

measures by her "power of the keys." All history, demonstrates, and among others the history of your administration, that where one of these absurdities is admitted the other is sure to follow. Once the church of Christ lends her "power of the keys" to enforce political dogmas under the sanction of religion, the state will soon begin to assume by its "power of the sword" to coerce conscience into subjection to political dogmas by "pains and penalties." Let me cite as illustration, the imprisonment, impoverishment and banishment, practically, of more Protestant ministers in the Border States during your administration than all that tyrant Stuarts ever banished from their livings for nonconformity; the blasphemous insouciance of the Rosser's oath as a qualification for sitting in a church council and his military deputation, as Daniel's "abomination of desolation—standing where it ought not," picking themselves side by side with clerks of church courts to organize spiritual "Rump Parliaments"; the case of "scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites" armed with your military authority to rob church chests of their records in Kentucky, and to condemn and crucify beloved pastors, by tearing them from their flocks, in Missouri; the case of your vulgar military upstarts forcing their loathsome liturgies upon christian ministers and worshippers and condemning the devoted Armstrongs and Wingfields with hundreds whom they represent to every ignominy and torture; now in the way of bodily labor and suffering in street sweeping; or now, worse still the mental torture of listening, in enforced silence, to the logical thimble-rigging of your Butlers and Wildes, garnished with their coarse, codfish sentimentalism and self-exalting patriotism; or now, still worse than all, the agencies of a reverent spirit and delicate conscience compelled to accept in silence the blasphemous "might makes right" dogmas of their Yankee ethics and hellish theology.

So I might refer you also to the case of sanctimonious Ecclesiastics with a roving commission from the war department, and armed with the power of the sword to go and rob Southern Christians, or rather to rob the God they worship, of the property consecrated to His cause. All this, Mr. President, I regard as but the logical consequence of the ecclesiastical sycophancy against which I have so earnestly warned the Churches. With shame and humiliation I must confess, that it was the church in the first instance that led you astray, and these are precisely the results threatened to the church, in the Word of God, as the punishment of such wanton prostitution of herself to the secular power. In the strong figure of the old prophet when the church has "played the harlot with the Assyrian clothed in blue," her judgment shall be the contempt, the exactions, and the cruel tyranny of her lover. It is a curious verification of this rule by its exception that the Roman Catholic Church, which has from the first refused to prostitute her agencies to political and military purposes,

now stands erect and defiant. No military authority interferes with her ministry or worship save to be defiled and humiliated. No Roman Catholic priests pine and groan in exile. Seldom, if ever, has Roman Catholic church property been desecrated and destroyed. And while every poor Protestant minister trembles at your coercion which ruthlessly tears him from his family and flock with no hope of exemption, your war officials carefully shield, by special orders, the members of a priesthood who have no families to leave broken-hearted when the war-call forces them off. The explanation of this anomaly is to be found in the principle of the prophetic threat of judgment to be visited on the church in the shape of the contempt and insolent exactions of the secular power to whose purposes she has debased herself.

That this charge against the Protestant Churches of apostasy to secularism is well founded will readily appear by a simple reference to the political history of the country on the one hand and to the utterances and acts of church courts, pulpits, theological professors and church journals on the other. The proper limits of this letter preclude anything beyond a general reference to the more notorious facts.

Every intelligent citizen knows that, since the origin of the government, two great political parties have existed, representing two widely different constructions of the constitution. And no logical mind can fail to see that in the ecclesiastical acts and utterances to which reference is here made the solemn sanctions of religion that bind the conscience—for church courts and pulpits speak in the name and by the authority of Christ—are brought to the support of one of these constructions of the constitution as against the other, and the measures of one part as against the other. It is immaterial to the argument which of these parties is right, nor have I, as an editor, ever presumed to determine. The simple point of my charge against the churches is that they should have assumed to determine such questions at all, contrary to the tenor of all Christ's instructions and to the very nature of the spiritual power committed to them.

In illustration and proof of this I refer you to some of the ecclesiastical utterances of the last three years, beginning with my own church, that I may not be suspected of sectarian partiality in the matter.

The General Assembly at Columbus, in 1862, declared, in the name of Christ, that "it is the clear and solemn duty of the national government to preserve, at whatever cost, the national Union, enjoining upon all, in the name and by the authority of the Lord Jesus to examine their heart and temper toward the government." And the same body, in 1864, in Christ's name, though seemingly careful not to mention the name of Christ in their pronouncements, endorse in effect the leading political acts of the party in power, some of which I understand