation of the South, but simply the preservation of the Constitution and the Union, and the restoration of their fellow-citizens in that revolted region to the protection and blessings of the Republic.

But there are other aspects in which the present state of our country may be viewed. The strife is mainly between two geographical sections, the South and the North. Doubtless there have been sins peculiar to each division, for which God may have a controversy with us. Easy were it certainly to draw out a long catalogue of the wrongs of the South, both against the North and against her own slave population. But I refrain myself, and speak only of their latest and greatest wrong, their rebellion against the Government and the Union

of the country—a wrong and a crime whose Divine judicial treatment carries with it the punishment of all their other sins, and whatever may be the troubles of the North, there remains no place for doubt that the direst consequences, the permanent resulting evils of this war will be chiefly upon the infatuated insurgents themselves. The leaders who prepared the South for rebellion, or rather prepared rebellion for the South, and precipitated her into it, did not dream of the colossal, determined, and deadly struggle in which they now are inextricably involved. In their blindness they counted upon a short conflict and an easy victory. They counted upon a weak administration, a divided North, and foreign recognition and intervention. But God would not have it so; the enormity of their crime forbade it. Their long preparations, their willing or forced union, their vast armies, their unexpected victories, have not helped them. Their task increases in magnitude every day. As their sufferings and deprivations accumulate, the demand for greater sacrifices and supplies increases. As their wants multiply, their means diminish. Shut out from all the world, and shut into themselves; without manufactures and the arts, without mechanics and artisans, without money and credit; with three million six hundred thousand bond slaves dependent on them, and thirsting for freedom; with a sparsely settled population, and relatively difficult intercommunication—having, with an area of nearly 800,000 square miles, less than 8000 miles of railroad—without a navy, and every port blockaded, and every comfort and necessary of life from the North and from Europe interdicted—in these circumstances they are compelled to wage this war against the government of the country supported by the people with an unanimity and zeal unexampled in the history of mankind, six millions against twenty-three. That government was indeed disabled and prostrate; its army was scattered upon our most distant borders; its navy dispersed over remote seas; its munitions of war were trans-

ferred to the South; its subordinate offices were filled with traitors and spies, and the people were divided by the bitterest partisan strife known in our history, so that there seemed for a few months, a possibility of success on the part of the South. But all this is now changed; and what the rebellion could not do when we were weakest and it was strongest, it must now attempt when parties have disappeared from among us, and the people are fused into one glowing mass of patriotic fervor and devotion; when the treasure of the country, never so abundant, is laid at the feet of the Government; when the navy has returned and is greatly augmented, and the army is strengthened by hundreds of thousands, purged of its traitorous officers, nerved by defeat, and made courageous by discipline, and supplied and able to keep itself supplied with all the munitions of war; when our communications with the world are free, and among ourselves, with an area about the same as that of the South, facilitated by more than 23,500 miles of railroad; when the spirits of the people, saddened and depressed for a time by the almost universal repudiation of Southern debts, are quickened by the return of confidence, by the general revival of business, by the ready employment of capital augmented by the immense outlays of the Government, by the sympathies of foreign powers, and by the safety from hostile invasion of every port and every foot of territory in the free States. Surely the prospect for the South is sufficiently appalling. The heart sickens at the contemplation of the things that must be coming upon them. The cloud that overhangs them skirts their whole horizon, and we can see no silver lining to it. Their trade and commerce and credit are destroyed; the productions of their soil are rendered valueless; their people are impoverished; their choicest population are sacrificed on the battle-field and in the hospital; their territory is being overrun with hostile armies, before whose tramp, farms, houses, villages, whole counties are wasted and destroyed; the

foundations of their social fabric are upheaving, a reign of terror impends over them—and this is only the beginning of their sorrows. Are we mistaken when we regard this war as the natural result, the judicial penal consequence of the deep conspiracy, of the systematic fraud, perfidy, perjury, treachery, plunder, and falsehood, in which this rebellion was conceived and born, by which it has been cherished, strengthened, and fashioned into a hideous monster, from which the civilized world draws back with horror? Why should any one look upon the war as the death-knell of the nation? It must needs be that offenses come, but woe unto them by whom they come.

