

Correspondence.

PUBLIC OPINION IN THE SOUTHERN CHURCHES.

KNOXVILLE, TENN., Jan. 7, 1867.

In my letter from New Orleans of the 3d, so much space was occupied in stating the political situation as it appeared to me on my first visit to this city, as to compel the omission of many other incidents and observations of much interest to me. And in respect to the political future, I may add, that during my two weeks' stay in that city, I did not meet a single person of rebel proclivities who did not speak of the establishment of a territorial or provisional government for Louisiana, by the present Congress, as a fixed fact and a condition to be submitted to by them; the inquiries on their part being generally directed to probable details in the arrangement.

Of the churches existing in New Orleans before the war, all, without a single exception, are rebel in their feeling and action—generally even more so than the politicians. In one of the most prominent Episcopal churches, for two or three Sabbaths, prayers for Congress had been omitted in their service. Singularly enough, the only minister who gives any indications of "accepting the situation," is the one who, perhaps, more than all the others combined, contributed to hurry the State into secession; and who, when it was an accomplished fact, himself entered, as a private, the rebel army—the Rev. Dr. Palmer, of the First Presbyterian Church. And in regard to him, the indications are strong that any further expressions of loyalty on his part will not be tolerated by his congregation.

The First Congregational Church of New Orleans, now about a year old, is an exceedingly live institution. The ordination of its first pastor, Rev. Mr. Van Orden, of New York, took place during my visit. Rev. Dr. Kirk, of Boston, Eustis, of New Haven, and Palmer, of New Orleans, conducted the services of the occasion. The church has now a membership of thirty-four, about one-half being young men; it is self-sustaining, and in every respect, bears evidence of energy and vitality. Its edifice, a neat wooden building, well fitted up, capable of seating four or five hundred persons, is well located, and its trustees having, with the wisdom of a serpent, insured it in a thoroughly "Secesh" company, it escaped conflagration on the night of the July riot. The building and site were purchased by the American Congregational Union.

The only other loyal religious organization in the city is that under the care of the Rev. Dr. Newman, of the M. E. Church. Two churches were started under his care during the war, buildings from which rebel ministers had fled, being turned over to him by the general then in command of that department. These buildings, some time since, by order of the present Executive, were restored to their former rebel owners, and the congregations, having no place of worship of their own, have perceptibly diminished. But it was no part of the arrangement of that Church, now in its centennial year, to allow so important a field to be given up or go into decline. Steps were immediately taken to build new churches, and Bishop Simpson was sent here to look after the interests of this branch of his Zion. I heard him preach, two Sabbaths since, to one of these congregations in the hall of the Mechanics' Institute, the hall in which the convention was assembled when the riot of the 30th of July occurred. The surroundings of the place seemed to me exceedingly fit for such an assembly on such an occasion. It was the place where Horton fell, a martyr to his devotion to the cause of liberty, when the echoes of his voice in supplication for the blessing of the Great Ruler of nations upon the deliberations of the convention had scarcely died away. The walls of the room were scarred with the marks of a hundred bullets, the windows were still in the shattered condition in which the infuriated mob, five months before, had left them. An audience of a thousand persons was present, and the sermon of the Bishop was one worthy of the place and the occasion.

Another item of the discouraging effects of the President's "benignant" reconstruction policy is in the discontinuance of Freedmen's schools. At one time, under the vigorous military regime of Butler and Banks, the education of Freedmen was carried on with more energy and success than at any other point in the country, with the single exception of Washington. But the tax levied for their support, by the direction of the President has been discontinued: under the same authority, the funds of the Freedmen's Bureau are no longer permitted to be used for that purpose. No source of support remains, except the small amount appropriated by the various benevolent associations of the North, and nearly all the schools have of necessity been discontinued. When impartial suffrage, based on being able to read and write, goes into operation, the beneficence of our present Executive policy of reconstruction, in introducing as small a portion as possible of the colored element into the demoralizing arena of politics, will become apparent.

