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LIBERTY AND PEACE; EXCLUSIVISM AND WAR.

A doctor of divinity in one of our strictest Presbyterian churches, recently remarked to a member of another strict denomination, that "the New School Presbyterian Church is at present the quietest household that he knew of." The fact is worthy of notice, and may furnish food for meditation to those two great classes of professed believers, each of whom pursues an ecclesiastical policy at variance with our own; as it very plainly sets aside many of what they regard foregone conclusions in Church matters.

In the first instance, it may be worth the attention of rigid subscriptionists—*ipsissima verba* men—who can see no peace for the Church except in the unqualified adoption alike of the great principles, and the minor details, of the doctrinal system embodied in the Church's creed. These men find union only in uniformity; security only in rigidity. It is one of their favorite arguments to draw an imaginary picture of the scene which must ensue, if their rigidity of doctrine were to relax; to portray the Babel of confusion that would supersede the good order of God's House, when, by yielding any thing, they would, by some mysterious logical process, be obliged to yield all the lines of defence that they have drawn around the Church. What measure of success they have had in their policy, experience has shown and will show. Their great object—uniformity—is, indeed, always within their reach while they have access to a cemetery, but in dealing with living beings they are more likely to mar than mend God's handiwork. If God had meant all men to be of one kind, we presume He could have saved our precise brethren great trouble in making them so, but so long as human nature retains the variety, which He has stamped upon it, so long will there be variety and difference in the modes by which even thoughtful men apprehend great fundamental doctrines, while all such will agree in all essential respects. New School Presbyterianism, in recognizing this fact, has subserved, not defeated, the great ends of His manifold Providence, and the peace and prosperity of His Church.

But on the other hand—for we sail between Scylla and Charybdis here—the peace enjoyed by our branch of the Church is no less a rebuke to the false "liberalism" that in our day abuses a noble word to the Devil's service. These so-called "Liberals" have a profound "faith in [Liberal] humanity and its capabilities," excepting, always, when it professes to hold fast to any dogmatic statements of belief. To mention the word "creed" is to wash all the rose-color from their spectacles. They reject total depravity, save in the case of the Westminster divines, *et id genus omne*. Humanity may be trusted in any and every thing, until it comes into contact and combination with positive Christian doctrine. The only chance of agreement is by renouncing that, and proclaiming what Sandy Mackaye in *Alton Locke* calls "union on the broad principle of 'want o' breaks.'" How far this kind of "free thought" may plead the un-Christian rigidity of the opposite extreme in excuse for their vagaries—how far the blood of them that are lost may be demanded at the hands of those who virtually caricature the Christian faith by a most un-Christlike intolerance, no man can say. But we do know that our own Church has a peculiar vocation in this very direction—to manifest before the eyes of all men that a working, living, growing, Christian—aye, and Calvinistic—Church needs no such barriers of defence, and can recognize every healthy desire of humanity as something sacred. In doing so we assume no new role in the Church's history. Scottish Presbyterianism in its most heroic age, went far beyond even the "New School Presbyterianism" of America in this liberality of practice, and for one hundred and eight years never required subscription to any creed, and yet was never troubled with doctrinal dissension or heretical defection. When in 1838 a rigid adherence was required by law, there followed the age of Moderatism and semi-Socinian indifference.

When we look beyond our own bounds,

we find no such state of peaceful activity in most of our sister Churches. Among our Old School brethren, we find that the old issues as to the power and rights of the civil magistrate in relation to the Church are being raked up from the ashes of the past; although it was thought that the revision of the Westminster Confession had laid them at rest forever. A turbulent minority, trained in the heresy-hunting temper which a narrow Church policy is likely to foster, denounce the loyal deliverances of the recent Assemblies as Erastian; while the somewhat revolutionary proceedings of the Assembly at St. Louis have re-opened the question as to whether the power of the Assembly is derived from the Presbyteries, or *vice versa*. On this last issue, we find the ultra-disloyal ranks endorsing the theory of Constitutional Presbyterians in maintaining the former position. Even in doctrinal matters, the peace is not altogether undisturbed. The influence of other philosophical schools than that on which Princeton theology rests, is making itself felt, and Realism, in a new and more refined form, is claiming something more than "equal rights with the theology taught at Princeton and Alleghany."

