New Orleans Daily Crescent.

DISCOURSES FOR THE TIMES.

We publish below two discourses delivered in this city on Thursday last—the day which had been appointed by the Governor and Mayor as a day of Thanksgiving, Fasting and Prayer. One of them is the production of Dr. Leacock, of Christ Church, and the other of Dr. Palmer, of the Presbyterian Church, opposite Lafayette square. Both of these gentlemen are distinguished and able ministers, and both of them treat the absorbing topic of the day with uncommon eloquence, originality and force. If there is any occasion when it should be considered justifiable to introduce into the church subjects of secular concern, we consider that of last Thursday an appropriate one—a day not set apart in the church calendar for any religious services, but one established by the civil authorities only. But it is to the discourses themselves that we direct attention, embodying a discussion of the great event of the day from an original point of view, and suggestive of our duty, as well in our moral as our political relations, to our own section of the country. The theme could not have been more ably treated than by these two eminent clergymen, whose addresses we to-day lay before our readers:

THANKSGIVING SERMON,

DELIVERED AT CHRIST CHURCH, NEW ORLEANS, ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 1860.

BY REV. DR. W. T. LEACOCK.

A day of Thanksgiving—one day of every year set apart for the expression of a nation's thanks to the God and Father of our spirits, grows out of the nature of God's blessings to men. Some of his blessings are individual blessings, and for them individuals should be thankful every day. Others are national blessings, and for them the nation should, at one and the same time, lift up its heart and voice to God in praise. That time is this—we of this State are, on this day, called upon to bless God for all his benefits.

But even our individual blessings require a fixed period of time for praise, because they are not understood or felt to be blessings at the time they are given. God's dispensations are not always self-evident mercies. We know they are mercies. For God has nothing now but mercies for his creatures—his very chastisements are mercies—mercies in disguise—but they are not understood by our hearts at first, and therefore they seem hard; and, seeming hard, the language of our hearts is the language of rebellion, not of praise. But time develops the mercy in the dispensation. What once appeared hard is now seen to be merciful in the good in which it issues, and then our hearts, penetrated by a deep sense of repentance for our rebellion, overflow with gratitude to God, and praise is extorted from our lips.

Now, this fact, the fact that the mercy is not seen in the dispensation as soon as it occurs, is a reason for one day in the course of the year to be set apart for the purpose of thanksgiving.

Every day should be a day of thanksgiving and praise, because every day is itself a blessing and brings blessings with it; but the events of every day are not understood; they require time to be developed; the dispensation which seems hard to-day, may, in the process of a few months, be felt to be a great mercy. Every touch of the artist has its value, but the value of the touch can not be understood until the picture is completed; and every event of God's providence has its mercy—but the mercy may not be discovered till the event is developed—and this development requires time.

Now, the Christian, and the Christian heart alone, knows every event of God's providence to be a mercy, and he is willing to praise God in advance for the mercy, knowing that if he does not see it then, he will see it soon; but every heart is not a Christian heart—every heart, though a believing heart, does not possess this faith—and, therefore, in the course of each year a day is wisely set apart for reviewing the dispensations of God in our being, that we may see the benefits which are calculated to bring, and assure our weak heart that we are not in a fatherless world, but in a world in which nothing can occur without its use, and that use our good.

The child thinks his father's discipline hard, and the lessons which he is required to learn, useless; but when that child becomes a man, he discovers that the discipline and lessons were both strong evidences of love in his parent.

And thus it is with our hearts and God. Dispensations which seem hard in January, may prove themselves in December to have been nothing but mercies to our souls—mercies, too, which deserved a lifetime of praise.

We have met, then, to-day, to open the Book of Providence, and read there the events which have occurred, and in which we have had a share, during the period that has elapsed since our last similar meeting, that in solemn assembly we might lift up our hearts and voices to the Lord our God in thanksgiving and praise. Some of the events may not yet have developed themselves, but others have; and those that have should teach us that there is mercy in those that have not, only we know it not yet, and therefore that we should number them among our blessings. Let us then pause, look back and consider.

And we shall soon take up the language of the Psalms, and say: "Bless the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things."

Let us take these benefits as they are enumerated. Who has not cause to praise God for the forgiveness of his iniquities? Take this forgiveness in the lowest and most limited sense—in the sense of simply averting from us the temporal consequences of our errors—who has no cause to praise God in this?

