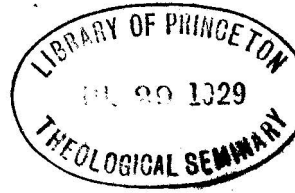


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THANKSGIVING IN WAR:

A SERMON,



PREACHED IN THE

TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,

PHILADELPHIA,

ON THE

28TH DAY OF NOVEMBER, 1861.

BY

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HENRY A. BOARDMAN, D.D.

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PHILADELPHIA:

C. SHERMAN & SON, PRINTERS.

1861.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

This sermon is given to the printer reluctantly; not from any unwillingness to publish through the press that which has been already published from the pulpit, but from a conviction that the country is amply supplied with this kind of literature. The author yields his own judgment, however, to the wishes of those who, having heard the sermon, insist that its further circulation may do some good.

PHILADELPHIA, December 10, 1861.

## THANKSGIVING IN WAR.

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PSALM 89 : 30-33.

“IF HIS CHILDREN FORSAKE MY LAW, AND WALK NOT IN MY JUDGMENTS; IF THEY BREAK MY STATUTES AND KEEP NOT MY COMMANDMENTS; THEN WILL I VISIT THEIR TRANSGRESSION WITH THE ROD, AND THEIR INIQUITY WITH STRIPES. NEVERTHELESS, MY LOVING-KINDNESS WILL I NOT UTTERLY TAKE FROM HIM, NOR SUFFER MY FAITHFULNESS TO FAIL.”

THERE are doubtless those to whom this “Day of Thanksgiving” will seem an unseasonable observance. “We have exchanged,” they will say, “the inestimable blessings of peace for the horrors of War. Our Union is dismembered. Vast armies are marshalling for bloody conflict. A hundred hospitals are already filled with the sick and wounded. Commerce is paralyzed. On every side there is want and suffering. Surely, a Day of Humiliation would better become us than a Day of Thanksgiving.”—We will not deny that there is some force in this reasoning. The statement of facts, though incomplete, is accurate. We are willing to concede that the case is much stronger than it is here represented. Not only are these calamities upon us, but

they are sent, as we verily believe, in retribution of our sins. The hand of God is in them. He is visiting upon us the threatenings he denounced against his ancient people,—and for a similar reason. “If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments; if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.” Here we may read both our sin and our punishment. We have, as a nation, forsaken God’s law, and broken his statutes; we have resisted his authority and abused his forbearance; we have sinned against him so long and so audaciously, that his patience was exhausted:—and he is now visiting our transgression with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes.

We admit, further, that our first duty in these circumstances is repentance and humiliation. We have no ground to expect a return of the Divine favor, unless we “humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.” But we have recognized this obligation, not in words only but in deeds. The nation has had its Day of Humiliation. Our own Church had previously observed its Day of Humiliation. It is not to be questioned, that there has been much searching of heart and contrition among the Christian people of the land in their private capacity. All this must, indeed, come short of the measure of humiliation which becomes us. Our repentance ought to be much deeper and more universal. Still, the duty

has not been altogether overlooked, nor will it be for the future.

That, however, is not our whole duty. It might be, peradventure, if the dispensation under which we are living, were exclusively one of judgment or rebuke. But it is not. There is mercy as well as severity. Of us also our Heavenly Father has been pleased to say, “Nevertheless, my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.” We are all witnesses that this is true. He has not given us over to the full consequences of our sins. The clouds which have infolded us for the last twelve months, have been broken with gleams of sunshine. There has been no day so dark, that a spiritual eye could not discern through its gloom the tokens of His “faithfulness” and “loving-kindness.”—And are these mercies to go unacknowledged? Is it not as much a duty to praise God for his blessings, as to abase ourselves under his chastisements? Are we always to come before him with notes of wailing; never with songs of praise?

Besides, this occasion has become an annual festival. Were the question one of instituting a Day of Thanksgiving now, there might be some room for a difference of opinion. But to omit such a service after it has made for itself a fixed place in our calendar, would be a reproach alike to our patriotism and our piety. It would imply that a year had at length come round which brought with it no pledges of the Divine protection, no

fruits of his bounty, nothing to be thankful for. If there be any who feel thus respecting the past year, they will have no sympathy with this festival. For the rest of us—"O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our Salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."

In doing this, you will of course wish to have your thoughts directed mainly to considerations which pertain to the state of the country. Let me advert, then, to a FEW OF THE GROUNDS OF NATIONAL THANKSGIVING WHICH ARE SUGGESTED BY THE HISTORY AND PROGRESS OF THIS WAR.

