

**THE UNION AND THE WAR:
A SERMON, PREACHED
NOVEMBER 27, 1862**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649139644

The Union and the war: a sermon, preached November 27, 1862 by William G. T. Shedd

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD

**THE UNION AND THE WAR:
A SERMON, PREACHED
NOVEMBER 27, 1862**

THE UNION AND THE WAR.

A

S E R M O N,

PREACHED NOVEMBER 27, 1862.

BY

WILLIAM G. T. SHEDD, D.D.,

ASSOCIATE PASTOR OF THE BRONX PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN THE
CITY OF NEW YORK.

NEW YORK:

CHARLES SCRIBNER, 124 GRAND STREET.

1863.

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1863, by
CHARLES SCHEBENTH,
In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States for the
Southern District of New York.

JOHN F. TROW,
PRINTER, STENOGRAPHER, AND ELECTROTYPING,
60 Nassau Street, New York.

THE UNION AND THE WAR.

"THE Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me? The Lord taketh my part with them that help me; therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me."
—PSALM CXXVIII. 6, 7.

THIS is a portion of a psalm that was indited, most probably, by King David, to be sung upon a day of thanksgiving by the people of Israel, as they moved in solemn and jubilant procession to the temple of the Most High, to offer praise for a great national deliverance. We do not know the particular occasion, the precise victory, that inspired this sacred anthem. Some commentators, as Tholuck, for example, think they find internal evidence within it, that proves conclusively that David could not have been its author, and that it belongs to a period subsequent to the captivity. But there are many chapters in the life of the

royal harper, especially his early and middle life, that were well fitted to inspire such a psalm of deliverance ; and it accords well with many similar thanksgivings in the book of Psalms that are universally ascribed to his authorship. But, be this as it may, it is an inspired lyric that expresses clearly and strongly the jubilation of the people of God, when his arm has wrought deliverance for them ; and in every age it has been an anthem through which they have uttered their praises when the right hand of the Lord was exalted, and when the right hand of the Lord did valiantly for his church. It is a thanksgiving psalm for a nation, and for an individual. Those heroes of the Christian church, those confessors, martyrs, and reformers, who have been called to great sorrows and to great triumphs in their own individual experiences, have betaken themselves to this one hundred and eighteenth psalm as the trumpet through which they sounded out their glorying in the God that had helped them and had given them the victory. Martin Luther, we are told, appropriated this psalm for his peculiar comfort, and wrote the seventeenth verse of it ("I shall not die, but live and declare the works of the Lord") upon the walls of his study, saying, "This is my

psalm which I love. Though I love all the psalms and the Scriptures, and regard them as the comfort of my life, yet I have had such experience of this psalm, that it must remain, and shall be called, *my* psalm; for it has been very precious to me, has delivered me out of many troubles, and without it neither emperor, kings, the wise and prudent, nor saints, could have helped me.*

If you will carefully read this psalm, you will observe that the strong and firm foundation upon which the rejoicing and the thanksgiving rest is the fact, *that God had been upon the side of the victors*; and this implies that truth and right were upon their side. David and the people of Israel did not rejoice merely because they had "quenched" the nations that had "compassed them about like bees," as a man quenches the flashy "fire of thorns." It was not the secular and religious rejoicing of a warlike people over a great victory and a new conquest, without any regard to the right and wrong of the war, without any reference to the moral principles that were involved in the contest. It was no merely Roman triumph, stretching many a mile with spoils and

* Tholuck on the Psalms, in loco.

captives, adding another province to the immense pagan despotism of the old world, and ministering afresh to the pride and glory of an earthly domination. It was a Jewish triumph, a theocratic victory, gained by the favor of Jehovah, founded in a righteous cause, and subserving the interests of that spiritual kingdom of which the Son of God, and the Son of David, is the Lord and King. The Roman general stood in a triumphal chariot, attired in a gold-embroidered robe, bearing in his right hand a laurel bough and in his left a sceptre, and his brows encircled with an oaken garland. He was the central figure in the pomp, and the few religious ceremonies that accompanied the procession, as it moved up to the Capitol and "Jove's eternal fane," were all eclipsed and lost in the adulations offered to a mortal. But the king of Israel went on foot, with the priests and the people, clothed in the simple linen tunic, the girdle, and the mitre, and his utterance was: "O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let Israel now say that his mercy endureth forever. Let the house of Aaron now say that his mercy endureth forever. The Lord is on my side. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me. It is better to trust

in the Lord than to put confidence in man. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes." It is the utterance, not of a proud and self-conscious emperor, but of a servant of the Most High, in meekness and thankfulness ascribing glory to him from whom all glories are.

We have selected this text because it very naturally conducts us to a series of reflections that are appropriate to the circumstances in which we assemble at the call of our Chief Magistrate, to offer thanksgiving to God. For some of the circumstances are peculiar and sad. We are invited to be glad and thankful in the midst of the most melancholy and exhausting of wars, a civil war. Yet the invitation is a reasonable one. For there is no condition of man here upon earth in which he does not enjoy some blessings; in which he does not receive more than he deserves; in which, therefore, it becomes him to render thanks to the Providence that has made him what he is, and has given him what he has. And it is a fact that the most genuine praise and thanksgiving ascend from those hearts which in the eye of the world have the least to be thankful for. St. Paul chained to a soldier, and with the chains clanking upon his hands as he lifted them in adoration, cried to all suffering Christians: "Rejoice