It is not to be doubted that God has matter of controversy with the North for sins against the South. I need not speak of the course of Northern presses and pulpits and orators in their self-righteous attacks upon Christian and other slaveholders in the South, or criticise the course of some Northern States in their legislation against the return of fugitive slaves, or condemn the reluctance and refusal of individual citizens to execute the law of the land for such return, or remark upon the seeming or real injustice of our tariffs, of our fishing-bounties, or of our navigation laws. God may be visiting us for these things, and doubtless we deserve much on these accounts. But there is one aspect, especially, in which we have sinned against the South, to which we should give our earnest thought. We have blamed the South for their spirit of aggression upon the soil and principles of freedom. I think they have sinned greatly, but they have sinned under strong temptations and through the connivance and the aid of the North. We led the South to the brink of the precipice over which they have plunged. The North has lacked moral courage to do her duty. She has sought peace before principle. She has preferred material interest and prosperity to determined vindication of the vital principles of our Constitution and Union.

She has been timid and fearful, and even cowardly in matters of highest, sternest duty. In almost every sectional controversy she has yielded to slavery. Nay, sometimes she has led forward that too willing power in new demands, and sacrificed Freedom on her strange altars. The North has acquiesced, with no indignant protests, no settled opposition against them, in Ostend Manifestos, Cuban and Central American expeditions of territorial conquest, and the steady increase of the slave-trade in her own ports. Rather than have trouble, we yielded, till our forbearance not only ceased to be a virtue, but became a flagrant crime.

Look at a brief historical sketch made vivid in the lurid light of this war. The freedom and personal independence of every man, the right of all to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, were the spirit and the glory of our national charter; and the fathers were of one mind and heart concerning slavery. It was doomed in their purpose and plan. In the year 1787, a vast territory, embracing 239,349 square miles, was ceded to the United States by Virginia. By the unanimous vote of Congress, the whole of it was forever consecrated to freedom. In 1793, the cotton-gin was invented, and an impulse was given to the culture of the staple by slave-labor, such that slavery gradually became a great financial, political, and social power, and was regarded by many no longer a curse and a blot, but a source of strength and growth. At once a change in the policy of the South was inaugurated, and the struggle for dominion between Freedom and Slavery began. The two powers almost immediately came into conflict. Such enactments as that of 1787 were impossible. In 1800 Georgia ceded to the United States nearly 98,000 square miles of territory lying between her western boundary and the Mississippi. The entire cession was yielded to slavery. In 1803, the nation purchased of Napoleon the boundless territories lying between the Mississippi and the Rocky Mountains. Freedom did not dare to spread

her banner over this immense region. She compromised with her foe, and by running a line along the parallel of $36^{\circ} 30'$, because they threatened secession and dissolution, consigned Louisiana, Arkansas, and Missouri forever to the labor of enslaved Africans. Just before, we purchased Florida from Spain, and allowed slavery to preside over and control her destinies. Next came the war with Mexico and the struggle over free Texas. Slavery demanded this immense area, 225,000 square miles of fertile lands, and to this demand added that of the right to create five slave States out of that virgin territory. After a show of resistance, the North again yielded, and slavery triumphed. Emboldened by success, and confident of her power, the South then required a more stringent fugitive-slave law, and when the North hesitated to grant it, the threat of disunion prevailed over her reluctance, and to avoid trouble and to keep the peace it was enacted. Her next aggression was upon the territories, which we, trusting to her honor, thought were forever safe for freedom. But slavery was now strong and imperious; it demanded, under the old threat, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise line; and, rather than have conflict, the North joined hands with it and broke up the sacred compact. And the Supreme Court of the United States, in contravention of the whole current of our legislation, in the Dred Scott decision, cemented and sealed this wicked deed. And then, lest the South should be offended and secede, the North withheld the "Wilmot proviso," for freedom from the entire territorial possessions of the nation. And, as if her own honor and dignity were not enough, she offered and gave to the South guarantees against all future amendments of the Constitution adverse to the interests of slavery. "Every judicial and legislative issue on this question, with the single exception of the final admission of Kansas, that has ever been raised before Congress, has been decided in