In the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, which holds with unyielding tenacity to a Semi-Arminian creed, the troubles entailed upon the Church by the war are still felt, and threaten a dismemberment of the body. The disloyal party are in power, and for the clear and decided utterances of former years, are substituting others as ambiguous and undecided as the theological position of their own Church.

In the United Presbyterian Church, the compromise by which the union of 1859 was effected, seems likely to go the way of all compromises. The Associate Church went into the union with one understanding; the Associate Reformed with another. The former secured the adoption of the present strict "close communion" Testimony, as a basis of union; the latter stipulated that that basis should be conformed to the belief and practice of both Churches. In the eight years that have elapsed, no change has been made in that creed, but the peculiar energies of the more rigid party have been taxed to the utmost, to impress the stamp of their own views upon the United Church, and, as we should have expected, with such success that every existing organ of the Church chimed in with their views. When at last one pastor, Rev. W. C. McCune of Cincinnati, fell back on the liberty secured him by the Adopting Acts of 1859, the Assembly of 1866 ordered his trial, and that of 1867 will have to decide an appeal from his acquittal by his own Synod. The rigid party have an immense preponderance in the Assembly, and it only remains to be seen how far they will carry their advantage.

Among our Covenanter brethren of the General Synod, the question of strict adherence to distinctive principles (on Psalmody, Communion, Secret Societies, &c.) or of pushing over them in the direction of Presbyterian re-union is hotly agitated. The terms of acceptance of the standards, prescribed by the Church, are broad enough to allow of considerable latitude of opinion, but some of her members are not quite so liberal as these are. To swamp the discussions in the columns of the *Banner of the Covenant*, which allows both parties to be heard, a rigid monthly organ has been established, under the editorship of two Scotch-Irishmen—one of them quite recently imported and formerly connected with a much stricter body in Ireland. The General Synod met in the city of New York on the 15th, and a warm time was expected, and possibly a division of the Church.

Among the Covenanters of the Synod, so-called, in distinction from the General Synod, there is more peace on national questions than there had been for some time past, as the "too liberal" deliverances made, during the war, in regard to allowing church members to take "the army oath" have been finally retracted. Mutterings of a coming storm, however, are heard in another direction, and the stricter members in this city have organized themselves into a Church within a Church, under the designation of "the Renwick Reformation Society;" and the prosecution on a charge of "looseness," of one estimable pastor and some prominent members is hinted at.

We have not space to follow up this sad

story of division in the ranks of the Church, which might be made to embrace German Reformed, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Unitarian, Universalists, the minor Methodist sects, &c. Certainly, it betokens great intellectual life, and is far better than a dull, unthinking acquiescence in an established order of things, or that a blind conservatism with the motto *quæta non moventur*. But better far is the harmonious and healthy activity of a Church, whose members are bound together by mutual confidence and sympathy, and in which reigns the sweetness of charity combined with reverence for all the essentials of truth. May our Church long abound in the wisdom that is *first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits.*

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE FROM THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

ROCHESTER, Saturday, P. M.

The forces of our representative body are now all gathered, and the denominational work all in the hands of the appropriate committees. The brethren are enjoying the usual Saturday afternoon recess, some preparing to preach on the morrow, some surveying the beauties of the country, some doing up the neglected correspondence of the week.

The Assembly is declared to be the largest ever gathered, by one—the commissioners and delegates numbering two hundred and thirty; the Assembly at Brooklyn in 1865, having numbered two hundred and twenty-nine. The strength of the Assembly is, however, not only that of numbers. The elders are in full force, and they and the ministers comprise men of distinguished abilities and long experience in responsible stations in Church and State.

There are such men as Dr. Nelson, the moderator, genial and conciliatory, yet firm, clear and deliberate; bying with him none of the seemingly boyish flashing character we might expect to pertain to a representative man of the New School Church of the West, but rather the tempered gravity and sweetness that would be nurtured by a quiet pastorate in the East. The election of such a man by acclamation is a proof of the discernment of the body, and of its appreciation of solid, sterling traits of character, as well as its sympathy with the West, and especially with the loyal churches of the State of Missouri.

