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# Presbyterian Banner

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Continuation of the Narrative of Dr. Marks.  
About two miles beyond the White Oak Swamp, toward James River, is the field of battle of Monday. This is sometimes called the battle of Nelson's Farm. The enemy were defeated and driven from the field on Sunday evening at Savage Station, and there was but little expectation of close pursuit on Monday—so little, indeed, that Paymasters had appeared in some of the Regiments, and had commenced paying off the troops. The battle commenced with the enemy rushing on our lines about 2 o'clock P. M. The struggle continued with unabating violence until 1 o'clock at night, when the guns of the enemy were silenced, and our pickets held possession of the battle-ground until 2 o'clock in the morning.

On this battle-ground, extending about two and a half miles, I found that every dwelling house, stable, barn, and out-building, was converted into a hospital, and yet many of our men were lying under the shade of trees, and under the folds of boughs, grass, and blankets. The battle was most severe in that portion of it where our Reserve Regiments and the 63d Pennsylvania were placed, in the defence of batteries; graves are found in this portion of the line, where one is elsewhere seen. In the neighborhood of two small farm houses near to the crossing of the Richmond and White Oak Swamp Roads, the conflict was most deadly and long-continued. These farms are embosomed in thick, dense pine forests, and from these the enemy rushed upon our lines and artillery.

In one of these houses I found Adjutant Gaither, of the 10th Reserves. The hospital was under the care of Dr. Donnelly, of the 3d Reserves, who had nobly volunteered to remain on the battle-field with our wounded men. When I entered the room where Adjutant G. was lying, I was much struck by his appearance. His face expressed fine culture and education, and purity and elevation of character. These impressions were confirmed by subsequent acquaintance. He was wounded in the right breast, the ball passing through the body. He had been left for dead, but was found alive by some of the Confederate soldiers, and borne to this house. He told me in my first interview that he had been praying to God, that some minister of the Gospel might be sent to his dying bed, to counsel, instruct, and pray for him, and now God had answered his prayer. He had been for years a member of the Presbyterian Church, and during his life in the army he had not forsaken his Saviour. I have seldom witnessed a more impressive scene. The dying officer, fanned and upheld by enemies; the floor of the room covered with the bodies of men every posture of interest, or distress; some listening with the greatest anxiety, and others too absorbed in their pains to hear anything. In the presence of them all, he bore his testimony, as a dying man, to the righteousness of our cause; that he had no regrets over his early death, for he died for his country. He likewise spoke of his hope as a sinner in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ; of his final sense of unworthiness, and how he had been pardoned so little of any value, but that he was not without a faith in God, for Christ his Redeemer, was mighty to save; and not by works of righteousness, but by his mercy and grace he saved us. At the same time he intimated a letter to his parents, full of gratitude and thankfulness for the past and hope for the future, and of joyful expectation of an eternal heaven.

This was on Saturday, the 5th of July. I returned on Monday, and found that while many whom I had seen on my first visit were gone, the Adjutant had revived and breathed with less painfulness; but he was not hopeful of the end, but felt assured he must die. I bade him farewell, with no expectation of ever seeing him again. But when I reached Richmond, and at 11 o'clock at night was searched to find No. 1. I was greeted by many familiar voices; and as I turned the light which I bore in my hand to the faces, I found many whom I had first seen on the field of death. To one of these officers, when I had spoken to him and congratulated him on his safety in Richmond, I said, "And the Adjutant?" "He's there," said his friend, pointing to a camp bedstead, on which the wounded man was lying. I approached him; he grasped my hand, and blessed God in heaven. He again assured me that he could not live; that the conflict was all over, and he now longed to be in the bosom of his Saviour; that he felt no fear nor apprehension of the future. This was Sunday, the 13th of July; he did not materially change for the worse until Wednesday following, when it became plain he was passing from us. On Thursday morning, the 17th, he called me to him and said the struggle was nearly over; that his faith in Christ continued unwavering. He asked me to pray with him, and commend his departing spirit to his Redeemer. Nearly the last words he uttered were: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, and henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness; which the Lord, &c., &c."

As I repeated the first words of the 23d Psalm, he took up the words and repeated much of the Psalm, saying, with an eye brightened apparently by the light of another world, and a smiling face, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me, and thy rod and staff comfort me." His end was peace. About 2 o'clock P. M. he passed from us, and went up, we hope, from the bloodstained garments to be clothed in the spotless robes of the glorified. Thus died a young man of the greatest promise, whom to know was to love; who, if God had been pleased to continue him with us, would have been an honor to his family and State. He lies amidst a great throng of his countrymen, in the Pottery Field of Richmond, and from their graves go up an appeal to the God of justice, to remember and avenge.