favor of the South."* Since the beginning of the century the conflict has been going on between Freedom and Slavery, and the issues have been as just recited. Wherever slavery could go, the South has said it must go, and freedom has been allowed only where slavery could not come. But, blessed be God, this record is closed. The North has put down her foot and said to slavery, Thus far hast thou come, but thou shalt go no farther. Slavery is remanded back to the position it held in 1788, when the Constitution was adopted. Well had it been for the North and the nation if it had said and done this long ago; but by an amazing fatuity, by a spirit of timid forbearance, if not of moral cowardice, it tempted and encouraged the South, yielding every thing to the growing exactions of the slave power. If the country was to be saved for freedom and humanity, is the war a strange thing? Is it not manifestly the judicial result of our own pusillanimity and faithlessness to the fundamental principle and law of the nation? While the South has not one word of complaint to utter as against the Federal Government, which she herself has administered during nearly the whole of our history, the North may well hang down her head in shame, and wonder that the visitation has been so long deferred. For the sake of outward peace and prosperity she has sacrificed the inalienable rights of the African race upon the continent; she has sacrificed the duties she owed to posterity; she has sacrificed the duties she owed to the vast emigration from foreign lands; she has sacrificed the duties she owed to the virgin soil which God had given her, to sanctify and bless. Moral principle, humanity, conscience have been strained to their utmost tension, and had more been yielded, I verily believe those mystic cords would have been snapped, the nation would have perished, and the crown and scepter of empire would have passed from the Queen of Liberty to the dark and dreadful Demon of Slavery. This war, then, while it is

* Mr. Everett.

doubtless God's judgment upon the North for her lack of moral courage, is, we assuredly believe, the hope of America. The loss of hundreds of millions of treasure, and thousands of precious lives on the battle-field and in the camp will gain for the continent universal freedom. What humanity, patriotism, piety must hereafter say to the South, should have been said from the beginning: "Your constitutional rights, historically and judicially declared, shall be granted you, fairly, freely, fully, but in the behalf of slavery *no more*." If the spirit of the statesmen who enacted the ordinance forever forbidding slavery in the North-western Territory; if the spirit of Clay, who said, "Let my arm wither in its socket, before I raise it to vote for the extension of American slavery;"* if the spirit of Webster, who solemnly declared, "Under no circumstances will I consent to the further extension of the area of slavery in the United States;" if this spirit had been that of the North, firmly, manfully insisted upon, the South would never have made or pressed her demands; and what a different record would have been that of the history of this country!

But, however blameworthy the North has been as toward the South, another view, that should sustain and encourage us in the present emergency of our beloved country, is the rectitude and the necessity of the war on the part of the *Federal Administration*. *That has been at no fault in this matter*. Never was a more necessary and a more righteous war than the present, so far as the government is concerned. Our Chief Magistrate, as the nation's head and representative, said, with simple truth, in his inaugural address: "In your hands, my dissatisfied fellow-citizens, in yours and not in mine, is the momentous issue of civil war. The Government will not assail you; you can have no conflict without being yourselves the aggressors. You have no oath registered in heaven to destroy the govern-

* Quoted from memory.

ment, while I shall have the most solemn one to 'preserve, protect, and defend it.'" And Mr. Holt thus affirmed the same truth: "It is not a war of conquest, or of aggression, or of submission, or of passion, or of revenge, but in every light in which it can be regarded, it is a war of *duty*." And when God imposes upon a nation such a duty, it requires no revelation to assure them of the Divine coöperation and blessing in their attempts to discharge it. We have no choice in the matter: a necessity is laid upon us; woe is unto us if we do not fight. The war is not of our seeking; it is forced upon us. We endeavored to avoid it. We yielded almost every thing to avoid it, trenching even upon honor, conscience, and humanity. We were incredulous as to the designs of the malcontents, even to the very last. We could not believe that a deadly assault was to be made upon the sacred ark of human liberties and hopes — the freest, the mildest, the best government God ever gave to this fallen race. We could not believe that men, whose oaths were registered in heaven to support and defend it, who had been educated, honored, trusted, and cherished by it, who for years had sat in the Cabinet and in the high council chamber of the nation, and who had won their fame under its banner, would actually attempt its overthrow. We shut our eyes to the most palpable proofs of conspiracy, perjury, plunder, and treason on their part, for we could not believe that a people whom the government had never betrayed or harmed a hair of their head, into whose lap it had poured unmingled blessings without stint, would forsake their own mercies and join in the diabolical outrage. And even when they struck the fatal blow, and the nation sprang to its feet, and shook off its lethargy, and lifted its voice of warning to the South, we were still incredulous, and only through a bloody defeat and a shameful rout have we been made absolutely conscious of the stupendous truth.

