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THE PEACE-MAKERS.

A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE TENTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA, ON
SUNDAY, APRIL 9, 1865, APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR OF
PENNSYLVANIA AS A DAY OF THANKSGIVING FOR THE
RECENT VICTORIES OF THE NATIONAL FORCES
IN VIRGINIA.

BY

HENRY A. BOARDMAN, D. D.

PHILADELPHIA:
JAMES S. CLAXTON,
SUCCESSOR TO WILLIAM S. & ALFRED MARTIEN,
No. 606 CHESTNUT STREET.
1865.

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PHILADELPHIA, May 8, 1865.

To the Rev. HENRY A. BOARDMAN, D. D.

Rev. and Dear Sir—You will confer a favor on us, if you will permit the publication of the Discourse delivered by you in your church on the morning of the 9th ult.

We think that its publication at this time will be useful.

Very truly and respectfully,

R. C. GRIER,
JAMES THOMPSON,
R. PATTERSON,
D. HAYES AGNEW,
JAMES SCHOTT,
W. C. PATTERSON,
JAMES ROSS SNOWDEN,
WM. A. PORTER,
WM. B. HIESKELL,
JOSEPH PATTERSON,
THEODORE CUYLER,
H. L. SPROAT,
HENRY McKAY,
ROBERT H. McGRATH,
SAMUEL HOOD.

PHILADELPHIA, May 9, 1865.

Gentlemen—Your kind note has taken me by surprise. The sermon for which you ask, was a sermon of THANKSGIVING. In less than a week after it was preached, our thanksgivings were turned into mourning. In the presence of our great national calamity—one of the greatest, in my opinion, which could have befallen our country—might it not be deemed unseasonable to publish a discourse prepared for so widely different an occasion? Your request shows that you do not think so. And if I defer to your judgment, it will be (*inter alia*) because of the absolute assurance I feel, that the aim and spirit and counsels of this sermon are in perfect accordance with the sentiments daily expressed by our deceased President during the closing weeks of his life. There was nothing his heart was so much set upon, as the early and thorough pacification of the country; and the magnanimous temper in which he had set about it, was hailed by the nation at large as a pledge that he would omit nothing which might contribute to this beneficent result. Even then, however, a *true* peace could have been established only through the benign influence of our holy religion. This was the radical idea of the sermon you desire to publish, and which I herewith place in your hands. The subject is presented in these pages in a very partial and cursory way. Believing as I do that it is the grand necessity of our times, I hope in a few days to invite you to a further and fuller consideration of it.

With respect and esteem, I am very truly yours,

HENRY A. BOARDMAN.

To the Hon. ROBERT C. GRIER,
Hon. JAMES THOMPSON, and others.

S E R M O N .

Matthew v. 9.

BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS: FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE
CHILDREN OF GOD.

ON the last Sabbath your attention was called to one of this rich cluster of "Beatitudes;" and it now falls in my way to speak to you of another. To some of you, the theme may present itself as in strange contrast with the scenes through which we are passing; while others may regard it rather as blending with these scenes and foreshadowing the issue to which they are tending. In either case, the reflection will be apt to force itself upon you, How immutable is the word of God! The universal law of earth, is change. With individuals, families, states, dynasties, there is nothing uniform, nothing permanent. Mutability attaches to all the works of man, even the most stable. Opinions, philosophies, policies, are perpetually varying. The BIBLE alone is unchangeable. Events make no

impression upon it. It imbibes no coloring from surrounding objects. It sways not an iota to the tides of human interest and passion. The turbulent billows of strife and violence break over it; but it stands firm like a granite rock amidst the waves of the sea. In cloud and in sunshine, in peace and in war, it speaks in the same calm, clear, authoritative tone, uttering the same immortal truths, and challenging, under penalty of anathema, the paramount and reverential attention of every human being. For "the word of the Lord endureth forever."

If this be so, then there can be no real incongruity between the benediction before us, and the times which are passing over us; that is to say, this benediction, true at all times, must be true now; and, suited to all seasons, must be suited to the present. "BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED THE CHILDREN OF GOD."

I would not have you infer from these remarks that I design to treat this passage exclusively in its adaptation to our public affairs. This is not my purpose: albeit I shall not decline that use of it altogether. It has a lesson for all periods and for all persons.

