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CHIVALROUS ELEMENT IN THE CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.

All the good in the world is from the Holy Spirit and belongs to the Church. It may not now be in the Church; it did not all originate there. But it belongs to the Church, to be appropriated, assimilated, and made subordinate to her spiritual designs. All that is good in philosophy or science; all that is glorious in art and in literature; all sweetness of manners and nobleness of natural character, so far from exciting her jealousy and hostility, so far from drawing down her indiscriminate condemnation because they are sometimes outside of her visible limits, should be regarded as hints of new fields to be won and new powers to be harnessed to her car of light and of progress.

That mysterious, beautiful and powerful impulse which for three or four centuries prevailed among the higher classes of Europe, constituting them an Order of Generous Men for the defence of the weak, for the cultivation of noble traits of character, for promptness, self-sacrifice and manly courage in every bold enterprise, and for promoting the general safety in a time of prevailing lawlessness, going under the name of Chivalry, has passed away; and with it is gone much that is absurd and worse than useless. But a certain dignity of character, a certain superiority to low forms of selfishness, a certain conscience upon good manners, a certain sense of honor and truth and contempt of meanness, a certain enthusiasm for high and daring achievement, constituting some of the choicest elements of civilization, we cannot afford to part with. The Church was wise enough to recognize the good elements of chivalry and to attract them to her service during the palmy days of knighthood; now that the Order has disappeared, the Church cannot wisely overlook its best elements to day.

1. The Church should be, and be known to be, the very sanctuary of truth and rectitude. Antinomianism should be rejected, not merely as a dangerous heresy, but as something impossible to Christian purity and honor. He that cannot feel the meanness of making the doctrines of grace an apology for a sinful life, has none of the noble moral sensibilities of the true Christian knight. He cannot sympathize with Paul's indignant God forbid! at the proposal of continuing in sin to illustrate the abundance of grace. The chivalrous Christian will feel that he of all men is bound to live an irreproachable life; that he must carry his high principles into his every day business; that in times when such principles are most likely to succumb, he, of all men, must hold them high and stand by them firmly; that sympathy for the weak and the oppressed, that deference to woman, that sweetness of manners at home and in his intercourse with all men, that fidelity to trusts, superiority to meanness and trickery, and integrity and truth as steady as the fixed stars, are to characterize his daily walk, that as a consistent Christian he is to be a knight without fear and without reproach. Such is the ideal held before him in the New Testament. "Whatever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, if there be any praise, think on these things." And not only in word, but in the matchless life of the Master, all that is beautiful, all that is pure, all that is the best and highest sense, is chivalrous, is set forth.

The best of men
That e'er wore earth about him—
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.
Shame, O shame! on the meanness, the low-mindedness, the coarseness, the moral weakness in the presence of worldly motives, the narrow suspicions, the zeal for trifles, found too often associated with the Christian name! Often, alas, often, men do in the very name of Christianity, what would cover them with blushes as gentlemen.

One of the most grievous compromises of Christian honor, is the attempt to divorce the Church from all connection with the great moral questions of the day. This dishonorable scheme is pressed even where the broadest and clearest moral principles are involved, the dearest, most primary rights of men at stake, and the conflict of opinion doubtfully raging. In such conflicts, it is held, the Church is to have no voice, is responsible for no weight of influence upon the side of truth, justice and humanity; she is too sacred an institution to commit herself! A monkish, unscriptural, and unchivalrous doctrine which we have heard preached in the latter half

of the 19th century. The chills of something far worse than old age, the awful premonitions of apostasy, the lapse into the soulless state of the fossil and the mummy must be indicated by such a withdrawal from one of the noblest and most appropriate spheres of Church life. To have it for a moment doubtful on which side of a clear moral question agitating the public mind, the sympathies of the Church lie, is to give her a wound which it will take generations to repair. Every struggling cause of truth and justice should be able to count confidently on her prompt and generous championship. Her keen instinct and high state of moral health should enable her to recognize, and lead her to espouse, such causes in their very emergence, instead of waiting to be driven by God's Providence and shamed by the world into a tardy and reluctant avowal. By promptness and decisiveness she should train her people to a ready sympathy with virtue, truth, and justice, and so in every great struggle of the times she should appear for the oppressed, the tempted, and the imperiled, clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.

