

# PRAYER FOR RULERS:

OR

## Duty of Christian Patriots,

A Discourse,

PREACHED IN THE MADISON SQUARE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW  
YORK, ON THE DAY OF THE NATIONAL FAST, JAN. 4, 1861.

By REV. WILLIAM ADAMS, D.D.



NEW YORK:

RUDD & CARLETON, 130 GRAND STREET.

BROOKS BUILDING, COR. OF BROADWAY.

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THE

## DUTY OF CHRISTIAN PATRIOTS.

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"I exhort, therefore, that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; for Kings and for all that are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."—1 TIM. ii. 1, 2.

APPROPRIATENESS is the first law of discourse. My theme, on this occasion, has been chosen for me by the circumstances which have called us together. The President of the United States, and the Chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth, have recommended that this day be observed as one of humiliation, fasting, and prayer, in view of the present distracted and perilous condition of the country. Such a recommendation from such a source cannot be disregarded by the Christian ministry.

For one, I confess to a feeling of humiliation already. Less than two months ago I returned from a visit to foreign countries on the other side

of the sea. Travelling under despotic governments, where the Press is stifled, and speech is guarded, and your personal movements subject to espionage, I had prided myself much on the privileges of an American citizen; and as our noble ship entered the bay of New York, on one of the brightest days of our golden Autumn, it was with a swelling heart and a suffused eye that I exclaimed, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel"—believing that the sun that day did not shine upon a people having more of real prosperity and happiness and peace than our own. Less than forty days ago we had our annual festival of Thanksgiving, to consider the bounties of Providence towards us as a nation, when I endeavored to guide your thoughts into the channels of gratitude. To-day we are summoned to the altars of religion to humble ourselves, to fast and pray, in view of public calamities. A reversal so sudden, so entire, so unnecessary, so gratuitous, so unreasonable, as we should say, brought upon us by no descent of fire or pestilence from heaven—by no invasion of a foreign foe—but altogether engendered within our own borders—is itself enough to afflict and mortify us. Humiliated we are

before the world, by anything which touches the honor or integrity of our nationality, or implies the weakness of our much-boasted form of government.

We are assembled also to pray in behalf of our country. But to pray intelligently we should comprehend the import of our prayers. There is need, therefore, of instruction concerning the proper objects of prayer. To give that instruction in the spirit of Christian patriotism is the duty we have undertaken, in coincidence with the appointment of this day. On the Christian Sabbath we occupy ourselves chiefly and directly with those topics which concern man in his higher and spiritual relations. Not that these are without their influence upon man as a citizen of this present world, for our belief is that the indirect effect of Christianity on human society has more potency than all the direct efforts of mere human politics; that liberty and law, and restraint, and Governments, and civilization—all these and more are included in and spring from the central doctrines of the Gospel. For this very reason, and for others which are infinitely higher and greater, the pertinency of our Sabbath instructions is directly with the spiritual and eternal relations of man, from that point

of perspective which constitutes the peculiar characteristic of the Christian ministry. There are other topics concerning which every minister of religion, in common with his fellow-citizens, has his personal opinions. His own self-respect would be wounded if he were not able, in the proper place and in the proper manner, to hold his own independent judgment on all these subordinate subjects. It does not follow from this that he should make use of his official position on the day which Christ has hallowed for a specific purpose, to enforce his private interpretations of irrelevant matters. I hold to the right and duty of preaching politics—as that expression is properly defined—meaning not the squabbles of party, but the application of Christian truth to every relation and duty of life, just as the duty and the relation are presented in the New Testament. But this should be done with appropriateness, with sound judgment, and with proper regard to relevancy and edification, and the due proportion of faith. I have never felt, for example, that it was wisdom or duty for me to discourse, directly and frequently, on the subject of American Slavery—not that I ever so much as imagined there was any disposition on the part

