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Letter to C. P. McIlvaine

James A. Garfield

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General, later President James Abram Garfield to Ep. McIlvaine

Washington Feb. 15th 1864

Rt. Rev. Chas. P. McIlvaine

Dear Sir:

Your esteemed favor of Feb. 4th came duly to hand for which accept my thanks. It is very gratifying to me to have mentioned your approval in the statement of my views on the question of Confiscation. I believe the views of Mr. Stevens are erroneous and if generally received would be very dangerous. To admit that the rebel states are out of the union and hence a foreign people is precisely what the rebels want us to do and what would be a great calamity if other nations should acknowledge.

I fully agree with your view of the Constitutional doctrine of treason and attainder. Our fathers removed the power to punish treason from the Legislative to the Judicial Dept. and required that judgment should be pronounced and sentence executed during the life of the accused party so far as his property is concerned.

With profound respect and esteem I am,

Very truly yours,

J. A. Garfield