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PRESBYTERIAN RE-UNION, A QUESTION OF EXPEDIENCY.

Zeal for re-union of the two leading branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country, cannot be said to be on the increase in the two branches most nearly concerned. If there is serious earnestness thought on the subject anywhere, it is rather among the smaller branches, some of whose members seem to be weary of maintaining an isolated position, upon a basis too narrow to hope for growth, or even for the retention of their own members and their children. A new weekly paper, called the *Union Presbyterian*, has recently been started in Cincinnati by Rev. T. C. McCune, of the United Presbyterian Church. Dr. Robert Patterson, (not Robert P.) of Chicago, a distinguished member of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, (N. S.), recently left that body and joined the Old School Presbyterian Church. There was a conference at Pittsburgh, last month, between members of the Old School, United and Reformed Presbyterian Churches in that region; the representatives of the latter bodies being the most decided in their views of the insignificance of minor differences. We doubt whether it was felt that any progress was made or indicated by the Convention. A committee was formed, with one of our ministers as chairman, to provide for another meeting, although it does not appear that our branch was represented in the Convention. It is, indeed, not unlikely that a pressure from the smaller bodies may become the most potent influence in leading the larger bodies to decisive action.

What are the great motives for organic re-union among different branches of the Church? Plainly, first, the removal of the reproach of discord and division; the high duty of the Church of Christ to show to the divided and warring nations, and to the various antagonistic sections of society, the power of true religion to unite and harmonize. Christianity must be vindicated as a religion of love, no less than of truth, before men. Distinctions inappreciable to the common sense of mankind, must not be allowed to create perpetual divisions and incurable hostilities among Christians. Protestantism is at a disadvantage compared with Romanism, so long as its outward divisions hide the unity of its spirit.

Next, there is a loss of working power in a division of forces, although all aim at accomplishing substantially the same object. Seven men pull at the same weight at a disadvantage, compared with a single horse having the strength of seven men. That is the rule, to which there are, it is true, many important exceptions.

Thus two grand, simple reasons, one involving a point of duty, and the other a matter of expediency, are seen to bear upon this question of union. The duty of cherishing fraternal feeling among Christians is too plain to be questioned, and, if the only way to get at such feeling were to abolish all denominational distinctions, we ought to go at the destructive work at once. But recent events have shown that we are under no such necessity. Not only have the various denominations made great advances in Christian fellowship within a few years, but the two branches of the Presbyterian Church in this country have recently recognized each other, in the fullest manner, in Presbyteries, Synods and General Assemblies, and have really been examples to others of fraternal intercourse. And the various demonstrations made by evangelical men, of a substantial unity of feeling, especially since the era of Union Prayer-meetings, have proved to the world, as effectually as their organic union could, their oneness in Christ. Indeed, such courtesies are more impressive between bodies of different name and organization than the mere union of the whole could be.

Are we, then, effectually testifying, while apart, to our spiritual unity? Have we laid aside exclusivism and arrogance, bigotry and jealousy and needless controversial acerbity? In the world see that we are but distinct divisions of one grand army, with no rivalry such as may justly animate those who eagerly desire to secure the triumph of the great cause? If we have not fully done our part as Christian brethren, are

we moving rapidly in that direction, even while we are maintaining, as firmly as ever, our denominational lines? Are the two branches of the Presbyterian Church so acting towards each other, that every ground of cavilling is removed from the most critical observer? Are our denominational distinctions felt to be any real hindrance to the exercise of the largest measures of charity, courtesy and mutual respect?

If these questions can be satisfactorily answered, as we think they can, then the whole question of union is resolved into one of expediency. If denominations, while maintaining their organizations, can show true Christian accord, just as States, while maintaining nearly every feature of distinct political existence, can form a true unity, then, whether they should abandon their organizations or not, depends upon the question whether they can work most effectually through them or without them.

The smaller branches of the Church may well begin to feel that they are working at a great disadvantage on the limited basis which they occupy. Well may they question, as several of their number did in the Pittsburgh Convention, the importance of the distinctive tenets which hold them apart. It may be interesting, and not altogether useless, to continue to testify for an inspired Psalmody and for the supremacy of Christ over the nations; but can it be worth as great a sacrifice of means and energy as is now being made?

