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### *People Spot Missile: A Christian Spirit*

As many of you know I have been extracting material relative to the Civil War from the Church Advocate which was my denomination's weekly newspaper at the time. The project ended up being much larger than I ever dreamed, but I feel I have learned much. The following are three articles taken from the Advocates. They are in Volume 4 of "A History of the Churches of God as presented by the Church Advocate." I am not making a political statement with this. Frankly, I feel neither party is exhibiting a Christian Spirit. The first of these is a proclamation of Thanksgiving from President Andrew Johnson.

#### **By the President of the United States of America. A Proclamation—National Thanksgiving.—**

WHEREAS, it has pleased almighty God during the year which is now coming to an end, to relieve our beloved country from fearful scourge of civil war, and to permit us to secure the blessings of peace, amnesty and harmony, with a great enlargement to civil liberty, and WHEREAS, our Heavenly Father has also during the year graciously averted us from the calamities of foreign war, pestilence, and famine, while our granaries are full of the fruits of an abundant season, and WHEREAS, righteousness exalts a nation, while sin is a reproach to any people; Now therefore, I, ANDREW JOHNSON, President of the United States, do hereby recommend to the people thereof, that they do set apart and observe the first Thursday of December (7<sup>th</sup>) as a day of National Thanksgiving to the Creator of the Universe, for these deliverance and blessings; and I do farther recommend that on that occasion the whole people make confession of our National sins against His infinite goodness, and with one heart and one mind, implore the divine guidance in the ways of National virtue and holiness.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the United States to be affixed. Done at the City of Washington this 29<sup>th</sup> day of October, in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five, and of the Independence of the United States the ninetieth year. (signed)  
ANDREW JOHNSON by the President, WM. H. SEWARD, Secretary of State  
November 11, 1865 p. 240

**THANKSGIVEING—PENNSYLVANIA SS.—**In the name and by the authority of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.—ANDREW G. CURTIN, Governor of the said Commonwealth.—**PROCLAMATION—**With feelings of the most profound gratitude to Almighty God, I invite the good people of the Commonwealth to meet in their places of public worship on THURSDAY, the 7<sup>th</sup> day of DECEMBER next, and raise their hearts and voices in praise and thanksgiving to Him, not only for the manifold ordinary blessings which during the past year He has continued to heap upon us; for abundant and gathered harvest, for thriving industry, for general health, for domestic good order and government, but also most expressly and fervently for his unequalled goodness in having so strengthened and guided our people during the last four years that they have been enabled to crush to earth the late wicked rebellion and to exterminate the system of human slavery which caused it.

As we wrestled in prayer with Him in the dark time of our trouble—when our brothers and sons were staking life and limb for us on many a bloody field, or suffering by torture and famine in the hells of Andersonville or the Libby—so now when our supplications have been so marvelously and graciously answered, let us not withhold from Him the homage of our thanksgiving. Let us say to all, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve, but as for me and our house we will serve the Lord.”

Come then ye people whom He hath so helped and led—come ye war-worn and mutilated men whom He hath spared to your dear homes—let us throng the gates of His temples—let us throw ourselves on the knees of our hearts with awful joy at the foot of His throne, and render aloud our praise and thanksgiving to Him, because He hath made the Right to prevail—because He has given us the victory—because He hath cleansed our land from the stain of human slavery—and because He hath graciously shown forth in the eyes of all men the great truth that no government is so strong as a Republic, controlled under His guidance, by an educated, moral and religious people.

Given under my hand and great zeal of the State, at Harrisburg, this seventh day of November in the year of our Lord one thousand eight hundred and sixty-five, and of the commonwealth the ninetieth. By the Governor, ELI SLIFER, Secretary of the Commonwealth. December 7, 1865 p. 256

*(Editor’s Note: I was deeply touched as I typed the proclamations of both President Johnson and Governor Curtin. Curtin was Governor of Pennsylvania, a state which just recently told a pastor who was asked to pray for the Legislature that he could not use the name of Jesus. Having pondered this, I have decided if ever I am asked to pray and told I can’t mention the name of Jesus, I will clearly suggest someone else should do that. How can we expect the blessing of God?)*

The following is an article from a secular newspaper, The New York Observer.

**A Memorable Year—1865.**—While the present generation lives, and in the traditions of generations yet to come the year now closed will be *Annus Memorabilis*, the memorable year of our country’s history. Doubtless we shall continue to celebrate, and with increased enthusiasm, the anniversary of our national independence; but the thanksgiving of Fourth of July will hereafter be deepened and hallowed by the recollection that in the year of our Savior 1865, an awful civil war was ended by the restoration of peace, unity and love.

