

Source 1

J.H. "A prophecy of the Southern Confederacy" Jefferson County, Virginia [1862?].

Excerpt(s):

That God should love thee, has been demonstrated in favour of the South, with the abundant crop, supplies and comforts to support the Armies with the material of war, is strongly shewing I have loved thee, and the men for thee. Isaiah 43d chapter 14th verse is England, with Europe, now acting in behalf of the South, by the receiving of our Commissioners or Ministers. The result of that act alone will stay the Northern power from continued aggression—thereby "giving a people for thy life." After this promise, hear the 5th verse: "Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west."

Annotation: White American Protestants, both in the North and South, strongly believed in divine providence — that God was actively working to shape events and that God's efforts could be perceived as these events were happening. This source from Jefferson County (part of West Virginia today) in 1862 is an example of this thinking. Presenting itself as a "prophecy," it predicts that the Confederacy will achieve victory over the Union because God's love "has been demonstrated in favour of the South." Further signs that the Confederacy will win, according to this author, are seen in the "abundant crop, supplies and comforts to support the Armies with the material of war". The "prophecy" goes on to predict that England will side with the Confederacy against the Union and bring about an end to the war. Given the estimated year, 1862, which was early in the war, the source is likely a reaction to the success Confederate armies were having against Union forces at that point in the war.

Source 2

A sermon on the war, by the Rev. Elias Nason, preached to the soldiers at Exeter. N. H. May 19, 1861.

<https://www.loc.gov/item/rbpe.09400400/>

Excerpt(s):

My hope of ultimate success does not so much repose in our superiority to our enemies in point of military skill, or power, as in our going forth to the field of contest in confederation with Almighty God. . .

Why then am I hopeful in this dreadful conflict? I answer fairly: not so much because of our numbers, gold, or fleets, or generalship at the north; not so much because of our union at the north; not so much because of our "materiel;" our "sinews of war" at the North—No, no, no! not these alone.—but I am confident of final victory because of the plans and the action of that wise Spirit whom we come into this temple to worship today; because we have set up our

banners, not in our own, but in his Almighty name; and because I believe we go forth under his benediction to the battlefield—and one with God upon his side is an invincible legion. The South has set up its banner in the name of secession, in the name of rebellion; in the name of oppression! The poisonous rattlesnake is its fitting emblem. Such a banner ought to fall; it is opposed to human progress; learning, liberty; it is opposed to the great leading ideas of the nineteenth century; such a banner ought to fall; and I feel assured that God through your right arm intends to make it fall; and the illustrious “Star spangled banner” rise, heaven-lighted with the swelling songs of Freedom, over it.

Annotation: The notion of divine providence, that God would actively shape events in favor of the American people, was just as strongly held in the North as in the South. Here a sermon by Reverend Elias Nason, delivered to Union troops in New Hampshire, expresses faith that the Union will defeat the Confederacy because God will be on their side. “I am confident of final victory because of the plans and the action of that wise Spirit whom we come into this temple to worship today.” Nason also declares the Union on the side of “freedom” as well as “human progress; learning, liberty” likely references to fighting against slavery. To Eason this was further evidence that God was on the Union side. Note too the month and date of the sermon, May of 1861, was a month after the Confederate attack on Fort Sumter and still a few months before the first major battle of the war. At this point many on both sides would have predicted a short victorious war.

Source 3

“The Nutshell: the system of American slavery "tested by Scripture," being "a short method" with pro-slavery D.D.'s, whether doctors of divinity, or of democracy, embracing axioms of social, civil, and political economy, as divinely impressed upon the human conscience and set forth in divine revelation; in two lectures," 1862

<https://www.loc.gov/item/12005595/>

Excerpt(s):

[From page 22-23]

And yet will ye plead the Scriptures in justification of American Slavery? We can imagine but one mode of evading the common sense application of the “Golden Rule.” It is substantially this: “With my present experience and knowledge,” says the apologist, “of the conditions of mankind, were I a black man, I would prefer for myself and posterity forever the condition of Slavery to that of Freedom. So do I unto others as I would they should do unto me.” Dare ye answer thus at the bar of God in the day of final account! at His bar who commands: “Break every yoke and let the oppressed go free”!

