

ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE

GENERAL MILITARY HOSPITAL,

WILSON, N. C.,

ON THE DAY APPOINTED BY THE

PRESIDENT

AS A DAY OF

FASTING, HUMILIATION AND PRAYER.

BY

DRURY LACY, D. D.,

CHAPLAIN OF THE POST.

FAYETTEVILLE:

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1863.

GENERAL MILITARY HOSPITAL,
WILSON, N. C., March 27th, 1863.

Rev. DRURY LACY, D. D.:

DEAR SIR:

The inmates of the Hospital and citizens of the surrounding community, who attended Divine Service here to-day, desire me to express their appreciation of the well-timed, able and eloquent Address delivered by you as our Chaplain on the occasion.

In the general belief that its circulation will exert a beneficial influence in these stormy times, the pleasant task devolves upon me of soliciting in their name that you will place in my hands a copy for publication.

Permit me to add my own personal solicitations that you will comply with the request.

Very respectfully,

Your obt^l servant,

S. S. SATCHWELL,
Surgeon C. S. A., in charge.

GENERAL MILITARY HOSPITAL,
WILSON, 28th March 1863.

DEAR DOCTOR:

Your note of yesterday, requesting in behalf of "the inmates of the Hospital and citizens of the surrounding community, who attended Divine Service," the Address delivered by me, was received this morning.

I feel truly grateful for your announcement that "it is the general belief that its circulation will exert a beneficial influence," &c., and yielding my judgment to that of the applicants, will place a copy in your hands for publication.

I thank you, my dear Doctor, for your own favorable opinion of this humble effort; and believe me to be, very respectfully,

Your sincere friend, &c.,

DRURY LACY, Chap.,
Post at Wilson.

For Dr. S. S. SATCHWELL,
Surgeon in charge.

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Lovers.

ORDER OF EXERCISES.

I. INVOCATION.

II. HYMNS FOR THE CAMP.—40th, C. M.

1. Lord, while for all mankind we pray,
Of every clime and coast,
O, hear us for our native land—
The land we love the most.
2. O, guard our shores from every foe,
With peace our borders bless,
With prosperous times our cities crown,
Our fields with plenteousness.
3. Unite us in the sacred love
Of knowledge, truth and Thee;
And let our hills and valleys shout
The songs of liberty.
4. Lord of the nations, thus to Thee
Our country we commend;
Be Thou her refuge and her trust,
Her everlasting friend.

III. PRAYER.

IV. SCRIPTURE READ.—JOEL, ch. ii., 15—32 vs.

V. PROCLAMATION OF PRESIDENT READ.

VI. ADDRESS.

In compliance with the well-timed and most admirable Proclamation of our President, do we this day tread the courts of the Most High. We come to humble ourselves under His mighty hand; to afflict our souls for the evils we have done in His sight; to pour out the language of penitence and contrition before His throne of grace; to deprecate His wrath and to implore His mercy.

But where, some may ask, where is the propriety or necessity of thus humbling ourselves before God with fasting and prayer? I answer, that Jehovah's controversy with our guilty land is not yet removed. Are there satisfying evidences that

“His anger is turned away, and that He is pacified towards us for all that we have done and been”? Have our people, *“breaking off their sins by repentance, returned unto Him against whom they have sinned”?* From His judgments, which are yet abroad over the land, do they appear to have learned righteousness? Would to God that facts could warrant a prompt and exultant affirmative! But no! we are still at war with our enemy; the end has not yet come; the horrors of this cruel war still exist; the clash of arms is still resounding over the broad extent of our country; the fresh graves of those who have fallen in the deadly strife, or by slow, lingering disease, are strewed in every direction; our hospitals are yet crowded with the sick and wounded; wailing and lamentation still rise from a thousand bleeding hearts and desolated homes. No! Jehovah’s controversy with us has not yet ceased. We are still *“a sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil-doers, we have provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger,”* and it will be of the Lord’s mercies if we are not yet humbled by a cruel and merciless foe—by a people that we in our hearts despise.