A simple heart, with his name and address, marks the place where he lies.

patriotic, may be guessed from the known position of the *New-York Observer*. In only one particular does the *Observer* dissent from Dr. Hodge. It is in the opposition which Dr. Hodge makes to the paper of Dr. Breckinridge, which was so heartily adopted by the last Assembly. Dr. Hodge admits that the body had a perfect right to select the paper, by that it was *inexpedient* so to do; and that "the wisest and best course would have been *entire silence* on the disturbed state of the country." The *New-York Observer* cannot quite agree with Dr. Hodge on this point. Nor can we. We never could understand how, if Dr. Hodge considered the Southern uprising as a wicked rebellion, he could so steadfastly oppose the action of the Church in saying so. How he could so oppose the *Spring Resolutions*; we could never understand—they only declared the solemn judgment of the Church as regards the duty of loyalty, and allegiance to the powers to whom North and South were equally bound under oath. And to say that this question of allegiance was not one upon which the Church was competent to pronounce, was simply to declare that it was a purely political question and not a moral one, and that, therefore, men might, in this case, break their allegiance and not be chargeable with sin such as the Church ought to warn against and to condemn. Where then is the crime of the Southern uprising in Dr. Hodge's view, if it be only such a misdoing as the Church may not speak of—may if in such case, the action of the Church in declaring the duty of loyalty and allegiance, was unjust and to be protested against? Suppose the Southern movement to be high-handed rebellion and treason, as men at the North commonly believe, is not the Church to admonish and reprove her members of such a flagrant wrong? Why is the Church set up on earth if it be not as a witness-bearer against iniquity? And has not the community a right to look to the Church for her solemn declaration at a time when such a great divided in opinion and action? Can her deliverance be *inexpedient*, simply because there are differences of opinion among her ministers and members in the two sections? Much more; can this fact make her faithful testimony wrong? What if she does speak in a way to bear severely upon many of her ministers and members, must she be a *dumb dog that will not bark*, as though she were dumb, and which she is not? The Southern Church Courts did not deal so delicately and mincingly with the matter. Not they took the lead of the politicians, and their action was spread out before the General Assembly, in the Minutes of the Synod of South Carolina, showing that they had the way in advance of the political bodies. And why must the highest Court of our Church forbear to speak against the greatest crime of the age, if they regard it such as not involving wholesale perjury, robbery, and bloodshed, such as ages of Church service could not repair? Why? Could not the large membership in various quarters of the land, who were, at the moment, more or less vacillating about right and duty, expect it of this highest Court of Jesus Christ to speak out and inform them of the true Scriptural teaching in Romans xiii, and of its application to the case on hand? Has the Church and the Scripture no teachings on this subject of loyalty? The General Assembly did speak—kindly, but plainly and firmly—in few words—"acknowledging and declaring their obligation" to be loyal and true to the Federal Government, and "so far as in them lie" to sustain it in the exercise of its Constitutional functions; and to this end, they were sworn as American citizens. It was a dogma of the Vatican. It did not bar all right of private judgment. It was not meant to set up in every Presbyterian Church an inquisition. It was not at all a "test of membership." And yet Dr. Hodge saw in such a simple declaration, only evil—and a wrong, as it would seem, second only to the wrong of the rebellion itself. We never could reconcile this position of Dr. H. (in which the Southern and Border members agreed with him), with any proper sense of the horrible wickedness of the political leaders of the South. Nor could we see how brethren who believed that the fresh blood of Sumpter was spilt by traitors, could think it unfair and unjust to our Southern members, that the Church should, at her first Assembly, cry out against the wrong. It always seemed to us that such a position could be reconciled only with some very qualified view of the rebellion itself.

And yet, at this late hour, when the atrocities are so multiplied, and the brethren of the Border States need so to be advised of truth and duty in the case, when Dr. Breckinridge, from their very midst, submits a paper expressive of the right, and exposing the wrong, Dr. Hodge again utters to the country his dissent, and not weakly to the true position of loyal men and of a loyal Church to maintain, at this hour of our deepest agony, that "the wisest course of the Assembly would have been *entire silence* on the subject of the disturbed state of the country?"

Dr. Hodge, in his Protest against the action of the General Assembly of 1861, takes the ground that the Church is not competent to decide to what Government a man owes his allegiance. But is not competent to decide that he owes his allegiance to that Government to which he is solemnly sworn? And the OATH of all State officers shows that the citizens of the respective States are bound first of all to the General Government, and only secondarily and subordinately to that of the particular State. This is the moral point to which the Assembly speaks, and this is just the point where "the political question rises into the sphere of morals and religion." In Dr. Hodge's own language elsewhere—so seemingly inconsistent with his action here—we ask "Is Disunion morally right? Does it not involve a breach of faith, and a violation of the oaths by which that faith was confirmed? And we say again, in his own words, "If crime at all, it is the heinousness of which, can only be imperfectly estimated." It would really seem that he must regard it as no crime, or as of doubtful importance, if he would have the Church debarred from speaking against it. But this inference he disdains. And here is his inconsistency.