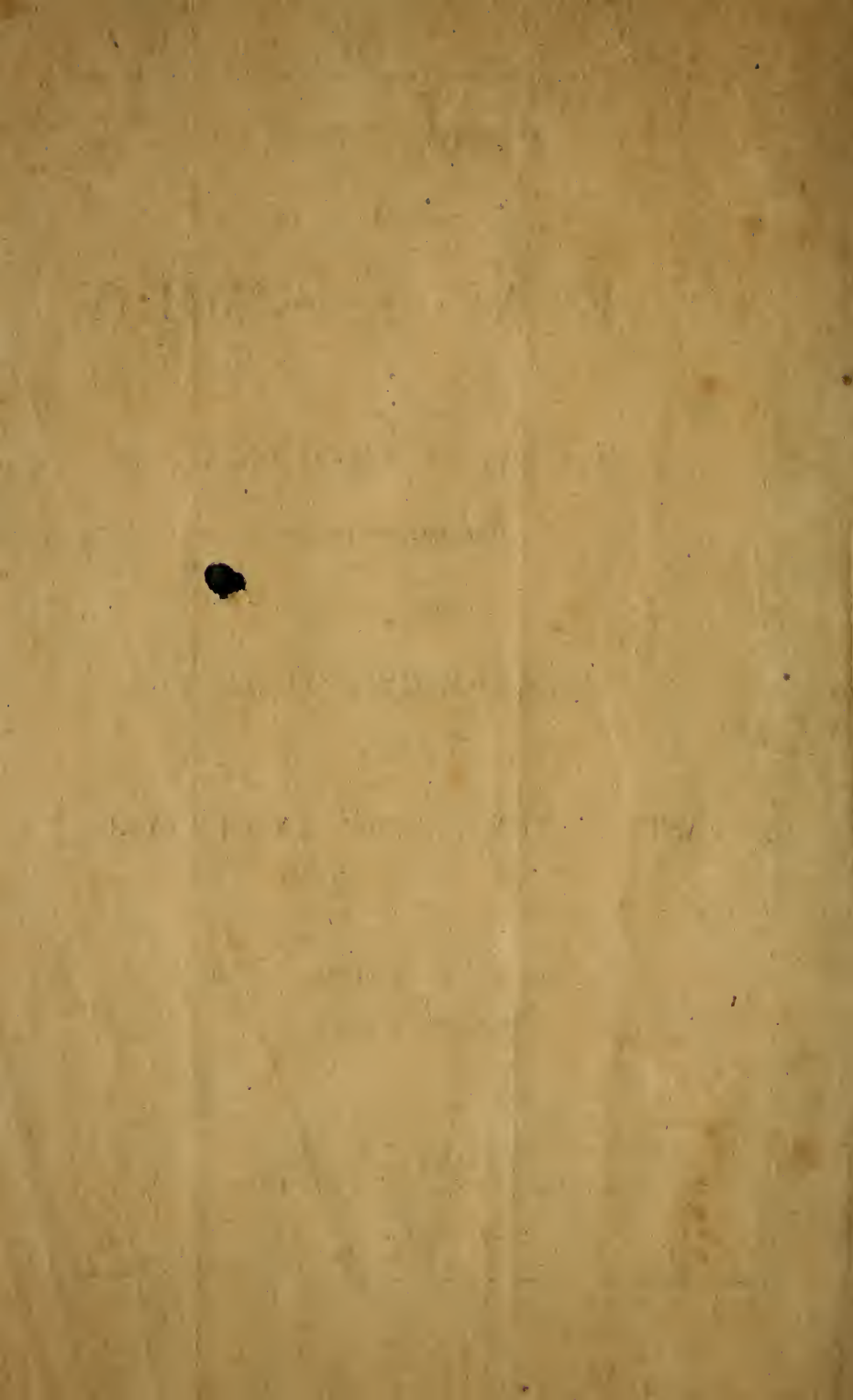


A DISCOURSE
BEFORE THE
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
OF
SOUTH CAROLINA,
ON DECEMBER 10, 1863,
APPOINTED BY
THE LEGISLATURE
AS A DAY OF
FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

BY B. M. PALMER, D. D.,
OF NEW ORLEANS, LA.

COLUMBIA, S. C.
CHARLES P. PELHAM, STATE PRINTER.

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DISCOURSE.

Psalm LX. vv. 1—4. "O! God, thou hast cast us off; thou hast scattered us; thou has been displeased: O! turn thyself to us again. Thou hast made the earth to tremble; thou hast broken it: heal the breaches thereof, for it shaketh. Thou hast showed thy people hard things; thou hast made us to drink the wine of astonishment; thou has given a banner to them that feared thee, that it may be displayed because of the truth."

There is a deep significance in this assemblage, and in the manner of its convocation. The supreme legislative authority of a sovereign State has set apart this day as a sabbath to the Lord. The Representatives of a free people arrest the work of legislation in an hour of public peril, that they may lead their constituency in an act of solemn worship to Almighty God, humbly imploring Him to withdraw the chastening hand that has fallen so severely upon our common country. It is the nearest approach which can be made to an act of worship by the State, as such. We reject the shallow nominalism which makes the State a dead^a abstraction. It is more than an aggregation of individuals. It is an incorporated society, and possesses a unity of life resembling the individuality of a single being. It can deliberate and concur in common conclusions which are carried out in a joint action, analogous to the powers of thought and will in a single mind. It stands in definite moral relations, not only to the individuals who are subject to its authority, but to other societies similarly constituted—giving rise to a code of public morality, and to the law of nations by which their mutual intercourse is regulated. It is this principle which lends significance to these religious solemnities;—that the State is, in some clear sense, a sort of person before God, girded with responsibilities which draw it within His comprehensive government, capable of executing a trust, and distinctly recognizing both its obligations and its rights. Thus, to-day, this venerable Commonwealth, through her constituted authorities, legislative and executive, bends the knee before the God of Heaven,

acknowledging her dependance upon Him who "ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will.