So far as I am aware, the only field which the Home Missionary Committee of our Church has attempted to occupy with any degree of thoroughness in the South, is that section of Tennessee, the centre of which is the point from which this letter is dated; and stopping over the Sabbath

here on my return Northward, I have had much interest in learning the condition of the work. I have been glad to find many facts most encouraging in their character, but I have also been much surprised at the magnitude and imminent necessity of the work that must be done at once, or disastrous consequences will follow. It is hardly overstating the fact to say, that two thirds of the churches in connection with our General Assembly in East Tennessee are at this moment without pastors and without ministerial supply; and there are no loyal ministers in Tennessee from whom the supply can be drawn. It is also true, that unless provision is speedily made for these churches, they will be occupied by the Southern Church; not because there is a surplus of ministers in the South, for many important churches of the denomination, and a large portion of those of less importance, are vacant; nor because the prospective supply is unusually encouraging, for I believe the aggregate number of students in the seminaries of both branches of the Presbyterian Church in the South is less than thirty; but because East Tennessee is the only locality in the South in which any number of churches have remained loyal to our organization, and it is deemed of the utmost consequence, at whatever hazard, that this field shall be occupied to the exclusion of loyal ministers, if possible.

The church building in this village is, perhaps, the finest of any belonging to any Presbyterian congregation in the State, and its congregation, under the care of Rev. Mr. Bachman, is rapidly recovering its ante-war condition of prosperity. In the county of Blount there are seven or eight churches without present or prospective supply from this quarter. The important church of Cleveland on the railroad from this point to Chattanooga is vacant; that at Jonesboro is about to become so, and, indeed, looking over this whole field, "the harvest is plenteous, but the laborers are few."

MARGARETTA.

She is dead, and yet she speaketh. She will always speak, to a wide circle of relatives and friends in her native place. She will speak to her fellow students and teachers in Ingham University. Perhaps she ought to be permitted to speak to yet others by the eloquent voice of her blended suffering and working in the cause of Christ, for we are assured that Jesus has said to her, "He that heareth you, heareth me."

The admonition of the Master: "Work while the day lasts," seems to echo back from our every memory of her. Converted at an early age, throughout her school days she is acknowledged, by teachers, pastors, and prominent friends, as a faithful Christian worker. The smile of earth and heaven rested on her as she strove to prepare her mind and heart for future usefulness. The happy hours pass rapidly on. One year more, and she will graduate, and be ready for whatever life-work Providence shall assign her. But God's ways are not as our ways. He sends to her sanguine, resolute spirit, the slow, sure angel, consumption. He paints her pale cheek with a hectic flush, and heaves her lungs with an ominous and painful convulsion. The message cannot be mistaken. It says: "Your days are numbered. You cannot go on with your studies. To stay at home and die, and to do so cheerfully, is the study God assigns you." It is the severest lesson she ever tried to learn. The struggle it cost her is fully known only to herself and her God; but she succeeded, she learned her hard lesson by heart. Henceforth to suffer, rather than to do, is her accepted duty. She is ready to take up her daily, hourly cross, and follow where Jesus leads.

But by means of home-nursing, and her own happy, resolute heart, she rallies by the return of spring, and calling to mind her favorite motto, "Better wear out than rust out," and believing that she could be doing as well as suffering for her God and her fellow creatures, despite the fears and remonstrances of friends, she takes a position as teacher in a primary school of a neighboring village.

Here she toiled as she loved so well to toil, making even her hoarse cough seem musical to the children, by the loving words and smiles with which she muffled it. She is warned that she is hastening her end, that she will not live to see the end of the term. But she has sought the guidance and blessing of God, and she will not be fearful but believing, and God grants her according to her faith. Her days seem to be prolonged miraculously, like those of Hezekiah. Amid the careful, happy exercises of her school-room, she gains a little strength instead of losing. She gains yet more in the ensuing vacation, and with the opening of the fall term, she is strong enough to go again to the University. And here by the grace of God, she is strong enough to graduate at the head of her class. Her valedictory, on "The Unseen Battle Field," presented an exquisitely beautiful picture of those soul-conflicts in which she herself had so often been a victor.

She was now honored by God and her affectionate instructors with a situation as fellow-teacher. Faithfully and well did she fulfil her trusts. Her vigorous intellect, her animated face, and the cheerful, earnest, affectionate tones of her voice, breathed the enthusiasm of life through her classes, even while her hollow, oft-recurring cough, sounded a *memento mori* to the gayest heart.

But her labors in that fondly cherished sphere of action were closed in less than a year, and closed forever.

