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American Presbyterian.

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 1866.

RELIGIOUS CONQUEST OF THE SOUTH.

It cannot be doubted that the lenient treatment of the rebellious South has encouraged the reorganization and perpetuation of the guilty churches and institutions in that section, and has secured them, to some extent, the active sympathy of disloyal church members of the North. It is perhaps one of the least auspicious circumstances for the future of the South, and of the whole land, that men so ingrained with the principles of the late pro-slavery rebellion, as its ministry and its editors, are permitted to hold their former places of influence. The most fertile sources of the rebellious spirit are thus established among the permanent elements of public opinion at the South. We can never be brought to admit the rectitude or the safety of such a course. The Southern churches and religious and other papers have forfeited every right to exist, by their fierce zeal in behalf of a pro-slavery rebellion; by their mad endeavor to stop the onward movements of Christian civilization; by prostituting their sacred functions and their influence in sanctioning an unjustifiable and bloody war, and by goading on the men of the world to put new fetters on the unhappy slave, and to seize, even at the cost of the Union and of National life, a broader area for the development of American slavery.

These Churches, these religious papers are unchanged. They are still the leading influences in the South. Encouraged by the seeming weakness of the moral sentiment of the loyal North as to the sin of rebellion, and by the active sympathy of a few of the men of wealth of our section, they are gathering up the scattered elements of their church organizations. They are rallying the somewhat discouraged pro-slavery sentiment of the South. They are concentrating their sectional churches on the old issues, in spirit if not in form, which originally divided them from their Northern brethren. They are nursing, not only in their hearts, but by open efforts, an undying hostility to the spirit in the Northern churches which led to the abolition of slavery, and the suppression of rebellion.

And if the North is content, and the Northern Churches are indifferent, the consequence must be the perpetuation, in all its most objectionable and dangerous features, of that perverted politico-religious sentiment, which, for nearly a generation, has been the mark of the apostasy and debasement of the Southern Churches. How far backwards into the North it will be able to fling its noxious influence; what disturbances it may yet originate in Church and State, we do not know. We believe the Northern Churches know a little more than they did, and are, with the whole loyal people, on a higher moral platform than they were, when the various disruptions of Churches took place; and that improved sentiment, under God, is our hope. But the surest way of preventing mischief in the North or the South, is to push vigorously and wisely our measures for the evangelization of the South. This is a work which the Northern Churches must do. That terribly false sentiment of the South must be met. We must not leave at community entirely to the influence of Churches founded on such a sentiment.

It is plain we must begin the spiritual reconstruction of the South with the loyal elements. Unlike our grievously mistaken president, we must make these, black or white, the core of our new organizations, and most vigorously must we push, and most liberally sustain, every effort to rally these elements, and make them the nucleus of a healthy influence upon the indifferent and the hostile. And as the loyal element is almost exclusively colored, our efforts at building up a true Church of Christ, embodying the principles and exhibiting the spirit of the gospel, should be largely directed to this population. Most affectionately, indeed, should we cherish the few living sparks, that never went out, among the faithful white Christians of the South. And it has been the unenvied good fortune of our Church to meet and welcome back, after eight years of separation, a whole Synod of such faithful men and women in the hill country of Tennessee. With scarcely any more attention than needed by the new settlements of the West, thirty-four churches, and two thousand two hundred and sixty members in East Tennessee were raised to their feet, cheered, encouraged, and established in a career of the highest usefulness for their section, and for the whole country. But

beyond this, our efforts as a denomination, for the spread of a pure gospel through the South have been almost nothing at all. In Charleston, South Carolina, we have a flourishing church of colored Presbyterians, which is indeed encouraging; but that is the extent of our achievements, out of East Tennessee, on this great field.

We believe our Church has its part to perform in this work, and with the proper degree of faith and zeal it can be no small part. The vantage ground of East Tennessee has not been given to us for naught. When the Union army had once fastened their hold upon this territory, the doom of the rebellion was sealed. Can we regard our position in that territory as less significant in a religious point of view?

We heartily rejoice at the successful efforts of other Northern bodies. The Congregationalists have our cordial wishes for success in their movements in Nashville, Memphis, and New Orleans, where, we believe, they have organized independent churches. The Baptists are laboring with great success among the colored people in Petersburg especially. The Methodists organized a complete Conference in Charleston, April 2d, upon the basis of "the common brotherhood of mankind," the blacks having no foolish prejudice against the admission of their pale-faced brethren to their ranks. The Conference includes two districts, about three thousand members, with twelve itinerant and sixteen local preachers, including Chaplain French, U. S. A., with a large number of Sunday-schools and teachers, and a "Baker Theological Institute," having already a class of fifteen students. This movement has made a great stir in Charleston; in the language of the *Southern Christian Advocate*, "the war of aggression has begun," and the "religious filibusters" are marshaling their hosts for the conflict.

