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John A. Weir

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—In 1800 the Methodists of our city numbered one to every 412 of our population; in 1810 one in 59; in 1820 one in 43; in 1830 one in 33; in 1840 one in 25; in 1850 one in 38; and in 1860 one in 45. Since 1840 they had (and perhaps have) been losing ground relatively, while actually gaining in numbers.

—In St. Mary's street, Philadelphia, there was a Mission Sabbath school, in the midst of a very poor population, and the children were very irregular in their attendance, came late, and often came hungry. So a refreshment room was opened in the rear of the chapel, and the children were invited to come there half an hour before the Sabbath school. The first Sabbath, more than one hundred boys and girls came together, and were first of all provided with breakfast.—*The Congregationalist (Boston).*

[This school is carried on by members of the First R. P. church in the place where their congregation once worshipped. Its ordinary expenses are paid by Mr. Geo. H. Stuart, whose eldest son—the late William D. Stuart—was once the superintendent. Mr. Jas. Grant, of the James B. Rodgers-Printing Co., is now superintendent. The design is to gather a colored church as a memorial to the first superintendent. The expense of the plan above described is very trifling, and is defrayed by the friends of the school in the congregation.]

—We have always insisted that the clear implications, if not the open declarations, of the Basis of Reunion made it a truly and safely liberal document. Proofs of the correctness of this opinion are numerous to the discerning eye. The only opposition to the Basis comes from the more rigid party. Dr. Hodge's position of antagonism as maintained in the last number of the *Princeton Review*; the want of unanimity in the votes of the Old School Presbyteries, approving the Basis, as contrasted with the invariably unanimous votes of those of the New School; the negative vote of three Old School Presbyteries, reveal to us, with the certainty of an instinct, the fundamental character of the document. *The Northwestern Presbyterian*, the leading opponent of every liberal movement towards Reunion, is dead, and its list was merged in that of *The Presbyterian* of this city, a few weeks after the adjournment of the Assembly. Its late editor, Dr. Erskine, we are pleased to say, is still living. Two weeks ago, in company with a couple of others, like-minded with himself, he voted in his (Chicago) Presbytery against the Basis of Reunion. Thus the late editor of the late *Northwestern* is a useful man still. His light is no longer on a candlestick, but it shines to the best of its ability, and aids still in illuminating the liberal sentiment of the Basis. Every such vote from the exclusive side, increases the sense of safety of liberal men in the united body. Every editor of the AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN has voted or will vote, AYE, in his Presbytery, on the adoption of the Basis.

THE AMERICAN BOARD AND THE REUNION.

During the present week the American Board is holding its annual meeting in the city of Pittsburgh. It will be followed, in a few weeks, by the sessions of the two General Assemblies in the same city. The coincidence is worthy of note. Thirty-three years previously, the one General Assembly, about to be divided into two, met in the same city. Among the exciting topics which occupied that body during its session of three weeks and one day, was the relation of the Presbyterian Church to this same American Board. A long report on the transfer of the Western Foreign Missionary Society to the General Assembly was introduced early in the session. It was put in the hands of a committee, who, in due time, reported to the effect, that the General Assembly was bound by previous action to take charge of this society, and proposed that the Assembly should immediately appoint a Foreign Board to be located in New York city. From this report Dr. Skinner, a member of the committee, dissented and made a counter report. It is brief and, we think, worthy of quotation at this point.

WHEREAS, The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions has been connected with the Presbyterian Church from the year of its incorporation, by the very elements of its existence; and whereas, at the present time, the majority of the whole of the Board are Presbyterians; and whereas, as it is undesirable, in conducting the work of Foreign Missions, that there should be any collision at home or abroad; therefore,

Resolved, That it is inexpedient that the Assembly should organize a separate Foreign Missionary Institution.

An effort was made to throw the whole subject out of the Assembly by a motion to postpone, which was defeated by one majority in 267 votes. At this stage, the case of Mr. Barnes

came up, and was continued, almost to the entire exclusion of other forms of business, until his appeal was sustained. The subject of Foreign Missions was then resumed; finally the proposal to accept the Western Society was voted down by four majority in a vote of 216. In this transaction we have one of the most influential causes of the disruption which followed in the next year.

