O. O. Howard
p. 1
C. H. Howard
p. 6-7

Inaugural Prayer Meeting

Among the important events connected with President Grants inauguration, the remarkable meeting for prayer at St Pauls Lutheran Church last evening deserves more than a passing notice

An Inaugural Prayer meeting was a happy thought suggested we believe by Geo. H. Stuart of Philadelphia.

It was a spontaneous gathering needing only the suggestion of notice, and it appeared as the meeting progressed, that similar meetings were being held in other parts of the Country.

Genl O O Howard was invited to preside, and announced as the topics for which special prayer was asked embraced the Government in all its departments, the personal piety of our rulers, that the Sabbath and sanctuary may be reverenced, that our laws may be just and salutary, that our nations wounds may be healed that all who labor to evangelize men may be blessed, and that King Emmanuel may be exalted in the land and among nations.

The 100th Psalm of Praise, the 5th of Matthew, the hymn- "Before Jehovahs awful throne" and a fervent prayer by Rev Dr Butler opened the meeting. Genl Howard read from the Evangelist calling attention to the closing sentence, in which President Grant asked the nation to pray for him. That is the Presidents endorsement of this meeting. God put it into his heart before the meeting was called or thought of

The General spoke of his first meeting with General Grant at Stevenson, Ala. when on his way to Chattanooga from the Army of the Tennessee to take Command of the Consolidated Military division of the West and of their interview in his own tent at Bridgeport. When the General alluding to the new Command just assigned him by President Lincoln, said that he never sought office or promotion, for he believed, that in case of failure, it would show that he had been flying in the face of Providence: but when responsibility came to him, he accepted it without fear. May not this explain the remarkable statement in his Evangelical that he feels the responsibility of his new station, but accepts it without fear.

General Howard alluded to his own custom for sometime past to pray daily for Genl Grant and asked that the Christians of the land should bear him always before God. - The Coronation Hymns - "All Hail the Powers of Jesus name" - brought the audience to their feet in a hearty chorus.

The Chairman recognizing Mr Stuart invited him to the front. With deep emotions, he alluded to his own feelings during the scenes of the day, in the Senate and on the Capitol steps, but, when rising up the Avenue in the procession he read the closing sentence of that address, a request for prayers by the "President of the United States", his heart found relief for its gladness only in tears.

Already that Lamentation is read and that request is responded to in prayer meetings, in Courts, and at Jesus' Altar, all over the land.

It is already across the Waters. And has been read on Change in London, and in many English homes, and thousands of hearts in Europe unite with us in the prayer "God bless our land through the new administration". "God bless our native land"

was the next hymn.

Dr Butler, pastor of the Church in which the meeting was held, was grateful to God for the inaugural. It was brief, comprehensive, full of truth & righteousness - a great relief for the miserable twaddle and special pleading to which the Country had been treated.

He had heard that some Washington Christian had refused to come here tonight, because it was to be a political prayer meeting. just as if the most solemn & important transaction under the Sun were to be undertaken and carried on without prayer. When we are Christian enough to hold national prayer meetings on every important political question, we shall be stronger, and safer, than we are now.

The Chairman, alluding to the next hymn to be sung - a Jubilee for Freedom - said that perhaps the programme had frightened Dr Butler's friend, but that the hymn was in its place, no one could for a moment doubt who had heard the Slaves in Georgia pray for Sherman's Army as it marched to the Sea.

General Ekin alluded to the topic of

prayer. that King Emmanuel may be exalted in the land.

The Chairman spoke of a scene at an Ohio Soldiers Asylum, where were gathered a Company of men, who had gone blind in the service of this Country, "So all over the land there are fragments of men Constantly reminding us what our nation is worth by its fearful cost.

Rev E. P. Smith of the American Mission-ary Association of N. Y. related an incident of Christian Commission work along the Mississippi river in 1863. A delegate from the North West in giving a report of his labors for the day, spoke of having prayer in General Grants tent, when surprise was expressed that he should attempt such a thing, he said "I tell you Brethren it is the easiest place to pray I have found in this Army" Now said the speaker when you find a man whom it is easy to pray with, you have one that it is easy to pray for. Let us take the thought of General Howard, and pray every day for President Grant, not in the general way, not merely for him as President, but as a man, a sinner like

one of us who needs Christ salvation. His prayer for us has gone all over the land that "we may have peace"; now let our prayer for him never cease till he has peace - the peace of God, which a man feels when he has surrendered to King Jesus.

Major Whittle of Chicago, alluding to the prayer that our nations wounds may be healed spoke of the remarkable revival now in progress at Richmond Va, in which the principal human worker is Rev Mr Earle of Mass. All Christians in Richmond are taking part in this revival work under this leader.

At St Louis a similar work is going on and Churches which have hitherto kept entirely apart over the line of the North and South feeling are now praying and working delightfully together. That is the way to heal the wounds of bad feeling, lift up Jesus. Has he not said "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me".

General Chas A Howard said, it is true that our President has made it easy for us to pray for him. Has he not in the words immediately preceding his request for prayer, shown that he

too is praying in the true Gospel spirit.

He expresses the earnest desire that such a fraternal spirit shall prevail throughout the land, as to secure a happy union. "The sentiment is scriptural" the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace." The faith of Christians may well be deepened for one who cherishes this feelings of brotherhood, it strengthens our hope not only for the Country, but for the race. When men in this spirit are ready to take their fellows by the hand as brothers and lift them up.

Rev Mr Hall of the Y. M. C. A. encouraged the meeting by the fact as given to him by an old Citizen of Washington that there were never before so many earnest outspoken Christian men in Congress as now.

Rev Mr Gregory spoke of our national existence as beginning in prayer. The Constitutional Convention at Philadelphia disagreed and were about to break up, when Benj: Franklin proposed to spend an hour daily in prayer. From that day the nation began to take shape.

Dr Rust of Cincinnati prayed for the

2 4 6

the poor of the land, and for a Christian life in Pres. Grant.

A city pastor offered fervent prayer that our President may be a model man for our young men, especially that he may escape the peril of our public men. that God would help him to be an abstainer from all that intoxicates.

Mr Wanamaker of Phil. offered prayer of thanksgiving for a Christian vice-president.

Gen Howard alluded to a fear expressed by an English friend, Rev Dr Morgan, lest the expected inaugural might take ground likely to excite bad feeling among his people. On the contrary the Inaugural takes the only ground on which bad feeling can be allayed - viz - Right between nations as between man and man.

Dr Morgan offered prayer for the two nations and for a bond of union among all the nations of the earth.

Hon Mr Dale of Indianapolis spoke of a Union prayer meeting in his City at the hour of inauguration.

A missionary to the Indians who had

brought three of his Converts into the meeting spoke with emotion upon the President's allusion to that race. Genl Howard read with loving emphasis the President's words respecting them- "Civilization, Christianization, Citizenship." At last that race has found a President who understands them; for said he, "I have long thought the Indian was a man." The words of the General, the presence of the Indians and the missionary, and the decisive utterances of the President prepared the meeting for the next hymn-

"We are rising as a people, With the changes in our land."

By special request the meeting continued beyond the hour and was closed with the Doxology and a touching prayer, and benediction by Rev Dr Pierson.

This is our first Inaugural prayer meeting. Let us hope that it is itself the inaugural of a custom which shall hereafter be perpetual.

Gen. O.O.H presides at
Inaugural Prayer
meeting for Gen. Grant

Gen. C H H "Comments"

March 1867