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THE CHURCH DONE WITH POLITICS?

It has always held to the doctrine that the Church as such is bound to exert a positive moral influence in the affairs of the State. When the Roman governor said, "My Kingdom is of this world," he immediately added, "If my Kingdom were of this world, then would my Kingdom fight," &c., showing that by "world," he meant the whole system of material forces upon which men rely for effecting temporal objects; wealth, position, office, and the like. His kingdom, he meant, was one dependent upon moral and spiritual agencies; upon the truth, of faithful testimony, of holy and upright character; in fine, of the Holy Spirit influencing men through the attitude, and energetic but peaceable deeds of the Church.

During the war, the Church of this country has done up, as it never had done before, to two first: That it had a duty to perform in the high, moral interests involved in the struggle—freedom, human rights and loyalty to God's ordinance; and second: That on account of its neglect of this duty in the generation or two past, it was in no small measure responsible for the mischiefs and miseries of the rebellion. The foes of freedom had to muzzle large parts of the Church, the amazing, humiliating and highly immoral doctrine was taught by men, who had the profit of the Old Testament and the thirteenth of Romans in their hands; that religion the Church had nothing to do with politics, broad, comprehensive meaning of word. Politicians might take whatever they pleased; the national policy or the Common Law might be shaped for or against these men chose; gross wrongs be meditated or perpetrated in the name of people; and yet the Church could not interfere, even in the exercise of those influences which are her legitimate Scriptural weapons. The necessary effect of such a policy must be to relieve the consciences of men in politics, and to embolden them in evil courses; while it tends to produce a dangerous indifference, and to supply to men that most pliable of all material, a lie without those clear and high moral notions, which can only be effectually nourished by the decisions of the Church, promulgated through her pulpit and her press.

This pernicious, pestiferous heresy has generally discarded, and while nearly every evangelical Christian exerted itself to most to strengthen and rectify public opinion on the moral issues of our struggle, it is to be feared that a relapse into the apathy of former days is impending. The question may well be asked, is the Church of Christ quite exhausted of opportunities of contributing to the support of righteous sentiments and sound opinions in the community? Is there nothing in the moral phases of affairs demanding her interposition? Are not high principles still at stake, in which the Church rests still at stake, in which the Church's most potent moral power and as the dispenser of truth in the world, is involved? Is the gross immorality of disloyalty and rebellion still to be inculcated. If the public were as keen upon this wickedness as they were once, would they not be whetted by a sense of danger, and would they not demand upon the professed morality for any services of this sort. We are all aware of the process of demoralization which has been going on ever since the death of President Lincoln. We know only has not a single rebel, as such, been brought to justice, and that even the proceedings against the arch-criminal have almost dwindled away. We must brand them with their true names. We must scout the idea of the nation falling in common honesty any more than the individual or the business firm. We must strip off the mask and quench the false glare, which, alas! the very enormity of such offences throws around them. We verily believe the ministry is called to preach upon the Eighth commandment as in danger of infraction upon the grandest scale known in any Christian country. Don't let the Tribune and Jay Cooke heat us in inculcating present national duty, and in denouncing an impending great national sin.

Religious teaching which does not take hold of the practical every-day life of men, and make it palpably purer in its most public relations is mere cant. Churches which have no mission, no acknowledged responsibility upon the burning moral questions of the age, have no business here. They do not belong to the New Jerusalem let down of God out of heaven. The Church may not be able to accomplish all the exalted

national objects she would thus aim at; but let her fulfil her part towards creating a right, pure, a noble public sentiment, leaving the question of success or failure to the Lord. Above all things, let her beware of the humiliating and disastrous fate of being left behind in the march of public sentiment; of having slowly and late to toil up to the point which she herself should have first occupied, as the World's Advance Guard in true moral progress and in genuine civilization.

MARCHANT'S PORTRAIT OF MR. BARNES.