We ask the attention of the young men just leaving our seminaries to this great work. We appeal to our Home Missionary Committee, and to our General Assembly to act zealously, practically, and liberally in the matter. We are doing almost nothing for black or white, in a field, which, we are sure, is more important, just now, than any in foreign lands; yea, we verily believe than any at home. Encourage and enable intelligent, pious colored youth to offer themselves, and sustain such institutions as the *Lincoln University* (late Ashmun Institute) in their noble purpose to train these youth for the work. We repeat, as the colored are the great loyal element of the South, a large proportion of our interest, attention, and liberality should be directed to supplying them with Christian ordinances and a Christian education.

We are glad to see that our *Presbyterian Monthly*, of the current month, gives evidence, in its opening article, that the Secretary of Home Missions not only has this matter on his heart—where we know it has always lain—but desires to arouse the Church more extensively to its great importance. We subjoin, in conclusion, an extract from a letter bearing on this subject, written by one of our brethren, until lately acting as chaplain of a colored regiment. It is dated at a town in Alabama, on the 11th of April last. The reference is to a colored congregation belonging to another branch of the Presbyterian Church.

I have made some developments here which I wish to lay briefly before you. The Presbyterians are dissatisfied with the old form of treatment, and are willing to do now as Northern men direct. They number from two to three hundred, and have no church, no head, no encouragement. They say the Methodists left the Southern organization, and are now in a prosperous condition, and say if any one will help them now, they will join him, if he be a Presbyterian and from the North. What steps will be best? If God directs, I can return here by October, and enter the work in building up a church. The Lord has blessed our regiment in a wonderful manner. In some companies over two-thirds have come out on the Lord's side, and give bright evidence of the fact by a working example. The best men in the regiment have taken this new stand.

By this fall the colored people will be able to help build their church. What is needed here is a good church building for the people. What can be done for them at Philadelphia? I can do something at Cincinnati, but do not know how much. I do desire so much to see these people aided in their good endeavors.

—It is a question worth asking, where in all probability, the miserable butcher Probst spent the last Sabbath before he committed the accumulated crimes of which he has been found guilty. We commend it especially to our German friends, who so unanimously oppose the laws for the preservation of the sanctity of the Sabbath. And we ask them to say, candidly, whether they desire among us a state of things calculated to produce a succession of such monsters, and a repetition of such unspeakably horrible deeds?

OUR regular letter from East Tennessee will appear next week.

THE COMING O. S. ASSEMBLY AT ST. LOUIS.

The elements of confusion are multiplying to such an alarming degree in the other branch of the Presbyterian Church, that we almost expect to see the majority driven to the short and summary method of disposing of them, contemplated by the movers of the Convention. Should the various lines of action proposed by different parties come before the body in the ordinary course of business, the session must be long, acrimonious, and, as it seems to us, disastrous in no small degree. The large majority, we cannot doubt, desire the body to maintain its position, as assumed since 1861, without change or compromise. At the same time, there are strong and influential minorities, who desire concessions to be made. Some wish the malcontents of Kentucky, and the border generally, to be pacified in some way, and to be retained in the Church. A still smaller number cherish hope of the return of the entire Southern General Assembly, and they are agitating in the press, so far as it will give them a hearing, and they expect to agitate in the coming Assembly, for concessions broad enough to encourage the rebel organization to come in bodily. If these minorities are not in some effective way silenced beforehand, they will assuredly fill the whole session with their clamor. We have too much faith in the temper of the renovated O. S. Assembly to believe they will carry their point; but of their almost unbounded power to disturb and harass, no one can doubt. The election of such ultra rebels and radical pro-slavery men as Stuart Robinson, Dr. S. R. Wilson, and Henry J. Vandyke, D.D., as commissioners, means war of the most unrelenting character.