How numerous our sins as a people are, how black their ingratitude, how peculiar their aggravations, it is not my intention fully to state. This would lead me over ground which would afford me no pleasure to traverse, and one which, should there be a necessity, would require us to take a sad and sorrowful review of the past. That we have merited these judgments which have fallen upon us, and by which the Eternal scourges a sinful and stiff-necked people, none but a daring atheism or stupid ignorance can deny. Nor is it my purpose to relate the causes of the horrid war in which we are engaged: they are known to you as well as they are to me. It is sufficient to say, that there are causes enough in the injuries and insults heaped upon us by our enemies for the last forty years—injuries and insults greater by far than those which caused our fathers to throw off the government of Great Britain. But the symptoms of its approach, though they had been for long years the source of deep anxiety to many, when they drew near, startled the most thoughtless. Our hearts throbbed with painful apprehensions; thousands of *“God’s people, in their families apart, and in their closets apart,”* for months were prostrate

before His throne of mercy, to deprecate those evils of which the bare apprehension filled them with alarm. But notwithstanding their prayers and tears, the gathering darkness was permitted to concentrate and pour down its tempest of wrath.

It is a very remarkable as well as mysterious arrangement in the government of God, by which He makes one sin the corrective and punishment of another. When nation rises up against nation, and one people against another—when dissensions grow into animosities, and animosities break out into open and destructive hostility—let us not suppose that such deplorable events proceed merely from the jarring interests and the jarring passions of men. Ambition of power, the fascinations of wealth and grandeur, acquisition of territory, jealousy of right and of interest, national honor or the lust of fame, often set the world on fire and swell the huge catalogue of human miseries. "*Wars and fightings come from our lusts.*" But in these disasters a higher agency is concerned. God, "*who sitteth upon the floods*"—God, "*whose kingdom ruleth over all*"—God, who causeth even "*the wrath of man to praise him*"—marks out the path of the tyrant, selects the objects of his prowess, and fixes the bounds of his ravages. His design may be evil, his aggressions unprovoked, and from him, unmerited by those against whom they are directed, every step of his course may be scored with crimes. And yet God, unimpeachably righteous, brings light out of this darkness, order out of this confusion, by such evil instruments accomplishes wise, good and holy ends, and when He has accomplished them, He visits the iniquities of the instruments themselves and breaks them to pieces with his rod of iron. This truth is set forth in clear light and in strong colors by the Prophet Isaiah, in chap. x, 5—19 verses.

This is one of those "*terrible things in righteousness,*" by which, "*when He cometh forth out of His place, God punishes the inhabitants of the earth.*" Thus, men become to each other the angels of His wrath—the executioners of His vengeance; and thus, He delegates one wicked people as ministers of *His* quarrel to another, and sends them to execute *His* threatenings upon their brethren in transgression. The sword never comes to devour but when He appoints it; for every fatal thrust it has His high

commission, and with the blood which rushes through the portals of death does He write the crimson history of His wrath.

Brethren! need I remind you that this dreadful plague is now upon us? Already have we suffered those horrors of war which our frenzied imaginations were not able to pourtray,—such horrors as those of which our fathers told us in our childhood, that took place in their day—in *that* day of desperate struggle for life and liberty, the deeds of which will ever live in our memories. Already have we heard the burst of hostile thunder—the shouts and wailings of maddening strife; already have we seen our fair land invaded by the ruthless foe, whole tracts of country desolated and turned into a howling waste, many of our cities captured and placed under martial law with their inhabitants in a condition worse than Egyptian bondage, thousands of families fugitives from their burning dwellings, our slaves carried off by fraud or violence, and, worse than all, the very temples of the living God desecrated by the outrages and obscenities of an impious soldiery—resounding with their imprecations, instead of vocal with the Redeemer's praises.