The struggle to give up the luxury of noble toil is easier now. It was but a review of an old familiar lesson. Serene and beautiful was that dear face as it again took its place in the home circle. It had not the passive physical beauty of some faces, but it did possess, in a rare degree, the beauty of a glowing intelligence, and the grace of a submissive, trustful, Christ-like spirit. It is true that the purple tinge of consumption was deepening on that patient countenance, but like the autumnal hues of inanimate nature, it only gave her spiritual nature an added glory.

"You are not afraid, Retta," said her pastor, "to look upon your position just as it is?" "Oh, no," said she, "I accustom myself to do this." For two long, weary years, she looked death in the face with the triumphant courage of a martyr. Now the pale messenger would approach within a step, and seem just about to snatch her away; and then he would stand aside, waiting the command of God, until her great fear was, that she should not be patient under her protracted sufferings.

When too weak to have full control of her thoughts, it was her delight to follow some Christian friend in addressing the throne of grace. When some one was speaking of the approaching thanksgiving, she exclaimed joyfully, "I shall spend thanksgiving in heaven." God took her at her word, and when her flesh and spirit seemed already parting, she broke forth with rapturous assurance. "I am taking one more step in knowledge." She felt as if she were slipping out of time into eternity. But she lingered on the threshold of heaven, lingered to feel even there, like her divine Master, the power of the Prince of Darkness in the hidings of her weakness of mind and body, sinking in the ruin of death; she lost sight for a moment of her Saviour; but she rallied quickly with the joyful cry, "Jesus will bear me through." Her heart and her flesh were falling her, but God was the strength of her heart and her portion forever. The pearly gates, so long ajar, closed behind her, and we saw her no more.

At her funeral, "The voice said cry, and I said, what shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flowers of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but the word of our God endureth forever." D. S.

LETTER FROM A COUNTRY PARSONAGE.

TWENTY-ONE CONDUCTORS DISMISSED. So I overheard one passenger say to another as we were borne along on a late occasion towards your goodly city. "Twenty-one of them dismissed?" Why, what has occasioned such a wholesale delivery?" "Oh, the old story; actual or suspected embezzlement of the company's funds."

THE OLD STORY.

This casual answer seemed very pregnant with meaning, and gave rise to these musings: Are railroad conductors, as a class, sinners above all other men, so as to warrant such a wholesale imputation? With them my acquaintance has generally been limited to the mere collection of fare and tickets, or the answering the various queries of passengers. Nothing, certainly, in their general appearance and demeanor, as they pass through the cars, which instinctively impels you to clap one hand upon your watch, and the other upon your pocket-book. There is perchance something in the employment itself peculiarly trying to the under-layers of man's moral constitution. The duties to which railroad companies subject their conductors, may be such as to keep in abeyance the honest tendencies—if such there be—of feeble human nature, and bring into active exercise all its original rascalities.

It must, no doubt, be admitted that the facilities afforded by this business for appropriating the funds of others to personal use, are greater than in almost any other earthly employment. To fill honestly such a position, men of proper intellectual, moral, and spiritual balance are required. Men of tender conscience, sound principle, and from under whom no moral prop has been ruthlessly knocked away. Many such men we have in our community, notwithstanding the snarling assurance of infidelity; "that every man has his price." Men sufficient are there in our Christian community, whose price is at least too high for the money of all the railroads to seduce into peculation and swindling.

Unfortunately for railroad companies, their own wicked arrangements debar them from obtaining the services of such men. Stockholders persist in running their trains, and, in various other ways, breaking the Holy Sabbath. Truly honest, thoroughly trustworthy men cannot be induced for hire, to engage in such a business. Let stock owners understand, once for all, and distinctly, that the man who can be induced to engage in a business, which by its known terms requires him to violate any one of God's commandments, that man will with equal facility, when occasion offers, violate any of his obligations to man. "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is enjoined with equal emphasis and solemnity, as "Thou shalt not steal." He who lends himself for hire, knowingly, to violate

the Fourth Commandment, will not hesitate to invade the eighth, in order to increase his gains.

If those moneyed corporations are not, as charged, soulless, and will listen, the country parson will preach them a short sermon:

YOUR POLICY, GENTLEMEN, IS BAD.