of the pews to restrict the liberty of the pulpit—not that I have not my own opinions on the subject, as a citizen—nay more, my own opinions as a student of Providence and the Bible—but because I have never judged that it was for edification to insist upon this subject before those who constitute this pastoral charge. Had it been my lot in life, as a Christian minister, to preach to those who were personally related to Slavery, I should have endeavored, to the best of my ability, to instruct them on the subject, as every other, with pertinence and directness. There is no preaching which is so easy, measured by the time and intellectual effort of preparation, as controversial preaching in regard to matters on which the public mind is already inflamed; and one's manliness and Christian wisdom are often more demonstrated by holding himself in restraint concerning many political topics, rather than falling in with prevalent opinion, and riding along on the wave of popular excitement. While, therefore, pertinency and appropriateness require us, on the Sabbath day, to hold our minds in contact with our own bosom sins, and our personal relations to Christ and eternity, the same law of appropriateness makes it necessary for

me, on this occasion, to speak with direct reference to the circumstances which have led to our convocation.

We are invited by magistrates to pray for our country; to pray for our rulers; and the text before us enjoins it upon us, for a reason annexed, to do the same thing. Perhaps some may think that it would be wiser to do nothing but pray. I am myself reminded of what was once said by the pious and discreet FENELON, in a time of great trouble and turbulence: "*Parlez à Dieu pour la paix de l'Eglise et ne parlez point aux hommes*"—"Speak to God for the peace of the Church, and speak not to men." But we are safe always when we speak in accordance with the letter and spirit of the Scriptures. "Our text is, "*Pray for Kings and for all those in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.*" The emphasis given to this matter shows that there were special reasons which led the Apostle to give it the prominent place which it holds in this epistle. Any one informed as to the state of the Christian mind at the time this epistle was written, in regard to the heathen magistracy, under which Christianity was born and developed, and especially the deluded expectations of

the Judaist mind in reference to what was about to ensue, can understand how pertinent this counsel was. Then there is a design in the accumulation of expressions—supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks. All the synonyms of the language in reference to the subject are employed, inculcating prayer in all its forms, looking to the supply of what is needed, the averting of what is evil, and the obtaining of what is good. Not only have we this emphatic form of expression in reference to prayer for the civil magistracy, but the reason is appended why we should thus pray. Not for what will inure to the benefit of the magistrates themselves—not merely for the conversion of the men thus described ; but this is the end, the object of our prayer in behalf of the civil power : That we may lead a quiet, peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty. This latter expression, “*in all godliness and propriety of conduct,*” denoting the ultimate end, of which a quiet, peaceable life is the condition. We have outlived the old error which was installed in ancient treatises on government, that, because the Holy Scripture refers to *Kings*, requiring men to pray for Kings, and to honor the King, therefore monarchy was

the only form of magistracy which had the Divine sanction, for the scriptural injunction making reference to the form of government which then and there existed is not even thus restricted, but includes all forms of authority and magistracy. Such a form of government as our own was not in existence when Holy Scripture was written, but never was there one under which prayer had such scope and pertinency, for the very reason that those who pray are the source of all power and sovereignty.

To give some order to our thoughts, let me say, in the first place, as explanatory of all the emphasis given to this subject, that the reason here assigned why we should pray for such as are in authority lays bare at once the whole design and office of civil government: "*That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life.*" We present this as the very best definition that can be given of the province and end of the civil power. Writers on political economy have fallen upon manifold mistakes by assigning to the ruling authority prerogatives which do not belong to it at all. A most notable instance of the kind comes to mind in the very clever book written by Mr. GLADSTONE, then a member of the British Parliament, some twenty years ago, entitled, *The*

