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## I. Literary.

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### THE CHARACTERISTIC AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

BY REV. DAVID JAMES BURRELL, D. D.

THE *Reformed Church in America* has no noteworthy "characteristic features" to distinguish it from the larger branches of the "Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System." It is, to all intents and purposes, identical in doctrine and polity with the Northern and Southern Presbyterian Churches.

Nevertheless it holds a separate existence, because of a belief, more or less prevalent among its adherents, that it has a real *raison d'etre*. There are those who aver that its power for good—which is not inconsiderable—would be greatly increased by an alliance with one of the larger Presbyterian bodies. Overtures looking to such a union have been made more than once, but for various reasons have come to naught.

I. The Reformed Church has an honorable history. It is the oldest evangelical organization in America. The first Dutch immigrants came over in the *Half-Moon*, Hendrik Hudson, skipper, in 1609. This was the year of Holland's armistice with Spain after a century of bloody conflict for religious liberty. The *Half-Moon* returned to Holland the following year, reporting an exploration of the Hudson River in vain search for the fabulous open passage to the Orient. An allusion to "fertile lands and fur-bearing animals" tempted the thrifty spirit of the Dutch

What freshness, vivacity, joy in life and effort! What sagacious reflections in some of them on men and things! What wit in some! What charm of style in every one of them! Not that they are unparalleled. They are not; but they are noble and very charming and Christian. The oration at the unveiling of the statue of Jackson, once you are through the introduction, is noble, very noble.

We are not sorry that the author has made any single disclosure he has made. Indeed, we would like to have been helped to a still more thorough knowledge of the man. We don't agree with him that we ought to have in our church a prayer-book. But we are quite willing to let him say all he can in behalf of a church's having such a book, to be used at the minister's option. Of course, the biographer ought to note the fact that his subject did not regard the matter as of sufficient importance to make a fight for it, if such be the case. And we think the biographer might serve the cause of truth well by pausing in such a connection to animadvert on the evil consequences which have generally followed from a dependence on such forms. But we do not believe in lopping off men in their biographies. And we believe that Dr. Moses D. Hoge was large and lovable enough to bear setting forth as he was.

His biographer has nobly executed a noble task. He deserves not only the hearty congratulations, but the grateful thanks of all who have an interest in the work.

*Union Theological Seminary.*

THOMAS C. JOHNSON.

OFFICIAL REPORT OF THE HISTORY COMMITTEE OF THE GRAND CAMP OF THE CONFEDERATE VETERANS, DEPARTMENT OF VIRGINIA. *By Dr. Hunter McGuire, Chairman.* October 12, 1899. Richmond: J. L. Hill Printing Company. 1899.

This is a very vigorous, able, timely, and effective document. It contains a drastic review of Fiske's *Historical Works*, especially his *History of the United States*; and one also of Messrs. Cooper, Estill & Lemond's, *Our Country*.

The character of the review of Fiske may be best shown by the following extract:

Finally, and this deserves a separate paragraph—with respect to the motives of action, we would be glad if Mr. Fiske or any other Northern author would relieve us of the mental confusion resulting from the contemplation of the facts that Robert E. Lee set free all of his slaves long before the Sectional War began, and that U. S. Grant retained his as slaves until they were made free as one of the results of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.\*

Soldiers and gentlemen, we accepted in full faith and honesty the arbitrament of the sword. We are to-day all that may be honorably

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\* "Few, perhaps, know that General Grant was a slave-holder, but the fact is that he had several in the State of Missouri, and these were freed, like those in the South, by the emancipation proclamation. 'Those slaves,' said Mrs. Grant, 'came to him from my father's family, for I lived in the West when I married the General, who was then a lieutenant in the army.'"

meant by the expression "loyal American citizens." But we are also loyal to the memory of our glorious dead, and the heroic living of the Confederacy, and we will defend them in our poor way from the false and foul aspersions of Northern historians as long as brain can think or tongue and pen can do their office. We desire that our children shall be animated by the same spirit.

