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The Press.

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The Press.

FRIDAY, MAY 1, 1863.

THE NATIONAL FAST.

The observance of yesterday by our citizens as a day of fasting, humiliation, and prayer, in compliance with the proclamation of the President of the United States, was, as might have been expected, general, and evinced, in a most unmistakable manner, that the sentiment of reverence for the Union, still universal and fervent, burns as brightly as ever in the hearts of the people. It was one of those quiet demonstrations of hallowed devotion to the cause of the country which exalt patriotism into religious zeal, and invest the character of the loyal citizen with the nobler attributes of the Christian. It was an occasion to elevate the moral natures of men, and make them worthier of Divine favor, even while humbling them to the dust, with a sense of their utter unworthiness even of Divine forgiveness. In such a spirit was the day appointed, and in such a spirit was it celebrated. It was something more than a formal compliance with the language of the President's proclamation. In all its features—in the tenor of the sermons preached—in the unusually impressive nature of the religious exercises—in the marked absence of a spirit of levity, so usual upon the public thoroughfares on holidays—and on the very general compliance with the request of the Mayor relative to the closing of stores and public buildings—the character of the day's observance was peculiarly earnest and solemn. There was all the quiet and none of the languid dullness of a Sabbath; and there seemed to be a general desire among all classes of the community to lay aside the cares and ties of business, and unite in religious ceremonies consonant with the spirit of the occasion. It was not a holiday, save in the English sense of the word. There was, of course, a cessation from the usual routine of employment, and therefore relaxation and rest; but there was no unseemly mirth manifested, nor such a thing as a spirit of hilarity anywhere observable. Except at the hours of opening and closing the places of worship, the streets were silent and deserted; all the stores, public buildings, the squares, and, strange as it may seem, many even of the drinking saloons were closed; while the passenger cars, save upon the more prominent streets, ran almost empty. Altogether, the solemnization of the day was of too marked and unanimous a character to be anything else than the expression of a people conscious of manifold errors in the past, and anxious to make atonement by sincere mortification in the flesh and in the spirit. This was the purpose and signification of yesterday's observance; and as we have the Divine assurance that the humble and contrite heart shall not be despised, but that "they who humble themselves shall be exalted," it is not too much to hope that Divine favor may attend upon the fervent petitions of our people.

EPISCOPAL.

SERMON BY REV. RICH'D NEWTON, AT THE CHURCH OF THE EPIPHANY.

Rev. Dr. Newton delivered an eloquent sermon, selecting as his text the following verses from the second chapter of the Prophecy of Joel:

"Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the people, sanctify the congregation. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, say Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thy heritage to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them."

The following is a brief synopsis of the sermon:

When Joel prophesied, a nation was threatened with an impending calamity. A people was to suffer from a famine produced by locusts and drought. These locusts were to come down upon them like a northern army, and so great was the terror that the prophet called upon them to unite in fasting and prayer. It was a timely call, and if rightly responded to, could hardly fail of either wholly warding off the threatening evils, or mitigating their distressful effects.

This nation is plunged into a civil war. For two years the sword has been unsheathed, and thousands of once happy homes have been bereaved and many brave hearts smitten in death. Desolation's reeking ploughshare has been driven rudely over some of the most beautiful portions of our heritage. A million of men have been called from industrial pursuits and are now under arms. The most sacred ties have been rudely sent asunder, towns and villages have been ravaged and lain in smouldering ruins, hospitals have been filled with the sick and wounded, and many a bloody battle-field has been strewn with the mangled remains of the fallen brave. Religion mourns her neglected sanctuaries, friendship, love, remembrance weep, and violence, profanity, and crimes are receiving a fearful and unnatural impetus. Trade has been prostrated, commerce has been paralyzed, riches have taken wings and flown away, the nation is divided, and the Government is assailed and threatened with overthrow and ruin. These are the surroundings of the country to-day. It is distressed, bowed down, humiliated. Under these circumstances citizens are called upon to observe a day of fasting and prayer. The text expresses the manner in which this religious ceremony should be observed. The fast, accordingly, should first be general, gathering together all classes, including, like the fast of Nineveh, every one, from the King upon his throne, to the beggar in his tattered garments. The nation has not been called upon to beseech God for the deliverance from possible or prospective evils, but for relief from actual and heavy-pressing judgments.

The overthrow of this Government would be a universal calamity—in the South as well as in the North. It would be a calamity pressing like the atmosphere around—equally on all. There is every reason, then, why the fast should be observed by the entire community. The suggestion came from the Senate Chamber of the national capital, and was proclaimed by the President. The call came, therefore, from the highest authority in the land.

The next feature of the text is that the fast should be earnest. The rebellion aims at the overthrow of a lawful Government, and the success of that rebellion would sound the knell of all the nation's hopes. The question at issue is one of life or death. Everything dear to the citizen is now at stake. Were the Government overturned there would be no safety nor stability in business, property, liberty, nor in aught else that is desirable to a people. The rebellion, like a conflagration, is burning the fabric of the Government, and unless those flames can be quenched that Republic is destroyed. A national fast, therefore, which has in view the support of such a political treasure, should be an earnest fast. It should be associated, also, with unusual acts of devotion. The troubles under which the nation is now groaning can only be effectually removed through the assistance of God. The help of man is vain. Soldiers cannot control the unruly elements that have plunged the nation into the wild and bewildering strife any more than they can calm the mountain billows of the raging ocean, hush the tempest, or quiet the earthquake as it sends the structures of men toppling down into ruinous heaps. The nation's hope rests in the Lord. Unless He takes the cause in His hands, the Government shall be ruined beyond the hope of remedy. A national fast, then, which has in view the powerful aid of God, should be general, earnest, and devout.

The text sets forth the object of the fast in these words: "Spare thy people, O Lord! and give not thine heritage to reproach." The evils from which this nation prays deliverance are more afflicting and manifold than those which the prophet had in view. The country asks relief from the terrible evils of civil war, though there is cause to thank God that the greatest horrors of battle have been kept away from the Northern States. So brisk is business, and so cheerful are the people, that it is difficult to believe there is a civil war raging upon American soil; but a visit to the hundreds of hospitals scattered throughout the country; a sight of the festering wounds, ghastly countenances, and quivering lips, shows in vivid colors the horrors of civil strife. Sorrow and anguish follow in the track of war. Could the eye gaze upon the long and melancholy train of those who have been made widows and orphans by this contest; the wives and children of those who are now enduring the practical hardships of war, and whose hearts are throbbing with anxiety lest the next battle should lay their husbands and fathers dead upon the field, how heart-rending the spectacle would be! From the ravages, distress, and licentiousness that follow an army; the sickness, suffering, and tears; the sighs and groans, and the fearfully accelerated rate with which these evils must increase as the struggle continues, how earnestly should the whole nation urge the prayer, "Spare thy people, O Lord! and give not thy heritage to reproach."

Every one has now a personal duty to perform. There is no excuse in the words, "we have already repented and are forgiven." The solemn duty of each is to look to his own sins. All should humble themselves for the transgressions which have heaped upon the people this terrible retribution. The pride and extravagance, the fraud and falsehood, the intemperance and profanity, the licentiousness and Sabbath-breaking, which prevail among the people; the wrongs, oppression and cruelty with which the poor Indian and poorer slave have been treated at our hands, cry aloud for humiliation before God, and for forgiveness of past errors. God has been forgotten in the public concerns of the nation, and He is now teaching the country some salutary lessons. There has been too much reliance in the resources and the prowess of the people. But they have proven themselves weak.

If this national fast be observed properly, a speedy termination of this unhappy war and a restoration of the Union may be anticipated. There is no doubt of the success of the Federal arms. When a man is acting under a delusion, there can be no certainty in an inference as to what he will say or do when the delusion has passed away. His thoughts and feelings will be different then. The people of the South have been acting under a delusion—a mysterious delusion. It is proved by the change of opinion in the public mind of the South on two subjects: first, the character of slavery; and second, the nature of the Government and its influence. A few years ago the prevailing feeling of the South was that slavery is an evil. Had that feeling continued, the present condition of things could not have occurred. This view gave place to another and totally different one. Slavery was declared to be a blessing, a Divine institution, and necessary to the highest development of society—the corner-stone of the Government. This view proves the existence of a delusion. The other case respects the Government, while at one time the Southern States were as loyal as Pennsylvania or Massachusetts—with the exception of South Carolina, which was never true; they have now, without cause, converted that love to hatred. The Government became to be regarded by them as an obstacle, an incubus in the way of their advancement. God has permitted that delusion, for reasons doubtless good, but inscrutable to man. By the stern discipline of His chastening providence He can and will remove it, for His power controls all the springs of human thought and action. When that delusion is dispelled, the Union will be restored. The North has had its delusions, also, but God can correct these. He can allay the fires of our sectional differences, and make the nation of one mind. He has absolute control over the unruly wills and affections of sinful men. Faith can remove mountains. Let the hearts of the whole people unite to urge the prayer: "Spare Thy people, O Lord! and give not Thine heritage to reproach."

SERMON BY REV. PHILLIPS BROOKS, AT THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY.

The services in the Church of the Holy Trinity, yesterday, were of the most impressive character. The vast audience that was gathered in the church appeared to be most fully impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and the responses were made in a manner that indicated how general and heartfelt was the feeling of the congregation. After the regular morning prayer, and the lessons from Isaiah, and St. Luke vi., from the 20th verse, the prayer for the President of the United States and all in authority was repeated, and then, before the Litany, the following prayer was also said:

Almighty and most holy Lord God, who dost command us to humble ourselves under Thy mighty hand, that Thou mayest exalt us in due time, we, Thy unworthy servants, desire most humbly to confess before Thee, in this the time of sore affliction in our land, how deeply as a nation we deserve Thy wrath. In the great calamities which have come upon us, we acknowledge Thy righteous visitation, and bow down our souls under the mighty hand of our holy and merciful God and Father. Manifold are our sins and transgressions, and the more grievous because of the abundance of our privileges and mercies under Thy providence and grace. In pride, and living unto ourselves, in covetousness and worldliness of mind, in self sufficiency, and self-dependence, in glorying in our own wisdom, and riches, and strength, instead of glorying only in Thee; in making our boast of unmerited blessings, as if our own might and wisdom had gotten them instead of acknowledging Thee in all, and seeking first Thy kingdom and righteousness; in profaneness of speech and ungodliness of life; in polluting Thy Sabbaths, and receiving in vain Thy grace in the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, we acknowledge, O Lord, that, as a nation and people, we have grievously sinned against Thy divine majesty, provoking most justly Thy wrath and indignation against us. Righteousness belongeth unto Thee, but unto us confusion of face. Because Thy compassions have not failed, therefore, we are not consumed. Make us earnestly to repent and heartily to be sorry for these our misdoings. May the remembrance of them be grievous unto us. Turn unto Thee, O Lord, the hearts of all this people in humiliation and prayer, that Thou mayest have compassion upon us and deliver us. When Thy judgments are thus upon us, may the inhabitants of the land learn righteousness. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father. For Thy son, our Lord Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past, and grant that we may ever hereafter serve and please Thee in newness of life, to the honor and glory of Thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord—Amen.