*State in its Relations with the Church.* The object at which he aims is, to prove that one of the principal ends of civil government, as such, is to propagate religious truth; and that, as a means to this, it is obligatory on every Government to profess and support a religion. Once allow the premises from which he starts, in his logic, and you cannot escape his conclusion. The error lies in the very foundation of his argument. He assumes a major premise which is too large, and includes too much. He begins with affirming that it is the province of government to attend to all which is vital to human interests. This would seem to be very plausible and very good. But it contains the mischief of a tremendous sophistry. We join issue at the very beginning, and deny that such is the province of civil government. Ten thousand things vital to the happiness of individuals and families there are which do not pertain to the civil magistracy at all. The province of Government is not universal, but limited and restricted. We should say that this was the design of government, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, or, to expand the definition somewhat—government is to protect our lives, our persons and property, as inhabitants of this present world. It is

to help men to settle their difficulties, not by individual force, but by processes of law and justice; to protect from violence and invasion—in short, to furnish a substratum on which the social system may stand and develop itself. This is not to affirm, as some good people have feared, that the temporal interests of man are of greater consequence than his spiritual. Far from this. But it is the province of government to care for one, but not for the other. Men of all religions and of no religion have an equal interest in this, that life, and person, and rights be protected by the civil powers. Men holding opinions the most antagonistic that can be conceived on many subjects—Gentile and Jew, Papist and Protestant—all agree in this, that they need the protection of a good government. Whether they have any faith in a future world or not—whether they can harmonize on this or that theory of morals or not—here is something which is admitted by all, there must be a ruling power in this world, or we could not live at all. The right conception of the province of government is very important, since it has always been true that men are in danger of extending the civil power over and beyond its just limits. We are jealous of such

encroachments. We are unwilling that affairs should be thrust into the province of government which do not belong to it. This definition of government, its use and object, has another advantage. It meets the scruples of such as have conscientious objections to being associated in the same government with those whose opinions and practices, on many subjects, they disapprove and detest. The Apostle instructs us on this very point: "I wrote unto you," says he, "in an epistle, not to company with fornicators; yet not altogether with the fornicators *of this world*, for then must ye needs go out of the world. But if any man that is called a *brother* be a fornicator or an idolater," then withdraw from him. Within your own communion of the church you may have laws of fellowship which you cannot apply to the social organization at large. Idolaters and Christians, pure and impure, sober and drunken, whatever are men's notions or habits in reference to other matters, in this they have all a common interest and necessity, that they should be protected by the ruling power from rapine, and violence, and carnage. Starting, then, with this object and end of government full in our eye, *that we may lead a quiet and peaceable*

*life*, as the result for which we are to pray, let me remind you that this is an object of vast importance, of indispensable necessity. We have fallen upon the evil habit of speaking slightly of government. In the too common custom of abusing the men who administer government, many have come to think and speak disparagingly of government itself, as though we could do as well or better without it. Without it, not to speak of living quietly and peaceably, we could not live at all. Government is God's ordinance for human protection. The word does not define the form, the mode, in which the governing power shall be administered; but there is in the very nature of things a necessity for some government—the worst is better than none—and in this sense the powers that be are ordained of God. And by government we do not mean a fortuitous assemblage of forces, but an organized form, adequate for the purpose; not an accidental convenience, but a stable power on which society may repose and develop itself safely and happily, and the Church of God may build her nest and lay her young. Government, as an ordinance of God, is a *power*. Designed for this very end to keep impulses and passions under restraint, within

legal processes, it must have the means of protecting itself, and enforcing its own enactments. Without this it is a nullity—it is nothing. Therefore says the Scripture, the magistrate beareth the sword, and not in vain, a sword not made of a shingle, but the veritable symbol of a veritable power, able to accomplish the legitimate object for which government was instituted.

Surely here is something worth praying for. That government is the best in kind which, like the great forces of nature, works so smoothly and quietly that we take but little notice of its working. If ours has been, and is a government, which is adapted to secure for us a quiet, peaceable life, then it is a government which ought to be preserved; and for this end prayer should invoke Divine aid, and the hearts and hands of all patriots should be combined in one. Greatly mistaken shall I be, if the result of events now in progress in our country is not to diffuse wider than ever the conviction that government, organized government, is with us, a most benignant thing to be valued for time to come, as it has never been valued before. Men have been trifling, in both extremes, with most sacred interests, till we are in danger, at last, of being con-