A sacred awe steals upon me in placing upon your lips, Senators and Representatives, the words of the Hebrew monarch, uttered three thousand years ago, yet so apposite to our own times. You remember the circumstances under which David came to the Jewish throne, and with what difficulty the succession was transferred from the house of Saul. Through seven years a fearful schism had rent the tribes of Israel; during which the retainers of the feeble Ishbosheth disputed the supremacy of him whom the prophet of the Lord had, by solemn unction, prefigured to the throne. The nation was still rocking beneath the ground-swell of these political troubles, at the time the text was penned. No sooner, too, did David grasp an undisputed sceptre, than he was called to enter upon that series of conquests by which the prophetic limits of the Hebrew empire should be attained. Upon comparing, however, the title of the sixtieth Psalm with the corresponding events in the national chronicles, we derive the immediate occasion of its composition. A formidable and successful expedition had been sent against Syria—not only that portion lying between the Tigris and Euphrates, but that also lying towards the more distant Orontes. Whilst the military strength of the country was thus withdrawn, the Edomites, the hereditary enemies of Palestine, took advantage of its defenceless condition to make a bold and sudden invasion. The tide of war swept with unrebuked severity over the land, until it threatened to extinguish the national existence—a catastrophe only averted by the seasonable return of the conquerors of the East, who overthrew the barbarous marauders with dreadful slaughter in the Valley of Salt, upon the south of the Dead Sea.

The issue of these sanguinary conflicts is familiar to all readers of the Sacred books. The power of David became more firmly consolidated; his enemies from within and from without were overthrown; and he continued to reign over an undivided empire, the greatest military chieftain of his times, transmitting at length a peaceful sceptre to his illustrious son. But in the midst of these perilous adventures, when the fate of the realm was trembling upon the balance, the monarch bard penned these

mournful lines, so descriptive of the dangers which invoke this day's prayer on the part of our afflicted State. Truly, the wine of astonishment is given us to drink! The throes of a stupendous revolution shake the land as with the terrors of an earthquake; and the burning crust upon which our people tread threatens at every step to part asunder and to swallow them up in the yawning abyss. Thou, O God, hast made the earth to tremble; and thou alone canst heal the breaches under which it shaketh! O thou, who hast scattered us in thy displeasure, hear the prayer of thy people this day, and turn thyself to us again!

But whilst we address our supplications to the most high God, let it be remembered that the language of true prayer is never the cry of supine imbecility, nor the wail of craven despondency. It is always the language of hope and of expectation. It is the utterance of a strong and brave heart, struggling with its difficulties, and casting itself with sublime faith upon the power of an omnipotent arm. In its very cry for help, it gives the pledge of a resolved purpose to fulfil whatever obligations are imposed by the dangers which surround it, or which are involved in its own expectation of deliverance. The man does not truly pray, whose heart is paralyzed with fear; his despair stifles the petition in its utterance; and the feeble whisper, which breathes forth the enervated appeal, confesses in the cowardice of its distrust the falsehood of its plea. He alone prays, who pledges his endeavor to do and to endure all that is comprehended in the answer to his petition. Piety, therefore, combines with prudence, and both unite with a lofty courage, in calmly surveying the perils which surround us; that we may deduce the solemn duties which spring from the bosom of our trials, and which bind the consciences of a people who have undertaken to lift up to God the voice of hopeful and confiding prayer.

During the progress of this relentless war, our enemies have wrested from us the great river of the west, which once bore upon its waters the commerce of half a continent; and though its possession has proved nearly valueless to them, its loss to us severs the connexion between portions of the Confederacy, and renders active coöperation betwixt them almost impossible.

They have placed the heel of oppression upon the queenly city which, within the embraces of this imperial stream, once filled her horn with plenty, and danced gaily to the sound of the viol and harp. They have trodden down and defiled other noble towns and cities, once the abodes of affluence, the seats of learning and science, whose ancient families handed down from father to son a proud, ancestral name. Their mailed ships beleaguer our coast, and seek to seal our ports against the commerce of the world. They have massed their numerous armies and driven them, like a wedge, nearer and nearer to the heart of the land; exulting in the hope of speedily riving it in sunder, as the axeman of the forest rives the gigantic but fallen oak. They have stirred up the resentment of the civilized world against our social organization, and pointed their prejudices, like poisoned spears, against our cause, that our strength may dry up within our bones in this state of dreadful seclusion. In all history there is nothing more grandly sublime than the perfect isolation in which the Southern Confederacy is now battling for those rights which are so dear to the human heart. The nations of the earth have no eye of pity for our distress, no tear of sympathy for our wrongs. They turn away in cold indifference, and leave us to grapple with a superior foe, whose malice feeds upon the memories of past brotherhood, and can be satiated only by drinking the life of a people to whom they were once bound by the most sacred of covenants. Yet all alone, this young nation, strong only in her consciousness of right, girds herself for the mighty struggle. Like the fabled Antæus, she gathers strength from the very reverses which bring her to the ground, and rises with new energy to the conflict. She drops a tear over the tombs of her martyrs, and then goes patiently again under her baptism of blood. All alone, she lifts an eye of faith to Heaven above, and beneath the shadow of Jehovah's throne, strikes again for liberty and life. All alone, with God for her avenger, she treads danger beneath her feet, and moves forward to the triumph which an assured faith reveals steadily to her gaze. Like David in the text, she stands upon the trembling earth, and whilst drinking the wine of astonishment mingled in her cup, she recognizes a commission from the God of Heaven which binds her to duty in the face of trial, and receives at His hands a banner

