

THE NATIONAL CRISIS:

BEING AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE PHI BETA KAPPA SOCIETY IN DARTMOUTH COLLEGE, AT
HANOVER, N. H.,

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BY

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THE NATIONAL CRISIS.

BY REV. GEORGE L. PRENTISS, D.D.

THE fine saying of the poet Schiller, *Die Welt-geschichte ist das Welt-gericht*, is receiving impressive illustration in our day. Rarely have events been fraught with such solemn, judicial import. There has been nothing like it since the great wars of the French Revolution. For a generation after that epoch of storm and battle, the course of events was so quiet as to lead many to believe that the reign of universal peace was just at hand. Under the impulse of this cheering belief, vast schemes for the improvement of society were inaugurated. The schoolmaster everywhere went abroad. The maxim of Lord Bacon, *Knowledge is Power*, struck men's minds with the force of a new revelation. It became in the practical sphere what the Inductive Method, so highly praised and so poorly exemplified by the same illustrious thinker, had already become in the sphere of natural philosophy. Public opinion was enthroned as the ruling power in the world. The principle of free association was applied to the working out of ethical and political reforms as never before. It was applied,

* The following Article was delivered as an address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society in Dartmouth College, Hanover, N. H., July 30, 1862. I have consented to its publication here at the request of the Editor, yet with a good deal of reluctance; for the form of a popular address seems to me hardly suited to the grave and dispassionate character of a Theological Review. Some passages relating to British sympathy with America are omitted, that subject having been already so fully discussed in the July Number of this REVIEW. G. L. P.

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also, with still more zeal and confidence to the work of diffusing Christian truth among all nations. Literature, art, poetry, and science, inspired by the popular idea, willingly joined their forces to those of philanthropy, politics, and religion. And while all this was going on in the moral world, the beneficent Genius of Invention was busy in taming the wildest agencies of nature and harnessing them "in order serviceable" to the triumphal car of Progress. The steam-boat, the railroad, the steam-press, and the magnetic telegraph were summoned into being, and incorporated with our modern civilisation. Is it strange that Christian society, animated by such generous intentions, and thus armed of a sudden with powers almost miraculous for realizing them, should have fancied itself on the very verge of that Promised Land toward which it had been wandering through so many wearisome centuries? Is it a wonder that the man of faith and the man of science vied with each other in depicting the glories of the new era? We, whose entrance into intellectual life was in those days, are not likely to forget what a fair bow of promise seemed to rest upon the future. If there was less of that unbounded hope which intoxicated youthful minds at the close of the last century, there was also far less of the overweening conceit which brought upon that generation such fearful disasters. Never before, within the same period, were such varied and strenuous exertions put forth to diffuse useful knowledge, to elevate and educate the masses, to ameliorate the condition of the indigent, neglected, and unfortunate classes, to reform the vicious, to train up children in right paths, to popularize the highest truths of science and religion, to emancipate and dignify labor, to multiply the conveniences and comforts of life, to do away with slavery, war, intemperance, and the other giant evils which had so long preyed upon human happiness—in a word, to render the world the abode of industrious freedom, peace, domestic joy, and virtuous intelligence. If you will take the trouble to read over addresses delivered thirty or forty years ago on occasions like the present, you will find them replete with sentiments illustrative of what I have been saying.

The impression, however, that the world was drawing near to the reign of general peace and brotherhood was far from universal. Some of the best and ablest thinkers maintained quite the contrary theory. They contended that the old providential laws were still in full operation; that the old passions of human nature, however for a time they might appear to sleep, were in reality as strong and explosive as ever; that instead of allaying them, the very advancement of society was fitted rather to give them new stimulus, and to arm them with more destructive weapons; that in a word, the signs of the times foretokened anything but millennial days. Experience has certainly justified this rather than the other view. We can now see plainly enough, that the age which at Waterloo seemed to be bidding adieu to the sword, was itself pregnant with the elements of titanic strife. The revolutionary storms which swept over Europe in 1848, revealed this to every observing eye, and subsequent events have only rendered it still clearer. The Eastern war, the Indian revolt, the wars in China, the Italian struggle, and now our own civil war, have demonstrated, one after the other, that the occupation of the peace society is for the present gone, and that a long time must elapse before spears will be turned into pruning-hooks. So far from learning war no more, never did the nations study it with greater diligence, never were preparations for it made on a more colossal scale than now. Europe is one huge camp, and reverberates with the tramp of a million of armed men.

History is, indeed, a wonderful teacher and judge. Those great crises, especially, which notch the centuries, speak with a voice which is as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings. What a touchstone they are of good and evil! How plainly they tell us what was right and what was wrong in the past! How they vindicate the majesty of truth! How they uncloak false theories and put to silence the ignorance of foolish men! They are the Apocalypse of Providence. What was said of the Sibyl, might be applied to them:

Not hers

To win the sense by words of rhetoric,
Lip-blossoms, breathing perishable sweets ;
But by the power of the informing Word
Roll sounding onward through a thousand years,
Her deep, prophetic bodements.

Our country is now passing through one of these momentous crises of history. It fell upon us like a thunderbolt from a clear sky. For some eighteen months it has absorbed the attention and tasked the chief energies of the nation. We have thought and talked about little else. Nor has it affected us alone. It has startled all Europe and the furthest Orient. The whole civilised world has watched its course with eager and profound solicitude. Those who differ heaven-wide as to its real character, confess it to be one of the most remarkable and portentous in the records of the race. On this point the same opinion has prevailed at Charleston and Richmond as at New York and Boston ; at London, Paris, and St. Petersburg as at Washington. Nobody seems disposed to underrate its importance. It is everywhere felt to be not merely an American question, but for the time being, at least, the paramount question of the world. The Eastern question, the Roman question, the Italian question, and all other questions, appear insignificant in comparison with the awful drama which Almighty Providence is now enacting in these United States. Here, if anywhere in the realm of time and space—I think we may say it without presumption — here, if anywhere, is the spot upon which the eyes of all who regard with interest the fortunes of the human race, whether among mortals or the immortals, are most intently fixed. You will not deem it strange, therefore, that I propose to speak to you of this portentous crisis, and to elicit, if possible, a portion of its meaning. I confess I should feel guilty of a kind of disloyalty, were I to occupy your attention with any other topic.

But two forms of speech seem to me pertinent now. The first is prayer to God. The second is, wise, faithful, patriotic speech to each other. We cannot, certainly, invoke too frequently or too fervently the favor of that Infinite Power which

rules the world, and before which all the nations of the earth are as nothing; nor can we speak to each other with too much earnestness of the solemn work in which we are engaged. But aside from these two things, why should a loyal American citizen stop to utter or to hear words, be they never so eloquent? What are the tongues of men and of angels at such an hour as this, if they are not flaming with patriotic ardor; if they do not help on the work of saving the nation? The mission of the scholar to-day, is to offer all his knowledge, and all his eloquence, and all his talents, and his own life also, if need be, upon the altar of that country to which he owes so much.

