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RE-UNION—THE PLAN OF 1869.

In the discussions on this topic, we have regarded ourselves as set for the defence of liberty. Not that we have been concerned for nothing else. But it has plainly fallen to others to care for other interests—as that of orthodoxy; and in these days, no principle is better understood, than that of division of labor. In looking at the new plan, we shall not deviate from the course hitherto followed, and shall examine it in its bearings upon the interest, in Providence, more especially committed to our hands.

If good evidence of the existence in the other branch, of an answering sentiment of liberty within the bounds of orthodoxy, had not been given last May at New York, judging from the appearance of things in influential quarters of our Church, the re-union movement, at that time, would have met its *coup de grace*.

That principle had been recognized in both of the previous plans of Re-union; the defeat of both and the failure to secure recognition of our Committee's amended plan, evincing, as it seemed, inveterate hostility to the liberal principle, had roused all the liberal spirit of our body, and every one of our weekly journals had a tone of decided disaffection to the whole project. A large number of the answers of our Presbyteries indicated similar feelings. Under these circumstances, the brethren of the other side, when their Assembly convened, promptly renewed the offer of negotiations. The conferences which followed between leading and cautious brethren on both sides, to the surprise of all, resulted in establishing most conclusively what had just been matter of the gravest doubt,—that a plan of Union, on the whole satisfactory to liberal men, could be secured; that leading Old School men fully knew our doctrinal position as still substantially what it was thirty years ago, and that the spirit of their body was such, as to set at rest all suspicion of a purpose or tendency to make of the Re-union, an instrument of persecution or disturbance in any shape or form.

The Plan of Re-union of 1869 embraces

(1) A Preamble and Concurrent Declarations adopted, we may say, unanimously by both Assemblies. The Preamble gives as a reason for the Re-union, the similarity of both bodies, "each recognizing the other as a sound and orthodox body, according to the principles of the Confession of Faith common to both." The Concurrent Declarations embrace ten points of administration, which are thus solemnly adjudged to be settled by the two Assemblies. By these articles, all ministers are admitted to an equal standing in the united body, with that held before the union. Plan of union churches are advised to become Presbyterian, with far less appearance of compulsion than in last year's plan. No rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies, is binding upon either. Churches are left free to cast their contributions where they wish; Publications are to be revised, not on the principle of Old and New Schoolism, but that of the exclusion of invidious reference to past controversies. Old School Seminaries come under the control of the united Assembly, unless they prefer the control of Synods, while ours are merely advised to put themselves into stricter ecclesiastical connections.

These mere declarations of two Assemblies are no guarantee of liberty or of anything else, but they are real indices of the state of opinion in the bodies. The orthodoxy and soundness of the body are recognized in which liberty notoriously prevailed; they are recognized at a time when that liberty was more openly asserted than in any previous Assembly, and at a time when it was frankly preached to the Old School, in their own Assembly, with the Addisonian grace and Attie wit, of the very cautious pastor of Madison Square church. There is no guarantee here, save a moral one. There is the plain historical fact that such a guarantee was defeated twice over, and that Re-union is to be accomplished in the acknowledged impossibility of retaining any explicit recognition of liberty, as proposed in the Gurley clause. At the same time, the tenth article utterly disappears, and the other branch go into the Re-union conscious of a loss of the power which the solemn announcement of the right of examination would have given.

(2) As to the basis itself: it fairly implies liberty though it does not name it. The Confession is put below the Bible; its sincere reception in the future is spoken of as a continuous historical fact, equally true of both bodies, although the refusal of our body to bind men to all its technical terms, modes and propositions, is perfectly notorious. The declarations made in the last As-

sembly, and in theirs by our men and their own are full, clear and unmistakable. They have gone into print, and they must weigh in any case of doctrine that may arise in the future. The declaration that our Standards are to be accepted as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures of course is something very different from a claim that our standards perfectly, adequately, and in all respects reflect the teachings of Scripture. It means, that they, as a whole, embody in a systematic manner, the general doctrinal purport of the Scriptures. What is the main drift of Scripture, what can be fairly made out of Scripture in great doctrinal outline, what can be clearly proven, to a Calvinistically inclined thinker, to be a leading Bible principle, and the concatenation of these in a system, are more exactly set forth in our Confession, and in kindred Calvinistic symbols, than in any other Church Confessions. We are not bound to everything in the Confession—it contains the System of the Bible; there is nothing to show that the church regards it as containing absolutely that and nothing else. Room for dissent from parts of the Confession as not in the Bible, as in subordinate details not adequately representing the Bible, as not essential to the completeness of the system taught in the Bible, there manifestly is;—not room of course for variation from plain fundamentals of the Calvinistic system; no one for a moment wishes the door put ajar for that.