The Litany was then said, and to the suffrage for "unity, peace, and concord," was added, "and especially to this nation, now afflicted by civil war."

The prayers appointed for Ash Wednesday, and one or more special prayers, then followed, with the collect, Epistle, and Gospel, for that day, with the following additional collect:

O God! whose nature and property is ever to have mercy, receive the humble petitions, which, with one heart and one mouth, throughout this land are now offered unto Thee; and though we be tied and bound with the chain of our sins, yet let the pitifulness of Thy great mercy loose us. Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder the restoration of godly union and concord. That, as there is but One Body, One Spirit, and One Hope of our Calling, One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, One God and Father of us all, so we may once again be made to be of one heart and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may, with one mind and one mouth, glorify Thee; through Jesus Christ our Lord—Amen.

Mr. Brooks then said that the day had been set apart for humiliation and prayer, and his hearers, knowing the purpose of the day, would not expect a discourse from their pastor. This was not a time for words. When the whole nation was bowed down on its knees in humiliation and repentance, it was not timely or proper to preach. This congregation had humbled themselves before the Almighty, and had discharged, as far as a congregation could, their duty. But were there not other duties remaining to be performed? Would mere confession of sin avail for the great purpose of the day, without an effort for reformation? While the people acknowledge on this day that they have sinned, not only as individuals, but, as a nation, would it avail, unless there was a sincere and honest effort for reformation? And would it not be a mockery before God to say that we have sinned, we have broken Thy laws, we have polluted Thy Sabbaths, and received in vain Thy grace, without alluding to or breathing of the greatest sin of all—the blackest stain upon our country, and the cause of all the ruin, and bloodshed, and afflictions that have been visited upon our land—the black sin of slavery? Had we not that duty to perform, to pray for the removal of that great crime—that dark spot upon our country's history?

And was this all? Were there not here in our midst, persons whom we meet daily in social intercourse, who gave not even a faltering support to the administrators of the laws, who are using the means that God has given them for the suppression of rebellion and treason?—men who deprecated the extermination of the evil that has caused all our troubles. Was it not as much our duty to pray for the rebuke of those traitors in the North as for the discomfiture of the openly-declared enemy in the South? It was the duty of the congregation to cultivate that firm, unwavering loyalty to the Government that would recognize no distinction between the open foe and the secret enemy.

The remarks of the pastor, which we give in substance, were listened to with the most profound attention, and met, apparently, a sincere and hearty response from his hearers. After they were concluded, the following eloquent prayer was said:

O Eternal God, who makest men to be of one mind in a house, and stillest the angry passions of the people, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thine infinite mercy, to appease the tumults among us; to bring to an end the dreadful strife which is now raging in our land, and to restore peace to our afflicted country. And we most humbly beseech Thee to grant to all of us grace to walk henceforth in Thy sight, in Thy holy commandments, and in due subjection to the power that is from Thee, so that, leading a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty, we may continually offer unto Thee our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, through the merits of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord—Amen.

The benediction was then pronounced, and the congregation dismissed.

METHODIST EPISCOPAL.

SERMON BY REV. FRANKLIN MOORE, AT THE UNION METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

At the Union Methodist Episcopal Church, Fourth street below Arch, the Rev. FRANKLIN MOORE, pastor, delivered an effective discourse, selecting his text from Jonah 3: 5, 10. The preacher first alluded to the history of Jonah, and then indulged in some remarks upon the subject of fasting. We have no definite information as to the origin of the custom. It can be traced back to the Egyptians, so that the Israelites among them would be familiar with it. This familiarity seems implied in the manner in which their great annual fast-day is enjoined. Lev. 16: 29: "And this shall be a statute forever unto you: that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, ye shall afflict your souls, and do no work at all, whether it be one of your own country, or a stranger that sojourneth among you; for on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." From the reasonableness and moral beauty of the custom, it is not absurd to suppose that it may date back to primeval Adam. The observation of ages is that great grief affects the appetite for food. Fasting is thus the natural expression of sorrow. Looking at men in their relations to God and eternity, it is the expression of sorrow for sin. It is essentially linked, after the teaching of the text, with prayer, crying "mightily unto God," and with reformation of heart and life; the turning of "every one from his evil way." Fasting may be observed with different degrees of rigidness, though a strict fast is, to neither eat nor drink for a given period of time. In accordance with the spirit of the day, one of humiliation before God because of sin, an inquiry was then instituted "as to causes of humiliation upon the part of the American people."

It was asserted that the spirit of independence had run riot, until we have lost much of our humility of spirits towards the Supreme Being. Great blessings are ever accompanied with great perils. The glorious highway of voluntary agency is all along fringed with the dark abysses of sin. Our noble form of Government is the only philosophical one on earth at this time—at all events, the only one working on a grand scale. Yet there is peril in our very fulness of liberty. There is a tendency to restiveness, under duly constituted authority. This tendency manifests itself in the home circle, in the church, in the State, and, lastly, towards God. At the commencement of this war, we vaunted ourselves on our resources, and did not rely humbly on God. Let us to-day repent of this haughtiness, and let our mission cry, "We will look unto the hills, whence cometh our help;" "our help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth." It was then said, *various forms of vice have been fearfully prevalent among us.*

1. *Profanity* prevails alarmingly in high and low places; in the chambers of commerce, and in legislative halls; in the army and navy. A large proportion of our people are tainted with the vice; a sea of profanity lifts its waves to God, calling for vengeance on us. … because of swearing, the land mourneth.

2. *Intemperance* … horribly, that there is scarcely a family … and without the sorrow … relative.

3. *Sabbath-breaking* … feature of our moral condition. The … strange infatuation widely prevalent, that it is a matter of *indifference* whether we observe the Sabbath religiously or not. The practical impression seems to be that the law of the Sabbath is a nullity, except for professing Christians. God's law has fire and thunder in it, and he will surely visit for the desecration of consecrated time.

4. *Social corruption abounds.*—The facts known to the ministers of the law, to judges, lawyers, police officers, known to physicians, and all observing persons, touching the violation of the spirit and letter of the commandment, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," are appalling.

5. *Violence is too rife among us.*—Maiming and murdering are by far too common, as police reports and the proceedings of criminal courts attest. Human life and limbs are held too cheap among us. Now, God is Love, and abhors violence and cruelty, and must loathe such a social condition among any people. A sad outline, indeed; but none the less true, calling upon the nation to cry, God be merciful to us miserable offenders!

One more element of national sinfulness we must notice—though last, not least in the list:

6. *Political corruption.*—The pulpit is not the place for detraction. We gladly admit there are many noble men in public political life. But we all know there are many incompetent and venal men in high places. All political parties among us have sinned in their failure to select men of the most commanding talents and of stern integrity. I would that my words on this subject could be sounded over the land, and thunder in all souls. *We must reform or die!* Christians must take more interest in political movements, or the nation will suffer, and they be glaringly guilty before God. I abhor the union of Church and State, but insist upon it that we must infuse more of the spirit of Christianity into American politics. W… a nation, fallen into a mournful apostasy … subject of *human rights.* The attitude of the … towards slavery in the first days of the Republic was this: *Toleration under protest.* The Constitution was there alluded to upon the subject, as also the views of Washington, and Jefferson, and George Mason. Action of the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1819 was cited, protesting against the extension of slavery. Democrats and Federalists of both Senate and House unanimously protested. But now, alas! how different the attitude! Cotton became an element of lucrative trade, and the national conscience has been crucified to appease Mammon. Gain, any way, right or wrong, has been the ruling maxim of thousands. *In the South,* slavery is now vaunted as the "corner-stone" of civilization—*ne plus ultra* civilization. *In the North,* political demagogues, with the secret knowledge that it is a loathsome thing, assent to the infamous assertion—assent in meek submission to their unhallowed thirst for power—power any way gotten—right or wrong. In our Legislature we have recently, in one branch of it, (the House,) witnessed a protest against the President's Proclamation of Emancipation; a protest which will hand down to posterity the name of every man who voted for it as the subjects of either infamy or pity. Pity, indeed, is due good men—for there were some such in the list—when blinded so dismally by the films of party passion, and so humbled by the lash of party drill, that they could thus, at such a time—tens of thousands of their brethren slain at the bidding of the Moloch of slavery—so fearfully crucify Humanity and Liberty. Yes, crucify Humanity and Liberty, and that in the hall of the capitol of Pennsylvania, and right under the folds of the star-spangled banner, whose every flap and crack in the wind seems to anticipate the time when all nations shall shout to God, and clap their hands in the joy that universal liberty reigns. The moral history of this war is short—God visited us with truth, and waited on us long, and when He saw nothing else would suffice to accomplish His purpose of freedom, He launched reluctantly against us the thunderbolt of war. He will stay the war when we do right and drop slavery, as one would drop a heated iron bar from his hand.

Several reasons of hope for the nation were now cited. The nation is planting itself rapidly on the platform of liberty and mercy. The apostacy generated a revolution of right sentiment, which finally placed Mr. Lincoln in the Presidential chair. The trials and sorrows of the war have schooled the nation for the emancipation proclamation. *The Church* is everywhere taking higher ground than in former times, or rather uttering what has always been her voice more distinctly and authoritatively. Here and there a lingering preacher or layman may be found whose hobby has been, in past days, to ridicule and assault crazy Abolitionists, and who now too, obstinate to admit that ever he was mistaken in opinion or action. *In the State* embittered politicians foam, and fret, and strut, and indulge in angry declamations, which are "like the idiot's tale, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing" but treason to God, and Liberty, and Humanity. *This liberty-movement is of God,* and it would be well for its opposers to mark its progress and power, and query whether, in their resistance, they be not fighting against God. Oh, fruitless effort to stay the progress of Liberty in the earth! Can the leaping and live lightnings of God, which go crashing among the Cedars of Lebanon, be harnessed by the bands of partisan resolutions? Can the voice of God's all-shaking thunder, be drowned and swallowed up by the cries and senseless shouts of ward and township meetings? No, no, the lightning of truth and liberty will leap and glare until the air of the social and moral earth is purified as in the day when the summer storm is stilled! When we reach the right position before God, as a nation, he will bless us. Hosea 6: 1-3: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up; after two days will he revive us; in the third day he will raise us up, and we shall live in his sight; then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord; his going forth is prepared as the morning; and he shall come unto us as the rain, as the latter and former rain unto the earth." 2d. We represent law, while the rebels represent anarchy. 3d. We are the champions of popular democratic liberty, while the rebellion is essentially aristocratic. 4th. We represent a whole and healthy Christianity, while the rebellion represents a sickly and maimed Christianity, which obscures Christ's golden rule of doing unto others as we would they should do unto us. With penitence and trust in God we must triumph. In conclusion it was asserted—These times teach us the vanity of earth. The clouds of sorrow have settled around the pomp and brilliance of life.

