

# The American Presbyterian.

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 1869.

### OUR ECCLESIASTICAL WEST-POINTERS.

The Church has no distinctive West-Point. But the Church, like the Government, has a great many West-Pointers. Both by the Government and by the Church they have been put to the proof. In each case their necessity has been amply vindicated. It ought to be past all doubt now, that training is vital. Men for leadership, whether of an army of the Union or of an army of the Lord, must be educated and disciplined. Now and then a man of no military education whatever, may spring to the front and go almost at a bound to responsible and successful generalship, very much as if he were born for organizing victory. Now and then one may step from the ranks of the Church, and, with little or no preparation, take official place and prove so great a winner of souls, as to have his ambassadorship stamped with unquestionable seal of God. On the other hand, a diplomated and finished West-Pointer may be a General Somebody who didn't do it. And seven years of carefullest culture may leave a candidate for the ministry as much of a "novice" as they found him, as far as work for God is concerned. Yet after all, training tells. West-Point only needed a great war to vindicate its necessity. The Church's battle with "the world, the flesh and the devil," has proved the imperative need of an educated ministry. Error is championed by the ripest scholarship. Truth must be alike championed or leave the field.

The necessity admitted, how shall it be met? The Government meets it by providing a most thorough military education for a certain number of young men every year. With these it is expected that our armies will be efficiently officered, and if need be led to battle. This education is "without money and without price." And yet the West-point cadet is no pensioner on Government bounty. He is not exempted a charity student to whom is doled out the barest allowance that may keep him at school. Put such a phase upon the matter, and that Academy would be emptied in a week. Young men, going there, give themselves to the Government. This puts the Government under a debt to them. It pays the nation to assume that debt and discharge it. The nation positively cannot afford to do anything else. Grant's training at West-Point has been worth a thousand-fold more to the Government than all that Military Academy ever cost.

So it is with the Church and the education of her sons for the ministry. She needs these men trained and disciplined, thoroughly equipped to officer her rank and file. She must have them, or give up the battle. Where are they to come from? These years of preparation to preach the Gospel demand a large pecuniary outlay. An education for the ministry costs something. Those well able to meet this outlay are not ordinarily disposed to enter the ministry. They think they can make better investments. They are tempted to other callings. The claims of God on them to be heralds of salvation, they seldom so much as consider. And when one of them, of bright promise and brilliant parts and abundant means, does feel impelled as by divine call to enter this harvest-field, alas! the exclamation from even some of the people of God is, "Why, what in the world is he throwing himself away for?"

What, then, is to be done? Where is the Church to look for the leadership of her hosts? How is the army of the Lord to be officered? The church must have her West-Pointers. She must educate her sons of poverty. She must stand ready to say to every young man with suitable qualifications who feels called of God to official ambassadorship, "Your equipment is provided for, the means shall be forthcoming for the amplest training. Go, fit yourself thoroughly for the work of God." And this must be done, not as a favor to the student, but as a favor to the church. The idea should be utterly discarded that such young men are the recipients of a bounty. Their consecration to the work of the ministry has put the church under a positive obligation. Their education is not a gift, but a debt. To call them charity students is to insult them. What is the meagre amount appropriated for their education, compared with the gift of their whole lives to the church? We might as well attempt to strike the balances between dollars and souls!

The church must have her West-Pointers. Thank God, she has them. The roll of them has been steadily increasing for the last five years. The Education Committee in connection with our own branch of the church, have now under their care, about two hundred and fifty young men who are being aided in their course of pre-

paration for the ministry. They are at their training posts, up and down the land, in academies and colleges and seminaries. They are there, we believe, by call of God. The church has prayed for them, and God has given them. They are arming for the conflict. They are being thoroughly furnished, so that they may wisely lead the Lord's hosts. Every one of them could be placed at some strategic point in the great battle-field this very hour, if he were fully equipped for service. Meanwhile the battle rages, and Satan keeps winning victories that might be won for Christ, if only a greater number of skilled leaders were in the field.

And just at this juncture, what do we see? Just on the eve of the day of prayer for colleges, what do we see? The treasury of the ministerial Education Committee largely overdrawn. Another quarterly appropriation to these 250 candidates for the ministry approaching, and thousands of dollars wanted to meet it. The Committee hesitating whether they will reduce the appropriation, defer it, or go in debt to meet it. And last, and worst of all, an apathy prevailing amongst the churches concerning this vital cause, that is most lamentable and shameful. An apathy that hung out its signals last year after this sort: Of 1560 congregations in our connection, only 277 contributed to this object. Twenty-one entire Presbyteries failed to give a dollar. Twenty-two more Presbyteries had only one contributing church each. The committee were saved from an embarrassing debt, or the candidates from positive suffering, only by the gifts of the dead. Special and unexpected legacies alone enabled the Education cause to show a good balance sheet.

