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THE MONUMENTAL CHURCH.

Meeting at the Greenlaw Opera House Saturday Night.

Speeches of Col. Stephens and Judge Brown.

In obedience to the call issued in the morning papers of the city, the Greenlaw Opera House was comfortably filled on Saturday night with the elite of our city to hear the addresses from Col. W. H. Stephens and Judge Thos. W. Brown.

At 8 o'clock Gen. Pillow called the Rev. Dr. Ford to the chair, and the Doctor immediately introduced Col. Stephens to the audience in about the following words:

Ladies and Gentlemen: I learn from the public prints that the object of this meeting is to rear a monumental pile to transmit to other generations the memory of the sufferings and the triumphs of the Confederate dead. The plan and details will be explained to you by the speakers.

Dr. Ford then introduced Col. Stephens, who spoke as follows:

Ladies and Gentlemen: You are aware that the organization of the St. Lazarus parish, in this city, was based upon the idea of erecting an edifice which should meet the requirements, both of an Episcopal and of a Monumental church to the memory of the Confederate dead. The financial distress so universal in the South, had, however, postponed until now any decisive movement towards its accomplishment; but in the opinion of the friends of the object the proper time for action has now come, and they have accordingly determined to present its claims boldly and confidently to this enlightened and patriotic community. They have engaged the services of an accomplished architect to furnish suitable drawings, and after mature deliberation have adopted the design of an edifice, and have agreed upon a general plan of operations. The estimated cost of the building is three hundred thousand dollars, and it has to be both a complete church and a complete monument; each perfect in the style belonging to its peculiar use, and yet, each in harmony with the other—the two forming together, a blended union of the highest orders of Gothic architecture.

This structure is not intended to have any political significance, nor is it designed to perpetuate sectional animosities or strife. Being commemorative of Confederate soldiers, it must, of course, rely chiefly upon Southern liberality. It will employ our own labor and will use, as far as possible, our own materials, such as wood and stone and iron.

The first object would be to secure an eligible and commanding site, visible from every part of the city, and then to pay for it out of the first means which came to hand; and we would aim to contract no debt, either for work or material, until resources were provided to secure its payment. And thus, when the edifice was completed, it would stand forth unencumbered, an ornament to our city, a credit to its founders, and a perpetual memorial of the liberality of our people. The artist has provided in his draft a space sufficient to contain six thousand names, with a brief statement showing their regiment and company, and the date of their death. Provisions would be made that the donation of a given sum of money, say about one hundred dollars, would entitle the donors to have inscribed upon a tablet the name of any Confederate soldier who died in service, either in battle or from wounds or sickness.

Two only out of that army of martyrs have been singled out for special honor. High upon the outer face of the tower are to be placed niches for the statues of the two Christian Generals, Leonidas Polk and Thomas J. Jackson. [Applause.] The one a most beloved and honored bishop in this church, who took up the sword to protect his people, and laid it not down until it dropt from his grasp in the moment of death; the other a Presbyterian layman, whose piety was so pure and so constant and so fervid, that now, while the world stands wrapt in wonder at his magnificent genius for war, it is difficult to decide whether we love and admire him most for his Christian graces or for the splendor of his military achievements. [Great applause.] He then went on to say that, except in the case of these two Christian warriors, there would be no distinction of rank or merit upon these commemorative tablets. All were alike actuated by a sense of duty and by a reverence to principle. They had been taught by the Fathers of the Republic that all free governments were founded in the consent of the governed; and this political axiom had so incorporated itself with their habits of thought and speech as to have become almost an article of religious faith. There were diversities of opinion, it is true, as to the expediency and policy of a separation; and there were different degrees of reluctance to dissolve the ties which had bound the sections together, but when the presence of an invading army made it necessary either to renounce the right of self-government by submission to the central power, or else to maintain it boldly, even at the risk of life, they met the issue with the same sedate courage and the same conviction of right, and the same high trust in Providence which in other days had inspired holy martyrs to testify at the stake to the reality of their religion. [Applause.] Profoundly impressed with the belief that fidelity to the principles of free government required the sacrifice, and with the same implicit faith which sustained Abraham when he laid his son Isaac upon the altar, they committed their wives and children, their kindred and friends to the care of Heaven, and with sad hearts indeed, but with unfaltering purpose, turned their backs forever upon homes which, until then, had been the scenes of the tenderest loves and the sweetest joys that ever blessed our fallen race. Faith in themselves and in the protection of Providence sustained them through all the trials and vicissitudes of that protracted struggle, and illumined with hope even the darkest hours of that dark and weary night which knew no morning. To commemorate such Christian virtues as theirs upon shafts of heathen architecture, and with devices drawn from their corrupt and idolatrous mythology, would be unworthy of them, unworthy of us, and unworthy of the religious element which abounded in our army and pervaded the Confederate institutions. Such Christian heroes should be associated in our memories with those high and ennobling thoughts and aspirations which belong only to Christian theology. That their prayers for the success of their arms and the establishment of their independence were not answered; that their sacrifices and heroic self-devotion were apparently all in vain, surely cannot be urged either as a personal reproach against them, or as an impeachment against the justice of their cause. What of the future? Let it be in store for us of blessings may—yet be our fidelity to principle; what may be the destiny that awaits our dear South—it is sufficient is not for us to know. It is for us to bow submissively to Him "who doeth all things well."

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

He who spared not his only son; He who closed his ear to the agonizing cry: "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me"—shall he not in his own good time vindicate his ways to men; shall he not work out the destiny of his people according to his eternal counsels?