The complicated evils which attend war, and such a war as this, and especially with such a malignant foe, should awaken in every bosom humble and earnest prayer to God, that these evils may be averted, and these "*calamities may be speedily overpast.*" These evils, both political and moral, it would require a volume fully to enumerate and display. But the time would fail me to unfold them here. I might call your attention to its pernicious influence on the population of the country, not only by increasing the difficulty of comfortable subsistence, but by the shocking waste it occasions of human life. I might remind you, (for you would not demand proof,) that it breaks up the happiest arrangements of society; that it arrests the progress of the arts; that it retards and ruins the improvements of science; that it weakens the efforts of agricultural pursuits and destroys commercial interests; that it creates perplexing revolutions in monetary transactions and in the state of property; that it impedes, if it does not frustrate, the regular administration of civil and criminal jurisprudence; that it frequently subjects many of the citizens to the stern jurisdiction and summary proceedings of martial law; that, whilst it puts a

stop to national improvement, it dries up the ordinary streams of national resource; that it oppresses the community with odious but necessary exactions and impressments, in order to maintain their military establishments and give energy to their hostile operations; and that it generally entails upon them a burden of debt which requires the wisdom and exertion of generations to throw off.

The moral evils which spring from war are neither fewer nor less baneful than the political. As it nurtures all the fierce and violent passions, it wrests from society the benefit of many advances in civilization, and drives it, in a retrograde motion, back towards barbarism. By interrupting the quiet pursuit of enlarged and generous education, it keeps the young in ignorance, and withholds from them the means of respectability and usefulness. By hindering the general and uniform attendance on the social worship of God, it suspends the benign influence of the Christian Sabbath, relaxes the bonds of religious duty, deadens the sensibilities of conscience, and tends to subvert the steady dominion of moral principle. Standing armies, moreover, are seminaries of vice. So they always have been; so, we suppose, they always will be. There are some examples, glorious examples, of men who hold fast their integrity even here. But in general, the predominance of iniquity is so great, that the virtue of most is quickly contaminated and blended with the common mass of corruption. Here the profligate and profane tutor each other in the arts of impiety and debauchery. The want of pure example lessens its efficacy, while freedom from pious restraint gives the rein to the more worthless propensities of the heart. Wickedness generates infidelity, and infidelity emboldens wickedness. Hence, as from a root, unbelief in speculation and immorality in practice are propagated in every direction, and scatter their poison to a prodigious extent. Besides all this, with men who are accustomed to the work of death, the life of man loses its value, and they can behold without emotion thousands of their fellow-beings mowed down on the field of carnage, or daily dropping into the grave by the power of disease. To add no more, an army is almost as dangerous when disbanded as it is expensive and troublesome when organized. Men who lounge

in idleness when not called to the activity of military duty—who are provided for without a thought of their own—who have acquired habits of plunder as well as of sloth—can with difficulty apply to laborious occupations. These render us unsafe in the midst of prosperity; these furnish the street with thieves, the highway with robbers, and the jail with criminals. And last, though not least, such a war generates a host of speculators and extortioners—men that spring up as from the bottomless pit, and prowl through the land in every corner of it, taking advantage of the ignorance and necessities of the people, and, like a flock of filthy harpies, suck and fatten on the very life-blood of helpless widowhood and weeping orphanage. The history of this war will be written, and when it is done, there will be found some dark spots on its records, which will form a glaring contrast with the glorious sacrifices endured and the many brilliant achievements of our arms won. But the foulest, darkest, blackest spot that will stain the page of the historian, will be the record of the heartless villanies of extortioners. “*God visits the iniquities of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate Him;*” and when, in coming years, it shall be asked of some young man of wealth, ‘Whose son is he?’ and the answer, ‘The son of a man who, in the second war of our independence, sold his country for gold’; and, as the finger of scorn is pointed at him, he will curse the name of his father; he will curse his own name, and curse the day that he was born. Such are some few of the evils common to war, and for a speedy deliverance from such horrors into which we are plunged, and that too with such a foe, we cannot too earnestly cry to God this day.

