

inflicted upon the colored race by their white brethren.

Some of the leading clergymen who participated offered some peculiar prayers, ostensibly to the Throne of Grace, but these appeals were of such a character as to arouse a suspicion that they were largely directed to the people. The petitioners drew vivid pictures of the horrid wrongs that had been perpetrated upon and that are constantly being committed against the colored people of this country. Among the elements of these portrayals were appalling butcheries, in which neither men, women nor children were spared, "every glade" having its tale of murder and woe. These prayers were really graphic, the wrongs referred to being delineated in strong and vivid lines.

In these times when a race conflict appears to be impending—many thinkers say it is inevitable—public utterances of the nature of those expressed at Chattanooga are calculated to hasten if not to precipitate it. One of the men who prayed informed the Lord that He worked through human agency. It would be a black day for the country if the colored people should, through agitation of their religious instructors, get imbued with the idea that they are the human agents empowered to execute the will of Providence, and that in that capacity it was incumbent upon them to inflict vengeance upon the perpetrators of the wrongs alleged to have been committed against them, and to wipe out the cause of their afflictions by a process of extermination.

A suggestion that has been offered before was renewed at the Chattanooga meeting—the formation of a League for mutual protection, of the entire colored people (those of negro blood) on the American continent. Should such an organization be effected, and unity be maintained in it, it would prove a powerful factor for good or evil. There are many chances to one that it would take the latter direction, because of existing political conditions. At present, in case of a crisis and the precipitation of a race conflict, the colored people would soon go to the wall. They are now in an unorganized condition, and are therefore weak and helpless. Let them be solidified, however, by such a League as that suggested, and their influence would be tremendously increased. They could then also be made more readily the prey of demagogues, and conspira-

tors. To sum up the resultant situation—a race conflict would be hastened.

THERE WAS NO PRAYING.

With a rush which almost amounted to a whirl, the first legislature of South Dakota effected an organization of itself and of the governmental machinery of the new State. At precisely half past twelve o'clock on Tuesday of last week two branches of that body met. In the house the call was read, when, without the loss of a moment, the members elect were sworn in by Chief Justice Tripp. By an almost unanimous vote S. E. Young was made chairman. He briefly remarked that there was no time for elaborate speeches, and closed by saying, "Thanks." The chief clerk and sergeant-at-arms were quickly elected, when a messenger was dispatched to notify the senate that the house was organized, and ready to witness the installation of State officers. Almost simultaneously a like message was received from the senate by the house, and both, in a body, proceeded to the front entrance of the capitol building, where the oath of office was administered to the State officers. No speeches were made, and the oaths were administered in a mechanical fashion. The State officers sworn in, the two houses assembled in their respective chambers and immediately adjourned for the day.

During the entire proceedings of the day, which certainly were not destitute of an element of solemnity in the minds of reverent, thoughtful and patriotic people, seeing they were the inauguration of the existence of a new commonwealth, there was no praying. No appeal was made for the blessing of the Almighty upon what was being done, nor upon the future of the new State; no thanks were offered to Him for what had been received.

The absence of all recognition of Deity from the proceedings attendant upon the putting in motion of the machinery if this new state government has attracted attention. It is certainly a departure from established usage, and will scarcely be referred to as a good omen by people who believe in God, and that He is a rewarder of such as diligently seek Him.

A SCRIPTURAL PROBLEM.

A CORRESPONDENT writes as follows to the *Christian Union*:

"Kindly answer for me a few ques-

tions on I Sam. xv, 2, 3. Did God give the command there recorded? If he did, did he not command to do a cruel and wicked deed from revengeful motives? If he did not, and Samuel and the writer of the Book of Samuel supposed that he did, is not their mistake about the character and dealings of God so serious as to render them untrustworthy teachers of religious truth? M. E. C.

The passage which troubles "M. E. C." is as follows:

Thus saith the Lord of hosts, I remember that which Amalek did to Israel, how he laid wait for him in the way, when he came up from Egypt.

Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass.

Here is the reply of the *Christian Union*:

"The passage evidently enjoins retaliation for hostilities four hundred years past. The war (on banditti) was probably justifiable. The motive appealed to (revenge) was not. The phrase, 'Thus saith the Lord,' does not necessarily denote a direct divine command. Compare II Sam. xvi, 10. It often means no more than 'it is right,' or 'it ought to be.' In any case, it shows, as here used, a defective moral judgment, and that Samuel's teachings, like those of all the other Bible Saints, must be brought before the judgment seat of Christ for revision and correction. It is only fair to notice other occasions, on which Samuel taught moral truths that are quite up to the principles of Christ.

The assumption that God ordered the destruction of the Amalekites at the hands of Saul, because of what their ancestors had done four hundred years previously, which is the basis of "M. E. C.'s" questions and of the *Christian Union's* reply, is unjustifiable. True, the Lord says He remembers the crime of the race committed four centuries before, but He does not say, nor intimate, that it is to expiate that crime that the children of the twelfth generation—allowing three generations to the century—are to be slain.

Is it not true that the enmity of Amalek towards Israel, begun treacherously four hundred years before, had been manifested almost continuously since? Is it not presumable that the Lord purposed the total destruction of a race, who, for four hundred years had sought to destroy His people? Does not profane history teach that the Amalekites had, for generations, practiced the crimes of Sodom and Gomorrah, and that they had become a hopelessly corrupt and