Who would not have lowered himself in the estimation of others—who would not have marred his own prospects and diminished his own happiness—if the consequences of every unadvised word and act had been visited upon him? Who has not cause to praise God for disease escaped, or for sickness healed during the past year? Who can tell how near he has been, even in the broad blaze of noon, to that destruction from which the providence of God has rescued him? Which of us, even among those who have endured the heaviest sorrows, can say, that we have not deserved more, on comparing what we have experienced with what we have deserved, or even with what we might have expected, will not find a large amount of loving kindness and of tender mercies for which he is a debtor to God? And if the mouth be not literally satisfied with good things, how can we tell that the things which we have desired were *really good?* Who can tell that the love of the creature, which he is seeking, and with which he is yet unsatisfied, may not deceive him, as it has deceived others? Who can tell that the affluence which he had accumulated, but which has been snatched from his grasp, might not have destroyed his soul if it had been retained? Who can tell that the object of his secret aim, whatever it might have been, that was irrespective of God, and from which he now seems farther off than he was twelve months ago—that this might not have been the rock upon which, if he had struck, he might have made shipwreck at once and forever of faith and of a good conscience? All real blessings, all blessings that will bear to be tested by the result, are subjects of praise, though some may have approached us under the lowering aspect of sorrow, and others under the forbidding frown of disappointment; for who will not testify—who, at least, that knows himself and examines the past—will not testify that of the most untoward events have often proved most beneficial in the result—thus adding another testimony to this glorious truth, that all things, at all times, are working together for good to them that love God.

But this is a national day, and we must speak of national as well as individual mercies; and we have them, blessed be God, we have them to lift up our hearts to God in prayer.

We have been greatly blessed as a people. We know nothing of those evils which commonly fall to the lot of nations, and therefore we feel not, as we should, the blessings which surround us. War, pestilence and famine have been removed from our borders; abundance has crowned our fields; prosperity has attended our commerce; and peace has united us with the nations abroad. And should we not be thankful? But there is a rising cloud in our hemisphere—a cloud as on a summer's eve—of which we cannot tell, until it bursts, whether it will bring the desolating tempest, or the cool, refreshing shower. But there is a hand that directs the storm; and there is a hand in that very cloud, which has long forewarned us of its coming, and prepared us with a refuge. The agitation of the slavery question, once thought an evil, God has made a blessing to us.

You and I remember when the slavery question was first mooted in our national councils, we dreaded the consequences and trembled at the bare mention of the subject, we stood aghast before our adversaries; and why? Because we were not as well informed on the subject of slavery as we are now; many of us doubted whether we could religiously hold one servant; there was no bond of union between us and them but the bond of property, and as all property is timid, negro property, under the circumstances of our ignorance, was cowardly, and therefore the moment this property was invaded in discussion it made us cowards, and as a band of cowards we were for imploring silence from our adversaries, and thus our cowardice only gave them courage to make their attacks more frequent, and more and more severe. But the question has been sifted to its very foundation, and we now feel ourselves safe, we now feel that as Christians we can hold them, and this feeling has dissipated our cowardice and given us an advantage over our adversaries; we shun them not now, we fear them not now, we are willing to meet them not only on Constitutional grounds, but on reason, on religion, on expediency, and dare them to their face to dislodge us from our position.

But how have we been placed in this position? Have we always occupied it? No—there was a time when we saw no mercy in God's permitting the subject of slavery to be brought before the public mind for examination; but it has been examined, and we now see the mercy—mercy in having our own minds fortified—mercy in calming down the opposition of the wise and virtuous. And should we not be thankful for this mercy? Should we not on this day give thanks to God for the termination he has given to a subject which at first seemed fraught with nothing but calamity to our very souls? Surely, surely, then, the agitation once thought an evil is now discovered to have been a blessing.

But this is not all—this is not the only blessing for which we should feel thankful. While the truth-seeking, truth-loving portion of the community are convinced that our position is of a character which can not be changed, and therefore should not be tampered with, there are others who, regarding not the truth, and following blindly their own prejudices and interest, have invaded our rights—invaded them by deceiving an ignorant but honest portion of our country men to unite themselves for the support of a band of robbers and assassins to murder and to rob.

