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THURSDAY, APRIL 1, 1869.

### THE RE-UNION MOVEMENT.

The policy of our branch of the church on re-union has been straightforward, consistent, and substantially unanimous. The Joint Committee's last plan, as adopted by both Assemblies last May, was rapidly receiving the approval of our Presbyteries, and would have been unanimously adopted, if it had not early appeared that the Presbyteries of the other branch would defeat it by a very heavy vote. The Presbyteries whose delegates at Harrisburg voted with the minority, being content with the explanations of the Assembly, contributed their votes now to swell the harmonious expression of sentiment of our body. The editors of all our papers were unanimously upon the same side. We believe if a poll of the entire ministry, office-bearers and members of our church had been taken, there would scarcely have been a dissenting voice, from ocean to ocean.

Very different has been the case with the brethren of the other branch. In the very adoption of the Basis at Albany they dispensed with the explanation of the Joint Committee accompanying it, and so left themselves without any authoritative interpretation of its terms. Voting to approve the Joint Committee's Basis by a large majority, they, in the same breath, voted *unanimously* that they would prefer something different; and all will remember the visit of their delegation to Harrisburg to persuade our Assembly to a similar expression of opinion.

We will not follow the history of the discussions and transactions, the circulars and conferences; and the variety of plans, with which the ministry, the press, and the subordinate judicatories of the other body have occupied themselves. After nearly one-half of our Presbyteries had voted to approve the Basis, it became clear that the plan had utterly failed in the other branch, and that some other course must be taken to secure the end proposed. Whereupon, a number of our Presbyteries, not easily disconcerted, voted their readiness to amend the Basis as to meet the wishes of the dissenters on the other side. As many as a dozen had taken this course, before the recent meeting of our portion of the Re-union Committee. At that meeting, it was agreed to recommend to the Presbyteries of both branches to unite on the old Basis, amended by omitting the "Smith" and "Gurley" clauses of the First article, and the Tenth article entire. But so far was their action from giving satisfaction to our Old School brethren, that the ink could scarcely have dried on the public announcement of the fact, when a leading Presbytery of the other branch came forward, with still further and more sweeping amendments, which were at once taken up and urged with zeal by the leading journal of the body. A few weeks after, we heard again of a conference in Pittsburgh, which issued a "fraternal address," approaching very nearly the spirit of that of our committee, and recommending similar action upon the two articles named, but suggesting further action and recommendations from the Presbyteries to the Assemblies, not contemplated by our Committee. So that harmony could not be very confidently expected as the result of these new deliberations in Pittsburgh. Besides, the meeting was informal, the public does not know who was there, but it knows that not a single Professor of Allegheny Seminary took part in the proceedings.

The action of the Pastors' Association of this city, taken last week, proceeded upon the supposition that practically, the proposal of our Re-union Committee had failed; that no sign of a response on the part of the O. S. Presbyteries appeared, and that, therefore, a proper degree of self-respect and of respect for our own Committee and our General Assembly called for a withdrawal to our former position. Perhaps the Association was somewhat hasty in its decision, as almost no Presbytery of the other branch has been heard from on the subject. Let but a reasonable probability appear that a sufficient number of those Presbyteries will endorse the amendments of our Committee, and nearly, if not quite all of the pastors and others belonging to the Association, will gladly meet them there. This is the position taken by ourselves, and we stand to it.

There are those we believe, in both branches, who still expect to see the two bodies united by the action of the coming General Assembly. It is hoped by such, that the coming six weeks will be sufficient to bring about the necessary changes of Presbyterial action, and to put three-fourths of the Presbyteries in both the bodies upon a common platform, with authorization to the General Assembly to consummate the union accordingly. Much will have to be done, and much

undone in these brief six weeks. No less than four plans, not counting that of the Joint Committee adopted by the two Assemblies last May, will be before the Presbyteries; three of them without a show of authority, and one recommended by the Re-union Committee of our body. They are as follows:

1. The proposal of the Synod of Wheeling, (O. S.) to omit the Smith and Gurley clauses in the First Article of the Joint Committee's Basis, leaving all the rest as adopted by the Assemblies.

2. The proposal of the Central Presbytery of Philadelphia (O. S.) to set aside the Basis altogether, and unite on the standards alone.

3. The proposal of our Re-union Committee to omit the Smith and Gurley clauses of the First article and the Tenth article entire.

4. The proposal of the Pittsburgh Conference which corresponds to that of our Committee, but adds a recommendation that the Presbyteries authorize the Assemblies to make any other alterations in the Basis which three-fourths of both of them may agree upon, and to unite without transmitting such changes in overture to the Presbyteries.