A deeply interesting scene was witnessed in the lecture-room of the First Church, after the lecture on Wednesday evening of last week, April 29th. E. D. Marchant, Esq., the well-known portrait painter of this city, whose portraits of Mr. Lincoln, Governor Geary and other distinguished persons, and whose devotion to, and great success, in his art, are well known, is a member of the First Church and a warm personal admirer of Mr. Barnes. Naturally enough, the close of Mr. Barnes' active career, was seized by his artist admirer as the proper occasion for a new portrait. And so, having just executed the work, he handsomely and liberally presents it to the church. After the lecture, on the evening named, the congregation organized by calling Ambrose White, Esq., to the chair, and appointing Mr. Geary secretary. The note of presentation, most gracefully and touchingly written by Mr. Marchant, was read, and at a suitable moment in the reading, the portrait, which occupied a prominent position, was unveiled to the audience. A motion to receive the portrait, with the thanks of the congregation, and to place it in the study, was made, and enforced in a brief and pertinent address by S. C. Perkins, Esq. Mr. P. expressed his sense of the great favor shown to the congregation by the gift of Mr. Marchant, dwelt on the appropriateness of placing it where future pastors would study, and sessions and trustees hold their meetings and the members assemble for prayer. He spoke of Mr. Marchant's personal regard for Mr. Barnes, and in the most touching manner, alluded to the loss by the artist of his noble, only son in the war, and to Mr. Barnes' tender pastoral ministrations during that time of great affliction. He had no doubt that the portrait was painted under the inspiration and remembrance of those ministrations. He concluded by moving a reference of Mr. Marchant's letter to the session and trustees of the church, for a suitable reply, and it was so ordered and the meeting adjourned. The portrait is certainly an admirable specimen of the art, and gives more satisfaction than any that has yet been painted. There is an intellectual and spiritual beauty; a sweetness without softness in the expression, heightening rather than concealing the truthfulness of the work, as if the artist had almost caught the moment when the man was passing into the immortal. The hands and other accessories are executed with the greatest care.

The study has been handsomely renovated, and the people who so warmly cherish the memory of the past may be relied upon in the future. A cordial reception awaits Dr. Johnson, who is expected to be with them this week.

LETTERS ON REUNION. III.

MESSRS. EDITORS: After the general remarks of my two former letters, I desire now to say something touching the hinge questions in relation to "Re-union." These questions are the following: 1. What are the difficulties to be overcome? 2. How are these difficulties to be met, in order to a real, practical union? 3. Do the terms agreed upon by the Joint Committee at the late meeting in Philadelphia so meet the demands of the case as to promise the desired result?

The difficulties in the way of "re-union" are deemed slight and unimportant only by those who take a very superficial view of the causes that divided the Church, and have thus far perpetuated the separation. The parties in the great conflict were not children, nor were they men without intelligence or any profound convictions, actuated by merely personal ambition or blind passion. Undoubtedly, grave misapprehensions and personal jealousies entered largely into the strife that finally rent our Church asunder. But the deeper causes were diversities in respect to doctrine, government, benevolent policy, and general spirit,—diversities that were developed more and more through many years until they could no longer be repressed. The more conservative elements in the Church, including many Presbyterians of foreign birth and training, constituted, in the main, the Old School party; and the New School party was made up chiefly of the freer and more progressive spirits in the Church, including many good people from New England. It was natural that two parties thus constituted should differ just as they did; the one adhering to the Scotch theology, and insisting upon a close conformity to the letter of the Confession of Faith and the Catechism; the other claiming the right to re-adjust some points in the theology of the fathers, while as Presbyterians still keeping themselves within the limits of "the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures."—the one constraining the constitution of the Church so as to make room as far as possible for a rigorous exercise of authority,

the other contending for a freer administration under the influence of "light and love," and less reliance upon machinery and the "power of the Church courts."—the one urging the importance and necessity of keeping the theological teaching, and the benevolence of the Church under the close supervision of the General Assembly; the other preferring more independence, and a larger participation of the people in the management of educational and benevolent institutions;—the one deeming and frowning upon "agitation" touching the subject of slavery; the other openly taking sides with the cause of human liberty. The Church was divided by these antagonisms; of which those pertaining to doctrine and government were the most influential in the minds of the thinking and earnest men who ultimately controlled both parties. The differences in relation to the policy of benevolence and slavery would never have divided its north of Mason and Dixon's line, if they had not sustained important relations to the strengthening of the one party or the other in regard to the profound questions of doctrine and government.

Now, time and Providence have disposed of the issue in respect to slavery, although our O. S. brethren as a body never openly espoused the cause of liberty in the later conflicts touching this subject, until the great rebellion was actually in progress, and the aroused spirit of loyalty in the country forced their Assembly to declare itself for the government in the spring of 1861. On the other hand, experience has convinced the New School body that "co-operative benevolence" in the departments of Home Missions and Education is not wise and expedient, while it remains a question whether the voluntary principle might not be so grafted upon the ecclesiastical policy, within the limits of our own Church, as to draw out the latent and add immensely to our efficiency as a denomination. It also remains a question, how far it is desirable to have the Theological Seminaries of the Church under the control of the majority in the General Assembly so as to provide for only one type of theological teaching, and indeed, whether Seminaries independent of direct ecclesiastical supervision may not best rally the people to their support, and still be safe enough so long as their professors are under the control of the Church, and they must have the confidence of the churches around them, if they are to be successful. And whatever be our theories on this subject it is a fact that some of our Seminaries are by their charters held subject to the government of close corporations.

