

Correspondence.

RE-UNION.

BY REV. HENRY FOWLER.

The re-union of the Old and New School branches is fairly before the Presbyterian Church of the United States. Its discussion has become a necessity—because the laity of the Church favor Re-union; because the causes which produced the schism have ceased to be either efficient or final; and because the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles produce in the Christian heart a sentiment which leads to Re-union.

I. CONCERNING THE LAITY.

We concede the difficulty of estimating public sentiment without the help of the ballot. Yet we do not hesitate to affirm that Re-union is the wish of the Presbyterian laity. This fact is revealed through informal conversations. It crops out in occasional newspaper communications. It is seen in acts and words and resolutions at ecclesiastical meetings. A notable instance occurred in the last General Assembly at Rochester, where the delegate from the O. S. body, a layman, expressed himself in behalf of Re-union with a discerning appreciation and a cogent eloquence which made N. S. clerical agents seem thin and tame. He is a lawyer in a large inland city, and a man of such information and position as unlikely to be mistaken in his unqualified statement, that he represents the sentiment of the laity, and especially of the young men, of the O. S. branch.

It is natural that the men and women of the laity should desire Re-union as soon as it can be effected. The men bear the burdens of separation and reap none of the incidental advantages, which a select circle of clergy may manage to glean. They pay the added expenses of two corporate bodies in the place of one, of two sets of Boards, of multiplied newspapers, of reduplication in church buildings, of increased numbers of pastors. One Board with slight enlargement could do the work of two. The reduction of denominational newspapers one half, though it might not reduce the price, would, by added excellence, give to the head of the Christian household, twice as good a periodical for his money. In many localities one edifice would accommodate the congregations, and one pastor would feed and care for two flocks better than two pastors now do it, because of better food and care himself. To this enumeration a layman would with plausibility add the economy of fewer theological seminaries. We concede that all our seminaries are not full of students, and some are not dangerously full in other respects, but we see such advantage to the Church and to the country in the present number, characteristics, and geographical disposition of the seminaries, that we doubt not a united Church will wisely and cordially support them all. A quarter of a century will show not only the advantage but the necessity of all.

And the women of the Church, "those women which labor with us in the Gospel," favor Re-union, because they dislike theological controversies and hard speeches; because they judge of merit by intuition of character, and see no difference between the earnestness, the consecration, the gentleness, and the wisdom of pastors whom they know in each branch; because they would like to escape those sharp missiles about "our superior unity" which Episcopal sisters dispense in society, or at least be able to return a delicate and proud allusion to our one Presbyterian Church; because they have a special gift of discernment in the direction of those incidental advantages which come by Re-union: our greater consequence in the eyes of public men, our higher consideration with other denominations; and finally, Presbyterian women favor Re-union because they read the book of John more than any other book of the Bible; because they linger long and tenderly around the 14th, 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters, and because the beloved Lord of Mary and of Martha, of Salome and Joanna prayed His last prayer with the disciples before the agony, "that they ALL may be ONE!"

While we are in the affirmative division of our subject concerning public sentiment, we may append our opinion that the young men of the clergy as well as of the laity in both branches earnestly desire Re-union. We are aware that there are exceptions, but these exceptions are confined to those who have come under special personal influence upon them by the original actors in the division, an influence so respectable that its control is not derogatory to a young man, and yet, if withdrawn, would leave its victim not a self-reliant and persevering champion for continued separation, but rather silently acquiescing, and in time, happily participating in Re-union. "Young Presbytery" is young America by the grace of God made Christian and by Church relation made Presbyterian, and young Presbytery proposes, by the union of the Church in its plans, efforts, and beneficences, to do its full share in Christianizing the country and the world; and this rising power is approaching the point of control over both branches of the Presbyterian Church. And what is here stated is especially true of the young men in the O. S. Church branch.

II. The causes which produced the separation have ceased to be either efficient or final. Let us review them.

1. It was alleged as a justification for the extending act, that the organic connection of Congregational churches with Presbytery, according to the "Plan of Union" was unconstitutional. This Plan of Union, whether in its inception unconstitutional or not, has ceased to be a cause of offense, because it has borne its legitimate fruit of transforming the Congregational churches into Presbyterian churches.

