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Introduction

One evening I met a christian gentleman from the South, who took me by the hand, and said, "How can you, who profess to be a christian, exercise such a disposition as you do towards the Southern people, and advocate such measures?" My answer was ~~condensed into a single remark~~: "I endeavor conscientiously to do my duty". This conversation suggested the propriety of a careful enquiry into the matter of christian duty toward the South, as a soldier and a layman might make it. – ~~and reciprocally, the duty of a Southern christian towards the North~~. Now the danger of error in judgement, as to the true condition of Southern society, based as it must be on testimony much of which is warped necessarily by prejudice, to the one side or to the other, is clearly recognized.

Yet this testimony, together with facts derived from personal experience, is all we have to guide us, so that we cannot reasonably expect a perfectly unbiassed conclusion.

Nevertheless, if we seek the position of duty, with predetermined candor, – with a spirit of prayer and of charity, which suffereth long and is kind, and is not puffed up with pride, we may expect to touch a chord of sympathy in the South, and possibly be answered in the same spirit.

My plan, (as seeming) is to make a classification of the South, according to my own observation; explain the present relation existing between us who profess to be loyal and the South, and then discuss briefly the christian principles that apply.

It was customary before the war in this country to call the slave states the South; during, and since the war the word "South" has for the most part been confined to the insurrectionary states. From the use of this term, collectively, on the part of public speakers and writers, to denote the Southern people many a grave error has become prevalent. For example – the editor of a newspaper in a Southern

By avoiding a misuse of these terms much misunderstanding and ill feeling will be prevented. I therefore propose the following classification of the South.

city, assumes that the customs of his city, are the customs of the South, so that when he finds a Northern editor enlarging upon the customs of the South, he often flatly contradicts him.

When we were marching for the relief of Knoxville I remember calling at a gentleman's house and asking him;—"are you a Union man Sir?" He answered surlily "I am a Southern man". "I know that for you evidently live in the South." Repeating my question I received the same answer. I then learned, for the first time, that "Southern man" in that region meant "secessionist". The term "Southern people" as used in the South excludes the negro population. Northern men include all classes in the same expression. To avoid ambiguity we will understand by "South" or "Southern people" the inhabitants of the insurrectionary States.

~~To pursue our classification we have~~

1st Those men who engaged heartily in the war, but who now give up fully the institution of slavery, and its concomitants, and are solicitous to exhibit their unqualified allegiance.

2nd A large class who at first pretended that

they gave up the points of contention, — that they surrendered state supremacy, secession, and slavery; but are now really making every possible effort to regain the power necessary to reestablish them or something equivalent.

A third class have always been defiant and now seek every opportunity to keep on foot some sort of contention and disorder.

The Fourth Class have ever been, and are still unconditional Union men.

It has been my privilege to meet several of the first class of these men, viz - such as have resumed their allegiance to the Government of the United States.

You can recognize them by certain tests, as follows: - they are not seeking public office, — they are at work on their farms, in trade, or other calling — they exhibit a wonderful deque of what you would call good practical sense, — letting a dead past alone, they are trying to conform to the necessities and wholesome lessons of the present. Mostly poor at the close of the war, they are striving to better their fortunes.

When they employ the negro they favor the extension to him of the rights and privileges that belong to him

as a man. They do not persecute the Union men who may live near them, nor ostracise them because of their fearless adhesion to the flag of their country. They now encourage the making of their State, a prosperous free State. They favor the building of school-houses and churches. They encourage immigration, and therefore neither openly nor secretly prate about their hatred of the Yankee. I have met and conversed with many men who come up squarely to all the conditions, which a humane and enlightened government could demand, and my impression is that in spite of the more numerous of the second class, the right conduct of these men is having its effect in separating and crystalizing the social elements in favor of law, and order, freedom, and prosperity. Unfortunately this class is not strong enough in either of the states lately in insurrection, to have an organ in their local press; again, there is still existing the old pride of caste, which cannot understand, even yet, how a gentleman-born can possibly do an act of injustice;

so that proper association and action amongst them is not ~~cannot be~~ had against the lawless and depraved. ~~particularly~~ ~~and~~ when the latter come from that class of so-called gentlemen.