sumed. Without a government, a power worthy of the name, able to protect us, where are we? What becomes of us and our children; if society is to become disintegrated, if theories are to be allowed which, carried out to their legitimate consequences in States, and counties, and cities, and families, would destroy the very idea of government, and leave us altogether at the mercy of passion, the power of mobs, and the turbulence of physical strength? The right of *revolution*—that word of hope and of terror—remains with every people, as the last resort of necessity; otherwise we should be forced to blush at the bend of illegitimacy and shame in our own coat armorial; but that right can be justified only after all legal methods of redress have been exhausted, and the power which resorts to it must first plead before the bar of reason and the judgment of the civilized world, that it has been compelled to this final and dread necessity in view of a greater good, which thereby, and thereby only, it is sure to accomplish. It is time for this subject to be taken out from the sway of passion into the domain of Christian reason. The time has come for all party and sectional lines to be effaced in the broad claims of patriotism. All subordinate

matters, prejudices and antipathies, must give way before this simple question, Whether we have, and are to have, a Government beneath which, as the ordained protection of God, we can lead honest, and quiet, and peaceful lives? When all irrelevant matters are brushed away, and that simple question is presented naked and alone in its own merits, the heart of this whole American people will be found to be true, and sound, and loyal. God grant that this question may be settled in his own wise and blessed way—by inclining the hearts of a praying people to consider candidly, seasonably, and wisely what is meant by his ordination of civil government as the means of securing for all quiet and honest lives.

With this reason which inspiration has assigned as the result and object of prayer, we come next, by a natural order, to consider why we should pray, in a special manner, in behalf of our rulers. Such an act of prayer, let me say, promises two results, and is to be justified by two reasons: 1st, The persuasive power of prayer in the way of securing for those in authority, as a gift from God, what is needful to the discharge of their duty; 2d, The reactive influence of prayer on the minds of those who offer it, as the best mode of adjust-

ing all perilous and difficult questions of polity. Let us consider these in their order.

All but Atheists believe that God presides over nations and individuals, and that by means and influences beyond our sight he can turn the hearts of men as rivers of water are turned. Now by fears and terrors as he did the heart of PHARAOH, and now by gentler processes as he did the heart of DARIUS and CYRUS. Who that has read history aright can doubt the power of the Almighty higher, stronger, and mightier than that of Kings and Cabinets. It was God who bestowed wisdom on Solomon—a wisdom so singularly displayed in his first judicial act, before he had reached his majority—with no intention of cruelty to a living child, yet proposing its dismemberment, that he might test the instinct of maternity, discovering which of the two claimants would first cry out against the violent division; and God it was who turned the counsel of AHITOPHEL into foolishness. He it was who still instructs us to pray for our rulers as dependent for success in their office upon Him. Let us pray that our “officers may be peace, and our exactors righteousness.” That those who are invested with authority may be firm and faithful to their trusts: administering government

without fear or favor. That they may be inspired with that wisdom which is profitable to direct, that they may fear God and do justly, and hate bribes, and remember their obligations to Him who has said: "Counsel is mine and sound wisdom. I am understanding, I have strength. By me Kings reign, and princes decree justice. By me princes rule, and nobles, even all the judges of the earth." And prayer of this description should go up from unfeigned lips. Never should devotion be subsidized to prejudice, nor partisanship make use of prayer for expressing its own pique. These are the prayers which have been prepared for us by the Divine Spirit, and such we should unceasingly offer in public worship, in true loyalty, and Christian patriotism.

Times like these lay bare to our eye the weaknesses and perils of our Government, as storms expose the leaks of a ship. We are wise if we come to see that our rulers are subject to manifold dangers, from which nothing but Divine wisdom can shield them. We boast much before the world of the freedom of our institutions, of the perfect equality of our citizenship, so that no man is debarred from office by the accident of birth

