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Presentation to the soldiers on their return
by Rev. J. E. Taylor, July 20th, 1865.

Presented by
Benj'n J. Van Allen.
II Samuel 10-12.

"Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God; and the Lord do that which seemeth him good."

The Soldier's Return

At Vernon to the Soldier

returned from Washington & vicinity

Preached at Bergen July 28th, 1861
II. Samuel 10:12.

Be of good courage, and let us play the men for our people and for the cities of our God: and the Lord do that which seemeth him good.

This chapter records a war of David with the Ammonites and the Syracans who were their allies, together with the Ammonites, who upon a base surmise that it was of ill-intent, abused David's ambassadors. Then David rendezvoused and the Ammonites prepared for war against them who carried it into their enemies' country, and sent Joab and Abishai against them. They addressed themselves to the battle, with wisdom and valor, and their foes were totally routed. And thus David strengthened his own reputation for gratitude and for justice, in repaying injuries.
Joab having the arrangements made for leading his forces into
the conflict, entered into the plan of attack and of the conduct of
both as to the assault and as to the help to be secured in case of need
and told his brother Absalom: "If the enemy be too strong for me
then thou shalt help me; but if the children of Ammon be
too strong for thee, then I will come and help thee." Be of good
courage and let us play the men for our people, and
for the cities of our God! And the Lord do that which seemeth
him good. Here was sound judgement and practical
wisdom in arrangement, and it only remained to bravely
encourage himself and his brother and other officers and the
soldiers to do their utmost, so to act well their part, not for
pay and preferment, for honour and fame; but for their
people and for the cities of their God. Thus cherishing the public,
safety and welfare. "God and their country" above every thing else while engaged in this work. Thus he was valiant from two great principles - love of country and love of God. And with this expression of his arrangements and purpose and feeling, he cheerfully leaves the issue with God. "Let the Lord do that which seemeth him good.

Let nothing be wanting in us, whatever the issue - let God's word be done by us, and then let his will be done concerning us.

The right was left to control the issues. Their business was to make conscience of doing their duty. Although their valor could not bind him, to prosper them, yet they could hope for his salvation in such manner and at such time as he should please.

Such then should be the principles on which and the plan by which the contest waged and raging in our land should be conducted. Our national Government and the people of this
nation, believe they have the right on their side and that God will defend the right. This war is a war for principle; the very principles which are the basis of the Constitution under which we live, the palladium of our liberty civil and religious. If the foundations be destroyed what can the people do? Must anarchy prevail, must civil and social order be overthrown and men to prosperity. But in the righteous efforts to uphold our government, there is nothing more appropriate—more beautiful than constancy, valor, activity, and patient endurance of hardships, blended with that meek composure which, rejoices in recognition of and submission to the will of God. This is true courage, which subserves its purpose both in victory and defeat. And if a dying soldier on the field of Waterloo could cry out, and long for the answer, 'Is our General content..."
with us? and she comfortably as he received the affirmative.
answer, how much more the Soldier who can on the gory battle
field, conscious of firmness, valor, and fidelity say "Let the Lord
do that which seemeth him good?"

In the warfare in which this our beloved country is involved,
we are confident multitudes of our people recognize the mighty
hand of God. Why he should have suffered this deadly strife
and to what extent he may see fit, to allow it to be carried
is all unknown to us. We know its origin, its alleged purposes,
and in part its development. We who have been compelled
to go into it, have already shared some success, and some defeat
and hence we are taught by the hand of God: lessons of utility
to both at national, local and national woes—to be humble in
adversity, in prosperity to consider. The state of things with us
demands, sober, solemn reflection, not merely for present exigencies but for future. The peril of our Government, its distresses civil, mercantile, social, and religious, are all blended in this unattractive picture. And it is good where the counsels of men are, like those of Hohophob, turned into foolishness to have our God to go to, and to entreat Him to do that which seemeth Him good. And to encourage ourselves in God, who knoweth the end from the beginning and from ancient times the things not yet done, saying My counsel shall stand and I will do all my pleasure. While that encouragement will stimulate to action bidding us to stand at our post and with alacrity do the bidding of the Lord.

We think we are not mistaken in this as the purpose of all who are loyal to our Government, as men, as
citizens, as soldiers. Disaster and even defeat at times are not certain indications of an evil cause. Disappointment and even temporary failure may subordinate the making us valuable purposes of looking away from an arm of flesh to an arm of might. God is the God of battles and he often leads us by a way we know not and he can save by many or by few. If we are proud of spirit and vain, and foolish he will with rebukes correct us for our iniquity and when he has humbled us, he will come and save us.