The great principle of diversity of views, of elasticity within certain reasonable limits, is we think fairly implied in this language—all the better for being the language of the Standards itself; and thanks are due to those who brought into prominence and open recognition this form of expression in our book, the spirit of which has been so persistently ignored by the rigid party. It is a form unknown in Scotland and Ireland. It shows that American Presbyterianism itself involves that, for which we have contended; that we are under the very letter as well as spirit of the Book, that New School, in these controversies about liberty, is Old School, and that Old School is something new on our soil.

But who is to mark limits and define fundamentals? The basis does not do it. Dr. Hodge allows some liberty; how do we know that his *ipse dixit*, or that of some other high Calvinist teacher or school will not be made the outside limit of free thought?

No definite answer can be given to these questions. The Basis leaves them untouched. It simply makes very prominent the fact that nothing like an *ipsissima verba* subscription is required. It takes up the methods of subscription now in vogue in both bodies, sanctions them, and transmits them to the future. The two bodies formally recognize each other as sound and orthodox, as they complete the measures for Re-union. In 1868, the O. S. Assembly recognized the Auburn Declaration as a fair statement of New School doctrine, and as embracing all the fundamentals of the Calvinistic system. These things indicate the prevailing spirit of that body. Dr. Patterson, of Chicago is satisfied with it as thus exhibited. The fact that it could not be more distinctly and explicitly embodied in the Basis, ominous as for a time it seemed of future trouble and of a general condition of defencelessness of N. S. men, lost nearly all its significance, in view of the abundant proofs, otherwise given, of the existence of a genuine, powerful spirit of liberty within their body. The truth is, we lack definite guarantees for its continued existence in our own body; and we trust, in the New School branch, not to an altered Confession, but to the permanence of the historic spirit of our body; and how long may that last, with all our theological Seminaries teaching a pretty fair orthodox Old School system, so as to command the applause of Old School men?

The union may even save liberty from perishing through New School supineness. The agitations through which we have gone, have brought out, have actually stimulated, the growth of these liberal sentiments among us, and have procured declarations from leading men, which, ten years hence, might have become quite impossible in a separate N. S. Church. The junction of the liberal elements in both branches may result in elevating the liberal consciousness to be a ruling characteristic of the whole body, to a degree never really enjoyed in our own. If then, we admit, as it seems we must, that the New School Church, the only extant specimen of a truly orthodox Calvinistic church of the Presbyterian name which distinctly recognizes different doctrinal views as within the limits of orthodoxy, disappears and dies, the probability is that it dies as a grain of corn when planted, soon to rise in a broader and more effective sphere. Its death may, in Providence, prove its only deliverance from annihilation; its necessary road to immortality.

Certainly, the distinctively Old School Church also dies. The Church which excided us, negotiates with us now upon terms of the most unquestioned equality, as a great, true, sound and orthodox body. The Church that spewed Albert Barnes out of her mouth, comes to the Church that holds him in the highest honor, and takes the initiative in movements for Union with us and with him. The Church that was governed by Princeton, sets Princeton at naught in her Assemblies, and consents to put Princeton under the control of the united Assembly, to which our Seminaries will owe no such jurisdiction. The Church that was shamefully, and, as it seemed, thoroughly corrupted by the virus of pro-slavery, toned down to the dearest conservatism, and silenced on all the great moral questions of the day, after putting some of the broadest declarations of loyal anti-slavery sentiment upon its records, commenced to seek alliance with one of the most advanced, outspoken and radical bodies in the land—ourselves. The Church that somehow gained the repute of being the pink of orthodoxy, and whose Board of Publication has been issuing partizan books against the New School, down to *Hodge on the Atonement*, now moves to a union with a body whose last General Assembly echoed with declarations of sympathy with Barnes and Bernan, and submits to having its catalogue of books revised "so as to exclude invidious references to past controversies."

The great, supercilious, arrogant, rigid, conservative, persecuting Old School Church is no more. Already at Albany last year tears were shed over its yawning grave. The tenth article, with which the flood of New Schoolism was to be dammed out of its Presbyteries, is swept away. Nothing, absolutely nothing, remains as a defence or a protest against the "heresies" of the New School in the basis of Reunion. Reunion with us is a corollary, not from the failure of Reunion with the South, but from the publicly and solemnly admitted fact stated in the preamble to the basis, that we are a sound and orthodox body. That is the logical form of Reunion, and distinctive Old Schoolism, as a ruling principle, dies just there. Whether it will rise again for another struggle with the risen liberalism of the New School, we dare not predict.