and condition. But we must remember that there is another side and aspect to this subject. If there is an advantage of this kind, there are many disadvantages and dangers connected with it. If all offices of trust and power are open to all, then all may seek them, and there will be scrambling and corruption, and most unworthy rivalries. The frequency of our popular elections multiplies the mischief from this source, and society is upturned from its discolored depths. It is not strange in such a state of things, that we are shocked by revelations of fraud, and dishonesty, and corruption. Men will intrigue for office for selfish ends, who are not fitted for it by education or character. They will employ methods which ought never to be used. It has come at last—it humbles us before God and man to admit it—to be understood that all is fair in politics. Nothing can be more unscrupulous than the strictly party Press of this country. So strong have become the chains of party, that the last thing to be expected of a political opponent is chivalric fairness and candor and courtesy and truth. An irreparable mischief has been done to the morals of the country by this shameless perversion and false-

hood, which waxes worse and worse. The public conscience is debauched. Nor can I see relief from all this mischief in any quarter but this one:—a deeper sense of religion, such as is implied in the act of prayer to Almighty God. Some put their trust in universal education; but intelligence is not the thing which is wanting in such a crisis; for who is so shrewd as your thorough-bred politician? The more you educate the faculties in the wisdom of this world, without the virtuous restraints of religion, the more you sharpen the edge which will wound and kill us.

“Yon Cassius *thinks* too much;  
Such men are dangerous.”

Our safety lies in that acknowledgment of divine control, of obligation and modest trust which finds expression for itself in holy prayer, without “wrath and doubting.”

Beyond all this power of prayer, considered as a means of helping our rulers to act wisely and faithfully, working their deliverance from all selfishness and partisanship and venality, there remains a most important and blessed effect of prayer, as it is reflected upon the hearts of those who offer it. If prayer had no power nor promise

of securing a gift of light from the Throne, its influence would be immeasurably good and great upon those who offer it. It calms the passions, clarifies the judgment, enlightens the intellect, composes the spirit, and pervades the conduct with serenity, and charity, and patience, and meekness, and hope.

Does any one doubt that the causes which more than any endanger our institutions proceed from excited passion rather than sober reason? That at this very moment our peril is from exasperated feeling, from threats, and wrath, and bitterness, and menaces, and taunts, and objurgations, and not from the spirit which would refer all matters of difference to legal adjudication, and to the wisdom and guidance which are never withheld from filial prayer?

Not for the purpose of recrimination, of which we have had so much, but for the very opposite—of suppressing it, and fostering a better temper—let me come at once to the very subject, which, more than any other, has occasioned the present embarrassment. I shall trust to your candor to say, when I have finished, whether the statement of the case has been made in truth and fairness.

Anterior to our own time and generation, without personal complicity of our own, by the persistent agency of the mother country, African Slavery was introduced and entailed upon this country. In the original draft of the Declaration of American Independence, by the hand of Mr. JEFFERSON, himself a slaveholder, one of the reasons alleged for the act was that Great Britain, notwithstanding the remonstrances and expostulations of the Colonies, had persisted in forcing upon them this very system. The time was, and not so long ago, when, throughout the whole of this country, and especially in the Southern States, which, in the origin and prosecution of measures at emancipation, anticipated others, and outstripped others in the amount of costs and sacrifices looking to that end—the time was, I say, when throughout the whole country there was a remarkable unanimity in reference to Slavery, as a political, social, and moral evil. Legislatures of States where it existed, and ecclesiastical bodies more immediately connected with it, scarcely without an exception, took action, looking to its gradual and ultimate removal. I shall not undertake to describe the manner in which a change in regard to the treatment of the

subject was effected; enough to know, what cannot be denied, that a change has taken place, and that this has led to extreme views, acrimony, and active antagonism. Men have driven each other wide apart by contrary opinions, as ivory balls are separated by concussion. On the one hand are those who regard the act of slaveholding as necessarily and unexceptionably sinful. They pronounce those who are involved in this relation as the greatest of criminals. Churches in the Northern interior, who never saw either a slaveholder or a slave, and were never in the way of such a probability, took action, denouncing this relation as the most atrocious of all crimes, forbidding any one connected with it to approach their communion. Epithets could not be found too strong by way of expressing detestation of this particular act, and those there are who have publicly avowed their purpose to put the Constitution and the Bible under their feet for a supposed complicity with this one unpardonable sin. In the opposite extreme are those who now assert that this relation is of Divine origin and sanction, and that to "conserve, extend, and perpetuate it," after the same manner as the relation between parent and child, to the end of time, is a

Christian duty. Moreover, the proposal has been made and publicly advocated, in consistency with this sentiment, to reopen and legalize the African Slave-trade, which the whole civilized world, and none more emphatically than our own country, has stigmatized as piracy.

