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### WHAT OF THE NIGHT?

At this time last year, it was our privilege to chronicle an extraordinary number of revivals in every branch of the Church and in every section of the country, North and West. Each week's issue went forth freighted with glad tidings; each paper was like the messenger, whose very feet upon the mountains were beautiful with the peace and salvation which he published to the rejoicing Church. Hundreds and thousands of strong men, of fathers and mothers, of the respectable and influential, of young men and of maidens, gave themselves in public covenant to the Lord. It was about the first of March, we think, that this remarkable movement reached a height, which, perhaps, was not at any subsequent period surpassed, but which seems to have been maintained for some weeks. During the month of March, we estimated the number of conversions at twenty-five thousand. And good judges pronounced the work, in many respects, greater than that of 1858. It was universally conceded that the material brought into the churches was of an unusually valuable character, the converting influences having reached the older and maturer persons, to a degree unknown to this generation.

As the interest was very slow to decline, and as revival intelligence, sometimes of the most stirring character, continued, from time to time, to gladden the heart and to encourage the praying and hoping ones, it was but natural to expect, in the season now passing, a renewal of the wonderful scenes of the previous year. This expectation has not, as yet, been fulfilled. We have had no such marvellous demonstrations of the Spirit, as at this time, last year, were electrifying the people of God in the region around Philadelphia, in Towanda, Williamsport, Corning, Elmira, and other places to the North and West of us. It must be confessed that there is nothing in the spiritual condition of the churches generally, which calls for congratulation or rejoicing.

Yet we are equally convinced that there is no cause for discouragement. We must remember that the country has been passing through a political excitement as great as any experienced since 1860. The question has been forced upon us at the North, whether, after conquering secession and slavery, we would exchange places with the vanquished, and allow them to govern and to ruin the country we had saved. Considering that the solution of this greatest of political questions is still incomplete, we cannot wonder that there has been some distraction of mind, and some hinderance to the free course of Gospel truth. And the Holy Spirit has by no means withdrawn his special influences altogether from the churches. His glorious workings in places like Mendham and Belvidere, N. J., Oberlin, O., Freeport and Neoga, Ill., Washab College and other institutions of learning; in that hitherto barren, yet important, field, the Pacific Coast; and on missionary ground, in Mr. Jessup's Seminary at Beirut, in Shantung province, China, and among the villages of Kolapoor, show that we are living today in true revival times. These are not ordinary operations of the Spirit. They show us the heavens surcharged with spiritual influences. They re-assure us that its windows need not be opened, when a blessing will be poured out beyond our capacity to receive it.

Brothers and churches may be discouraged here and there; special causes may interfere with the prosperity of a church in special cases; but the general principle must be maintained and insisted upon, that this is an era of grace, that we are to expect Pentecostal visitations of the Spirit, that a steady tide of pure revival influences is to rise and flow like a river of God through the churches—a river of saving influences, widening and deepening in all its course, and pouring its waters into the dead seas of the world's impurity, godlessness, and unbelief, until they are healed.

It is by no means too late to see great revivals this season. Some of our most remarkable and encouraging news came long after this period last year. Times and seasons must not rule too absolutely our ar-

rangements for extending the Gospel among men who are dying every day. With some denominations, a whole month is set apart to special religious services at this very time in the year; why may not our churches, especially in large cities, take advantage of the impression made by these observances in the community, and throw open their doors, also, with believing prayers to God for a blessing? One thing we have noticed: pastors who are accustomed to look and to labor for revival as part of the regular experience of their churches, express no feelings of discouragement, but the contrary, as to the present state of things in their churches. Some who had great gatherings last year, report hopeful indications and conversions, now.

Courage, brethren! Plough and sow the seed in hope, in humility, and in prayer, and God will give the increase.