2. The Church of Christ as the divine agency for the salvation of men, is the embodiment and transfiguration of all the most generous impulses of chivalry. That errand on which the world's Redeemer came down, might well serve as the ideal of the most perfect knighthood. How pure, how self-sacrificing, how boundless the love! How sublime, unwavering, and triumphant the purpose! How infinitely gentle and tolerant of misconception and opposition, even from those he came to bless and to save! Both his errand and the spirit in which he performed it, stand before men as the glorious anti-type and reality of all the little schemes of man for the good of his fellow. The Christian is called to bear his share in the enterprise of his divine Master. Not with the frivolity of worldly chivalry, but with glowing earnestness, with unsparring devotion, with tact, and gentleness, and versatility, and inexhaustible patience and boldness, and with the clear-eyed intelligence and comprehensiveness of modern philanthropy, he is to prove himself a true Christian knight, whose aims, whose methods, and whose spirit partake of the greatness of eternity. A special order of Christian chivalry is made up of the missionaries on home and foreign fields; a great field for chivalrous attempt is the vice and crime and home-heathenism of our cities. The work of God in every parish and pulpit, in every family, in every Sabbath-school class and in every individual heart requires to be done under the noblest, most courageous aspirations, in conflict with the most powerful foes. And if it often seems a wearisome, plodding business, far removed from the brilliancy of knightly encounter, we have but to remember that we are encompassed by a cloud of witnesses and that the victor's wreath, the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, is waiting for our brows.

3. The chivalrous element in Christianity leads us to treat with candor and fearlessness the objections of its enemies and the seeming hostilities of science. Perhaps nowhere has the want of knightly courage and honor among Christians been more sadly manifest than here. Often has error, or the semblance of error, been met with fear, with unmanly and violent opposition, with base cruelty and persecuting rage. Much of this spirit has passed away. Yet still there is often a want of a gallant, frank spirit, in dealing with error and with the advances of science, which are imagined to be hostile to the truth. We should fearlessly court inquiry into the truth of our religion. We should be willing to have it tested to its foundations by every method that skepticism can devise. Though Renan and Colenso, and Tyndalls, and Darwins, and Positivists, and Westminster Reviewers should swarm around us, we should be calm in the thought that in the endurance of these last and severest tests, our religion will but appear the stronger and the worthier of credence from intelligent men. The broad, unembarrassed conflict now going on in the world between truth and error is proof of the true chivalry belonging to our age of the Church and the world. Fear of the result, in such a conflict, is base and craven. We should willingly see Natural Science go her way and draw her conclusions, even though they seem in conflict with our views of Christian truth. It were ungenerous to distrust the God of Nature as possibly in antagonism with the God of grace and of the Bible. Let us have faith that as we get nearer to Him, by the road of a constantly improving method in Biblical and in Natural Science, each department of sciences helping the other, we shall more and more clearly see Him to be ONE. And it behooves the men of science to see to it that their part of the undertaking is not devoid of a chivalrous regard to the claims

and services, the sanctions and supports of the religion of Jesus.

We rejoice in the nobler manners and purer traits of character shown by different denominations of the Church towards each other at this day. The narrowness of bigotry, the meanness of exclusivism, the littleness of soul, that could see no truth outside of the acceptance of the minute details of its own theory or practice—features which have given such a wickedly, repulsive appearance to large parts of the Church—are disappearing, and a most honorable courtesy and generous recognition are taking their places. Mutual jealousy and suspicion are giving place to confidence and fraternal affection. The broad and clear essentials of Christian doctrine, duty and order are grasped the more firmly, while minor differences, over which our unworthy conflicts have chiefly been fought, are freely allowed in new bases of union. With or without organic union, the reproach, discredit and hindrance of disunion are passing away. A nobler, sweeter Christian age is opening upon us. The flower of Christian manhood is about to bloom. That combination of purity, gentleness, generosity and courage which was once the ideal of knighthood is again shaping itself out of the elements at work in the Church of our time. Happy the eyes that behold it; happy the natures that aspire to it; happiest they that achieve it!

THE STIMULUS OF CONVENTIONS.

The wisdom of the children of this world is not wholly lost on the children of light. The former have long known the value of conventions and mass-meetings, of more or less informal character, and embracing individuals from different localities, united in sympathy for a common object. The formality of our regular religious bodies is generally a barrier to the production of any great amount of enthusiasm for their objects. The annual meetings of the American Board seem to be the only ones in the religious world of America approaching our great political gatherings in popularity and effectiveness. The whole religious community, of all denominations, far and near, is warmed and toned up by them to a higher degree of interest in Foreign Missions. The glow of feeling does not die out in the whole intervening year.