The crowd that first listened to these words was composed of Jews. They were imbued with an

hereditary enmity to the Gentiles. They were expecting their Messiah, whenever he came, to lead them forth against their pagan oppressors. The wrongs of centuries were to be redressed, and all nations to kiss the sceptre of David. But a widely different doctrine was that which now saluted their ears; one which rebuked no less the revengeful passions of the multitude, than the pride and hypocrisy of their ecclesiastical teachers. Their Messiah had come. And, true to his prophetic character, he came as the "Prince of Peace." But it was not such a peace as they coveted, nor to be achieved in their way.

"Blessed are the Peace-makers." *Who are the Peace-makers; and the blessing pronounced upon them:*—these are the points which invite our notice. I shall treat them in a very familiar and informal way.

It has just been intimated that the Messiah came to establish a kingdom of peace. His grand design was to restore peace between God and man. And in doing this, he laid the foundation for peace of conscience, and peace between man and man. It is only one branch of this fruitful subject that is mentioned in the text. But it is apparent that he who would be a peace-maker must be a man of a *peaceful spirit*. He must love peace; love it, not simply

because it is commanded, but because it is right in itself. It must have an attraction for him. His heart must be in sympathy with it. And it will be, if he has drank in freely of the spirit of the Gospel. For the essence of the Gospel is, "On earth peace, good-will towards men." This was the substance of the Saviour's preaching; this the tenor of his example; this the end for which he endured the cross. And this is the proper evidence and badge of discipleship. It ought to be assumed as a matter of course, that a Christian is a man of peace.

Such a man will try to *live at peace with others*. The exhortation is, "Follow peace with all men." "*Follow*" it; though the same apostle elsewhere intimates that it may not be always attainable. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." I may notice this limitation hereafter. For the present, there are certain things looking in the direction of peace, which are "possible," and, therefore, are obligatory. One of these, is to exercise great care about giving offence.

To "follow peace," we must "follow after the things which make for peace." He fails in this, who neglects to set a close watch upon his lips. "He that hath a perverse tongue falleth into mischief." "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles." "A froward man

soweth strife, and a whisperer separateth chief friends." Not to guard one's speech, is to contemn "the things which make for peace." That the peace should be so often broken, can excite no surprise, when it is considered how much rash talking there is; how much malicious talking; how much thoughtless talking. Offence must needs be given: there is no help for it—where the tongue is under no restraint.

A peaceable man will be heedful of the *temper* and circumstances of the persons he has to deal with. We might wish it otherwise, but the world is very full of people with untoward peculiarities. In the course of a single day you may encounter such varieties as the morose, the officious, the desponding, the deceitful, the suspicious, the irritable, the revengeful, the capricious, and the prying. Many whose dispositions are really amiable, are afflicted with very *unamiable nerves*, which grate harsh music both for themselves and others. And there are a very few only, who are entirely exempt from *moods* which make them unduly sensitive to inadvertent affronts or slights.

To consider these infirmities, is one of the characteristics of a man of peace. Not that they are all of a nature to merit his forbearance. But in general he will keep in mind the temper and mood

of the persons he meets; and show their weaknesses as much indulgence as a good conscience will permit. To play upon people's weaknesses; to tease them because they can be teased; and incense them because they are passionate; and mortify them because they are vain; and cajole them because they are suspicious;—this may sometimes afford an evanescent satisfaction, but it is a malicious satisfaction. No Peace-maker could countenance it. Such an one will find no pleasure in helping to make others unhappy, even though their own tempers be chiefly responsible for it. A humane man will not lightly apply a match to a magazine: there are too many incendiaries about already. He will much sooner stretch forth his hand to shield the train than fire it.

But we cannot enter into details. Let it suffice, that a man of peace will endeavor to give his neighbor no just ground of offence. And, reciprocally, he will be slow to take offence. This imports that he will guard against such infirmities of temper as those we have been speaking of. We may insist upon the duty of treating them with a generous forbearance. But what right have you to cherish them? Why should you be so sensitive—so jealous—so petulant—so churlish—so obstinate—so uncharitable? No one can deny that these are very unchristian tempers. They cause a large part of the heartburnings, the

alienations, the contentions, that occur among men. It is as much our duty to be slow in taking offence, as to be cautious about giving offence. A Peace-maker will respect the obligation in both its aspects.