The spirit of division which was then near its height has passed away. Pittsburg, which, thirty-three years ago, beheld the preliminaries of a disruption almost ripe, will soon behold the preliminaries of a Re-union equally ripe. And just at this point, the American Board appears again upon the scene. It reminds us both how great and how little have been the changes since that time. The decided changes are obvious and need not be dwelt upon here. The feelings of the New School Church towards the American Board are among the things which have undergone the least change. The minority report offered by Dr. Skinner, in the Assembly of 1836, with the exception of the clause describing the denominational character of the Board, represents the feelings of the great mass of the New School Church of to-day. We say this, in the full recollection of the complaints which we have heard, for which have been uttered in our columns, in regard to the ecclesiastical policy of the Board. In spite of all dissatisfaction, the affection of the New School people for this institution continues to be so strong, that they contemplate the possible sundering of the ties uniting them to the Board, with almost unqualified regret. In every other field of labor—Home Missions, Education, Publication, etc.—the New School Church have learned to work denominationally, and to that extent have surrendered the principle of co-operation for which they contended thirty-three years ago; in regard to the American Board and its work, they seem to have made no progress worth mentioning in that direction. In the entire home field, they have found that they can do more and better work for the Master by the separate use of their ecclesiastical machinery, than in connection with other denominations. They will go heartily and with little need of readjustment into joint labors with their Old School brethren, in every department of home work. So far, the joint experience of the two bodies is harmonious and conclusive.

But in regard to the Foreign field, where the Old School Church alone has tried the experiment of separate denominational action, the results are by no means so decisive. After thirty-three years of this sort of effort, what have the Old School Church to show? Their receipts have not been meagre. From a membership of about 258,000, they last year acknowledged receipts of \$338,360, an increase of \$50,000 on the year before. During the past eight years they have received within a fraction of two millions of dollars. Their financial management has been among the most rigorously economical known to our great benevolent societies. They have over 170 American, and over 200 native laborers employed. Their Missions are organized into Presbyteries and Synods in conjunction with the General Assembly, and their native churches have elders and Church sessions. The system is beautifully complete. But if the number of converts is any test of success—and who shall say it is not a leading test?—the thirty-three years' experiment of the Old School Church cannot be called successful in any flattering degree. The report of last May showed but 1750 members in connection with churches on heathen ground under the care of their Board. The additions to the churches of the American Board last year, were 1600, and the entire membership, after purging the rolls of the Hawaiian churches of 5000 names, was nearly 21,000.

We do not pretend to understand the causes of this comparatively poor showing. But the fact is, that in leaving the American Board and taking hold of the Presbyterian Board, the New School Churches abandon an institution which has won an honorable place among the great and successful agencies of the Church, for the conversion of the heathen world, and take hold of one which has its reputation yet to make. They leave one which has all the elasticity of worldwide success, whose missions have had Pentecostal recognition from above, and turn to one which is still toiling among the foundations and waiting for a blessing.

Should then the Old School Church confess its experiment a failure? Should the two branches about to re-unite, put their experiences of the past thirty-three years into a common stock, and conclude, with equal force, in favor of denominational action on the Home field, and in favor of cooperation with kindred denominations on the Foreign field? Should the Re-union of the two branches be followed by a movement for

the cooperation of the whole body with the American Board?

We shall not undertake to answer these questions. But we will say, that if the two bodies desire to strongly convince the Christian world at home and abroad, that the Re-union is a movement of broad and genuine Christian charity, and not the mere upbuilding of a sect, no better way could be recommended than to join forces with the Congregationalists represented in the American Board, in their great and successful work upon the Foreign field. Such a movement would be a pledge to themselves and to the public, that while sincerely attached to their own denomination, they had not entered, in this Re-union, upon a career of rigid and forbidding exclusivism. On the other hand, to run the ploughshare through the flourishing fields of the American Board, and to separate brethren who had long been associated in the work, would give the heathen mind a very obscure and unsatisfactory impression of the nature and results of Christian Re-union at home.

