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John A. Weir 16 July 68

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THE WONDERFUL WEEK.

There is something in the crowded action, the sublime teachings, the intense passions and broad developments of divine and human character, the great transactions and unspeakable interests involved in the last week of the life of Christ, prior to his resurrection, that overwhelms contemplation. The sacred writers treat this brief period with a fullness which shows how high it stood in their inspired estimate. Matthew, Mark, and John, each devote about one-third, and Luke nearly one-fifth of their entire space to this, which constitutes but the three hundredth part of the entire ministry of Christ. In Robinson's Greek Harmony it occupies 52 out of 177 pages of text. From the time when our Saviour descended the brow of Olivet amid the plaudits of the multitude, on what is now commemorated as *Palm Sunday*, to his resurrection morning, one week afterward, we have a succession of scenes so memorable, that the only possible good reason for any part of this Church refusing to celebrate "Holy Week" is the insufficiency of any week, or any lifetime, or anything short of eternity for a proper contemplation and celebration of the same. It seems belittling to these events to confine the lively recollection of them to any particular period of the year, especially if the observance of a "Holy Week" is to have the effect of making the fifty-one remaining weeks of the year the more secular and common. And it is those only who try to bring their whole lives under the sanctifying and elevating power of these events, who will derive real benefit from a season set apart for special meditation upon them.

It is the Week of the world's greatest enlightenment upon the most solemn truths of religion. Christ's prophetic activity and dignity rise to their highest pitch. Hand-in-hand with the most unrelenting exposure of the hypocrisy of false teachers, goes the wondrous unfolding of the truth by the Great Teacher himself. He overthrows their arguments, exposes their devices to entangle him, and makes of their plots an occasion for the fullest revelation of his own divine resources, of the glorious provision which unbelief was rejecting, and of the awful fate rejecters of the Gospel were preparing for themselves. Then, as his public ministry, which began with the beatitudes, draws to a close, his very love and tenderness change into wrath against the guilty, incorrigible Pharisees; woes take the place of blessings, and with words such as never prophet uttered, and which shake every unseared conscience to its centre, he turns from the temple and leaves it and its hardened votaries to their fate.

Limiting himself now to the circle of his followers, he tells them what that fate is to be. In the midst of profound peace, he foretells the most devastating war; points to the magnificent temple, glittering in all the freshness of Herod's costly restoration, and prophesies a complete destruction; which the Jews themselves fulfilled against the express orders of the Roman conqueror, and which Josephus, an enemy of Christ, minutely records. But stretching far beyond the interval of forty years, his prophetic glance takes in the whole history of time, and in a wondrous symbol he shows us the progress of his kingdom, his own glorious coming and the end of the world, as an enlargement of the story of the end of Jerusalem itself. Then comes the personal application of the great truth thus taught, in three of our Lord's most solemn, pungent parables, addressed severally to his ministry, to the church and to individual members according to their several endowments; all crowned by a full and specific account of the Great Day for which all other days were made, with its final dispensation of rewards and punishments and its assignment of the good and the evil to their everlasting fate. Come ye blessed! Depart ye cursed! Never were words uttered by human lips which have so thrilled the hearts of the children of men.

Another phase of Christ's prophetic activity yet remained, the most inward, tender, spiritual of all,—in which, with matchless words, he opens his heart of hearts to his chosen twelve, consoling their grief, quickening their spiritual faculties, revealing the depths of his condescension and intimacy with them, adding promises of untold richness; above all, the promise of the Paraclete, to be more to them than even he had been, and yet, while he spoke, he seemed himself to be subsiding into that Holy Agent, whose influences upon the human spirit are as sweet and gentle as the dew. But not as he bends in his matchless intercessory prayer, we behold the over-distinct personality of our Great High Priest, beginning

on earth that office which, at the right hand of the Father, he ever liveth to execute for us.

It was the Week of the most awful self-development of sin. Against the Holy and Just One, the sinless Lamb of God, ragged all the world's worst passions. The grossest injustice was heaped upon the Most Just. The life of the Most True was falsely sworn away. Ignominy, scorn, contempt, mockery were visited by the vilest upon the gentlest, noblest and most courteous of men; scourging, laceration, and a lingering death of torture were decreed to one whose life was but a succession of matchless, miraculous works for the good of men. He that was anointed to preach the gospel to the poor, to bind up the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives and to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord;—O to think that he should be betrayed, and slain by the vilest of deaths, and that a robber and murderer should be preferred in his stead by acclamation! Can a more overwhelming proof of the world's wickedness; of the heinousness, obstinacy and intensity of sin be possible? The very teachers and guides of the chosen people lead in this unparalleled crime. Friends forsake Him, his apostles fly; one denies him, another betrays him. Sworn enemies and fiercely hostile peoples are reconciled by their common interest in this business. Jews join hands with their Gentile oppressors and accuse Christ before Pilate of that very sedition against Rome with which their own hearts were full, and the utter absence of which in Christ made them his enemies. And the estranged Pilate and Herod become friends, as in their hour and the power of darkness, they frantically pass to and fro between them the King of kings and Lord of lords in the disguise of a culprit. And Pilate must be conscious that the stain upon his soul is but deepened, as he washes his hands of guilt, while the Jews pronounce their own awful doom when they take his blood upon themselves and their children. The crime reaches its climax in the cold blood and the recklessness of consequences with which it is committed.