Proposals 3 and 4 are alike, in that, in both, there is a candid recognition of the comprehensive doctrinal position which has hitherto been restricted to one branch of the church. Had the Pittsburgh brethren omitted the recommendation in regard to further changes, besides those suggested by our Committee, their plan would have been coincident with our own. It is matter of regret that there should be any difference.

Out of these four plans, it is plain that one and one only must be chosen and approved by three-fourths of the Presbyteries on each side, before the Assemblies have the semblance of a constitutional right to consummate the Re-union—they certainly will not follow the precedent set in the disunion, of constituting themselves a legislative body, and attempt to undo one *coup d'eglise*, one revolution, by another. We say, one of these four plans must be adopted by three-fourths of the Presbyteries on each side, or Re-union fails this Spring.

And we say further, that in our judgment, the recent recommendation of our Re-union Committee is the *ultimatum* beyond which it will be impossible to bring any such number as three-fourths of our Presbyteries. Those recommendations, with the clear understanding, as stated by the Committee, that our church adheres to its liberal-orthodox policy, should be accepted by the requisite number of the Presbyteries of the other branch, if they desire re-union with our body. These offers of the committee we do not now intend to recommend. We only think it proper that the other branch should be fully advised as to the exact point where they will find us. They as a body have refused to accept the plan adopted by both Assemblies, and which has been ratified *unanimously* by our Presbyteries. Instead of holding stubbornly to our advantageous position, which was also that of their own Assembly, we, through our committee, have advanced amicably towards their new position. Will they meet us or not? Will they not, through their leading journals, give us some intimation, more decided and general than that of the recent, very informal, act of the Pittsburgh Conference, that such is their purpose? If not, we fear others of our Presbyteries will follow the example of that of Iowa City, and the advice of the Philadelphia Pastors' Association, and our body will be found concentrated upon the pure and simple Basis of the Joint Committee, while of our brethren of the other branch it will be said, every one hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation on the subject of Re-union.

Let the press of the other branch say as much as they please of other plans, but let them make it a matter of conscience, at least, to inform their readers upon what one of all the five proposed lines of action they will meet our Presbyteries, so that those really desiring union with us may not go blindly in every other direction. And then let God and the Christian world judge as to the result.

—The *Presbyterian* of last week says: It is the opinion of some, that the union of the Old and New School Presbyterian churches is to be the beginning of the strife and debate. We do not share these fears, inasmuch as we do not accept many of the statements on which they rest.

But it is on statements made by the *Presbyterian* itself, that some of these "fears" rest. Are we to understand that it repudiates, for example, that quoted in our columns last week, as follows: "We are but giving fair warning to our brethren of the other Branch, when we say that there are many in our Church, who will immediately demand that the right of examination shall be acknowledged as an inherent right of the Presbytery and will carry this claim of right up through all the Courts of the Church until it is recognized by the highest tribunal and made thus the law of the Church."

### WHERE, WHAT NOW AND WHITHER?

Propositions and counter propositions concerning Reunion are the order of the day. Almost every week heralds some new phase of the movement. We are in a maze of conflicting suggestions. Amidst the general confusion there are some things that may be, and that ought to be, understood.

It ought to be understood that the Old School Church first officially proposed reunion, and appointed a Committee to confer with a similar Committee from our own branch in regard to the desirableness and practicability of the movement.

It ought to be understood that this Joint Committee, representing equally the two branches of the Church, framed and adopted and reported for consideration and approval, both the basis of '67 and the basis of '68.

It ought to be understood that these two bases thus unanimously adopted in Joint Committee, and submitted for Presbyterial action, have been accepted in each case by the N. S. Presbyteries, and rejected in each case by the O. S. Presbyteries.

It ought to be understood that the proposition to unite upon "the basis of the Standards pure and simple," is the suggestion of *Old School men alone*, made unofficially, without conference with our branch, and after a plan of union had been regularly submitted, for action by their own Assembly.

It ought to be understood that while the Old School Presbyteries have overwhelmingly rejected their own Committee's basis, they have acted upon this unofficial and one-sided suggestion, and have voted for the first article *without* the Smith and Gurley amendments—or, for the Standards pure and simple, *as to doctrine*.

It ought to be understood that this action of the Old School Presbyteries either *summarily defeated reunion*, or necessitated some new recommendation to our own Presbyteries, and such additional action by them as should lead to harmony.