The Christian conventions which are being held with such success all over our land, especially in the North-west and New England, and one of which closed its sessions on Wednesday evening of last week in our city, have proved themselves a great and needed outlet for Christian sympathies, and a great power to cultivate and elevate such sympathies. Heart has answered to heart, as face to face in water. The unity of real Christian experience and aspiration has been demonstrated. As soldiers in the thick of battle need to see a comrade at their elbow in order to keep their courage to its fighting point, so the courage and working force of individual Christians depends largely upon the consciousness of lively and active co-operation on the part of brethren in every part of the field. Plans of work are discussed. Light is concentrated upon practical questions from widely different quarters. Special gifts in any one quarter are, as far as possible, made common to the whole body. Flaming zeal is rebuked and quickened. The responsibilities of the laity are explained and enforced. And a place is vindicated for religion among the elements of the social, public, everyday life of the community,—as a power which expects to make its way in the world as a great public movement, as well as by Sabbath-day ministrations in isolated pulpits, in prayer-meetings, and in individualized, independent efforts for the salvation of separate souls of men. It is true, that all great public movements for the real good of men, prove their genuineness by the final individuality of their application. That which is truly great is conscientiously attentive to detail. Judged by this standard, these conventions are worthy of all approval, for the constant pressure of their inquiries and discussions, and the constant result of their presence in any locality, is towards an increased sense of personal responsibility among Christians. In fact, the great popular evangelizing movement is to be realized in the raised Christian activity of members of individual churches, simultaneously realized among all the denominations of God's people, in any given locality. It is to bring the grand army into line, to secure a general and united advance, to convert the straggling shots and encounters which a few faithful workers are continually effecting not without results, but at great disadvantage from want of adequate support, into a simultaneous, enthusiastic, overwhelming assault.

The Convention last week was brief. It interfered but slightly, if at all, with the regular Church services. It drew together the embers

of Christian light and warmth among us. If it does not seem to accomplish all that could be wished, it will be because, in a great city like this, the religious interest which would electrify a whole western country, might almost escape notice. In fact, Christian Conventions of all the Churches in a particular ward, might prove of greater practical value than one embracing the entire city and parts of neighboring States besides.

DR. PATTERSON'S VIEW OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S PLAN.

REV. J. W. MEARS, D.D.—Dear Brother, I am exceedingly sorry to see that reports are already published, representing the Joint Committee on Reunion as having unanimously adopted a basis for reunion, which will surprise and grieve many friends of our church and lovers of Christian liberty. Very much to my regret I was unable to remain with the Committee till the completion of its work. I was heartily in favor of reunion on the basis recommended by the Joint Committee last year, with an additional article restricting the powers of the General Assembly. I am as heartily opposed to reunion on the present basis, and this on several important grounds.

On due time I will, if Providence permit, give my views on this whole matter.

Yours fraternally, R. W. PATTERSON.
CHICAGO, March 20, 1868.

SUBSTANCE OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE'S NEW PLAN.

Below we give the substance of the plan of the Committee, referred to by our Chicago correspondent, as having appeared in the *N. W. Presbyterian*. It is believed to have first appeared in the *N. Y. Herald*, from which it was copied into other papers. It is incorrect in some important respects. We presume the Joint Committee will, under present circumstances, conclude to remove the injunction of secrecy and authorize the publication of the entire document.

1. The Philadelphia basis as to doctrine with Dr. Gurley's amendment. We suppose it will now read somewhat thus, according to the statement of the *Evangelist*: In the United church of the Westminster Confession of Faith and Catechisms shall be received and adopted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures. Yet while the Confession of Faith and Catechisms, our recognized standards as a Church, shall be held in their integrity, and in their fair historical, that is the Reformed or Calvinistic sense, full liberty is granted to both sides in explaining and illustrating these doctrines of the Gospel.

2. The two Boards of Publication shall continue their separate catalogues until the United Assembly shall organize its first Board or Committee, when the two catalogues shall be submitted to it for revision, it being understood that only injurious references to the late divisions shall be left out.

3. The rights of Presbyteries to examine ministers seeking admission was conceded, the Old School Committee yielding the imperative rule, and leaving each Presbytery to examine as disposed.

4. The seminaries are all advised to put themselves under Assembly or Synodical control, and upon such submission is conditioned their ecclesiastical recognition and recommendation.

5. All imperfectly organized, or "Plan of Union" churches are advised to perfect their organization presbyterially, within five years, or otherwise be dropped from the rolls. No new churches thus organized are to be received.

LAYMEN'S ASSOCIATION.

The plan of a Laymen's Association among the churches of our city has met the approval of the Pastors' Association, as will be seen from the following action:

Resolved, That this Association has heard with pleasure of the prospect for uniting the strength and resources of our laity, for the more effective promotion of missionary enterprise, within the bounds of this city; and we hope that those who have undertaken the matter may be able, by the Divine blessing, to bring it to a speedy and successful issue.