The Second Class, viz. those who are insincere in their professions of loyalty, is too apparent to require much exposition. They combine openly and secretly with others to keep the negro in practical slavery. They reluctantly pay him wages, and do not in other respects treat him as a man entitled to a man's rights and privileges. Here is where the labor contracts are broken off, for the purpose of depriving the laborer of his hire, — where the people are governed by the pistol and the whip, — where education is hindered, — school buildings and churches destroyed. ~~Some~~ Government agents have been killed, and others maimed and mutilated by these men; and nothing can reach them but a vigorous and united Government, vindicating its laws and defending its citizens. The riots of New Orleans & Memphis, the nightly assassinations by bands of "Regulators" — often moving, as recently in London Co. Va, with blackened faces, — are principally due, in their horrid details, to

the third defiant class. I learn that in some parts of the country there is a greater abundance of strong drink dealt out than ever before, derived from small home-made distilleries and other sources and the defiant, reckless, idle miscreants are much of the time, under this demoniac influence; and that much of the reported cruelty to the negroes, is due to this fact.

The Fourth Class embraces a larger number of whites than the usual estimate, and nearly all the negro population. The Southern Loyalists' Appeal, places the number at 8,000,000, —, and we may allow these men, by their representatives, to describe their own condition, making all due allowance for party zeal, — for the intense feeling of those who have been oppressed. They say to their fellow citizens of the United States, — "We implore your help against an organized oppression, whose sole object is to remit the control of our destinies to the contrivers of the rebellion, after they have been vanquished in honorable battle; thus at once to punish us for our devotion to our country, and to entrench themselves in the official fortifications of the Government. × × × × × × × × If you fail us-

we are more utterly deserted and betrayed than if the contest had been decided against us. x x x x x x x "now the rebels who offered to yield everything to save their own lives, are asking to consign us to bloody graves. x x x x x x Our last hope, under God, is in the unity and firmness of the states that elected Abraham Lincoln, and defeated Jeff. Davis. x x x x x Our wrongs bear alike on all races, and our Tyrants being unchecked, you will award the same fate to white and black. We can remain as we are, only as inferiors and victims." [We may fly from our homes, but we should fear to trust our fate with those, who, after denouncing and defeating treason, refused to right those who have bravely assisted them in the good work"] Again — "More than a thousand of devoted Union citizens have been murdered in cold blood, since the surrender of Lee; ~~and in no case have their assassins been brought to judgement~~." This appeal further represents that emboldened rebels have threatened civil war in several states, unless their

demands be complied with, – that officials elected as Union men, have been corrupted and carried over to their enemies,

Alienation has sprung up anew between the sections; immigration has been hindered, and free and friendly intercourse checked by formidable barriers. Rebel soldiers are represented as having "persecuted the teachers of the colored schools, and burned the churches in which the freedmen have worshipped the living God."

The earnest expressions ~~of these men~~ which I have quoted are substantiated in whole or in part by a multitude of facts that have come within my own knowledge.

My recapitulation of the classification of the Southern people would be.

First – the truly repentant.
Second – the treacherous or hypocritical
Third – the openly rebellious
Fourth – those who remained true.

I would like to avoid as much as possible in this inquiry, anything that would seem of a partizan character, – but as each one of us has daily political duty of some kind to perform, as well as an influence to exert, there is special reason for constantly determining what that duty is, and

fearlessly performing it when known. Let us then ask first - what relation now exists between us who fought for the preservation of the republic, and those above named, whom we have designated the South.

Speaking collectively with a view to our Governmental relations - it is confessedly that of the conquerors and the vanquished. Some sensitive men prefer different terms to express the same thing — as — "overpowered" overcome by numbers, instead of "vanquished."

The relation however is plain without regard to the manner in which it was produced.

Now certain of our large hearted christian leaders wish this Republic to show a christian magnanimity unsurpassed in all the annals of history, — wish not only to extend the olive branch of peace, but to press it upon the conquered, accompanied with such overwhelming acts of generosity as must in their judgment win the affection and confidence of all these erring brethren, and not only would they forgive past offences, but open every castle wall and bid them come in fully clad in armor.

To support this position the scriptures are quoted "forgive your enemies", do good to them that hate you," overcome evil with good.