which she must display because of the truth. Let us, my hearers, read the inscriptions upon this banner; and then throw its folds anew to the breeze, in testimony of the principles which we are called this day to confess before the nations of the world.

I. In the first place, a banner is given us to be displayed in defence of republican institutions upon this continent. Among the issues involved in this conflict, this certainly is not the least. The imagination may, perhaps, be more impressed with the physical dimensions of the war, with the hundreds of thousands in armed array upon the field of battle, with the ponderous artillery hurling its dealy missiles against our beleaguered fortresses. But the moral grandeur of the struggle lies in the immortal principles which are at stake, and which will give to it its true place in the history that shall hereafter be written. Schlegel has well remarked, in his *Philosophy of History*, that "in the whole circumference of the globe there is only a certain number of nations that occupy an important and really historic place in the annals of civilization." In a comparatively narrow belt, extending from the south-east of Asia to the northern and western extremities of Europe, he finds the only historical and highly civilized countries who have made any substantive contribution to the general progress of mankind. Without pausing now to inquire whether his classification is complete, or whether since his day additions should not be made to the fifteen nations embraced within his "land chart of civilization," his discrimination between the historic and unhistoric races must be allowed as just. It is unquestionable, moreover, that every historic people is marked by characteristics which render it strictly individual. Egypt, for example, from the moment she lay in her cradle of bulrushes upon the banks of the Nile, has exhibited a character purely and intensely Egyptian. The Hebrew and the Persian differ as clearly from the Roman and the Greek, as those in turn differ from the English and the Spaniard, and these again from the Russian and the Turk. Nor can it be denied that in the comprehensive scheme of Divine providence, all such nations have an assigned work, and are preserved in being till that work is done. Thus, Greece was perpetuated until she had carried the arts of sculpture and painting, of poetry, eloquence and song, to a perfection which has never been surpassed; and

when she could do no more in philosophy and science, she was trodden in the dust beneath the iron-heeled legions of Rome. When Rome, too, had built up an empire as wide as the world, and could do no more by her systems of jurisprudence and state-craft, she slid into a military despotism; until at length her mighty framework gave way, under the pressure of barbarian hordes, that from her ruins might spring the present Congress of European nations.

It is not, then, aside from the purposes of this day, to consider what may be the task which the great Ruler of the earth has set our people to accomplish, and how far its successful issue may be bound up in the history of the present struggle. The grand problem undertaken to be solved by our forefathers was the establishment of a free government under republican forms, in which the exercise of sovereign power should be lodged in representatives, chosen by the people. The possibility of such a government, and of its continuance to remote posterity, is the question now submitted to the arbitrament of the sword between the North and the South. It is our clear conviction that the same grave in which this Confederacy shall be buried, will prove the sepulchre of republicanism upon this continent. During the progress of this fearful strife, expressions of doubt as to the feasibility and value of such a government have fallen from many lips—and sometimes the preference has been openly avowed for a constitutional and limited monarchy. Too much importance should not be attached to utterances, which are probably the language of impatience, wrung out by disappointment and suffering, rather than of matured and sober reflection. It is, however, a weakness to shrink from the discipline to which all nations are subjected in working out their allotted destiny. No grand experiment in the science of legislation can be achieved without trial and conflict; for in the clashing interests and passions of men, causes of insecurity will ever be found, and constant modification of existing institutions will be required to adapt them to the changes of outward circumstances. When, therefore, a stable government, like that of England, is enviously cited in contrast with the fluctuations of our own, it is overlooked that this great boon was not purchased except at the cost of seven hundred years of conflict.

We have but to look into the brilliant pages of Macaulay to learn how long and bitter was the struggle between prerogative on the one hand, and privilege on the other, before these two poles of the English constitution were adjusted in even tolerable harmony. It is far too early for us to abandon the experiment commenced by our fathers, and unmanly to succumb beneath the first difficulties encountered in our historic probation. Rather let us, with the patience and moderation of our British ancestors, amend by gradual changes what experience shows to be defective in our institutions, without capriciously changing the foundation of the government under which we were born.