Colonel Stephens then at length referred to the bravery, the patriotism and the valor of those who fought, bled and died in defense of the Southern cause, and concluded his very eloquent address as follows:

Our conquerors, viewing the late civil war from their own standpoint, and possessing the ear and sympathy of the outside world, have written us down as vile ingrates and depraved malefactors, who owe our escape from the gallows only to their undeserved compassion. Shall we, by our silence and by our acquiescence in this harsh judgment, give it corroboration, and thus heap reproach upon those who cannot speak for themselves? Or shall we inscribe deep in marble their honored names as a priceless inheritance to our children?

I think I know your answer to that question. Here, then, in the center of the great Valley of the Mississippi, midway between the oceans; here on the shores of the mighty river, in this patriotic city which sent its thousands of sons to the battle-field—here let us lay broad and deep the foundations of a Monumental Church, to be completed in buttress, and wall and dome and vestibule, to teach the world, now and hereafter, that, come weal or come woe, come life or come death, we will vindicate the honor of those who, though gone before us, are as "dear to us as are the ruddy drops that visit our sad hearts."

In the ages long ago, when the voyager upon the river Nile floated along the walls of the ancient Memphis, whose name, in the language of its founders, signified "The City of the Blest," he rested upon his oars, while gazing with religious awe upon the distant pyramids whose lofty summits soared above the towers and minarets of that beautiful city, so renowned for the number and splendor of its temples.

Let us so lay the foundations of this our temple, that it shall soar as high and stand as firm and enduring as

"Titanian fabrics which point in Egyptian plains
To times that have no other record."

So that hereafter in the distant future, when the world shall have done us justice and Heaven shall have blessed our people, the voyager who approaches this "City of the Blest," throned in queenly beauty upon these heights, may lift his eyes in wrapt admiration and religious devotion to the glittering spire that soars in silent grandeur to the clouds, and bow his head in gratitude and adoration to Him who, though he "sitteth upon the circle of the Heavens," condescends to fill his earthly temples with the glory of his presence!

At the close of Col. Stephens' remarks, Judge Brown was introduced, and spoke as follows:

The sorrow-stricken, but yet unbroken heart of the South, demands for those who fell in her defense—maintaining to the death her cause—some commemorative monument more obtrusive on the senses, but as enduring as a great thought linked to immortal verse. This yearning desire has been present to our people with all the impulse and tenacity of instinct ever since the last and irretrievable disaster befel our arms. The poverty and humiliation that followed defeat have not quenched it. With returning prosperity it gathers renewed vigor. Our great grief cannot be appeased until the costliest and most appropriate honors are paid to the names of our dead heroes. Hector had his tomb and due funereal rites, although his valor failed to secure ultimate triumph, and his deeds could not save his beloved Illium.

Is it just and rational to gratify this acknowledged desire of the South, and will the execution of a design to that end comport with the proprieties of our situation? The solution of this question does not necessarily reopen any issue closed by the late civil war. Nor are we called upon to record in advance what may be the verdict of history as to the merit of the respective parties involved in this most fearful tragedy of the present century. Great virtues remain to individuals as well as States, notwithstanding political errors. Often the grandest political errors result from an excess of virtue. To argue that we were right, politically in the struggle, would, to the Southern mind, be merely an attempt to prove an axiom. To say that we were wise in putting our statesmanship at the time, on the hazard of battle, would only be to make a dispute about a matter of expediency. Our political foes and partisan antagonists could not now admit either our truth or wisdom, whatever convictions in our favor may have latterly sprung up in their breasts, as time has been allowed them to pause upon the huge golgotha—the field of dead men's bones—into which our beautiful land has been converted. The time for our vindication is not yet. But so far be say Christian warriors, there would be no distinction of rank or merit upon these commemorative tablets. All were alike actuated by a sense of duty and by a reference to principle. They had been taught by the Fathers of the Republic that all free governments were founded in the consent of the governed; and this political axiom had so incorporated itself with their habits of thought and speech as to have become almost an article of religious faith. There were diversities of opinion, it is true, as to the expediency and policy of a separation; and there were different degrees of reluctance to dissolve the ties which had bound the sections together, but when the presence of an invading army made it necessary either to renounce the right of self-government by submission to the central power, or else to maintain it boldly, even at the risk of life, they met the issue with the same sedate courage and the same conviction of right, and the same high trust in Providence which in other days had inspired holy martyrs to testify at the stake to the reality of their religion. [Applause.] Profoundly impressed with the belief that fidelity to the principles of free government required the sacrifice, and with the same implicit faith which sustained Abraham when he laid his son Isaac upon the altar, they committed their wives and children, their kindred and friends to the care of Heaven, and with sad hearts indeed, but with unfaltering purpose, turned their backs forever upon homes which, until then, had been the scenes of the tenderest loves and the sweetest joys that ever blessed our fallen race. Faith in themselves and in the protection of Providence sustained them through all the trials and vicissitudes of that protracted struggle, and illumined with hope even the darkest hours of that dark and weary night which knew no morning. To commemorate such Christian virtues as theirs upon shafts of heathen architecture, and with devices drawn from their corrupt and idolatrous mythology, would be unworthy of them, unworthy of us, and unworthy of the religious element which abounded in our army and pervaded the Confederate institutions. Such Christian heroes should be associated in our memories with those high and ennobling thoughts and aspirations which belong only to Christian theology. That their prayers for the success of their arms and the establishment of their independence were not answered; that their sacrifices and heroic self-devotion were apparently all in vain, surely cannot be urged either as a personal reproach against them, or as an impeachment against the justice of their cause. What of the future? Let it be in store for us of blessings may yet be our fidelity to principle; what may be the destiny that awaits our dear South—it is sufficient is not for us to know. It is for us to bow submissively to Him "who doeth all things well."

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