In dismissing these twenty-one conductors, you have acted unwisely with respect to your own moneyed interests. Those discharged are no more dishonest than will be the twenty-one with whom you expect to fill the vacant positions. Have you forgotten the fable of the fox and the flies. Reynard, by some mischance, got stuck in the mire. He was soon covered by a swarm of hungry flies, who were fast filling themselves with his life blood. A jackdaw, seeing the pitiable condition of his bushy-tailed friend, kindly proposed to drive away the blood suckers. By no means, responded the fox; for, were these away, a new and hungry swarm would immediately cover me, and in that case I am a dead fox.

YOU ARE TEMPTERS TO EVIL.

By running your trains upon the Sabbath, and inducing men for hire to conduct them, a direct and cruel temptation is thus placed before them to sin against God, by engaging to break His express command. You tempt men needing employment, by almost a bribe to violate the divine law, and thus also furnish direct encouragement for them to violate the laws of your company. You swindle the Lord and all men and women, having a conscience, out of the Sabbath; and, as a just retribution, men swindle you out of your money.

YOU HAVE NO FAITH IN MEN.

Yourselves violating, without seeming compunction, the law of God for gain, you no doubt imagine that every one else is ready to do the same. In full sympathy, no doubt, are you with the old Scotch Divine; who, when commenting upon the passage where the Psalmist exclaims, "I said in my haste that all men are liars," merely remarked, "Och, David, mon, did you but live here now, ye might say it at your leisure." Gentlemen of the railroads, we preach to you a better gospel. Truth and honesty have yet a habitation among men, but you are not in the way to find them. Learn to act honestly towards God and men, and you will speedily have honesty meted to yourselves. Just dealing is profitable for this life, leaving the next out of account.

JOHN W. FORNEY.

In the almost frenzied efforts to break down the sanctity of the Sabbath by the Editor of the Press, a perusal of the above short sermon is requested. Does he forget, or has he yet to learn, that should the sanctity of the Fourth Commandment be destroyed, the eighth, yea, all the others, go down with it? The greatest enemy of his race could not act more to the injury of the community in which he lives, than one working for such a result.

Fraser, Pa. A. M. STEWART.

DESTRUCTION OR REFORMATION.

One might expect that a Christian Church would be ever a power in defence of the people, an uplifter of the weak, an educator of the broad masses of humanity. But a Christian Church which has become corrupt, whose officials are self-indulgent, ambitious and covetous, allies itself with the oppressor, and handles ignorance and superstition as tools, whereby, out of the people, to make gain. Pharisees, of whatever age, lay burdens upon others, grievous to be borne, which they will not touch, and devour widows' houses, as a profitable recreation from the pretentious sanctimony of long prayers.

The Romish Church, now for these twelve centuries, has had its Pharisaic element. Doubtless it has had priests of eminent self-denying toil in behalf of true holiness. It has had multitudes of lay-members who adorned the doctrine of God our Saviour; but as an organized body, (to speak with mild charity) its influence has been against the truth and against the progress of the people. Hence the lessening of its power has been sought by the lovers of Christ and humanity, and even its destruction has been prayed for and prophesied.

The year 1866 records a decisive blow at the temporal power of the Papacy. The Roman States will soon cease to be governed by the Pope. The head of dissolute priests, clothed with the powers of the State, loading the people with taxation and shutting out knowledge, improvement and spiritual light, will soon find the earthly sceptre falling from their frail hands, and the city of art, and of temples, the city of history and prophecy, will become part of United Italy, the capital of a constitutional monarchy.

When the temporal power of the Pope ceases, we may look for a moral improvement in the Romish Church. When the sphere of influence and activity is moral, then only by moral improvement can there be moral power; only by spiritual vitality can there be spiritual sway. The Romish Church must cease to be an influential Church, or it must cease to be a secular, a corrupt and worldly Church. We may pray with faith that the work of reform shall commence within the Church. As in the days of John Huss, so in these days, leading priests shall pronounce against abuses, shall plant their arguments on the word of God, shall preach the Gospel for the people. As in the days of Martin Luther, so now they shall proclaim justification by faith, declare against celibacy, against

the worship of the Virgin Mary, against the abuses of the confessional; that in these United States, where the Romish Church holds so wide and strong a communion, it shall possess itself of the spirit of American institutions; that the country of free discussion and an open Bible, the country of Sabbath-schools and public schools shall become, through the reconstruction of this great church, not its hunting ground, but its home.

