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THE RE-UNION—SHALL IT BE NARROW OR COMPREHENSIVE?

There are two alternatives, both of a radical nature, one or the other of which must be distinctly recognized in any safe Re-union: it must be based upon complete harmony of sentiment; or, if that does not exist, it must be broad and generous enough to comprehend the differences as not conflicting with agreement in essentials. On the basis of a thorough and minute agreement in doctrine and polity, Re-union presents no problem for the wisdom, sagacity or patience of any one to solve. And this simple thing alone it is that some extremists believe to be proper or safe for the churches to undertake. Let those who agree come together—that is the extent of their re-union sentiment. To their minds, Calvinism is a system so compact and vital in all its parts, that it has scarcely a jot, or a tittle, or a nailing of speculation which can be dispensed with, without impairing its essence. There are others, who play into the hands of this class, by their anxiety to prove that the New School have abandoned their doctrinal peculiarities and come over to the positions of the Old School; or *vice versa*, that the Old School have softened their rigor and have substantially adopted the position of the New School. Thus the idea that Re-union proceeds on the ground of substantial identity of view, and that such identity is necessary to its success, is strengthened.

In our judgment, this is a false and dangerous position. It covers up important facts. It casts dishonor upon the history of both branches of the Church. It ignores great currents of opinion. Its tendency is to suppress, obliterate and confound things which are distinct, which ought to be distinct, and which it is a mark of moral cowardice or obtuseness not to recognize as distinct. And it degrades the notion of Christian and Protestant, no less than Presbyterian union, as something unpracticable without a dull dead level of uniformity in belief: a new Romanism on Protestant ground.

Let us cease the idle effort to persuade one another that we think alike; that all the recognized differences between the two schools are included in the little arc, within which the minute philosophers of Princeton and Allegheny believe Calvinists may oscillate without impairing the integrity of the system. Let us say clearly, intelligibly, union or no union, that we do not accept the realism of the Confession, or the Coecian gloss of the federal headship, which Princeton puts upon it; that while believing thoroughly in the Scriptural statements of a moral union between Adam and his posterity, we refuse to be bound by any theory of that union that is or has been current in the Church; that we repudiate all such notions of the nature of the fallen will of man, as must destroy his conscious responsibility, and convert him into a dead machine; that we would supplement the grave defects of our Confession of Faith, as was suggested in a celebration of the Centenary of its formation, in a meeting of Scotch divines over which Chalmers presided, by a clear declaration of that which is the very burden of the gospel, that Christ died in order truly to bring salvation within the reach of all men. While holding to the vicarious nature of Christ's sufferings and their relation to the attribute of divine justice, let it be clearly understood that we consider it presumptuous in any teacher or school of theology, to invade the sacred mystery of the atonement, with any philosophical theory of its nature and effect which is alone to be accepted as authoritative. Let it be understood, that as the fathers who framed the Confession did not believe that all wisdom died with Augustine and Calvin, but deemed themselves capable of doing a better work for their own day, so we cannot be brought to believe that all wisdom died with the Westminster Assembly of divines, and that within the clear, safe limits of the grand Scriptural system they taught, there have been, and still are going on, developments of opinion, quite as worthy of recognition as those which they put specifically on record. They themselves, as the New School men of their day, would doubtless be the first to reprove the blind exclusiveness of those who bind themselves to-day to the circle of their ideas.

Unity, uniformity,—that is the drift of those who wish the qualifying clauses of the First Article erased, and who cry out against the steadfastness of our Committee to the sentiment, while consenting to give up the words. Unity, uniformity,—that is the platform towards which those are willing to drift who on both sides ply

the work of extenuation, who cry out upon a frank exposition of differences as a disturbance of the peace, and who expect, in some favorable moment of good feeling, to carry through a union, in which all differences are ignored. Such a faulty union, if any, those who cannot trust their cause to the future, but must have it to-day or never, will obtain.

And some innate weakness there must be in him who condescends to victory
Such as the present gives, and cannot wait.

It is the honor of our branch of the Church that it has openly pursued the policy of comprehensiveness; that it has grown up fresh and elastic in the invigorating atmosphere of free opinions. Only last week, we saw and participated in the reception of a candidate for ordination, who did not believe it in any sense true that the sinner could repent; that he was absolutely impotent, and who knew nothing of the distinction between natural and moral inability. There was perhaps, not a single member of the Presbytery which voted unanimously to sustain him, but held to that distinction as of great importance; yet in the true spirit of Calvinistic comprehensiveness of our branch, he was received. If Re-union is to be on the basis of the comprehension of all the recognized types of Calvinism, our branch, and ours alone, is, and always has been, on Re-union ground. And it is ground that never should be surrendered; and the tenure of which should never for a moment be obscured in a haste for Re-union somehow or anyhow.