I make no apology, then, for my subject, for it is the only one on which I can speak to you. But I shall aim to treat it in a temper not unbefitting this occasion. I shall try to do so in a spirit harmonizing with its high and weighty character. The feelings of Moses, when the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush, and he said, *I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt*, would not, perhaps, misbecome us to-day, as, standing on this literary Horeb, we look forth upon our imperial Republic, and marvel that it is still unconsumed amidst the fiery trials which have so long encompassed it. Could that unseen voice, which issued from the midst of the burning bush, interpret to us the strange and fearful scene upon which we are gazing, it would, I doubt not, say to us as it said to Moses: *Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground*. He who considers this terrible scene without a feeling of religious awe, is not wrong in his temper merely; he is utterly wrong in his method; his understanding is off the track. For it is not a whit more certain that we are in the midst of a tremendous strait, than it is certain that we have been brought into it by the hand of God. We have not fallen into it, nor run into it, nor been driven into it by chance, or by any mere human impulse. The storm that has swept over the nation and set all the waves and the sea roaring, was raised by no enchanter's wand. It has been slowly gathering for more

than a third of a century ; and it has at length burst upon us so furiously in strict accordance with the moral laws and order of the world. There is divine reason in it. There is divine justice in it. And we may be quite sure there is a divine purpose in it. It is little better than moral idiocy to attempt to explain this trouble upon any lower principles.

The hand of God, it is true, is always in the world, and nothing comes to pass independently of him. But how much more distinctly and powerfully his ruling hand is manifested at some times than at others ! There are periods when everything seems to go on according to mere natural law. The visible course of affairs is like clock-work. It requires no little effort to believe that behind these quiet, customary appearances Almighty Wisdom is concealed, and that through them all it is executing its steadfast decrees. Such are the times of peace and outward prosperity. Then come periods when the old order of things is brought to an end. New and extraordinary forces suddenly spring into action. Other men and other principles gain the ascendancy. New measures are adopted. A social, a religious, a political revolution is inaugurated. There is a fierce struggle between hostile opinions and systems ; between the past and the future. There is civil convulsion. There is the battle of the warrior, with confused noise and garments rolled in blood. Such are the times of transition, of war and public calamity. The whole order of the world seems then to be changing. A new cycle of events begins. A fresh chapter is opened in history. Humanity takes a step never taken before toward the fulfilment of its grand destiny. The hand on the dial-plate of time is moved forward, and no mortal power is strong enough ever to put it back again. The introduction of Christianity, the inundation and conquest of the Roman Empire by the barbaric hordes of the North, the Protestant Reformation, the civil wars of England, the American and French Revolutions, afford some of the most memorable instances of these great crises and turning-points in the march of society. At such times that stupendous agency, which we call Providence, comes out into the foreground, as it were, and rivets the astonished gaze of all

thoughtful and devout beholders. Then the eye that is armed with faith can almost see it, as it moves to and fro and directs the course of events, like a skilful general leading his forces to victory. Then the ear, that is armed with faith, can almost hear it as, uttering its voice above the tumult and roar of battle, it instructs the warring elements how to fight. And what at the moment may appear obscure and contradictory, how plain it is when we come to read it in the light of the finished series of events! The working out of a great Providential issue is, in this respect, not unlike a child's puzzle. The result is predetermined, and each several piece has an appointed place in securing it. The wrong position of a single piece would defeat the whole plan; and yet, to one who had never before watched the game, many a piece would seem more helpful in a wrong than in the right position. But the practised little eye, that sees the end from the beginning, knows better. So particular movements of the Divine hand, in compassing a certain object, appear to us at times strange and disastrous; but they are not so in reality. The strategy of Providence is almost always unexpected, because it is so far-reaching and comprehensive; but it never fails. Every step leads in the best, if not always in the shortest way to final success. When the last step is taken; when the last piece is in its place—the divine puzzle is solved, and we feel assured that it could not have been worked out so well in any other way. Great and marvellous are thy judgments, Lord God Almighty.

Reason and religion, then, alike impel us to acknowledge reverently the hand of God in this crisis. Nothing else can raise us to the height of its great meaning, or arm us with the strength and courage to go through it in triumph. Nothing else can save us from being utterly maddened by the crimes, horrors, and suffering, which mark its course. If he does not believe it has a divine side; that it is under the direction of Eternal Providence, and intended to work out His omnipotent and all-wise decrees, I do not see how any thoughtful man can look upon it without shame and despair. If God is not in it, then is it assuredly the devil's work, and "chaos is come again."

But it is not enough to contemplate this national tragedy with an awestruck eye, or to believe that it is pervaded by a divine purpose. It exceedingly concerns us to find out what that divine purpose really is. Thrice is he armed who hath his quarrel just; and thrice again is he armed who comprehends the justice of his quarrel. It is no *Deus ex machina* who has ordained this conflict; but the ever-living God of nature and of history. He still governs the world as he has always governed it, by righteous and beneficent laws. As he upholdeth, so doth he rule all things by the word of his power. Events march in the train and keep step to the music of that divine *Logos*, which was, and is, and is to come. In order to act the right part in them, and in order to understand them when they have come to pass, our own intelligence must be in vital sympathy with that of their invisible Author and Arbitrator. The divine purpose which is forcing its way into existence, and preparing for itself a local habitation and a name on earth, must be reproduced in our own consciousness, and embodied in our own life. This is the only way for men to become co-workers with the Most High in executing his sovereign behests. This is the ancient method by which, from age to age, mighty nations and all the elect spirits of the race have comprehended their Heaven-appointed mission—fulfilled their several tasks, and rendered themselves forever illustrious in human annals. This is the secret of that sacred enthusiasm, which transformed Eastern shepherds and nomads of the desert into venerable patriarchs, seers, warriors, and kings; which changed fishermen into apostles and evangelists, and which is able still to bless the world with heroes, saints, and martyrs. It is the presence of some divine idea in the soul, actuating the whole being and illuminating the path of life. Let a man grasp, in honest conviction, a real thought of God, and spend his days in striving to realize it; and he is on the highway to glory, honor, and immortality. Let a whole people grasp, in honest conviction, some sacred cause, some principle of immutable justice, and consecrate itself to the work of vindicating that cause and enthroning that principle, and we have the grandest spectacle ever witnessed on earth.