But in an organization as strong in numbers and wealth, as compact and as well developed as ours, it is not surprising that the impression prevails widely that no organic change is necessary to secure the highest degree of efficiency, or that fear prevails lest union with the other branch may actually prove a disadvantage.

There are differences between us which are real and considerable; differences which, it is true, in our judgment, should not keep us apart; and which do not owe their divisive influence to the spirit of our branch of the Church. Yet they rent our body asunder twice in a century. They were such as to prevent our brethren of the other branch, for twenty-five years, from manifesting the commonest tokens of fraternal feeling towards our branch. That reproach, however, has ceased. To-day the most vehement ultra Calvinist does not think of denying to us the ordinary courtesies extended to ecclesiastical equals. The differences between us are no barrier to communion, or to change of pulpits, or to mutual recognition by delegates in the highest ecclesiastical courts.

But when we advance to the proposal of organic re-union, we find in many of our brethren of the other branch a tenacity about shades of doctrinal belief and modes of statement and philosophical explanation, which runs right across our more liberal, though unwaveringly Calvinistic views of Scripture truth. Only a month ago, one of our younger ministers, from a Presbytery on the border between New York and Pennsylvania, presented himself for admission upon his papers, before a Presbytery of the other branch in this city. He had been led to believe that the barriers to organic unity were removed, and that without sacrificing any of his views as a theologian of the school of Dwight, Edwards, Barnes and Park, he could have free entrance upon a field of usefulness which had opened to him, within their bounds. Judge of his surprise to find himself subjected to a two days' examination, by some of the veteran theologians of the Old School body, who showed surprising eagerness for the quest, declaring at the close of the first day's work that they wanted to make a clean thing of it, and must have another day to complete it, and winding up with the utter rejection of his application. No protest or appeal from the action of the Presbytery has been heard of. Such rude experience, which we are bound to say was manfully borne by our brother, is enough to disenchant not only the subject of it, but all in our body who become aware of the facts, from all roseate expectations of early organic union, or of harmonious co-operation in such union if accomplished at an early date.

The whole question of organic unity between the different branches of the church is, we think, one of pure Christian prudence and expediency. For while a horse with the power of seven men can bring more than seven times the force of one man to bear in a direct pull, there are often objects to be at-

tained where a horse, or a direct strain cannot be employed, to the needed extent. There are perhaps seven positions or eight, in each of which one man and no more could work advantageously. And such a work as the conversion of the world or the Evangelization of our country, is not to be done by one strain, one grand effort of a consolidated Christianity, but by diverse appliances adapted to many-sided humanity, by the One Church in its varied yet not essentially unharmonious developments; in a word through the *Evangelical denominations*.

That there are no superfluous church organizations we do not dare to affirm. Nor do we intend in anything we say to discourage Presbyterian re-union when the parties are ready for it. But we do say, better than all external union is effective Christian effort. A union which will not clearly promote that, is to be repudiated.

SHALL THE MAJORITIES OF OUR GREAT CITIES PRESCRIBE THEIR OWN MORAL CODE?

While our State Senate has taken no action on the proposal of the Anti-Sunday Law men at all calculated to encourage their expectations, a decided majority of the House has proved itself obsequious to their wishes. During last week, a bill submitting the question of the running of the passenger cars on Sunday to a vote of the people of the city was hurried through various stages in that body, only two votes being wanted of the necessary two-thirds to carry it to its final passage without the usual formalities. The bill provides that a vote of the citizens shall be taken on the 15th of March, and that, if a majority so decide, the cars may run at once without further legislation. In less than a month, then, it is expected to put the peace of our Philadelphia Sabbath in the hands of the majority of our city population. Unless the Senate and the Governor interpose, we may feel tolerably certain of such a result.

We are not only opposed to such a wholesale desecration of the day as these Sunday car men want, but we are utterly opposed to the submission of any question of morals, or of the fundamental law of the State, to a vote of the majority of any part of the State, least of all the majority of a great city. Just as appropriately might it be left to a vote of our citizens, whether the death penalty should be abolished here, while it prevailed in other parts of the State; just as well, whether murder, arson or robbery committed under certain circumstances or on certain days of the week were a crime at all, while it continues to be a crime everywhere else; just as well, whether oaths might not be dispensed with in our city Courts and the testimony of avowed atheists be received there as of equal weight with that of believers.