The church meets this week to pray for institutions of learning. The burden of prayer will doubtless be for "the Lord to send forth laborers into his harvest," by baptizing the colleges and calling young men to the ministry. There could scarcely be a sadder and more reproachful commentary on the prayer, than the present condition of the treasury of the Education Committee. Will not every pastor of our church arm himself with facts and figures, and go before his people with an appeal to their hearts and consciences and pockets so effective, that the response shall wipe out that reproach? H. J.

### WHAT SHALL BE DONE FOR THE POOR?

A friend, writing to us from Brooklyn, very correctly observes: "The great question is, how shall we serve the poor so as not to ruin them?" No doubt this is one of the important problems to be solved by the Christian people of this age.

Dorcas was a woman of blessed memories. She is yet; but we doubt whether all who call themselves after her are as prudent as she was, and succeeded in accomplishing as blessed a work as that by which she is immortalized. She was "full of good works and alms deeds," and the weeping widows after her death showed to Peter the coats and garments which she had made. We are not told, however, that she gave away all these coats and garments, nor is it stated in connection with her good works and alms deeds that she furnished food, and fuel, and hats, and shoes to her poor friends, and gave them to understand they would confer a great favor by accepting them.

Yet this is what some of our tender-hearted Christian sisters of the present day do. They organize their societies. They employ their missionaries. They petition their friends to assist them in contributing funds. They meet and unite in making very nice garments, and then they go out, and, as an inducement to the poor to send their children to Sabbath-school, and themselves to attend church, they give them provisions, and coal, and an outfit of clothing? What is the result? The children come to school for awhile, and perhaps the parents to church. But ere long you miss them. The garments are worn out, or soiled, or pawned, and they are waiting for a new supply.

Occasionally you find a family who seem to appreciate your kindness, to be grateful for your benefactions, and to be benefited by your aims. But tell me, ye good-meaning Dorcasites, is it not usually the reverse? Are you sure you are not unintentionally making paupers of those whom you thus feed and clothe? Consider this matter carefully. The mass of those who apply for aid are impostors. This you know. Of the remainder, who are truly unfortunate or needy, very few require more than counsel and encouragement. Occasionally, one may need a little immediate assistance, but this should be given very cautiously. There is danger of depriving the poor of their natural nobility, by making them dependent. Watch the children, and you will see how adroitly they manage their case. Now they go about in their poorest garb, and put on

a whining tone, to all which they are carefully trained, that they may touch your sensibilities. Listen to the mothers, and you may hear a conversation like this, which actually occurred in this city last Spring, between two poor women, whom we will call Mrs. Thrifty and Mrs. Dependent.

Mrs. Thrifty—"Well, neighbor, the cold winter is over. Come, let us work hard, and try to save something, so that in the Fall we can provide for ourselves."

"You may do as you please, Mrs. Thrifty," replied the amiable Mrs. Dependent; "but, as for me, I shall not trouble myself much about these matters. You know the trotters will be around in time."

"The trotters. Why, who do you mean, Mrs. Dependent?"

"Why, don't you know? Those 'Dorcas ladies, I mean, to be sure."

Well, this is enough of the conversation. Christian ladies, there is a better way to care for the widows and orphans. Next week we will say a word to you about *Industrial Schools*. P. S.

### THE REUNION COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATIONS.

Our readers will receive with great interest the report of the latest action of the Re-union Committee of our Church, which we publish in this paper. Its spirit is calm, courteous, and fraternal towards our brethren of the other branch, while asserting, once more, the great characteristic principle of Christian liberty, to which, in all its action, the Committee has maintained unflinching allegiance. In connection with this declaration, the Committee recommend our Presbyteries at their approaching Spring sessions, to agree to Re-union on the Basis proposed last May by the Joint Committee and the General Assemblies, with the omission of the Smith and Gurley clauses, in the 1st article, and of the whole of the Xth article.

The spirit of this action of the Committee is most gratifying, and it well represents our own feelings on the whole subject. With the form of it, however, we are not so well pleased. The preliminary part of the document is longer and less perspicuous than it should and might have been. The glowing style, the animated tone and the fervid eloquence that marked the document read at Harrisburg, are wanting in this. The experiences on the subject through which our Committee were led to these conclusions, were probably not favorable to those elements of style. And the perfectly proper and just declaration of continued adherence to the liberal-orthodox spirit of the Joint Committee's Basis, and to its explanatory opening and closing portions (which were never adopted by the other branch) should have been made a part of the new action specifically recommended to the Presbyteries. As it is, it amounts to nothing more than the expression of our Committee's sentiments on the matter, and the Presbyteries must go somewhat aside from the Committee's recommendation; if they make the declaration part of their action. It will be entirely within their province to do so, or indeed to act altogether independently of the Committee's action. But the recommendation of the Committee will be of great weight, and their omission to recommend will be followed by a neglect to act on the part of many.

