

DISUNION

The following eloquent extract is taken from a sermon by the Rev. Thomas B. Thayer, of the Church of the Restoration (Universalist), of this city, delivered on the Sabbath following the death of General Taylor:

"I cannot contemplate the destruction of this Union, the breaking up of this great confederation of States, without a shudder, without a pang of almost agony, and an inexpressibly mournful feeling. And though I would rather see it perish than rest on injustice, oppression and wrong, and believe it must [? unreadable] according to the law of God, yet I have no patience with those traitors and fiery declaimers, who so flippantly discourse of the possibility of such a calamitous issue; and are so ready with sacrilegious hand, to put the torch to the noble and sacred edifice. They should be promptly and openly disfellowshipped by all true patriots, rejected and cast out as vile things, with scorn and contempt, by all wise and good citizens, by the nation itself.

"When I think what a vast amount of toil, and suffering, and blood, this Union, these free institutions have cost; what a glorious country we have; what a sublime political and social mission is assigned to us; how we are called of heaven and of earth to solve the great problems of liberty, free suffrage, self government, social order, general prosperity, and happiness; and with what unutterable emotions, with what trembling hearts, and beseeching looks, and outstretched hands, the oppressed nations of the earth look to us amid their sorrows and unsuccessful struggles for freedom, and plead with us to be true to the cause of humanity and liberty, by showing to all men and nations what is possible; when I think how all the wretched and down-trodden of every people point their sneering despots to this land, to show that largest liberty and perfect order are compatible, that the government of the people and the highest national prosperity and individual happiness, are not only possible together, but possible in no other way; when I think, if this Union sinks into wreck and ruin, and our noble and precious institutions break up in anarchy, and amid the horrors of civil strife and blood, how those suffering millions of Europe will be struck into silence and dumbness, and tyranny will once more have the argument against the people; when I think how long it will be, and at what fearful cost, ere the world will get back again to its present position, and Freedom climb up the difficult steep from which we shall have thrown her, by our monstrous treason and guilt;

"When all this passes before me, and I remember also that this vast area of new territory is sacred to religious and well as political freedom; that here every man may read his Bible without let or hindrance, and believe and worship God as he will, without fear of ecclesiastical power or penalty, and when I see how our institutions are multiplying the means of education for the masses, and diffusing everywhere knowledge and intelligence, and so

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increasing the means of the highest enjoyment of which man is capable; and when looking forward only a single century, I think, if this Union stands and these institutions remain, how they will have modified the forms or breathed a new spirit into all other governments, how the whole face of the earth will be renewed and freshened into beauty, and what a radiance and glory will rest on our dear native land—Oh, with what sickness of heart I think of the bare possibility of the breaking up of the Union! This Union, sacred by its associations with the names of Washington, Hancock, Adams, Jefferson, Lafayette; and consecrated and cemented by the blood shed on the heights of Charlestown, on the fields of Saratoga, Trenton, Yorktown, on the hills that lie all about us here, and the very soil we tread on now—When I consider how vast and various the interests involved in its continuance, my heart exclaims, 'Dumb be the tongue that would speak for dissolution, and palsied the hand that would attempt to realize it.' Nay, I am almost ready to say of the wretch that would remove the first stone of this glorious edifice of liberty and humanity, what Paul said of the traitor to the gospel, 'Let him be accursed.' "

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Transcribed on 4 Sep 2009 by Karen E. Dau of Rochester, NY