

CHAPTER VI

THE CIVIL WAR - THE WAR BETWEEN THE STATES

One of the saddest moments in the history of the United States Congress is described by Saul Pett as follows:

Civil war awaited them and they were leaving now, one by one, in sad succession. On Jan. 10, 1861, the gaunt, courtly senator from Mississippi rose from his desk in the 36th Congress to say goodbye. He pleaded for peace between North and South. If not...

"Then Mississippi's gallant sons will stand like a wall of fire around their state," said Jefferson Davis, "and I go hence, not in hostility to you, but in love and allegiance to her."

Davis became president of the Confederate States of America a month later. A few months after that, when Union troops were quartered in the Capitol, when soldiers slept in both chambers and Army cooks cooked bacon and biscuits in the basement, a young trooper from the Sixth Massachusetts angrily rammed his bayonet into Davis' desk.

Today, that desk can be found along the center aisle of the third row up from the well of the Senate. The hole left by the bayonet has been mended, but the scar remains. From Saul Pett's Associated Press article.

What led a proud and hopeful nation to this tragic impasse? After the Revolutionary War, America had enjoyed over seventy years of success and prosperity. But as we grew, we as a nation became selfish. We forgot the God that had blessed us. We turned to material prosperity and away from God.

Perhaps the most obvious symptom of this selfishness was the eagerness with which this nation embraced slavery. We turned our backs on the Founders' statement that "All are created equal," and forgot Patrick Henry's fiery pronouncement, "Give me liberty or give me death!" Ignoring Jesus' admonition to do unto others as we would have them do unto us, we built prosperity on the backs of widows and orphans torn from their homelands, whose only hope of release was death.

Abraham Lincoln's Addresses

Between the time Abraham Lincoln was elected and inaugurated, seven states had seceded over this issue. In his inaugural address, President Lincoln urged all the states to settle their differences peacefully. Nevertheless, the country found itself divided by war. In 1863, in the midst of this war, Lincoln issued a proclamation to all Americans, appealing to them to recognize the true cause of the national calamity:

And inasmuch as we know that, by His divine law, nations like individuals are subjected to punishment and chastisement in this world, may we not justly fear that the awful calamity of civil war, which now desolates the land, may be but a punishment inflicted upon us for our presumptuous sins to the needful end of our national reformation as a whole people?

We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved these many years in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth, and power as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious Hand that preserved us in peace and multiplied and enriched, and strengthened us.... We have become too proud to pray to the God that made us. (The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, Vol. 6, pp. 155-156, Roy P. Basler)

Through all the horror of the Civil War Lincoln's faith and humanity never faltered. His Second Inaugural Address expresses his immortal good will to all:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan to do all which may achieve and cherish a just, and lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

President Lincoln was able to lead this divided, troubled nation because he himself was so free of pride, so full of compassion and so mindful of God. We know from biographies that he humbly turned to God in prayer continually, not only before making an important decision.

All the world's saviors have in one way or another loved their enemies and done them good. President Lincoln was no exception. Few public figures have attained Abraham Lincoln's magnanimous spirit, although he was vilified as no other American president. Publicly denounced by Edwin Stanton as a "low cunning clown the original gorilla," Lincoln nevertheless appointed Stanton Secretary of War because he saw him as the best man for the post. When a friend told Lincoln that Stanton (then a Cabinet member) called President Lincoln "a fool," Lincoln replied: "Did he call me that? Well, I reckon it must be true then, for Stanton is usually right." Later, a repentant Stanton sobbed uncontrollably at Lincoln's bedside after the President's assassination.

Lincoln's self-forgetfulness, his purity of thought and motive, his affection for his fellow man, his trust in good, were constant prayers. So well known to his countrymen was Lincoln's habit of prayer that several far famed statues erected in his honor show him kneeling in supplication to an all merciful God.

The Battle of Gettysburg

One of the great turning points in the Civil War came at the Battle of Gettysburg. The Union cause trembled in the balance as the North steadily lost ground. General Sickles, a man of great courage who lost a leg at Gettysburg, later asked Lincoln, "Were you not alarmed during the Battle of Gettysburg?"

"No, not one moment's anxiety," Lincoln responded. He had gone to his room, closed the door, fallen on his knees and told the Lord that the burden of carrying on the cause, in which he so firmly believed, was greater than he could bear. If the great Union cause was to succeed, omnipotent power must guide and direct it.