One of these is, that *in respect to our most valued rights and privileges, the war has not molested us.*

In saying this, I have no design to underrate the gravity of the contest in which we are engaged. I assent to the maxim which has become so current amongst us, that "of all wars, civil war is the worst," with a single qualification. I believe, too, that we do not exaggerate the importance of this conflict when we say, that even among the civil wars of which history has preserved a record, our own may claim a sad pre-eminence, if estimated by the magnitude of the issues it involves. But there is one thing worse than civil war. You will understand me when I refer you to the annals of the Waldenses, to the martyrology of the Huguenots, and to the history of England under

"Bloody Mary." Our political rights and franchises are the fruit of centuries of conflict in the senate and in the field, and we may be willing to hazard our lives in defence of them. But they are not to be weighed against religious liberty, and the hopes and consolations of Christianity. The war which is aimed at these, which employs dungeons and fagots to despoil a people of their spiritual life, and force upon them a spurious and revolting faith, has a more fiend-like malignity than any assault upon charters and constitutions. Let us be thankful to God that there is no element of this sort mingled in this unhappy contest; that the rights of conscience are held sacred, and that there is no disposition in any quarter to interfere with the liberty of opinion and of worship.

It is another cause for thanksgiving, that *so large a portion of the Union has remained loyal to the Constitution, even in the face of a civil war.*

It must indeed be conceded, that *Secession* has made greater inroads upon the Union, than could have been anticipated even by its chief abettors. The strong logic of events has shown us, that the Union held no such place in the hearts of one part of the nation as we had all been wont to suppose. The ready abandonment of it by so many States has struck the rest of the country with astonishment. For history teaches, that the very last thing a nation can be persuaded to do is to change its government. Before a people can be

wrought up to this point, their government must, in ordinary cases, be perverted into an engine of tyranny, and they must have been subjected to years of injustice and oppression. But here was an effort to destroy a government the mildest, the freest, the most equitable on the face of the earth,—a government so gentle in its working, that no law-abiding citizen felt its pressure, or was ever reminded of its existence, except when he bethought himself of the eminent civil rights and privileges it conferred upon him. That several millions of people should conspire to overthrow a government like this, was a phenomenon as much without historical precedent, as it was without justice or decency. The country and the world could not but stand amazed at the revolting spectacle.

But bad as the case is, it might have been worse. It is clearly an instance of a virulent *moral insanity*, spreading itself like an epidemic over a vast region of territory. Having acquired such a momentum, it is nearly as great a marvel that it should stop where it did, as that it should have broken out at all. It is a most encouraging sign that it left the largest portion of the Union untainted. It did not even reach the *slave line*. In every one of the Southern Border States, it encountered firm resistance. Four of those five States have shown a fixed purpose to drive it from that part of their soil which it had polluted, and of the fifth, one-third of the population has testified its abhorrence of the evil by organizing a new State government.

The comparative value in square miles of the two sections of the Union, as thus divided, is of small moment. Enough, that in population, in manufactures, in commerce, in schools, and colleges, and churches, in general intelligence, thrift, and enterprise, the immense preponderance is with the loyal States. A nation composed of these States alone, would be entitled to take its place among the leading powers of the globe. We may well offer our thanksgivings to God, that the strength and majesty of our Union are arrayed on the side of law and righteousness.

It is only presenting this thought in another aspect, to suggest that *the patriotism of the country* deserves to be celebrated with devout thanksgivings to-day. The change which has passed over us within the last few months, is as much without a parallel as is this insane attempt to overthrow the government. We are not a military nation; it is no reproach to us. The character we bear among other nations, is that of a money-loving and money-getting people. Whether it is quite modest for those from whom we inherit this trait to upbraid us with it, we need not stop to argue. The indictment is faithfully drawn, and we plead to it by confessing its truth. Never was a people more immersed in trade and traffic. With a new continent to take possession of, a soil and climate favorable to health and boundless production, institutions adapted to stimulate individual industry and talent to the

