

he knew the full meaning of: "I want you to understand that you have made a free-will offering of yourselves to your country and to the great cause of human liberty. Your lives are not your own. My life is not my own. . . . Now, boys, we understand each other."

Here Mitchel, for the first time, learned of Halleck's mistake in attributing to him the burning of the bridges alluded to above. He at once set himself right with the authorities at Washington. His self-respect led him to vindicate his military honor from aspersion. But at the same time he wrote to the authorities regarding another matter that showed the unselfish character of the man. While in the West he had frequently received intelligence from negroes, whose loyalty he promised to reward by seeing that they were not forced to return to their masters. In South Carolina he heard that the services of these poor blacks were ignored by the new commanders. This brought from his pen even stronger language than that in which he denounced the injustice done to himself. He could not bear to have it that his pledge should be slighted even in the case of the humblest human being to whom he had given it.

His address to the colored people of South Carolina shows the man, the depth of conviction, his wide humane sympathies. "I think that God intends all men shall be free, because He intends that all men shall serve Him with their whole heart." He enjoined upon them industry, sobriety. He promised them schools. He showed them that their destiny was more in their own hands than in Northern armies, for they must be worthy of freedom, then God would give it to them.

Within six weeks after his landing at Hilton Head the department felt his tremendous energy. Three expeditions inland were planned, and one executed. But a mightier than human warrior was upon him. Death came through yellow fever. One who saw him die reports his firm words of faith in Christ, and adds, "When the tongue refused to obey the mandates of the will, with a smile that seemed like a reflection of glory from heaven he raised his left hand and pointed with his forefinger to the skies, and repeating the movement with his right, it seemed that earth and heaven had met and mingled." The last act of his life was in bringing to his bedside two officers who had quarreled, and making them shake hands. His message to his children, his last will and testament, contained these sweet words: "Love God supremely and each other most deeply."

It was General Mitchel's custom, in the absence of a chaplain, to preach to his troops. We can imagine the sermon of such a man, thoroughly versed in Scripture as his writings prove him to have been, with mind stocked with sublime contemplation of Him who "walks among the stars," and with heart almost bleeding with its tender sympathy for the brave boys, many of whom were to die painfully in obeying his orders. But his whole life was a sermon glowing with illustrations of the Divine precepts and grace.

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