But be the abstract preferences of men what they may, it should be borne steadily in mind, that governments at last are not made, but grow. The philosopher may sketch, in the seclusion of his closet, the Utopia which charms his fancy; but the statesman must accept that form of government which the antecedent conditions of society may impose. Despite all the artifices of a speculative legislation, it will crystalize according to a fixed law, in precisely that shape which the exigencies of the times and the character of the people shall determine. We, at this day, must work out the problem bequeathed to us according to the conditions in which we find it, as did our fathers before us. The republican form of government was adopted by them, not through original choice, but as a simple necessity. The controversy with England was not begun for republicanism, though it ended in it. With them monarchy was not so much repudiated, as liberty was sought: and if any branch of the royal family had resided here, and had sympathized with the passionate struggle of a young nation to be both great and free, the conservative spirit of our forefathers would have led to the establishment of monarchy upon these republican shores. But there was no titled class, having the prestige of nobility and rank, from which a monarch could be chosen; and the statesmen of this period dwelt too much in the light of past history not to know the impossibility of lifting a single family, from the uniform level of society, to permanent presidency over the rest. They were too well skilled in political

science not to be aware that the wide interval between the commonalty and the throne must be filled with an intermediate class, who should render the ascent less abrupt and precipitous. These conditions of monarchy failing, our fathers evinced their practical wisdom in striking the golden mean between the radicalism which overturns only for the sake of remodelling, and that fatal conservatism which, in its blind attachment to inheritance and prescription, resists the progress it should aim to guide. The actual sovereignty of the people was accordingly recognized; but the country was saved from the savage rule of unlicensed democracy by the establishment of a Confederate republic, with its written constitution, and all the checks and balances which can be furnished by two deliberative chambers, the presidential veto and state sovereignty. A little reflection should convince every mind that the same difficulties which interdicted monarchy in 1776, exist in even stronger force in our own day. Nothing consequently is left us but to accept our problem exactly as we find it, and to solve it, if we can, under the smiles of a benignant Providence. It is the dream of the Radical to change our whole political fabric from turret to foundation stone; but true wisdom dictates that such modifications shall be gradually admitted as time and experience shall hereafter suggest.

The maintenance of republican institutions being then at once a duty and necessity, no proposition seems clearer, than that these are bound up in the fate of our own Confederacy—which conviction gives us assurance of the ultimate and complete triumph of our cause. The Northern people, from the commencement of American history, have failed to seize the true idea of a republic. They have confounded it with democracy, from which it is as generically distinct as from monarchy itself. Republicanism, with them, is only democracy writ small—a merely mechanical device for condensing the masses, and rendering practicable the government of the mob. They have pushed the doctrine to the verge of ungodliness and atheism, in making the voice of the people the voice of God; in exalting the will of a numerical majority above the force of constitution and covenants, and creating in the despotism of the mob the vilest and most irresponsible tyranny known in the annals of mankind. Not, however, to insist upon their fundamental mis-

conception of the very nature of republicanism, which has worked out its legitimate result in the total prostration of civil liberty, and in the ignominious surrender of all its safeguards, a fatal defect is patent in the very structure of their society, which renders them utterly incompetent to achieve what our forefathers had commenced. I allude to the fact that no class exists with them, which stands forth the representative and guardian of the conservative element in human society. This is sufficient to explain the rupture between the two portions of the old confederation. The conservative element existed only at the South. Long and patiently it battled against the usurpations of an aggressive and unprincipled democracy; but overpowered at length, its only resource was separation from a lawless power, which could not even be held in check. This withdrawal leaves the North hopelessly destitute of that conservative influence, which must always be proportioned with the aggressive forces at work—or the nation drives recklessly forward to its own destruction. Individuals may, doubtless, be found in their ranks, of sound and conservative views; but these are not grouped and consolidated in a class holding the balance of power in the nation: and the singular ease with which all moderate views have been swept away by the stormy clamors of the populace, too mournfully attests how feeble is the breast-work against vulgar fanaticism presented by insulated individuals. In the South, however, whatever odium may attach to her social organization through a perverted and unscriptural philanthropy, this capital advantage accrues: that the dominant race, by the force of its position towards an inferior and servile class, is rendered conservative in the highest degree. All their interests are bound up in the perpetuation of the prevailing institutions of the land; and the class, whose tendencies might be to change, has no share whatever in the administration of public affairs. It matters not whether slaves be actually owned by many or by few: it is enough that one simply belongs to the superior and ruling race, to secure consideration and respect. So that, without a hereditary and privileged nobility, inconsistent with the simplicity of republican taste, all the political benefit which springs from the existence of such an order, lodges with the entire population who have any control over the land.

But whatever may be thought of the relative competency of the North and the South to perpetuate republican principles, it is perfectly clear that the subjugation of the latter closes the door of hope against both. The South, sunk into the condition of a dependent province, will have lost the opportunity of realizing in external form any of her most cherished opinions; while the conquering North, in the very fact of her triumph, will have extinguished the last vestige of that government which she now wages war professedly to maintain. Holding her conquest only by military force, she can never hope to construct anew the old Confederacy, whose elementary and pervading idea was the free consent of all the parties. Constrained by her very success to become a despot, her standing armies, levied for the suppression of revolt, will soon tread beneath their feet the last poor remains of civil liberty—and the history of ancient Rome's subjection to the Pretorian guards, will be reenacted, amidst the scorn and derision of all mankind. Say I not well, that the banner given us to be displayed is in defence of a pure republican government upon this American continent? It is my unwavering conviction that God has rent the old nation by this terrible schism, not only because it had grown too great to be good, and to prevent its becoming the scourge and pest of the world, but also to afford in this Confederacy, a last asylum for the genius of republicanism to work out, if possible, its promised blessings to the nations of the earth.