As in all our dealings with slavery and rebellion, the most ominous and unwelcome phenomena were indications of sympathy in the North, so our brethren find it in the situation now forming. The well-known benefactor of the Church in Chicago—the wealthy inventor McCormick—has thrown himself ardently upon the side of the Southern portion of the Church, and has corresponded and published largely in the interest of an ecclesiastical reconstruction quite as liberal as that proposed by the Executive for the nation at large. It appears that Mr. McCormick commenced his efforts at reconstruction as far back as July 14, 1865, when he wrote to Prof. B. M. Smith, of Union Theological Seminary, Va., in reply to a request for a donation to that institution. He hesitates to give the donation, preferring to wait, in the hope that "the position of the General Assembly [North] will be set right at its next annual meeting." He has "reasons for believing that many able men in the Church contemplate a prompt and vigorous movement in that direction." He trusts "that, when that is done, the churches South will as promptly return to their former connection with it." Reverting to the money question, he says: "I should, before contributing, prefer to see some indications to that effect."

However, without waiting for the "indications," he sent his donation of one thousand dollars. Then the indications came—such as they were. Dr. Smith's letter refers to the loyal action of the General Assembly of 1861, which our readers remember as the Spring Resolutions; he says he agrees with Mr. McCormick in characterizing those acts, in the mildest terms of charity, a "fatal error," and adds:

Then, in my humble view, the prime and essential step toward reunion is to be taken by the Northern Presbyterians. Subsequently Dr. Smith so modified or restated his position, under the manipulations of Mr. McCormick, as to leave himself, in the language of the latter, "uncommitted upon the subject until further action thereon should have been taken by the Northern Assembly." Meanwhile the Southern Assembly met at Macon, and the correspondence goes on. That Assembly presented features which convinced "conservative" men in the Northern body that the Southern Church was a fixed fact; and they began to revolve in their minds quite a different sort of Union—that with the radical and once suspected "New School." It was "a corollary," they said, from the failure to reunite the South. Mr. McCormick and Prof. Smith view the matter differently. The former says:—

"I am glad to find that, since the meeting of the Macon Assembly, you still think there is some prospect, in some way, of reunion of our Church at some time."

Prof. Smith paints the prospect as very dark. Dr. Hodge's position even is "unsound." He comes to the painful conclusion that reunion is impracticable for the present, but by no act of theirs (the Southern body). He thus puts the alternatives involved in the situation:—

If then, the radicals have the upper hand at St. Louis, union is out of the question; the sounder gets the upper hand, we may be able to come together. In any event, I look forward to a union of sound, good Presbyterians by individuals, churches, Presbyteries and Synods; and we shall have under the name, it may be, of the Southern Assembly, a pure and able church, reformed and regenerated, but still great, pure and able church. So mote it be!

Mr. McCormick introduces the correspondence, which the *Presbyterian* refused to print, but which appeared in the *New York Observer* and the *Tribune*, as follows:—

I do not decline to cast in my mite of help in the struggle, the result of which, at the approaching meeting of the General Assembly, will, in my judgment, decide that question at least for the next quarter of a century.

We doubt whether Mr. McCormick could rally more than a score of votes at St. Louis in aid of his proposal, pure and simple, to make substantial advances toward the rebel General Assembly. His own Presbytery, of Chicago, have sent as commissioners two ministers, who have signed the call for the convention, and two elders, according to the *Presbyter*, of the same way of thinking. And the demeanor of Stuart Robinson and the border men generally, may be so unwise as utterly to frighten from conservative breasts all traces of sympathy with their cause, and consolidate all into one temporarily radical body. But we fear the net result of all may possibly, for the sake of peace within, if not for enlargement without, be a sensible letting down of the moral tone of the body by a modification, more or less extensive, of its existing honorable record. Against this contingency, the vigilance of the faithful men in the majority should be most cautiously directed.

RETRIBUTION TO ENGLAND.

The Fenian movement in this country, so far as it has any real military meaning, is crushed, and we are heartily glad of it. So far as it can be made a means of gathering a heavy tax from the earnings, and of the poorest classes in the community, and of enriching a few designing men, it will probably continue; and we are sorry for the poor dupes. We cannot say that there is anything of a movement, from beginning to end, which ought to excite a single emotion of sympathy in the breast of any sensible person, and we much doubt whether it does. The Irish Catholic population in this country will not, in a generation, outgrow the effect of their affiliation with the disloyal elements of the North during the war. Those who constituted the bulk of our secessionist minorities, and showed their readiness to aid in destroying the country of their adoption, naturally cannot expect any considerable sympathy in a wild and revolutionary effort to gain a country of their own.

We have no hesitation in saying that the chief interest felt in the movement by spectators in this country, arises from its peculiar providential relations to the attitude taken by Great Britain towards ourselves, in our own struggle for national life and liberty.