In adopting this Plan, the Congregational Church surrenders its distinctive polity of independence. It places itself under the care and authority of Presbytery. Its finances, membership, and ecclesiastical action are annually reviewed by Presbytery, through its book of records sent up for examination. Its decisions may be, and are, brought before Presbytery by appeal and carried up to Synod and General Assembly.

Its board of deacons is elected in the same way as a board of elders and does the same duty. Its lay representatives in Presbytery are known only as elders. Its pastors belong not to the individual church, but to Presbytery, and can be disciplined only by that body. The practical working of the "Plan of Union" is essentially Presbyterian.

Because the church retains its original name of the "First Congregational Church," this name does not continue it a Congregational church any more than calling a church "Central" necessitates its continuance in the heart of the city. Neither does this original title prevent its being Presbyterian any more than calling a church "Saint Peter's" prevents its being Presbyterian. It is not the name but the vital fact which the wise man regards. These churches are consistent, bona fide Presbyterian churches. Every one who knows their real life, knows that they are. An intelligent Congregationalist would not own them. They have acquired the very attribute which distinguishes a Presbyterian church from that of every other denomination, to wit: an organic connection with Presbytery. They have lost the very attribute which distinguishes a Congregational church, to wit: independence. Out of regard to time-honored associations and respect for the wishes of elderly people no change is made in the name. It is of slight consequence, as compared with the harmony and prosperity of the Church. So in regard to the deacons who are authorized to sit in the Presbyterian courts: There is no violation by these courts either of the spirit or of the letter of the constitution in receiving them. There is no violation of its spirit, because these men are elected according to the constitution and because they fulfill the duties prescribed by the constitution. There is no violation of the letter because they appear before Presbytery as elders, they answer to the roll-call as elders, they submit to the regulations imposed on elders. There is but one omission of conformity to the Book of Discipline, and that is an omission not by Presbytery, but by the individual Church. All of them are not ordained according to the precise form prescribed by the Book of Discipline, but the object for which that form was imposed is gained in another way. Does this omission work corruption to the blood? Does it invalidate every superior and essential claim to be regarded as Presbyterian churches? Must a large body of excellent churches be excused, which are in living and growing union with Presbytery, which conform in their relations with the body to each and every specification of polity, which are sound in the faith, which present their collections through Presbyterian Boards, which are governed by Bishops educated at Presbyterian Seminaries—must they be ruthlessly and disastrously cut off before the New School Church is pure enough for Re-union? Especially is this to be forced to an immediate issue, when time alone is needed, (for a fair understanding of the case on their part) in order to see these churches cheerfully conforming in this one omitted particular to the letter of the Book of Discipline, as they now do to its spirit?

The wise and conservative Christian who desires the unity of the Church can answer this question in but one way—God forbid! This Union with Congregationalists, one of the original causes for separation, has lost all vitality, for the simple yet conclusive reason, that the *quidam* Congregationalists are *nunc* Presbyterians. The offense has become a defense, the weakness a strength.

We are aware that to this argument the exception may be taken that the so-called Congregational churches disregard a principle of Presbyterian polity in the admission of members not by authority of session but of the church. We will not ignore the exception. Yet it is an exception which the churches need time only to receive. Meanwhile, it does not invalidate our essential position that by organic connection with Presbytery these churches have ceased to be Congregational in any sense which makes the "Plan of Union" an actual offense, perpetuated by Presbytery against the constitution.

TO BE CONTINUED.

St. Paul, December, 1867.

DEAR EDITOR: When I started, I hardly expected to write to you from a point within the shadow of the North Pole, as Minnesota did not lie within my contemplated route, but here I am, and I am heartily glad to have got so far. After spending some months on the prairies, it is a real relief to find oneself in a grand, rolling broken country like this great North-west.