II. In the second place, a solemn duty is imposed upon us to protect the slave, peculiarly dependent upon our guardianship, from the schemes of a false philanthropy which threaten his early and inevitable extermination. It is not my purpose here to discuss the institution of domestic servitude existing amongst us. The argument has long since been exhausted upon both sides of this disputed topic; and those who have given it their attention have long since reached, upon the one side or the other, probably an unchangeable conviction. Some facts have, however, been grievously overlooked by the fanatical assailants of slavery, which, it seems to us, have much to do with a correct interpretation of God's providence in reference to this entire subject. The negro race, for example, has never in any period of history been able to lift itself above its native condi-

tion of fetishism and barbarism ; and except as it has indirectly contributed by servile labor to human progress, might well be discounted, according to Schlegel's view, in the general estimate of the world's inhabitants. Often as they have been brought in contact with other and superior races, they have never been stimulated to become a self-supporting people, under well regulated institutions and laws ; but have invariably relapsed from a partial civilization into their original state of degradation and imbecility. It is moreover notoriously true that the highest type of character, ever developed among them, has been in the condition of servitude ; and that, in the fairest portions of the earth, after the advantage of a long discipline to systematic toil, emancipation has converted them instantly from productive laborers into the most indolent and squalid wretches to be found upon the globe. Whilst too, as by the force of a universal law, an inferior race melts away in the presence of a superior civilization, a few thousand Africans have expanded under this system of domestic slavery into four millions of people ; constituting, at this moment, the best conditioned, the happiest, and I will add, in the essential import of the word, the *freest* operative class to be found in christendom. It is also beyond dispute that a larger number of slaves at the South are in the communion of the Church of Christ, and have been made partakers of the blessings of the gospel, than is furnished in the returns of missionary labor by all the branches of the Christian church taken together, over the whole surface of the globe. And last of all, one of the most significant facts in this entire series, is, that whilst slavery has existed in every variety of form through the whole tract of human history, it has been reserved to our times to beat up a crusade against it under precisely that patriarchal form in which it is sanctioned in the word of God, and in which it has never been found since the overthrow of the Hebrew empire, until now. My individual belief is, that servitude, in some one of its forms, is the allotted destiny of this race, and that the form most beneficial to the negro himself is precisely that which obtains with us ; where, either as born in the house, or bought with our money, he is a regular member of the household, and is protected alike by the affection and by the interest of the master. I am not in the least appalled by the

apparent unanimity with which the voice of christendom protests against the lawfulness of slavery, and pronounces it both a heresy and a crime. It is the fashion of the world to go periodically mad upon some wild scheme, which contrives to enlist in its support a misdirected religious zeal. This is far from being the first instance where a religious fanaticism has stirred the depths of the human heart, and brought the world in fearful collision with the grand and fixed purposes of Almighty God. Mediæval Europe, with all the fervor of religious consecration, poured forth her armed myriads to rescue the Holy Land from the polluting tread of the Saracen. It shocked the conscience of that superstitious age that the sepulchre of our blessed Lord should be in possession of the Infidel. Under the passionate appeals of vagrant monks, a sustained fanaticism, surviving a thousand disasters, held christendom to the visionary enterprise through a period far longer than that which attests the folly and superstition of the age in which we now live. But as the gathering tides of ocean dash in vain against the continents by which the Creator bounds their fury, so this wild fanaticism, after a frightful waste of treasure and of life, broke into spray against the decree of God: and Europe's proud chivalry returned from the vain conflict, to learn at home the lesson of submission to the behests of Heaven. Perhaps one of the results of this grand struggle will be to correct the error of the world as to this whole matter of domestic slavery—to teach mankind that the allotment of God, in the original distribution of destinies to the sons of Noah, must continue, despite the ravings of a spurious and sentimental philanthropy—to illustrate the riches of his grace, and the workings of a beneficent gospel, through the relation of master and servant, not less than through that of parent and child, and all the other permanent relations in which man stands to his fellow man.

On this point, however, I do not wish to be misunderstood; and having said so much, I desire to say a little more. Whilst rebuking the presumption of those who clamor for the emancipation of those whom God has manifestly placed under the yoke, I would not fall into the same condemnation, by insisting upon the *perpetual* bondage of those whom it may please Him finally to release. Being firmly persuaded that the relation of

master and servant is clearly ordained of God, and that there is no more sin intrinsically in it than in the subordination of parent and child, I feel no compunction of conscience in the holding of slaves. But if it be the Divine purpose to elevate them into a condition of freedom, I believe our people will be the last to rebel against the decrees of Providence, and not a feeling of their hearts will rise in opposition to that advancement. I confess frankly that I have no expectation of such a result. From all the attributes of the negro character, from the whole history of God's dealings towards him, and from all the light shed upon his destiny from the sacred Scriptures, I judge his true normal position to be that of "a servant of servants," and that his own interests are best subserved in this condition of subordination and dependence. But the decision of all this I am willing to remit to that future to which it belongs. If the day shall ever arrive when the slave ought to be free, God will sufficiently indicate it by evincing his aptitude for a new and independent career, and by making it the interest of the master to dissolve the relation hitherto sustained. We agree, with all our hearts, to leave the solution of this intricate problem to the generation which shall be called to decide upon it; in the assured conviction that, if emancipation be brought about at all, it will be in God's own sublime way, by the silent operation of secret but efficient causes: and to the Divine will, clearly indicated through the unfoldings of His providence, we respond from the depths of our hearts a most cheerful amen. But we do protest against the impertinent obtrusion of men into the counsels of Almighty God, and their insolent attempt to dictate the policy of His administration of human affairs, and to dig the channels in which the current of His providence must be made artificially to flow. We do insist further, that in the present posture of the two races, the African cannot cease to be a bondman without bringing utter ruin upon both: and especially that our subjugation, in the present struggle, will be the signal for the extirpation of the negro, now cast by God upon the protection of the white master. The truth of this, alas! there is no room to doubt. All history attests the impossibility of two unequal races living side by side with mutual advantage. The inferior gives way before the energy and resources of the superior; nor would it be diffi-

