

General McClellan Vision - McClellan's Potomac Panic



“She is called on to accomplish that vast result, self-conquest; to learn that important lesson, self-control, self rule, that in the future will place her in the van of power and civilization. It is here that all the nations hitherto have failed, and she, too, the republic of the earth, had God willed otherwise, would by tomorrow’s sunset, have been a heap of stones, cast up over the final grave of human liberty. But her cries have come up out of the borders like sweet incense unto heaven. She shall be saved. Then shall peace once more be upon her, and prosperity shall fill her with joy.

“But her mission will not then be finished; for ere another century shall have gone by, the oppressors of the whole earth, hating and envying her exaltation, shall join themselves together and raise up their hands against her. But if she still be found worthy of her high calling they shall surely be discomfited, and then will be ended her third and last great struggle for existence. Thenceforth shall the Republic go on, increasing in power and goodness, until her borders shall end only in the remotest corners of the earth, and the whole earth shall beneath her shadowing wing become a Universal Republic. Let her in her prosperity, however, remember the Lord her God, let her trust be always in Him, and she shall never be confounded.”

Editors Note: General McClellan's Vision of George Washington was originally published in the Portland Evening Courier (Maine) on March 8, 1862 and later in The Individual Christian Scientist, Vol. XI, No. 2. At this present time, I have been unable to track down an original copy of the Portland Evening Courier or The Individual Christian Scientist. The text below of McClellan’s Vision is a compilation from mainly from The Mary Baker Eddy Institute, *Chapter VI, the Civil War- The War Between the States* and Manly P. Hall’s book, *The Secret Destiny of America*. It should be noted that there are some minor variations in the text between the two versions. What is most striking between the text of McClellan’s Vision and the text of Anthony Sherman’s account of George Washington angelic visitor at Valley Forge is the concept of three perils or three great struggles for survival and God’s divine plan for the United States. The text also gives us a possible glimpse into God’s long term plan for the republic.

McClellan was a public figure known to most Americans, he ran against Lincoln in 1864 and served as Governor of New Jersey in 1878. If the newspaper story was untrue, some have argued, McClellan would have requested a retraction. McClellan kept meticulous records of all his correspondences and no retraction appears to have been requested. Yet in the throws of the Civil War, the story from a Maine paper may have missed his attention. Perhaps the most telling sign of the authenticity of his vision was his emotional condition soon after he accepted command of the Army on the Potomac.

Lincoln replaced McDowell with George B. McClellan as Commander of the Department of the Potomac,

July 27, 1861. On November 1st, he was given the Commander-in-Chief of all the Union forces, replacing Winfield Scott. According to some historians, he was in a “near panic” over the possibility of a rebel invasion of Washington DC. While this could be attributed to the condition he found the army at the time, he appears he had a dire concern. McClellan was a well disciplined General, for him to be, as he wrote to his wife “worried half to death” infers something very serious was bothering him.

In the book *George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon*, Stephen W. Sears wrote “The anxiety was real, for within ten days of his arrival in Washington McClellan became convinced that he was about to be attacked. The Confederate army at Manassas Junction and Centreville grew in his mind... On August 4 he put his forces on a forty-eight-hour alert. On August 6 he extended the alert. On August 8 he announced to General Scott a state of emergency. His intelligence sources confirmed that attack was imminent”¹ He was in a “near panic” over a Confederate invasion, he also felt that Providence had assisted his army’s situation with heavy rains that swelled the Potomac. In letters to his wife on August 16th and 23rd respectively of 1861 he wrote:

“Gen. Scott is at last opening his eyes to the fact that I am right & that we are in imminent danger. Providence is aiding me by heavy rains, which are swelling the Potomac, which may be impassable for a week - if so we are saved. If Boeuregard comes down upon us soon I have everything ready to make a manoeuver which will be decisive. Give me two weeks & I will defy Beauregard - in a week the chances will at least be even.”²

“Beauregard has missed his chance, & I have gained what I most needed - time! ...I do not live at all. Merely exist, worked & worried half to death. I have no privacy, no leisure, no relaxation, except in reading your letters & writing to you.”³

Most telling of his inner thoughts on God and country are in letters to his wife. Like Lincoln, McClellan understood that the reason for the war was that the nation had broken divine commandments and had sinned grievously against God. He believed the Civil War was the wrath of God on the country for Her past transgressions. In a letter to his wife Mary Ellen on October 31st of 1861 he wrote:

“It is perfectly sickening to have to work with such people & to see the fate of the nation in such hands. I still trust that the all wise Creator does not intend our destruction, & that in his own good time he will free the nation from the imbeciles who curses it & will restore us to his favor. I know that as a nation we have grievously sinned, but I trust that there is a limit to his wrath & that ere long we will begin to experience his mercy.”⁴

After Lincoln’s visit to Sharpsburg, after the battle of Antietam, he replaced McClellan as commander of the Army of the Potomac with General Ambrose Burnside.

RE: Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910)

Mary Baker Eddy was the founder of the Christian Science church as well as several periodicals including *The Christian Science Monitor*. In 1843, she married George Washington Glover. He succumbed to yellow fever the following year, two months before the birth of her child. Mary Baker suffered from poor health which only deteriorated over time to the point where she was bed-ridden for periods of time. She married Dr. Daniel Patterson in 1853.

In October of 1862, she sought out treatment from a Dr. Phineas Quimby in Maine. His treatments did help her restore back some of her health. In the fall of 1862, she wrote a letter in defense of Dr. Quimby and his treatments to the *Portland Evening Courier*. After being criticized by the *Portland Adviser*, Mary Baker wrote another article in support of Dr. Quimby published in the *Portland Evening Courier*. She wrote, “P. P.