The twenty-eight hours' ride from Chicago to St. Paul is not a very attractive bit of travel. "The shades of night were falling fast" as we started, and soon shrouded in darkness the section of Illinois and Wisconsin through which we hurried. We had just time to see the lights of Milwaukee, and then hurried by night across Wisconsin. We passed many places reputed beautiful, but such of us were not asleep could distinguish nothing in the darkness. By day-break we reached Prairie du Chien and saw once more the Father of the Waters. The thin ice that formed on the surface of the river was not sufficient to prevent travel, and a ride of three or four miles by steamboat took us to North Mac Gregor on the Iowa side, a cold bleak-looking town, built in one long street between two bluffs. We took the cars of the newly completed Mac Gregor Western Railroad, and passed through the rolling ground of the River bottom and out over the broad, flat, black prairies of North Eastern Iowa, whose monotony is broken only by here and there a snow drift, or a "baby town" that had sprung up within a year or maybe a month past. Much of the land through which we rode was destitute even of a trace of a fence, the fields being unenclosed, and the main part of the country being not even reclaimed. Where we came upon the river-bottoms they were covered with brush rather than timber. The stations bore grand names—Calmar, Castalia, Ossian—but the names were all that was grand about them, if we except the prospects for the future. At three o'clock in the afternoon we were offered a "thirty minutes' stop for refreshments" which we found to mean the privilege of running across a small prairie of a public square and indulging in crackers, cheese and whisky in whichever one of a dozen small groceries looked most promising. Here the more northerly route from St. Paul

(via Milwaukee and La Crosse) unites with that by which we have come, and the trains pass by the same road—the Minnesota Central—to the Northward. The country continues its monotony and bareness, though the towns are older and finer places—Fairbault is especially deserving notice. It is not till we approach the point at which the roads to St. Paul and Minneapolis diverge, viz. at Mendota on the extreme southern elbow of a bend in the Mississippi, that we enter the true Minnesota, the land of river and lake, of rock and hill, of valleys and pleasant places. Before darkness has fallen upon us the second time we can discern the change in the scenery. We are scarcely ever out of sight of a lake and the hills lift up their heads through the "gloom"ing." And often we pass under high sandstone rocks through deep cuts made for the Rail Road. In the darkness we enter West St. Paul and the journey of some twenty-eight miles is ended.

It is only within the last few months that this new route has been completed by securing "through connections" between Mac Gregor and Owatonna, while three or four miles of river travel and an unnecessary change of cars at Milwaukee still detract from its perfect continuity. The old route which crosses Wisconsin in somewhat higher latitude, involves thirty miles of steamboat travel in summer and stage travel in winter, between La Crosse and Winona. The completion of a new railroad between these two points will soon render this the best route. Both roads are owned by the same company, so that there is not much competition nor advertising rivalry in regard to them.

St. Paul is the most beautiful in situation of all the cities that I have seen. It is placed on a lofty amphitheatre of solid rock which rises quite a height above the low ground along the Mississippi banks. At one end the ground slopes down gradually to the level; at the other it rises to a precipitous height above it, while just under this upper town is built a lower town which must be flooded by the spring freshets. On its island side, the town is sheltered by a wide-sweeping semi-circle of sloping bluffs, which are being rapidly covered with fine residences. The view from this bluff, and even from the streets of the town is very fine, embracing a long stretch of the course of the Mississippi which winds into an enormous S, running almost due North past the town, between high ranges of almost mountainous bluffs. It was a view that fixed one's gaze even in the bleakness of an early winter; I could imagine what it must be in the flush and glow of its summer's beauty!

St. Paul is as happy in its material for building, as in its position. The plain of rock on which the city is situated, consists largely of blue limestone and bluish-gray granite, furnishing an unequalled material for building. The earlier settlers had of course little means at hand for quarrying the stone, and were compelled to build houses of wood, but, as the town has grown, beautiful, tasteful facades of stone are taking the place of the older structures and will yet be the only kind to be seen in St. Paul. Third St., the Chestnut St. of St. Paul, runs along the bluff from the lower to the upper town, and will compare favorably in point of architectural beauty with any street of its size that I have ever seen; the pavement will not need soon to be replaced, as it is simply the living rock. The stone of which these fine houses are built is obtained in excavating the cellars, a fact which annihilates the cost of transportation and makes one sure of the foundation.