One design of public trials is, no doubt, to render such con-

secration purer and more entire. There is no sweeter or nobler use of adversity than this. It is astonishing what rapid strides a people can make in understanding the principles of its own existence, its history, and its providential task under the pressure of overwhelming calamity. How immeasurably more vivid and profound is our national consciousness than it was before the bombardment of Fort Sumter! You remember how the report of that flagitious act was borne to us on the wings of the lightning; and how, like lightning, it struck our hearts. But it did more than that; it penetrated the lowest depths of the popular mind like the trump of God, and raised again to newness of life old ancestral ideas and patriotic instincts, which had too long lain buried in oblivion. Years seemed to intervene between the day before and the day after we heard that appalling news. And we have lived very fast ever since. If you measure time by events, we have lived almost half a century since then. If you measure time by the intensity and depth of experience which is acquired in it, the nation has passed since then from incredulous youth to full and earnest manhood. It has felt the weight of tremendous cares and responsibilities; it has been at its wits' end and staggered like a drunken man; it has been rocked as by an earthquake, has poured out its blood like water, and walked month after month along the edge of a bottomless pit that yawned to swallow it up. It has been putting forth superhuman exertions to save its own life, its honor, and all its dearest treasures. Surely it ought to have learnt thus a great deal of wisdom; surely it ought to understand both itself and others a great deal better than it did eighteen months ago.

And beyond all question, such has been the effect of its fearful experience. This crisis, like the word of God, has been quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow; and has been a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the nation's heart. It has revealed to us perils of whose existence we had not dreamed, but which, concealed a little longer, would have wrecked us past hope. It has taught us great lessons of political truth and duty,—

lessons concerning the divine institution, authority, beneficence, and rightful claims of government, which, if we mark, learn, and inwardly digest them, will not be forgotten for a thousand years. It has shown us that the principles for which our fathers fought and toiled, for which they lived and died—the principles which lie at the foundation, uphold and animate the whole majestic structure, and form the cap-stone of our Christian Republic, are as *sacred* as they are glorious; that they are guarded by a jealous deity, whose feet are indeed shod with wool, but his path is as the path of a flaming sword, turning every way; and that no people can trample these principles under foot without incurring his vengeance. How many huge fallacies, by which we have been led to fancy we could enjoy the inestimable rights and privileges without fulfilling the self-sacrificing duties of constitutional liberty, has this crisis scattered to the winds! How it has, at once, revealed and chastised our national vices and follies, our vain-glorious conceit, our political corruption and venality, our shallow views of public duty, the madness of blind party-feeling, and the bitter consequences of converting the service and offices of the country into a barbarous system of partisan reward and spoils! How plainly we now see that mere material prosperity and aggrandisement are no true signs of national well-being; that the most magnificent industrial interest, if allied to injustice and despotic lust of power, may in an instant lose its sceptre and become like a millstone about the neck of its subjects to drown them in the depths of anarchy and woe.

It is easy to perceive how in these and similar ways, this rebellion, by its very magnitude and wickedness, has been to us an incomparable moral and political discipline. It has wrought upon the understanding, conscience, and whole spirit of the nation with an almost miraculous power. It has precipitated a work of popular education, to which there are few, if any, parallels in history. As we compare the temper and posture of the national mind in reference to some of the weightiest problems of the nation's life with what it was only eighteen months ago, we are lost in wonder. It is like comparing the

intelligence and courage of consummate manhood with the petty views and weakness of youth. Momentous questions which then perplexed the brains of statesmen, as they had long been the subject of fierce debate throughout the land, have been finally answered, and their answers wrought into the inmost experience, sense, and character of the nation. They are adjudged and settled for all time. It is scarcely more probable that they will be reöpened than that we shall revive the question, decided by our fathers a century ago, of colonial allegiance to the crown of Great Britain.

Secession is one of these adjudicated questions. This crisis has compelled the American people to answer it, and they have done so by stamping it with the seal of their abhorrence as deadly heresy and rebellion. They have marked it with an anathema such as the Christian Church has put upon an open denial of God. It is like atheism, and subverts the first principles of our political worship as a free, order-loving, and covenant-keeping people. It makes the Constitution, as atheism makes the Bible, a deceitful dead letter, instead of an organic law of life. It makes the government, which our fathers built up for us with such infinite pains, a mockery and a delusion, placing in its hand a broken reed instead of the mighty sceptre of righteous and sovereign authority. It ruthlessly puts asunder that Union and Liberty which Almighty Providence, on the day when they so happily joined hands in the presence of the jubilant nation, surely intended should be one and inseparable, then and for ever. It is a principle of social disintegration and universal anarchy. Denying that we, or ever were, the people of these United States, it aims to destroy our historic life, to blot out our name and nation, and render us a by-word in the earth. Secession, in fine, is national suicide. It is a monstrous political crime, which must be put down and punished at all hazards and at any cost. Such is the irrevocable judgment which the American people have passed upon this baleful doctrine.

And in passing this sentence, I need hardly say, they have settled the question of *coercion* also. They have decided that it is both their right and bounden duty to maintain their na -

tional existence and authority by force of arms. They were very slow in coming to this conclusion ; it cost them prodigious struggles of mind ; they would have given everything short of their country's life and honor to avoid the issue. Where does history afford another instance of a puissant and high-spirited nation drawing the sword and wielding it in its own self-defence with such unspeakable reluctance ? But the nation has deliberately taken this step, and in doing so has determined that this Union, since it could no longer be preserved by the ballot, must be preserved by the bullet ; that those who, against reason, against law, and against solemn oaths, attempt to destroy it, shall be compelled to desist and return to their allegiance by rifled cannon and the sword of justice. And it has already sealed this decision with the blood of myriads of its noblest sons. Henceforth let all the world understand that American Democracy is not the rule of popular opinion or of moral and political suasion only,—not mere organised influence, but that it is *government* in the highest sense of the term ; and that the enforcement of the laws, at whatever cost, is a fundamental article of its creed—just as fundamental as liberty itself.

But there is another and still more momentous question which this rebellion, if it has not already answered, is rapidly forcing to a settlement. It is one of the most formidable questions that ever taxed a nation's intelligence or puzzled a nation's will. It relates to the most extraordinary political and social phenomenon of modern times. For more than a century it has been the subject of earnest thought and discussion ; for a third of a century it has called forth more debate, has aroused more vehement passions, and led to sharper diversities of opinion, than any other subject. It has created a literature of its own ; and if all the articles, speeches, addresses, sermons, reviews, pamphlets, and books which have been written upon it were collected, they would form a large library ; and they would furnish too, I may add, as striking specimens of human eloquence, and of both the power and weakness of human wisdom, as can be found in our mother-tongue. There is no other chapter in history exactly like this, and certainly few others so profoundly interesting to the

student of human nature. *African slavery in the bosom of this free, democratic, Christian Republic*—whence and what is it? right or wrong? a blessing to be spread and perpetuated; a curse to be got rid of, or a *tertium quid*, capable of being turned into a blessing or a curse, according to the use that is made of it? Is it a sectional or a national institution, the creature of mere local and municipal law, or of the Constitution itself? Ought the Christian Church to condemn or to defend it, or to say nothing about it? Have negroes rights which the government and white men are bound to respect, or does their rightful state lie outside the sphere of law, the Constitution, and the public conscience? Behold a sample of the points involved in the problem of American slavery!