These gentlemen claim that they are like our blessed Lord, who loved, worked, and suffered for men "while they were yet sinners, who died the just for the unjust;" and that the resulting condition of society provided their prescription should be followed, may be described thus " Riots will subside, lawless hangers-on will be driven off, or better governed, and a way will be gradually opened up to the freedmen, through education and industry, to full citizenship, with all its honors and duties.

These propositions seem so noble, and the end to be secured so desirable, that a goodly number of our christian people joyfully adopt them; what then is the objection to the doctrines proposed?

Between man and man, considered individually and personally — no injunctions of our Lord are plainer than those quoted from the scriptures, and every christian man's experience is that there is profound wisdom in them. But the instant you consider the interests of a family, society or state, safety against an enemy demands something beyond magnanimity, and acts of generosity. It demands a careful and thorough reconnoissance of the enemy's position; and a full preparation to meet

and repel his assaults. It was perfectly plain that, no magnanimity, acts of generosity, or display of charity could dislodge the enemies of our country (during the war) from any of their formidable positions, and it would have been suicidal in the extreme, to have attempted to defend the integrity of our government by any such means; and now, unless it can be shown clearly and satisfactorily, that the temper and disposition of those who were then enemies have been completely changed, it will be no less suicidal to attempt to secure unity and peace and prosperity to the whole country, by simply pleasing them and yielding to their demands.

Christian ministers who urge complete and immediate restoration without any further condition or pledge, are accustomed to liken our Government to the Church of Christ, and say "you would not forbid men who wish to come in!" The door of the church is always opened to him that knocketh. True, yet among all christians, except perhaps what is called the "broad church", some conditions of membership are demanded, beyond a mere entrance into the church edifice; something more than a mere enrollment on the church books. Every minister's appeal

calls for repentance and confession of wrong; and for a man to secure admission into the church, evidence of such repentance is generally required.

In church matters the change, is fundamental; a change of heart and life, and surely some ~~an~~ ~~an~~ equivalent to something corresponding to repentance, or at the least a transition from the attitude of disloyalty to that of loyalty, not in theory only but in practice should be required of those who have rebelled against the Government.

If this were really done, the parallel between the church and the Government would be more complete and sensible.

It may be urged that it is hardly fair on our part to expect an actual repentance and confession of wrong on the part of men who may have been sincere in their opposition to the Government, or who, notwithstanding defeat, still believe their cause was just. We must admit that if our enemies are really sincere in what we call crimes, the conditions of repentance and confession of wrong may be considered morally impracticable, yet their sincerity does not excuse them, does make secession and human enslavement right; and surely the enemies of our country cannot be excused

on the ground of sincerity, by these advocates of unconditional restoration who themselves acknowledge, that ~~they are~~ those enemies have been wrong.

These advocates require of us who fought for the Union, the highest demands of Christian love, towards the enemies of our country. They require us to receive them into close fellowship, and to place the most implicit confidence in them.

We admit the duty of charity towards all, and of malice towards none, but if we firmly and honestly believe these men to have been criminal, as we really do, it is simply impossible for us to receive them into close fellowship, and to exercise confidence in them, except through their repentance and confession of wrong. So that with our conviction as true men, especially in our representative capacity, the least we can do is to demand proper pledges — such fundamental guarantee as shall preclude every probability of the renewal of the conflict.

Even if it was improper to demand actual repentance, so much the more would these guarantees be required, if we would preserve the integrity of our Government.

It may be further urged that

Wherein we ask for our nation, our nation in all the future

no earthly government can administer absolute justice, and therefore it is improper to assimilate ours, to the divine government in make such difficult exactions. We answer — The powers that be are ordained of God, and doubtless these powers should be assimilated to the divine government, and have the right to demand true allegiance from every citizen, so long as they bear the divine impress of just and equal laws. When few or many strike heavy blows for the overthrow of a government, and it succeeds in repelling them, and in saving itself, it is in accordance with every principle of reason and sound judgement, to punish the offenders, unless they shall acknowledge their offence, and sue for pardon, and put away every spirit and semblance of opposition.