Never among men has there been such a causeless, detesta-

ble, atrocious rebellion. We must go to another world to find its parallel. Nowhere can we find it, except as we read in God's Book that vast numbers of spirits, living under an absolutely perfect government, exalted and blest to the very limit of their capacities, in the pride and madness of their hearts attempted its overthrow, and sought to establish a dominion of their own among themselves. Not that I would compare any human government with the Divine, only I think that the union of law and liberty, and the recognition of individual rights and worth, approximate nearer to those of heaven in this than in any other country in the world; so that the guilt of this Southern conspiracy has no rival, so far as is known, save that of the rebel angels. Indomitable pride and lust of dominion produced them both; they are alike excuseless and profane, and the day of both is coming. The path of our duty, therefore, is as plain as a revelation could make it. It is, by every energy we possess, with all our heart and soul and mind and strength, to crush out, to annihilate this rebellion. The only guilt that can surpass that of this gigantic treason, would be that of its allowance. Cost what it may of material prosperity, of treasure, and of life, come what may as the consequences of the effort, our one duty, as plain as the moral law, is to support our Government, preserve our Constitution, maintain our Union, and transmit this Divine heritage of freedom to posterity undiminished and untarnished. We can not falter, unless we are prepared to plunge ourselves and countless myriads of our fellow-men into an abyss of infamy from which we can never emerge, and give to the enormous iniquity of this rebellion a kind of justification. In the recollection of the sacrifices and sufferings, sorrows and blood, which purchased our liberties, with the noble example of our ancestors before us, with the eyes of the civilized world upon us, with the hopes of unborn generations committed to us, with inexhaustible means and resources at

our command, with right and honor, duty and God on our side, shall we hesitate, shall we yield, shall we despond? No. The battle is not ours, but God's; and as certainly as he put down the rebellion in heaven, so surely, if we are not faithless to the most sacred trust ever committed to a people, will he destroy this monster rebellion, and preserve our nationality and liberties.

I had purposed, in the next place, to speak of the revealed fact, that God's dealings with nations have varied relations and objects, and that it is the extreme of folly to fix our minds upon one, and that the darkest and most improbable, to the exclusion of others; but time warns me to hasten to my last topic, upon which I beg you to bear with me a few minutes. I refer to the connection of the present war with slavery. That this institution, as legalized in the South, pervading with its poisoned virus every stratum and ramification of society, coloring and vitalizing laws, politics, customs, opinions, domestic habits, lifting high its head and spreading wide its arms, laying one of its iron hands on the continent of Africa and the other on that of America—that slavery is the real cause of the rebellion which has shaken the nation to its center, no one of us doubts. I know that the opposition to it which prevails throughout Europe, and has been steadily increasing at the North, is charged with originating and fomenting our troubles. I do not deny that many persons among us have been unwise and unchristian in their proceedings against it. But if resistance to its exorbitant demands for territory and dominion, to its rendering of the Constitution, to its new and arrogant claims of Divine authority and fundamental necessity as the base and corner-stone of the best human government—if such resistance is the cause of the present war, I think the war a good one, and am willing to bear my share of its responsibility and its burdens.

If slavery is not an evil and a curse, but a divinely blessed

institution, even then its revolt against the Government, under such opposition as it has received, is altogether without extenuation. Slavery with God and humanity on its side, could have borne and ought to have borne ten-fold the agitation it has had from the North. That which is true, good, and divine, is honored and built up, not hurt and irritated by trials like this. But slavery can not brook agitation; it avoids discussion; it allows neither free speech nor a free press; it hates the light, neither cometh to the light, and whatever tends to expose its real character and actings is forbidden. Only on the supposition that there is a deep and essential wrong in its very nature, can we understand and interpret its conduct. It does not act like innocence, and the opposition it has encountered has only revealed the tenacious grasping and domineering spirit that animates and sustains the system.