Our President has likewise called us to render God our thanks for His great mercies and His wonderful deliverances, as well as to humble ourselves before Him. Let us do this in a becoming manner. Remember, then, that there is a religion of Society, as such,—a tribute of reverence and praise which it owes to the living God. Formed under His auspices and nurtured by His care—preserved by His power and replenished by His bounty—He requires from it, on the accounts, social worship and the social vow. The honor of His sovereign rule He cannot relinquish, and the confession of it we may not with-

hold. It is true, there are subordinate agents who have acted their part in the transactions of this war. But in however conspicuous and honorable a manner these civil and military virtues, which are at once the duty and glory of their official stations, have been displayed in the critical circumstances in which they have been thrown; however firmly and wisely and bravely they may have acted; however much they may have deserved of their country, still their exertions would have been utterly fruitless without the countenance "*of Him who is the Governor among the nations.*" And here let me say, that no persons within the bounds of the whole Confederacy are more prompt and more willing to acknowledge all this than the distinguished agents themselves. As proof of this statement, look at the many calls made by our Chief Magistrate on the good people of the country to assemble for thanksgiving and praise when God has crowned our efforts with success, or for humiliation and prayer when we have met with reverses and disasters. Look at the admirable series of resolutions presented by Mr. Sec'y Memminger, and unanimously passed by Congress, after the first battle of Manassas in July '61. You have never read a dispatch to the Government from Gen. Lee that he did not, in a most marked manner, ascribe the success of our arms to the kindly interposition of the Almighty; nor from Gen. Beauregard in which the same acknowledgment is not made. Gen. D. H. Hill, in the most emphatic manner, commenced it at Bethel, in a dispatch to Gov. Ellis, of such artless simplicity and pathos, that when read before the Convention, filled all eyes with tears and all hearts with gratitude to God. Gen. Kirby Smith, in his brilliant victory at Richmond, Ky., ordered all his troops to assemble the next day (Sunday) to render thanks to Almighty God for the signal victory that had crowned their arms. Whilst Gen. Jackson, in his own peculiarly short and striking telegrams, ever begins: "By the blessing of God on our arms, we have again defeated the enemy." Whilst, then, we mourn over the desolations of this horrid war, and humble ourselves that God inflicts it upon us, let us thank Him this day that He has given us such officers,—men who fear God and fear nothing else; men who worship God on their bended knees morning and night, and pray to God audi-

bly and visibly while the battle rages, and who ascribe all the praise of their success to the same glorious God whose favor they had so earnestly sought. But let us not rest in these second causes, nor limit our praises to these human instruments. Let us not disregard them, but look beyond them. Let us make our boast in God, who in the day of trouble covered us with the shield of His Omnipotence. "*If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,*" now may our people say, "*if it had not been the Lord who was on our side when our enemy rose up against us, then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us: then the waters had overwhelmed us, then the proud waves had gone over our soul. Blessed be the Lord who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth. Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowler, the snare is broken and we are escaped.*" Let our experience of His repeated and unmerited favors during the progress of this horrid war encourage us to put our unlimited trust in Him till it closes—aye, in all time to come.

There are other aspects of this subject which I would be glad to present, if the time would permit. Let the following suffice for the present:

I pretend to be no politician, much less a statesman. I lay claim to no prophetic visions of the future, but still, in my humble sphere, cannot but indulge, as no doubt others do, in anticipations of what is to come. I have never yet had any misgivings as to the ultimate result of this terrible conflict,—dark as may be the way through which we shall be called to pass—dreadful as may be the sufferings which we may yet endure. I have never yet had any serious doubt of a glorious issue; of our independence as a sovereign people, and of our people "*sitting yet under their own vine and fig-tree.*" I honestly believe we are in God's good time to be elevated to a dignified rank among the nations of the earth, whether foreign governments recognize us in six months or six years, or never recognize us at all. We will *win* a place among the family of nations, by God's blessing on the skill of our Generals and the valor of our troops. A people determined to be free can never be enslaved.