But these, you say, are extreme views. Certainly they are. I describe them as such. I refer to them as such. But do you not know that these are the very agencies which work mischief; for that which is ultra—beyond fairness and truth—is the parent of fanaticism; and fanaticism is a fire which, once kindled, burns you know not where or what. I use that word with philosophical accuracy. Enthusiasm is a noble quality. We all admire earnestness and zeal; the expression of one's own sentiments with an honest heartiness. But fanaticism has this peculiarity, that always it has in it an element of malignity; a spirit that would do harm to its object after some form or method; a spirit which would lift its hands and sharpen its tongue in wrath; which would strike, and bite, and retaliate, and devour. Extremes, to be sure. But does any one question that it is these extreme notions which are now flying through the troubled

air; which are repeated backwards and forwards, exasperating a bad temper? Is not this spirit, wherever it has existed, the parent of misapprehension, and prejudice, and hate? If Sir Walter Raleigh found it so difficult to arrive at the exact truth of facts, occurring almost under his own eye, in his own castle yard, what may truth expect when the very air is full of a malign spirit, excited to a most inflammable and explosive pitch? The consequence has been, that while the extremists on either wing have understood each other well, and hated each other heartily, the great body lying between, on both sides, have not known and understood each other at all. When, at length, the subject became involved with political legislation, then a thousand other forces came in to intensify the feeling. Now it was that legislative acts themselves partook of the prevalent sentiment on either side, increasing the exasperation. The real cause which made the Fugitive Slave Law so obnoxious to many in the North was, that they interpreted it as containing a crack and a jeer which was intended to humiliate them; while the people of the South, in their turn, put the same interpretation upon every Northern Liberty Bill, its animus, what-

ever ingenuity may have been in the letter, being understood as one of defiance and insult. And so it is that the great mass of the nation, innocent of all evil designs, intending no wrong, and doing no wrong, are yet, by the great law of social liabilities, involved in perils engendered by others, which threaten now the whole domain. The question now before us, is whether it is possible for this matter to be lifted up and lifted out from this region of distemper into the court of reason, and before the supremacy of Providential facts? The stars in their courses fought against Sisera—and there is no place for passion, or impatience, or fretfulness, when we put ourselves in contact with the great calm facts of Nature, and Providence, and Revelation. Our hope is not so much in legislation and discussion, for it has long been our national vice to legislate and talk too much, for mere effect, on abstract questions, instead of meeting each and every case upon its own merits. In cases of disputed rights, let supreme law be arbiter,—and I believe there are many questions of law in connexion with this subject which should employ the highest legal talent of the country—and every citizen be prompt to recognise its solemn authority. Though it is the

most difficult of all conditions in which to act wisely and freely when put under threats, yet it is a token for good, that, already in our own Northern community, there is a disposition to repeal whatever may have been judged in its spirit and intention to be contrary to faith, and honesty, and law. I speak of the spirit and the temper, for this is the whole matter. If by any process, if, by a special answer to special prayer, there could be such a return to a reasonable and charitable temper, in which all shall be convinced that nothing is intended, and nothing will be tolerated which is not right, then, indeed, fear would give place to hope, and apprehension to peace.