More like an ideal leader of the Church of the West, is the pastor of the Third Church, Pittsburg, Rev. Herriek Johnson, who with his Elder, Judge Williams, forms one of the strongest delegations sent from any Presbytery. Eminent for ability and grace, in the pulpit and on the floor of the house, is Dr. Wm. Adams of New York, whose ringing voice and engaging manner, and clear good sense, would secure him a ready hearing whenever he rose, even if a less interesting subject than the Report on Re-union, were in his hands, or a less important position than as Chairman of the Committee on Bills and Overtures were assigned to his charge.

Able represented is the Presbytery of Cleveland and Portage by Dr. Goodrich and Professor Hitchcock, with such an Elder as T. P. Handy, Esq.; Brooklyn too by Drs. Cuyler and Robinson, with such an Elder as Fisher Howe, while such men as Dr. Darling, of Albany, Dr. Hawley of Cayuga, Dr. L. M. Glover of Jacksonville, Dr. Wisner of Lockport, and such young men as Vincent of Troy, Aikman of Wilmington, Erskine White of New York 4th, H. Augustus Smith of Philadelphia 3d, and many others, join to make an Assembly ripe in mature wisdom, and full of promise for years to come.

There are such elders, besides those named, as the good Stephen Torrey of Montrose in our State; Moses W. Dodd, the publisher of New York; Wm. H. Jessup, Esq., brother to the missionary in Syria, son of Judge Jessup, and a young man of like spirit with the past and present generation of his eminent family. And not behind these are Farr, Tenbrook and Birkinbine of our city.

Our remote Presbyteries are well represented. Four Presbyteries in the Synod of Missouri; every one of the three Presbyteries of Tennessee, and three of the Presbyteries in the Synod of Alta California, have their delegates promptly on the floor of the Assembly.

The Moderator's sermon is published in full in our paper of this week. It was in hand full early enough for last week's pa-

per; but we felt that courtesy forbade our putting it print at a date which might have given it publicity before it was out of the speaker's mouth. It is universally spoken of as an exceedingly eloquent and able production, with views, however, of that positive character which are sure to excite dissent, and to make, at the same time, a clear impression upon the minds of the audience. Our readers can form their own judgment of its character.

The reports of the Permanent Committees all showed most marked progress, save in one important matter of Foreign Missions. Home Missions especially showed a greater proportional advance than had been gained in any corresponding period. The new subjects of Church Erection (as re-organized by the last Assembly,) and the Sabbath School cause were ably presented by Dr. Ellinwood and Rev. C.P. Bush for the respective committees, and brought matters of new interest before the Assembly. But more interesting than all was the report of the joint Committee on Union. The liberality of the terms of the proposed union was generally conceded to be far greater than there had been any reason previously to expect. Our readers will find the report of the joint committee entire in another part of our columns. The discussion, if there is any, will take place on Wednesday of next week, and we shall try to keep our readers fully informed of all that occurs at that time.

The accommodations for the General Assembly are ample. All the commissioners and delegates, all the secretaries, editors and others in any way connected with the body, or by duty in attendance upon the Sessions, are hospitably and conveniently entertained. The arrangements in the Brick church, for accommodating Committees, are excellent. The letters to and from members of the Assembly are quietly received and distributed in a post-office in one corner of the building, to which, however, none of the appointees are eligible. W. properly be expected from the CTS. Arrangements has been done, and largely through the two churches of nomination. While many persons attendance not connected with the body, are hospitably entertained by their friends in the city, this part of the business has not been regarded by the Committee as obligatory upon them.

The cold weather is a drawback to the enjoyment of the members. The season is fully one month behind. Many of the farmers are just putting the plough into the ground. On our way through the hills of Northern Pennsylvania, for a distance of ten miles or more we saw heavy drifts of snow scattered along, a quarter or half a mile apart. They had lain there for three or four days, and judging from the present temperature they are not yet melted. In and around Rochester the apple and cherry trees are barely in blossom, and the horse-chestnuts are barely in leaf in the streets. One is reminded of the beautiful apostrophe in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*.