It ought to be understood that the Committee on Reunion in connection with our branch of the Church, have met this necessity, in the spirit of most generous concession, and have shown, for the third time, a willingness to shape a basis, that, shall, if possible, commend itself to the views of our Old School brethren. The Committee have, unanimously recommended to our Presbyteries that, at a regular meeting, preceding the next General Assembly they express their assent to the amendment adopted by the other branch, and also to the omission of the Tenth Article. And the Committee "cannot but trust that our Old School brethren will concede this additional omission, since it is but the application of the same principle to the *polity* of the Church, which they have applied to its *doctrine*." We earnestly hope, and we confidently believe, that three-fourths of the New School Presbyteries will carry out this recommendation of our Committee, and give their assent to the two amendments at the regular spring meetings. Of course we regret last week's action of the Philadelphia Pastoral Association, and should have sought its modification or indefinite postponement had we been present.

This is the "Whence" and the "What Now." What the "Whither" shall be, will depend very much upon the manner of response given to the address and suggestions of our Reunion Committee by the Presbyteries of the other branch at their spring meetings.

It ought to be understood, however—let it be kindly but distinctly and decisively said—it ought to be understood that no right of reasonable liberty in doctrinal exposition, such as is conceded by the Gurley clause, is relinquished or denied by our Presbyteries in agreeing to the amendment to the Tenth Article. This our Committee clearly state. This we believe to be the unalterable sentiment of the great body of our Church. Indeed, we are fully satisfied that not a Presbytery in our whole connection would favor that amendment, if it was supposed that reunion on the basis thus amended, involved the relinquishment or denial of such right and liberty. "Truth," in *The Presbyterian*, says our [N. S.] proposition, "is to unite on the basis of the Standards pure and simple, plus the whole liberty of interpretation guaranteed by the Gurley amendment." That is just our proposition exactly, if there is any "plus" about it. We think, however, the "plus" is involved in any reasonable and defensible acceptance of the Standards as a basis of doctrine.

It is precisely at this point that we should understand each other. It is due to Christian courtesy and candor. The amendment to the First Article was proposed by the Old School Assembly only as a matter of "preference," and because "the basis would be more simple and

more expressive of mutual confidence." For this reason we are willing to assent to it. But "H" in *The Presbyterian* says the O. S. Presbyteries "voted against the Smith and Gurley amendments because they were utterly unwilling to admit any such understanding." Who is "H?" And does he fairly represent the bodies for whom he speaks? And did the O. S. Assembly mean one thing by their proposition and the O. S. Presbyteries an altogether different thing by their vote?

Again: *The Presbyterian* manifestly takes exception to the clause concerning liberty in the address of our Committee, and says, "This is re-introducing the Gurley amendment, which had just been handsomely bowed out," or "This is practically saying that they omit what they do not omit,—that they surrender what they mean to retain." Well, does *The Presbyterian* mean to deny the liberty referred to? What is that liberty? A liberty of interpretation "which does not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system." Is *The Presbyterian*, are our O. S. brethren, opposed to that? They are certainly on record in opposition to the *ipsissima verba* theory of interpretation. Says Dr. Musgrave, "I doubt whether a dozen men in our branch of the Church can be found who hold it." Says *The Presbyterian*, "We emphatically deny the purpose to hold them to the *ipsissima verba* theory." Tell us then, what the liberty is, and what ground it covers, which is untrammelled by the *ipsissima verba* theory, and yet which lies between that and the liberty "which does not impair the integrity of the Reformed or Calvinistic system." This last is the liberty of the Gurley clause, and we understand *The Presbyterian* as objecting to it. It denies the purpose to hold us to the *ipsissima verba* theory. We ask in all kindness and solely for the purpose of mutual understanding, to what liberty of interpretation are we invited in the proposed reunion? H. J.

### GREAT CHURCHES OF THE WORLD.

The great churches of the world are, first, the Roman Catholic, numbering 195,434,000; and the Russian Greek, numbering about 40,000,000; the remaining portions of the Greek and Eastern churches, probably 40,000,000 more, being too much broken up into sects and rival national churches to be here enumerated.

There are about twenty million Lutherans in Europe, but they are divided into as many national churches as there are petty German principalities or Scandinavian countries. From this vast population the Lutheran Church in America is receiving great accessions just now, by immigration, their increase last year having been eighteen thousand. The United Evangelical Church of Prussia, composed of the Reformed and Lutheran Churches united by the State, has a population of over eleven and a half millions of nominal adherents; besides two and a half millions in other German territories.

The Church of England, although nominally comprising the entire population, and supported by tithes drawn from the whole, now holds but a divided empire over the twenty millions of the population. None of the dissenting denominations can compare with her, however, in numbers, wealth, and influence. Her church accommodations are 5,317,915, and her estimated church-attendants are 3,773,475, while the accommodations of all the others combined amount to 4,894,648, and their estimated aggregate attendants to 3,487,556. Her membership is probably twelve to fifteen million, and her revenue from twenty-five to thirty millions of dollars in gold.