But we do not predict a great uprising for work, a great widening of plans, a great accession of courage, a great thrill of inspiration, and a great panic in the ranks of the enemy, when two so great branches of the army of Christ, so unaturally sundered, swing together 420,000 strong. The devil will stand aghast to see his work of '37 and '48 so completely undone. The world will have a certain sense of lost ground recovered, and of forward movement made by the Church of Christ. Divided forces, divided counsels and plans, divided sympathies will be made one. Stumbling blocks will be removed from those, who could not understand different theologies, much less different schools of different theologies, in the one Church that claims to be from God. It will be keenly felt by the great mass, that the happy accomplishment of such a movement, so large and shining an illustration of the power of charity, is signal proof of the divine favor and of the unwonted presence of the Holy Spirit. It will be interpreted as a call for an advance of the whole line, and a pledge of triumph; as the signal for the opening of some new seal of prophecy; the one accord preliminary to a new Pentecost; and it will stimulate energy, quicken faith and prayer, enlarge enterprise, open the fountains of beneficence, inspire hope in bearing the cross, and bring on an age of activity in Christ's kingdom that will leave minute metaphysicians and theologians, as mere camp followers and stragglers, ignominiously in the rear. The great object of thought will be a personal living Christ, around which a new and living theology will reconstruct itself, in brief and ringing creeds, when the cumbrous confessions of today are sharing the decay of the physical frames of those who wrought them out:

"The Knights are dust,
Their good swords are rust,
Their souls are with the saints we trust."

In our opinion, the N. S. Church should enter this union cordially, heartily, enthusiastically, as no more an Old School than our movement; as 'saving what is important in our principles, as holding out no prospect of embarrassments of which we need be afraid; as an endorsement by the whole Church of our trusted leaders, our generous methods of subscription, our love of justice and boldness in grappling with wrong in the individual and the State, our devotion to the interests of Christ's Kingdom, especially as involved in our country's destiny; as in fact putting the whole Church, with its methods of thinking and working, in a position where old things pass away and behold all things become new.

LINCOLN UNIVERSITY.

There are, we suppose, still remaining, some doubters of the capacity of the African race for the higher forms of culture and for elevated positions of usefulness. To most persons, however, it will be no great surprise to hear of the entire success of the late commencement exercises of Lincoln University, or to be told that higher indications of mental ability, diligent and well directed study, and genuine manliness and nobility of character can scarcely be seen upon any similar occasion, among the youth of the reputed superior white race.

The exercises were held on Wednesday of last week, upon grounds adjacent to the University, under a spacious awning. A thousand persons were probably present during the day. Two carloads of Philadelphians ventured the long and tedious ride, over the crookedest road in Pennsylvania, except, perhaps, the Catawissa, and the slowest except that, or those from York to Gettysburg. Among the ministers on board were Mr. Barnes, Drs. Shepherd, Parsons, W. W. Taylor, Geo. Hood, Mears, Work, McCauley, (O. S.), and Malcom, (Baptist). A good number of well known laymen, with members of their families—those whose presence cheers the workers in every good undertaking—were in the company. Members of the North Broad St. Church, whose former pastor, Rev. Dr. Adams, is one of the honored professors of the institution, were there in force.

The Commencement exercises were introduced with singing, and prayer, by President Rendall. The Latin Salutatory was announced, and there responded to the name, William H. Miller, of Kentucky, a creature about a yard high, whose entire growth since early childhood seemed to have been in the region of the brain. Supported on crutches, this crippled African came forward, moving with real dignity, deliberateness and grace; and in well chosen words and without trepidation, went through his brief Latin Salutatory to the faculty, trustees, students and audience, turning, coolly from one to the other, and retiring in seemingly perfect unconsciousness of anything singular in the proceeding. Such a triumph over a combination of difficulties we have never seen; and it made a profound impression at the very opening of the services. Mr. Miller has been under the care of one of the Declaration and Testimony Presbyteries, by whom he was sent to the institution; but he is now under appointment of our Committee as a missionary to his people at Maryville, E. Tennessee.

Great and genuine wit and imagination were displayed in the Mathematical oration by Jacob Nocho, of this State. The presence of Mathematical Law and relations in every part of the universe, from the fixed stars to the grains of sand on the seashore was well illustrated; why should they not hold good in more spiritual circumstances? Angels might well employ some mathematical calculations, some celestial trigonometry in ascertaining the position of our world to guide them on their visits hither! The oration of Mr. P. B. Gipson, also of Pennsylvania, upon "The Congress of the United States,"—its nature, powers, great men of former times and its recent eminent services for freedom, was composed and delivered with such force, spirit and genuine oratorical ability as would have graced a high position in either House at Washington. Did space permit, we could speak in sincere praise of every one of the ten orations. Every one present concurred in recognizing their universally high character, and the unquestionable superiority in oratorical endowments of these speakers, as compared with a similar number of white youths, on like occasions. There was such entire composure, such an absence of anything merely declamatory, such good taste in taking their own improved condition as a matter of course, instead of that spread-eagle style of self-congratulation that might have been expected,—in short such manliness, scholarship and piety as at once to reflect credit on the individuals, their race, and their excellent corps of instructors in the University. After the conferring of the degree of Bachelor of Arts upon the fourteen graduates, and the excellent valedictory, a recess was taken.