Lincoln recalled that when he finished his confession of man's limitation and established his faith in the power of Omnipotence, there came within his soul a peaceful assurance that all was well. Although news kept coming from Gettysburg of one Southern advance after another and the weakening of the

Northern forces, he had no fear, for God, infinite good, had spoken to him as clearly as it had to Abraham, Moses and Jacob.

Humble Are the Truly Great



THE KNEELING LINCOLN

Statue in Bronze - Designed by Herbert Spencer Houck.

Lincoln's habitual fervent prayer availed. God's plan for America to become the cradle for the second coming of the Christ could not be thwarted. As the hymn assures:

O blest is he to whom is given
The instinct that can tell
That God is on the field
Although he seems invisible.

General McClellan's Vision

It was important that the Union be preserved. If the Union were destroyed there would be no place on this earth where the prophesied "Comforter," the second coming of the Christ, could survive. Since "the divine must overcome the human at every point" (S&H 43:27) it was crucial that this divine understanding be founded in human consciousness.

Therefore, while God, infinite Mind, was "graciously preparing" Mary Baker Eddy for the reception of the final revelation of the absolute divine Principle of scientific mental healing (see S&H 107:4), Mind was also preparing a place for the second coming of the Christ, the "Comforter," Science and Health.

The following report showing divine intervention to preserve the Union is taken from The Individual Christian Scientist, Vol. XI, No. 2. It was originally published in the Portland (Maine) Evening Courier on March 8, 1862, a little less than a year after the Civil War began with the firing upon Fort Sumter by rebel forces in April of 1861:

When 1862 dawned few realized how dire the situation was for the Republic....General George Brinton McClellan went to Washington, D.C., to take over command of the United States Army. At 2 A.M. on the third night after his arrival, he was working over his maps and studying the reports of the scouts when a feeling of intense weariness caused him to lean his head on his folded arms on the table where he fell asleep.

About ten minutes later the locked door was suddenly thrown open, someone strode right up to him and in a voice of power and authority said: "General McClellan, do you sleep at your post? Rouse you, or ere it can be prevented, the foe will be in Washington."

In his published article General McClellan described his strange feelings.... He seemed suspended in infinite space and the voice came from a hollow distance all about him....The furnishings and walls of the room had vanished leaving only the table covered with maps before him. But he found himself gazing upon a living map of America including the entire area from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean.

McClellan was aware of the being that stood beside him, but could only identify it as a vapor having the vague outline of a man.

As he looked at the living map the general was at first amazed and then elated as he saw the troop movements and a complete pattern of the enemy's lines and distribution of forces. This knowledge would enable him to terminate the war speedily. But this elation dissolved as he saw the enemy occupy positions he had intended occupying within the next few days. He realized his plans were known to the enemy.

At this realization the voice spoke again: "General McClellan, you have been betrayed! And had not God willed otherwise, ere the sun of tomorrow had set, the Confederate flag would have waved above the Capitol and your own grave. But note what you see. Your time is short."

McClellan did note what he saw on the living map, transferring it to the paper map on his table. When this was done he became aware that the figure near him had increased in light and glory until it shone as the noonday sun. He raised his eyes and looked into the face of George Washington.

With sublime and gentle dignity Washington said, "General McClellan, while yet in the flesh I beheld the birth of the American Republic. It was indeed a hard [struggle] but God's blessing was upon the nation, and...with His mighty hand brought her out triumphantly. A century has not passed since then....and now by reason of this prosperity she has been brought to her second great struggle....

"But her mission will not then be finished; for ere another century shall have gone by, the oppressors of the whole world [the anti-Christ]...shall join themselves together and raise up their hands against her. But if she still be found worthy of her high calling, [the enemy] shall surely be discomfited. [Then shall the 'very small and feeble remnant' prevail 'and shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward' (Isaiah 16:14 and 37:31)].

"Then [in the 21st century] will be ended her third and last great struggle for existence.

Thenceforth shall the Republic [after the scripturally prophesied struggle with the anti-Christ has been won (see Rev. chapters 1320)] go on, increasing in power and goodness, until her borders shall end only in the remotest corners of the earth, and the whole earth shall, beneath her sheltering wing [through the message of the second coming of the Christ], become a universal Republic. Let her in her prosperity, however, remember the Lord her God, let her trust be always in Him, and she shall never be confounded."

Washington raised his hand over McClellan's head in blessing, a peal of thunder rumbled through space; the general awoke with a start. He was in his room with his maps spread out on the table before him, but as he looked at them[to his astonishment, he saw] the maps were covered with marks and figures he had made during the vision....this convinced him that his dream or vision was real and was from above. [The kingdom of God within McClellan's own consciousness had revealed to him what he needed to know.]