Yet we do not mean to say that the Committee's frank avowal of liberal-orthodoxy will, even as it is, be without avail to secure our liberties. Far from it. Our brethren of the other branch will see, that in accepting their recent offer of "The standards pure and simple" we have not receded from our denominational position as to the right of interpretation and the entire equality of the various types of Calvinism already having a recognized existence in both bodies. They must go into the Re-union with their eyes open. They are not proselytizing us, any more than we are proselytizing them. They do not take us into their body, any more than we take them into ours. Meeting us with these declarations on our lips, in the very act of accepting their terms, although we do not insist upon incorporating them into the terms, they must, if they are the honorable men we take them to be, either inscribe these declarations on the unwritten but deeper heart-contract between us, or frankly reject the Re-union altogether. Any middle course is incompatible with the simplest principles of Christian integrity.

Such, we think, will turn out to be the practical effect of the Committee's Declaration, if adopted by the Presbyteries. And yet it strikes us as a piece of sentimentalism, an expression of confidence bordering on the romantic, to leave out of a solemn contract, which is to endure for generations, an element which one side believes

to be of the highest importance, and which the other side is believed to be at heart entirely willing to admit into it. In such a case, the omission is so gratuitous, the chivalrous flourish of courtesy is at the peril of such grave realities, that one cannot but anticipate some surprising and inconvenient result to all the parties in the arrangement, as a reproof of their neglect of plain business principles in the work of the Lord.

We, therefore, advise Presbyteries to incorporate the Committee's own declaration of sentiments into their action; to reiterate their adherence to the explanations of the Basis, as well as to express their assent to the changes proposed. Meanwhile, we wish it understood, that while this is our preference, we here pledge adherence to the Committee's Plan as it stands, if the Church can be rallied on that alone, believing that if Re-union is consummated by joint action of both branches in full view of the sentiments of that report, stringent Presbyterianism will be put into a hopeless minority. Well-posted men on both sides assure us that such will be the result.

### IN A PET.

The process of making Plan-of-Union churches over again into unmixed Congregationalist churches does not seem to be prospering. We do not say this from any intimate knowledge of what is going on in Central and Western New York; but from what we have observed of the temper of our Congregational brethren when they touch on that subject. From *The Independent* down, our exchanges of that denomination grow as teasy when they touch on it as do Baptists when Sawtelle or Malcom quote Roger Williams.

The last ebullition of temper is from *The Congregationalist* of Boston. On its first page we find an editorial article, entitled HOW HONESTLY TO BE DISHONEST, in which the action of our Synod of Albany in answer to a memorial of Rev. Geo. T. Everest is commented on in such a fashion as might be expected from the title of the article.

We do not understand the *Congregationalism* of the article. We had supposed that the system took its name from an underlying theory that every local Christian congregation is a church complete, and is fully competent to manage its own affairs, and that our Presbyterian conception of national churches, possessed of distinctive rights and powers, was an extra-scriptural invention. Now here are sundry local churches of Christ, who have hitherto ceded to a central body as their agents, the power of managing most of their general concerns. It is proposed that by a vote of these same churches acting in their own right, they shall cede the management of part of their own local affairs to a body elected from their own number. What is there in Congregationalism to forbid their doing so? What is there in Christian morality that requires them to forfeit their franchises under the state, for having done so? Yet *The Congregationalist* pronounces it thievery.

We cannot clearly see the consistency of the thing, but if our Boston friend is right, we hail it as a sign of moral progress in that denomination. Congregationalists have not been very scrupulous about the Eighth Commandment if that is an infraction of it. The Reformed Classics of Philadelphia "could a tale unfold" on this subject, and we are not aware that *The Congregationalist* or the Council which met to receive Dr. Smiley and his flock, uttered one word of disapproval. Just about the close of the war *The Independent* published a plan by which churches of any other order or faith might be turned into "churches of the Puritan faith and order" without endangering any legal rights. We would not be sure about it, but we think that *The Congregationalist* referred to, if it did not copy that article, without one word of disapproval. So, too, with a still more recent attempt in Iowa City, by which a New School Church's property was to be transferred. So, too, indeed with some other Iowa churches. "In '42 or '43," says *The Presbyterian*, "a 'missionary band' of twelve Congregational ministers went to Iowa from Andover. Nearly all of them took charge of New School churches at important points, and in less than two years took them over to the Congregational body." Were they thieves? Was Dr. Smiley a thief? Are the First Congregational church of Philadelphia a band of thieves? If so, let *The Congregationalist* give them the benefit of a little of its new-found moral indignation. The rule, to be good, must work both ways.