But we may "suffer wrongfully"—where we have neither been over-sensitive to affronts, nor done aught to provoke an injury. This, unfortunately, is a common case. It is a sore trial to flesh and blood. Nature cannot well cope with it. But grace will come to the rescue. A Christian in these circumstances may take the needful steps to vindicate his character; for he cannot but feel keenly the injustice that is done him. But if he be animated by the Spirit of Christ, he will stifle the promptings of revenge; and try to overcome evil with good. For so his Master taught, both by precept and example. Why should any Christian marvel that he suffers from the tongue of calumny, when he recalls the history of his Lord?

If these observations be well-founded, they show that men become Peace-makers in just so far as they imbibe the spirit of genuine religion. They have an essentially peaceful temper. Their principles, their teachings, their aims, their conduct, all go to promote peace. They carry with them a silent but impressive remonstrance against the dispositions and practices which tend to produce strife. Their lives are a rebuke to the malevolent passions which agi-

tate the masses. Cautious about giving or taking offence, where they have a difference with others, they are forward in seeking to have it removed. They are willing to accept the Saviour's rule as it stands, "If thou rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee . . . go and be reconciled to thy brother." It may cost a struggle to do this; for pride and passion would hold them back. But it would be a harder struggle not to do it. They cannot sleep with a quiet conscience, until they have taken all suitable measures to win back an alienated brother. If the effort fails, as it may, they can only leave the matter in the hands of God. The sin lies not at their door.

In the same temper they strive to compose divisions among others. These divisions frequently originate in some trifling incident—a hasty word; an oversight; the tattle of a busy-body; at most, a misapprehension. As regards Christians, it would be safe to assert that nine-tenths of the estrangements which occur among them, grow out of some misapprehension. When the mischief has once taken place, they lack the humility or the resolution to seek an explanation; and so the trouble grows, as neglected weeds always grow, until the insignificant thorn-bush becomes a brawny Upas. What they need now is a Peace-maker—some discreet, large-

hearted Christian, to mediate between them. And with such a days-man, how many alienated friends have been restored to each others arms.

It must not be inferred from these observations, that peace—our own or that of others—is to be sought at all hazards, and at any sacrifice. It is a blessing of very great value; but we must not sacrifice things of still greater value to secure it. The apostle glances at this in the expression already quoted, “If it be possible, live peaceably with all men.” It is not always “possible.” For we must heed the voice of duty. We must follow wherever truth and right lead the way. And this will sometimes expose us to obloquy and contention. It was in this view, our Saviour said, “I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword;” and he goes on to predict the bitter feuds which the gospel would occasion in households. But would any one say, that Christ was not the Friend of peace? or that he should have suppressed His doctrines, because he foresaw that bad men would make them a pretext for assailing his disciples? We are not to shrink from duty, even though it may offend those whom it would grieve us to offend. A good conscience in forming our opinions, and, on all proper occasions, asserting them, must be preserved at whatever cost in respect to our friendships, or our social and professional advantages.

While this maxim is of general obligation, it applies with peculiar force to religious convictions. Christianity is a religion of peace; but it is still more a religion of truth and holiness,—these in order to that. “The wisdom which is from above is first pure, then peaceable.” To hold back the truth, as the pulpit has so often done, may promote peace; but it will be the treacherous calm which precedes shipwreck. Neither as ministers nor as private Christians, may we fail to declare what we believe to be the whole counsel of God. Times and modes are to be regarded. And we must be mindful of the tone and temper of our own hearts. But firmly, prudently, charitably, and faithfully, we must set forth the truth. If this lead to disputation, it will be no fault of our’s. Jesus Christ was of old, and he is still, “a stumbling-block to the Jew, and to the Greek foolishness.” Are his friends answerable for the dissensions which may follow the preaching of Christ crucified? Is it they who disturb the peace of the Church? Far from it. It is the formalists, who will not endure the truth. It is the bigots, who arrogate a monopoly of the truth, and hand over all who are outside of their own narrow pale to “uncovenanted mercy.” It is the teeming tribes of errorists, with and without their sectarian organizations, who reject the Bible or deny some of its

essential doctrines. These all are, in their measure, responsible for the discord that prevails in the religious world. Very desirable it is to allay this strife: it is the standing opprobrium of the Church of Christ. But it may not be allayed at the cost of the truth. The truth is not our's to barter away. And if bartered, it would fail of its end. For there is no real peace except through the truth. And the only *Peace-makers* entitled to the benediction of the Saviour, are those who "buy the truth and sell it not;" who will, if needful, "contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;" and who will diligently use the word of God to win back an offended brother, to reconcile divided friends, and to replace the harsh polemics of the Church with Christian love and concord.