Why should not our legislators leave it to a vote of our population whether there should be any Sabbath at all in the city? Why make a discrimination in favor of any one business? Why not allow it to go to vote, whether butchers, tailors, mechanics, builders, merchants, draymen, farmers may not pursue their avocations on that day, as well as railroads?

We beg again to remind our legislators that they owe a solemn duty to the great cities of their commonwealth. The second city of the Union and of the Western continent is in their borders. They are the guardians of its morals. They know that its seething population is almost certain to comprise a majority utterly unfit to be trusted with questions of morals; who, if they could, would vote half the decalogue out of existence; a majority, for whom, rather than by whom, laws must be enacted and police arrangements made. They know, or ought to know, that when a clamor comes up from such a city for a relaxation of moral restraints, the virtues of which have been proved for centuries, that then is the very crisis, in which they must legislate with a firm hand, and show their wisdom by strengthening rather than loosening the bonds of order. They know that our peaceful Sabbaths, the very glory and distinction of Philadelphia, the gift of our sagacious and pious founder, William Penn, are and have been for two centuries one of the chief defences of public morals, if not the chiefest of all. They know, or ought to know, that this agitation for repeal comes not from the moral, the good, those that have the true in-

terests of the people at heart, but from money-grasping corporations, from infidels and atheists, from the profane and the licentious, from small unscriptural sects like Universalists and Swedenborgians, from Irish Catholics and beer-drinking Germans, and from the rowdy element generally in our city, led on by demagogues and followed by politicians who might, otherwise be respectable men, but who are willing to crawl on hands and knees through mire and dirt at the bidding of the mob.

Once more, we would remind our legislators that the bad elements of our great cities generally are making such alarming demonstrations at this time, that it becomes them to weigh well the force of the example they are setting to others. The New York mob has ruled that city for twenty years, and now, it is moving heaven and earth for the repeal of the wholesome excise or license laws of the State, so far as the city is concerned, so that liquor may be sold freely on the Sabbath and with less restriction on week days in that city. The German infidels of Chicago are besieging the Illinois legislature for a similar repeal of Sunday laws in their favor. The Missouri legislature, a year ago, had to meet a similar appeal from the beer-drinkers of St. Louis, and rejected it. The present Maryland legislature, the degenerate successor of the body which enacted the new and strong code of Sunday laws for the State, has decided to submit the question of the running of the cars on Sunday in Baltimore, to the vote of the citizens.

Legislators of Pennsylvania, your action last year, followed up as it was, by the clear and noble vindication from the Supreme bench, of the laws which you had refused either to repeal or to improve, gave heart and hope to all the friends of order and good morals in all the great cities of the land. Disappoint them not to-day. Be faithful to the unspeakably high interests involved in your decision. Act not only for the good name and the peace of Philadelphia, but for the good name and the peace of the rising flood of vice and immorality in all the great cities of our land.

THE EDUCATION CAUSE.

As the time for the annual services in behalf of Colleges and Seminaries draws near, the question arises, What is the position of the Educational cause in our Church? To this Dr. Mills, the Secretary, makes answer in a carefully prepared circular, the most important parts of which we give below, earnestly requesting for them the attention of the reader.

There are twelve hundred churches which should contribute to the Assembly's Education Fund. The number which has contributed since the commencement of the financial year in May last is about one hundred and fifty. The amount needed for educational purposes will rise to nearly \$25,000. The amount already paid in is less than \$10,000. Large contributions cannot be expected from a great many churches; and the amount needed cannot be raised, unless, according to the recommendations of the General Assembly, the subject shall be presented to every congregation and a contribution taken in each, in its behalf.