Society in St. Paul is of a very exceptional character for a western city. I see it only in the dullest season, when navigation by river is at an end, and when the gay crowd who flock hither to enjoy the mild Northern summer have gone back to their Sunny South again. But even in winter one is struck with the unusual proportion of educated people. Probably in no city of our continent, with the possible exception of Boston, is there such a large proportion of persons of culture and refinement. And the reason is manifest. The settlers of St. Paul have not come West simply to "push their fortune." They are very largely people of good family and social position, who have selected St. Paul as a residence for reasons of health, and finding that the climate has benefited them, they have the good sense to stay there, to find the occupation of their life there. The rude, comfortless ways of getting on that characterize other places as young as St. Paul are not to be found here. Evidences of taste and refinement abound on every hand in a measure far beyond that of Chicago. I have no hesitation in saying that the number of stores where works of art and literature are on sale in St. Paul, at least equals those in Chicago. What the future of St. Paul will be is mainly in the hands of its citizens. They have the means of making it the Athens—as it is already the Boston—of the Great Northwest.

In spiritual matters I can only judge of St. Paul, by what I see. The Episcopalians and Romanists seem to take the lead. There are two New School and one Old School Church; the second of the former Churches—the House of Hope—loses its pastor, Rev. F. A. Noble, at the New Year, as he takes Herrick Johnson's Church in Pittsburg, while Dr. Johnson bargained to come to St. Paul. The frivolous masses of this gay and cultivated community need a touch of his fire and steady earnestness, and I believe that under God the watchman of Zion (were he to come) would no longer need to look down into the valley and ask: "Can these dry bones live?" That the present time is one of spiritual drought here I am informed on all hands, but a few look prayerfully and in faith for a coming shower, and hope that the wave that has swept, as far as Chicago will not recede until it has reached Minnesota. Among the hopeful signs I may mention the resuscitation of the Y. M. C. A. as an active organization as a hopeful sign. The young men of St. Paul are moving forward, and hoping for better things.

St. Paul is destined to be a place of great and wide-spread influence—in fact the capital of the great North-west. In manufactures it is very much behind-hand and must ever be so, as its neighbor and rival Minneapolis possesses such unequalled water-power, a thing of which it is almost destitute. But as the head of river navigation, the political and social metropolis of the State, and the converging point of the Minnesota Railroads, it will always be the commercial centre of the region. I was astonished to find so many and such well built railroads running from this point. One of these the St. P. and Lake

Sup. R. R. is being built by the Pennsylvania Central to the head of Lake Superior, and will enable the Minnesotians to ship their grain to New York at a less cost than it can now be sent from Chicago, and will turn a very important item of trade out of the Chicago channel. When it is remembered how important the grain trade is to Chicago, and that Minnesota is one of the two great wheat regions of the Mississippi valley—Southern Illinois being the other—it will be seen what an important bearing this will have on the future of Chicago. Another of these roads, the St. Paul and Platte, is pushing steadily westward to Red River on its way to Oregon, and I have heard other Minnesotians express the opinion that this road may yet be finished before the Union Pacific of Kansas. The rapid progress hitherto effected by the latter, should not lead us to forget that it is the easy part of the route that has been got over, while the rest of the road will not be over prairies and rolling lands but through the very heart of the mountains, and over just such a route as that of the Pennsylvania Central through the Alleghenies; and from the length of time that it took the wealthiest "R. R." corporation of the land to lay their road to Pittsburgh, we may judge how soon and how easily this other road to San Francisco will be completed, through a region more mountainous by far than Western Pennsylvania. Now the Minnesota road avoids all such obstacles, and runs clear through to Oregon by a route as easy as the Union Pacific's route to Cheyenne. That it will be more obstructed by snow than its Southern rival is not likely, as some of the operations on the latter even now have to be carried on under sheds, while the cost of grading and tunnelling must be enormous. One other Railroad is badly needed, and is already contemplated—a Mississippi Valley Railroad. At present Chicago takes toll of all who have not the time and patience for River travel. If you want to go to any place in the West, even when in the West—you must go to Chicago to get to it. A railroad running along the course of the Mississippi itself and uniting all the main towns on its banks, would break up the westward roads and break up the monopoly. Part of such a road is already erected; the need of its completion is keenly felt by the capitalists of St. Louis, Keokuk, Burlington, St. Paul and other places, and it may be in complete operation at no late day. I shall have something to say of Minnesota's climate and scenery in the next.