I need not stop to review the history of this terrible question. You know it as well as I do. You know how the differences of opinion about it became more and more sharply defined, more antagonistic and irreconcilable both in church and state, until they reached their climax and practical conclusion in the rupture, one after another, of large religious denominations, in the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, and the consequent struggle in Kansas, in the Dred Scott decision, and the Presidential election of 1860. By this time the South had become almost unanimous in regarding slavery as a divine institution; and as such they, naturally enough, claimed the right to extend it far and near. Few vestiges remained of the anti-slavery sentiments which formerly prevailed among them, and had been cherished by their most illustrious statesmen of earlier days. It was one of the most sudden and complete revolutions of public opinion on record. To explain fully how it was brought about, would lead me astray from my subject. The prodigious growth of the cotton interest was a leading cause, but by no means the only one. Along with this conspired potent influences, moral, social, and speculative, which were in part the natural effect of slavery itself, and in part wrought upon the Southern mind from abroad, and especially from the North. The result was, a public opinion in favor of the institution so unanimous and despotic, that the slightest

whisper of opposition imperilled a man's reputation, if not his life. The decree of King Nebuchadnezzar, that whoso would not fall down and worship the golden image which he had set up in the plain of Dura, in the province of Babylon, should be cast into the midst of a burning fiery furnace, was scarcely more inexorable than the public sentiment at the South, which demanded homage to the Dagon of slavery.

In the Free States, meanwhile, hostility to the system had grown deeper and more intense; but it was still far from unanimous. A large and influential portion of the Northern people, and leaders of opinion, either kept silent on the subject or spoke with doubtful and bated breath; others boldly avowed their entire sympathy with the Southern doctrine; denounced all who opposed it, and predicted the day when that doctrine would be dominant throughout the nation. Most of this latter class were wont to spell "negro" with two gs, and could not restrain their wonder that such a black and miserable creature of God should excite anybody's thought or pity. Certain ethnological theories of the day, and such contemptuous views as Mr. Carlyle, in one of his Latter-Day Pamphlets, allowed himself to express respecting Sambo and the uses to which he should be put in the world, gave great aid and comfort to this class at the North, as they had done to the new doctrine at the South. Then there were inveterate party prejudices, dislike of politics in the pulpit, and I know not what other influences, which continued to excite bitter divisions in Northern sentiment. Some who really hated slavery, hated abolitionism a great deal more; while many hated abolitionism with such total energy of mind and heart that no faculty was left for hating slavery. The state of things was curious in the extreme. It was a psychological study. Thousands of candid and sensible men look back to their feelings on the subject two years ago with unfeigned astonishment; and thousands more are likely to do so before another two years shall have passed away. The *odium theologicum* in the palmiest days of bigotry and superstition was scarcely more suspicious or more intolerant than the sentiment aroused in many a Northern good man's bosom by the mildest denunciation of slavery as a wicked and cruel system.

Such is a rude but not, I think, an unfair picture of the state of popular opinion in reference to slavery two years ago. Though far in advance of what it had been before in our day, it was yet conflicting and deeply complicated with the violent passions and prejudices of party.

But the summer of 1860 seems to lie far back in a former age. The nation, as I have said, is several decennia older than it was then. It has been taking lessons of a Higher Teacher. It has passed through "great searchings of heart." Its moral vision has been touched with a marvellous eye-salve, and whereas it was once blind, now it sees—sees with the clearness of intuition—sees with amazement that it never saw before—sees as it were in the very light of eternal justice. An earthquake has broken asunder the gates of brass wherein the public conscience long seemed to lie imprisoned, and that conscience has come forth, disenthralled, to bear witness to the truth, and to judge righteous judgment. Slavery appears to the nation now what his sin—his intemperance, his gambling, his lust—appears to the man whose feet have at last been taken from the horrible pit and the miry clay and planted upon a rock. We have found out that each one of its sable victims is like a grain of gunpowder; and that four millions of them combined together in the political and social system render that system one vast magazine of mischief, sure sooner or later to explode and scatter ruin over the world. The logic of words had done its work; and thousands of wise and good men remained still unconvinced. The logic of events and of Providence has now been heard thundering through the land; and the people are beginning to cry out, *Amen—so let it be!*

Of course there are individual exceptions. Some still assert that abolitionism, political ambition, the doctrine of State-rights, or something else, and not slavery, is the prime cause of this rebellion. But such theories are fast dying out; few real thinkers advocate them any more. The plain common-sense of the American people agrees with the philosophy of history, with the best reflection and with the most authoritative testimony of Southern leaders themselves (of such men as Dr. Thornwell and Vice-President Stephens, e. g.) in regarding

Slavery as the proper root and ground of our national troubles. A strong disunion sentiment, it is true, had long existed at the South, and the desire to break up the Union has often used slavery for a *pretext*, as General Jackson, with rare sagacity, predicted it would. No doubt wild dreams of a Southern republic, of conquest in Mexico, Central America, Cuba, and elsewhere, coupled with bitter disappointment at the loss of political power at home and a growing dislike of "Yankees and Northern mudsills", have been controlling motives in precipitating treason. But back of all these other motives—animating, envenoming and arming them all—has lain the slave-power itself. Out of this dark and evil ground was born the dire spirit of Secession. Had no such institution existed, I do not deny that centrifugal tendencies might have shown themselves in the Southern States, but it is not conceivable that they could ever have been combined into such a diabolical scheme of perjury, treason, and rebellion as that which is now struggling to destroy the government and life of the nation.