How is this subject presented to us in the New Testament? Perhaps we shall see the better if we look first at the Christian method of treating another subject which is free from all doubt in our minds. I refer to despotic Government, the object of our implacable abhorrence. When Christ and his Apostles were upon the earth, they lived under Roman despotism; and what that was, a superficial acquaintance with history will suffice to show. Did they ever make a *direct assault* upon this tremendous power? Did they excite to insurrection? Did they draw the sword against

it? Did they arm the tongue against it? Never. The very opposite. "Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's" was the rule of Christ. It was in regard to this old Heathen despotism that Paul counselled his contemporaries to be obedient and loyal, recognising its authority himself, and appealing to its jurisdiction. Are we, then, to infer that Christianity sanctions irresponsible and cruel tyranny, aiming to extend and perpetuate it? Never, never! For its own spirit fosters justice. It looks at the universal diffusion of what is right. Tell us, then, why the New Testament does not contain one direct assault upon those ancient and stubborn tyrannies. Some reason there must have been, and that reason the very best. Do you say that it would have done no good; that it would have reacted upon the heads of those who took part in it, and, therefore, it was deferred till a more auspicious opportunity? Then you admit that there is such a thing as wise expediency, and that this is a Christian virtue, employing the best means and occasions for its own good ends. So we believe. Like the sun in the heaven, Christianity lifts itself up to its central position, and its warmth melts the ice, and its attractions gradually, but certainly, draw all lesser

orbs around itself obediently. Would you know what Slavery was in the days of the Cæsars? Read Tacitus, the contemporary of Paul. Yet you do not find in the New Testament one *direct assault* upon it, as a thing to be overthrown by instantaneous violence. The relation is recognised as an existing fact. Masters and slaves—there is no mistaking the word—those that were under the yoke, are instructed in their relative duties; while the hand is not once lifted to sever at a blow the relation itself. What, then? Must we infer that this is a relation which Christianity ordains, and conserves, and perpetuates, as one of her own institutions? By no means. Read the epistle of Paul to Philemon; a most extraordinary thing it is that such an epistle, from such a man, to such a man, on such a subject, should have been handed down to us—and I confess to you that I find it always hard to read that epistle, so full of the very spirit of Christian gentleness and courtesy, without a moistened eye—and you need not wonder long or be in doubt as to the process by which the religion of Christ reforms abuses and removes evils. Men may be impatient, fret and goad themselves and others into madness, but God has his own time and method,

and we do well sometimes to think of the slow yet certain processes of his Spirit and Providence.

On the one hand, we of the North—I say *we*, since I speak of a prevalent habit—must cease from all vituperation and angry reproaches. We must not speak of our Southern brethren as oppressors and barbarians, nor vilify them, nor taunt them, nor goad them, as if they were sinners above all others. We must bear in mind that had we been born in the same circumstances with themselves, in connexion with a system which sends its roots through the whole social structure, there is no reason to suppose that we should have been more humane, more kind, more wise than they. We must acknowledge that among them, familiar with this relation, are some of the best specimens of philanthropy and religion the world can furnish, men and women worthy to stand by the side of the man in the New Testament, who held the same relation to a *doulos*, whom Christ healed, of whom Christ said, “I have not seen so great faith, no, not in Israel.”

On the other hand, we say to our brethren of the South, while we acknowledge and defend every right guaranteed to you by the Constitution, you must not take new ground which is

untenable; you must not force us to join a new issue; nor give resurrection to questions which have long ago been considered as settled by the civilized world; you must not resort to violence; if the solemn tramp of the census instructs you as to the certainty of prospective changes, you must meet the fact as an appointment not of man, by which to be irritated, but of God, with acquiescence, with equanimity; you must not forswear reason, nor put the torch to that edifice which we occupy in common, and in which we and our children, and children's children, have such incomparable and ineffable advantages.

Surely, then, we find abundant occasion for prayer, full of faith in God, and charity for our fellow men, in the presence of this great embarrassment. If any man pretends to know by what method this great problem of our history is to be solved without detriment to either race, our own or the African, for as Christians our regard is for all, in Christ all are our brethren; if any one, I say, pretends to know the future of this history, without aid from divine wisdom, I pity his self-sufficiency and arrogance. No man can look with indifference upon that which in any way affects the prosperity of the country or any