He set about immediately...to thwart the enemy's plan, riding his horse from camp to camp to implement the changes at once. The Confederate Army was so near that President Lincoln could hear the rumble of their artillery...at the White House [which no doubt helped to keep him in a constant state of fervent prayer for the safety of the Union. That prayer availed].

McClellan's action saved the capitol early in 1862, and saved the Republic from the second peril. The first "peril" had been the Revolutionary War.

"Liberty and Justice for All"

On Jan. 1, 1863, Lincoln by virtue of his powers as commander in chief of the army-issued the Emancipation Proclamation. It was chiefly a declaration of aims and policy. Much effective legislation followed. Later the 13th Amendment of the Constitution made slavery in the United States illegal.

The abolition of slavery was a great stride forward in this country. It was the spirit of love prevailing. Abolition came about because enough people cared for their brother man to want him to be free. To stand idly by and not follow the dictates of love would be an omission of the duty which God has placed on the shoulders of all who live in His presence - the presence of Love.

In a day when it was still unusual for women to take an active role in furthering social justice, Mary Baker Eddy's patriotic articles and poems in defense of the Union were published in the news media of that day. Other women also made wonderful contributions. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin and Julia Ward Howe's "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" both had an enormous influence in crystallizing public opinion in opposition to slavery.



The Lincoln Memorial

Inscribed for posterity in the majestic Lincoln Memorial is Lincoln's famous Gettysburg Address, calling on Americans to strive "that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth."

Mrs. Eddy, in her sixteenth to fiftieth editions of Science and Health, headed her chapter "Animal Magnetism" with Julia Ward Howe's stirring lines:

*He has sounded forth the trumpet
that shall never call retreat;
He is sifting out the hearts of men
before His judgment seat;
Oh be swift, my Soul, to answer Him,
be jubilant my feet.*

In joining the effort to preserve the Union and extend our nation's guarantees of liberty and human rights to "the least of these," Mary Baker Eddy, then Mary Patterson, was also actively preparing the cradle for the second coming of the Christ.

Significantly, it was not until after the Civil War was won and the fruits of liberty were extended to all, that Mary Baker Eddy was inspired to explain Jesus' teaching that the kingdom of God is at hand, is within our individual infinite spiritual consciousness.

Slavery's Abolition Clears the Way

Once the union of the United States of America was established on a firm foundation as an accomplished fact, and slavery was abolished, the scene was set and the way was open for the establishing of Christian Science-the discernment of the eternal union of Principle and its idea as All-in-all.

This Principle, which Jesus knew himself to be, expressed itself for us 2000 years ago as the man Jesus "the highest human corporeal concept of the divine idea" (S&H 589:16). This Principle, expressing itself as what is called man and the universe, is currently leading to the recognition of the equality of the sexes, the annulment of the curse on man, and to humanity's liberation from all bondage and limitation.

At the end of the Civil War, as Rebel and Union soldiers bound their wounds and made their weary way home to help a war-battered nation heal itself, this same Principle was preparing the way for mankind's full and final healing. Mrs. Eddy writes:

The voice of God in behalf of the African slave was still echoing in our land, when the voice of the herald of this new crusade sounded the keynote of universal freedom, asking a fuller acknowledgment of the rights of man as a son of God, demanding that the fetters of sin, sickness, and death be stricken from the human mind and that its freedom be won, not through human warfare...but through Christ's divine Science. (S&H 226:5)

"The history of our country, like many other histories, illustrates the might of Mind, and shows human power to be proportionate to the embodiment of right motives.... To legally abolish slavery in the United States was good, but its abolition in the human mind is a more difficult task." (S&H, 16th ed., p. 87)

The United States of America was founded on the promise of "liberty and justice for all." Forging beyond the Magna Charta and the Mayflower Compact, it had embedded this guarantee in the Declaration of

Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and now in the Emancipation Proclamation. Its citizens had lived these values and died to uphold them.

Christian Science, which is as ageless as God, made possible each of these documents and every step forward, for "Where the spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty." Now the time had come for the full revelation of Christian Science to human consciousness - the full revelation that evil is never real, is never anything but illusion, hypnotic suggestion, that Jesus said would end with the second coming of the Christ, the "Comforter."

Truth would reveal that human birth and death are hypnotic suggestions only, which will be overcome as mankind learns the Science of being, that already and always exists in "the kingdom of God within you." Remember, in the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed "and now, O Father, glorify thou me with...the glory which I had with thee before [this dream of life in matter overtook me.]" (John 17:5)