But it is sometimes objected by the timid and incredulous,

that our country is too poor, and our armies too small and ill provided to cope with so mighty a foe and to drive him back. Has not Lincoln already an army of 600,000 men in the field, and is he not now raising 3,000,000 of men more? How then is this little handful of men, badly fed, badly clothed, and badly equipped, to meet such a formidable host? Why has this little band a fatigue-duty laid upon it so beyond its powers and its prowess? What prospect and what hope is there of success? To all this I promptly answer: We have army enough, if we have only patriotism and prayer enough. God's plan of giving success to nations is not Buonaparte's plan, that of numbers. All history will prove that our power is not to be computed by our numbers. With God's blessing, all our conflicts are secured by the same promise that secures victory to the Church—"One shall chase a thousand and two put ten thousand to flight." Hence our song has ever been and shall yet be in the midst of battle: "*The Lord of hosts is with us, the mighty God of Jacob is our refuge.*"

What, then, if Lincoln does muster in the field his 3,000,000 of men? Like those before them, they will be driven as chaff before the wind. It is not in the power of any numbers he can bring against us to succeed. "Witness the example of Persia when she poured her 3,000,000 on Greece." What became of them at Thermopylæ and on the Hellespont, and other places made famous by song? They melted away like snow under a summer's sun. "Look at England, when for 300 years she attempted to subdue Scotland and annex it to her Government." She never would have succeeded to this day had she not at last succeeded only by disgracing herself in receiving a king from her enemy, when James VI of Scotland became James I of England. "Look at Holland, glorious little Holland, against the all powerful Spain." With a low, flat country, half marsh and water; every city of importance sacked or burnt; her principal forts taken and held by the enemy; her dykes to keep out the sea broken to destroy her produce; her old men, women and children fugitives from their homes, or those who remained huddled together in a few points of safety; her armies living for years on potatoes or the flesh of horses;—amidst all these privations and distresses and horrors of a cruel

war, her spirit was still unbroken, her courage undaunted, and after a resistance of many long years, achieved her independence, and took her place among the family of nations. Let us go for proof to sacred history. Then look at Gideon's little army of 30,000 men, marshalled on the field of conflict against the countless hosts of the Midianites. When the captain of the Lord's host reviewed them, He said that "*they were too many.*" When He had reduced them down to 300, (by a singular process of *lapping* water from the brook,) and they were brought in line of battle against the army of Midian, then He permitted them to make the onset, and *they did it*; and with the battle-cry, "*The sword of the Lord and of Gideon,*" the victory was easy. Take another case:

When Elisha was pent up in Jotham, and the hosts of Syria spread over all the hills, and covered with their horses and chariots the whole territory, and his body-servant, in alarm, cried out, "*Alas! master, and what shall we do?*" the faith of the prophet could easily climb the hills and see them all glaring and glittering with the horses of fire and chariots of fire, and could calmly reply, "*More are they who are for us than they who are against us.*" And the prophet was as safe as if Heaven's Chieftain had sent His whole life-guard to protect the man of God. Well might he sing, as he led the blinded Syrian into Samaria, "*The chariots of God are 30,000, even thousands of angels.*" And well might he add by way of chorus, "*The Lord is among them. The mighty God of Jacob is their leader.*" No, my hearers, no. Let us not be moved by the display of numbers against us. "What though we be but 6,000,000, and our enemy 20, or 40, or 60,000,000, we will plant ourselves against the rock of historic truth and say, "Come one, come all!" We *must* succeed, and, by God's blessing on our efforts, we *will* succeed. We will all die rather than bend the suppliant knee or kiss the hand of the tyrant. Our cause is founded upon the immutable laws of God, and is so righteous that we can carry it to Him, and leave it under the shadow of His throne.

Now, in the goodly heritage which "the Governor of nations" will yet secure to us, there will exist a larger proportion of all the elements of greatness in the true sense of the term—