highest degree, and fresh avenues to wealth and honor continually opening on every side, it is not to be wondered at that we should have become a money-making nation. Let us not shrink from the admission; this passion had gone to a discreditable extreme with us. It required all the efforts of all the men of culture, and the whole power and energy of our Christianity, to combat these grovelling tendencies, and keep the nation from stereotyping itself in a mould of sordid cupidity and arrogant pretension. No one could have imagined, that underneath this broad surface-work of eager toil and deceptive glitter,—down below the deep springs of all our mechanical and commercial activities,—the fires of patriotism were burning as brightly as they did in the War of the Revolution. But it was even so. It required only a fitting occasion to call it into action. That occasion was given by the parricidal attack upon Fort Sumter. The echoes of those traitorous cannon rang through the nation's heart, and its slumbering patriotism burst forth with a vehemence which swept everything before it. The army of seventy-five thousand men, which was extemporized as by some magic power for the protection of the Capital, was the first emphatic, tangible proof, that the love of country was as strong and pure amongst us as ever. Decisive as the evidence was then, it is still more so now. An adversary might have suggested, that the extraordinary response which was made to the

President's proclamation of the 15th of April, was a mere ebullition of passion which would soon subside. So far from this, the sentiment which inspired that movement, though less impetuous, has been growing deeper and broader ever since. What is especially to be noted concerning it is, that it has spread through the most cautious and conservative classes of society,—and that by a perfectly intelligible process. For the course of events has disclosed a cumulative series of proofs, that this rebellion was concocted many years ago; that its leaders have kept it in view as their ultimate object through all the collisions of parties, and all the changes in our public affairs; that they ignominiously availed themselves of the very immunities the Constitution afforded them, not excluding even official place and power, to plot the subversion of the Government; and that the various alleged grievances which they put forward in newspaper articles, in legislative debate, and in inflammatory appeals to their constituents, were mere pretexts designed to cloak their real designs and help on their consummation. It is this conviction, I say, founded upon absolute moral demonstration, which has brought the most prudent and conservative classes of society into full sympathy with this war for the defence of the Union. They feel that they have been misled and betrayed. In giving their sympathy and support for years past, to those who have become the master-spirits in this movement,

they supposed they were dealing with men who, like themselves, were seeking in good faith to preserve the Union. And now, that the treachery is laid open, and they see that during all this while, the one cherished object of these men was to *destroy* the Union, they have the double motive of personal wrong and public duty to inflame their zeal in behalf of the cause of their country.

It may serve both as argument and illustration on this point, to refer to the financial provision made for carrying on this contest. Other tokens of patriotism may arrest the popular eye, but there is really none more signal than this. Of all the creations of Christian civilization, there is none so sensitive and timid as capital. On the first breath of danger, it flies to its secret asylums as frightened birds to their nests. And the very name of war strikes it with a horror like that of the Babylonian monarch, when he saw the handwriting upon the wall. But here, the unwonted spectacle is presented to the world, of the capital of the country rushing spontaneously into the very embrace of war. The noise of battle has actually allured it from its coverts. Our rich men, even many who are threatened with the loss of their thousands and millions at the South, are laying their silver and gold at the feet of the government, while multitudes in humbler circumstances are offering the funds upon which they depend for a comfortable support. Without assuming

that there is no other motive concerned in these transactions, we may safely challenge this as an evidence of patriotism, which has rarely been exceeded by any people in any age or country.

But the most imposing exhibition of this sentiment is undoubtedly that presented by our army. We admit no qualification here when we assert, that the world has never before witnessed such a spectacle. Here is an army of 500,000 men raised in six months, and not a conscript among them. They are all *volunteers*. I do not say that they have all enlisted from pure patriotism, but I do say that there are tens of thousands of them whom nothing but love of country could have carried into the camp, and that they have all avowed, by the fact of their enlistment, that they are ready to hazard their lives in defence of their country. Nor is it by its numbers merely that this great force is to be estimated. Even prejudiced foreigners have put it on record, that no European army has been made up of such material. There are, of course, regiments which may not come within the scope of this remark, but taken as a whole, no people ever sent into the field so large a body of men of the same intellectual and social standing,—nor, it is safe to add, containing so many faithful Christians. Not to argue these points, let it suffice to point to the interest displayed throughout the service in public and social religious services, both on Sundays and during the week; the universal



demand for books of all sorts, and the enormous army mails, which fairly groan under the weight of the letters sent home from the different camps.\* These are decisive indications of the high moral and intellectual tone which pervades this noble army.

Nor is it confined to the army. The picture has its fitting consort in the other branch of the service. This majestic fleet along our coast is, to a large extent, the recent offspring of the same generous patriotism. It is essentially a *volunteer* fleet, and it promises to retrieve the damage inflicted upon the reputation of our gallant navy, by the defection of so many of its officers.