Our duty is to inquire of him what he will have us to do. Then girding on our armor to stand in our lot and the remember that Lot was cast into the lap and the whole did protect themselves of the Lord. Whatever issues may then follow the consciousness of duty well done will cheer even amid defeat and in death.
And now guided by these principles of action we are warranted by the example given us in the text to
"Be of Good Courage and play the man for our people."
Courage is that quality of mind which enables men to encounter danger and difficulties, with firmness, or without fear or depression of spirits. It is a constituent part of fortitude but fortitude implies patience to bear continued suffering. (It is well said (by Addison) "Courage that grows from constitution often forsakes a man when he has occasion for it; courage which arises from a sense of duty acts in a uniform manner."

This is Good Courage. It strengthens for resistance of measures, rash and ill advised as well as served the aim; and clears the victory in the hour of conflict. But when all this is said and felt, that higher moral and holy
Courage, which maintains confidence in God and is based on that holy faith and love to Him which the true Xian exercises.

As he looks to Christ, who is the Captain of our salvation and has conquered sin and death and hell, reposeing the interests of his country as well as of his soul, as but bands in the great sustaining power of the Xian patriot and soldier,

dier. Our praying generals, who know the worth of this holy bravery, know the worth and power of prayer to

and reliance upon Him who heard and answered prayer.

They play the men for the people. They act the part of men,

noble men, valiant men for the people. They indulge now

virtuous feeling—prize no disguise—use no double deal-
ing—but strive to know and do their duty, go onward

to the conflict, with minds set upon the right and hearts

set on God and things above. Noble men who dare to
do their duty, and whatever the issue can appeal to God, as to the rectitude of their motives and the strength of their actions. In our present national trials may God give us such men and spare us the infliction of wicked rulers, for when the righteous are in authority the people rejoice but when the wicked bear the rule the people mourn.

Application

The occasion of this discourse is in perfectness. Three months ago and the alarm was sounded through the land that the Capitol of this great nation was in danger being threatened by an invading force in open re-bellion against the national Government, of our country. Men and means were called for. All over the Northern section of our land the uprising of the people was as that of
One man—every State prepared for action and an mighty army was soon in motion for the field of conflict—our good State, though small willingly bore her part— our own County and Town being strongly represented and we well remember the parting scenes of that to us eventful day.

We bade Adieu to our fellow citizens about to be fully equipped for battle. Our closest Sons and brothers—many of them husbands and fathers, were on the march. At that Sanction they had time to hear the parting word of counsel from their friend and to many of them their pastor, and to join in solemn prayer to God for preservation, health, usefulness and success, in the sad but imperative duty on which they had entered at the call of God and their Country. Then in distribution to them, the Word of God, for their perusal and their comfort and consolation. Thus furnished and
accompanied by the benedictions of two thousand and friends
and fellow citizens
they manfully set out and held on their way to the post of
duty assigned them. Often have we communicated
with them and endeavored at least in some degree
to minister to their comfort, during the period of their
camp life. We have heard from various sources
of their fidelity, their vigorous and skillful toil in the
arduous work of rearing entrenchments and guarding
the great road way to the national Capitol. By
day and by night, every man, willing and ready to
act his part. Few under other commanders went
forth, to other points of danger and of action and periled
their lives in the field of battle. They were of good courage
and now this day and evening, our eyes behold
most of them, nearly all of them, having fulfilled their day and with credit returned to their homes and friends, unharmed. If a few we may say God hath covered their head in the day of battle, while companions in arms have fallen by their side. Of all it may be said they have been strong to labor and have labored well and effectively. If it had not been their lot to be in the field, battle they have stood in their lot as God appointed it. If ever soldiers were the subjects of fervent prayer these men have been such. With every Sabbath and every weekly service they have been remembered, and at our family altars not been forgotten.

And now Soldiers we welcome you home. We greet you grateful with joyful hearts in view of your leaving to truly and so well played the war for the people. The people bless you.
Your families bless you - Your pastors bless you - this Church blesses you - Your country will bless you - God, the Holy God will bless you.

And now I have one desire, large and unbounded on your behalf, it is that you may all remember Your Preserver God. Give Him the glory due to his name. Praye Him in His holiness - consecrate yourselves to God - under the Banner of the Cross of Christ. Be devoted to his Cause and Kingdom. Put on the Gospel armor, and fight the good fight of faith; and when your last battle shall have been fought and your last victory won, as desire accomplished is sweet to the soul, your Great Captains voice shall proclaim your Welcome to his Kingdom and your crown

"Soldier of X well done."

"Begin thy new employ.

"Sing while Eternal ages run

Thy Master and his joy."