On the summit of such joy is also raised a crown of rejoicing that by the voluntary act of the people of the United States, including States in the South and the North a fundamental law has been added to the Constitution, for ever forbidding involuntary servitude.

Then by the blessing of God the two great boons of peace and universal liberty have been bestowed in this great year. As we stand on the border of its grave, and its last sands are running, we would lift up heart and voice to Him, who hath wrought our deliverance with his own right hand, brought us up out of a horrible pit and miry clay, and established our goings upon a rock. He hath put a new song into our mouths, and we will praise Him while we have any being.

Already the past begins to look in review like a horrid dream. It is hard to believe that for four long years we could have been at war among ourselves, and that more fearful destruction of life and property has been wrought than in any war of modern times. But even this awful vision, as it rises on our sight, has this great lesson for us to read and remember, that no ties of blood, of interest or affection, no laws of nature or of constitution, no precepts of God or experience of man, are enough to control the passions of sinful man—“Whence come wars and fightings among you?” asked James the Apostle; and he answers then, “Come they not hence, even of your lusts?”

We remember, and we have been recurring to our files of six and seven years ago to read, the utterances and warnings with which we then addressed our countrymen of both sections and all parties, beseeching them to study the things that make for peace, and warning them that we were on the edge of a precipice, the gulf of civil war. All this is history. We have been made to taste, and see the horrors of intestine strife, and in the year now closing we have been brought by the good providence of God to the close of that strife and into the enjoyment of peace. Well will it be for us and for our children if we make this year so marked and illustrious in our annals that for all coming time we shall keep in mind the dangers of division and disunion, the sacredness of constitutional obligation, and the duty of mutual forbearance and love.

Above all things we need in the whole land a wider and deeper prevalence of those principles of righteousness which are taught in God's Word as the exaltation of a nation. Here, as in the Hebrew commonwealth, it has been shown that the nation which forgets God cannot prosper. In all legislation, seen in such matters as the tariff, the bankrupt law, the revenue tax, as well as those laws that respect the rights of states and individuals, there are moral principles involved which legislators in all countries habitually disregarded, and so got their laws against God's laws, and make confusion and disaster. As all truth is harmonious, so nothing can be wrong in itself and expedient for man. This has been shown a thousand times; but men of the world, governed by merely worldly considerations, never regard it in weighing the consequences of their action. Yet this year is to be memorable forever as the year in which God interposed to save this nation to vindicate the righteousness of his laws and compel the world to see that it is not by might, but the power of truth, that great events are wrought. He has shown us that the war of ideas has at last been brought to a close by the universal admission of the righteousness of that doctrine which affirms that his country is one, and all the people are free.

From this year onward we are to advance in the march of civilization with these ideas the essential doctrine of American statesmanship and individual success. No party and no man can export power without the support of these ideas; and that, not because they have been vindicated by the sword, but because they have their root in the will of God, and "of right ought to be."

If with the beginning of another year we could see the revival of love for pure religion spreading abroad in the land, crowning our peace with salvation, and filling the heart of the people with a new joy even that which is divine, and this revival pervading the Churches, and reaching to the fountains of influence in the State, hallowing this great people just now redeemed from the gulf of disunion and war, we should behold the sublimest spectacle which prophets and kings ever saw. Starting on a new career of commercial prosperity unequalled in the past, felt as a power second to no other on the whole earth, what grandeur and glory would invest its future if it became at once the exposition and example of that moral greatness which belongs to a people whose God is the Lord! Guided by this central and controlling idea, it would become the light of the world. Wherever the principle of free government by its influence were spread, the glorious Gospel of the blessed God would be commended and made victorious by the added energy of the divine Spirit, till the freedom with which Christ makes men free would be co-extensive with the human race.

The work has been well begun; God grant that it may not end with the end of the year of its birth.—*N.Y. Observer* January 4, 1866 p. 286

I was touched as I wrestled with this trilogy of articles, and felt a deep concern for the spiritual welfare of this country in these times. I would like to quote Joshua 24:14 <sup>14</sup> "Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your ancestors worshiped beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. <sup>15</sup> But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates,

*or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”*

Again, I am not intending this to be a political statement but a Christian one. I am unashamedly Christian, and believe it is time for all Christians to stand up and be counted for the master. James W. Moss, Sr.

*I am now available to present “The Role of the Church in the Civil War”, “Starting a New Service”, “Churches Have Personalities”, “People Spots”, “Does Your Church Really Care About People?” and “A Christian Perspective on Leadership Skills.” “Stewardship and Managing Debt” jm*

***Volumes 1, 2, and 3—“A History of the Civil War as Presented by the Church Advocate!” are now available. Volume 4 is well under way and will be the final volume. It is a history without the varnish of revision.***

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