The doctrinal publications of the Church, must in the end be conformed, in the main, to the types of theology that are held and treated as allowable in the Church; and on this point, the two Schools must be practically at issue, whatever they may agree upon in words, unless they can first really come together on the general doctrinal question.

How then stands this vital question as presented between the two Schools? I answer, very nearly as it stood before and at the time of the division, so far as the general position of the parties is concerned. There were then, as there are now, various shades of theological opinion to be found among those who adhered to both parties. The great characteristic distinction, as to the doctrinal question, at the time of separation, appeared in two important facts: (1.) While there were some N. S. men in theology on the Old School side, and many Old School men with the New School as to questions of administration, all the leading men on the O. S. side were strongly O. S. in theology, and many of the leading men on our side were distinctly N. S. in theology. And here let me say that the theological difference, though often exaggerated by Old School men, was one of ideas as well as words. I think no discriminating theologian will say that there was no real difference between Drs. Junkin, Breckenridge, Wilson, Hodge and even Alexander, and such men as Beecher, Barnes, Duffield and Beman, touching the doctrines of Original Sin, ability and inability and atonement; or that the Old School leaders differed as widely from one another as from the distinctive New School men. The difference, though as we think, not fundamental in relation to the great outlines of the Calvinistic system, was such as to warrant the distinction of "two types of theology," and it certainly drew lines closely on questions pertaining to theological Seminaries and doctrinal publications, and even the appointment of Commissioners to the General Assembly.

(2.) But the great, practical difference arose in regard to the importance of the doctrinal divisions. Both parties, then as now, professed to "receive the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures," "in the Reformed or Calvinistic sense." But the O. S. leaders contended that such men as Beecher, Barnes, Duffield and Beman, had discarded essential parts of the Calvinistic system, and must therefore be either mistaken or insincere in their subscription to the Confession. (The *typissima verba* theory of subscription was never generally held by Old School men of the present generation.) This view of the alleged "errors" and "heresies" in their relation to the Confession led first to the claim that Presbyteries have a right to examine ministers bringing regular testimonials from co-ordinate Presbyteries, (which claim was expressly denied by the New School majority in the Assembly of 1834, and as positively affirmed by the O. S. majority in the Assembly of 1835.) Then efforts were made to exclude such representative men as Barnes and Beecher from the Church, by discipline for heresy. This drew the lines between the stringent O. S. men, and the party of liberty in the Church, which embraced many men who were moderately Old School in their theology; and on the question of exclusion, some mild men who finally sided with the O. S. body voted for the acquittal of our persecuted men. And as "Old School" (Dr. Chas. Hodge) frankly says in a late number of the *Presbyterian*, "when they (the O. S. men) failed in that effort, they insisted on the division of the Church." After the division, those in the O. S. body who were represented by the men who voted for the conviction of Mr. Barnes in the Assembly of 1836, were an overwhelming majority. Of course, then as now, there were some N. S. men in the O. S. body, who were tolerated there on condition that they would hold their tongues and pens as to their peculiar views, and let the whole stream of the Church's known teaching, whether in the pulpit, in the Seminaries or through the press be distinctly Old School. On the other hand the New School body after the division freely conceded to both Old and New School men full liberty to hold their distinctive views and teach them through whatever channel they might find most convenient. While N. S. men could not ordinarily obtain admission into the Presbyteries of the O. S. Church, men of both parties of theology were readily received into our Presbyteries, and permitted to pass unquestioned from one Presbytery to another.

Now, it is doubtless true, that within the lapse of thirty years, some changes have taken place in both bodies, affecting the numerical strength of distinctively N. S. men, in our Church, and of exclusive men, in the O. S. body. But the avowed position of both bodies