But there is still another sphere for the sympathy and care of the Peace-makers, which you will not expect me to pass by in silence. It is too broad a subject to be discussed within the brief limits allotted to the remainder of this service: but a few thoughts may be thrown out for your consideration.

The Peace-makers are the true, spiritual disciples of Christ. They are in and of the Church. They represent the Church. As a matter of order, then, we may refer to them in the aggregate, and consider the CHURCH in its character of PACIFICATOR. That

this is its proper character, no one will deny who has ever read the New Testament.

What, then—to come at once to the question that lies just now in every one's bosom—*is the true function of the Church in respect to war?*

I answer, its function is threefold:

(1.) If possible, to *prevent* war.

(2.) If this be unavoidable, to *attemper* and *mitigate* it.

And (3.) to do whatever may be lawful and right, to *bring war to an end*, and to *restore a just, humane, and Christian peace*.

1. The Church is, if possible, to *prevent* war. This is involved in its nature and design. Its mission, like that of its Divine Founder, is to deliver men from sin; and to fill the earth with holiness and happiness. It must needs, then, discountenance war. For war brings in its train every form of sin and every type of sorrow. There is, perhaps, no word in human language of such comprehensive and fatal significance; none which comprises such an accumulation of wrong and suffering. That Christianity should be opposed to war, is a thing of course. Many readers of the New Testament understand it as forbidding even defensive war; and that, under any circumstances. Nearly four years ago I gave you the reasons why I could not acquiesce

in that view. But, assuredly, all the teachings of the New Testament, and the whole tone and genius of Christianity, are adverse to any war unless it be strictly defensive. If its lessons were universally received, war would be an impossible thing,—the more so, as it lays the axe at the root of the evil, by subduing the passions in which war usually originates.

Whether the Church did its whole duty in trying to prevent the war which has desolated our country, will be a question for the historian. And yet, need we await his decision? Is it not patent to all the world, that if Christianity had had its just ascendancy amongst us, this conflict would have been averted? Had the pulpit and the (so-called) religious press, North and South, to name no other agencies, steadfastly inculcated those great lessons of obedience to law and magistracy, of truth and justice, of humanity and kindness, of forbearance and conciliation, which belong to the rudiments of the Scripture morality, this contest could never have happened. The land would have been saved this great crime of rebellion, and the untold horrors it has brought with it. That topic, however, is not before us, except in an incidental way.

2. When war actually exists, it devolves upon the Church,—composed as it is of those who are by

profession Peace-makers, *to do all that it can to limit and mitigate its evils.*

The inherent tendency of war is to barbarity. Unleashing as it does the strongest passions of the human heart, and setting men to destroy each other, it is scarcely to be wondered at, that uncivilized tribes should conduct their wars less like men than fiends. It must be claimed on behalf of the Christian religion, that it has greatly modified the ferocity of war. Many of its worst devices are professedly abandoned by Christian nations: and if practised, are practised in derogation of the recognized code of Christendom.

It will be readily admitted, too, that the Church has not been idle during this unhappy contest in our country. Its noble activity in providing supplies and contributing to the comfort of the sick and wounded, friends and foes alike, has elicited the merited applause of the civilized world. It is a sublime triumph of the beneficent spirit of the Gospel, this ministration of mercy, on a colossal scale, to the sufferers of the war. Here, at least, hate has given place to love; and the Peace-maker has found his congenial task, in binding up the wounds of combatants struck down by each other's hands.

Yet it would not be difficult to show, that there

are grave omissions and even transgressions to be laid to the account of the Church, as well during the progress of the war as before it commenced. Let this topic be waived, however, for one that is more grateful.