of freedom and happiness—than has ever yet fallen to the lot of any other people. The old leaven of *radicalism*, in all its wide-spread and ever restless forms, will have been purged out, and new elements of strength and beauty and grandeur will take its place. We are now in the gristle of our youth, and have already been proving how tough and elastic it is, and what we may be when it becomes hardened by a little use and age. The fact is, we have become, in God's providence, the great inheritors of human freedom. The North have lost all pretensions to true freedom and to a well regulated liberty. They want the necessary conservative element, and for the want of it they have been driving on, under the power of a mad mobocracy, until they have plunged blindfold into all the horrors of a military despotism. What the end will be I do not pretend to know, and what is more, I do not care. But on our side—we tell it thankfully, we tell it firmly—we are the inheritors of human freedom, and we intend to transmit the sacred treasure to our children's children, untarnished by a single blot, undiminished by a single particle! We love our fathers' memory; we cherish the deeds of our great ancestors; we know this day of God's terrible visitation upon us, but we look to Him for His mighty interposition, and by His grace we mean to be faithful to our lot, just to the glorious past, true to the still more glorious future! Milton, one of the most gifted of all English poets, in his "Treatise on the Liberty of unlicensed speech," full of the greatness of his theme, has with unsurpassed beauty drawn the picture of a commonwealth, which with no great changes we may apply to our young Confederacy. "Methinks I see," says he, "a noble and puissant nation rousing itself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking his invincible locks; methinks I see her as an eagle, nursing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full mid-day beam, purging and unscaling her long abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance, while the whole noise of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about in their envious gabble, amazed at what she means." How can I add any thing to this gem of thought? But, my hearers, pardon me for a moment. I pray you, anticipate with me the future.

Contemplate this Confederacy as filled with happy citizens—educated, virtuous, manly, high-minded freemen; all living under equal laws, all enjoying perfect liberty of conscience, all happy and ministering to each other's happiness. Think with what power this Confederacy will be invested—what glory will surround her. The fairest forms that ever presented themselves to the eye of the poet in the hour of highest inspiration, and when the most enrapturing visions broke upon his imagination, do not exceed in grace and beauty and loveliness those which our country may assume in the enjoyment of a truly virtuous and well regulated liberty. Where now, you see at the North the poor, abject, crawling flatterer, the pander to a great man's lusts, the minion of power, here at the South you shall see the freeman lifting his manly front, and showing an eye beaming with intelligence and a countenance conscious of inward dignity. *It will be a nation of freemen!*

But now hear me. If our privileges, social, civil, religious and political—secured under "*the shadow of the Almighty*"—have hitherto repelled the weapons of our cruel assailants, and have received the strongest confirmation in the numerous and brilliant victories achieved by our gallant army on many a hard-fought field, and opening before us so glorious a future,—let us beware of dealing foolishly, and vaunting away our mercies. A most proper and becoming sentiment which the services of this day should impress upon us, and which we should carefully cherish, is, to *keep at a cautious distance from arrogance and pride*. To communities, not less than to individuals, insolence is the forerunner of shame. "*Pride,*" saith the wise man, "*goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*" If God has yet a controversy with us, (if he had not this dreadful war would not be upon us,) he can yet chastise and humble us by a rod, that we in our hearts despise. He, who has all power and wisdom, "*may yet provoke us to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation he may anger us.*" Interest combines with the injunction of inspired prudence: "*Lift not up your horn on high; speak not with a stiff neck, for promotion cometh neither from the east, nor west, nor south; but God is the Judge, he putteth down one and setteth up another.*" The proud, the vain, the boastful, He will teach to bend before his author-

ity, by the sad experience of His displeasure. Without His direction, the sagacity of the profoundest statesman is but another name for stupid infatuation. "*He turneth wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish.*" Without Him, the most intrepid commanders "*bow down under the prisoners, and fall under the slain.*" Abandoned by Him, the most stable fabrics of earthly contrivance totter to their bases, moulder into dust, and become the sport of every wanton breeze. Let us not flatter ourselves, that however others suffer, *we* may safely walk in the imagination of our hearts. We have no charter of immunity in sin. Without discrimination, "*the haughty shall be humbled and the forward cut off;*" "*for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.*" Amen!

VII. PRAYER.

VIII. HYMNS FOR THE CAMP.—39th, L. M.

1. With all the boasted pomp of war,
In vain we dare the hostile field;
In vain, unless the Lord be there;
Thine arm alone our land can shield.
2. Our arms succeed, our councils guide,
Let Thy right hand our cause maintain,
Till war's destructive rage subside,
And peace resume her gentle reign.

IX. BENEDICTION.