Our statement, however, is still incomplete. The army and navy are, after all, under a government like ours, but exponents of the public feeling. The patriotism which animates them is a twin-flame of that patriotism which glows and burns throughout the nation. Undoubtedly, if there were any serious apprehension of danger to our own homes, this sentiment would prompt to still greater activity. But there is apparent in every direction, a generous devotion to the country, and a willingness to sustain it, as God may give the ability, in this its hour of trial. Let us offer our thanksgivings to-day, that the spirit of patriotism has survived our prolonged and enervating prosperity.

We may find another reason for gratitude and praise,

\* For example, 70,000 sent from Washington in a single week, and 10,000 by the first mail from the small force lately landed at Port Royal, S. C.

*in the stimulus this war has given to the humane and Christian virtues amongst us.*

We are apt to think that war is necessarily evil, and only evil, and that continually. That it does comprise more evils than any other scourge with which nations are visited will not be denied. But even the grim visage of war has or may have some lines of light, and in the present case, these grateful lineaments are so conspicuous that no one can overlook them.

It was the remark of a very eminent British writer, in commenting a few years since upon the vaunted progress of the United States, that this country "had never yet been *tried*," and that "it was too soon to pass upon our character until we had been cast into the crucible by which all the older nations had been tested." That trial has now come. It bids fair to do us good. Virtue is the fruit of discipline. This war promises to arrest in a measure the extravagance and parade, the epicurism and effeminacy into which we were so fast running. It puts our young men upon a training which will nourish their manly virtues. It inculcates, as no moralist could, lessons of economy, of moderation, of patience, of self-control. It fosters genuine sympathy and benevolence. This half million of men in the field are linked by innumerable ties to millions at home, who attend them daily with their solitudes and their prayers. The well-being of these soldiers lies, a cherished burden, upon the great heart of the

nation, and no nation can carry such a charge without having its life elevated and spiritualized.

In this view, it is perhaps to be regarded rather as a mercy than a calamity, that our government was so wholly unprepared for the war. Had it been foreseen, a thousand arrangements would have been made, and a thousand agencies intrusted to officials of the government, which have now of necessity been left to private benevolence. There seems a congruity in the means to the end,—a volunteer army and navy cared for by a spontaneous and munificent kindness on the part of the people! Even if it were possible for our brave troops to dispense with this ministration, it would still be fraught with blessing to the *people*. For who shall estimate the moral value of those labors which are going forward in every quarter for the relief of our volunteers? I speak to a jury well qualified to pass upon this issue, for we happen to stand upon a spot where this beneficent spirit has wrought with an energy and a liberality not surpassed in any part of the Union. The members of that Society,\* which has held its meetings in the lecture-room of this Church almost from the very day the war commenced, can bear witness to the reflex influence of their exertions upon themselves and their families. I run no hazard in saying for you that this work has brought a double blessing with it,—a blessing as well for yourselves as

\* "The Ladies' Aid Society," organized April 26th, 1861.

for the soldiers who have been the recipients of your bounty. Rarely have I looked in upon the scene of cheerful industry presented at your meetings, without the reflection, "What a harvest of good these noble-minded women must reap from the seed they are sowing here!" And the same seeding has been going on all over the land. In families, in churches, in schools, in hamlets and villages, the generous affections of the heart have found full play in providing comforts, both for the sick and well, in our camps and hospitals. The women of the country have given not only their time and toil to this work, but immense sums of money also, which might, at an ordinary season, have been laid out in dress, and equipage, and amusements. It has impressed upon society, even in our large cities, a new type; replaced its frivolities with rational occupation; turned many a fashionable trifler into a useful woman; and set before the young an example of patriotism and philanthropy, and a just appreciation of the true ends of life, which must tell with salutary effect upon their future characters. All this is the fruit of the great trial which is upon us. It is present and palpable fruit, independent quite of that immortal reward which is bound up in those wonderful words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto ME." God be praised, that even if the war is destined to open the sluices of vice upon the

country, it is at the same time invigorating the virtue of the people, and garnishing the land with those flowers of Paradise which never die.

It were inexcusable not to mention *the favor which a benign Providence has shown our cause*, as one of our grounds of thankfulness to-day.