Yours, &c. ON THE WING.

OUR LONDON LETTER.

LONDON, JAN. 8, 1868.

If the year that has just gone has been to England as well as to Europe of critical importance, the one which we now begin promises to be pregnant with circumstances and results even yet more startling, more novel and more grave. There have been eras in the history of the world when great revolutions have worked their way with slow and solemn tread through patient periods of social change, and there have been others when the vicissitudes of nations have been conducted with almost meteoric rapidity and force. Such an era as this latter was the great French Revolution, when by a mighty volcanic outburst a nation strove to throw off the inward seethings of political evil. We are not passing through such bloody and tempestuous times—times, swelling with such tumultuous passions—yet, never have events so important and changes so great pressed on more swiftly and imperatively.

The reason is, that now everybody is wide awake, everybody is thinking, everybody is trying to act, everybody is becoming conscious of rights and powers, everybody is protesting against semblances of autocracy. And that is why, looking over the great society of England, and looking out on Continental nations, and mindful of last year's developments, I feel that this year marches in upon us with a knapsack full of solemn changes.

To England, especially, does this promise to be a year, not only of anxiety, but of large result. Great political and great religious questions are to be settled in it; one way or the other. These questions have, hitherto, been burked by an overweening aristocracy on the one hand, and by a state-subsidized religious organization on the other. It requires no keen eye to see that that aristocratic influence has been broken. The first Reform Bill was a crack—the second is a fracture. Any one who has mixed in English society since last September, will, if he looks back upon his experiences there, be surprised to find how rapidly its tone is changing, with regard to what used to be called "democratic impulses." Men avow sympathies now with republican ideas which before they scouted. With regard to the education of the people, there is every prospect that we shall have a comprehensive scheme constructed. In Ireland a commission has been appointed consisting of six Roman Catholics, two Presbyterians and six Anglicans; to consider the whole question of Irish education. In England it appears as if the fight would be between the Denominational system and the local secular rate-paying method in vogue in the United States. The battle of the former is fought in the interests of the English Church by many doughty champions, Archdeacon Denison doughtiest and loudest of them all. The Congregationalists, who have held out so long against State assistance, are changing their opinions, and will, I think, support the rating system in localities with additional aid from government. The government is at its wits' end to please the parties. It seems impossible to devise a scheme by which the denominations shall be able to give, or to get, for their children in national schools, denominational instruction, without interfering with the religious prejudices of other sects. In America, you would wipe the board clean, and chalk down new figures—we cannot do that here. Our institutions are crystallized—we can only abolish or change them with very strong solvents. The Church of England appears to me at this moment to be the institution most obstructive to political and religious progress. It sits slinking its head everywhere with denial. But the heaven is working. The Church is divided against itself. In addition to this, the preposterous claims of high church leaders are exciting the disgust of all sensible men.

An illustration of the spirit of these persons has been recently given. The Archbishop