We submit these paragraphs as suggestions, merely adding that they will be found to some extent working in the minds of men of both Schools. Our hope and prayer is that the reunited Church will take rank among the foremost in missionary zeal and enterprise. And whatever plan shall be agreed upon, we shall deem it a privilege to labor with all our heart for its success.

A UNANIMOUS VOTE OF FIFTY PRESBYTERIES.

Dr. Hatfield writes to one of the Editors of this paper:—"I have received more than fifty responses from the Presbyteries already, and every one unanimously affirmative,—not a single negative vote."

PEN PICTURES.

NO. 3. THE CRITICAL HEARER.

Having looked at the portrait of one who never attends divine service, and of another who visits the sanctuary only once on the Sabbath, let us now glance at the picture of one who may be denominated the *Critical Hearer*.

This individual, of course, is intelligent, but not very learned. Either by reading or conversing with those who read, he has acquired a smattering of theological lore. He is moreover naturally smart. He has a glib tongue, and he associates with those of less calibre than himself, who, by their deference to him, lead him to infer that he is quite a Socrates. He has also had the advantage or *disadvantage* of frequently listening to some very distinguished and eloquent men, who now constitute his beau-ideal of excellence.

With these feelings, and qualifications the critical hearer wends his way to the house of God. There is one thing in his favor—he never goes to sleep in church. His active mind, on the alert to pick a flaw in the sermon, prohibits a discourse, may be caught,—a very uncertain approach to drowsiness. He always marks the text in the Bible, so that the pastor, if he tain rule, however, as the pastor may preach, a new sermon from an old text.

And now, snugly ensconced in his seat, he fastens his keen eye upon the preacher, and has both ears wide open to catch every utterance. So far good. But the trouble is not with his eyes or ears, but with his heart. He is not one of those who was in early life trained to reverence the minister or his message; or, if he was thus educated, his natural disposition repelled the lesson, and contact with the world has entirely removed any respect he may in his childhood have acquired. Perhaps he is a professing Christian, but his heart is not very warm with love for Jesus and his cause. If he is interested in the church, it is chiefly in its temporal prosperity. His minister, therefore, to suit him, must be a very popular preacher. By his power of thought, his gift of eloquence, or some great peculiarity he must impress the masses. The critic is a very benevolent man. He is all the while calculating for others. As for himself, Mr. Jones is sure he could bear with a great many imperfections; but then how will it be with Mr. Smith, who has just taken a pew beside him, or Mr. Brown who has been a few times to meeting, and, if he likes the pastory, may locate?

"Why doesn't our minister preach historical sermons? Why isn't he more practical? Why does he not have more fire in his delivery? I wish he would put a little poetry in his discourses as Dr. Flash did when he preached. Do you remember Rev. Mr. Bonnyfinger, how he discoursed about Demas forsaking us? Why you could almost have seen poor Demas running off the end of his finger, and flying out the door! What a splendid discourse Dr. Bigman gave about the rolling up of the scroll! How impressive his

manner as he took a sheet of paper and rolled it up, thus giving us a practical illustration of his subject! Would it not be desirable that a Committee be appointed by our Session to inform our minister that he would do well to imitate these ministerial brethren in their impressive ways? He is not too old to learn, and a hint or two would do him good. And if he is too set in his way to change, why then he should know he is not the man for a Fifth Avenue church, and he had better look out for a call elsewhere."

"Ah me! what is to be done with these critics?" cries out Mr. Faithful, when at length some injudicious friend comes and whispers in his ear these queries and suggestions of the wide awake Mr. Jones.

"Do with them? Why tell them to shut up," says Dick, an impulsive boy who is enjoying his first college vacation.

"Do with them? Why, I'd preach them one plain sermon," says an indignant friend, "and tell them they'll soon have a vacant pulpit to supply."

"Do with them?" A serious question is this, injured and disheartened pastor. Don't be too quick to answer it in your mind. Go with your burden to the Lord.