To illustrate my own views farther on the subject I quote the eminent divine, Christian dealing equitable power, the twenty-eighth day of January 1865 says of the Southern men who rebelled,

"They began and carried on for four years the deadliest conflict of modern times; they inflicted upon us a loss of three

" thousand millions of dollars, and of more than three hundred
" thousand loyal men; they brought upon us more than the
" usual horrors even of such a battle, and in their desperation
" refused to yield, until absolutely overwhelmed.

" Now unless there is something in the form or spirit of our
" State, by which it can set aside all principles of government
" ever recognized by men or revealed by God, unless we deny all
" moral law, and all religious obligation, unless we treat as a
" nullity the whole basis of human society, then this was treason,
" rebellion, and war. And therefore those who engaged
" in these acts are justly subject to all the pains, penalties, and
" disabilities which rebels, traitors and belligerents can incur.

" To treat them as if they were not thus guilty, is not only a
" political error, but a positive immorality, that endangers the
" nation, and is an insult and an injury to every loyal man.

" But what manner of treatment should they receive? That
" which is proper for Christian conquerors. There should be forgiveness,
" based on repentence, and mercy, united with the due vindication of law."

But ~~you say~~ "may not forgiveness precede and not follow repentance?" I believe forgiveness may, but not reconcilement with mutual confidence. Let us consider a little further this duty of forgiveness, and endeavor to apply it. Our Lord has taught us to say "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Admit that this requires us to forgive without any question or condition our personal enemies, yet to effect a perfect reconcilement with them, there must be repentance and forsaking of trespasses on the part of these enemies. The father whose heart is full of love and compassion may say "My son, I forgive thee" — and yet that son may still be a wicked, unrepentant Absolom, whom the safety of his household requires him to exclude from his presence.

The application of these principles, individually and collectively, is simple. The First class, the truly repentant, may be met more than half way in his youth. Our voices and our votes may be cast in their interest. They should be relieved, so far as is consistent with the safety of the government, from the consequences of their offences; full

amnesty and pardon should be granted them, and they may not long be excluded from all the privileges of citizens, which they are willing to accord in equal degree to all other loyal men. They will engage in every good ~~work~~ work, and help build up the waste places of their country.

Surely the Fourth Class, who have always been true, will soon be identified with these men, in all the leading questions of the day, and they all must present a solid front against the treacherous and the defiant.

The latter class so numerous,—I say it with sorrow,—and so terrible; embracing every grade of society, even ministers of the gospel, and ladies of education and taste, and distributed over the country from the Ohio to the Gulf of Mexico, and from the Delaware to the Rio-Grande,—what is our christian duty towards them? I speak my honest convictions when I say these people really hate us, and hate the negroes, many other light than as slaves. They hate the Southern

unconditional union men with a deadly persistent hatred. I do not intend for those whom this coat does not fit, to put it on, — but the evidence is overwhelming, of the existence of a numerous, a controlling class of men, — of people I should say, who hate what we love, and love what we abhor. We must not deceive ourselves with the fancy that all the riots, the murders and outrages of the past year, upon the Union men and the negroes, which are really on record, are due alone to an irresponsible class of the low whites. If it were so, these things would not long continue. They are due to the active and open disloyalty of prominent men, and to the more passive hatred, which has robbed crime of its horrors, and permits it to go unpunished. Well, if this be true, shall we give "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth"? No; we may yet penetrate this gloom and, by the divine blessing, dispel it. We may hold them firmly by the hand of power, the power of moral force — that same power by which they were conquered, in order that no fall

purpose of destruction shall be carried out by them against loyal men, whether black or white, that no new conspiracy may have the slightest chance of success, — at the same time, if need be, we may and ought to feed the hungry clothe the naked, develop industry — establish and promote education, and constantly show how different we are, from the morbid representations of us to which a poor deceived people have so long listened. All that generosity can suggest, all that charity can demand, that the law of God may require, let the christian advocate and do — but he cannot forget that his Government should be well entrenched against the real enemies of good order, — should keep up a clear line of protection for the true, and never, through the instigations of men affected by some good natured insanity or morbid sympathy with the criminal, allow the innocent to be apprehended, tortured and slain. The fruits of our victory are — manhood developed strengthened and ennobled, — and liberty enlarged & made universal. God has given us these fruits, and he will hold us responsible for their proper use and for their preservation.