A tribute to a relative (Dr. D. Minis, Jr., surgeon of 48th Pennsylvania Regiment, who died at Roanoke Island), as a representative man, was here given. Oh, my dear friend, martyr of the right, soon the leaves and grass will be green above thee, and the wild birds will sing in the branches which fling a cooling shadow over thy grave. The breeze which has kissed the bright waves of the Ohio will whisper sorrowingly over thee, and extracting the fragrance of the flowers which blush and breathe around thy dust, carry it abroad, thus symbolizing how thy memory, and that of thy fallen fellows, will be cherished as incense among all people who love Liberty and Law. An apostrophe to the Republic was then made with Donald McKay's clipper ship—the Great Republic—as the source of illustration. It closed thus: Glide thee on, Great Republic, with cloudy sail and bending spars, freighted with the hopes and rights of humanity; greet all shores with thy presence, and fill the nations with the joy of freedom, as they hail thee. Glide on, over all seas, until thy prow and keel have cut and carved the breast of every ocean. Glide on, and God guard thee, that thou mayest glide ever, unshattered by the tempest, unfoundered by the billows.

SERMON BY REV. H. F. HURN, AT THE GREEN-STREET METHODIST CHURCH.

From the sermon preached yesterday morning, in the Methodist church, on Green street, below Eleventh, by its pastor, the Rev. H. F. Hurn, we make the following extracts. The text was selected from the third chapter of Jonah, the fifth verse:

"So the people of Nineveh believed God, and proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them even to the least of them."

The speaker began his sermon with an allusion to the object of the day. The people had been called together by the Chief Magistrate, to devote the hour to prayer, and to the reading of God's holy word. The country of their love was flooded with calamity; it was as though the vials, held by the shining and terrible ones spoken of in the Apocalypse, had been opened over the nation, and the drops were falling red and heavy: great drops of blood, which ran down in rills like rills of a thunder shower. But a little while ago, and our country was all peace and prosperity, and we lived not then under the apprehension of the onslaught of a near and gigantic foe. Now, oh God, what a change! War was upon us—War, the leveller of pleasant homes; the desolator of fertile fields. War, the grave-digger, blasted our cheeks with his scorching breath. What had the people done to call upon them this fierce agony? As Christians, they might be assured that all present national troubles had some mysterious and unseen connection with the laws and designs of Providence. It was useless now to speculate upon these causes, nor was it the purpose of the morning. It was too late to avert the evil, and there was but one resource left, and that was to fly to some powerful protector. In looking around, seeking for some avenue by which to escape, to whom should we turn, if not to the All-wise and All-powerful Ruler of the universe, the speaker stated that it was not his purpose to cast recriminations upon any party, nor to direct the minds of his hearers to the errors and mistakes into which any set of men had fallen, but rather to lead their thoughts to prayer and penitence. In view of the great calamities by which they were surrounded, nothing could be more appropriate than humiliation and repentance, nor more in accordance with the teachings of Divinity. There were in the Bible not less than sixty references to fasting and prayer as a means of turning aside the wrath of God. The meaning to be given to the word fasting as thus used, had long formed a subject of dispute among theologians and learned men; were these verses to be accepted as rendering the external act of fasting, the mere abstinence from food, obligatory upon Christians?

But whatever differences existed upon this point, all were agreed that the fasting of the soul was the most important part of the act. The twelfth and thirteenth verses of the second chapter of Joel were the true exponents of that fasting which God required: "Therefore, also, now, saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning; and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord, your God." It was not the body, but the soul, which was to be mortified. So it was with the people of the United States of America at the present day. They needed to fast, not from meats, but from their evil doings; to humble themselves, to be afflicted and exceeding sorrowful. America, if not the greatest sinner among the nations of the earth, had at least much to answer for that can not be charged against other countries; greater opportunities overlooked, and more certain chances of advancement and moral excellence neglected. At this moment, the nation was passing under a most terrible ordeal. The happy land of our early hopes and dreams, and prayers, was no more! Nominally a Christian land, it had insulted the Almighty, had violated His laws, and was now suffering the penalty. It was well to clothe our souls in the garments of affliction, as were called before the mind some of the enormous crimes for which this day the nation endures the vengeance of God. It was true that there was not a town in the country in which the spire of some village church did not reach up into the golden sunlight; but if corruption and faithlessness, if trickery and fraud, were matters of self-mortification, then was the day of humiliation most appropriately in keeping with eternal surroundings. Crimes enough existed over which to mourn. Most to be lamented were the great national crimes of Sabbath-breaking, of drunkenness, of profanity, of general unbelief and Atheism. Not the least of the long catalogue was the sin of excessive national pride, which had scorned all dependence on any arm save that of the people, and which had even rejected the aid of God omnipotent. The calamities of the country had been met with a disdainful trust in its own strength, regardless of the Lord. Leaving generalities, the speaker proceeded to advert to the state of those before him. They should look into their own hearts and see how great the causes for humiliation and prayer which existed in their own bosoms. They would then first realize the peculiar fitness of a day like the present. They, with the nation, had sinned. By reason of their sins, the light had been veiled from the happy days of peace. The question now was, how long should the gloom exist? How long would they hesitate before they resorted to the only certain method of dispelling it, by prostrating themselves before God, in prayer—prayer, which moves the arm that moves the world. When they came to read the history of this country by the unerring light of eternity, it would be seen that the prayer of Washington was mightier than his sword. They should pray to God, night and day, that He would stay the annihilation which threatened this most beautiful and excellent of governments, and render vain the dark machinations which were levelled at its existence. They should pray in their closets, in their public gatherings—everywhere and always pray for the glory of the nation. All should pray! pray! pray! pray! that the wrath of God might be turned aside. He held all in the hollow of His hand. Even amid the roaring cannon, which drowned the sweet music of the Sabbath bells, the Lord God omnipotent reigned. Death and destruction could not rise to strike Him. In olden times the world rang with the lamentations of the ancient Pagans, who mourned the loss of a god, and the refrain of their song was—"The mighty Pan is dead!" But the God of this country lives eternal, far above the power of Death. To Him let all appeal in their distress. Hope still remained. The glorious old ship of state could not be wrecked, for the God of their fathers, the God of their country, stood at the helm, and His hand would never falter.

In concluding, the speaker quoted Longfellow's much-admired apostrophe, beginning:

"Sail on, oh! ship of state—
O Union strong and great!
Humanity, with all its fears,
With all the hopes of future years,
Is hanging on thy fate!"

PRESBYTERIAN (O. S.)

SERMON BY REV. … BOARDMAN, AT THE … (O. S.) CHURCH.

The services … were of the most interesting cha… opening with prayer, the hymn, "Humiliation of National Sins," was sung. A fervent and impressive prayer was offered up for the Chief Magistrate of the nation and the several Commonwealths.

Dr. Boardman selected his text from the 5th chapter of the prophecies of Isaiah, 24th and 25th verses:

"Because they have cast away the law of the Lord of Hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel. Therefore is the anger of the Lord kindled against his people, and he hath stretched forth his hand against them and hath smitten them: and the hills did tremble, and their carcasses were torn in the midst of the streets. For all this his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still."

He commenced, by saying he … one had come to the house of God, this d… a war sermon. This was a day dedi… other uses. Our chief magistrate has sum… to meet together, on this day, to confess o… national sins. The two elements relating to this subject are most appropriate. He alluded to the resolutions passed by the Senate of the United States, and the proclamation of the President, and hoped that we would accept the two papers as part of the nation's creed. No one can help but be convinced, and acknowledge that human governments are at the disposal of Him, as much as are the birds of the air or the fish of the sea. War is really one of his implements for scourging nations as is disease and pestilence. The President says, in his proclamation, that this civil war *may* be a punishment for our sins. This day is a national humiliation for national sins. They are your sins, and my sins, and a personal acknowledgement and recognition of Him must be made.

Let every one, therefore, turn from his evil way. To specify the sins which call for humiliation would be both impracticable and unnecessary. The conscience which does not this day induce its possessor to cry, "God be merciful unto me," must be stupified. Let us, therefore, invoke the Divine Spirit, and ask that we may forsake our sins. If we are not willing to know, and forsake our sins, then the Almighty may continue to scourge our land, and we know not where the evil may end.

Speaking of the sins for which we were most answerable at this time, he said there might be those present who would expect him to speak on slavery. He did not think it necessary to dwell upon this topic at this time. That it had been the source of great evil, both North and South, cannot be denied. If it had been God's will to abandon it years ago, he should have rejoiced; but such had not been the case. He did not wish to dwell upon the subject. Both the President and the Senate, while specifying other national sins, have carefully avoided the mention of slavery. Perhaps both felt that the time had come when we should look at home, and they would do nothing to excite that which is made the topic of six day sin each week.

No nation ever enjoyed more prosperity than we did previous to the rebellion. We paraded our power and strength before the whole world as something of our own making. We gave up the law of God and took to our evil ways. This fact was noticed for years, and alluded to both from the pulpit and the Christian press. Little did it occur to us in what form the cloud would burst. The storm came with a fury before which the stoutest heart might have quailed. Yet public pride would not bend. This could be noticed everywhere. We were still given to boasting, and it was thought and proclaimed that the rebellion would end in a few months—it could not last long—eight millions could not contend against twenty-two millions. There are even now editors and orators continually boasting that this war must soon end. But this spirit, he noticed, had much abated, and was growing less each day. It is madness for any nation to expect to succeed in any contest without His support. Great armies and generals are nothing. That God is on the side having the greatest artillery is utterly nonsensical. If there is no other proof of this we have had it in the present war. God has other principles by which He governs the world than mere brute strength. The truth cannot be disguised, God has smitten us in our most vulnerable part. None of us can believe that our country is to be given over to ruin; but there is but one way by which we can avert this calamity. We must again place our dependence in Him whom we have forsaken. Evidently the Christianity of the country has been outmastered by its ambition. No one is so simple as to ask whether there are any signs of decay among us. On every side we inhale the foul incense that goes up from Mammon's altar. Laws are made and unmade, and offices of profit and trust filled and vacated at the bidding of money. He did not make these charges, but he constantly heard them repeated, and, if it be so, they indicate a deterioration of our national character which is, indeed, frightful. The fatal virus is fast spreading through the whole system. By and by the crash must come, and great will be the fall thereof. How near we are to this crisis none but God himself knows.