Quimby stands upon the plane of wisdom with his truth. Christ healed the sick, but not by jugglery or with drugs.” Four years later she withdrew into the word of the Bible and trust in Christ to heal her. She started what is know today as Christian Science.

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When 1862 dawned few realized how dire the situation was for the Republic....General George Brinton McClellan went to Washington, D.C., to take over command of the United States Army. At 2 A.M. on the third night after his arrival, he was working over his maps and studying the reports of the scouts when a feeling of intense weariness caused him to lean his head on his folded arms on the table where he fell asleep.

About ten minutes later the locked door was suddenly thrown open, someone strode right up to him and in a voice of power and authority said: “General McClellan, do you sleep at your post? Rouse you, or ere it can be prevented, the foe will be in Washington.”

In his published article General McClellan described his strange feelings.... He seemed suspended in infinite space and the voice came from a hollow distance all about him.... The furnishings and walls of the room had vanished leaving only the table covered with maps before him. But he found himself gazing upon a living map of America including the entire area from the Mississippi River to the Atlantic Ocean.

McClellan was aware of the being that stood beside him, but could only identify it as a vapor having the vague outline of a man.

As he looked at the living map the general was at first amazed and then elated as he saw the troop movements and a complete pattern of the enemy's lines and distribution of forces. This knowledge would enable him to terminate the war speedily. But this elation dissolved as he saw the enemy occupy positions he had intended occupying within the next few days. He realized his plans were known to the enemy.

At this realization the voice spoke again: “General McClellan, you have been betrayed! And had not God willed otherwise, ere the sun of tomorrow had set, the Confederate flag would have waved above the Capitol and your own grave. But note what you see. Your time is short.”

McClellan did note what he saw on the living map, transferring it to the paper map on his table. When this was done he became aware that the figure near him had increased in light and glory until it shone as the noonday sun. He raised his eyes and looked into the face of George Washington.

With sublime and gentle dignity Washington said, “General McClellan, while yet in the flesh I beheld the birth of the American Republic. It was indeed a hard [struggle] but God’s blessing was upon the nation, and, *therefore through this, her first great struggle [first peril] for existance.* His mighty hand brought her out triumphantly. *A century has not passed since then and yet the child Republic has taken her position of peer with nations whose pages of history extend for ages into the past. She has since those dark days, by the favor of God, greatly prospered. And now, by reason of this prosperity she has been brought to her second great struggle [second peril]. This is by far the most perilous ordeal she has to endure; passing as she is from childhood to opening maturity, she is called on to accomplish that vast result, self-conquest; to learn that important lesson, self-control, self rule, that in the future will place her at the van of power can civilization.*

It is here that all the nations hitherto have failed, and she, too, the republic of the earth, had God willed otherwise, would by tomorrow’s sunset, have been a heap of

stones, cast up over the final grave of human liberty. But her cries have come up out of the borders like sweet incense unto heaven. She shall be saved. Then shall peace once more be upon her, and prosperity shall fill her with joy.

“But her mission will not then be finished; for ere another century shall have gone by, the oppressors of the whole world, *hating and envying her exaltation*, shall join themselves together and raise up their hands against her. But if she still be found worthy of her high calling, *they* shall surely be discomfited, *and then will end* her third [peril] and last great struggle for existence.

Thenceforth shall the Republic go on, increasing in power and goodness, until her borders shall end only in the remotest corners of the earth, and the whole earth shall, beneath her sheltering wing become a universal Republic. Let her in her prosperity, however, remember the Lord her God, let her trust be always in Him, and she shall-never be confounded.”

Washington raised his hand over McClellan's head in blessing, a peal of thunder rumbled through space; the general awoke with a start. He was in his room with his maps spread out on the table before him, but as he looked at them[to his astonishment, he saw] the maps were covered with marks and figures he had made during the vision.

McClellan walked about the room to convince himself that he was really awake. He then returned and looked at the maps. The markings were still there.

Convinced now that the experience was heaven sent, He set about immediately and rode from camp to camp to thwart the enemy's plan making the necessary changes in his strategy to meet the enemy's planned offensive.

His moves were successful, and he prevented the capture of the city of Washington. The Confederate Army was so near that President Lincoln could hear the rumble of their artillery...at the White House.

General McClellan concludes his account of the strange vision that saved the Union with these words: “Our beloved, glorious Washington shall again rest quietly, sweetly in his tomb, until perhaps the end of the Prophetic Century approaches that is to bring the Republic to a t'ird and final struggle, when he may once more, laying aside the crements of Mount Vernon, became a Messenger of Succor and Peace from the Great Ruler, who has all the Nations of the Earth in his keeping.

“But the future is too vast for our comprehension; we are the children of the present. When peace shall again have folded her bright wings and settled upon our land, the strange, unearthly map marked while the Spirit eyes of Washington looked down, shall be preserved among American archives, as a precious reminder to the American nation of what in their second great struggle for existence, they owe to God and the Glorified Spirit of Washington. Verily the works of God are above the understanding of man !”⁵

Endnotes:

1. Sears, Stephen W, George B. McClellan: The Young Napoleon, Page 101; New York, New York, Da Capo Press, 1999.
2. Sears, Stephen W., The Civil War Papers of George B. McClellan: Selected Correspondence 1860-1865, Page 86; New York, New York, Da Capo Press, 1989
3. Ibid, Page 89.
4. Ibid, Page 113-114.

5. The Mary Baker Eddy Institute, Chapter VI, the Civil War- The War Between the States, *http://mbeinstitute.org/America/amerch6.html* (text in italics) Hall, Manly P. The Secrete Destiny of America, Page 183-189; The Philosophical Research Society, Inc., Los Angeles, California, 1991.
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