

# THE SOUTHERN PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

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## ARTICLE I.

### THE BATTLE OF FORT SUMTER: ITS MYSTERY AND MIRACLE—GOD'S MASTERY AND MERCY.

When thou comest nigh unto a city to fight against it, then proclaim peace unto it. And if it will make no peace with thee, but will make war against thee, then thou shalt besiege it.—Deut. 20 : 10, 12. Also, 2 Chron. 32 : 5-8; Ps. 22 : 7-9; Is. 25 : 11, 12; Num. 31 : 49; Is. 29 : 8, 4.

We have been called together to the sanctuary—the house of prayer, of promise, and of God's presence and powerful interposition—originally by the generally expressed sentiments of this community, and more recently by the unanimous voice of our Southern Congress, and the proclamation of the President of the Confederate States, and our own Government. Never was there a louder appeal, and never a more imperious necessity. We have been coerced into a war. It is a religious, and yet an irreligious and anti-Christian, war. We have crossed swords with the Northern confederacy over the Bible. We have met each other face to face at the same altar, invoked fire from heaven on each other, and appealed to the God of battles, to whom belongeth vengeance, to avenge us against our adversaries. The fearful guilt and amenability to the righteous judg-

VOL. XIV., NO. III.—47

## ARTICLE VII.

## EXPLANATORY NOTE.

It is a matter of great regret with us, that our remarks in the July number of this Review, upon the presence of the South-Western Delegates in the last General Assembly, should have proved offensive to any of those brethren. We can only plead the privilege of a free press to comment freely upon the official conduct of public men. It was our opinion that no Southern man ought to have attended the Assembly, inasmuch as our country was at that time at open war with the North. And we hold the same opinion still—but we do not, and did not, claim to judge for any one but ourselves. It seemed to us that the brethren who attended the Assembly put themselves into a false position, and would find their attendance misinterpreted on all hands; and so it certainly has proved. We designed no offence in expressing that opinion, but considered it incumbent on us, as a reviewer of the Assembly, to refer to the matter, as to the other points which were likely to be of interest to our readers.

To one of these Delegates, in particular, we would express our regrets for having given currency, in our review of the Assembly, to an unjust statement respecting him. We refer to what we put on record, on the authority of the *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, as to the Rev. Mr. McInnis, of New Orleans, having said that the Southern people, generally, did “not sympathize with the rebellion.” We had reason to believe that the Rev. Dr. John Leyburn, of Virginia, was reporter, as usual, for his own paper, and we copied the statement, therefore, as probably correct, on *his* authority. But we added the expression of our hope that the *Presbyterian* was in error. What more could we do? Nevertheless, the statement, being denied by Mr. McInnis,

is, of course, not correct as concerns him; and, therefore, unsolicited by him, we take this opportunity of putting down upon our own pages this acknowledgment of the error, and this expression of our regrets for the injury done to him.

We are, also, free to say, with respect to the important and difficult question of the relation of the kingdom of Christ to the kingdoms of this world, upon which we expressed ourselves strongly in our review of the Assembly, that further reflection has modified essentially our views. It is, indeed, difficult to say, in every case, where, precisely, Church power ends, and the power of the State begins. Rebellion is *a sin*, and sin may be condemned, of course, by any Church court, because the Church may enforce all that the Word reveals. But how far the Church court is authorized to go in determining between a lawless rebellion and a just and righteous revolution, it is difficult to decide. When a new Government is set up, *de facto*, and Christian men have to judge whether they ought to obey it or to adhere to their old allegiance, we must acknowledge that the Word of God does not enable any Church court to give them light in their doubts and darkness. The Scriptures command servants to obey their masters, and children their parents, and subjects their rulers; but the servant always knows his master, and the child his parent, while the subject sometimes can not tell who is his lawful ruler. Here the moral question depends on a political one; and that political one is not determined in the Word, and, therefore, it is not the Church that can point out to the honest but doubting subject where his allegiance is due.

We confess our need of more light upon the whole subject. We are not able to say how far, in the very midst of revolution and war, individual Ministers of the Gospel may go in making use of their rights, or in assuming to discharge their duties of citizenship; nor can we decide how far the individual Pastor, in his pulpit, may go in manifesting his sympathy with the old Government or the new, as

the case may be, in the way of exhorting his flock to constancy, to patience, to obedience; or in the way of asking the Divine blessing on the cause of the one or the other side. And how far, then, may the Assembly of Pastors go in the same line of manifesting a sympathy with either the one Cæsar or the other, in the way of appointing a day of fasting and prayer for the Divine blessing; or in the way of joining, themselves, in the prayers of the Moderator, or of any other brother, for the favor of the Almighty to either army; or in any kind of recognition of the solemn and sorrowful condition of their divided and distressed country?

Acknowledging this state of embarrassment and doubtfulness of mind about the subject, of course we are bound to withdraw, and do hereby withdraw, all our expressions which reflected on the Southern Commissioners in the last Assembly, as not having done justice to the question or to their own country in the debate. It was a question very difficult indeed to deal with, in full justice. We have no doubt that they were patriotic and honest men, and that, having felt it their duty to go to the Assembly, they discharged their obligations there in the fear of God, and as faithfully and ably as any other like company of brethren could have done in the same circumstances.

It was very far from our design to wound the feelings of any one of those brethren, or to injure their reputation, in the Church or the State. With Scotch-Irish blood running in our veins, we have to speak, usually, with some warmth and earnestness; and occasionally we write, our friends have often told us, with a seeming abruptness. This, we suppose, can hardly be charged to our blood. Neither the warmth nor the abruptness, however, have any mixture of malice. We love our brethren. We desire, with all our heart, the peace of the Church. We salute them with the Apostle's salutation, of Grace, Mercy and Peace. May the blessed Master smile on us all, and use us all, in our new circumstances, for His own glory, and the comfort and prosperity of Zion!