They have murdered our people; have robbed them—they are yet robbing us—but what is the result of their combined action? This, the slaves themselves have been so deceived by them as to fear them, and are now, many of them, unwilling to trust them; and the masters, seeing the facility with which the slaves can escape, have so endeared themselves to their slaves as to make them unwilling to leave their service, which they know, for a condition which they know not. I speak of the border States, and all who live there know what I say to be true.

Now, what more alarming than to have a body of thieves let loose among us, premioned by some, assisted by others, and encouraged by their own mistaken views of religion and philanthropy, to commit such depredations among us! Yet what have they done? Great injury, to be sure, but great good also. And while we should deplore the evil, should we not also be thankful for the good?

But we have another cause for thankfulness. You and I thought, a few months ago, that the Abolitionists were few compared with the population of the North; and whenever we expressed any fears for our condition, we were answered—"Oh, the Abolitionists are comparatively few, and by their very numbers and insignificance utterly powerless;" we allowed ourselves to be lulled into slumber under this assurance, forgetting that we were slumbering on the very crater of a volcano. But this election has shown their force—has shown not only their numbers, but their power. They have come upon us like an avalanche, and the suddenness of their appearance and the number of their body have awakened us to action—awakened us in full time to check their destructive career. And should we not be thankful? Suppose they had not exhibited their strength as they have done; suppose they had gone on increasing, and filling us all the while by the limited paucity of their numbers, and then have broken upon us when the whole North had been absorbed by their views, what would have been our condition then? Nothing but inglorious submission. But what is it now? We have been roused to harmonious action by their formidable appearance at a time when we have yet friends in the North, but those friends powerless of themselves, and only waiting action on our part to take position by our side; and is not this a subject of thankfulness to be expressed on this day to our Heavenly Father? But have yet another cause for thankfulness. When we consider the treatment we have received from the hands of our enemies; our character they have defamed; our feelings they have lacerated; our rights they have invaded; our property they have stolen; our power they have sought to paralyze; they have threatened; murderers and robbers have been let loose upon us, stimulated by weak or designing or infidel preachers, armed by fanatics and sustained by a band of assassins, both political and civil, out of the very wealth which they have accumulated by their connection with the South. Nothing has been left untried which the deepest and blackest malice could invent for our injury or destruction; we have been proscribed as unworthy members of the great American household; we have been banished from their very houses of prayer; we have been ridiculed and taunted, and flouted as unfit for the society of men, and accursed of God. And has not this, too, been a blessing to us? For what has it not done for us? It has awakened us to the truth that there can be no concert of action between our enemies and ourselves, and hastened the period of adopting such measures as are best calculated for our interest. And what shall the enemies be? Shall we fold our arms ingloriously, and do nothing but beg like craven cowards that they will not disturb us? I leave this question for your own hearts to answer.

It is not for me to show what should be done. It is only for me to say what I believe to be the hand of God, in what has been done—that the recognition of that hand might add fervor to our thanksgiving and praise.

Then bless the Lord, O, my soul, and forget not then his benefits. But how shall we bless God? We should bless him not only with our lips but in our lives, by giving ourselves up to his service, by worship before him in holiness and righteousness all our days, by doing our duty in that state of life in which it has pleased him to call us; and there is no state of life, there is no circumstance in which we may not give praise to God—(the tradesman in the conduct of his business—the artisan in the practice of his craft—the parent in the government of his household, or in the instruction of the child—the domestic in the performance of her most menial service—the beggar in receiving a Christian charity—the exhausted and suffering inmate of a hospital in the endurance of a protracted and agonizing disease—all may give themselves up to God's service)—for we do this when we do his will, when we labor diligently, when we rule mildly, when we obey cheerfully, when we suffer patiently, when we submit ourselves to the will of God in the afflictions and visitations of life, and are only concerned to glorify Him through faith in his Son, Jesus Christ.

Now, in justice to myself, I must be permitted to make a remark before I close. Six weeks ago, I counseled you, from this place to avoid all precipitate action; but at the same time to take determined action—such action only as you felt you could take with the consolons support of reason and religion. I give that counsel still. But am one of you. I feel as a Southerner, Southern honor is my honor—Southern degradation is my degradation. Let no man mistake my meaning or call my words idle. As a Southerner, then, I will speak, and I give it as my firm and unhesitating belief, that nothing is now left us but secession. I do not like the word, but it is the only one to express my meaning. Five days ago I might