

The following short sermon, by the Rev. Dr. Lord, of Vicksburg, Miss., is published at the request of one of our correspondents and patrons, and will be interesting to all of them. The introductory correspondence is omitted as immaterial to the object of the discourse, and requiring more space than is convenient to spare.

### SERMON.

BY REV. W. W. LORD, D. D.

*Judges xix : 30.*—And it was so, that all that saw it said, there was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.

Until this proclamation was issued, my fellow-citizens and soldiers, there may have been some doubt as to the ultimate intention of the invaders from the North, in case they should once get possession of that fair domain, the coveted land of the sun—the rich and beautiful South—to obtain which they have forfeited their own best birthright;—to enslave which they have trampled upon their own constitution, and destroyed their own liberties. Whether they intended merely to reduce us to a state of political subordination, like that which they have long sought by more peaceable measures to do, or whether they proposed to seize our property and take charge of our domestic institutions, has hitherto been an open question. The people in most of the border States have inclined to the former opinion; the people of the Southern States have adopted the latter. The question, so far as this proclamation bears upon it, may be considered to have been decided. More than political subordination is intended. More than confiscation of property; more than the abolition of slavery is designed. Slavery is ordained, but it is for us. For negro slavery abolished, white slavery is to be established. Such slavery as that to which Russia has reduced Poland—nay worse—such enslavement as was perhaps never before attempted; a slavery of body and soul for which there is no parallel; and this imposed not only upon their own race, their own blood, and color, but upon the women—the matrons and daughters—the most respectable and respected—the ladies of that race. Consummate proof of the humiliation which is prepared for the husbands, sons and brothers of those high-spirited women whose very gestures are to be put in chains, whose very eyes are to be imprisoned, and whose very souls are to be crucified by the infamous threat of personal outrage! History furnishes no example of such infamy; language has no words to express the depth of degradation to which the tame submission to such a threat would sink a people.

Consider the letter of the proclamation, the spirit, or the effect, and it equally, and in each point of view, seems incredible. It threatens legal prostitution to every woman of the South whose dark eye should even involuntary flash at the sight of a foreign hireling parading the symbols of tyranny, and the deadly weapons which are to maintain it, in the streets of a Southern city, before the very door of her hitherto sacred dwelling.

Hard always is the lot of the conquered. But was there ever a daughter of Ireland legally prostituted to the English soldier—were it even an Irish peasant girl—because her eye flashed or her bosom swelled, at the sight of the hereditary tyrant, with the emotion which has sent so many of Ireland's sons to scaffold or into exile, dreaded as much as death? Was there ever a woman of Poland legally surrendered to the brutal Cossack because the blood of her ancestors tingled in the trembling, defiant finger that pointed the scorn she felt for the wild Tartar in his sheepskin, who rode, lance in hand, into the gateway of her ancestral palace?

But contemplating the unexampled brutality and indecency of this proclamation, and considering the effect of it to be such as I have said, viz: a degradation hitherto unnamed and unconceived amongst any people, the question arises as to the motive of its author. What could prompt this gray, cool-headed politician, from puritan New England, so soon and so suddenly to cast the Czar of Russia into the shade of a comparative leniency and humanity? For that Autocrat, though he has some times applied the knotted and cruel knout to the naked backs of ladies, never thought of that refinement of cruelty by which they would be rendered what neither the knout nor Siberia could render them—degraded and infamous; cut off from husband and parent and child forever!

What tempted him to forget that an insult to the female sex has always been the thing of all others most deeply and fatally resented? Had he forgotten Virginius with his knife, and his dead daughter in his arms? Had he forgotten that an outrage upon a female of rank, drove the superb Tartuin from Rome, overthrew the kings, and established the Roman Republic? Did he not remember that an insult offered to a female, took Spain from the kings of Castile and Arragon and gave it to the Moors? As a New England puritan he might at least be supposed to remember the part of scripture from which my text was taken—and how that for such prostitution as that which he authorizes, the outraged woman was divided together with her bones into twelve parts and sent into all the coasts of Israel—“And it was so that all who said there was no such deed done nor seen from the day that the children of Israel came up out of the land of Egypt unto this day: consider of it, take advice, and speak your minds.” And the result of that deliberation was the series of battles between Israel and Benjamin which effected the destruction of Gibeah and the desolation of the tribe of Benjamin, the authors of the outrage, until the Israelites themselves “lifted up their voices and wept sore and said—O Lord God of Israel, why is this come to pass in Israel, that there should be to-day one tribe lacking in Israel?”