He wished to call attention, particularly to the criminal unfaithfulness of our political duties in times past. We do not claim that our Constitution is perfect, but so many and so marked are its effects, that we must recognize its power. We have been slothful in the right of franchise, and have absented ourselves from the polls, thus allowing incompetent men to come into power. He did not deny that there were able and patriotic men in place, but these were few compared with those who could be bought and sold for money like cattle. One would suppose people would only select such men as have their confidence and regard. This, to a certain extent, had been done; but is it general? He thought not. He alluded to the usefulness of a pamphlet known as "Our Representation and its Reform." The speaker, in an interview with Mr. Webster, before his death, was informed by the latter, that unless our present mode of electing the President and Vice President was changed it would destroy the whole country. Conceding slavery to be the *whole* cause of our present troubles, it has taken eighty years to bring about this sad state of affairs. And does any sane man believe or pretend to say that if this Union is re-established, which we all hope it would be, can it resist for the same period, eighty years, the corruption now going on in our midst? There is ground to fear that we have not yet, as a nation been brought into the posture that becomes us. There are those who find a compensation for these troubles in the material prosperity of the North. The exigencies of the contest, they contend, have opened the doors for speculation and made labor abundant, and this is what they call prosperity. It is a gross calumny to assert that this is the general feeling, however, at the North. If it were so, we might expect at once to see our institutions go down to the dust. If we do not turn to God, and suffer this calamity to go on, the whole land may be stricken with sorrow. Every month that the union of the States is postponed, it multiplies the difficulties in the way of effecting that union. The only sure way to escape from the judgments we fear, is to make our peace with God. Our sins are numerous, and it is vain to attempt to enumerate them by classes; and nothing but the blood of Christ can take them away. Our prayer is for this; and if this prayer should go up from all, we cannot doubt the result.

In conclusion, the speaker made an eloquent and touching appeal to those present, and called upon them to bow with an humble knee to Him who alone could again restore to us our former peace, happiness, and prosperity.

PRESBYTERIAN (N. S.)

SERMON BY REV. ALBERT BARNES, AT THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

The congregation of the Rev. Albert Barnes shares the character of its pastor, in being one of the most influential and intelligent in the city. The attendance yesterday was sufficient evidence of this. The text was chosen from the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel: "And I set my face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplications, with fasting, and sackcloth, and ashes: And I prayed unto the Lord my God, and made my confession, and said, O Lord, the great and dreadful God, keeping the covenant and mercy to them that love him, and to them that keep his commandments; We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts, and from thy judgments: Neither have we hearkened unto thy servants the prophets, which spake in thy name to our kings, our princes, and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."

The speaker commenced with the remark that it was to be presumed all present were loyal. None had a right to assume that any were not so. We might differ in our views of the Government, of the Administration, of the qualifications of those in office, of the causes of the present trouble, and of the methods of their removal; but there was no difference of opinion in regard to the proclamation which had called together the people on this occasion, and in regard to the terms in which that proclamation had been communicated. It was a point of interest that, in this unanimous resolution of the Senate, our supplications were mentioned as being made in the name of Jesus Christ, thus distinctly recognizing the Saviour as the Mediator. The object to be accomplished is *penitence.* But this object could not be met by confessing the sins of others merely, by denouncing others, or by discussing the abstract subjects of slavery, secession, the emancipation proclamation, unless, indeed, these subjects produce a bearing on our own hearts. The topics to be discussed mainly related—*first,* to the grounds of our humiliation, and, *second,* to our duty in the present crisis.

First. The grounds of our humiliation.

In endeavoring to understand the reasons of the Divine disposition in cases like the present, we should consider the methods in which He evinces it, viz.:

1. Punishment, individual and national.
2. Discipline, for the purposes of reform.
3. Inducing some change in social custom, manner, or law.

There is a class of words which men use which seem synonymous, but which are distinct. *Shame* is used in reference to sin especially, but, also, has relation to … division of folly. *Chagrin* is felt when people have sought a social position, recommendation, favor, or patronage, are repulsed and disappointed. A nation, for instance, might feel so when it sets up to be a model nation, and finds that its claims are not recognized. *Mortification* is expressed, not on account of sin, but because the sin may be known to others, and because the author of it may be distressed and overwhelmed in its detection. There was one other word—*repentance*—which meant neither shame, chagrin, nor mortification, but which was allied to the feeling of penitence, as being sinners before God.

The reasons for humiliation appeared to be:

I. The fact of the rebellion.
II. The causes of the rebellion.
III. Our reverses in the prosecution of the war.
IV. The suffering and sorrow produced by the war.

I. The fact and character of the rebellion. There never had been anything like it before. Persia, Egypt, Rome and all Europe, could show no parallel. The rebellion in the civil wars of England was comparatively a small affair, the population of England at that time not being more than the present population of New York or Pennsylvania. Neither is the Chinese outbreak to be mentioned as on an equality with this in this country. In skill, in valor, in equipments, in the issue itself it will not bear comparison. It is a matter of small importance whether the Chinese rebellion triumphs or not. The social condition is not liable to be changed. How widely different here. Some time ago we had an army, which few knew much about, of ten thousand men. Suddenly we heard of seventy-five thousand men starting forth on a new movement. Then came a call for three hundred thousand men, and then for three hundred thousand more. Then we became familiar with what amazed us in childhood, when we learned that Napoleon invaded Russia with five hundred thousand men—the fact that millions are engaged, now, here, against each other. This was a fact fit to produce humiliation. With all the wisdom they possessed, our fathers prescribed checks and balances to provide for any exigencies of the Union. For seventy years the Union and the Constitution have triumphed. Then, through evil machination, the Union tottered and fell like a house built upon the sand. Other nations have never taken the view which we have taken of our Government. They have told us that the experiment of a republic had not yet been fully tried; they intimated that it would be a failure.

II. The causes of the rebellion. These relate both to man and God. They have operated on the one, and they have influenced the other. There is one real cause of this rebellion. If this had not existed, the calamities of war, in their present form, would never have existed. The speaker alluded to slavery, and the effects, designs, and disappointments of its abettors. Up to the time when the rebellion broke out, the power indubitably was Southern. The facility with which the institutions of the land have been adapted to Southern views, is marvellous.

Five reasons have been offered in the South, for what we call rebellion, and what they call the establishment of a Confederacy. These are:

1. The laws of individual States in regard to slavery.
2. The bounty on the fisheries.
3. The navigation laws.
4. The tariff. The first in 1779 was on cotton, three cents per pound, and was expressly to protect the Southern States.
5. The action of the North in regard to the fugitive slave law.

III. Our reverses in the prosecution of the war. In all wars there are reverses. In the capture of New Orleans, and in the Western waters, it is true, we have met with a series of brilliant victories. But we have also had reverses. In the seven years' war of the Revolution there were reverses which tried even the heart of Washington, and our reverses are such as to, in some sense, humble us. But God may intend to accomplish an end, which will not allow individual disasters to retard the steady progress of events. If we had secured victory at once, the result might not have been that which God intends: the emancipation of four millions of human beings. But now this question is settled. Whether the Union be restored, or the Confederacy be established, slavery in the United States will never be what it has been.

IV. The suffering and sorrow produced by the war. Some one is responsible for this. But that was not the place to say to whose account should be laid the bereavement of families, and the affliction of the innocent. Starvation is abroad in the South. It does not, perhaps, affect the President of the so-called Confederacy, but it does affect thousands of men, and women, and children there.

Second.—Our duty in the present crisis.

There are men, North and South, who are pursuing war for the sake of war, or for the sake of fame, influence, and position. Loyalty, in its broadest sense, is faithfulness to a sovereign or a prince. The Constitution, accurately, defines treason. Our duty relates to sustaining the Government, and to presenting no obstacles in its administration. We use the term government, in regard to legislative, judicial, and executive powers, republican or monarchical. Administration is temporary; may soon pass away, and is liable to change. We owe allegiance to the government, and we owe allegiance to that form in which it is administered.

There are six ways in which to secure, in any country, the entire demands of freedom. These may be secured effectually in the fatherland, and most effectually in America. The ways are:

1. The authority of the Supreme Court.
2. The right of amendment of the Constitution.
3. The ballot-box.
4. The power of impeachment.
5. The recognized right of revolution.

The fatherland, in the time of William and Mary, gave an instance of this.

6. The right of conscience. When law violates a man's conscience, his duty is to submit to the penalty—not to obstruct the observance of that law. A government has power to loosen the bonds between father and son, master and apprentice, master and slave. The latter was done three times during the Revolution, as references to Lord Cornwallis, Sir Henry Clinton, and Lord Dunmore, show. We were not to despair of a reconstruction of the Union on the great basis that the General Government is to be detached from slavery. Whatever the issue, that, at least, will be a great and glorious gain. We have abundant occasion to thank God, and trust to him for intervention.

The services were closed by the singing of the 51st hymn:

"The Lord our God is full of might."

The sermon was introduced appropriately by the singing of the 46th psalm:

"God is the refuge of his saints,"

and the 743d hymn:

"Saviour, when in dust to Thee."

The comprehensive prayers which accompanied them, completed the devotional exercises.

SERMON BY REV. E. E. ADAMS, AT THE NORTH BROAD STREET PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

Texts: *"Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting."*—Dan. v. 27. *"The Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will."*—Dan. iv. 32. *"Rend your heart and not your garments."*—Joel ii. 13.

Mr. Adams commenced by saying, that he was disposed to offer praise to God for the moral victories we have gained for the whole nation. These tell mental development in the inventions which are stimulated by the war, in the history it creates; in the disclosure of principles which lie at the basis, and run into the superstructure of our national life; in the better impressions of both parties, the one of the other; in the death-blow given to slavery; in the lessons we have learned; that great achievements are not the work of an hour; that our boasting and impatience are unworthy of us; that our life has work in it; that sorrow is a discipline for noble endurance and manly triumph.

The South has learned that … can fight and will do it to the end; not … not men as against their falsehood and … hands which have labored in Northern … turf among granite mountains, can govern cities and command armies. We have learned that our enemies are valorous, skillful, and enduring.

