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LETTERS ON REUNION.—V.

[We take pleasure in according to the concluding letter of this series the leading place in our issue for this week, on account of the calmly luminous manner in which it presents our own thoughts on this subject. We need scarcely say to our readers that these letters are from one of the best informed and most fully representative minds in our Church, well known as a leading pastor in the Northwest. The prospect of hearing further from the same source will be gratifying to our readers.]

Mr. EDGEMOND—I must hasten to say, in a few words, what I have to add, respecting the NECESSARY CONDITIONS of "reunion," considering the differences that are believed to exist, and the relations of the parties, to each other.

1. It is absurd to suppose that a mere organic union would blot out the differing convictions of men on both sides who have earnestly studied the questions at issue all their lives, so that there would be "no more Old School" and "no more New School." The differences *grow up while we were one Church in form and organization*, and they will be marked and distinct for at least a generation to come, whatever reunion may take place.

2. If reunion is to be effected, either (1.) The New School must go over to the Old, or (2.) The parties must come together on a basis broad enough to allow New and Old School men to enjoy and propagate their own opinions side by side as equals; or (3.) The two bodies must unite without any clear understanding of the grounds of re-union, and "trust each other," for the consequences. Of course, the first mode is out of the question. The third course would be a venture in the dark, which there is scarcely folly enough on either side to make. A race between two parties in the united church, for a numerical ascendancy in the construction of equivocal terms, and for the rule of the whole body, would be attended with evils that would disgrace our common Christianity, besides working the ruin of Presbyterianism in this country.

The second course remains, as the only one that can afford any promise of harmony and practical co-operation. This must be evident to all considerate friends of re-union. But, now, the question is, *What is essential in order to bring about a union on the generous basis that has been indicated, in such a manner that it will be likely to prove satisfactory and enduring?*

This question must be answered in the light of three great facts. (1.) The Old School party will have a large majority in the united church. (2.) In all churches having extended confessions, liturgies, or constitutions, the *letter-men*, or the high church party, have the advantage of the men of progress, who go rather for the spirit than the letter. This is seen alike in the Lutheran, Episcopal and Presbyterian Churches. It is easy to insist upon the *mere words* of a symbol or form of service, or plan of government, and cast suspicion upon every man that adheres more closely to Scripture, than to the "standards" which men have set up. (3.) The New School body are not only the weaker, but also the accused party. We must therefore at the best enter into the union, already partially under suspicion.

For these reasons, we need and must have *clear definitions of the grounds* on which the union is to be consummated. This ought to be desired on all hands. For it would be most disastrous to go into an union on terms that were construed differently by the two sides, and the final construction of which must depend upon the question, which should prove the stronger party in the church. Already we hear, it is claimed, on one side that the more liberal party will have the majority and will be able to give their own construction to disputed terms; while on the other side it is claimed that the majority will be with the more stringent party. Now unless on leading points at least, such as the doctrinal basis, the terms are understood essentially alike by all parties, an union will only be the opening of a thirty years' war. Let us not *patch up* a hollow union. Let there be a clear, undoubted understanding of the terms, on both sides, as preliminary to union, whether it takes two or ten years to effect it. In time we shall come to it, if we only have patience.

The points, as it seems to many, on which we need to have explicit, unequivocal terms, are (1.) The doctrinal basis, which ought to be understood to provide for the full and free allowance of all the theological views that are well known and publicly recognized as allowable in each branch of the church. Without this, union will be nothing but the "absorption" of the smaller body by the larger

(2.) The status, in the united church, of all the ministers and churches now in both connections, should remain unchanged, including full liberty to ministers now in good standing, to pass from one Presbytery to another as freely as heretofore, so long as they shall commit no offense, to impair their standing; and embracing the right of the "mixed churches" to enjoy all the privileges guaranteed to them by the conditions on which they were organized. As much as this must be embraced in an union "on equal terms." And if either party refuses to unite on such a point of equality, they should be held responsible for the continuing separation. If the right of examining and rejecting ministers now in good standing, on their removal from one Presbytery to another, is conceded in the terms, it will be speedily exercised in a manner that will revive the old doctrinal controversy from one end of the land to the other. It would not be demanded, as a condition of union, that the right of examination should be expressly conceded in the terms, if it were not the design to assert, in practice, the utmost that can be safely granted on this point, is to leave "the question of examination," where it was before the controversy arose between the two Schools. This is fair to both parties, and will bring the matter to a fair and equitable settlement on equal terms.

(3.) The way should be left fully open for the teaching of all the allowable phases of theology both in the seminaries of the church, and in the doctrinal publications of the church, so far as any ecclesiastical restrictions are concerned, and no invidious distinctions should be made between the Theological Seminaries now connected with the two bodies. This is evident if we are to unite "on equal terms."