With relatives and friends in the South, with deep sympathies for its humane, moral, and Christian population, in common with many others, I have ever refused to denounce them for holding slaves, or to esteem them sinners above all that dwell in our favored land. I entertain the same views to-day; indeed, my sympathies are even more profound and tender; and I would be the last to bring a railing accusation against them; but the history of the past ten months has poured a lurid light upon the whole system of American slavery, and made revelations concerning it to which no patriot can be blind. The attitude of the people of the South to the system is changed. Their position is reversed. The power has passed from them to restrain, guide, and control the system, and now slavery animates, molds, and controls them. It is as supreme over the master as over the slave. Like Romanism, it overshadows, fascinates, and enthralls its votaries, rendering them powerless to resist its subtle, fatal influences. While we thus distinguish between the system and the persons under it, let us remember that this distinction goes far to mitigate the guilt of individuals.

We all feel that the subjects of Romanism are to be pitied as much as they are to be blamed. And if you and I were in the South, possibly we should be led captive by slavery at its will. In such times a remnant, according to election, may be reserved unto loyalty, but only a remnant. Let us not judge the masses harshly. As clay is in the hands of the potter, so are they in its hand. While we condemn the system, we can pity and pray for the enthralled people.

Surveying the South a year ago, looking into its homes and churches, into its schools and colleges, observing its culture and refinement, we should all have pronounced such a rebellion as that which now assails the very life and being of the nation, an utter impossibility. We should have said that no power this side of the pit existed capable of plunging so many millions of free and rational men and women into a revolt against the most benignant government God ever ordained on earth. But this rebellion has shown that slavery has become the master-spirit of the South, and that it is as malignant and desperate as it is despotic. It knows no scruples of conscience, of honor, or of humanity; it stops at no obstacles; it hesitates at no crime; it accepts the aid of poison and assassination; it heaps its highest honors on traitors, perjurers, liars, and robbers; it repudiates most sacred obligations, private and public; it puts on the mask of patriotism and plunders the mints, arsenals, forts, and navy-yards of an unsuspecting nation. By foul slanders and lying proclamations, it drags its blinded and frenzied population into an unnatural and fratricidal war. It fights with stolen arms, and in its modes of warfare renews and surpasses those of the Goths and Vandals. It stands with lighted match at the magazine, determined to rule all or ruin all. At its feet, country, church, domestic institutions, law, order, honor, oaths, property, and freedom, lie in abject submission, and at its bidding, Repudiation, Treason, Rebellion, Revolution, spring forth, and armed hosts march against our Capitol, the center and

the citadel of our hopes, the eye and the heart of our body politic. Long has it been gathering strength for this stupendous crime ; slowly but steadily has it been undermining the principles of humanity and religion among its population, palsying the instinct of indignation at wrong, making horrid deeds of sin venal and harmless, exalting political necessities into moral principles, and blinding vast numbers, even in the North, by its demoniacal sophistries. Slavery throughout the South, and without a protest against it, has by stern law forbidden four millions of men, made in the similitude of God, and hastening to his judgment-bar, to read his word and educate themselves or their children. Though every one of them is the kindred of Christ, and many of them chosen of God and precious, it has practically numbered them among the brutes that perish, so that in the striking language of Count de Gasparin, "Every day in all the Southern States, families are sold at retail ; the father to one, the mother to another, the son to a third, the young daughter to a fourth ; and the father, the mother, the children, are scattered to the four winds of heaven ; these hearts are broken, these poor beings are given a prey to infamy and sorrow, these marriages are ruptured, and adulterous unions are formed twenty leagues, a hundred leagues away, in the bosom and with the assent of a Christian community." With untiring zeal and unexampled energy it seeks to perpetuate itself and enlarge the area of its terrible power. It sets itself against the Divine, prophetic decrees which foretell and proclaim liberty to the captives, the undoing of heavy burdens, the letting the oppressed go free, the breaking of every yoke, and the opening of the prison-doors to them that are bound. It eviscerates the Gospel of its holy precepts which command masters to render that which is just and equal to their servants, doing unto them as they would be done by. But I need not develop any farther this enormity. It is very familiar to us all ; only in the bright and clear atmosphere which this war has created we are restored to our

normal and Christian vision, and we can not help seeing what once we were unwilling to believe.