### THE LONDON WORKINGMEN IN CONFERENCE WITH THE CLERGY.

On Monday, the 21st of January, a conference of rare character was held in the London Coffee-house. Three hundred persons were present, including representative men from the different trades, and political leaders of the workingmen, with such men as Thomas Hughes, and Arthur Kinnaird, members of Parliament; Mr. Peter Bayne, Dean Stanley, Rev. Newman Hall, Rev. F. D. Maurice, Rev. Mr. Binney, Rev. Drs. Raleigh and Edmond, Canon Miller, and others. For seven hours a free and friendly conference between these parties was kept up, with a view to reach some of the causes which hinder workingmen from attendance upon Christian worship. About twenty genuine workingmen spoke, including a cabinet-maker, three engineers, a tailor, a plasterer, a porter, a carpenter, and so on. Contrary to the express stipulations of the call, one or two of these speakers assailed the doctrines taught in the pulpit and the character of the Scriptures themselves. Allusion was also made to the Scientific Lectures of the infidel Professor Huxley to the workingmen of London, as furnishing a valuable counteractive to the low pleasures by which the work-people are lured to destruction.

The great complaint urged, was a want of sympathy between the clergy and the working people. Ministers, said Mr. Paterson, a cabinet-maker, decline to interest themselves in the social questions of the day so important to the workingman. The same thing, substantially, was said by Mr. John Bates, engineer; another engineer said that ministers should sympathize with trades' unions and political associations. Mr. Bebbington, the porter, said ministers were seldom seen in the homes of the poor; Mr. Thomas, a carpenter, complained that clergymen held themselves so much aloof from the workingmen. Other reasons assigned were the strong objections of the workingmen to the Established Church; the usurpation and injustice involved in State support; the enormous wealth enjoyed by some of the prelates while their curates were starving; and the gross corruption practiced in the assignment of livings. Others, again, charged on the clergy indifference or opposition to the temperance reformation, so essential to the comfort and purity of the workingmen, or complained of the absence of discipline and prevalence of grievous inconsistencies among Church members; some excused the overworked poor for their non-attendance at Church on the ground that they required the Sabbath as a day of rest and recreation, but Mr. Bebbington, the porter, complained that many employers compelled their men to work on that day; sensibly enough he condemned the running of Sunday steamers and Sunday conveyances, and said no man had a right to rob another of his Sunday, even though it was to take his fellows into the country to breathe a purer air.

Rev. Newman Hall and Rev. Dr. Miller responded very fully to the objections; but the most notable and encouraging feature of the meeting was the stand taken by the political leaders, Mr. Edmond Beales and Mr. George Potter. Of these men, the *Weekly Review* says:—

"It would be difficult to name two men who are regarded with more hatred and apprehension by the specially respectable, religious, and conservative classes in England, than Mr. Edmond Beales and Mr. George Potter. The one is regarded as the firebrand of political, the other of social, revolution. On Monday they both spoke, and

the burden of their speeches was to urge and implore workingmen to give ear to the message of the Gospel and attend the public worship of God."

Mr. Potter made the most practical suggestion brought out by the meeting; namely, "that the ministers in the Established Church and the Nonconformist chapels name a Sunday evening during the next month, and let it go through the metropolis that to the workingmen alone a sermon would be preached. Let it be called the workingman's sermon, and the workingmen would come and hear." Mr. Potter's concluding words are full of practical, Christian wisdom and put the whole question of reform in its true evangelical aspect. How encouraging to all Christian workers for the masses, are such sentiments, from the mouth of one of a class so generally suspected of anti-Christian sympathies, and in fact so often found laboring to instill into the minds of the working people sentiments of hostility to the Church and to Christian institutions. Some of our American demagogues may ponder them with profit. Here they are:—

"Whatever might be the causes for the alienation which they had met to consider, as one faithful to himself and to his class, he must say, 'Workingmen, the truth is proclaimed, the Gospel is preached, and no excuse can free you from the responsibility of attending to it.' (Applause.) As one who had done much for their social and political elevation, his heart's desire for them was that they should go more to places of worship, and should think more of the Gospel which taught them that they had a soul to save, and that whatever might be done for them pecuniarily, morally, politically, and socially, was utterly useless unless they laid hold of salvation and eternal life." (Loud applause.)

The frankness of this movement is well adapted to win the confidence of the class to whom it was addressed. It puts the whole matter of religion in a new aspect to them when their own opinions are asked by its appointed ministers. It is part of that great series of measures by which the Church in modern times is re-establishing her primitive character of sympathy with, and adaptiveness to, all men, including all the various branches of Home Missionary effort. In countries like England, where the Church is burdened by alliance with the State, and is seen by the poor in the light of odious privilege, such movements are even more necessary than with us. But both here and there, there cannot be a more important work done than to convince the thronging mechanics, artisans, and laborers, particularly of our great cities, of the necessity of a hearty acceptance of the truths and performance of the duties of the Christian religion, to their true elevation. And the worst enemy of the working classes is the man who is endeavoring to prejudice them against the ministers, ordinances, and institutions of Christianity.