It is the world's Great Week of Redemption. It was in the divine arrangement, and perhaps in that higher nature of thing in which grace is included, that as the world's sin reached its climax; it should find its cure. As the infinite goodness draws near in the form of a free pardon, it must needs rouse the fiercest opposition of that which it comes to abolish. It must meet and conquer sin in its mightiest possible demonstration, or it cannot be a sure conquest at all. Only in a fierce encounter with sin can divine love take the form of a sacrifice; nothing but sin in its direst manifestation could drive the nails and plunge the spear into such a victim. It is when sin hears from the cross on which it has wreaked itself, the cry "Father forgive them," that its madness is broken.

The agony in the garden, the bitter cup from which the sufferer prayed almost in a burst of despair to be delivered, the great drops of sweat as it were blood, the nature which, though linked with infirmity, sank almost crushed by the burden, the cry of desertion on the cross, all teach the unfathomable depth and intensity of these sufferings, and remove them utterly from that class which many a weak martyr, child or woman, has borne with unshaken calmness. They were for the sins of the world. Taking upon himself the burden of millions of sinners, the guilt of a whole race, he might well feel that he must sink under the fearful load. It was suffering, says Mr. Barnes,—commenting on the words, "My God why hast thou forsaken me,"—endured by him that was due to us; and suffering by which alone we can be saved from eternal death.

He did not draw back. The Father did not take away the cup on which hung the possibility of our salvation. He did not so shine upon him as to mitigate his sufferings on the cross, and so diminish the value of his sufferings as showing the enormity of sin and the depth of the divine indignation against it. "It is finished," gasped out the dying Saviour. Time's great work was done. The hidden sun began to shine; the veil of the temple was rent in twain, and the rocky caverns of the dead were thrown open to the light, and life reanimated their decaying inmates, in token of the glorious resurrection with which this week was to close and all its wondrous works to be crowned and consummated. For this great eternal result of one short week, what joy, what gratitude, what adoration should we feel more than human powers can express!

O blessed Well of Love, O Flower of Grace,
O Glorious Morning Star! O Lamp of Light,
Most lovely image of Thy Father's Face,
Eternal King of Glory, Lord of Might,
Meek Lamb of God before all worlds beight,
How can we thee requite for all this good?
Or what can prize that Thy most precious blood?
With all Thy heart, with all Thy soul and mind,
Thou must Him love and all behests embrace.

All other loves with which the world doth blind
Weak fancies and stir up affections base,
Thou must denounce and utterly displace
And give thyself unto Him full and free.
That full and freely gave Himself to thee.

THE PUBLICATION CAUSE.

TO THE PASTORS AND ELDERS OF OUR WEAKER CHURCHES:

DEAR BROTHER:—It is not strange that in some of our weaker churches, whether financially or numerically, (and in some not weak, we are sorry to say) the question is started, whether it is worth while to contribute to the Publication work. If your church puts itself in that rank, let me say, that we greatly desire and hope that it will be one of our helpers and co-workers. Without arguing the matter (which is not needful) let me state a few facts.

1. The total amount of money received from churches varying in strength from moderate to very small, is a considerable part of the Committee's means for doing its good work.

2. Of the collections, a good number, every year, are from churches we should not feel disposed to press—the very young, or very feeble, or foreign born, (as Holland and German.)

3. Frequently the contributions of churches from which we scarce look for anything, are larger than those from churches deemed strong and able to give largely.

4. The fidelity to duty with which these weaker churches sustain the Publication Committee in its efforts to do good, is a strong moral support, encouraging, cheering, and sustaining, as well as setting a good example to others.

5. Even the children from our Sabbath-schools, (and in churches not rich) often give more to aid others through this channel, than some larger churches.

6. Nothing more weakens a church than to tell it that it is too poor to give through our recognized and appointed channels of benevolence.

7. God's blessing on a work for Him is its success, and His blessing is not regulated by the amount given, so much as by the heart of the giver. For success we want the gifts of the poor as well as of the rich, and both fertilized by love and prayer.