The prevailing opinion in Great Britain—with many noble exceptions, to be sure—was upon the side of the rebellious South. How a Christian people, one of whose holiest traditions and most marked characteristics is loyalty, could take such a position, was almost inexplicable. But it was the fact, nevertheless. Even the detestable object of the rebels—to establish a pro-slavery government—did not avail to divert the sympathy of the ruling classes from their cause. Help was afforded them, and a whole piratical navy was built, armed, equipped, and manned in England, sheltered in British ports, repaired in British dockyards, and coaled from British vessels in every part of the world. The British provinces on our borders were the refuge of rebel conspirators, who there safely concocted the most infamous plots of wholesale arson, poison, and robbery; who made raids into our peaceful borders with but a hypocritical show of interference on the part of the British authorities, and who laid there the whole plan of the atrocious and diabolical act which crowned the rebellion—the assassination of the President.

Within six months after that act, England had to deal with incipient rebellion in three widely separated parts of her dominion; Ireland, Jamaica, and Canada. All the annoyance, disorders, exposure, bloodshed, and nameless perils of a great civil outbreak, seemed hanging over her head. The evil plight in which she rather exulted to see a neighboring nation, and to the measure of which she allowed her subjects to contribute, seemed about to become her own. The policy of disintegration, which she had defended as lawful and good for us, seemed about to have a full opportunity to test in regard to her own widely-

extended and somewhat slightly connected provinces. And the sympathy she had given to our rebels, was returned in the most cordial manner by millions of our population to her own rebels. It was manifested in very much the same manner, too; by organizations, by the collection of vast sums of money, by the issuing of bonds for a rebel republic—likely, too, to be worth about as much to the owners as the rebel cotton loan now is in Europe. And what is worth noticing, the sympathy for England's rebellious subjects comes not from the loyal classes in the North, who were most deeply wounded and embarrassed, by her course in the war. They are her friends, so far as she has any with us. The Fenians are mainly Northern secessionists. Thus the friends and sympathizers of the rebels here are punishing England for the encouragement she gave them. It is they who have been returning the chalice to her own lips, while we have but needed to look on. Of course, the rebellious-minded are the ones who are sure to make the most prompt use, for themselves, of any concession to the spirit of rebellion, in the case of others. This plain truth, forgotten in a surprising manner by England has been speedily and emphatically brought to her mind.

The Fenians, too, have carried out the parallel, by a threatened invasion of Canada from various points on our border. And the fright and the arming and drilling and emigration from the threatened localities in Canada, have been about equal to that caused in corresponding parts of our own frontiers, when Southern rebels made Canada a base of operations against the North. Here, accounts have been most marvellously squared. And we greatly rejoice that the Christian element of revenge has come in, to prevent the absolute completion of the parallel. Our government has observed the Golden Rule. It has sent one of our best Generals and an ample force to the disturbed location, and is honestly resolved that no mischief shall be done. Our neighbors, who must have very guilty and very active consciences just now, as they remember *St. Alban's*, will be safe. Their defenceless towns will not be entered, nor their banks plundered, nor their peaceful citizens shot in the streets by Fenians in disguise.

We shall say little about the summary measures taken with conspirators in Ireland; the quick trials, the heavy sentences, the suspension of *habeas corpus*, &c. They were undoubtedly right. We approve them with all our hearts. Nothing but summary processes will avail with rebels. Tenderness to rebels is treason to the State. We confess, we never felt much shocked at the blowing of the rebel Sepoys from the muzzles of British guns. The authors of the unspeakable atrocities of that rebellion richly deserved a worse fate. We have always admired the promptness and severity with which British law is generally administered to rebels. But is it not remarkable that this justly severe people should be found siding with the conquered rebels of the South, and joining almost unanimously to deprecate the punishment even of the chief? And is it not still more remarkable that just in the midst of their calls upon us for moderation, Ireland should suddenly give them an opportunity to show how utterly opposed they are to such a policy themselves; how quickly and how surely their instinct of national self-preservation guides them to conduct the very reverse of their shallow counsels? If the ox goes my own property or person, I am wonderfully aided in reaching the most positive conclusions as to disposing of him; though when preying upon others only, I saw no reason to make way with him.