Mr. Fiske furthermore teaches our children that, but for the war the South would have reopened the slave trade. He tells, without quotation of authorities, a certain story of slave ships landing their cargoes in the South. Those of us who were men in the later fifties will remember a rumor that about that time a vessel (called *The Wanderer*, and commanded by a Southern man) brought a cargo of Africans into Southern river. It was also rumored that one or more ships, owned and commanded by Northern men, were engaged in the same work. The stories may or may not have been true. Granted the truth; the fact that one or more Yankee slave-traders had returned to the sins of their fathers does not prove that 20,000,000 of them were about to do so; nor does the purchase of such cargoes by half a dozen Southern planters prove that 5,000,000 of them had determined thus to strengthen their working forces.

#### WHAT HE OVERLOOKS.

In his work Mr. Fiske overlooks the fact that the Confederate Government, at the first meeting of its Congress, incorporated into its Constitution a clause which forever forbade the reopening of the slave trade. I beg you to consider the following contrast: George III. forced the Virginia Governor to veto our Virginia act of 1769, prohibiting the further importation of slaves. Mr. Fiske tells us that "in Jefferson's first draft of the Declaration of Independence this act (of the King) was made the occasion of a fierce denunciation of slavery, but in deference to the prejudices of South Carolina and Georgia, the clause was struck out by Congress."

The different impressions made on different authors by the same facts is to be observed. Mr. George Lunt, of Boston (*Origin of the Late War*), understood Mr. Jefferson to show that the omission was very largely due to "the influence of the Northern maritime States." Mr. Jefferson wrote the passage and describes the incident. To us, it appears from his account that this denunciation was of the King not less than—perhaps more than—of this traffic to which we Virginians were so much opposed. As to the omission of the passage, he gives Mr. Fiske's statement as to South Carolina and Georgia, but adds the following, which Mr. Fiske omits: "Our Northern brethren also, I believe, felt a little tender under these censures, for though their people had very few slaves, yet they had been pretty considerable carriers of them to others." Of course, historians cannot say everything—must omit something. We could wish, however, that our author had displayed a less judicious taste in omissions. Be it understood that we ourselves omit many things that we would say but for the fact that we are only seeking to supply some of Mr. Fiske's omissions, and so estab-

lish our proposition that our children cannot get true pictures from this artist's brush, and that his book ought not to be in our schools.

#### UNHOLY COMBINATION.

*The Origin of the Late War*, published by the Appletons in 1866, but out of print for lack of Northern popularity, is a book preëminently worthy of reading. Its author, Mr. George Lunt, of Boston, in Mr. Fiske's own State of Massachusetts, tells us that an unholy combination between Massachusetts Freesoilers and Democrats to defeat the Whigs, with no reference to any principle at all, sent Sumner to Congress and materially contributed to the cause of the war, partly through the Preston Brooks incident, which Mr. Fiske so unfairly describes. "Slavery," this author observes, "was the cause of war, just as property is the cause of robbery." If Mr. Fiske will read the Lincoln and Douglass debates of the time before the war; if he will lay aside preconceived opinion and read the Emancipation Proclamation itself, he will see that not even for Lincoln himself was slavery the cause of action, or its abolition his intent; that emancipation was simply a war measure, not affecting, as you know, the border States that had not seceded; even excluding from its operation certain counties of Virginia; simply intended to disable the fighting States, and more thoroughly to unite the rabid abolitionists of the North in his own deadly purpose to overthrow the constitutional rights of the States. Just after the battle of Sharpsburg, from which, as you remember, he dated his abolition proclamation, he very clearly indicated his view of the cause or purpose of the war on his part. "If he could save the Union," he said, "by freeing the slaves, he would do it; if he could save it by freeing one-half and keeping the other half in slavery, he would take that plan; if keeping them all in slavery would effect the object, then that would be his course." Further, with respect to the provocation offered to the South that led to the war—so far as slavery was its cause—Mr. Webster, in his speech at Capon Springs in 1851, used these words: "I do not hesitate to say and repeat that if the Northern States refuse wilfully and deliberately to carry into effect that part of the Constitution which respects the restoration of fugitive slaves, the South would no longer be bound to keep the compact." Mr. Lunt and Mr. Webster were Massachusetts men, like Mr. Fiske. Mr. Webster was a great constitutional lawyer; Mr. Lincoln was President. Yet we do not learn from Mr. Fiske that any of these heresies or mistaken purposes had currency in Massachusetts or in the Union. He would teach all men that Mr. Lincoln claims immortality as the apostle of freedom. He is the co-worker with the orator of their absurd Peace Jubilee, who lately proclaimed that the flag of Washington was the flag of independence; the flag of Lincoln the flag of liberty.