Annotation: Slavery was the central issue dividing the Union and Confederacy and on this issue too both sides believed that the Bible supported their position. While pro-slavery Christians

pointed to the existence of slavery in the Old Testament of the Bible, anti-slavery Christians tended to argue that the teaching of the New Testament were opposed slavery as it was practiced in the United States. In this 1862 pamphlet, the author identified only as “Layman of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the Diocese of Connecticut” argues that the Golden Rule, found in the book of Matthew and Luke as part of the Sermon on the Mount, necessarily means that slavery is not justified. The author then quotes from the book of Isaiah, ““Break every yoke and let the oppressed go free” a passage often invoked by abolitionists.

Source 4

Battle hymn of the Republic / by Mrs. Julia Ward Howe. [Philadelphia] : Published by the Supervisory Committee for Recruiting Colored Regiments, [1863?]

<https://www.loc.gov/item/98101743/>

Battle hymn of the republic - background information

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.200000003/>

Battle hymn of the republic audio

<https://www.loc.gov/item/ihas.100010455/>

Song of the first of Arkansas ... written by Captain Lindley Miller, of the First Arkansas Colored Regiment

<https://www.loc.gov/item/amss.cw105500/>

Excerpt(s):

Oh, we're the bully soldiers of the “First of Arkansas,”

We are fighting for the Union, we are fighting for the law,

We can hit a Rebel further than a white man ever saw,

As we go marching on.

Chorus: Glory, glory hallelujah.

Glory, glory hallelujah.

Glory, glory hallelujah.

As we go marching on.

2. See, there above the center, where the flag is waving bright,
We are going out of slavery; we're bound for freedom's light;
We mean to show Jeff Davis how the Africans can fight,
As we go marching on!

(Chorus)

3. We have done with hoeing cotton, we have done with hoeing corn,
We are colored Yankee soldiers, now, as sure as you are born;
When the masters hear us yelling,
they'll think it's Gabriel's horn,
As we go marching on.

(Chorus)

4. They will have to pay us wages, the wages of their sin,
They will have to bow their foreheads to their colored kith and kin,
They will have to give us house-room, or the roof shall tumble in!
As we go marching on.

(Chorus)

5. We heard the Proclamation, master hush it as he will,
The bird he sing it to us, hoppin' on the cotton hill,
And the possum up the gum tree, he couldn't keep it still,
As he went climbing on.

(Chorus)

6. They said, "Now colored brethren, you shall be forever free,

From the first of January, Eighteen hundred sixty-three.”

We heard it in the river going rushing to the sea,

As it went sounding on.

(Chorus)

7. Father Abraham has spoken and the message has been sent,

The prison doors he opened, and out the pris'ners went,

To join the sable army of “African descent,”

As we go marching on.

(Chorus)

8. Then fall in, colored brethren, you'd better do it soon,

Don't you hear the drum a-beating the Yankee Doodle tune?

We are with you now this morning, we'll be far away at noon,

As we go marching on. (Chorus)

Annotation: The United States at the time of the Civil War was a very religious nation and soldiers in the Civil War often expressed their understanding of the war in religious terms. This can be seen in the marching songs that were used to recruit soldiers to the war and that were later sung by the soldiers themselves to keep time during marches and engage soldiers' interest. A famous example of a marching song, “The Battle Hymn of the Republic”, incorporates religious themes implying that God is on the side of the Union in their effort to defeat the Confederacy and end slavery. Many versions of this song with different lyrics were sung by Union troops including “Song of the first of Arkansas”, the first of Arkansas being a regiment of Black soldiers. In addition to the “Glory, glory hallelujah” chorus, the song references Gabriel’s Horn which in many Christian traditions signals that Judgment Day has arrived. In the song, when the “masters” hear the first Arkansas coming they will think it’s Gabriel’s Horn.