The Romanists have now in the United States 2,550 church edifices, which on an average of 300 members to each church, gives 765,000 communicants, representing a population of 5,000,000. They have 15 Archbishops, 34 Bishops, 2,502 priests. They have 30 Colleges, 26 Theological Seminaries, 177 male and female Academies, 624 parochial schools, 171 convents, 139 hospitals and asylums. We may pray with faith that these Romish edifices, these multiplied cathedrals, temples, colleges, asylums, shall be the dispensers of a pure Gospel, the dwelling place of Christ, the instruments of the Holy Spirit for the regeneration of mankind.

THE THIRTY-TWO DOLLARS.

The following is not a story, but a plain narrative of facts. A benevolent Christian gentleman was applied to for help, by a poor man who was in want of work. He was informed where he could get employment in a distant place, furnished with money for his journey; a letter of recommendation, and provision was made for his family in his absence. The poor man was full of gratitude to his benefactor; when the gentleman said to him: "I do not know what your religious views may be; but are you able to see any connection between the death of the Lord Jesus Christ and my giving you this thirty-two dollars." "No," said the man; "I feel very much obliged to you, but I cannot say that I fully understand what you mean." "Why," said the gentleman, "if Jesus Christ had not died on the cross, I would not be a Christian man, as I hope I am. I would have had no feeling of kindness towards you, there would have been no charity in this community, and you and your family might have starved to death. Never mind thanking me, but promise me that you will think of these things. Give your love and your thanks to Him who has taught us that you shall love thy neighbor as thyself, and whose blood cleanseth us from all sin."

The lesson is obvious. Let us all think of these things, for there is nothing really good in the world which cannot be traced directly to the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

TOWANDA, PA.

Missionary Intelligence.

India—Eighty Years' Progress.—The earliest register of the Tinnevely Church, bearing date A. D. 1780, gives the number of Christians as thirty-nine. In 1863 the Church numbered 23,341 baptized persons, and about 10,000 or 12,000 catechumens; and in the Christian schools there were no fewer than 12,482 children! The missionaries (Church of England) live in tents, and move about from place to place throughout the district of 1,200 miles square, preaching to more than 300,000 souls.—The Bishopric of Calcutta has been declined by three English clergymen.—The London Missionary Society has two native candidates for the ministry in India, who have been examined and their written answers sent forward to London for examination and approval.—The Chumba Mission 1863, Rev. W. Ferguson, in obedience to a call of God, resigned the chaplaincy of a Highland regiment, and started with two interpreters for this Himalajah district. Here he was kindly received by the Rajah, and has spent three years in proclaiming the simple word of life in the streets and suburbs, at first through an interpreter, living among the people, entering into their feelings, availing himself of every means to draw the people to church. His right hand man is a native musician, called Delawar, who has adapted Christian hymns to native airs; and by singing gathers the people to the preaching. Mr. Ferguson is a man of remarkable physique, a Presbyterian, but refuses to put himself under society control. He has made seventy-three converts, and opened the way for many more.

Africa—Egypt.—For some twelve years past our United Presbyterian brethren have had a mission in Egypt, with eight ordained missionaries, a native printer, three female teachers, and twenty-nine native helpers. At the several stations Arabic preaching is maintained, and eleven day-schools and boarding-schools have an average daily attendance of 650 children, about 200 being Jews or Moslems. The success of the mission among the Copts (who number nearly half a million) has been so great that the missionaries are hopeful of seeing before long a general reformation in this long-ignored Eastern Church. Hundreds of Scriptures and other religious books are disposed of every year among the Moslems and Jews.—In Western Africa the units, and in South Africa five districts containing sixty-five circuits. The whole number of missionaries employed is not less than a hundred, the aggregate of members amounting to nearly twenty thousand. Their mission in South Africa has been blessed with a great revival under the preaching of a Californian, and from 200 to 400 accessions have been received in several places.—A Car Colony, having been convicted by a commission of personality of the devil and the sinfulness of Christ's human nature, brought an action against the Moderator of the Synod, and obtained a *locus standi* before the Supreme Court, by alleging that the promulgation of this judgment jeopardized his position. (we do not gather which) was not properly constituted according to the laws of his own church, and true. The Court gave judgment in his favor, and on the ground that spiritual sentence passed for a spiritual offence, could not be revised or set aside by the ordinary civil tribunals.