I have no time to go into an analysis of the social system of the South; but the day, I believe, is not distant when the general voice of Christian society will admit it to have been false to the core; and that its permanent existence as a ruling power would have been fatal to the moral interests of this nation and of mankind. It will be admitted that the elements of a worse and more dangerous oligarchy can hardly be imagined. Quite aside from the fate of the enslaved race, the condition of the large majority of the white race also is rendered by it hopelessly degraded. What sad revelations the progress of the war has given us on this point! How well they illustrate the maxim of Lord Bacon respecting the true greatness of kingdoms and states: "Let states that aim at greatness, take heed how their nobility and gentlemen do multiply too fast; for that maketh the common subject grow to be a peasant and base swain, driven out of heart, and, in effect, but a gentleman's laborer. Even as you see in coppice woods, if you leave straddles too thick, you shall never have clean underwood, but shrubs and bushes. So in countries, if the gentlemen be too many, *the commons will be base.*" It is un-

deniable that slavery has been the main cause of that remarkable stratum of Southern society—the *poor whites*—who have already afforded their political masters so much food for powder, and who, forming as they do in large sections of the South, an immense numerical majority of the population, are to be rewarded by and by—those of them who survive—with the privilege of not voting at the elections and of taking no part in the government of the new Confederacy. I speak of the oligarchical despotism of the South — not of the Southern people themselves. I know perfectly well that so far as individual character is concerned, the South has produced and is still able to produce as fine and noble specimens of human nature—as brave, as generous, and as Christian men and women as the North. But its slaveholding social system is essentially at war with the first principles of our democratic republic; at war with its liberty and equality, with its popular suffrage, with its common schools, with its free thought, free speech, and free press, with its constitutional order and justice, with its industrial dignity and freedom, with its fair humanities, and its ancestral Christian spirit. Such a system cannot live and rule on this continent without subverting, sooner or later, the institutions of our fathers and changing our whole civilisation. It has already developed some of the subtlest vices of Oriental caste combined with the political organization, skill, energy, and reckless ambition, which belong to the revolutionary despotisms of the West. Give to this power national existence and independence, half a million of bayonets, a great fleet of iron-clad ships and floating batteries, railroads leading everywhere, two thirds of our sea-coast and the Gulf of Mexico, more than seventy out of our eighty-four principal rivers, the larger portion of our present territory, with unbounded prospects beyond to tempt its cupidity, and what is likely to be the result of it all before the beginning of another century? Is anybody so ignorant of history or so simple-minded as to believe that such a power as this and such a power as the American Union could quietly coëxist in the same hemisphere?

I cannot resist the conviction, then, that in the decree of

Providence this rebellion is the death-sentence of slavery, and that the American people will see to it that the sentence is carried into execution. And this not solely because the institution is so unjust and cruel to the black man, but still more because it is so utterly demoralizing to the white man. If we were at liberty to leave out of account the claims of the negro himself; if we could demonstrate, as so many have tried to do, that his welfare is best promoted by the state of bondage, even then would the paramount interests of the dominant race require the overthrow of slavery as a system abhorrent to the whole genius and *morale* of our Anglo-Saxon type of civilisation. But are we at liberty to leave out of account the claims of the black man himself? "I frankly confess to you, gentlemen (said the other day a distinguished politician of the old national democracy, to a highly intelligent company whom he was addressing), I frankly confess to you, that, for myself, I take no interest in the negro; but, gentlemen, I am at a loss to conceive how any man can review the history of this rebellion without a clear conviction that *Almighty Providence* does!"

Precisely when and how the "*monstrum horrendum*" will be finally disposed of I do not pretend to say; but certainly the mortal process seems to be going on. There is already a most destructive "friction and abrasion" about the extremities; and in due time, doubtless, the very seat of life will be reached. Let us not be impatient; let us not be in too great a hurry. There is a right way and a best way of doing whatever ought to be done. Because a murderer is sentenced to be hung, nobody would be therefore justified in strangling him on the spot. The forms of law must be observed. Whether slavery is finally abolished in one year or in a score of years, appears to me comparatively unimportant, provided its abolishment is deliberately initiated and rendered ultimately certain. The subject is beset with the greatest practical difficulties, and those who agree as to the main principles ought not to quarrel about the details of time and manner. The country is under a heavy debt of gratitude to the President for the admirable spirit which he has shown in dealing with this question. His

recent address to the Border State men is one of the most dignified and impressive appeals which ever issued from the lips of power. I shall not stop to discuss the President's plan, or any of the other schemes of emancipation which have been proposed. Whatever plan is adopted, it is plain enough that its successful execution will require the utmost wisdom, firmness, and resources of the nation, aided by the special favor of God. In the progress of events a violent and summary policy may become necessary. We know not what a month or a week may bring forth. The American people are in no mood to be trifled with; and the mill of the gods, although it always grinds sure, does not *always* grind slow. Sometimes when a great people, inspired of Heaven, put their shoulder to the wheel which turns it, its movement becomes quick and terrible like an avalanche; then in a moment, in the twinkling of the eye, as it were, the work is done. For one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and sometimes he crowds the work of a thousand years into one day.

I have left myself but little time to touch upon other points of vital importance. It has been my aim to show that this crisis is full of Providential lessons and results. Events have a two-fold office; they are designed at once to form and to reveal the nation's character. They force it to a thorough self-knowledge and self-development. They compel it to face its past errors, and learn the bitter but salutary truth that

“ We still have judgment here ; that we but teach
Bloody instructions, which, being taught, return
To plague the inventor ; this even-handed justice
Commends the ingredients of the poisoned chalice
To our own lips.”

They summon its deepest principles, its intelligence, its latent, reserved strength, its moral and physical resources, its ancestral spirit, and its whole manhood into strenuous action. This rebellion has taught us as much that is new about ourselves and our institutions, as about the geography of our country. What mist and clouds of false opinion it has scattered to the four winds! With how much more benignant and star-like virtue than ever before, do those divine ideas of

freedom, humanity, justice, and religion, in whose radiance the infant nation was perpetually bathed, and which have been indeed

“ — a master-light of all our seeing,”

shine down upon us in this dismal midnight of our troubles! When before were ever the time-honored traditions of our history; the sweet memories of our pilgrim father and mothers; the names of the immortal patriots, heroes, and statesmen, which fill the earlier and the later annals of the Republic; the good old cause for which they lived and died, the great Constitution, the beneficent government, the glorious Union which they formed by their wisdom and consecrated by their prayers and sacrifices,—when were they ever so precious and sacred as now — now that parricidal traitors would despoil us of them all?