cult to trace the causes which necessitate the direful catastrophe. Does any one dream that the fairest portion of this continent will be abandoned to the fate of the West India islands, and suffered to grow up into a wilderness merely to furnish a home for a lot of indolent barbarians? The lean and hungry vandals, now hoping to appropriate our broad and fertile fields, will be restrained by no such romantic sentiment from swarming upon the land which their own arms have subjugated. Beneath that fearful invasion the negro will be buried. Mocked with a delusive freedom which exists for him only in name, task-masters, more unrelenting than those of Egypt, will exact for scanty wages a degree of toil which the bondman never knew. Precisely here his ruin will begin. Among the proofs of the negro's fitness for servitude is the striking fact that he cannot easily be overtaken. The white man may be induced to labor beyond his power of endurance, until nature gives way beneath the protracted effort. But the negro reaches his natural limit, and becomes at once incapable of toil, which no compulsion will prompt him to achieve. What hope has he of competing with the hardy and aggressive race who shall then be masters of the soil? Can he thrive as the slave of capital, which has no bowels of mercy for the aching limbs and overstrained nerves which are bending and breaking beneath the scourge of starvation? Yielding to his constitutional revulsion from undue labor, and emancipated from that mild constraint which now exacts of him a moderate industry, he will sink back into his native indolence—melting away at last through filth, disease, and vice, until not a vestige of his existence will remain. If this be the doom to which he is reserved, then is the mystery of that providence insoluble, which first brought him to our shores; and which has advanced him from a savage to the dignity of a man, and made him a member of the household of faith through a blessed gospel, which here in bondage he has been taught to embrace. Whatever the nature and extent of our crimes, which have drawn upon us the avenging judgments of Heaven, with what does this poor feeble race stand charged, that they should be led to the shambles by the inhuman butchers who, during the progress of this war, have already destroyed one half the victims seduced into their power? It cannot be

that a benignant providence has allotted to them such a destiny as this: and the presence of the helpless African is to us a sign of the Divine protection and blessing. With his fate bound up so entirely with our own, I believe that for his sake at least we shall be preserved: and while he spreads forth his hands in mute appeals to us for guardianship, the banner of defense must be unfurled, beneath whose righteous folds both the master and the slave may boldly rally. I cannot doubt that one of the compensations of this bitter conflict will be to sanctify, and to endear, the tie by which these two races are linked together. The timid amongst ourselves will be reassured, when they discover this relation, regarded by many so unstable, unshaken by the rockings of this terrific tempest; and in the sweeping away of these groundless fears, the way will be prepared for the more faithful discharge of all the duties which slavery involves. Relieved of those embarrassments which a hypocritical fanaticism has interposed, we shall be able, with greater freedom, to give them God's blessed word, to protect their persons against the abuses of capricious power, and to throw the shield of a stronger guardianship around their domestic relations. It may be for this that our people are now passing under the severe discipline of this protracted war—on the one hand to chasten us for past shortcomings, and on the other to enlarge our power to protect and bless the race committed to our trust.

III. The contest in which we are embarked is a struggle for existence, in which defeat means simple destruction. Our enemies profess indeed to fight only to restore the Union, and to maintain the integrity of the nation: but the pretext is too hollow to deceive those who have watched their aggressions during the past. Through more than forty years the North has striven, by a partial and discriminating legislation, to reduce the South into a state of political vassalage. They have systematically drained her wealth to enrich themselves, and have thrown upon her the chief burden of sustaining the common government; whilst, with a refinement of cruelty, they have persistently sought to cripple her resources, and with suicidal madness to overthrow her domestic economy, upon which the welfare of both depended.

The ferocity of the present war cannot be explained, except as the culmination of a studied jealousy which has been cultivated through the life of an entire generation. No hatred is so intense as that which glows in the bosom of him who inflicts a wrong, and which can justify itself only by its implacability for existing at all. To suppose the enmity of the North appeased just at the moment it is tasting the sweetness of revenge, is to give it credit for a generosity which would have forbidden it ever to arise. Nor will the prize for which a parliamentary conflict has been waged through half a century be relinquished, just as it is within the grasp. Nothing is less desired by the dominant party of the North, than the reconstruction of the old Union, if the South shall ever lie at its feet a helpless prey, to be devoured at its will.