Why, I say, with all these historical instances in his mind, and having every reason to conclude that the passionate and high-spirited people of the South would not be false to historic precedent, did he suffer himself to be betrayed into such a piece of insolence and folly, as this proclamation will seem to Europe and to the entire world, and in future history to be? Had he drank the wine of devils, or had the gods made him mad? Is he insane, was he inebriated—or was it a mere motiveless insult to the women of the South, prompted by anger at hearing his soldiers describe the patriotic contempt which the ladies of New Orleans were at too little pains to conceal from them! The latter supposition is plausible, but I think the cause of the indiscretion was deeper and more profound. At the bottom, I believe, would be found, could we read the black and unilluminated page of the man's mind where the insult was first recorded, would be found, I say, the burning of the cotton; the destruction of Southern property by Southern patriotism; in a word, the failure of the whole scheme of Southern invasion. Exasperated and irritated at finding the fruits of conquest snatched from his hand, and seeing in the proud looks and scornful gestures of the Southern women, a conscious exultation of the fact, he retaliates an irretrievable injury by an expiable insult.

Soldiers of independence, men of the South, it remains for you to say what course you will take with the man and his minions, and wheth-

er a state of things which has made the so-called commander of the Department of the Gulf insane with rage, should not be to you a cause of encouragement and exultation.

Our enemy sees what some of us are slow to see—that if we should destroy every particle of cotton in the South, nay, all property not actually necessary to subsistence, we should still be richer than we would be were we to save the cotton and submit to the North. Save the cotton, save the property by submission, and then subtract from it fifteen hundred millions of war debt and the value of all the slaves in the South, and how much property would the South have left? Or suppose that the extinction of rights in Southern property should be gradual and partly compensated—where would be the prosperity of the South, in the hands of the ignorant theorists and jobbers of the North? If all our property were destroyed, and our liberty remained—in other words, if we gave up all to preserve our liberties, we should still be rich, or have the power of again becoming rich. For the country, the richest and most fruitful under Heaven, would still be ours, and the institutions adapted to develop its wealth would still remain to us; and we should begin the history of a free nation with the brightest promise that ever dawned upon a people. But with what should we begin the history of ages of servitude? With a little of property left to us by the clemency of our conquerors, laden with a debt of hundreds of millions, and gradually dwindling to nothing under a system which has made Jamaica, once the richest gem in the crown of Britain, a worthless pebble under her foot. If the country is taken all that is upon the top of it will but make us poorer—will subject us to rapine and be a bait and lure to the tyrant.

What motives then, my countrymen, are wanting to make us the bravest of soldiers and most inflexible of patriots? Our interests and our manly honor were in the cause before. The honor of our women is now in it. God, to whom in the midst of victories and reverses we have alike appealed to show and defend the right, has so far answered our petitions as to put us still more evidently in the right, and our enemies still more flagrantly in the wrong. With the memory of this last great wrong and insult burning in your minds you will go into the battle of Vicksburg. With “guns to the right of us, guns to the left of us”—with defences constructed by the highest science—with thousands of brave hearts and ready hands to defend our almost inaccessible land approaches, we have here an opportunity to strike a blow which will make the dark eye of Southern women flash with other emotions than those whose harmless lightning struck the guilty soul of the temporary tyrant of New Orleans. Their eyes will flash with pride and joy, to hear that their honor has been vindicated up the hills of Vicksburg by their own brave citizens fighting with ours in the same holy cause—and standing side by side upon the rock that turned back the invasion which has rolled up the Mississippi like a tide from the ocean.

And let us not forget, upon this solemn occasion, that Almighty Being who planted in our hearts the just sentiment of indignation and sense of wrong, which in the end will bring to aid us, His irresistible power.

He has called himself the God of battles.—He is the only giver of victory; and if He sometimes gives the victory to our enemies, it does not follow that He will give them the ultimate victory. He permitted Israel to be three times beaten and repulsed in the great quarrel to which our text relates, and yet the warlike tribe of Benjamin, the violator of womanly dignity and the rights of humanity, was at last overthrown in that woman's quarrel with a mighty slaughter.

He has taught us in this very narrative that in the vindication of our honor, no sacrifice is too costly, no peril too great to be incurred. But here our honor and our interest are united; and every apparent loss that does not involve loss of honor, is a real gain; for it makes the distance between us and our former countrymen and present enemies greater. What is property in such a war as this? We are like a ship upon a lee shore that must show all her spars, though it should blow a gale of wind; or like the same ship in a storm, when, to avoid foundering, she has to throw her lading overboard. It is hard no doubt to see the precious bales and boxes sink into the “gesty waves that swallow navigation up.” But it is better than that the ship should be swallowed up. Let us save the ship, and she may yet bear other cargoes of richer merchandize upon the bosom of a smoother sea.

May Heaven grant it to our efforts, our sacrifices, our prayers, in His own good time.