### THE PLAN OF CONGRESS.

At length Congress has produced its plan for the reconstruction of the late rebellious States and submitted it to the veto of the President. It is to be commended on many accounts,—on nearly every account. It repudiates the entire plan and policy of the President, and undoes all he has summarily and arbitrarily done in the work of reconstruction. It puts the rebel states under military control, returning to the status that prevailed immediately upon the surrender of General Lee. It destroys at a blow the enormity and scandal of rebel rule over territory conquered by loyal arms. It re-establishes the fact that the rebellion in the interest of slavery was a total, disastrous, irreparable failure. It puts loyal men, white and black once more under protection of the flag and the army of the country. The flag which has been folded away and draped in mourning, and hidden in forgotten corners, since the death of Lincoln, is once more unfurled; its folds floating and flapping on the breeze, sing again their glorious song of freedom, and shine once more on Southern fields, the emblem of victorious nationality, the pledge of a new era of justice and equal rights to all. The eminently righteous doctrine that men have lifted parrioidal hands against the very existence of their country, have neither the right nor the fitness to partake in its government, is made fundamental to the proposed restoration of the States to a civil position. Only loyal men will be admitted to the privileges of citizenship and of office-holding, at least in the first formation of the

new governments,—a provision far in advance of the pending Constitutional Amendment. And the right of suffrage is given to all loyal men, white or black.

There is but one grave defect, and that we fear, unless remedied, will nullify the whole arrangement—its execution is in the hands of the President. We scarcely know what the Thirty-ninth Congress does mean by intrusting its scheme to the hands of the President, unless it be to furnish a last argument for the removal of the present incumbent, and the substitution of a true man in his place.

### THE RE-UNION COMMITTEES.

The meeting of these Committees, first apart, and then jointly, was held in New York City last week as announced. Our own and the joint Committee's meeting was held in the study of Madison Square Church. Ten members of each Committee were in attendance. Rev. George F. Wiswell, D.D., was elected a member of our Committee in place of Dr. Brainerd. The details of the business transacted are not, we suppose, designed for publication at present, but no harm can possibly result from the announcement, that during the two days through the greater part of which the joint meeting extended, no jarring word was uttered, although every member gave free utterance to his opinions, and that the impression made by the conferences was favorable to the result contemplated in the formation of the Committees.

### OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

In the staid old city of Georgetown the experiment of impartial suffrage has its first trial on Monday. There is a poetic fitness about its taking place in the District of Columbia, and especially under the eye of him who vetoed the bill which places the ballot in the hands of the freedmen. Before this reaches your readers the telegraph will have informed them of the result, and the fact will be demonstrated that those who have wielded the bayonet are worthy of carrying the ballot. The conservative candidate is the present Mayor, who has filled the office for twenty years, and considers that he has a life-patent of it. He is a violent negro-hater, and but a few years ago carried on a large traffic in human flesh. The candidates on the equal suffrage ticket are all young, active business men, and have been led by principle to lend their names to the cause at the risk of social and business ostracism. More than two-fifths of the registered voters are colored men. We will not attempt to predict the result. Whatever it may be, we are confident that it will not verify the closing prediction of the message which vetoed the suffrage bill "that the all-embracing extension of impartial suffrage would end in its destruction."