It is true we have had painful reverses. Most of these, however, it must be confessed, have been attributable to incompetency or rashness on the part of officers. On the other hand, the sum of our reverses is very small when compared with the fruits of that wise and efficient policy which has secured three wavering States to the Union, and with the success which has crowned our arms in numerous instances. But even these are not the chief tokens of the Divine goodness towards us. What primarily demands our gratitude is the loyalty and patriotism of the nation upon which we have just been dilating, and which have created this vast army and navy and the means to sustain them. Our work thus far has all been preliminary—a work of preparation. And I do not know that God ever put it within the power of a threatened nation before to accomplish such results in so short a time. With this we must associate two other blessings equally signal, viz., the exemption of the country, and especially of the camps, from wasting epidemics, and our almost unexampled harvests. There is something so marked in our abundant crops the present season as contrasted with the

short crops of England and France; it bears in so many ways, financial, social, and military, upon the issues of this war; that one is compelled to believe there is a special Providence in it. Let it make us thankful and humble.

There is but one other topic with which I shall detain you. We have the best reasons for believing that this contest will result *in re-establishing the Union and perpetuating our Government*; and for this priceless blessing, though yet in perspective, we may fitly offer our thanksgivings to-day.

It were superfluous to specify the grounds upon which the conviction here expressed rests. The subject is open to every one's investigation; those who do not share in the conviction that the Union is to be preserved, are of course free to entertain a different opinion. That there are prospective difficulties in the way of a re-union which now seem intractable, may be admitted. The two which overshadow all others are the slavery question, and the bitter resentments engendered by the war. We have no warrant to regard either of these as invincible. Other nations have survived civil wars without mutilation or permanent estrangement: and so may we. What is to become of the four millions of slaves at the South, is a question not now before us. Whether the Institution is to be perpetuated; and if so, whether with any abridgment of its territorial area, or any material change in its essential conditions, are points which

need not be anticipated. The whole problem is likely to come up quite soon enough. And whenever it does come, it will tax the collected wisdom, patriotism, and Christianity of the country to resolve it. Let us hope that in that day, the subject may be considered without the ignorance, the uncharitableness, and the mutual hate, which have too often envenomed the discussions of the question in the years that are past.\* It will be a great and beneficent effect of the war, if it shall teach all parties of all sections, that this profound and complicated evil is never to be approached except in that spirit of candor and forbearance with which it was uniformly treated by the Saviour and his Apostles.

“Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” We leave to the future what properly belongs to the future, resting only in the firm assurance that a gracious Providence will preserve and perpetuate this Union. Why we should manifest so much solicitude on this point, seems to be a marvel to the European mind. One of the leading London journals in describing the war, lately observed, “One party (the South) is fighting for independence; the other for an *idea*. One strikes for liberty; the other for the *Union*.” To their minds,—

\* Whatever may be the criminality of the South, it cannot change the facts of history. The record shows that the North is very far from being guiltless in this matter. Let us neither cancel nor suppress our Protest against those aggressions which Pennsylvania, at least, has for the last twenty years denounced as fatal to all harmony between the North and the South, and in fact subversive of the Union.

and this writer represents the intelligence and rank of England,—our UNION has no significance! It is a mere abstraction, an “*idea*,” which it is both wicked and absurd to go to war about. If Scotland should propose to resume her ancient sovereignty, and set up her own throne and Parliament, these philosophers would be likely to think that “Union” might represent something more than a shadow. Even Ireland, though separated from England by a broad arm of the sea, cannot lift a finger to sever the political bond which unites them, so far as to restore her ancient Parliament, without being threatened with the whole army and navy of Great Britain. “Union,” it seems, means something on that side of the water; on this, it is a mere bagatelle.

One does not care to argue with such conceited ignorance as this. We all understand here, that it were just as reasonable to ask Great Britain to consent to divide herself into two kingdoms at the Tweed, or France at the Loire, as to expect our government to acquiesce in any partition of the States by a line of latitude. Providence has marked out this country as the heritage of one nation. Its chains of mountains and its network of lakes and rivers demand this. A glance at the map will show that there cannot be one nation at the sources and along the affluents of the Mississippi and Susquehanna, and another at their mouths; one nation commanding a third of the coast line from Maine

to Texas, and another nation the other two-thirds. We are made one nation, too, by our descent, our language, our history, our traditions, our diversified climate and productions, our mutual dependence and our reciprocal interests. Our capacity for self-development and self-protection, our just position among the nations, our charters, our schools, our religion, all require that we shall be one nation. The dismemberment which is now attempted, would not simply arrest our progress, despoil us of our national prestige, and impair, if not annul, our power for good throughout the globe; it would entail perpetual war and bloodshed upon our posterity. For what power short of Omnipotence could prevent this, with two rival confederacies inflamed with hereditary animosities, having an imaginary line of several hundred miles in length as a conterminous boundary, and one of them (as would certainly be the case) allied by a league, offensive and defensive, with some leading European monarchy?