3. It was specified as another function of the Church, to exert its influence *in bringing war to an end, and establishing a just and stable peace.*

It is not to attempt this by arraying itself against the State. Civil government is a Divine ordinance. It is this which makes rebellion not simply a political offence, but a sin against God. And all factious opposition to government bears the taint of criminality. The State is, within its legitimate sphere, entitled to the moral support of the Church; precisely as the Church may claim the protection of the State. In respect to particular measures or magistrates, it is the privilege (in a free commonwealth) and may be the duty, of the citizen, to seek by the use of the prescribed means, to bring about a change. But he may do nothing, especially in the presence of a great rebellion, wilfully to embarrass the government in re-establishing its authority. His obligation as a Peace-maker binds him to promote whatever measures may be best adapted to insure an early and righteous peace. And it certainly requires of him, that he be importunate in pleading

with the "God of peace" on behalf of his afflicted country.

These obvious principles have been recognized, though not to their full extent, in the conflict from which we seem at length to be emerging. The peace for which so many prayers have gone up to God, and so many anxious hearts have been yearning, appears to be dawning upon us. The honoured Chief Magistrate of our Commonwealth (who, as I learn, has just gone on another of his visits of sympathy to our wounded soldiers in Richmond*), has invited the people to unite this day "in rendering thanks to Almighty God for all his mercies, and especially for that he hath been graciously pleased to look favorably on us, and make us the instruments to establish the right, to vindicate the principles of free government, and to prove the certainty of Divine justice."

The response to this appeal will be general and cordial. Not only in this State, but throughout all the free States, the voice of praise and gratitude will resound to-day. On thousands of altars will sacrifices of thanksgiving be offered to the God of our fathers. There is cause for thanksgiving. Four

* Governor Curtin's generous concern for the sick and wounded Pennsylvania soldiers throughout the whole war, have won for him the lasting gratitude of our Commonwealth.

years ago, on the Sabbath after the attack upon Fort Sumter,* it fell to my lot to address you in this place. May I be allowed to quote a few sentences from the sermon delivered on that occasion—a sermon which (as I find) contains no thought nor word I should care to alter to-day. “As yet we only feel the spray of the billows breaking at our feet. But the storm is raging off the shore, and the tide is swelling, and it threatens to pour itself before long in fury over the land. It is not for man to say whether it shall be arrested. . . . It may not accord with the Divine plan that we should escape this conflict. But we may plead with Him that if war must come, it may be shorn of those atrocities which are the proverbial characteristic of civil wars. We may further plead with Him, to bring it to a speedy end. It is horrible that there should be war at all: a protracted war among brethren would embosom all the curses which have followed in the train of sin. No tongue may attempt to depict, no imagination to conceive of its horrors. Let us pray that its time may be short.”

These prophetic apprehensions have all been realized. The war came. Instead of ending in a few weeks or months, it has lasted four years. And as to its “horrors,” they have even exceeded all that

* April 21, 1861.

was then predicted. What occasion can there be to recount them? Have they not been the burden of our daily journals; of our public assemblies; of every social gathering; of all households, and of all hearts? Is there any family that has not been made sick and sad in rehearsing the calamities of this war? Is there any congregation where its thunderbolts have not fallen, and laid the brave, the true-hearted, the loved and honored, in the dust? Four years of fratricidal strife! Four years of carnage! Four years of prisons and hospitals and graves! Four years of ever accumulating widowhood and orphanage!

Oh, beloved, while we mingle our tears with the mourners, we have cause for thanksgiving to-day. We must and will rejoice that the citadel of this great revolt is conquered, and its power broken. We must and will be thankful to God, that the system of servitude which nurtured the passions that inspired the rebellion, is passing away. That it *must* fall, became apparent on the morning of the 12th of April, 1861. The first gun fired at Sumter was its death-knell. How it was to be brought about, it was not for man to say: but there were those who felt (as I certainly did) that the issue was then and there determined.

In a published sermon preached here fifteen years

ago, it was said: "I have never set myself to defend slavery; and by the grace of God I never will. I concur in the estimate which is put upon it by the people of the North, and by tens of thousands of our Southern countrymen, that it is a colossal evil; and that no consummation is more devoutly to be wished and prayed for than its removal." And now its "removal" has come. Not in a way which any one then living could have anticipated. Not in the way which many amongst us believed would be the wisest and best way—either for the master or the slave, for the government or the people. But the vast stream of Providence rolls on regardless of men's plans and opinions; and he who will not yield to the current, must be swept away by it. God's purpose is accomplished. The African race is emancipated; and the land redeemed from the taint of slavery. For this let us offer our thanksgivings to God. But if there should be thoughtful Christian men who "rejoice with trembling," let your charity bear with their weakness. They only wait to see the result of this stupendous revolution. The abrupt and violent enfranchisement of four millions of ignorant slaves, is an event to which history supplies but one parallel. That transaction was under immediate and palpable supernatural direction: and even then it cost forty years of painful discipline, and the lives of an entire