(Extracted from the minutes.)
CHAS. BROWN, Sec'y.

We trust that those interested will now feel encouraged to go forward and perfect an organization from which such important results are likely to follow.

Our assent and approbation to the New Plan of the Joint Committee, as reported to us from different quarters, soon after its adoption, was qualified, as our readers will remember, by the remark that, not having seen the Plan, we could not speak finally. From what we have further learned of the document, we are inclined to the belief that the liberal purpose of its framers is capable of more explicit statement, and that comparatively slight amendments may be necessary to make it thoroughly acceptable to all the friends of Reunion on a safe, permanent, and liberally Calvinistic basis.

AFFAIRS AT THE CAPITAL.

McArdle is out of the Supreme Court at last. The Bill withholding jurisdiction in his case and others similar, passed the House on Friday by the requisite two thirds majority, and having already passed the Senate was declared by Speaker Colfax to be a law notwithstanding the President's veto. It is understood that the Court will at once formally dismiss the case. The treasonable utterances of McArdle through his paper while the case was in the court, hastened the speedy action on the bill that should leave him under the penalties already inflicted upon him.

The bill for the relief of manufacturers has been in hands of a Committee of Conference, and their report has been accepted by the House, but rejected by the Senate and another Committee called for. This bill takes off the tax from about ten thousand different articles, leaving tobacco, whisky and petroleum as sources of revenue. The disagreement is upon the whisky section. In the new bill it is provided that in any district where the price of whisky is below the tax, it shall be the duty of the revenue officers to seize and close all the distilleries of the district. The tax is still two dollars a gallon. The "whisky ring" have been very active in the lobby and on the floor of the two Houses, but have as yet been unsuccessful. It is feared by many in the Senate that this section of the tax bill is so stringent that it will not accomplish the purpose aimed at, but Congress is in earnest in its intention to enforce the collection of the tax upon distilled liquors, and the frauds have been so immense, something new must be done. The Ways and Means Committee are fearful lest the revenue be not sufficient for expenses. The great difficulty has not been the defect of the law, but the failure of the officers appointed by President Johnson to enforce the law; this was very clearly stated in the letter of the Commissioner of Internal Revenue, urging the removal of General Steadman from the office of collector at New Orleans, which was read in the House last week.

The Constitution voted upon at the late election in Alabama, is, by vote of the House of Representatives, accepted as the basis of a provisional State Government, and the officers elected under it are to qualify and enter upon their duties. The Legislature is to be convened and the Constitution again submitted to the people, when a majority of the votes cast will decide its acceptance. Advances from Arkansas received here indicate the success of the new Constitution there by about five thousand majority.

Mrs. Frances Lord Bond has been recommended by a large number of leading men for some diplomatic position abroad. It is said that she aspires to represent the government at the Court of St. James; but the President will not be likely to nominate her, at least till the Senate has acted upon the appointment of Gen. McClellan, and the Senate knowing the General's readiness to wait, do not seem disposed to hurry him in his preparations for moving on Great Britain. Mr. Clay and Mr. Hale are coming home from St. Petersburg and Madrid, leaving other desirable places vacant. It may be that President Wade may be called upon to act upon his own recommendation of Mrs. Bond.

I understand that the Democrats have ascertained that Judge Chase can be their candidate only when they come to his platform; when they do that, probably Boutwell, Kelly, Logan and other Radicals will return to their old party.

Gen. Butler has just concluded a very calm, clear, and able argument before the Senate, upon the opening argument of the impeachment trial. He reviewed the whole case—the nature of the Court; the right to challenge Senators; the relations of the President to the Senate; and all the items of indictment presented by the House. The effort must add greatly to Gen. Butler's reputation as a lawyer, and the manner of presenting it was in keeping with the importance and dignity of the occasion. Some of his points were quite telling; as for instance, in reviewing the President's objections to the Tenure of Office act, he proved that the President had, in the early part of his Presidency, approved the principle of that act, thus—"accepting it or not as it suits his convenience," or, again, in putting the claim of the President in his answer to exercise freedom of speech, and to instruct the people upon their duties, in juxtaposition with some of his ribald and blasphemous utterances at Cleveland and St. Louis, showing what the President actually said in glaring contrast with the smooth legal paper of his counsel.

Mr. Wilson presented some of the testimony, and then the Senate adjourned to meet to-morrow and proceed with the trial. FENWICK.

The full and accurate report of the Christian Convention on the Second Page, is from the accomplished pen of Rev. Samuel W. Duffield.