But we have learnt much that is new about other nations as well as about ourselves. One of the most startling effects of this crisis has been the sudden revelation of foreign sentiment in reference both to our Union and to the cause of constitutional and popular government, which it represents. Those best acquainted with the secret currents of European opinion, were still unprepared for what we have witnessed; more especially for what we have witnessed in Great Britain. To the most of our people the course of England was anticipated without misgiving. They expected to be almost inundated by a stream of hearty Christian sympathy from that old fountain whence their forefathers had drawn the living waters of freedom. They were already covenanting with themselves how they would one day pay the grateful debt and teach their children to pay it over and over again after them. All this may have been unreasonable, and even foolish; but certainly it was most natural. Never was there a deadlier disappointment. England appeared to wait until she thought she saw which way the scale was going to turn; and since then her sympathy has been like the blast of a wintry east-wind. There have been, it is true, noble exceptions. The names of such men as John Bright, Mill, Arthur, Hughes, Foster and others, will

long be held in honor among us, for they have spoken generous and truthful words in our behalf, when such words were of more value than the precious onyx or the sapphire. A few presses, too, have been earnest and faithful advocates of our cause; and no doubt there have been many secret good wishes and prayers for our success. But the simple fact remains, that the general feeling of Great Britain, as expressed in the varied organs of her public opinion, and by her public men, has been overwhelmingly against us and our cause. How shall we explain it? It may be readily explained by assuming that our cause is bad, and that we are in the wrong. Then England's course would be highly to her credit. But assuming our cause to be what we honestly believe it to be, the cause of order, justice, and human freedom, how then shall we account for the fact that the freest, most law-abiding and politically-enlightened, most anti-slavery, and most Christian people of the old world — our own kith and kin too, — have turned their backs upon us in this dread hour of our agony, and lavished their moral support upon the most flagitious conspiracy and rebellion the world ever saw,—a rebellion whose openly-avowed aim is to found a government with perpetual and ever-extending slavery as its corner-stone! No ordinary motives, no ephemeral influences and pretexts, however plausible, can explain this phenomenon. It has deeper roots. It is the product of causes that lie back of the common consciousness, that have their source in the will rather than the understanding. No man of sense will pretend, of course, that there may not have been honest misapprehensions in England respecting our feeling and intentions toward her. Infinite pains had been taken by the emissaries of secession to foment such misapprehensions:—as, for example, that Mr. Seward was her enemy and was bent upon the annexation of Canada, that we wanted to get into a war with her, and the like. But did not the course of our Government in the Trent affair afford an unanswerable reply to such calumnies? No doubt, too, the Morrill Tariff, and still more the loss of cotton, have been exceedingly trying to her. But these things were no justifiable ground of offence. We had a perfect right to frame our own tariff. It was no fault of

ours that England's supplies of slave-grown cotton were suddenly cut off. It was the fault of the traitors who precipitated the country into civil war. If England had not been predisposed to take sides against us, she might still have insisted upon our giving up Mason and Slidell; but would she have done it in just the way she did? Could she have so misunderstood the principles of our Constitution, the motives of our government, or the spirit of our people in reference to this struggle; could she have so misinterpreted the most notorious facts, and boldly continued to assert that slavery had nothing to do with the real motives and merits of the struggle, if a secret bias of the will had not perverted her judgment? But I need hardly speak of a secret bias. No fact of contemporary history is better established than the fact that this Republic is the object of profound antipathy among the ruling classes of Great Britain, and that they would rejoice in its destruction. With individual exceptions, of course, they are our enemies, and not our friends. Our troubles have taught us this. In ordinary times nations are apt to play the hypocrite towards each other. Their amity is apt to be the mere offspring of fear or self-interest. Their alliances are often unnatural and forced. There is, in truth, a deplorable want of real honesty and Christian principle in the whole sphere of international polity and relationships. But such a crisis as the present compels nations to uncloak their real sentiments and proclivities. It has done so in the case of Great Britain, in a way to excite our grief and amazement. As one after another of her most eminent statesmen, the leaders of her renowned aristocracy, her eloquent divines and able writers—men whose names were familiar as household words in all our homes—pronounced judgment against us, often in terms of unwonted arrogance and contumely; it has seemed almost incredible that we were listening to voices from the land of Milton and of Hampden—the land consecrated of old to liberty, law, and hatred of slavery. But it was even so. And it is a fact which seems to me portend anything but good to the cause of peace and humanity.

Great Britain and America ought to march in the van of

Christian civilisation, hand joined to hand. It is a thousand pities they should not do so. England could form no alliance on earth so natural, so fruitful, so beneficent, or so invincible as this. It would be a grand alliance with the future, and with the course of history. "The possible destiny", said Coleridge, thirty years ago, "the possible destiny of the United States of America, as a nation, of a hundred millions of freemen, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, living under the laws of Alfred, and speaking the language of Shakspeare and Milton, is an august conception. *Why should we not wish to see it realized?* America would then be England viewed through a solar microscope—Great Britain in a state of glorious magnification." If the spirit which breathes in these generous words of one of her greatest and wisest sons, had possessed the heart of England's statesmen, she would have seized the precious, irrevocable opportunity, and bound this great Republic to her with hooks of steel.

She has chosen another course. I do not complain of it. But I think the causes of her doing so merit our careful study, for they are likely to influence both her and us in the future. "In the eyes of an Englishman", says the profound critic of our own Democracy, who knew England well, and loved her in spite of her faults, "a cause is just if it be the interest of England that it should succeed. A man or a government that is useful to England, has every kind of merit, and one that does England harm, every sort of fault". These are severe words, and I should not have ventured to utter them in my own name; but have they not found a signal illustration in the present case?

There is, indeed, something prodigious in the mental and moral constitution of most Englishmen, when they sit in judgment upon other nations. What a marvellously happy faculty they possess of forgetting unpleasant things in their own history! How often they remind one of what the rat said to the mouse, when a cat was introduced into the premises:

"Said the other, This cat if she murder a *rat*,
Must needs be a very great sinner:
But to feed upon *mice* can't be counted a vice;
I *myself* like a mouse for my dinner."

After hearing all the various rebukes, counsels, and curtain-lectures addressed to us from the mother-country during the past eighteen months, would anybody venture to dream that the British Government had ever been anything else but the gentle, impartial, and divinely appointed "guardian of civilisation"? Would anybody believe that it ever had made, or ever could make, the smallest objection to the "secession" of old Ireland, the Ionian Isles, or the ancient nationalities of India? Truly there was never such a huge piece of contradiction; for, without a question, England is still a great and wonderful country, full of glorious institutions, robust virtues, prolific talents, unbounded industry, enterprise, pluck, and cleverness; above all, of true-hearted and large-hearted Christian men and women. Nobody can deny this. But in her weak points there is no nation more ludicrously infirm, however unconscious she herself may be of the fact; while her bad points are exceedingly bad. If one wishes to understand the dark side of British character in our day, let him read over the articles of the London *Times* on the American struggle, remembering that this is the paper from which English noblemen, bishops, scholars, merchants, and politicians derive their chief information and by which they are most largely influenced in forming their opinions concerning the affairs of the world. Where else shall we find a match for this most able, but godless sheet, in unblushing mendacity, scoffing, arrogance, and duplicity! Its course toward our afflicted country has been that of Shimei, who came forth and cast stones at King David, when he fled before the rebellion of his unnatural son, who cursed the king also as a bloody man and a man of Belial. It is hard not to say, with the sons of Zeruah, *why should this dead dog curse my lord, the king?* Why should our revered and sorrow-stricken country be reviled and mocked at by this uncircumcised Briton? But I seem to hear that country's injured majesty chiding such thoughts, in the words of King David to Abishai and all his servants: "Behold my son, which came forth of my bowels, seeketh my life; how much more now may this Benjaminite do it? Let him alone, and let him curse, for the Lord hath bidden him".