of Armagh, in a late charge, urged upon the clergy the duty of educating the children of the parishes—"as children of the Church, with Church principles, founded upon sound instruction in her doctrines and formularies"—the object being to help them to withstand the Church of Rome and "those numberless sects which at once the weakness and the reproach of the Reformation." The Rev. Mr. McAlister, a Presbyterian minister, ventured to ask the Bishop, what was of course interested in keeping well with that "sect," of which Mr. McAlister was a member, for the sake of the establishment. "Did you call my Church a sect?" To which the Archbishop answered: "Your Church is the established Church in Scotland, and though not the established Church here, is partially endowed by the State: THEREFORE—hear, O heavens—your Church is far from my idea of a sect." Says "THE NORTHERN WREIG," "the correspondence was published in an Irish Tory organ as a marvellous proof of his Grace's consciousness and of the union of two Protestant Churches. As for the poor Wesleyans, and the poor dissenters of other denominations, that, it seemed, were as sects, the reproach and weakness of the Reformation, they might give the lie direct, if they pleased. The Archbishop cared nothing for them; the truth really is, and it has been admitted by earnest Protestants, that if one Protestant Church has been at once the reproach and weakness of the Reformation, it is the present Irish establishment." I don't think there was much in the Bishop's reply, and it is only an evidence of how our Presbyterian brethren in the North of Ireland are hampered and shackled by their invidious toyism, to the State, that every one in that Church accepted the answer without further challenge. But Archdeacon Denison comes across the correspondence, and forthwith, with this usual fiery logic asks the Archbishop in writing: "I beg very respectfully to ask your Grace whether it is not the duty of a Church and not a sect that Churchmen in England and Ireland are asked to take their stand in resisting the assault about to be made upon the Church of Ireland, and, through her, upon the Church of England? Because, if so, I humbly conceive that it will be found impossible to combine together any number of Churchmen for the purpose of such resistance."

"If a Church be apostolic in order, primitive and Catholic in doctrine and discipline, then it is well with the nation that finds it established by law (that is to say, that finds it the National Church), and maintains it as it finds it. It is not the fact of establishment, nor of recognition and partial endowment, any more than it is the fact of its being the Church of the majority of the people, that gives the claim. These are human things; the others are not human only, but divine."

"It is for the Church of Ireland, established by law, because keeping and delivering by her apostolic ministry, the truth of God, that Churchmen have to contend. The position is necessarily an exclusive position." If it be not exclusive it is false.

"Perhaps the Archdeacon takes the strongest stand, he can, but if he thinks he can make any thing for his side out of this sort of advocacy, he is mistaken. He does not see that he cuts the ground from under his own feet. For, until he can get the people—the majority of Ireland and of England—to see as he does, his assumption of divine rights will be looked upon as an absurdity. The apostles never arrogated to themselves the right to State support, and were they alive now, I fancy the true apostolic church would not be found in Abbeys and Cathedrals, or its ministry in copes and stoles and bands and gowns, but in simple evangelistic everyday apparel, trading the courts and alleys of our great cities."

We are much worried by the "Fenians," whose atrocities so senseless and so useless, have set up the back of all England against them. I regret that so much of their ability to create this state of things is furnished from your side. We have not always been fair to you—yet I should like to have seen some more distinct expression of disapprobation from the Christian portion of your community of this wretched conspiracy. If you could see the miserable beings engaged in it—or being on the spot measure the whole absurdity of their attempts, you would in the cause of humanity and for the sake of the men themselves, contribute to bring about, in America, a state of opinion which would stop all outward complicity in an insurrection, which, if it were necessary, will be put down by the whole force of Britain. But it never will be necessary. The seriousness of the thing has been greatly exaggerated, by the Fenians themselves, for the purpose of helping on their organization in America, by the Government here for the sake of getting credit for what is yearly, in my belief, a factitious activity. So we get governed now a days? When shall we have honest and Christian Governments? When shall the Millennial year of grace be seen? "The Christian Times" contains this paragraph:

OBITUARY. "Died—in Laodicea, the Prayer Meeting, aged one year. The health of this little meeting was poor most of the year, and its life despaired of. But a few anxious friends kept it alive, and sometimes it would so revive as to encourage them. Discouragement at last prevailed, and the prayer meeting is dead. It died from neglect. Not a were living within a mile of it, and not one was seen, saved, or where two or three are agreed, etc. Two-thirds of the forty might have been there had they been so disposed, but they were not, and the prayer meeting died."

ADDELPHOS.

"THE SUNDAY LAW IN NEWARK.—Mayor Peddie, of Newark, has issued a notice warning the liquor dealers against further violations of the ordinance prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors on the Sabbath. The suggestions of the Mayor have been quite generally complied with, and those who persist in the practice are given to understand that the law will be enforced."

Happy Newark! As for the Temperate and Orderly citizens of Philadelphia, they are as much disappointed in their Mayor as the Republicans were in Andrew Johnson!