Speaking of the grounds for humiliation and prayer, he weighed the whole nation in the balances of the decalogue, showing that idolatry, profaneness, impurity, and murder, walk abroad in the land. That it is almost impossible to find truths in the ordinary channels of intercourse. The mind is crazed with rumors. Lies float on the telegraph; fly on the *wings of the press, drop in honeyed words* at the counters, fall in false tears at the grave, and lurk in roseate hues at the bridal. The heart is false. The head is false. The life is false. We are wrapped about in the *unreal,* the mere mummeries of what ought to be a true and glorious manhood. Covetousness, also, goes side by side with benevolence, and feeds on it. It would have the war go on for itself. It would coin money from the quivering flesh, and the dying heart of the soldier.

Our great, comprehensive sin is forgetfulness of God. He is in the strife, but we do not see him. It is for this people, more than any other, to recognize God. Our nation was consecrated by him and to him at the first. When it came forth naked, cold, helpless, on this wintry shore, *He* took it into his bosom, hushed its cries, gave it angels' food, made it great, armed it against its unnatural mother, set it up before the world's thrones, and marshaled the stars in glory around its head. We cannot innocently forget God. He is in all our history—in every act of this war.

Another sin of our people is their cruel and unchristian prejudice against the African. He has once had a grand history, and shall have another. The part of the Ethiopian is more glorious than that of the Anglo-Saxon, in the days of Tacitus and Cæsar, when he dwelt in the German forests, drank the hot blood of his captives from human skulls, sacrificing to his "grim and gory idols."

God has a prospective nationality for the negro. He was at the bottom of this war, but he is rising to the top. He waits and prays. If he has not the cold, clear intellect, of the Caucasian, he has a gentler and a better heart, and Christ deals with the heart. If God reserved this great continent for the Anglo-Saxon, may he not have reserved Central Africa for the negro, that he may there surpass his early life under the reign of celestial love and peace? He will remain where he is until God's day shall come, then for the exode. Give the African his right. Let mind and heart be the measure of right, as it is in Heaven. Whether we will or no, he will rise and have his destined history, and do the work to which God calls him. With true dependence on God we shall live as a nation. It is treason against Heaven to think of failure.

"Oh, freedom! Power at thee has launched
His bolts, and with his lightnings smitten thee:
They could not quench the life thou hast from Heaven."

Our prayer to-day is for the *freedom of the world!* for the peaceful, holy reign of Christ. We want *true* liberty—soul liberty. There are lusty bawls for freedom. There are gods at the polls whom Nature would not own as scavengers. We want none of them; but the grand, holy, stern, pure manhood, redeemed and glorified by the Son of God!

UNITED PRESBYTERIAN.

SERMON BY REV. J. T. COOPER, D.D., AT THE THIRD UNITED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

At the Presbyterian Church in Front street, near Jefferson, of which Dr. Cooper is pastor, the lessons of the day were very appropriate and interesting. This well-known pastor preached from the first clause of the 26th chapter of Isaiah, 8th verse, a text of singular force: "Yea, in the way of Thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for Thee." The manner of the reverend gentleman was especially simple, grave, and fervent. The text, he remarked, was part of a song to be sung near captivity; it was uttered in a day of tribulation and iniquity; and it was proper to the attitude of the nation before the Most High, and to the experience of the professing people of God. Judgments in Scripture were sometimes significant of laws and statutes, sometimes divine decrees and truths; here it involved punishment, for Isaiah further says, "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." The present is a time of such judgments, when God's wrath, and the national peril and weakness, humble us before God. Judgments involved the ideas of justice, and divine dispensations visited upon nations and individuals in calamities of failure, epidemic, massacre, or famine, should teach us to submit, and to reform. To justify God we must condemn ourselves. If the affliction is great, what shall we think of the sin which provokes it? Should we not bow our pride in reverent and penitent humiliation when we remember that, though the punishments of God may be severe, they are less than we deserve? To know the justice of God's judgment, we should learn his mercy by calling upon him. David recognized this justice even when he cried, out of his despair, "My God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" The earnest prayer of the psalmist must become our own before we shall discover beyond God's justice its crowning fulfilment of mercy and benefaction.

The judgments of God are mysterious to the Christian, are but chance to the skeptic and infidel—but their fact and truth remains as God remains. He has countless resources of wrath, countless ways, and countless forms of judgment, and though it works often through inferior agencies, it possesses an original commission. Proof of the divine permission and foreknowledge, was shown in the most cruel act of the world, the death of the Saviour for the redemption of man, which God claimed as his suffering, in confirmation of which the Saviour answered Pilate—"Thou couldst have no power except from above." God sends his warnings, and the heart of Pharaoh is still hardened—he smites. We should be ready to listen to God to know when he warns us. Let us hearken to his whisper before we tremble at his thunder, or are smitten by his thunderbolt. We must be warned against security.

The duty of self-interrogation both with reference to the individual and national sin, was dwelt upon by the reverend speaker. What share have we had in the national transgression? The nation had greatly sinned, and we have exalted to places of honor and trust those who have not feared God, and blasphemous officials in high places are breakers of the Sabbath, infidelity and religious indifference are among the people; and we have made laws against the laws of God. For how long have we enslaved our innocent fellow-men, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh, degraded into articles of trade and beasts of burden? How far have we countenanced the crime of the day, the sin of the hour, the vices of politicians, the sins of statesmen? What is our share in the transgression of the rulers, the counsellors, and the nation?

We think only of the rebels as a cause of our national distress, and forget the chastening and purifying justice. We have called upon the President, upon McClellan, upon Burnside, and now on Hooker, for victory—but have we called on God?

In conclusion, the reverend gentleman expressed the Christian duty of waiting in the way of God's judgments, and the worth of such dispensations in national education and reform, and the salvation of people. Wait on God's judgments, not in idleness or unconcern, but in diligence doing the work of God. "Wait on the Lord and be of good courage, and he will strengthen thy hand." "If my people which are called by my name, shall humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and heal their land."

BAPTIST.

SERMON BY REV. DANIEL C. EDDY, AT THE TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH.

At the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Chestnut street, above Eighteenth, Rev. Daniel C. Eddy, pastor, delivered a discourse upon Isaiah viii, 12.

The moral attitude of the American people, said the speaker, is one of the profoundest awe. All over the country, from St. Lawrence to the Potomac, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific, are all gathered to praise God; and to pray for the prosperity of their native land. A nation freighted with all the hopes of the future have gone into communion with God, and civilization stands waiting at the door to know the result.

The year 1861 witnessed the growth of one of the most extraordinary wars that ever desolated the country. But the causes that developed it are older than the Government itself. It was an attempt to make national one of the institutions of the South, at which humanity shudders, and from which pity turns aghast.

But we could not conceive that this South would ever put into execution the mad threat of secession in which they indulged. The South took the silence and apathy of the North for cowardice. The Northern politicians had yielded so often that the South thought that, no matter what they asked, the North would yield to anything. They had prepared their scheme of revolt, had laid all their plans; and, acting on the servility of their Northern friends, they thought that the Democratic party of the North would control the Republicans, while the armies of the South could march into Washington, be recognized by the nations of Europe, and build up an empire stretching from the Potomac to the Rio Grande, controlling the Gulf and in possession of the Pacific coast. It was a beautiful dream; but the people of the South have thoroughly awakened from it. It is now one of the most odious despotisms ever known. It has been a scene of murderous and barbarous outrages; it has been stripped of its young men by one of the most odious conscriptions ever known; it has persecuted Union men and women even to death.

And yet this great Government has in its magnanimity, accorded to traitors belligerent rights; it has delivered up traitors taken on board of British ships, under the rulings of international law; it has been so lenient, that the President has not signed the death-warrant of a single traitor, and they have been permitted to go unwhipped of justice, to traduce the Government and the country that has spared their worthless lives. Still, we cannot but be sensible that all the Powers of Europe would rejoice in the downfall of this nation. Aristocracy and nobility are all interested in seeing the breaking up of this Government, which is a standing reproach to kings and the extravagance of royal families. They hate us, because this republic has been the beacon to Poland and Italy and republican France.

England and France, with most power to befriend or harm us, and which ought to have given us assistance, have been giving assistance to armed rebels, and doing all in their power to build up the rebel Confederacy and to cripple this Government. They have built ships for the rebels until the Clyde has become to be known as the Confederate Dockyard. They have built English ships, manned them with English sailors, and sent them out under the English flag to prey upon the commerce of the American nation. The aristocracy of England is our enemy. Palmerston and Lord John Russell are allying with Mr. Adams, our minister, while English pirates escape to prey upon American commerce. It would not be straining the point to call the Alabama the Palmerston, and the Florida Lord John Russell.

It is England, perfidious England, and mysterious, ambitious, paradoxical France that cry out for a new Confederacy. It is the slaveholders that cry out for the Confederacy. The war has been, in their interest, and it will be known to future history as the slaveholders' war. The four millions of bondmen do not want disunion, the poor whites of the South do not want it, but it is the slaveholders. They wanted disunion, because they were afraid of their slave property. Slavery ruled the country until by the growth of the free States it was endangered, and then the bastard Confederacy was formed. This, then, is a slaveholders' war on Union and liberty, for the avowed purpose of enslaving a people and raising a new government on the corner-stone of slavery.

A few traitors in the North have also joined in the cry of a Confederacy. This is an humiliating concession, but it perfectly accords with the weakness of human nature. In the slave States, without a single free institution, they may be excusable; but in the North, what must be thought of men who would have the Government say to disloyal States "Wayward sisters, go in peace?" They are ready to give up the capital, Mount Vernon, give up the Mississippi that it may be possessed by a foreign power. There are no epithets sufficient for these persons. Traitor was a severe word to Benedict Arnold, but it is a mild term to apply to these persons. There are ministers who refuse to pray for the President and for the success of the Federal armies; there are merchants who would sell contraband goods to the South to slay our sons and brothers. These people every day foully abuse the Government. There is not one of these men who does not hand a monument of the mercy of the much-abused President and Government. Every day that that sink of iniquity, the New York *World,* is allowed to spread its treason over the country, and every day that Fernando Wood is allowed to carry his worthless head over his traitorous heart, is an outrage, and a monument of the forbearance of the Government.

It is these three classes, then—the aristocrats of Europe, the slaveholders of the South, and the traitors of the North, who are those calling out—"A Confederacy! a Confederacy!"

The reverend gentleman then sketched at length the evils which would result from a disruption of the Union. If the South should separate, there would be an Atlantic Confederacy, a Northwest Confederacy, and a Pacific Confederacy. Such a division of this country would be the delight of the crowned heads of Europe, and the death-blow to the hopes of the struggling patriots of Italy and Poland, and thousands of others. She is the beacon-light of liberty all over the world; and, if the Government falls, constitutional liberty falls also.

Can we consent to let the South go, that it may establish a confederacy founded upon human bondage? Never! What would be the verdict of posterity? Should we do it, the dead patriots who sleep by the Chickahominy, on the Peninsula, and all over the South, would come forth from their graves and condemn us.