Washington's birthday was marked by no uncommon event in the city which he founded, and which is honored with his name. Congress was so hard pressed with work that it could not pay even the poor respect of an adjournment to the day. The strangers that now fill the city to overflowing made an excursion to Mt. Vernon, and swelled the crowd at the President's last reception in the evening. These occasions have been too often described to bear recital by this pen, though a few reflections may not be uninteresting. As we joined the throng pressing for entrance, we had an opportunity of ruminating over what we saw. The Executive Mansion is no palace like the Tuilleries, St. James or the Escorial. Many a private citizen lives in its superior. Nor is it a credit to the nation as the residence of its Chief Magistrate. But when the national debt is paid perhaps we'll have a better one. Our pride as an American is always touched when we think of it as being modeled after the residence of an Irish Duke. If the British had burned the walls in 1814, as well as the inside, we might now have a White House distinctively American. The huge portico where we are swayed to and fro by the surging crowd, is of the Grecian order, of which our public buildings have no less than twelve,—a circumstance which has called forth the criticism of foreigners. But the porch seems almost hallowed when we look at the "historic window" beneath it, where the form of our martyred President was so often seen, and from which he spoke so many words of encouragement and fulfilling prophecy to a nation in its darkest hours.

While considering one of these, we are whirled by this current of humanity through the door and into the broad hall, where the Marine Band in its gay uniform is discoursing "most eloquent music."

The doorkeepers continually command the crowd to keep back; but it is like Canute's mandate to the ocean. We are carried irresistibly forward through the long lines of policemen to the blue-room, where the President stands with U. S. Marshall Goding on one side, and the self-constituted poet-laureate, B. B. French, (who will soon surrender his fat office as Commissioner of Public Buildings), on the other side. Each one comes before the President in the height of perspiration; which accounts for the impossibility of distinguishing the original color of his glove which has been clasped by a thousand people during the past hour. We could not congratulate him on the success of his policy, as some took occasion to do, but as we scanned his countenance and contrasted it with our recollection of it one year previous, when he made his Niagara leap into the arms of the copperheads, we thought the lines of care were deeper, and the lineaments of dogged willfulness more developed. No clue could be gained from it as to the disposition he would make of the Reconstruction Bill then in his pocket. One of his organs assures him it would be a "most uncomfortable thing" to have it remain there, while another notifies him that he cannot approve it without making himself "a military despot over ten states of the South." So his only alternative is to veto it,—which is expected. While searching in vain for some feature in his countenance on which our eyes could rest with pleasure, we were reminded of an incident which transpired in the old Hall of Representatives a short time ago. An "excellent lady, with the two daughters of a friend, were viewing the statuary there collected, when they came to the marble busts of Lincoln and Johnson. "Now Clara and Nellie," said she to the young girls, "study these two faces carefully. Imagine yourselves in trouble, and away from friends. To which of these would you flee for counsel and support, and in which, if in either, could you confidingly trust?" Several moments were allowed them for examination; and when asked for their decision they both instantly replied, "This one," pointing to the bust of President Lincoln, "He would be a father to us." *A nation has done the same.* When they were informed that the busts represented Lincoln and Johnson respectively, they expressed much innocent surprise, as they had been taught to believe that all evil dwelt in the former, while the essence of all good abode in the latter.

But we have wandered to the other end of "the avenue." Let us return to the White House. Mrs. Johnson comes from her seclusion for the second time, and assists in the reception. She is plainly attired and receives with unaffected modesty. To her, more than to any human being, the President owes his present elevation. She taught him the alphabet, and while she lives, our greatest hope of his reform lies in her. Her countenance indicates abundant good-sense, and great perseverance, and were it not for her invalid body she would do the honors of the Executive mansion second to no one. We left the Reception easier than we entered. It is like office-holding, difficult to get in, but easy to slip out.

### IN THE NAME OF THE PROPHET—FIGS!

Our brethren in Southern Ohio must prepare for trying times in that region, as that powerful educational agency, Antioch College, is to use up their orthodox in short order. The *Boston Christian Register* says: "In the region about Antioch you meet the Yankee influence from the Western Reserve of Ohio, the slaveholders emigrated from Virginia and Kentucky, and the energetic Scotch-Irish from Western Pennsylvania. This last people is cursed by a theology drawn from the lowest cant of narrow Presbyterianism. Here is a grand ganglion of the forces of our American humanity. If our foremost New England culture will but grasp it, endow it with life and keep in sympathy with it, its influence on this and the next generation will be without limit. Neglect it, and the consequences be on your own souls. We have the college with all the machinery, [Liberal Christianity?] only lacks force, more vital power."

MAJ. GEN. O. O. HOWARD lectures to-night at National Hall, on the Freedmen, before the SOCIAL, CIVIL and STATISTICAL ASSOCIATION (colored) of Philadelphia.