Now, my dear friends, why should we look at this war as the death-doom of our nation? Why should we not rather feel that God has called for it, in order to destroy the power, to break the yoke of this accursed and galling system of human bondage, and sunder the alliance between our glorious Constitution and this foul, fearful iniquity? To the human eye it really seems as if nothing else could effect these ends, so thoroughly has it entrenched itself in the Constitution of the nation and laws of the States, in the trade and commerce of the people, in European necessities and industries. The tenacity with which the South cling to their slavery of the Africans is not unlike that of the Egyptians to theirs of the Israelites. And we know what terrible judgments were required in order to make them loose their hold upon their bond-slaves. Lands, rivers, fountains, houses, cattle, were all devastated with Divine judgments; and not until the first-born of every family in Egypt was slain in one night, was the maddening spell sufficiently broken to allow of the deliverance of Israel from the house of their bondage. In like manner do our brethren of the South cherish and value their servitude of the African race. It is the corner-stone of their Confederacy. Without it every thing else is worthless in their esteem. They therefore keep it as the apple of their eye; they grave it on the palms of their hands, and sooner shall a mother forget her sucking child, and cease to have compassion on the son of her womb, than they prove faithless to their servile institution. But the days of miracles are past, and what was effected in Egypt by supernatural means, God may now effect by natural. And of all instrumentalities within the range of nature, what could so thoroughly accomplish this object as this uncompromising deadly conflict which, through the madness of their own hearts, God has brought upon them? Indeed, I think it can be de-

monstrated that nothing less than *civil war* could prevent the system from becoming the dominant power upon the continent; and I verily believe that in the end it will appear that the plagues of Egypt were not more destructive to slavery there than this war will be to slavery here. The more wide-spread and desperate the rebellion, the more terrible and fatal will be the blow struck at the system; and how wide-spread and desperate the rebellion is, a few words will indicate.

(1.) Only *one tenth* of the slave population of the country are in the loyal States. All the rest, three million six hundred thousand, are in the rebel States, under the control and partaking of the fortunes of those States.

(2.) These States, numbering nearly ten millions of mixed population, are practically under a reign of terror. The whole are compelled to support the rebellion. Men, women, and children are wrought into a state bordering upon frenzy. A spirit of fierce and bloody hatred seems to possess the people. Their capacity for making and believing falsehoods is so wonderful, that we can account for it only by supposing that the God of Truth has given them over to strong delusions to believe lies for their destruction.

(3.) Their recuperative energies are terribly broken by the war; and if it continues long, will be utterly destroyed. Destitute already, to a vast extent, of the common comforts and conveniences of civilized society; their good name, their money, their credit, and their monopoly of cotton, gone; their internal public improvements arrested, if not annihilated — what will remain to them when the war is over, if not before, but to be utterly exhausted and rent with internal factions, heart-burnings, and bitter enmities. How can they recover themselves? If slavery then exists, how can they sustain themselves, with thirty-six hundred thousand slaves, fevered with excitement, restless and difficult to control, yet absolutely dependent on them?

(4.) The refusal of England and France to lend them assistance will only make them more fierce and desperate. Thrown entirely upon themselves, they must in the very first campaign gather *all* their forces, collect *all* their reserves, and resist the tremendous forces of the Union, until overwhelming disasters, and a sudden collapse, leave them prostrate, helpless, utterly broken in their social and political fabric.

(5.) The 380,000 slaveholders are, with few exceptions, engaged directly in the rebellion. The loss among them by death in the camp and in battle, by expatriation and exile, by the confiscation of their estates and escape of their slaves, added to their complete exhaustion by the war, will make doubly sure the final result.

(6.) Once more: their early and signal successes in seizing the national custom-houses, mints, armories, arsenals, forts, and navy-yards, and their victories over the national armies at Big Bethel, Stone Bridge, Wilson's Creek, and Lexington, have only magnified and intensified the conflict. While imparting the wildest confidence to the South, they have aroused the most solemn determination in the North; so that now conciliation, compromise, a half-and-half struggle are impossible; and the National Government is compelled to precipitate its whole power—the power of twenty-three millions of free people, abounding in resources of all kinds, compact, with vast armies, and vaster reserves, and nearly three hundred vessels of war afloat, against that of six millions in rebellion, relatively without military resources, widely scattered, without a navy, and encumbered with not far from four millions of slaves.