Nor, on the other hand, can the seceded States yield again a free consent to reënter the old Confederation; which consent the Declaration of Independence assumes to be the corner-stone upon which all just governments must rest. An experience through half a century of the perfidy of the North, interposes an insuperable bar to all reconstruction. The utter recklessness of truth on the part of our foes is one of the most appalling developments of the present war; and I believe all history may be vainly searched for a parallel instance of the abandonment of all truthfulness by an entire people. It is a degree of profligacy not reached by a single leap. Rapid as may be the deterioration in morals of an individual or of a class, there are stages in the declension; and it is a fearful education which conducts at last to the lowest deep. At an early period, the people of the North commenced to tamper with their religious symbols, until the very creeds of the Church became the nests of heresy and deceit. The Bible fell next before this fell spirit of apostacy; its dogmatic authority was overthrown, or else ridiculed as an idle and obsolete superstition; and its sacred language perverted into a sanction for all the utterances of an infidel philosophy. The transition was easy to a perverse criticism which should eviscerate the Constitution of all its meaning, or to a "higher law," which should summarily dispense with the obligation of oaths and covenants. It needs no argument of mine to show that treaties and compacts depend at last upon

the good faith and honor of the parties contracting; and that where truth has lost its sanctity, the last bond between man and man is severed, and society dissolves in universal anarchy and chaos. Suppose then that, with inconceivable generosity, the North should offer to the subjugated South the liberty of reëntering the Union she has abandoned, what guaranties can be proposed more sacred than those which have been already trampled profanely under foot? And what security can the South have of the fulfilment of promises by a people who have proclaimed, with unblushing profligacy, their insensibility to honor and to truth? Besides all this, an impassable gulf now yawns between the North and South; a sea of blood rolls its deep, dark tide betwixt them, which never can be crossed; and over the graves of our dead, it will be impossible to shake hands in amity and love. History will perpetuate the memory of this heroic struggle, and our most distant posterity will kindle with a just resentment at the story of our wrongs. No, my hearers, there is no going back—the past is an abyss. The South may possibly be subjugated, if such be the stern decree of Heaven, and may henceforward be held as a conquered province, to be impoverished and crushed beneath the heel of a bitter and relentless foe; but as equal members in a just and faithful alliance, it is not written in the book of fate that South Carolina and Massachusetts shall sit side by side as in days of yore. The dream of reconstruction can be cherished only by a madman, who is heedless of the most solemn lessons taught us by the past, and who knows nothing of the fury of those passions set loose by this war to devour the helpless and the innocent. Imagination sickens at the horrors to be enacted, should the South fail in this great struggle for independence. The last act in the fearful drama will be one of terror and of blood. The brave and noble of our land, who stand forth the representatives of Southern manliness and pride, will bend their necks to the executioner, and expiate the crime of daring to be free. When the weary headsman rests from his ignominious toil, proscription and banishment will follow with all their lingering torture. Our gallant people will be poured forth, in forced or voluntary exile, to mingle their blood with other races, or else to melt away like the drifting snow upon the unfriendly earth. The hungry agra-

rian of the North will abandon his rocky glebe to carve for himself a kinder fortune upon our vacant lands. The miserable remnant of our people that shall remain to weep amid the tombs of their fathers, will bow beneath a servitude which daily insult will render as humiliating as it is oppressive. Suspicion will dog them at every step; with a picket at every corner, and a spy in every house, bullied and badgered by insolent ruffians at every turn, they will find a prison in their homes, and live as culprits in the land of their birth. This gloomy picture I hold up, not as a prophecy of the fate we are doomed to incur, but only as descriptive of what the term subjugation unquestionably imports. I thank God that, in the darkest hour, I have never despaired of the Republic. I have an abiding faith in the righteousness of our cause, as well as in the constancy and patriotism of our people; and a faith stronger still in the wisdom and goodness of that Providence which has watched over us thus far in our momentous struggle. With God's blessing upon our strong arms and willing hearts, we shall yet be free, and fulfil a glorious destiny among the nations of the earth. It is well, however, to consider the fate which awaits every conquered people, that we may resolve to escape it. If self-preservation be the first law of nature, let us write upon our banner that we have a right to live; and enter anew upon the conflict, as those whose very existence is at stake. Better, infinitely better, if fall at last we must, to fall with the brave upon the field of battle, with our face to the foe, a nation of martyrs; than as slaves, to be consumed by lingering decay, the shame and the scorn of history.

IV. A far more solemn and august view of our struggle remains to be presented, for the banner which waves over us bears upon its folds this inscription—God's right to rule the world. There is no attribute of the Divine Being guarded with more jealousy than His own sovereignty; and history is read to little purpose if we do not discover, in all its grand epochs, a special vindication of God's supremacy. "The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all." "His dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation—all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing, and he doeth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the

earth ; and none can stay his hand, or say unto Him, what doest thou?" Yet, with this very interrogatory in its most profane spirit, the North has, for more than a generation, challenged the most High God. Claiming for themselves a purity superior to his own, they have presumptuously pronounced against the Divine administration from the beginning of time. Though slavery has existed through all the past, and though it is sanctioned and regulated in the scriptures of the Old and of the New Testaments, they arraign before their bar the Providence which has ordained and perpetuated it until now. Nay more : not content with impeaching the Divine morality, and hurling their impious accusations against the integrity of God's rule, they proceed, in all the madness of fanaticism, to rectify the errors of His administration, and to shape the providence which shall henceforth guide and govern the world. Unabashed by the sublime patience with which "God's eternal thought moves on his undisturbed affairs," and with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day, these fierce zealots would quicken the Divine activity in the accomplishment of their puny reforms. Though the universe should lie in ruins at his feet, nothing must retard their glowing ambition to make the world more perfect than God would have it to be—and the sun must be swept from the face of the sky, because their telescope has revealed a spot upon his disc. It is this spirit of arrogant dictation, finding its climax in the pretensions of "a higher law," which has involved the North in the guilt of perjury, and has broken the holiest political covenant ever sworn between man and man. It is this which has since lifted up the sword to butcher those who will not bend to a merciless proscription. It is the same spirit, mounting to phrenzy, which has seized upon wise and venerable ministers of the Church—who have turned away from the gospel of God, to hound on this war of exterminating and bitter revenge. And this it is, which stamps with ungodliness and atheism this effort of our foes to lay waste our land with fire and sword. Under this aspect, our struggle rises from the heroic into the awful and sublime. We strike not only for country, and for home, for the altars of our worship and for the graves of our dead ; but we strike for the prerogatives of God, and for His kingly supremacy over the earth. The