We have now begun to see the moral and political advantages of the war. It has proved that the Union is something more than a rope of sand, and it has given the slave system its death-blow. Who would want to take the Union back to the condition in which it was on Thanksgiving day, 1860, when James Buchanan was in the Presidential chair? The war which was to overthrow the Government has only deepened its foundations, and made it stronger and more powerful than ever.

To-morrow we shall be called upon, sternly and loyally to meet and welcome conscription and taxation, setting our faces against treason North and South, and holding up to everlasting honor the men who fight our battles, be they of what creed or party they may be, and holding up to scorn and damnation the men who in this dark hour would betray us; and let us, with songs and gladness, welcome the millennium, the political glory, the long sabbath of liberty, of the jubilee of humanity.

REFORMED DUTCH.

SERMON BY REV. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, AT THE SECOND REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH.

The Rev. T. De Witt Talmage, pastor of the Second Reformed Dutch Church, Seventh street, above Brown, reserved his Fast-Day Sermon until last evening, when that edifice was filled to hear a discourse, the subject of which was, "The Sins of the North."

Text: Zephaniah, 2: 13. "And he will stretch out his hand against the North."

He opened by saying that it was a strange sight to-day, mid week, to see the wheels of traffic pause, and gathering into chapel and church, and cathedral, multitudes of worshippers, with sadness on every countenance, and sorrow in every heart. Not as on those glad autumnal occasions when Thanksgiving Day has come, and families are gathered home to the banquet, and the churches of God are all ringing with praise for harvests gathered, and national prosperity continued. But a long, deep shadow, he said, had fallen upon us. That scourge of nations, which hath dug its grave-trench, all round the world, and poured into it the best blood of kingdoms and generations, after cursing other nations with its atrocities, had landed on our shores, and the double-quick step which was played at the departure of our troops, had been exchanged for the muffled drum beat and the burial dirge.

For a nation like this, which was born in the agony and travail of a righteous revolution, and baptized in its infancy with patriot blood, all the great spirits of the noble and the free standing up as its sponsors, and through every stage of its advancement making appeal to God's protection—for such a nation to-day to prostrate itself in the dust is most appropriate and becoming. To your knees! O nation of God's right hand! Let penitence moan bitterly at the family altar, and organs through aisle and under arch tremble with the wailing. Let rivers weep to the sea, and clouds weep to the hills, and all over the land be mourning! mourning!

The prophecy made in the text relative to Syria, is, to a limited extent, descriptive of the chastisements under which we are suffering. For our transgressions, God hath stretched out his hand against the North. And while in this discourse I preach about the *sins of the North,* do not think that it is because I wish, through any short-sighted policy, to forbear expressing my unutterable hatred for American slavery, one of the worst abominations that were ever exhumed from the pit. This is a sin, for which the South must repent. We did not come here to confess the iniquities of others. God helping me, I will try, in very plain words, to set forth some of the transgressions on account of which God hath stretched forth his hand against the North; then, to consider the manner in which we have been humiliated; and, lastly, the way out of our calamities.

I arraign *covetousness* as one of the consuming sins of the land.

God is the friend of hundred-handed, thousand-wheeled enterprise. Brooks tumbling from mountain-ledge were meant for mill-wheels, as much as horse's mouth for bit, or ox's neck for yoke. Every ray of light, and every drop of dew, and every crystal of snow, is wealth from God put in our lap! But all this is no excuse for a spirit of avarice. What multitudes of men rushing over all moral restraints, with hell-devouring greed grasping for more! What influential business establishments, with Fraud's grip on every yard of cloth and every box of spicery! What massive residences, without one honest brick from foundation to observatory! What dashing equipages, with the widow's portion in the horse's tinkling head-gear, and the orphan's bread stuffed into the crimson upholstery!

I arraign *Drunkenness* as one of the crimes of the land. 480,000 drunkards staggering, hooting, yelling, blaspheming. It hath chosen the fattest lambs for its sacrifice. What garlands of victory this bloated, carbuncled hand of Drunkenness hath snatched from the brow of the scholar and orator! What lights of large-hearted generosity it has put out! Does it not jingle the burglar's keys? Does it not whet the assassin's knife? Does it not cock the highwayman's pistol? Does it not wave the incendiary's torch? Into your nostrils, comes up daily in this city the stench of thousands of unlicensed, contemptible, sneaking, villainous, filthy, nauseating, disgusting, infamous, loathsome Irish, Dutch, American lager-beer rum-holes.

I arraign *Political Corruption:*

What millions of money have gone to make votes for corporations and railroad companies! Our Albany and Harrisburg capitals have been only the primary departments where men were schooled for the more stupendous swindling of the National Congress. Even since the judgments of God have descended, the thing goes on. What "Indian Trust" frauds, and steamer "Catiline" outrages! What swindling in army rations, swindling in knapsacks, swindling in blankets, swindling in muskets, swindling in everything, till scoundrelism and rascality are triumphant.

I arraign *irreligion* and *forgetfulness* of God.

O, let me come back, though in coming we must tread on the sharp swords of battle, and must leap the grave of a nation's slain. Then, before we have gone another furlong on this troubled sea, we will behold the Son of God walking the waters, and at His Divine command the old ship will right herself, and the storm fall dead.

God has humiliated us by the scoff of other nations. How many hard thrusts from the "mother country"—from *England,* the sympathizer of other days, her courts doing homage to our diplomatists, her parliaments praising our prosperity? *England!* the home of Shakspeare, and Cowper, and Rogers, and Tennyson. England! the despiser of insurrection in India, and the terror of despotisms. England! of the Christian Queen, and the philanthropic endeavor, flooding the earth with Bibles, and sending her missionaries all through the kingdoms of darkness. What forgetfulness, of the glorious sentiments of Burke and Pitt! What open-hands for Confederate loans! What deaf ears to the vessels of war coming together under the thousand hammers of her ship-yards, and destined for Southern ports! What hot denunciations in Parliament of "bubble-bursting republics!" What banquets for the representatives of insurrection—toasts drank, and speeches made, and cries of "Hear! hear!" in the excited galleries!

The preacher went on to say that we had been humiliated also by the bereavements consequent upon the slaughter of the battle-fields.

Repentance was the only way out of our calamities. What a solemn scene! A nation at prayer. To add another thrill to the solemnity of the day, we hear the shriek of hundreds of drowning passengers as the steamer "Anglo Saxon" comes crashing into the coast of Newfoundland, many of our American citizens crushed amid the breaking decks, and clinging to the fore-rigging, and plunging down where the sea keeps her awful sepulchre; and, in view of all these disasters, the cry that goes up to God to-day for help is loud, long, bitter, and tremendous.

My prayer is the prayer of the dying Sumner, over whose fresh grave the nation mourns: "God save my country, the United States of America!"

LUTHERAN.

SERMON BY REV. E. W. HUTTER, AT THE NEW-STREET LUTHERAN CHURCH.

In the New-street Lutheran Church, besides the large congregation, a number of strangers were assembled. The pastor, Rev. E. W. Hutter, delivered an instructive and interesting discourse. He announced as his theme *"The Time of Mourning,"* and chose for his text the words of Christ contained in Matthew, ix, 15:

"Can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the Bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them—and then shall they fast."

The preacher commenced by saying that it was no difficult matter to connect the text with the occasion. The disciples of John the Baptist, joined by the Pharisees, and doubtless at their instigation, found fault with our Lord that *his* disciples did not *fast* as frequently as they. Our Lord's answer is characterized by profoundest wisdom. Without condemning the complainants for *their* fasting, he yet vindicates the conduct of his disciples, and selects an argument from the common usage of joyful festivities at weddings. He compares his disciples to the children of the bridechamber, who have the bridegroom with them, and mourning and fasting was not seasonable to them in *their* circumstances. Soon, however, their condition would be altered. Referring to his own crucifixion and ascension, they would be led to weeping and fasting by the force of the deep afflictions and persecutions that should follow. The truth here inculcated is the same asserted by Solomon in Ecclesiastes, that to every thing and purpose under heaven there is *a season,* and accords also with that other kindred declaration of Christ, that "sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Even religious observances should not take place *out of* season. "God has made all things beautiful *in their season.*"

Fasting was represented as an ancient usage. It was coeval with the days of Moses and Joshua. To prove its Divine origin, a number of Scriptural authorities were quoted, especially the case of the Ninevites, under the preaching of Jonas. Christ never instituted any particular fast, nor enjoined it, as a standing sacrament upon the Church, but the text furnished proof that He deemed it proper and expedient, especially in seasons of deep public or private affliction. The duty, too, was inculcated in the Sermon on the Mount, and enforced by His own personal example. The practice has this particular benefit, that it chastens the passions, provokes attention to sacred things, by laying a salutary arrest on the exhilarating flow of business and pleasure, and obtrudes solemnity of thought upon those whose hearts are only susceptible to such impressions from outward and sensible influences.

Mr. Hutter next said, that he responded most heartily to the Executive recommendation of a public fast, because it recognized our dependence on Him, without the power and ministration of whose unseen and universal providence man nor angel could lift a thread or a pinion. This was a great lesson, for a nation to learn, and none more difficult, the apostacy having so benumbed our sensibilities, darkened our perceptions, and filled us with the poison of pride. We fancied ourselves gods, living, and moving, and having our being in ourselves, and not in another. Whereas, we were dependent on God for every breath we drew, and for every pulsation of our arteries, and were habitually enriched by His smile, and languished under His rebuke. He responded, furthermore, with cheerfulness, to the Executive call, for the additional reason, that at this fearful juncture of our nation's history, more than at any other, confessions, and prayers, and amendatory resolves, and physical and spiritual mortifications, were called for. God's disciplining hand is upon us, and from His awful judgment throne he was speeding the bronzed arrows of an incensed Omnipotence. The bridegroom, he said, had been taken away, and we call in vain for his return. The speaker held, that when the mind is left without any solid centre, on which to settle, when "the timid shriek and the brave stand still," he that had no appreciation of his perils, and despised the chastening of the Lord, was a moral *monster,* either more or less than a man.

What greatly aggravates our calamities, he said, is the fact that they are *self-procured.* If the nation dies, it will die the awful death of a *suicide.* We cannot, if we would, dissociate our national troubles from our national sins.

Mr. Hutter next inculcated, in forcible and glowing language, the cherishing of true views of duty, as well as of enlightened and comprehensive conceptions of the principles of Providence. He would not desecrate such a day as this, nor degrade the place he was occupying, to profane, irreverent, and irrelevant uses. God forbid! He had ever sought to realize that the pulpit was not the place to discuss partisan disputes, nor to seek the gratification of selfish and personal ends. No! It was the place to bring into contact with the spirits of men God's love, God's condescension, God's mercy, God's ineffably glorious and sublime salvation, through the blood shed on Calvary. It was the place to bring men into the warm sunshine of the covenant, who are yet within the precincts of the curse, and shivering under the clammy coldness of the second death.