In the afternoon a greater company than before was assembled. Two finely executed portraits in oil, by Mr. J. R. Lambdin, of Mr. Lincoln and of Thaddeus Stevens were presented to the University by Mr. Francis of our city. General Gregory, to whom our readers need no introduction, with great propriety represented the donor, and made a brief presentation speech. Hon. Geo. W. Townsend, representative from the district in which the University is located, replied in behalf of the Trustees. Then, a sable undergraduate was introduced. His speech cannot be better described than as fully corresponding to the demand of the occasion. All the gratitude, joy and hope of an emancipated race, thrilling with the great

prospects of freedom and education, which their benefactors, Lincoln and Stevens, had opened before them, found fit expression in the impassioned words of the young Ethiopian. Amazement and delight prompted the prolonged applause amid which he closed. Rev. C. C. Alvord, Superintendent of Freedmen's Schools, was now called upon as representing Gen. Howard, one of the Trustees, who was necessarily absent. Mr. A. called the attention of the audience to the great significance of the services of to-day. This is the first regular graduating class of the Institution—and in fact the first graduating class of the first collegiate institution for colored youth in the country. These young men are the pioneers of this great movement for liberally educating the freedmen. To-day this ship has been launched. Amid such stirring and appropriate words of counsel and cheer the exercises drew to a close. We are sure the visitors will not soon forget the impressions received, or early cease to mingle with their daily prayers, benedictions upon Lincoln University.

—A meeting was held last Thursday evening to organize lay preaching in the Baptist churches.

—Ten more Methodist churches of this city have voted for Lay Delegation, the aggregate vote being 1126 for to 65 against.

—Mr. E. Deutsch, of the British Museum, author of that article on "The Talmud" in the *Quarterly Review*, which attracted great attention last year, was sent to examine the explorations in Jerusalem, and has returned to London. *The Athenaeum* says: "Mr. Deutsch has deciphered the inscriptions of the 'great stones' of the Temple platform, and finds them to be Phœnician masons' marks. Thus, we have an end of all doubts as to the original builders of that side of the Temple wall. They were of the age of Solomon, and probably the craftsmen of Hiram, King of Tyre. Mr. Deutsch has also recovered the lost letters of the Maccabean Hebrew alphabet."

—Matters in Spain wear a less auspicious look. Serrano has been made regent,—that is, he is virtual king, until some one is actually chosen to occupy the throne. Thus, a monarchical form of government seems to be assured. Of itself this need not be a matter of serious concern. Gen. Serrano, although formerly a favorite of Isabella, is a statesman of liberal sympathies. The partisans of Isabella receive no countenance from the government. But the intolerant tone of semi-official declarations in regard to the Republicans, the proposal to make the utterance of Republican cries in the streets a penal offence, the actual arrest of the President of a Republican club in Cadiz for making a speech against the Regent, the declaration of Prim in the Cortes, last Friday, that the government must be hard, inflexible and even cruel, in repressing disorder, all point to the conclusion that the authorities do not appreciate the excellent temper shown by their own people during the revolution, and have not learned the magnanimity which freely allows the expression of dissentient opinion on matters of public interest. It is not unlikely that the regency will have a stormy time.

—The war of the organized working men of the country against the negro still continues. The white working-men under government employ, who might be expected heartily to sympathize with all movements for the enfranchising of the negro, give sad proof that they too are under the control of the spirit of caste. Following the unworthy example of the National Typographical Union at Albany, the Union of Washington City, by a vote of 229 to 164, rejected a report recommending young Douglass to membership. The Bricklayers' Union of the same city has gone further, and has expelled six of its members for persisting in working with two colored bricklayers at the Navy Yard. We blush to think that our American workingmen, at this day, are attempting to perform the worn-out part of oppressor of the black race, and are banding together to shut any one out of honest employment, because of the accidents of color or race. We warn them of the truth, that has been so terribly illustrated in the last few years, that the Almighty has no attribute that sympathizes with such injustice. The surest way for these Unions to prove themselves enemies of the working classes, to confirm all the unreasonable prejudices of other classes of society against them, and to write their own doom, is to attempt to ostracise men whom the laws of the land recognize as citizens, as eligible to the bench and the bar, and as fit for offices of trust and power, in both the home and foreign departments of the government. Better make a virtue of necessity, Messrs. Printers and Bricklayers! Your majority reports and resolutions cannot mop out the deluge.