question at issue simply is, whether He who has created the world shall rule it by his wisdom; or abdicate his power at the bidding of a lawless fanaticism: whether his robust justice shall continue to administer human affairs, or yield to the sickly fancies of a sentimental and insane philanthropy. We are thus summoned to stand as sentinels around Jehovah's throne, and to vindicate the honesty of his reign against those who have assailed the one and impugned the other. The preëminent grandeur of this war is found in the fact that it centres upon a religious idea. On the one hand is a wicked infidelity, lifting its rebellious arm against the Ruler of the universe; and on the other, humble loyalty, receiving the blow, and offering itself a sacrifice to His insulted majesty. Patriotism is sanctified by religion, which from her sacred horn pours upon it the oil of consecration. Can we doubt the issue of such a conflict? By virtue of its relation to the cause of God, we can see why the instruments of His glory should be purged with trial upon trial; but history and the Bible unite their testimony, that in the end the wicked will be trampled in His fury, and those who wait for His salvation shall rejoice in their deliverance. I utter these sentences with due consideration; for here, I judge, is the pivot upon which our triumph will turn. At the precise juncture when independent nations are to dwell side by side, and the principle of a balance of power is introduced upon this western continent, it is suitable that God should practically demonstrate His lordship over the earth, and compel the admission that He "ruleth in the kingdom of men." As soon, therefore, as this truth shall be imbedded in the convictions of our people, and prepare us to be candid confessors of the Divine supremacy, then, and not till then, will He overthrow our enemies and establish us in the land. In the firm belief that He will assert our liberties in the assertion of His rights, we are certain of ultimate triumph, since the battle is not ours, but His. We lay the nation beneath the shadow of His throne, and bide His arbitration through the fearful ordeal of battle.

Such, Senators and Representatives, is "the banner given us to be displayed because of the truth." For myself, I solemnly and reverently accept it from the hands of Almighty God, willing in life and in death to confess the principles inscribed upon its

folds. Do you this day, on behalf of a noble constituency, accept it with a like devotion? Then send forth the utterance, whose echo rebounding from our mountain sides, shall mingle with the deep, hoarse murmurs of the sea, and be borne by the winds of heaven to the distant nations who have left us alone with our fate and with our God. Here to-day, at the Capital of this ancient and venerable Commonwealth, let us "in the name of our God set up our banner." It is for you, the representatives of a suffering and heroic people, to reflect the spirit of martyrdom which reigns in the hearts of your constituency. Our sons have gone forth, girdling the Confederacy with a living wall: at whose foot is heard the sullen roar of the invading tide, rolling up in the madness of its rage, and dashing into idle foam. Our martyrs are upon the battle plain, undergoing the fearful baptism of blood: and when the electric wires convey to every home the tidings of death, pale and silent mourners are there, undergoing the equal baptism of grief. Wife and mother press the hand upon their breaking hearts, and plead with God to accept the sacrifice which the strongest human love has not wished to withdraw from the altar. Beside that altar you have now summoned the priest to stand, and with the holy offices of religion to sanctify the oblation. The offering which patriotism renders to country, a sovereign State, on bended knee, with sacramental fervor, dedicates to God. Lift up the right hand to Heaven, as the grand oath rolls up above the stars, that you are prepared for death, but not for infamy—that the sacred rights, for which we are now contending, shall never be extinguished, but in the blood of an exterminated race. The vow is registered: and He, who sits enthroned beneath the emerald rainbow, smiles upon us from out the dark cloud, as he writes against it the hour of deliverance. Let us but *do*, and *endure*, till the hand upon the dial-plate touches the last second of the appointed time, and sounds forth the note of our redemption. Patiently submitting to that righteous discipline by which He prepares us for greatness and for glory; trusting in that Almighty arm which is pledged to strike down the haughty and the proud; humbling ourselves in penitence and shame for our private and our public sins; piously accepting every trust which His sovereign will imposes;

and consolidated by the sufferings which He calls us to endure ; we wait the fulness of the time when we shall once more rejoice in the blessings of liberty and of peace. Oh Israel, "there is none like unto the God of Jeshurun, who rideth upon the heaven in thy help, and in His excellency on the sky. The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath thee are the everlasting arms ; and He shall thrust out the enemy from before thee, and shall say, destroy them. Israel then, shall dwell in safety alone ; the fountain of Jacob shall be upon a land of corn and wine ; also His heavens shall drop dew. Happy art thou, O ! Israel : who is like unto thee, O ! people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency ! and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee, and thou shalt tread upon their high places."