At present nearly one hundred and forty young men are receiving assistance from the Education Fund. Those in the preparatory course at the rate of \$100 a year. Those in the Collegiate course, \$132 a year. Those in the Theological course, \$160 a year. These sums are as small as should be paid, while the present high prices of living continue. It has been said, "Find the young men needing help and the means will be supplied." We have now to say, in answer to this, we have found the young men in increasing numbers, and are in want of the means. WE ASK FOR THEIR IMMEDIATE SUPPLY. These young men are needy and worthy of aid. They are giving satisfactory evidence of their possessing the qualifications prescribed by the General Assembly. We have promised them only such an amount of aid as the Assembly directed, and as their circumstances require. To fail in the fulfilment of our engagements to them, would disappoint them and involve them in serious trouble, would dishonor our position as a Church endeavoring to conduct the business of the Redeemer's kingdom, and involve the displeasure of the great Head of the Church.

It is to be earnestly hoped that nothing less than a providential hinderance will prevent a prompt compliance with the recommendation of the Assembly, in regard to presenting the subject of education to the churches.

The Assembly has recommended that such churches as have not already made their contributions to the Education cause, shall use the Sabbath either preceding or succeeding the day of prayer for this purpose. Should stormy weather intervene on either or both of these days, the earliest fair Sabbath should be made use of.

Funds should be remitted to the Treasurer of the Assembly's Permanent Committee on Education, J. W. Benedict, Esq., 128 Broadway, N. Y., or, if more convenient, they may be forwarded to him through the Rev. E. A. Huntington, Auburn, N. Y., or the Rev. C. E. Babb, Cincinnati, Ohio.

OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

Congress is sitting up nights in order to extricate itself from the interminable pile of bills in which it is imbedded. Tariff, bankrupt, bounty, war-debts, reconstruction, impeachment, all pressing upon it, and behind these a powerful public opinion and numerous lobby, like so many pounds of steam to the square inch, driving it ahead. These bills, if an adverse President is to be checked, must be passed before the anniversary of Washington's birthday. Any measure not then in his hands can be constitutionally smothered in his pocket, and Congress have no opportunity of applying its "two-third" restorative. But every subject of vital importance to the country will be disposed of previous to that date, and bills which offer no inducements for a cheap veto will be reserved for consideration during the last ten days.

Congress, like a hydraulic press, has compressed a vast amount of history into the small space of a week. Senator Chandler, with a boldness bordering on rashness, for which he is famous, startled his compeers by precipitating upon them the subject of impeachment. Standing on a resolution of inquiry as to whether the President had any authority to appoint provisional governors for the states lately in rebellion, he hurled a characteristic philippic at the occupant of the White House. But his associates, fearing lest they should incapacitate themselves from acting as impartial judges in a case which they see approaching them from the other end of the Capitol, soon laid it on the table.

The select committee on the New Orleans riot have reported. Mr. Boyer, as the minority, justifies the Louisiana rebels, exonerates the President, and throws all the blame on the union men. He will, doubtless, receive a reward from his master. The report of the majority, though it presents nothing new, corroborates the worst that has been reported in a terse and trenchant manner that carries conviction. It also recommends a plan for the establishment of civil government in Louisiana, a plan at once simple, just and practical. While it secures suffrage to the negro, without the invidious qualification in the President's proposition, it imposes conditions which exclude leading rebels from any participation in the government. Though the provisional governors are appointed by the Executive, they cannot act until confirmed by the Senate, thus virtually securing their selection by that body.

The wonder is that this bill, which is the logical result of the examination into the New Orleans riot, and seems to embrace the views of a majority of the Republican party on reconstruction, was not brought forward at an earlier day. The Memphis massacre and the persecution of her loyal sons, aroused Tennessee to strike off the bonds of traitors. She will soon be as well governed, and as reliably loyal as any state in the Union. She has secured herself in the citadel of *ex-franchisement to every loyal element*. This must be the basis of settlement in every Southern State. Two years have demonstrated that no other plan is worth the parchment on which it is written. The military bill of Mr. Stevens will be necessary in many states until these elements are more developed, more concentrated and better organized.

The bill which passed the Senate, on Sunday morning, is the Louisiana Bill, Steven's Military Bill and the Blaine amendment combined. The latter has been rejected by both houses once. How it is benefitted by its association with the other propositions, it is difficult to see. The House must recede from its former position, before it can become a law. The preamble of "Sherman's substitute" declares, that the governments in the Southern States are "not legal," a declaration that will not be relished by the author of them. It is one, too, from which Congress will not recede, and must start up the ghost of impeachment at the White House.