The "mutual confidence" basis of Re-union must be tested by reference to this phase of the matter: Is it mutual confidence in the oneness of each other's sentiments; or mutual confidence in each other's sentiments in spite of recognized differences? The first sort of mutual confidence is mutual veridancy. The second sort is manly and generous, and will never be caught shrinking nervously from the frank avowal of its opinion, such as was given in the rejected clauses of the First Article. This is the only sort of confidence which is worth a straw in the contemplated Re-union.

A Comprehensive Union, based upon the specific recognition of minor differences and liberties of interpretation within the circle of a general genuine Calvinism—that is our watchword, on the eve of this important meeting of the General Assemblies;—that or postponement of the whole subject to better times.

PEN PICTURES.

BY REV. PETER STRYKER, D.D.

NO. I. THE NON CHURCH-ATTENDANT.

He is not a Pagan or an Infidel. He is only a careless man, who works hard all the week to make money, and thinks he needs Sunday as a day of rest and recreation. On the week days he rises early, and without a word of thanks or petition to the God who has made and preserved him, he bolts down his breakfast, and flies off to his business. But on the Sabbath-day he sleeps late, rises slowly, eats long, and wrapped in his dressing gown, and delighting in his new slippers, he lights his cigar, stretches his limbs over a chair, and reads the Sunday newspaper.

The wife cannot go to church, because her husband expects to have a sumptuous dinner to-day. She must, as his slave, consider her body and soul are his, and devote herself to his wishes. Very likely some of his boon companions are expected, and there must be a grand display as well as a bountiful supply upon the table. Conscience tells her this is not quite right, but she is only a woman, and of course her opinions upon such matters are not to be consulted. She must submit to her lord and master. He is the head of the household, and his word, nay his wish is law. Duty to God and herself, must be a secondary consideration.

And how about the children? Well, the baby is dandled for a few moments on papa's knee, and then with little Tom, the second baby, is sent up into the nursery. The older children, to get them out of mamma's way, and keep them from tormenting papa with their noise, are sent to Sabbath-school with the permission to stay to church, if they want to. Blessed children! may they learn a better way than that pursued by their inconsiderate parents!

Dinner time comes. The expected guests have arrived. Without a word of devout acknowledgment, but with a deal of fashionable ceremony, strangely commingled with jokes and repartee, the hour passes,—very likely an hour of gluttony and dissipation.

After dinner a game of cards must be indulged in. "The better the day, the better the deed." And then the carriage comes, and mine host with his friend takes a ride to the Park. We do not lift the curtain any farther to see the Sabbath breakers trying the speed of their horses by the way, or stopping at some "Gem" for a drop of good cheer.

Of course, after this round of gaiety the head of the household is too weary to attend evening service. Even the dramatic performances of Rev. Mr. Dashaway, who preaches just around the corner, cannot attract him. He is weary and must retire early, that he may be well rested for the coming week's duties. Thus life glides away, and God is forgotten; the interests of the soul are unheeded, and the influence which might be powerful for good is all averse to piety, and given to Satan and the world.

How many there are who answer to this picture! My next neighbor is one of this sort. A very clever man he is, affable and pleasant in his social bearing, but he is not interested in religious matters. What can I do to change his mind in this particular? Perhaps, reader, you know of many men; who answer to this description. They form a very large class in the community. Some of these careless people live in the country, but not many of them. The social habits of people who reside in our rural districts where religion prevails, is such that a man, to be respectable, must have his pew in church, and himself attend at least occasionally. But not so in our large cities. There, people may lose themselves quite easily in a crowd, and each one does in this particular, as he pleases.

It is an interesting question, why there are so many moral and respectable people in our cities, who call in the clergyman to weddings and funerals, but never frequent the house of God? High pew rents may sometimes account for it, but not always. When these people are interested, they will pay a good price for the gospel as well as for concerts and balls, and other amusements. We feel quite confident that the free pew system would not attract them. This would be too common, and might bring them into society they would not relish. The secret of it is *carnal feeling*. They are indifferent to religious matters, and need to be educated to new habits.

This devolves upon all God's people a great responsibility. Would they could see it, and feel it! Sermons, and tracts, and Bibles, and newspaper articles will not reach these people, simply because they do not read them or hear them. What is required is; that Christian neighbors shall lay aside their various excuses, and courageously, prudently, persistently use their influence personally with those who are non-church-attendants, and persuade them to accompany them to the house of God. It can be done. Those who shake the head at this declaration, probably have never tried to exert this happy influence. If they have, and have failed, let them try it again. Let them have faith and perseverance in this, as they have in other matters of no half the importance, and they will be sure to succeed. Let them mingle prayer with Christian effort, and He who turns the hearts of men as he does the rivers of waters, may give them their earnest desire.