Let us have the co-operation of yourself and your people. For information with regard to the work to be done by our Committee, we refer you to our Annual Report, and the *Presbyterian Monthly*, which we will send you if you have them not already.

Yours truly and Fraternally,
JOHN W. DULLES,
Secretary Presbyterian Pub. Committee.

To the officers of our stronger churches it is needless to say that we hope to have them as our co-workers, since the suggestions addressed to feeble churches apply *a fortiori* to the stronger. There is a great work before us, a work that we cannot afford to neglect. Let us seek to do it.

REV. DR. STRYKER.

An esteemed minister of our Church in New York writes us as follows:

We congratulate the North Broad St. Church of Philadelphia upon having secured the pastoral services of Rev. Dr. Stryker of this city. Dr. S. has been in the ministry for 20 years, and in all that time has been without interruption, prosecuting his life work. He has been pastor of the 24th St. Reformed Church (formerly Broome St.) for the last 12 years, and his success there may be inferred from the fact that he has received about 500 persons into his church upon confession during that time. He is a faithful worker in all fields of ministerial labor. His efforts in the temperance cause have been constant and influential. In the Sabbath-school—in the Bible-class—in the prayer and lecture room—as a pastor diligently looking after all the interests of his flock but few have excelled him. In all benevolent operations of the church he has taken an active part, and, doubtless, raised more money from his people for these than any other person could have done. He has built a new and beautiful church edifice since he came here and cleared it of every dollar of debt through his personal effort.

He has greatly endeared himself to his people and ministerial brethren, and they part with him with the deepest regret. A kind sympathizing man—a genial warm-hearted companion—a refined cultured gentleman—a cheerful joyous Christian—an earnest Bible preacher and faithful, loving pastor, he goes to your city to bring these qualities into a new scene of activity. Our warmest sympathies and prayers go with him, and we trust that he will be received—we are sure that he will be—with true Philadelphia hospitality and co-operation, not only by his church, but by the brethren and pastors. T. S.

"CANDOR," AND THE N. W. PRESBYTERIAN.

MR. EDITOR:—I forward to you the following letter from a member of the Presbytery of Chicago (N. S.), to the *North-Western Presbyterian*, together with the remarkable answer of the editor, to which I invite the earnest attention of your readers. This answer assumes an extraordinary importance the light of three or four facts:

1. The editor of the *North-Western Presbyterian* is a clear-sighted man, who can hardly be ignorant of the sentiments and feelings that prevail in his own branch of the Church on the subject of re-union.

2. He has informed me that his answer to "Candor" has been approved by the leading men of the Old School Church, including Dr. Hodge, of Princeton, and that his positions on this subject are sustained by the Professors in the Seminaries of Allegheny and Danville.

3. I have the authority of Mr. Erskine for the statement that no Old School paper, not even the *Cincinnati Presbyterian*, which so earnestly advocates re-union, has expressed one word of dissent from the views which he has given respecting the construction to be put upon the Philadelphia platform and the use to be made of it in case of re-union.

4. Mr. Erskine regards the explanatory clause, which was proposed by Dr. Gurley as an addition to the doctrinal basis of the Philadelphia Convention, and accepted by the Joint Committee at its late meeting, as leaving the door open for the enforcement of the views which he has expressed in his reply to "Candor" and in this judgment many of us feel constrained to agree with him. I have hesitated about endorsing Dr. Gurley's amendment, it would be only because he thinks it liable and likely to be construed in different ways, so as to lead to future difficulty and conflict.

I am aware that there are those in both branches of the Church, who strongly disapprove of all efforts to bring about a thorough understanding of each other's position between the parties in the negotiations on the subject of re-union. But I am willing to incur the displeasure of any class of brethren on either side, who would have serious misapprehensions created or perpetuated for the sake of union. We all desire union if it can be effected cordially and without sacrificing or impairing the large and still sufficiently guarded liberty in point of doctrinal sentiment and ecclesiastical administration, which is the distinctive glory of our Church. If Old and New School men can heartily unite and stand side by side on a clearly-defined ecclesiastical platform, broad enough for both, we say, Amen. But if we are asked to "renounce" *one whit of our former liberty*, we must decline, at all hazards, and cast the responsibility of continued disunion upon those who would "entangle us again with the yoke of bondage." Yours, R. W. P.

[The exigencies of our space compel us to publish the letter and article in question in another place. They will be found on our Fifth page.]

AFFAIRS AT THE CAPITAL.

WASHINGTON, April 6th, 1868.
The impeachment trial, halted on Saturday at another important stage in its progress. The managers concluded the presentation of their testimony in chief, with the exception of a few points noted, and the defence were given until Thursday next, to prepare their case. In making application for this further delay, Mr. Curtis stated that they would have but little oral testimony to offer, but that they intended to present a large mass of documentary evidence which had not yet been arranged. Mr. Curtis assured the Senate that delay would be saved if this indulgence was granted to them.