(4.) To adapt the organization of the church to the altered condition of things, and to avoid conflicts on points of difference regarding the powers of judicatories, especially of the General Assembly, it should be understood that as soon as practicable, the constitution will be so amended as to provide for a *distribution of powers* in the church, somewhat analogous to the distribution of powers and functions under the admirable system of our state and general governments. I only express a growing and deep conviction of many thinking minds, when I say, that unless some such readjustment of our ecclesiastical system as this is effected, we shall never have permanent union, peace, and prosperity as a great and wide-spread division of the Lord's army in this free and broad country.

In asking for well-defined and liberal terms of re-union, we do not overlook the necessity of "mutual confidence," to make any compact of real, practical value. But we do hold that it must be fully understood *what the two parties are willing to do* in relation to the points of known difference, to make the necessary "mutual confidence" possible. If the terms are so drawn up as to provide, *clearly and unequivocally*, for the liberty and security which we demand, and our Old School brethren publicly agree to accept them, we shall have no doubt that as honest men they will fulfil their engagements. But we are not willing that either party should act, in a case involving such interests, under a misapprehension; or that terms should be agreed upon which are known to be construed in different and opposite ways by large portions of the two churches.

I shall defer the discussion as to the extent to which the necessary conditions of real union are met by the terms that have been agreed upon by the Joint Committee, until the report of that Committee shall have been presented to the General Assemblies. REAL UNION.

WELCOME TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The General Assembly meets to-day once more within the bounds of our State and Synod. Five years ago, it sat in the First church, Philadelphia, and those who remember the happy impression made by that meeting are prepared to give the body a double welcome to our churches. In 1863, it will be remembered, formal intercourse with the other branch, was begun, and the admirable spirit and ability which marked the first series of addresses and replies will not easily be forgotten. At that session, too, which preceded, by two months only, the most critical period of our country's whole history, while Grant was preparing to invest Vicksburg and Lee arranging his advance upon Pennsylvania, the Assembly was providentially led to declare itself, in the most unqualified terms, for the support, not only of the country in some vague phrase, but of the administration, specifically, as faithfully maintaining the cause of the country, and as deserving the hearty support of every patriot and every Christian. Then it was, too, that the Assembly, stimulated by the able report of Dr. Be-

man, decisively engaged in the work of Publication, and lifted the cause from its embarrassed and dubious condition hitherto. An endowment of \$50,000 was secured as the result of that action, and the career of rapid development in prosperity and usefulness enjoyed by the Committee dates from that action.

In fact, almost the entire absolute growth of the Church, dates from that only five-year-old Assembly. The report of the Presbyteries for 1863 showed that the entire number of our membership was less than 136,000, or nearly ten thousand less than in the year 1846. Previous to 1863, we had never made any gains which were permanent, or upon which there grew a percentage of new gains. After the accessions reported in 43 and '46 which brought our number from one hundred thousand at the beginning to one hundred and forty-five thousand, our Church seemed more like an anvil than a living, expanding organism; not growing, but retrograding; suffering slightly from attrition, but proving itself of sterner stuff than the upper and nether millstones, between which some thought it would gradually disappear. On the contrary, in the four years ending with the Assembly at Rochester last year, the total of membership had grown to nearly two hundred thousand, and in all our various other reports the increase was equal to more than one million of dollars, or more than fifty per cent.

Patriotism, Catholicity, Denominationalism; a regard for the moral aspects of secular affairs; for Christ in His whole Church; and for our special relations and duties in that Church—these traits which may be viewed as set forth substantially by Peter in his "godliness," "brotherly-kindness," and "charity," and which are together the fulfilling of the law—love to God, love to our neighbor, and love to ourselves, which must be long to the life of every true Church, and which, as they are effectively and harmoniously set forth, are a just measure of its prosperity—were never more conspicuous in the Acts of any General Assembly of our Church than in that of 1863. Let us accept the omen. Let us be true to the spirit of our Church, which has ever aimed at realizing these three ideas, and which has been conspicuous among the Churches of Christendom for its fidelity to them all. Let us aim to hold none at the expense of the others, and, as a practical corollary, let us see to it that no interest of the denomination suffers, and no scheme of progress is arrested while negotiations for Reunion, which may or may not succeed, are pending.

SOCIAL PLEASURES OF CHRISTIANS.