REV. F. A. NOBLE was installed pastor of the Third Church, Pittsburg, February 21st. Particulars in our next.

### REV. A. M. STEWARTS LETTERS. XXX.

ACROSS THE CONTINENT.

This caption has become somewhat hacknied, yet it is not likely soon to lose its interest to the American citizen or foreign tourist. *Across the Continent*, has perhaps at present even more attractions than in any past period, or than are likely in any time to come. Across the Continent also in winter, when mountains of snow are to be crossed in sledges, broad valleys and long canyons passed over and through in the old stage-coach, and by steam horse, along the progressive rail, over and through mountains and hills; up gulches with laughing, babbling, impetuous streams; down, down beside long rivers; across broad plateaus, grassy, barren or covered with the everlasting sage-brush—distances so long, so wide, so visionless they seem interminable.

A special interest in crossing the Continent at present, is the opportunity of witnessing the gigantic efforts of the two rival railroads as to which shall stretch the farthest ere the rails shall be united. Within a very few months this privilege will forever pass away. Two armies of no inconsiderable size are now fast approaching each other; and this in a region far away from former haunts of civilized men; a land of exceeding ruggedness, treeless, fruitless, grassless, and in the judgment of comers and goers, barren. An enterprise so grand, so unparalleled, in the world's history is not easily, unless seen, conceived of, with intelligence. The boom of exploding powder may almost be heard by the approaching columns, as the rocks are rent in pieces, in order to make way for the iron chariot with its train of life, trade, civilization and Christianity.

### ROUGH HUMANITIES.

These marvellous enterprises have drawn into them strange mixtures of character, who are without a present home or localized abode. At the terminus of each road, there will be erected in a day, a city of no meagre dimensions, composed of tents, rough boards, and many habitations of more rugged materials. Here are scenes of busy bustle, with very many appliances belonging to civilized life. Jostling against each other, are the director, superintendent, contractor, engineer, mechanic and laborer; Jew, Gentile, Milesian, Chinaman, Mormon, sutlers, saloon-keepers, gamblers, robbers, desperadoes; and saddest, perhaps also commonest, troops of poor abandoned, outcast women. As track-laying progresses these hasty cities are successively moved on to new localities.

What is to become of this large and commingled mass, when the roads from the Atlantic and Pacific sides unite in mid-continent as they will within the next three months, is a problem which may satisfactorily solve itself, yet very difficult to the present vision of a thoughtful mind. Perhaps the most hopeful result to be desired is, that when the last rail is laid and the present occupation of these multitudes gone, they may mutually kill off each other until none be left. This process even now goes on quite successfully in many of these places. With what time and opportunity for observation it has been in my power to use, no evidence or trace of Christianity has been discovered among the masses of these continental road-builders. The seven thousand Chinese laborers on the Pacific division have as much religion and far less immorality than their Anglo-Saxon and Milesian compeers. No Sabbath, no Bible, paper, book, or tract to tell of Christ—no gospel or gospel agent, but abounding and intensified wickedness—drinking, sweating, gambling, robberies, murders, and prostitution.

### THE JOURNEY.

Although the ends of the railroads are approaching so near each other, a long distance of each road is unprepared for passenger trains. Five hundred miles of staging still remain as a feeling memento of the olden time. My starting point for the East was Austin, Nevada, a hundred miles South of the Humboldt river, up which the Western Division of the railroad is now being constructed. Starting, Monday noon, the five hundred miles of coach riding through Nevada and Utah were completed late on Saturday night by arrival in Salt Lake City. Six days and five nights of constant stage-riding across that lone unsettled land, and amid February snows and winter, was an experience that few would crave to repeat. Three pleasant companions, and one of these a lady, helped much to lighten the tedium of the toil.

The Sabbath was spent among the Saints—of which and other matters concerning Mormonism, in my next.

There were eighty-five miles of staging this side of Salt Lake ere reaching the cars on the Eastern end. A part of this was over deep snow and upon sledges. A drifting snow-storm bewildered the reckoning of our driver, by which we had the benefit of a twenty-four hours detention amid ruggedness itself. Excepting occasional delays from snow drifts, the thousand miles by rail beyond Omaha proved a pleasant and easy ride. When the Missouri was crossed on a bridge of ice, a home feeling began first to be cherished; and as the Father of waters was left behind, it was, *this side the river*, and in the land of the East. Thus, after a thirteen days and nights journey without undressing or rest, I found myself safely in Chicago among loved ones, with whom thanks were given to Him, who keeps and guides by day and by night, in the house and by the way; through a special and gracious Providence.

A. M. STEWART.