The advocates of that love and forgiveness

which affixes upon the rebellious no guarantee for preserving these precious fruits, say to us "what pledge do you demand? – what conditions do you impose?"

I am entirely willing to trust the pledges and conditions to my Government. I can see no violation of christian principle in the proposed amendment to our Constitution. I detect no spirit of revenge in any of its provisions. It imposes no unnecessary hardship, and makes no unreasonable exclusion of Southern white men. Those who were bound by an oath to sustain the Government of the United States, and who did not do it in the time of trial, but broke that oath are simply excluded from office, and even this disability may be removed from any man or from any number of men by a two thirds vote of Congress. There is not one degrading condition – And I believe if these demands could be submitted to the Southern people, through any other medium than through that class which is unfavorably affected by them, the great majority would hail with joy such generous terms of settlement, certainly – they would have done it, antecedent to false teaching.

The first class of men, as I have described them, agree to this, and look to Congress to relieve their disability to hold office. The Union white men surely approve the terms required by the Amendment. The negroes alone, speaking in their own interest, have any valid right to complain.

On this point an able writer, whose sentiments I heartily endorse, recently said - - - - - - - -

"To my mind our nation must live in everlasting infamy if we fail to secure a full measure of justice to an unfortunate race of men, who were originally hunted down in their own country, and carried off and sold like beasts into an abject slavery, with all their posterity. This enslaved race has the strongest possible claims for kindness, as well as justice, at the hands of the people & Government of the whole country, and more especially from the people of the South. These unfortunate slaves have done a great portion of the labor that has fed and clothed the whites and blacks of the Southern country.

"As true as the laborer is worthy of his hire, as true

" it is that we, as a nation, cannot withhold justice and equal
" rights from a race of men that has fought and bled, and
" labored to defend and protect the Union of States in the hour
" of our nation's greatest extremity.

"The enemies of our country and government, are
" now trying to persuade the community to believe, that a war of
" races would result from giving the black man the same
" measure of justice and rights, which the white men claim
" for themselves. This will be found to be a groundless
" fear. Our national danger will result from unequal
" and partial laws. We cannot make laws which
" will oppress, and keep in ignorance the poor, without bringing
" on ourselves and our country the just judgement of a
" righteous God, who will reward us as a nation according to
" our works."

It is claimed further that these pledges and conditions were not demanded soon enough by the conquerors; (possibly this may be true); and that they ~~cannot~~ will not be accepted by the masses of the South: to use the words

of the Cleveland Address.

"The Southern people, after
" following their political leaders into the late struggle, &
" sharing the risk of their fate, through four years of ter-
" rible war, are called upon to aid the proscription.
" Whatever punishment their leaders may deserve at the
" hands of the government, it is unintelligible that
" statesmen should have dreamed of asking their
" associates and followers to inflict that punishment upon
" them, especially a punishment of lasting disgrace more
" terrible than any which the government is authorized to
" impose. If in the midst of their woes the people of
" the South retain the ordinary fidelity of comrades-in-arms
" to each other, the common sentiment of honor, which
" rules all companionship, — they will not voluntarily
" desert the men, whom they have voluntarily & steadily
" followed, amid so many perils."

If these statements be true and applicable to all classes, the condition of the South is indeed deplorable. If after the

people have been led and driven into rebellion, – after they have been made to suffer defeat & disaster beyond parallel: after their sons have been sacrificed, their homes desolated, and their property destroyed, through the wrong principles of their political and military leaders, – if now "a common sentiment of honor which rules all companionship" keeps them in the wake of their confessedly blind guides and prevents the surrender of them to a just punishment, – then I see no possible hope of the adjustment or removal of their difficulties. But these are probably not the facts – certainly not the whole truth.

We are accustomed to say "Southern people" without discrimination. – Surely The true union men, as we have classified them will not follow these leaders. Those who have returned to loyalty, and are longing for the peace and prosperity of the country will not deem their exclusion such a lasting and terrible disgrace as to demand in preference perpetual anarchy and misrule. The treacherous, or hypocritical and the defiant, will no doubt follow any lead that will keep

Society in a disturbed condition, and prevent any approximation to equal justice. For bad men are willing to advocate anything and do anything on Earth for power.