It is a pity the social pleasures of Christians cannot be regulated by a Christian common sense. Such a common sense would indicate a reasonable concern for our physical and intellectual, not to say moral natures; and would even deny the name social pleasure to the excesses in which these are sacrificed. It is no part of Christianity to interdict any real enjoyment. Its province is to regulate, to elevate, and so, to enhance our pleasures; to keep them from becoming a mere folly and delusion, a snare to our souls and a by-path out of the narrow way into the broad road of utter conformity to the world.

No people have a better right to a happy social evening than Christians. They may justly regard it a part of their Christian calling to cultivate among themselves and their friends the social propensities. They may well regard it an evil omen when the whole control of the festivities of society is allowed to fall into worldly hands. When their circumstances allow, they should give and go to parties. But they should cherish and inculcate a Christian manliness; an independence of the world's ways in all. They should feel that there is a Christian type of amusements which it is their business to discover and to endeavor to establish in the community.

We ask Christian people and those who admit the value of Christian prudence to consider and revise their social habits. While we admonish them against sinking into an unsocial, over-retired, half-cynic mode of life, we also warn them against pernicious conformity to the world and its social excesses. There are enough Christian families in good society to make an effective stand against these excesses. Let there be some mutual understanding that the bad hours, and worse practices of mere pleasure-lovers shall not be slavishly aped, but shall be discountenanced and frowned down in their social assemblies, and that methods more truly Christian, but not a whit less entertaining shall be pursued. Let a set of standing rules be laid down, somewhat like the following:

1. Cards of invitation to state distinctly the

hours within which guests will be entertained—say from 8 past 8 to 11 o'clock—(just as long as from 8 past nine to twelve) and as the "refreshments," we are sorry to say, form so large a part of our entertainments, put them before the company punctually at ten o'clock. We need not say to the public for whom we are writing: exclude conscientiously from your tables all that can intoxicate. Let it be understood that to stay beyond the hour named is a violation of propriety.

2. Waltzing and the kindred kinds of dancing to be forbidden. It is certainly surprising that such a rule should be needed in the social assemblies of Christian people who desire to cultivate pure-mindedness among their children. Yet such is the fact, and the rule cannot be adopted too soon or enforced too carefully. We see no harm in the simpler sorts of this amusement.

3. Other and better and more intellectual methods of entertainment should be provided. A professional reader or elocutionist would delight any company, at intervals, for an hour, by reciting fine passages from standard or recent writers, grave or humorous in character. Tableaux, entertaining games and other devices should be introduced. He will be recognized as a public benefactor, who devises some successful means of keeping a company in social rapport besides dancing, eating, and the displaying of dry goods, which in the absence of high conversational powers have become the monotonous round of evening parties in America.

We make these suggestions in the spirit of inquiry. Perhaps some of our fair readers may be able to acquaint us with efforts of the kind already in progress, or will give us a better idea of the difficulties in the way. We should be glad to hear from them.

A SERIOUS QUESTION OF VERACITY has arisen between the correspondent of *The Presbyterian*, signing himself "Old School"—pretty well known to be Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge, of Princeton—and the Old School portion of the Joint Committee. As we publish "Old School's" article entire on an inside page, we freely admit the following correspondence, though we think its first appearance should properly be in the paper in which the obnoxious statement first appeared.

PHILADELPHIA, May 16, 1868.

REV. DR. MEARS—Dear Sir:—Feeling a deep interest in the proposed union of the two branches of the Presbyterian Church (O. S. and N. S.), and sincerely desiring that all obstacles to a proper and permanent union may be removed, I take pleasure in furnishing for publication, the accompanying copy of a letter received from an esteemed member (O. S.) of the Joint Committee on Union. It will explain itself, and I trust will do good. By inserting it entire, and if possible, with it also the article referred to in the *Presbyter*, in the next issue of your valuable paper, you will confer a favor on many of your readers, and especially on—

Yours Truly,
S. W. CRITTENDEN.

CAMDEN, May 13th, 1868.

REV. S. W. CRITTENDEN—Rev. and Dear Sir:—I thank you for calling my attention to an article that appeared originally in the "Presbyterian" of your city and has been copied into other papers, relative to a Resolution said to have been adopted by the O. S. portion of the Joint Committee on reunion at their recent meeting.

Allow me to call your attention to a correction of that article in the "Cincinnati Presbyter" of May 6th. Dr. Monfort, editor of the "Presbyter," is a member of the Joint Committee, was present at the "separate meetings" of the O. S. Committee and beyond question his correction is right. No such "resolution" as that referred to in the article in question was ever adopted. The records of the O. S. Committee are in my possession, and not only is no such resolution to be found, but there is no foundation whatever for the allegation made in reference to our branch of the Joint Committee. If you think this statement will correct misunderstanding and remove suspicion, you are at liberty to use it for that purpose in any way you please.