Such are the circumstances, in which the Slave Power is placed to-day. And while the Federal Administration, in conducting the war rightly and earnestly, protest that their aim is not the destruction of slavery, and the South as earnestly proclaim that its preservation is their aim, is it not more than probable that God means something very different from either?

The blows which preserve our Union and destroy the rebellion take their chief effect upon slavery. It requires no Daniel to interpret the MENE MENE TEKEL UPHARSIN on the walls of the institution. Its destruction may not be as sudden as that of the Egyptian bondage, but no doubt it is as certain.

God grant that in bringing about this result, the homes of the South may be spared from the terrors of servile insurrection, and the people from the horrors of servile war! God grant that Pestilence and Famine may not blight and devastate the beautiful and sunny South! God grant that the defeat of their armies may be so complete and overwhelming as to make their submission prompt and perfect; so that the united wisdom and piety of the whole land may undertake the management of as difficult a problem as ever fell to the lot of a nation: What to do *with* and *for* the multiplying millions of the African race upon our soil? But these things are hidden in the future. God himself will determine them. Meantime, leaving all contingencies and results with him, unhampered by the thought of possible and probable difficulties, let us give ourselves, our property, our prayers, our all, absorbingly to the fulfillment of God's manifested will, to the discharge of our sad but stern duty in the war to which his Providence has summoned us; the putting down, completely and forever, the greatest rebellion the earth has ever known.

Before closing, let me give utterance to a single caution. There is danger that, with such views as have been set before you, we repeat some of the very sins which have brought our troubles upon us. There is danger, that in our consciousness of strength and assurance of final victory, we forget the God who has remembered and protected us in our weakness and disasters, and trust and glory in our own might and wisdom, in the skill and energy of our commanders, in the number and valor of our soldiers, in our armaments and munitions of war, instead of relying solely on Him who has given us all these, and who

can at any time blight and blast them all. Every thing depends on the favor of God. We have now abundant reason to believe that he is with us. Let us be very careful, lest we offend and grieve him by an unholy self-confidence and dependence on means and agencies, instead of him who provides them. This day's solemnities and services are designed to forestall and prevent a sin so pregnant with disaster and woe. For demoralization and insubordination, sickness, defeat, dismay, and panic, are God's servants and messengers, and he sends them whensoever and to whomsoever he pleases. If we glory in our might and wisdom and riches and resources, and not in the Lord, then though the nation were ten-fold more powerful than it is, we could not hope to prevail. We must make God our refuge and defense. With the Almighty against us, confusion, disaster, and panic will attend our armies. The stars of heaven, in their courses, will fight against us. Oh! for a steadfast, serene trust in the Lord God of Hosts! It were madness for us to rely on men and munitions of war, and not on Him who alone giveth strength, courage, and victory.

I have spoken my own sentiments freely and frankly. They give reason and value to the services of this day, in my esteem. I can not look upon this fearful struggle in the light which many view it. While I see more than enough to make us humble and lowly and dependent on God, I see nothing to make us despond, much to make us hopeful and jubilant. In the inscrutable purposes of his Providence, God *may* mean, after all, to dash this nation in pieces like a potter's vessel. I would not presume to deny it; but I can not see one sound reason, deduced from history, or from the nature of the strife, or from the word of God, for such a conclusion. Wherefore, let us fast and pray this day in hope and not in fear, and, penitent for our sins, and humble in spirit, let us prosecute this war in the name of the Lord of Hosts, leaning on his arm, hoping that in the end the North and the South will be forgiven

and purified, and cemented in the bonds of a more perfect and blessed union, and that the words of Divine prophecy concerning another nation divided against itself, will be fulfilled in our reunited country. "Behold I will bring it health and cure; and I will cure them, and will reveal unto them the abundance of peace and truth. And I will cause the captivity of Judah and the captivity of Israel to return, and will build them as at the first. And I will cleanse them from all their iniquity, whereby they have sinned against me; and I will pardon all their iniquities, whereby they have sinned and whereby they have transgressed against me. And it shall be to me a name of joy, a praise, and an honor before all the nations of the earth, which shall hear all the good that I do unto them; and they shall fear and tremble for all the goodness and for all the prosperity that I procure unto it."