generation to bring the vast scheme to a successful issue. Let us pray that the Pillar of cloud and of fire may reappear for *our* guidance. If it should, and we have grace to follow it, this will prove a glorious deliverance for both races. But if we are left to the counsels of a mere mortal wisdom, it may one day turn the rejoicing of the land into mourning. It is both our duty and our privilege to hope for an auspicious result—auspicious for the black race, auspicious for the white race, auspicious for our country, and for our common Christianity.

But to avert the evils which may still threaten us, and secure the advantages that may be within our reach, we must invoke an agency which the wisdom of this world has sometimes held in light esteem. "BLESSED ARE THE PEACE-MAKERS!" It is the province of the government to enforce the laws, to suppress insurrection, to bring back revolted States to their allegiance, and to reëstablish the authority of the Constitution throughout all the land. So dear are these objects to the hearts of the people, that they have counted no sacrifice too great for the accomplishment of them. They have surrendered freely their property, their business, their domestic ties. They have poured out their life's blood like water. And in our thanksgivings to-day we may not forget, that, under God, we owe the redemption

of our imperilled heritage to the patriotism and courage, the skill and endurance, the toils and sufferings, of our army and navy. Thanks be to God for the favor with which he has crowned them, and for the events we chronicle to-day.

But when the government has finished its task, and the sword is sheathed, and the turmoil of war is hushed, there will remain a work to be done which no statesmanship nor valor can effect. The arrest of fighting is not peace. The only peace that will avail to us, is one that penetrates below the surface. To allay the resentments of this war, to lull to sleep its fiery passions, to restore mutual respect and esteem, and thus renew an actual, not a mere formal, Union,—here is an achievement which, to any eye but that of faith, must seem impossible except as by a sort of miracle. Whether it is to be, is known only to Omniscience. But our duty is plain.

The hour has come for the CHURCH to prove her loyalty, not to Cæsar simply, but to her own and Cæsar's LORD: to show whether she has been baptized with the Spirit of Christ, or with the spirit of the world. A broad field is before her; and her Master summons her to a lofty mission. Will she call down fire from heaven to consume the wrongdoers, or will she go to them and bind up their wounds? Will she climb to the top of Gerizim with

her mouth filled with blessings; or will she stand upon Ebal and utter curses from the rising of the sun to the going down thereof? Some who not only claim to be her sons but minister at her altars, have within the past week made the air ring with maledictions which took the thoughts irresistibly to that scene, where a guiltless sufferer cried with his last breath, "Father, forgive them: for they know not what they do!" One cannot but believe that if *He* had been present on an occasion of this sort, he would have turned to his vindictive followers, and mildly said, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of: for the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." Is there anything in the plaudits of a delirious crowd, that could soothe the pain of such a rebuke from those lips?

We may take a lesson even from the rigorous economy of the Old Testament. When the tribe of Benjamin had committed a grievous crime, the other tribes assembled a powerful army and marched against them. Twice were the allies defeated, losing in one battle 22,000 men, and in the other 18,000. In the third conflict, they succeeded. Benjamin lost 25,000 troops. Only six hundred survived, and the tribe seemed about to become extinct. What course did the other tribes adopt? The provocation they had received, was immense: 40,000 of their people

had been slain—enough to fill the land with mourning. A single blow would exterminate the small remnant of the offending tribe. Passion would have prompted it. But natural affection, piety, and patriotism, forbade. Instead of extirpation, there occurred a scene which would have shed lustre even upon the brightest epoch in the annals of Christianity. “The people came to the house of God, and abode there till even before God, and lifted up their voices and wept sore; and said, *O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?*” (Judges xxi. 2, 3.) An injured and suffering nation, in the flush of victory, while yet mourning their own dead, come together to weep over the terrible but righteous retribution they had visited upon their brethren, and to plead with their covenant God to preserve the tribe from extinction. There was a moral sublimity in the spectacle enough almost to move a heart of stone.