The management of the case has so far been almost entirely in the hands of Gen. Butler, who has been opposed on the part of the President by Messrs. Stanberry and Everts. The essential points in the case were abundantly sustained by the President's admissions, and by the certified documents presented to the Senate. The testimony of witnesses required but little time, being confined principally to the attempt of General Thomas to take possession of the War Office, to the interviews of the President with officers in charge of this military department, and to the President's public speeches. The readiness displayed by Gen. Butler in questioning his witnesses and in meeting all the objections of the President's counsel is truly marvellous. Mr. Stanberry has been quite willing to give up the task of contesting his moves to the less passionate and excitable Mr. Everts. Both these gentlemen seemed somewhat wearied on Saturday, while Gen. Butler remains apparently as fresh, nonchalant and courteous as on the first day.

He is a most irritating antagonist, is very sarcastic but at the same time conventional and parliamentary in his language, always alert and unwearied, imperturbable under every attack and ready to give blow for blow, never elated by success nor depressed by any defeat, so fertile in expedients that when driven from what seems the last, he surprises you with the impression that he has just begun, and that all that has preceded is mere by-play. He is just the man for a long trial. Some have accused him of being undignified in his examination of the reporters who had taken the President's speeches; but it must be remembered that he had to deal with a subject that was undignified. Truly enough, such expressions sounded out of place before the Chief Justice and the Senate of the United States; but the humiliating thought was that they were the utterances of the President of the United States. The vulgarity and blasphemy of the speech at St. Louis alone ought to be regarded as constituting a "high crime and misdemeanor" for one in such an office.

The resistance to law has been amply proved, and the recognition of that law by the President himself has been clearly shown. The Chief Clerk of the State Department testified to a change in the wording of commissions signed by the President after the passage of the Tenure of Office act. Before that time the commissions read, "to hold office during the pleasure of the President," since that time they have been made out "to hold office subject to the conditions prescribed by law."

In his answer to the first article the President says that he suspended Mr. Stanton under the Constitution, and at his own pleasure, but in his letter to the Secretary of the Treasury announcing the suspension, he says that it was done under the provisions of the Tenure of Office act. It is difficult to imagine that the learned counsel of the President, can so argue that admitted facts shall be resolved into myths or that resistance to law shall not constitute crime.

Some fear has been expressed that because Mr. Stanton was appointed by Mr. Lincoln his removal by President Johnson was not covered by the law. It will be remembered, (and no doubt this will be brought out in the rebutting testimony if the above claim is set up) that on the day after Mr. Lincoln's assassination Mr. Stanton by authority of Mr. Johnson issued an *Official Bulletin* announcing that Mr. Johnson had assumed the duties and office of President, and giving the public information of some of the proceedings of the Cabinet Council that day. Among these proceedings he says: "the President formally announced that he desired to retain the present Secretaries of the Departments as his Cabinet and that they go on and discharge their respective duties in the same manner as before the deplorable event that had changed the head of the Government."

The rights of the Chief Justice have occupied much time during the week. One concession to his claims has been made in giving him the decision of incidental questions subject to an appeal to the Senate by one of the Senators. This may do no harm in this trial since the Chief Justice, now that his right in the case is admitted seems inclined to waive it and appeals directly to the Senate, and as there are many Senators through whom the managers could effect an appeal—but as a precedent it certainly does not seem right thus to tie the hands of the managers and give so much power to the Chief Justice.

The friends of the President are very much elated by the rulings of the Chief Justice and by the knowledge which they claim to possess, that six Republican Senators are sure to vote against impeachment. There is probably no foundation for this latter story but every difference of opinion among the Republicans is hailed as a division and as security for the President's acquittal. It has been made manifest by the trial that while the Democrats sit as partisans acting in concert on every incidental and legal point, the Republican Senators are determined to give a fair trial in which the accused shall have every advantage to which he is entitled. Acting as fair men they are found to have diverse views upon questions of law and evidence. A conviction from such men will command the assent of the nation.

Legislative business is quite suspended during the trial. The House decided to adjourn each day to attend the trial. For a day or two the members came in with an imposing procession, but this has dwindled day by day until the last of the week, when "the House of Representatives" being announced with all formality by the Sergeant-at-Arms, the entrance of fifteen or twenty men looked ridiculous. There is now not a quorum of the House in the city.

Generals Grant and Butler have settled their differences through the intervention of mutual friends. Most unlike in temperament and in genius yet engaged in the same good cause, there has been no good reason for the continuance of the bitter feud that sprang up at the close of the war, and it is a cause for congratulation that they have had magnanimity enough to end it.

NEW YORK.