It is this consideration which, beyond any other, reconciles many of the wisest and best of our countrymen to the war. Appalling as it is, they are convinced that it is the only alternative to something far worse—a long succession of fierce and bloody wars among those who are to come after us. They feel, as patriots and as Christians, that it would be a crime of the deepest dye to transmit such a legacy to posterity; and sooner than consent to it, they will make any sacrifices,

submit to any hardships, and face any dangers. The first duty we owe, under God, to our country, to the world, and to future generations, is to retrieve and perpetuate our nationality. I say, "to our country," and I mean by this our *whole* country. The solemn determination on the part of the loyal States to re-establish the Union in its integrity, at whatever cost, is not to be interpreted as the offspring of a vindictive feeling towards the South. It has never been the sentiment of the loyal States, that the Southern *people* had initiated this war upon the Union. They regard them—even now when they have, in such masses, taken up arms against us—as having been deceived by unprincipled leaders, whose authority is already waning just because their arts are beginning to be understood. Truth is no match for falsehood on a short course; but with the world before them, truth is sure to reach the goal first. Time and patience are already opening the eyes of those deluded multitudes to the real condition of things. And when the frenzy to which they have been wrought up has passed by, it will not be strange if they become their own avengers, and visit their betrayers with summary justice.

These, if I mistake not, are the prevailing sentiments of the loyal population. And when they insist upon a restoration of the Union, it is from an honest concern for the well-being, not of themselves only, but of the people of the seceded States as well. They are per-

suaded that it is the only means by which those populations can again enjoy the benefits of a wise and good government.

It is a satisfaction to reflect that in the issue here contemplated, the Union will probably be handed over to our successors stronger than when it came into our hands. The Constitution will be better understood. Warned by the past, the people may guard the ark of their liberties with increased vigilance. The educated and wealthy classes, whose criminal neglect of their political obligations makes them largely responsible for the calamities which oppress us, may peradventure feel that a government like ours is worth some *little* time and care at their hands. Whatever contests may arise, whatever political heresies may spring up, there will at least be nothing to fear from the noxious dogma which has produced this colossal insurrection. *Secession* will be dead. And so far, the Union will be secure.

Let the lesson be drawn here (as in a parenthesis), that neither in politics nor in morals are errors of opinion to be allowed to pass with impunity. There is nothing of which men in general are so intolerant, as any rigor on the part of religious teachers in dealing with unscriptural doctrines. Immoral conduct they will not defend. "But why censure a man for a mere speculative error?" Because a speculative error may be charged with the elements of death, a thousand-fold beyond the mischief bound up in a vicious life. You must take this asser-

tion on trust so far as theology is concerned. But in politics, the demonstration is before you. This war which is desolating the most prosperous country in the world, is the product of an erroneous political opinion. That opinion was drifting about for many years among the eddies of our politics, occasionally eliciting some discussion, but treated in the main as a harmless absurdity. Yet it carried in its bosom a very magazine of destruction, which needed only the fatal spark to cover the land with these mighty ruins. Let the lesson be heeded. Error is not harmless. The charity which leads you to shelter it when propounded by a popular lecturer or a popular preacher, and which makes you stigmatize those who denounce it as bigots, is a charity which has stolen the livery of Heaven to serve the devil in. He who is TRUTH itself, and whose boundless goodness has irradiated our world with the light of hope and of heaven, has suspended salvation and perdition upon men's belief. "*Believe* on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." Let us have no more of that spurious charity which is ever ready to homologate truth and error,—when they lead, in politics, one to law and order, the other to anarchy and bloodshed; and in morals, one to an eternity of glory, the other to an eternity of shame.

But it is time to release your attention. Unless we

have gone over our subject in vain, you will feel with me that we have ample cause to keep this festival, notwithstanding the sorrow which has gone up into so many homes, and the ensigns of war which wave from every hill and turret. You will bring your thanksgivings to God to-day, that we still have a country; that the ancient patriotism still glows upon our altars; that Christianity has girded herself with new strength for this day of trial; and that our cherished UNION promises, by the blessing of Heaven, to emerge from this conflict, purified by the fires, more firmly established upon its foundations, penetrated with a more humble and grateful temper, and better fitted than ever to help forward the cause of liberty, humanity, and true religion throughout the earth.