in relation to a rigid or liberal construction of "the system of doctrine" contained in the Confession, remains unchanged. The O. S. body attempted to justify its divisive measures in 1837 and 1838, by alleging that we were radically unsound in the faith, or stood by and defended men who were thus un-sound. They still apologize for those measures by reiterating even in the issues of their Board of Publication, the same charge. And those of them who advocate "reunion" are careful to assure their brethren that we have changed, or at least are willing to change; our ground in regard to subscription to the Confession of Faith far enough to satisfy the whole, or nearly the whole, of the united Church. Not a single O. S. paper, however zealous for "reunion," has ventured to say that their Church is ready to unite, with the understanding that men holding the distinctively N. S. theology can be freely received into the ministry of the Church, or be allowed to pass from one Presbytery into another throughout the Church. On the contrary, one of their papers, the N. W. Presbyterian, openly declares that they will consent to reunion only on such terms as will allow them, for all the future, to reject all applicants for admission into the ministry of the Church, who hold the views of Barnes, Duffield, &c. And from this O. S. quarter do we hear any expression of disapproval of this declaration. On the contrary, "Old School" (Dr. Hodge), in the *Presbyterian*, expressly endorses the exclusive article of the N. W. Presbyterian, as "admirable." We are told, also, by "Old School" that "at the recent meeting of the Joint-Committee, the Old School members of that committee had a separate meeting, and resolved, by an unanimous vote, that they would not consent to any terms of union which should bind the united Church to the latitude of interpreting the Confession which the New School has hitherto allowed. And further, he says, that this resolution was adhered to until the final adjournment. Dr. Hodge further affirms that "the Old School stand publicly committed" against allowing us the liberty which we have hitherto enjoyed, which he calls "the latitude of interpreting the Confession which we have hitherto allowed." "Our Presbyteries," he says, "cannot knowingly consent to any such condition." And it was precisely, to avoid any implied consent to any such condition, that the O. S. members of the Joint-Committee, steadily refused to accept any and every proposition from our side, that in any way recognized the allowance of the "various views" that are openly held and taught in our Church, without ecclesiastical "let or hindrance." At last, as "Old School" well says, "neither party did yield. They adopted a formula on which each could put its own sense, and departed." So much for the supposed change on the part of our Old School brethren. It may be that a majority of their body has changed. But if so, we lack as yet any tangible evidence of such change, just at the point where we need it most. It is said that they do not understand Mr. Barnes and Dr. Duffield, &c., and therefore it is unfair to quote their condemnation of the views of such men. Well, if they do not understand the views of men who have so often, during the last forty years, expounded their theology; it would take those of us who are younger, forty years more to reach the same point of continued misunderstanding. How are we ever to find out what our brethren are willing to allow, if we cannot give them credit for common sense enough to understand the main views of men whose meaning seems as clear to us as anything we ourselves could say?

Of course we, on our part, claim that our Church has not changed since the division, as to the points that create the difficulty in regard to doctrine. We have very many men still in our Church, who hold and publicly teach the same doctrinal views that were so loudly denounced by our Old School brethren at the time of the separation. Whether the number of such men among us now is larger or smaller, has no important bearing on the present question. For we freely receive men into all our Presbyteries who hold the same opinions that were avowed by our leading New School men then, and we claim the right of continuing to do so. Of course I do not refer to the theology of Oberlin, or that of Dr. Bushnell, which our Church never has in any way approved. I refer to the views of the very men who were arraigned for heresy, and whose sentiments on the disputed points were well expressed by the protestors in the Assembly of 1837, as endorsed by the celebrated Auburn Convention of the same year. Such is our position. We never believed there was any such doctrinal difference as to justify the division of the Church. We do not believe there is any such difference now as to justify continued separation. But we demand the same liberty for the views of New School men as for those of Old School men, as a condition of reunion. We demand this for ourselves and our children and our children's children. We ask of our brethren no more and no less than we are willing and ready to grant to them. It is a part of the liberty which we now enjoy that we can pass freely from one of our Presbyteries to another without being rejected on account of views which we held and avowed at our licensure and ordination. We ask not mere toleration where we may happen to be at the time when the re-union shall be consummated, but the same freedom of removal from place to place, which we now enjoy. In this respect also, we are ready to grant all that we demand. Such, I believe, is the position of the two parties as far as it has been publicly announced, as it regards the allowance of differences of "interpretation," or "doctrine," which is really the same thing.

In another letter, I will (D. V.) notice the other points to which I have referred. RE-UNION.

GLADSTONE'S RESOLUTIONS ON THE IRISH CHURCH.—The following are the resolutions which were adopted by the British House of Commons, April 4, by a majority of fifty-six: 1. That in the opinion of this House it is necessary that the Established Church of Ireland should cease to exist as an establishment; due regard being had to all personal interests, and to all individual rights of property. 2. That, subject to the foregoing considerations, it is expedient to prevent the creation of new personal interests by the exercise of any public patronage, and to confine the operations of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners of Ireland to objects of immediate necessity or involving individual rights, pending the final decision of Parliament. 3. That an humble address be presented to her Majesty, humbly to pray that, with a view to the purposes aforesaid her Majesty would be graciously pleased to place at the disposal of Parliament her interest in the temporalities of the archbishopric, bishoprics, and other ecclesiastical dignities, and benefices in Ireland, and in custody thereof.