Yours Truly,
V. D. REED, Sec'y. of O. S. Com.

The paragraph in the *Presbyter*, above referred to, is as follows:

"There was no vote in any 'separate meeting' of the 'Old School members' of the Committee as to consenting to 'terms of union' which should bind the United Church to the latitude of interpreting the Confession, which the New School had hitherto allowed." There was no reference to the latitude which the New School had hitherto enjoyed."

Readers are referred to the paragraph marked 4, near the head of the third column, on the second page of this paper, as containing the statements aimed at in Dr. Reed's and Dr. Monfort's denials. Whether the allegation of "Old School" is an utter fabrication, or no, it is not to be supposed that either Dr. Hodge or the Joint Committee will leave the matter rest here. One or the other of the distinguished parties is placed in a very questionable position by the correspondence. If

it is a misconception, it is one of the most monstrous on record. If such dense fogs arise at the very opening of the reunion negotiations, what is the promise for the future?

REV. DR. WM. L. BRECKINRIDGE has been enlightening Transylvania Presbytery upon the character of the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, in such terms that to that remote body our existence must be a most portentous and direful phenomenon. As the Dr.'s information is not direct, but reaches him only through the haze of the prejudices and fancies of partizan observers, the impression he makes in using his information is necessarily distorted as well as exaggerated. There are, consequently, several downright untruths in the assertions made in Dr. Breckinridge's remarks, not intentional on his part, but the result of allowing himself to be led by these sources, which he so mistakenly thanks for their vigilance. (1) We never complained of the mere writing or publishing of Prof. Hodge's views of the Atonement. Our charge was, that the issue of a book containing wholesale charges of heresy against leading New School men by name, and claiming to be conclusive authority on mooted points between the two Schools, by the official act of the Church while friendly negotiations were pending, was a breach of the trust. (2) We never said that the Princeton theology was to be swept from the Church by the Reunion movement, but *Exclusivism*. Exclusivism is not a theology, but a spirit or mode of holding a theology. The readiness with which our Princeton critics confounded the two terms is significant. But, it was *exclusively* their work, not ours. We do believe that Reunion, if successful, will be the death of all claims to exclusive authority, which any existing type of Calvinistic theology might be disposed to set up. (3) We can never admire or approve of Dr. Hodge's view of the atonement. But the strong language which we used against it would not have been elicited by the modest avowal of the views as personal to the author. It was as only promulgated by authority and announced as a finality that they stirred and continue to stir our indignation.

IMPORTANT INSTALLATIONS.

The Third Presbytery of this city is engaged in the agreeable work of reestablishing pastoral relations in some of the most important of its fields in this city. On Thursday May 14th, Rev. Peter Stryker, D.D., was installed as pastor of North Broad Street Church. Rev. Dr. Wiswell presided and put the Constitutional questions. Rev. H. B. Stryker of the church of the Huguenots, Staten Island, father of the pastor, preached the sermon, upon Christ's commission and promise to his ministers,—a sermon full of Gospel simplicity and unction, well befitting a patriarch in the service. Dr. March gave an eloquent, eloquent and brief charge to the pastor, requiring of him the especial exercise of faith, hope and charity; and Dr. Adams gave a charge to the people, which overflowed with the pathos, the richness of imagination, the affluence of style and the keen bright thoughts, so characteristic of the man. We have the manuscript for early publication. The usual hearty greetings were extended to the pastor at the close, a large part of the congregation lingering behind and shaking him by the hand.

Calvary Church received its new pastor, Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D.D. at the hands of the same Presbytery on Monday May 18th. Rev. J. G. Butler, D.D. presided, and proposed the questions, prayer was offered by Rev. John Mears, D.D., the sermon, an earnest, graphic, trenchant presentation of the main elements of the preacher's power, of the hindrances to his success and his encouragement in the Holy Ghost, was preached by Rev. E. P. Humphrey D.D. of Louisville, brother of the pastor; the charge to the pastor, from Dr. March, presented in an impressive manner the popular responsibilities and opportunities opening before the pastor in his new field; and the charge to the people was from Albert Barnes, who in a few weighty sentences referred to the past history of the church, the objects of its founders, many of whom he touchingly mentioned as having passed away; and to the high expectations entertained of its future, as a mother of churches.

The services in both instances were largely attended, and everything promises well for the future of these charges, under their competent and worthy pastors, whom we heartily welcome to the growing circle of the ministry in our city.

WE SHARE in the grief, surprise and mortification of nine-tenths of the loyal people at the failure thus far of the attempt to remove Anderson Johnson. But as the end is not yet, we delay anything we might wish to say.