part of it. We may have no direct personal relation to this or that system. But here comes in the great law of organic life and social liabilities. We may be innocent, and yet suffer the consequences of others' actions. Children may be harmless as doves, but they are involved in the results of their parents' conduct. Our Fathers were immediately related to the introduction and extension of Slavery. If wrath, and bitterness, and objurgations could produce any good, they would be most inappropriate and unbecoming in us. Then we have a real interest in everything which concerns the welfare of every part of our Confederacy. The whole is our country. There is not a right which belongs to any State which we would not defend. Not a wrong can be inflicted upon one which all the rest do not suffer. Whatever infidels may say on the subject, objecting to the ethics of the New Testament, that it omits from its injunctions this virtue of patriotism, we know that there is such a thing as patriotism, a true love for country, a sentiment which may run to excess and folly in the absence of Christianity, but which Christianity cherishes, and fosters, and moderates, infusing into it her own celestial temper.

It is time for us to make some peculiar expression of our loyalty. Partisanship must be merged in patriotism. Sectionalism must give place to an intense love for the whole nationality. If revolution is actually to occur, let it not be till men have opened to each other their honest hearts of patriotic love, and the conviction is justified to the waiting world that there is some imperative necessity which makes that ultimate resort inevitable. Does that exist? How would you define it? What is the question which forces any to such a necessity? Differences of opinion? But men may live under constitutional law with conscientious sentiments of utmost diversity. Differences of opinion leading to antagonism of claims? Let them be referred to the tribunal which law describes, and a loyal people must ever acknowledge. Revolution!—for what? Disappointment, temper, impulse, passion—none of these are to supersede law, and to displace that constitutional Government which is our protection. Revolution! What memories are associated in our minds by the word? It was only last week that the last survivor of the Battle of Bunker Hill died in the State of Maine. Surely it cannot be possible that within so short a

time from the beginning of the Revolution which resulted in our independence, there should, in any quarter, even be thought of another revolution, for what good end we cannot imagine, against the very Constitution which our fathers framed. As the later Athenian orators, when their country was in danger of distraction and dismemberment, were wont to shout "Marathon! Marathon!" recalling the field where patriotism and valor prevailed against desperate odds, so will we repeat the names of the men and the fields whose renown has come down to us as a common heritage, associated with our common ancestry and our earlier struggles. More than all, will we call aloud on the name of our God, beseeching him by the very arguments which he has put upon our lips, not to give us up to reproach. Political zealots may scoff at the inutility of prayer. But I speak to-day to men and women who have faith in its efficiency. Before the spirit of prayer, the false guides of passion and an evil temper disappear, and the great lights of charity, and meekness, and hope, come forth to point us in the way. What will the nations say if our experiment of self-government should thus early prove a failure? How should we be ashamed to

confess before the world our weakness and imbecility, if the bond of our Confederate States should prove a rope of sand, instead of a chain of gold. We cannot pretend to dictate or mark the way for Divine Providence—but with all the heart we have, we will pray for the peace and prosperity of our country. Let us confess our sins most heartily before God. “Think you,” said Christ, “that they on whom the tower of Siloam fell were sinners above all others? I tell ye nay. But except *ye* repent, *ye* shall all likewise perish.” Sin of every name and form is a leak in the ship, and humbling ourselves before God is our strength and security. For the sake of all the hopes and prospects of mankind—for the sake of rational liberty—for the sake of the Christian Church, with its new domains and auspices—for our brethren and companions’ sakes—we will pray for our rulers, and pray to Almighty God for ourselves—that here, beneath the vines and trees which our fathers planted, we may lead a quiet and peaceful life. Should reason be borne down by passion; should it prove that a fire has already been kindled which may not by any human power be quenched, still will we not let go our hold on faith and the guardianship of God.

Still will we cling to the altars of religion, and invoke the grace of the Almighty. Still will we pray that we may keep a conscience void of offence before God and man, so that in any extremity we may have the security which springs from confidence in Supreme direction, believing that He, in the day of evil, will say to his own wherever they are, "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee, hide thyself, as it were, for a little moment, until this indignation be overpast." But prayer and faith will win a blessing. After the storm behold the bow in the clouds, and brightness covering the whole heavens.

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