Governments, he said, come not by chance, nor fortune, nor from private ambition, but are "ordained of God," as a blessing to the world. Unless absolutely and insupportably oppressive, and manifestly contrary to the righteousness of the Supreme Monarch of the skies, the greatest sin men could commit on earth, was to attempt their forcible overthrow. That our's was of this character, not even the blinded fanatics in arms against it, would have the hardihood to declare, for, had they not, ever since its establishment, enjoyed almost a monopoly of its emoluments and honors? By the firing on Fort Sumpter, a gigantic mischief had been inaugurated, even the *ruin of the realm*—the untying the bond of our nationality! Horrible iniquity, to be punished by the Great Judge! *Who* but the Prince of Darkness could have instigated to so foul a deed? And from that deed of violence had proceeded all this carnival of blood, and all this accumulation of disgrace and sorrow, and humiliation. What an incendiary—what a burglar—what an assassin—had not this secession desperado become!

In no spirit of Phariseeism did the speaker thank God that of the monstrous crime of seeking by force of arms, the disruption of our Government, and the Republic's overthrow, we of the North are innocent. We had much to answer for at the bar of God, we all knew, but to such diabolism, thank heaven, we had not lent ourselves! For those who have, and yet do, sackcloth is a garment far too fine, and ashes a sprinkling much too pleasant. Let others do as they might, as for himself, said Mr. H., in closing, his conscience would dart sharper pangs into his soul than any lash of scorpions could inflict, could he ever cease to invoke the Divine blessing on our nation's brave defenders, that the rebellion might be crushed, and its authors and abettors discomfitted and punished. Since the day when wicked Cain imbrued his hands in the blood of righteous Abel no such foul atrocity had been witnessed on this earth. Theft, arson, assassination, and the like, we all knew, were heinous offences; but the lowest sink and puddle of them all bore no comparison to this crusade of shame and blood, inaugurated by unprincipled demagogues at the South. This, he said, was a crime against God, against country, against countrymen and countrywomen, against kinsfolk, lover, friend, and acquaintance, and against all men universally. Even the ordinary marriage tie could only be dissolved under the gravest solemnities, and as a dernier resort. Much more could the solemn nuptial tie that bound in one common bond of fraternal love these associated States be only dissolved of *direst necessity* under the tie of conscience, binding all parties to the retributive justice of Heaven. So regarding the facts, clear to his mind as if written with a pencil of light on the arched sky, the speaker would never cease to anathematize the rebellion as a most horrible iniquity, nor to invoke in behalf of our land the speedy and sure interposition of the Jehovah-God! Then, when the bridegroom should return to the children of the bridechamber, our mourning would be turned into joy, and our fast into a feast, which time might God speed!

At the close of the sermon, the congregation sang the national ode, *"My country, 'tis of thee,"* &c.

INDEPENDENT.

SERMON BY REV. WILLIAM MORRIS, AT THE ASSEMBLY BUILDING.

A sermon, having for its theme The Scriptural Idea of a National Fast, was delivered by Dr. Wm. Morris at the Assembly Building, yesterday morning, at 11 o'clock. The discourse was one of remarkable point and compass, evincing unity of design, but including an instructive variety of particulars, and the principles which they involve.

The preacher introduced his subject by observing that, in order to a distinctive and just apprehension of the proposed theme—in its origin, nature, and intent—the *spiritual* relations of the children of God to their Heavenly Father, their divine Saviour, and the Holy Spirit the Comforter, must be mentally held apart from the natural and political relations of men and of nations towards God, as God; the Creator and Possessor of the heavens and the earth, the Preserver of men, the Provider and Giver of every natural good, and the Sovereign Ruler over all the nations upon earth.

Dr. Morris sketched the origin of nationalities; and remarked that men are social beings by creation and constitution, as ordained of God; but that men became gregarious as a consequence of the entrance and prevalence of sin. The existence of political communities or nations he ascribed to the existence of sin upon earth. Men associated and combined to repel lawless invasion, and predatory strife, and for the purposes of ambition and power. And he reminded his audience that all national histories without exception, are the histories of diversified sin—no flattering mirror for a national review, but appropriate to the subject and the day.

In progressing toward the Scriptural Idea of a National Fast, the preacher presented an epitome of national duties thus: It was the bounden duty of all nations, in their national capacity, to glorify God and to be thankful. Out of this epitome several particulars were evolved: That it is the duty of all nations to glorify God by confessing, in deed and in truth, that He is God—the almighty and wise and benevolent Creator, Upholder, and Possessor of all things; the merciful Preserver of men, the munificent Giver of all natural and national good, and the sovereign and supreme Ruler over all the earth—the "King of Nations;" and that, from all nations, in their national capacity, the humble and gladsome confession of gratitude and praise ought to ascend continually, in acknowledgment of the truth that the earth is full of the goodness of God, whose tender mercies are over all His works.

This summary of national duties was followed by a brief review of national sins, and, these were shown to be all comprehended in an invasion and assumption of the rights and prerogatives of God. The particulars indicated were these:

An assumed right to the earth, which "is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and an asserted right of territory, independent of the sovereign disposal of God, who has divided to the nations their inheritance, and … has determined the bounds of their habitations; an assumed right to the genial powers and influences of Nature, to the varied productions of the earth, and to national resources of wealth, and greatness, and … power; an assumption of the right of sovereignty on earth, and a national aversion to the truth that the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will; and that none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? An enmity to the truth that God is God; an abuse and waste of the bountiful provisions of God, in the way of pride, luxury, debauchery, and drunkenness, and by the monopoly of God's bounties in the way of covetous speculation, the subversion of justice and judgment, in both the enactment and administration of the laws, by reason of bribery and corruption; commercial imposition, overreaching and systematic fraud; oppression of the weak, the defenceless, and the abased.

This catalogue of national sins was amplified to some extent; but it was evident that the preacher aimed at informing the understanding and conscience of his audience, rather than at exciting, by declamatory application and censure.

Having enlarged upon the fact that national sin was the avowed occasion of a national fast, the preacher proceeded to show the Scriptural idea of a national fast. He said it was the practical confession of national guiltiness before God, and that the just desert of such guiltiness was national ruin and destruction. For a national fast, proclaimed by authority and really observed, is a total abstinence from labor and food, both of which were necessary to the continuance of individual and national life; and to abstain from both, in the way of humiliation before God, was, therefore, to confess that the nation deserved to be paralyzed and to perish. This included a contrite confession of national sins, an honest turning away from national iniquities, and an earnest appeal to the mercy of God, for deliverance from deserved and impending doom. The fast proclaimed at Nineveh, consequent on the denunciation uttered by Jonah, was quoted, as presenting the true idea of a national fast (Jonah, 3: 5—10). And the fast of *Yom Kippor,* or day of atonement appointed by God, to be observed by the nation of Israel, was also cited and explained. The Israelites were to abstain entirely from work; and they were to afflict their souls; that is, by abstaining entirely from food. The afflicting of the soul ordained of God was physical, and not metaphysical; and the physical affliction was not appointed for its own sake, but as a significant mode of confessing that national iniquities deserve and may be justly visited with national ruin and death. The preacher held that the Most High did not take pleasure in the attempt of people to make themselves morose and miserable; but He did regard (as in the case of the Ninevites) an honest and practical confession of national desert.

The description of a literal and honest fast was followed, by that of a lying and hypocritical fast, in which the passage in Isaiah 58: 1-11, was quoted. Dr. Morris remarked that this passage presented one of the finest specimens of sarcasm in all the Scriptures. With keen and bitter irony Jehovah there credited the nation with all the superiority in moral and religious virtuousness and devoutness which, in their boastful self-confidence and self-righteousness, they claimed to themselves, and which had culminated in a national fast. Then, said the preacher, God unmasked the hypocrisy and manifold iniquities practised and persisted in, under cover of an extremely religious pretence, quoting from the chapter named, "Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labors. Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. Is it such a fast that I have chosen?" The metaphorical significance of a true national fast was shown (by means of the succeeding verses) to be an abstinence from national iniquities and an observance of the dictates of humanity, justice, and truth.

In conclusion, Dr. Morris showed the Scriptural idea of *Christian fasting* in contrast with a public *national fast.* The fasting of Christians, as taught by the Lord Jesus, it was said, could not be imposed by ecclesiastical authority, but must be both spontaneous and private—known only to God; and the occasion of such fasting was an excess of physical energy, obstructing the proper activities of spiritual life, and communion with God. The object of Christian fasting was, therefore, to abate the antagonistic force of "the flesh," that the Christian may steadily "walk in the spirit" and in the light of the approving countenance of God. His illustrations at the close, showing the folly of those who are physically feeble abstaining from food at the peril of their health, were humorous and convincing, and elicited a general smile among the audience.

SERMON BY REV. JOHN CHAMBERS.

A large congregation assembled at the church of the Rev. John Chambers, on Broad street near Chestnut, yesterday morning, to assist in the solemnization of the fast day. The reverend gentleman read a number of extracts from Zachariah 12:9; Amos, 8th chapter, Jeremiah 4:26, and Isaiah 58.3, showing what the scriptures say concerning the observance of fasts, and the necessity of humiliation and prayer. Alluding to the beautiful and touching proclamation of our chief magistrate, he said the great object of fasting was to humiliate the people, and to implore the forgiveness of Almighty God. We must not criminate, nor recriminate, but in His name pour oil of love over the troubled waters, that all men may come together, and after this war is over, sit under one vine, and one fig-tree.

The speaker made his particular text an extract from Proverbs:

"But sin is a reproach to any people."

The burden of his discourse had reference to the sins of the nation. This fast, he said, will bring men's minds to an appreciation of their own wickedness, of their need of pardon, and of the necessity of asking God for it. No nation on earth, no nation that ever lived, has ever seen more affliction than ours. Why are we arrayed in hostility against one another? Why are we, men of the same blood, of the same family, of the same country, fighting face to face, and feeling for each others' hearts? Sin only has done it; sin only could do it. It was his duty as a minister of the Prince of Peace to call upon all to confess their sins, and endeavor to propitiate the favor of Almighty God. We do not hate sin unless we hate it with a fixed purpose. We must do better. We must demean ourselves before God with so much truth and courage that He will come down from His high place and hush the ocean of trouble. As it is, we can only say to Him, in the words of the Prodigal Son: "Father, we have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight we are no longer worthy."