I have spoken of England and her feelings toward us. On the Continent we have more friends and are far better understood. Insular narrowness and aristocratic pride have not stood in the way of a candid study of our institutions. There the great work of De Tocqueville made its mark upon the political intelligence of the age, and its influence is still felt. The remarkable books of our generous and whole-souled advocate, De Gasparin, strikingly show this. The passion for popular freedom and popular rights, yet glows in many noble breasts. Neither the divisions and reactionary principles in Germany, nor the iron despotism in France, nor the all-absorbing thought of national unity in Italy, have extinguished it. Still the political condition of the Continent is not auspicious for our cause. So far as the governments and ruling classes are concerned, they regard us, for the most part, with doubt and disfavor. The reaction is everywhere potential. The Sphinx-like man, who reigns in the Tuileries, is everywhere held in secret terror, and sits as an incubus upon the heart of Europe. The sympathy with popular, republican, Christian institutions like ours, is at its minimum; the sympathy with ultra-conservative principles and absolutism in Church and State is at its maximum. The revolutions of 1848 have borne little fruit but this as yet. Let any one who desires light on this subject, read with care the recently published memoir and letters of De Tocqueville. It is one of the saddest books of the day. It gives a most vivid picture of the demoralization of political sentiment and character in Europe. Let me cite a few passages. Here is one written in 1856 :

“I still consider liberty as the first of blessings. I still see that it is one of the most fertile sources of manly virtues and great actions. No tranquillity and no material comfort can in my mind make up for its loss. And yet I see that most of the men of my time — the most honest among them, for I care little about the others — think only of accommodating themselves to the new system, and what most of all disturbs and alarms me, turn a taste for slavery into a virtue.”

Again he writes :

“Is it really true that there ever have been parliamentary assemblages in France? That the nation took a passionate interest in all that was

spoken in them? Were not these men, these constitutions, these forms of government, shadows without substance? Did the passions, the hopes, the fears, the sympathies and antipathies, which once so strongly moved us, really exist in our own time, or are they mere recollections of what we have read in history? In truth, I am tempted to believe it; for what has really existed leaves some trace, and I see none of all we imagined that we saw and felt."

Speaking of the reäction in France, he says:

"With a few exceptions, we have come out of this revolution like laborers who leave the field hanging their heads, worn out by the day's work, thinking of nothing but to get home, get their supper, and get to bed."

If Europe does not intervene in our troubles, then, it will be from no restraint of principle, but from the conviction that intervention would be likely to cost too much. Nothing will ward it off, nothing has warded it off, but a salutary dread of the possible consequences. The monitory voice of that little "Yankee cheese-box", which appeared so unexpectedly off Fortress Monroe on that memorable Sunday morning of last March, has been far more eloquent in our behalf than any despatch of Mr. Seward. We shall be demented if, after the lessons of the past year, we rely upon anything else than our own strong arm and the favor of Heaven. Peace is our fundamental policy; but henceforth we must be one of the first military and naval powers of the earth. The systematic and persistent attempt, both in England and on the continent, to represent the American people as little better than a great mob, and the government as terrorized by their clamor, means, being interpreted, hostility to our free, democratic institutions; and it is all-important for us so to understand it. Even the aged Lord Brougham, in his recent lamentable tirade, plainly avows this sentiment. He warns against the fierce, warlike passions of democracy in contrast with the peaceable spirit of monarchy, and does not shrink from a virtual comparison of the American people agonizing for national life and their national government, to the multitude who clamored for the crucifixion of our Saviour. The feeling of most of the governments and ruling classes of Europe toward *the people* in the democratic sense of that term (a feeling oc-

casioned in part, I admit, by errors and excesses of the democratic spirit) is very much that of the Pharisees of old; *Execrabilis ista turba, quæ non novit legem.*

But it is time that I hasten to a conclusion. I have touched upon only a few salient points of my subject. And while, as you perceive, I have spoken my mind freely in reference to the rebellion and its motives, as also in reference to foreign sympathy with it, I have said but little in censure of our own faults and errors in the past or the present. This is not because I think there has been no ground of blame, nothing wrong among us. Far enough from it. But it would be difficult to speak the whole truth without allusions not altogether in place on such an occasion as this. It is no hour for bitter reflection and recrimination. Few are altogether guiltless. Almost all have made mistakes, greater or less. I have small respect for the man who busies himself now with nursing old hates and prejudices, raking up old quarrels, proclaiming his own innocence, or even denouncing old sinners. He had better wait till the war is over,—perhaps he had better wait till the day of judgment. *That* will be a fearful day, no doubt, to not a few who have helped on this treason and held their heads high in the land; but will it not be a serious day to us all, when our duty to our country shall be the matter of inquisition? Who of us has done for her all he might and ought to have done? Who of us will not need mercy? So far, too, as the leading conspirators and criminals are concerned, whether north or south of Mason and Dixon's line, they may safely be left to the future. History will take care that justice is done them. We have seen but the early dawn of American literary genius. We shall have our Thucydides and our Tacitus yet. Perhaps we shall have our Dante yet; and when he constructs his poetical hell, he will leave ample space, and that in the lowest circles, for these unnatural children of the Republic; ample space, too, let us hope, for the corrupt contractors and politicians and office-hunters who have traded in the woes and blood of their country! And on the other hand, he will place high in his poetical Paradise, and crown with aramanthine wreaths, those who shall have done most and made the greatest sacrifices for their country's salvation.