Try it, dear brother or sister! It may cost you an effort, perhaps a great effort; but that effort will enlarge your own heart, develop your Christian character, add much to your pious enjoyment, encourage your minister, strengthen the Church, and may save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins. Of this you may be sure, it will glorify God, and thus accomplish the great end of your being.

THE NEW CHRISTIANITY'S LESSON TO THE OLD.

There has been a strong impression abroad, for several years, that the newly gathered churches among the heathen were exceeding those at the old centres, in the practical fruits of their Christian consecration; but it has been reserved to a furloughed missionary from Broosa, Turkey, Rev. J. K. Greene, to put the comparison into the form of exact statement, which he has recently done in *The Advance*. It appears that there are in Asia Minor precisely the same number of Evangelical churches as there are Congregational churches in Minnesota—sixty-three; while in the Minnesota churches there are, in the aggregate, only ninety-nine more members than in those in Asia Minor: 2,865, and 2,766 being the numbers respectively. The first fact in his statement that strikes us is, that while only five of these Minnesota churches have pastors, thirty-six of those in Turkey are thus supplied. Second and still more remarkable fact: While only eight of the Minnesota churches are self-supporting, twenty-one of those in Turkey are.

Our denominational divisions have much to do with the figures thus far. In a new and rapidly developing country, and where Christianity is the acknowledged religion, denominational rivalry, leading to such meagre results at first, must be allowed, in the hope that the results will be grander in the end. If Congregationalists and N. S. Presbyterians were united in Minnesota, and if they alone had the field, as in Asia Minor,

the figures would be far more impressive. But by what line of argument shall we extenuate the force of the comparisons which follow? We confess ourselves at a loss for any other explanation than the superior quality of the Christianity of these lately-reclaimed half-idolatrous Armenians. The total of contributions of the sixty-three Minnesota churches for general and home purposes, during 1868, reduced to a gold standard, is put at \$15,536 by Mr. Greene. Those of the Turkish churches for 1867, in gold, were \$13,055.

By a careful estimate it is ascertained that the average value of property, per family, in the Congregational societies of Minnesota is \$3,568. On the other hand, the average value of the property of Protestant families in Turkey is not more than \$400. Again, the average income of the first named families, reduced to gold, is \$550; that of the Turkish Protestant families, \$250.

Judging the gifts of these new converts by the value of their property, they give eight or nine times as much, in proportion, as do the old established Christians of Minnesota; judged by their annual income, they give twice as much. The comparison with the thirty-six churches comprising the Synod of Minnesota (N. S.), in May, 1868, is somewhat more favorable to the American Christians: These churches containing 1956 members, contributed \$21,500 to all purposes, say \$15,000 in gold, or nearly \$8 per member during the year. The Congregationalists gave a trifle over \$5, and the Armenian converts a trifle less than \$5 each, in gold. The average contributions of all the members of the Presbyterian churches, of both schools, last year, were about \$11 each, in gold. The average annual income of the families of those comparatively wealthy churches must be quadruple that of the Armenian converts, and the net result of the calculation is, that proportionately these converts of half a generation, give twice as much as ourselves, whose ancestors were converted to Christianity a thousand years ago!

CURRENT TOPICS.

—The Prussian journals state that a Protestant jubilee is to be held next Autumn at Berlin, as a sort of counterpoise to the Ecumenical Council at Rome.

—Excellent service has been done by *Harper's Weekly*, for Protestantism, in the recent discussions upon convent life in England. By skillfully designed and finely executed engravings, the contrast between the ideal and the real life of the nunnery, and between its unnatural loneliness and the beauty of domestic life has been effectively set forth. We rejoice that the popular illustrated press is put to such good uses, especially when we think of its frequent gross perversions.

—Column after column of the secular papers of Rochester and Lockport are devoted to accounts of Mr. Hammond's meetings, with full reports of his remarks on the Scriptures and sketches of his sermons. The printing of the poems which he recites, for example the long one entitled, "No sect in heaven," creates an immense demand for the papers containing them. In one of his meetings, in Lockport, Mr. Hammond declared that the Rochester *Evening Express* had been the means of a great revival in Iowa through the printing of religious intelligence.

—The O. S. Presbytery of California has passed resolutions warmly expressing sympathy and approbation towards our Presbytery of San Jose, in regard to the trial and deposition of Mr. Hamilton of Oakland. The California correspondent of the *Congregationalist* mentions Rev. David McClure and Prof. Durant, of Oakland College, as among those giving countenance to Mr. Hamilton.