If the "fidelity," "sentiment of honor" and "rules of companionship" of these men, be such as described, how wise, how necessary for the simple safety of our Government, to demand conditions and secure them, in the fundamental law.

Otherwise this "fidelity, honor, and companionship" will secure to their votaries, the reins of power, and utterly ~~un~~-destroy the fruits of our labors and sacrifices. — the ~~very~~ fruits named even in this address referred to = Union, freedom, justice, and law.

Again we are appealed to, to lay aside distrust, and have confidence. ~~This leads me directly to my last point, the objection duty of the Southern men who fought against us~~ Confidence cannot be reposed in men at will. I may do all I can for a man to promote his welfare, but I cannot have confidence in him, if I believe that he hates me. This hatred toward Southern

Unionists and Northern men, is very apparent, strong, and widespread at the South, - it has sundered families and churches, it shows itself everywhere in public and private life: it is difficult for the most conciliating kind, and self-denying christian to allay it, in individual instances; when exercised towards the teachers of colored schools it is called prejudice,

It is thought injudicious to speak of it or to dwell upon it because the tendency is to irritate - yet how indispensably necessary for the Church of Christ South, to eradicate this spirit, and how vital in importance for the individual christian to exercise it. As I have learned my religion, no man can have reconcilement with his God, and a well grounded hope of Heaven, with hatred in his heart. For distrust to be dispelled, and confidence secured - the Southern christian should seek fellowship with us, - if we seem wrong, he should expostulate with us - - he may send missionaries and teachers among us - deal with us kindly and charitably.

All true men wish to be right and

to do right, and is there not as much required of the Southern christian as the Northern? The principles that govern him and govern us are the same: they are from one common Lord.

The Church of Christ, renewed and purified by his spirit, is, to organized government, what the enlightened conscience is to the individual man.

It will discern clear differences between right and wrong measures, and impel society, by an irresistible moral force, to follow the right. And as a dead conscience suffers a man, without protest, to become vicious and degraded, so a dead church suffers the social organization, which it should influence, and move to embrace and exercise just, wise, and righteous laws, to become iniquitous, unhealthy, and prone to dissolution. Conservative christians – so called – cry out against "political preaching"; – doubtless partizan preaching should be avoided; but if my position with reference to the Church of Christ

be the true one, how essential is the voice of his Church to proclaim to us the truth as it is, and guide us in our political no less than other duties, according to the will of God. In trying times like these, how essential for the ministers of Christ, faithfully to apply right principles, with clearness and precision, and with no uncertain sound, to the momentous issues and measures of the present. I hope the time has come when that satanic theory has been forever exploded, — that theory which allows politics to be a trade without any religion in it, and wherein religion has no place. On the contrary the true political leader, inasmuch as his influence is more extended, should more than other men, understand and practise the eternal principles of truth. Let us then, my friends, seek first the purification of the Church of Christ, by those appointed means, with which you are all familiar. Success in this will unerringly tend to a genuine a lasting Union, North, South, East, & West. Let us extend everywhere the christian influence and the christian power, in the spirit of the Master, who was the friend of the poor & the lowly, — thus those who are the poorest and the

lowliest now may be made participants in the fruits of our great victory, and become living bonds of union — instead of the occasion of strife.

~~By God's blessing it may be possible to diffuse such a general spirit of good will as to override those obstacles in the way of reconstruction which seem to some ~~good~~ now completely insurmountable.~~

Whatever be our trials and conflicts we may not forget that we are but instruments in God's hands, and that however weak and humble we may be, He is accomplishing His mighty purposes by these very instruments.] end

Our own Christian patriot poet has embodied the spirit it is well still to inculcate in the following lines.

"The land is red with judgments — who
Stand guiltless forth?
Have we been faithful as we knew —
To God and to our brother, true,
To Heaven and Earth?"

"Who murmurs that in these dark days
His lot is cast?
God's hand, within the shadow lays
The stone, whereon his gates of praise
Shall rise at last."

"Turn and return Oh! outstretched hand!
The years have never dropped their sand
On mortal issue vast and grand
As ours to day."

"Already on the sable ground
Of man's despair —
Is freedom's glorious picture found
With all its dusky hands unbound —
Upraised in prayer."