#### FALSE PICTURES.

"Demands of slave-holders," "Concessions to slave-holders." These and the like are the expressions our author uses to paint a picture of an aggressive South and a conciliatory North. Through and through

this author's work runs the same evidence of preconception as to the causes of war, and predetermined purpose as to the effect his book is to produce; the same consciousness of the necessity laid upon him and his co-laborers; the same proof of his consequent inability to write a true history of the sectional strife; the same proof that his book is unfit to be placed in the hands of Southern children.

A curious observation is to be made. Just where we ourselves would say that slavery was the cause, or, at least, the occasion of the outbreak of the war, Mr. Fiske does not see the connection. He would have us take even his own statement on that point with a very marked limitation. "Slavery was the cause," but only in so far as the action of the South made it so, and by no means in consequence of any act done by the North or Northern men. That is the doctrine that we must teach our children. Even the John Brown raid is outside of the group of causes. That was beyond question an overt act of Northern men. Therefore, the incident is to be minimized in history and effect. Those of you who remember the situation and possibly marched to Harper's Ferry on that occasion, will be surprised to note that Mr. Fiske says "he (Brown) intended to make an asylum in the mountains for the negroes, and that the North took little notice of his raid." There is no occasion for answering such a statement. We know that Brown and those who sent him here, aiding him to buy his pikes, etc., purposed war, intending that his fort should be the headquarters of an insurrection of the negroes, and purposed that his pikes should be driven into the breasts of Virginia men and women. All of us remember the platform and pulpit denunciation of our people, the parading, the bell-tolling, and other clamorous manifestations of approval and sympathy which went through the North and convinced the people of Virginia that the long-threatened war of the North against the South had at last begun. In this sense, perhaps, it was not of the causes of the war; it was the war. I myself saw the demonstrations of the Northern people on that occasion. Happening to be at that time living in Philadelphia, it was instantly plain to me that I was in an enemy's country. The Southern students around me saw it as plainly as I did. It took but a dozen sentences to open the eyes of the least intelligent. It was only to say, "Come on, boys! Let's go!" and three hundred of us marched over on our side of the line. The war for us was on, and I know that the State of Virginia knew that was what the North meant. Just how Mr. Fiske enables himself to make the statement quoted we cannot understand. We only see another proof that his point of view distorts the picture in his mind to such an extent that he ought not to be employed as a painter for us or our children.

Much has been said of Mr. Fiske's elegant style. We will only observe that the sugar-coating of a pill does not justify our administering poison. The Trojan horse may have been a shapely structure, but in its belly were concealed the enemies of the city.

In the close of the report Dr. McGuire commends to the library committees of the various camps the reading of the following works:

*The Origin of the Late War*, by Mr. George Lunt, an attorney of Boston, published in 1866 (Appleton & Co.) ; a book to be read by our people, even at cost of steps to be taken to secure its republication.

Lieutenant-Colonel Henderson's *Campaigns of Stonewall Jackson*, the new edition of which, it is hoped, will be easily within our reach.

Hon. J. L. M. Curry's *Southern States and Constitution*, and also some of the very valuable works of Mr. John C. Ropes, of Boston.

THOMAS C. JOHNSON.