—Mr. Barnes' Commentary on the Psalms is now published complete, in three volumes by Messrs. Harper & Brothers, New York. We give the closing paragraph of the work, reserving fuller comment to another occasion:

"I cannot close this work without emotion. I cannot lay down my pen at the end of this long task, without feeling that with me the work of life is nearly over. Yet I could close it out in no better place than in finishing the Exposition of *this* book; and the language with which the Book of Psalms closes seem to me to be eminently appropriate to all that I have experienced. All that is past,—all in the prospect of what is to come, calls for a long, a joyful and a triumphant HALLELUJAH."

—Singularly enough, while we were writing our inquiry in regard to the *status* of Dr. Wadsworth in the reunited Church, in view of his denunciations of the doctrine of Limited Atonement, the wires were carrying to our city the doctor's affirmative to a call from a church of another denomination, in some respects more rigid and old-fashioned than his own—the Reformed (Dutch). Encouraged by a number of

his friends, the church, worshipping at the corner of Tenth and Filbert streets, sent him the call which he promptly accepted, and the distinguished and eloquent preacher is perhaps already on his way by steamer to the East. The benefit to the struggling church of his pulpit labors will be great, but the whole Reformed Church will be advantaged by receiving a divine whose published sentiments are so far from doctrinal rigidity or narrowness.

—Various indications of serious interest in the relations of unemployed ministers and vacant churches will be found in our Religious Intelligence, but we cannot see any encouraging advance in the solution of the problem involved; i. e., how to bring the parties interested together. The Presbytery of Luzerne (O. S.), proposes a more vigorous supervision and a holding of ministers and churches responsible to the Presbytery; a course which the Third Presbytery is endeavoring to pursue. And we believe there is not a vacant or unsupplied pulpit in the Third Presbytery, so that if there are unemployed ministers on its roll, the Presbytery can do nothing for them. The subject deserves much study. A Sustentation Fund is needed. A Church Extension spirit is needed by Presbyteries and unemployed ministers. A Bureau of Exchange, gathering up and classifying facts drawn from every part of the Church and acting as the agent of both parties is conceivable, but whether feasible or not, is quite a different question. It is a perplexing case, but we believe as times improve, the difficulties will much diminish.

—A correspondent at the State Capital writes: "Your late editorial—'A steady hand at the helm'—meets the views of all good men who have watched the course of a Legislature that will live only as notorious for corruption and its shameless prostitution to the worst classes and passions of society. If, as is intimated in a late number of the *N. Y. Evangelist*, the Legislature at Albany has exceeded our own in badness, it can only be accounted for by its greater ability. Good men stand confounded and horror-stricken at the course of our Legislators. They know not where to turn for relief. It was long supposed that the Senate was possessed of a dignity and self-respect that would save the commonwealth from public shame. It is not so. The evening sessions have been disgraced by public drunkenness of senators. Corruption is believed to be as full grown there as anywhere. Good men there are in both branches, but they have been overborne by the venality, cunning and skill of others. The Legislature has been notorious as a great Divorce Court, where all the scandals of unhappy marriages were publicly ventilated to the amusement of our law-makers. It is sincerely wished by many that the Legislature could be convened but once in three years. We should hope then for some diminution of public vices."

—The administration under which we are living will be famous in history, as the first which gave practical proof of the overthrow of prejudice against color, by the appointment of a black man to any civil office of trust and emolument in the national service. It is a startling instance of the retributions which have come so thick and fast in our day, that Charles M. Wilder, but six years ago, or less, a South Carolina slave, worth fifteen hundred dollars on the auction-block, should now hold the office of Postmaster in the capital city of that proud State, with a salary of \$3,200 a year. At the same session in which Mr. Wilder was confirmed, one other colored man was confirmed as assessor in Louisiana, and a third as justice of the peace in the District of Columbia. Mr. E. D. Bassett, Principal of the Colored High School of this city, has received the appointment of Minister to Hayti. At the same time, the President has shown the comprehensiveness of his regards, by appointing the ex-rebel General Longstreet, who since the war has been an earnest and consistent Union man, Collector of the Port of New Orleans, and by nominating an ex-rebel Colonel of Alabama to be Governor of New Mexico. A keen sense of justice too seems to have suggested the appointment of Mr. Hoare as Attorney-General, he being the son of Samuel Hoare, who went as agent of Massachusetts to Charleston to remonstrate against the confinement of one of her citizens in the jail of that city merely on account of his color, and who was driven off by a mob at the peril of his life. Right bitter are the dregs of the cup of oppression. The administration by simply conforming its policy to the great principles of justice, are the scarcely conscious instruments of recording some of the most striking lessons of Providence.

Rev. Moseley H. Williams, of the 2d Cong. church, goes to Grand Avenue chapel, Brooklyn.