But when we call to mind the outcry made in Great Britain against the highest and truest exponent of the nature and penalties of treason that our war has produced—we mean Gen. Butler—we have but to think for one moment of Jamaica. Not that we mean for a moment to admit that the cases are parallel. We most heartily approve, as our readers know, of all the prominent acts of that remarkable man's administration when among the rampant foes of his country, and wish it had been in the order of Providence that a man of such principles could have held a prominent place during the entire processes of reconstruction. But we can, at least, point the British writers who are never weary of defaming him, to Governor Eyre. Yes, it is truly surprising how speedily a new instance has been furnished, in addition to the startling catalogue of barbarous wholesale punishments, which European nations have not hesitated to inflict on rebels and public enemies when they fell into their hands; while they hypocritically cry out against any approximation to justice in our dealings with the would-be destroyers of our country.

We cannot conclude better than by quoting Gen. Butler's summary of these cruel acts in his farewell to the citizens of New Orleans:

The enemies of my country, unrepentant and implacable, I have treated with merited severity. I hold, that rebellion is treason and that treason persisted in, is damnation, and any punishment short of that due a traitor, gives so much clear gain to him from the clemency of the Government. To be sure, I might have regaled you with the amenities of British civilization, and yet been within the supposed rules of civilized warfare. You might have been smoked to death in caverns, as were the Covenanters of Scotland by the command of a General of the royal house of England; or roasted like the inhabitants of Algiers during the French campaign; your wives and daughters might have been given over to the ravisher, as were the unfortunate dames of Spain in the Peninsula war; or you might have been scalped and tomahawked, as our mothers were at Wyoming, by the savage allies of Great Britain in our own revolution; your property could have been turned over to indiscriminate "loot" like the Palace of the Emperor of China; works of art which adorned your buildings might have been sent away, like the paintings of the Vatican; your sons might have been blown from the mounds of cannon like the Sepoys at Delhi; and yet, all this would have been within the rules of civilized warfare as practised by the most polished and most hypocritical nations of Europe. For such acts, the records of the doings of some of the intimates of your city towards the friends of the Union were a sufficient provocation and justification.

CENTRAL CHURCH, WILMINGTON, DELAWARE.

Last Sabbath Rev. George F. Wiswell celebrated the tenth anniversary of his installation as the first pastor of this church. There are few, if indeed there is any church, in our connection, that has had a more marked and favored history. Great harmony and affection have always prevailed among the people, and between them and their pastor; and the church has been characterized, from the beginning, by an earnest, working spirit. Its spiritual history has been very remarkable. There have been, in the ten years, seven distinct and general revivals. Perhaps the most extensive has been that in progress since November last, in the course of which it is thought that one hundred persons have been savingly brought to Christ.

Since this church began its record, five hundred persons have been added to it, three hundred and twenty of whom have united on profession of their faith. The present actual membership is four hundred and fifty-five.

There are four Sabbath-schools in connection with the church, numbering over seven hundred children. Of the three mission or branch schools, two have already neat and commodious chapels, and for the third, a chapel is to be erected this season. There is also in the church an efficient Young Men's Christian Association, numbering about seventy-five members, and much of the church work is carried forward through this organization.

But our knowledge of this church does not leave us to infer that any sense of personal responsibility is lost in mere organization. On the contrary, we believe that the efficiency and usefulness of this favored congregation has come from the fact that each one has felt responsible for his share of labor in the vineyard.

Our position as a denomination in the growing city of Wilmington was never so commanding and promising as now.

There are few more laborious and faithful pastors than he who, ten years since, was installed pastor of the Central Church, and few can look back over so glowing and successful a record. In the struggles of the past five years—such years as have brought true men to the surface—this church and its honored pastor have been a tower of strength in that border State; and so will they continue to stand unflinchingly by the great principles of freedom and human rights, for which so many have given themselves as martyrs.

NATIONAL SOLDIERS AND SAILORS' ORPHANS' HOME.

This institution, located in the District of Columbia, whose patriotic and benevolent character is adequately announced in its title, and whose claims to the confidence of the citizens is guaranteed by its list of officers—the wife of Gen. Grant being the President, is preparing to hold a fair for the promotion of its high object, in the City of Washington during the present month. Contributions for the tables, or of articles suited to the wants of the orphans, or of money for the general support and maintenance of the Institution are invited. And as the fame of our city for staunch patriotism and boundless liberality to the soldiers and sailors of our Union has become national, it is hoped that we shall not fall below our reputation in this effort at the National Capital.

Mrs. Dr. John C. Smith is one of the Directors, and one of our most energetic ladies in all works of patriotism and benevolence. Mrs. John C. Farr, has been designated to take charge of the effort in this city.

Donations in money, goods, or fancy articles will be received at Farr & Brothers, 324 Chestnut street.