The reverend gentleman then proceeded to a theological discussion of sin—its nature, its relations to the people, and how it affects our country in the present troubles. According to St. Paul, sin is the transgression of the law. It is utterly impossible to sin unless there is law. He defined the various laws and the transgressions which invade them. In the beginning there was liberty. God placed man in the beautiful garden of Eden, and said to him, "All the earth is thine but this one tree; touch it not." That was a law. In breaking that law, death and sorrow came into the world. Law was inaugurated in Paradise. In invading it, we have made ourselves wretched and sinful creatures. Cholera, pestilence, famine, and war, are all the results of sin, and sin only. We see it in our own nation—in our political and social systems. We who make our own regulations and our own laws, have no excuse for violating the laws of the land. And yet we see it done every day; and it is this state of affairs that has caused the war, which we are now repenting in bitterness and blood. If we obey God from our hearts, we may be sure we shall obey the laws of the country. If we do not obey God, we cannot obey our constitutional rulers. The man who will not submit to the Supreme authority, will not submit to the subordinate authority. We can only expect justice and happiness, when we obey both God and man. Why are we now cursed with affliction? Because of our sins. Their name is legion. They are seen everywhere. In our political and social relations we see corruption and contouness, and injustice; sons cheating fathers, and fathers cheating sons. We see in our reports of Congressional and Legislative committees, statesmanship dripping with corruption; and through these public committees we find the bold villany of men in high places, setting aside dignity and honor. Men disregard the Sabbath; advantages are taken unduly; justice is overlooked. We are frightened at the condition of society; men are bought in legislative halls, and whoever has the most money will control the actions of the people's representatives. Men here remember when no man would have dared to bribe. Now it is the business of those who govern. We must reform ourselves—not the sins of Pennsylvania, or Georgia, or Massachusetts, or South Carolina, but the sins of the nation. Hereafter we must be pure and holy men, and all will be well.

Seventy or eighty years ago our country was happy, prosperous and wonderful. Everything that man could wish seemed to be showered upon us, and we seemed to progress beyond the hope or comprehension of our most sanguine citizens. Now we are in misery, and it is because we have forgotten God. Our nation has waxed fat and kicked. And after sin came war. We see now to what a condition we are introduced. The noise of battle fills the air; the cries of the wounded and dying oppress the earth; and into this sea of death we seem to be driving, without hope or succor. Men meet in battle array, anxious for each other's blood—meeting like frowning wolves. Every heart desires to escape from this condition, for the instinct of every heart is towards love and peace. If we would return to our former condition we must seek and obtain God's forgiveness. Then we shall return to the obligations we owe to the Constitution, we shall live in peace and harmony, we shall be a free nation, with the Bible standing erect in the world. To attain this we must change our course. We must avoid wrath, evil speaking, sedition. The speaker alluded to Israel, and made a comparison with the United States. He believed that no nation had ever been blessed with such blessings; no nation had ever dashed the cup so recklessly from its lips. Sin had thus maddened us, and taken away all sentiments of love, respect, and reverence. If we had obeyed laws, met our obligations, and remained true to one another—if we had insisted upon public virtue in high places, and allowed no infringements upon our rights, we might have been spared all our present calamities. For all our misfortunes we are responsible, because we are identified with all the duties and responsibilities of citizenship. He had known professors of religion to own stock in Sabbath-breaking railroad companies. He saw around him drunkenness, vice, false dealing. These are the causes of the war. He must give up all, and then look for forgiveness. He was for the whole country—for a re-established Union. He loved it. There was no excuse for our crime and sin. We had many educational advantages, but we were corrupt. He was startled the other day, while riding to a funeral with a dearly-beloved brother—one of the most pure-minded and honorable business men in the city—by being told that notwithstanding the most extraordinary care, goods were almost daily stolen from his store. What is to become of the country, when a dealer cannot put goods on his counter to sell, without having them stolen? The Gospel would prevent us from stealing; the Gospel is our hope and salvation. He urged upon his hearers the duty of repentance. The whole land is in a condition of wretchedness. We want deliverance; we are tired of the war; we do not wish to see our garments rolled in blood. If we look at the Cross; if we fix our eyes upon the Son of God, he will come to our assistance and give us safety. He will do what is just for this nation. Let us go home and examine ourselves. Let us repent, drive iniquity from our hearts, and live fixed in our determination to live up to the laws, in letter and spirit, cling to the Bible, love mercy, and walk with God.

THE COLORED CHURCHES.

It was expected, though not officially announced, that sermons appropriate to the occasion would be delivered in the churches dedicated by colored people to Divine worship. Our reporter paid a visit to a number of them, during the morning, and ascertained that there was no general arrangement made for the delivery of addresses. Some of the buildings were closed; others were open for prayer meetings. These, so far as our observations extended, were pretty well attended, and conducted in a solemn and impressive manner, indicating dignity and culture in the principles of Christianity. There were no crowds standing about the fronts of these churches, as is generally the case on Sabbath days. Persons might pass and repass at any time, and not be attracted even by the sound of a single voice within the walls, so solemnly were the proceedings conducted. It was, indeed, a day of fasting among the religious colored people of Philadelphia.

GENERAL CEREMONIES.

Yesterday was very generally celebrated by the religious denominations. The churches of all were thrown open. The Roman Catholic churches were filled with worshippers from an early to a late hour. At morning, noon, and night, faithful congregations were presenting their petitions, or listening to the words of exhortation as they fell from the lips of their pastors. The services generally were of a quiet character. The fact of the occasion being one of humiliation gave the exercises a prayerful and solemn aspect. This peculiarity also marked the celebrations in the Jewish Synagogues. These were largely attended. The addresses made were of an eloquent and patriotic nature, and the congregations, including all classes, embraced some of the most intelligent and Union-loving members of the community. It is unnecessary to add that the exercises in these, as well as in all other places, were unusually absorbing, and the religious feeling evinced was as deep as it was wide. Prayer meetings, private and public, were held all over the city, and a glance at the advertisement columns was sufficient to prove the prevailing sentiment of the hour.

STREET SCENES AND INCIDENTS

are generally plenty on fast days as well as holidays. But there was a dearth of them yesterday. No excitement offered a contrast to the general quiet. The thunder-storm which occurred in the afternoon is noticeable as being the first of the season, and produced some small excitement along the roads. It doubtless made matters look very bright in the country, but very dull in the city. The transactions of the night offered some contrast to the solemnities of the day. All the places of public entertainment were open. At the Chestnut-street Theatre Miss Bateman repeated "Leah" for the sixteenth time. Miss Thompson, at the Walnut, and Mrs. Bowers, at the Arch, appeared respectively in "Little Barefoot" and "Woman." At the Musical Fund Mr. Gottschalk gave the last concert of the season. The Swiss Bell Ringers, at Concert Hall, held forth as usual. Such entertainments give a tinge of festivity to the close of the day. In all the relations of life which were yesterday exhibited, a spirit of quiet joy and geniality was indicated, and it was this which enhanced the value of hours so particularly profitable and pleasant.

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THE DAY IN NEW YORK CITY.

ITS OBSERVANCE IN BROOKLYN.

SERMON OF REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

[Specially Reported for The Press.]

New York city, notwithstanding the well-known indifference of its cosmopolitan and mixed population to matters pertaining to prayer and religious humiliation, was not far behind our own city in the general religious observance of the day. All the public offices, in compliance with the special request of Mayor Opdyke, were closed, and many private establishments suspended business. The newspaper offices, in many instances, honored the occasion by transacting business with closed doors, and evening editions gave a respite to lightning presses. The city churches were well attended, and the sermons in all were characterized by purely Christian and eminently patriotic sentiments. Brooklyn, the acknowledged "City of Churches," presented quite a holiday aspect, and the firmest advocate of a solemn fast-day observance could not have been more satisfied of that city's attachment to religion, Christianity, and patriotism.

As naturally to be expected, Plymouth Church was invested with more than ordinary interest, as the large attendance amply testified. The soul-stirring eloquence of the distinguished pastor—Rev. Henry Ward Beecher—at all times a guarantee that the auditor will be delighted and instructed, but particularly so on an occasion in itself an inspiration to eloquence, added to the belief that this would be his last opportunity to bid his charge farewell prior to his departure for Europe, conspired to fill the church as it has seldom been before. The pews, aisles, and galleries, long before the commencement of the exercises were crowded with an audience at once intelligent and appreciative.

At 11 o'clock, Mr. Beecher ascended the pulpit, and, after the usual preliminary exercises, delivered the sermon of the day.

SERMON OF REV. HENRY WARD BEECHER.

The text was taken from the 62d chapter Isaiah, 10th verse:

"Prepare ye the way of the people, cast up the highway, gather out the stones, lift up a standard for the people."

The prophet Isaiah, penetrating far beyond our capabilities, throws out intimations, or makes predictions of the conditions of the people, and the nationalities of the earth, that are far beyond our comprehension and our faith—intimations which it seems strange to hear—a voice declaring, as part of the Divine sovereignty, the great Christian truth of democracy. In those days, when jealous sovereigns reigned everywhere, then when nobles leagued together to oppress the poor and unfortunate, then when the great man, and the rich man of the earth, counted themselves precious in the sight of God, according to the weight of their treasure—to hear a voice, at that early period, ascending up, "prepare ye the way of the people," not of governments, not of orders, not of monarchies, but of the people, "cast up the highway," we are amazed and confounded. A new road was to be cut out for the people to walk in, and the stones were to be gathered out, that the people should not stumble from ignorance or weakness. Lift a standard for the people! Brave old prophet! Grand utterance! How long that seed lay buried before its coming up! Blessed are we that we live in this day to see some fruit of the harvest of that seed.

This is a nation of the people—a free and intelligent, common people, peculiar in characteristics, and marked in development. There have been eminent examples of governments of all classes. We have had nobles and superior orders in every form, and whatever good was inherent in those forms of government has been found out. We have had also priestly governments, and we know how little of that instinct in them is worthy of being incorporated into any other intended to serve the people. Under all skies, with and without commerce, among warlike or peaceful people, among civilized and in savage nations, we have had these various governments tried in various ways, until there is no longer anything to be learned or discovered from them. There have also been attempts at founding free governments. There were elements of democracy in the Jewish Government; but all the attempts of antiquity to form free governments were not sufficient to demonstrate either the true nature or the excellence of a free government. They were all based more upon the liberty of the State than the elevation of its citizens. The liberty of the ancient Republics was the liberty of the *community*—a very different thing from the liberty of the *individuals* of the community. They took hold of the wrong end. There was lacking those fundamental ideas of intelligence, without which there can be nothing like regulated freedom. Those instruments of government by means of which the affairs of State could be administered, the laws maintained, and the rights of