In the mean while, let the main question be,—Who is on the Lord's side? Who, forgetting the past, is willing to put his hand to the plough, and help put down this rebellion, without further delay? Who is willing to give his days and nights, his labor, influence, money, son, brother, and his own life to the work until it be accomplished? It is high time to put these questions everywhere and to everybody—and those who hold back and shirk them, harping still upon old grievances, deserve the malediction pronounced against Meroz; *Curse ye Meroz*, said the angel of the Lord, *curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.*

Of the history and conduct of the war thus far I have but few words to say, and these shall be a plea for confidence. Grave mistakes have unquestionably been made. How could it have been otherwise? The President and his advisers are fallible men. Congress is far from being an infallible body. Our best generals are all imperfect. On the other hand, the task to be performed, both civil and military, has been almost superhuman, with scarcely a ray of experience to guide the government on their dim and perilous way, with treachery on every side, and the popular voice itself often clamoring for different and sometimes for impossible things. We have wanted our President to be at once a Washington and a Jackson, and our generals to be all Napoleons. We have wanted to have everything done with consummate wisdom and skill. It was a natural feeling in view of the interests involved; but was it reasonable? Certainly, there has been a great deal to try and vex the nation's patience; but it is always so in momentous exigencies; and does not this very trial of patience work experience, and experience hope? It is a thousand times pleasanter to praise than to blame; and though blame is often indispensable and most salutary, yet it is so only in the degree that it is intelligent and just. On the whole, is there another man among all the twenty millions of loyal citizens whom you would prefer to put at the head of the nation in place of the honest, sagacious, and just man—the plain Western man of the people—whom Providence has put there?

Admitting that Congress has said and done some unwise things, has it not also passed some of the most important and fruitful measures recorded in the history of our national legislation? Have we not ample reason for thanksgiving that the crisis has given us so many officers in both arms of the service who have understood their work, and performed it with eminent skill and valor; men whose names will be for ever honored in the memory of the Republic? And as to the army and navy themselves, what words can do justice to their heroic deeds and their still more heroic sufferings and patience? We used to look up to the heights of patriotic zeal and self-devotion, where our Revolutionary sires once walked, with awe-struck eye, and fancied them inaccessible in our pleasure and money-loving age. But these youthful scions of the good old stock have trodden those glorious heights, and are treading them to-day; so too are myriads of the sons of Erin and of the land of Luther along with them. Of more than six thousand sick and wounded New England soldiers who have passed through New York, two only, I was told the other day, had been heard to utter complaint and dissatisfaction with the war; the rest were eager to recover, that they might return to the field of conflict. Such is the spirit of our young warriors for the Union; and I believe it is, in truth, the inmost spirit of the nation.

Let us give way, then, to no querulous, doubtful, or gloomy temper. Let us not only not despair of the Republic, but cherish unbounded faith in its heaven-appointed destiny. Hope is our American and Christian birth-right. We belong to the future; and if the past was not a mockery, that future has in store for us unspeakable blessings. But we must prove ourselves worthy of them before they will be ours. The nation has already done a mighty work, military, naval, financial, and political; but it is able to do a yet mightier work. We have had great successes already; we shall have greater still in the future. The recent sharp disappointment at not celebrating the Fourth of July in Richmond and all other disappointments will be swallowed up in the ultimate triumph. It is indeed a dreadful contest; like that waged in heaven,

when, smitten by the sword of Michael, the great archangel, Satan "first knew pain"; a contest

"—— such as, to set forth
Great things by small, if, nature's concord broke,
Among the constellations war were sprung,
Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound."

Yes, it is *war* of the direst sort; as such let it be carried on until this rebellion also be hurled headlong,

"With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition."

Let the country throw its whole mind, soul, and strength into the contest; but let it do so with the moral dignity, order, and temperance which become a great Christian people. Let it go forward with impassioned energy and determination, but at the same time calm, self-possessed, and revengeless. We are fast making history and forming character for coming ages; let us keep a righteous and stainless record that shall be a heritage of honor to our children's children. The world is looking on, and with but few friendly eyes. God and angels, too, we may be sure, are spectators of our conduct. "The breaking up of the American Union", writes De Tocqueville, "will be a solemn moment in the history of the world". "I cannot desire, as many persons do, its dismemberment. Such an event would inflict a great wound on the whole human race." I, for one, cannot believe that such a wound is to be inflicted. There is only one other calamity that, it seems to me, would exceed this—the expulsion from among us of the Christian religion. So far as we ourselves are concerned, if this rebellion should triumph, that instant the value of human existence on this continent would fall as the public securities fall when a hurricane of bankruptcy and panic sweeps over the land. It would then be as woeful a thing to live as it is pleasant now; and as bitter in dying to leave children behind you as it is sweet now; for every nerve and fibre of loyal American life is bound up with the life of

the Union. The national government, viewed in the most formal way, is yet like the shell of the tortoise, which shelters, guards and conserves the whole organism within. What would become of the living creature were this protective covering crushed and torn off? and what would become of the vital organism of American society, with its thousand tender and sacred offices, if, no longer sheltered and shielded by the Constitution and the laws, it were exposed to the assaults of those fierce, anarchic elements which are now desolating and consuming the life of the South?

And while the Union is all in all, the very ark of the covenant, to us and our children, it is everything to the race. It is freighted with better hopes for freedom and humanity than any other nation in existence. If it is wrecked and lost, there will be a cry of anguish through the earth. What other nation can take the place or do the work of this? What other nation by its fundamental principles and its entire history represents, as this does, the immutable rights and dignity of human nature? What other nation occupies such a matchless position on the globe for serving the cause of God and man? If still united, we shall cross the threshold of 1900 a hundred millions strong; and if we fight this battle successfully, what battles for truth and justice and freedom and all good things shall we not *then* be able to fight?

The issue is in the hands of God, and it becomes us reverently to await his decree. But we have the strongest reasons for awaiting it in hope. Would he have guided the nation from the beginning with such a friendly and outstretched arm, if he had meant to kill us? Surely we cannot abandon the faith of our fathers, that he is the Master-Builder of this Union and has ordained for it an incomparable destiny, so long as the moon endureth.

Yes, I believe it will yet live not only to correct its own errors and to learn wisdom by the things which it has suffered, but also to teach the world new lessons in liberty, in government, in philanthropy, in science and art, in the dignity and skill and exhaustless resources of industrial freedom, and in the beneficent power of Christian faith. I believe it will yet be-

come, like Mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth, realizing, as the light of its example becomes more pure and bright, the vision of the poet :

“I saw the expectant nations stand
 To catch the coming flame in turn ;
 I saw, from ready hand to hand,
 The clear, though struggling, glory burn.

“And each, as she received the flame,
 Lighted her altar with its ray ;
 Then, smiling to the next who came,
 Speeded it on its sparkling way.”

Let us, then, steer right onward in our dread task, humbly entrusting our cause still to that divine Champion of humanity, who guides the march of history. It is a true Apocalyptic contest, full of mysterious seals and vials of tribulation ; but it is in the hands of Him who in righteousness doth judge and make war. Let us not doubt that in due time he will bring forth judgment unto victory. “Then”, to conclude in the glowing words of Milton, “then amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate His divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages ; whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her old vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation, to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when Thou, the eternal and shortly-expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and distributing national honors and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth”.

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