And what less can we do? Can there be a Christian here who is willing that a tribe should die out of our Israel? God forbid. He has forbidden it. What means this long delay of victory? Why has He kept us waiting through these four weary years, and tried us with so many reverses and sorrows, if not to teach us a lesson of deep contrition for our

sins; to press home upon our hearts the conviction, that His controversy was no less with us than with our brethren; to chasten the exultation of our day of triumph; and to bring us into a state of mind in which we might offer the petition, without invoking his anathema upon our own souls, "Forgive us our trespasses, *as we forgive* those who trespass against us"? He who cannot read these lessons, running through every page of these mournful annals, is blind.

I am not speaking, let it be noted, of the magistracy of the land. I meddle not with the high questions which the suppression of the rebellion may force upon the attention of the government. What justice may demand at the hands of our rulers; what mercy may claim; what a sound policy may dictate,—these are points which I am content to leave where the Constitution and laws have lodged them. My business as an unworthy minister of the Gospel, is not with the government, but with individuals; and not, primarily, with the world, but with the Church. I speak of what concerns Christian men in their private capacity, when I say that it behooves them to repress in themselves and discountenance in others all malevolent feelings. Let us not mar the truth and purity of our thanksgivings to God, by blending with them imprecations upon our misguided country-

men. Have they not plucked down upon themselves a ruin so awful that even in the ends of the earth every one's ears that hears of it shall tingle? Is not the whole South a desolation? "A voice of wailing is heard: 'How are we spoiled! we are greatly confounded, because we have forsaken the land, because our dwellings have cast us out. For death is come up into our windows, and is entered into our palaces, to cut off the children from without, and the young men from the streets!'" "All her beauty is departed: her princes are become like harts that find no pasture, and they are gone without strength, before the pursuer. . . . All her people sigh; they seek bread: they have given their pleasant things for meat to relieve the soul. . . . The Lord hath trodden under foot all my mighty men in the midst of me: He hath called an assembly against me to crush my young men. . . . The young and the old lie on the ground in the streets: my virgins and my young men are fallen by the sword. . . . I called for my lovers, but they deceived me. . . . Behold, O Lord, for I am in distress: my bowels are troubled: mine heart is turned within me; for I have grievously rebelled: abroad the sword bereaveth: at home there is as death."

This is the picture presented by that once beautiful land to-day. Superadded to poverty and want

and exile and wounds, their cities in ashes and their homesteads blighted, there can be scarcely a house where there is not "one dead," nor a heart that is not filled with anguish. Is not this enough? Can you still talk of vengeance? Is it for the blood-bought *Church* to pray that these sufferers may be *denied the mercy of her Lord?* Be it rather her grateful office to emulate His pity; to seek out and reclaim these wanderers; to heal these fatal antipathies. The field is white to the harvest. Even here at the North the sweet charity of the gospel has been trodden under foot. Among all sects and parties truth, candor, and Christian kindness, have been often sacrificed to prejudice and intolerance. Relentless passion has sundered the sacred bonds of brotherhood, and divided friends, families, and churches. The call is urgent. Let the PEACE-MAKERS go about their work. There is not one of them who may not do something either North or South, to rectify hurtful misapprehensions, to moderate harsh judgments, to check ebullitions of rancor, to extinguish animosities, to fan the lingering spark of kindness, to encourage friendly offices towards the erring, and to diffuse the healing influence of the Gospel. Here is what our poor bleeding country needs, the *sure and stable peace which flows from the cross*. "CHRIST is our Peace." He must bestow it, or we may despair of

seeing it. But if He speak the word; if he simply breathe into the hearts of his professing people his own meek and lowly temper, and send them forth through the land to be PEACE-MAKERS in deed as well as in name; we may hope, that love will achieve yet one more triumph over hate, and merge even these bitter national enmities in a sacred and lasting concord.

For those who engage in this heaven-born work, there is a "blessing" provided, the grandeur of which no tongue may describe. "BLESSED are the PEACE-MAKERS; for they shall be called the CHILDREN OF GOD." *Blessed*—for the temper that animates them carries a blessing with it which is sweeter than the plaudits of an admiring world. *Blessed*—for GOD is the GREAT PEACE-MAKER; and this Spirit, which no one inherits but from Him, *proves* them to be His "children." *Blessed*—because, "if children, then heirs; HEIRS OF GOD AND JOINT HEIRS WITH CHRIST!" Here is a domain as wide as the universe—as lasting as eternity. It belongs to the PEACE-MAKERS. Choose ye, whether ye will have part in it.



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