The Presbyterian Church stands among the great churches of the world, both in the number and character of the populations nominally embracing it. There are three and a half millions in Great Britain, principally in Scotland and Ireland, two millions in Holland, one and a half million in France, one and a half million in Protestant Switzerland, and two millions in Austria and Russia. In Canada, Australia, and the Dutch Colonies, there are possibly half a million more, and in this country fairly three millions of the population may be reckoned to the different Presbyterian branches; making a Presbyterian population in the world of fourteen millions, nearly one seventh of the entire Protestant population. If to these are added the fourteen millions of the United Evangelical Church of Prussia and the German States, which is Presbyterian in form, we should have a total of twenty-eight millions—the greatest numerical following of any of the Protestant forms of polity and belief. In the Established Church of Prussia, it is second to the Anglican, among organized denominations.

A Buddhist reformer has been crucified, in Burmah, by his enraged co-religionists.

### CURRENT TOPICS.

—A Wisconsin legislative committee has reported unanimously in favor of the re-enactment of the death penalty for murder.

—Only six of the seventy-two columns of last week's *Independent* can be called distinctively religious, these six being mainly items of intelligence. Mrs. Lydia M. Child and Wm. Lloyd Garrison are the leading contributors, between whom Rev. Ray Palmer's short article is sandwiched. There is no remote allusion to any religious topic in any one of the six editorials.

—The *N. W. Presbyterian* declares our Chicago correspondent's item about that paper being for sale, an "unauthorized statement." This is not the first "unauthorized statement" in regard to the sale of newspapers which has got abroad, as the columns of the *N. W. Presbyterian* itself will bear witness.

—The Pastors' Association, N. S., of this city, have appointed "Church Temperance Meetings" as the next topic for discussion, to be opened by Rev. Dr. Shepherd. Dr. S.'s church, on Buttonwood St., has kept up such a meeting every week for a year, with remarkable success, and it is hoped that as the result of the discussion, other churches will be induced to make a Temperance meeting part of their regular weekly or monthly services.

—The mayor and common council of the Democratic city of Detroit attended the funeral of the Romanist Bishop Le Fevre, and ordered the city offices closed in honor of the occasion. Did they do as much last summer on the occasion of the death of the eminently worthy and right reverend Presbyterian Bishop Duffield?—*Independent*.

What they did at the funeral of the good Presbyterian bishop we have forgotten; but on the occasion of his golden wedding, they passed congratulatory resolutions and were present in a body at the reception in the evening.

—Among the most marked indications of the advance of public sentiment in Italy beyond the dark and unscriptural positions of the dominant church, is the proposal of a young priest of Salerno to enter the marriage relation, and the manner in which the proposal was received by the people. The priest, without laying aside his hierarchical character, had entered upon an engagement with a young lady; but her father interfered and procured an order from the local magistrates, forbidding any civil officer from celebrating the marriage, on the ground that the man was in priests' orders. An appeal was taken to the Neapolitan Court, February 17th, where it excited the most intense interest. The government, it seems, through the Attorney General, took the side of the young priest, and the correspondent of the *London Times* says that the speech of this officer was "full of eloquence, and distinguished by the most liberal spirit. The acclamations were so frequent and fervid that it was difficult to follow the thread of the speech. At the end hats were lifted, vivas were shouted, and a universal clapping of hands ensued such as I have seen only in the enthusiastic audience of a theatre. Long and loud it continued; the demonstration was beyond the power of the priests to stop it, and numbers came up to congratulate and thank the Attorney-General." The Court has since declared that the opposition to the priest's marriage is inadmissible, and directs that the ceremony shall be proceeded with according to law.

In Mexico, we learn from the correspondence of the *Tribune* of last month, an ex-priest has been married by the civil magistrates to an ex-nun of Puebla.

—The translators of the Received Version, in 1 Cor. 14, 16 have omitted before "Amen" the definite article, which it has in the original. The passage reads: "How shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned, say 'Amen' at thy giving of thanks," instead of, "How shall he say 'the Amen'?" not an unimportant difference. The article conveys the idea of a prevalent custom, an established and recognized part of the worship of the primitive church. In Stanley's note on the verse, quoted by Dr. Poor, in his revision of Lange, we are told that in the early Christian liturgies it was regarded as a marked point in the service; it is spoken of as on a level with the thanksgiving, "the President having given thanks and the whole people having shouted their approbation. In latter times, the Amen was only repeated once by the congregation, and always after the great thanksgiving, and with a shout like a peal of thunder." Very tame does our participation in public worship appear in contrast with this thrilling outburst of manly devotion; very timorous the suppressed and decorous murmurs of an Episcopal congregation. Let us have "the Amen" back again, but let us have it in the stirring style of the primitive church.