Dip down upon the Northern shore
O sweet New Year, delaying long,
Thou dost expectant nature wrong
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons?

Bring orchis, bring the fox-glove spire,
The little speed-well's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping wells of fire.

THE ASSEMBLY OF THE OTHER BRANCH.

The Old School Assembly met in Cincinnati, May 16th, and Dr. Staunton preached a sermon on the comprehensive nature of Paul's knowledge of "Christ and Him crucified," especially as in relation to the Church's duty to "the powers that be." His declaration that *all doctrine and duty centre in Christ*, must have been as distasteful to the "No politics" men as it was to Rabbi Wise of the Jewish Temple, who preached a sensation sermon on the next "Sabbath" in reply.

The case of contesting Commissioners from loyal and *de-facto*-ed Presbyteries was referred to a committee consisting of Revs. Dr. Breed, John Crozier, and Elder T. Newton Wilson.

Dr. Gurley, of Washington, was chosen Moderator, and his competitor for that honor, Dr. Howard, of Pittsburgh, was made Temporary Clerk.

May 17.—The Scottish delegation telegraphed that they would be present on Saturday and wished to be heard on Monday. Dr. Gurley presented the report on Re-union which after stating the circumstances in which the Committee met and the cordiality which pervaded their deliberations, presents in full, the joint report agreed upon (given in another column) and concludes by saying:

Leaving their report with the General Assemblies, and the ministers and churches of our denomination throughout the land, your committee cannot disregard the providential auspices under which their recommendations await decision. The present is thought to be a favorable time, now that many questions of former controversy have lost their interest, for adopting a magnanimous policy, suitable to the necessities of our country and the world. The Presbyterian Church has a history of great renown. It has been intimately associated with civil and religious liberty in both hemispheres. Its republican and representative character, the purity of its clergy, the simplicity of its order, the equity of its administration, its sympathy with our institutions, its ardent patriotism in all stages of our history, its flexible adaptation to our heterogeneous population, its liberal support of colleges and seminaries designed for general education and theological culture, its firm and steadfast course in the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, and this by means of revealed truth and the special effusions of the Holy Spirit, in distinction from all trust in human arts and devices, all unite to promise, if we are wise and faithful, a future for the Presbyterian Church in these United States greater and better than all the past. Amid all the changes which have occurred around us, we are confident that nothing true or good will recede or decay; and it becomes all those who love the same faith, order and worship, abounding in love and hope, to pray that God would count them worthy of their calling; that they may fill all the good pleasure of His goodness and the work of faith with power, that the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in them and they in Him, according to the will of our FATHER IN HEAVEN.

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May 20.—The *Be'er* the use of Engineers reported 358,220 volumes and 2,000,000 pages of tracts disposed of, with receipts of \$145,701-52, an increase of over \$16,200. The Hymnal was reported completed and recommended to the churches for adoption.

A proposition to send to New York for the minutes or journal of the joint Committee on Re-union, for the use of the committee that has the report under consideration, was laid on the table. This was a rebuff to an opponent of re-union.

A HUMANE MOVEMENT:—A meeting was held on Monday, May 6th, at the rooms of the Board of Trade of this city, to consult on the protection of dumb animals against the barbarities which so often shock the feelings of passers along our streets. The movement comes none too soon. The occasions which have excited it are of daily and even hourly occurrence. Horses and mules before the heavy freight cars, with loads beyond their strength, are punneled without mercy; live calves, tied in agonizing postures, are piled into the butchers carts, and there left lying until the convenient time for slaughtering them comes, and as we are informed, cattle and sheep coming in from the West, remain in the cars two and sometimes three and even four days without drink. The meeting mentioned was attended by citizens of the most respectable and influential class. Among the active participants in the proceedings were Mayor McMichael, chairman, H. M. Philips, Esq., Wm. A. Porter, Esq., and ex-Governor Pollock. One committee, S. Morris Wain, chairman, was appointed to draft the charter of a society for the prevention of cruelty to animals, with the view of obtaining its passage by the legislature; and another, Samuel V. Merrick, chairman, to issue a pertinent address to the public on the subject. We look for some effect from this fair beginning.