The fact is, these critics are useful. They are like mosquitoes and flies in summer time. They make a man watchful, keep him humble, tax his ingenuity, develop his patience, increase his diligence. They are nuisances, it is true, but who will say they are not permitted by a wise and gracious Providence, to hover around the sanctuary, and sing their monotonous song, and occasionally thrust their sharp bills into the minister for a good purpose?

Keep good-natured and hopeful, dear Mr. Faithful. Pray, work, be earnest, preach the gospel as pointedly as you can; and if you do not reach the heart of Mr. Jones, the critic, you will, by the help of God, lead some others to the cross, and with them, at the last great day, be crowned with immortality. "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." P. S.

RESPECTABLE GAMBLING.

The eyes of the public have been fixed, for nearly two weeks, upon the gold gamblers of New York. A clearer understanding of their nefarious operations has been reached than ever before. The excitement of Friday, September 24th, was neither more nor less than that of the gambling saloon. For a time previously, the movement may have been what is called legitimate speculation; but soon the bids became mere bets. Every offer to buy meant, "I bet that the price will go to such a figure;" every response meant, "I bet that it will not." Not only did no coin change hands, but it was not possessed even by multitudes of the excited bidders. When the nearly crazy Albert Speyers shouted out: "I will take five millions at sixty!" he meant, only to bet that gold would go higher, and that he could sell his five millions if he chose to take it, at an advance. The party who accepted the offer meant simply to bet that it would not exceed that figure, and just this was the meaning of the whole shameful transaction. We are glad that the people have had such a full opportunity for understanding these operations. It is one of the moral uses of dark things.

We do not now intend to declaim against gambling. But we do ask those who are content to make their living and to carry on their business in a legitimate way, to frown this kind of business quite down and out of the circles of fair dealing and respectable traffic. We ask them to turn their backs upon gamblers of every kind and in every commodity. If they will gamble, let them understand that no thin disguises and respectable names will shield them from the disgrace which properly attaches to their occupation. There are places for gamblers avoided by men of character. Young men are enticed into them and ruined. They are not allowed a great amount of publicity. Their business transactions are not quoted in the money articles of our daily journals. There are laws against their very existence. But what avail all these limitations, if gambling itself, in some of its worst forms, drawing the young into its vortex, and pursued upon a scale so vast as to involve the entire financial interests of the country, is treated as fair and honest employment, in which men may grow rich without damage to character and position? Every honest man must be alarmed at the distinction which is thus drawn, where all are alike immoral, and where the borrowed respectability only covers the greater danger and snare. Let all honest business men combine with the press and the pulpit of the land, to consign gold gambling and all modes of business which consist of bets as to future prices, to deserved infamy.

THAT OBITUARY.

Probably very few of our readers were not mystified by the OBITUARY which was published on our second page last week. Many, no doubt, had their orthodox sensibilities shocked by it, and wondered how a paper, so unimpeachably sound as our own, could give publicity to such Pelagian and Socinian sentiments. A closer reading, we hope, solved the riddle for most, and showed that the deceased Polly who suffered and died while free both from original sin and actual transgression, was a parrot.

The question thus raised is worth answering in earnest. It is: "What is the connection between physical death and sin?" This question has been a mooted one among theologians for centuries, some of the most conservative taking the view hinted at by the author of the OBITUARY, viz.: that the death of the body is not a consequence of the fall of man, while in general it is conceded that premature death, disease and suffering are among its consequences. On the other hand, some even who are not much concerned about "traditions inherited from the Fathers," incline to the view that all species of death are included in the threat: "In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die." We may have a word to say on this subject hereafter.

THE CITY TICKET.

Two weeks ago we called attention to the remarkable, and we believe unprecedented reform movement in the Democratic party in this city, and contrasted it with the indifference of the Republicans to the bad quality of their own ticket. The object of our remarks has been misunderstood. One of the Republican city journals accuses us of seeking to injure the Republican party and to promote the success of its opponents. We are not surprised at the accusation. When bad men get control of party machinery and make nominations which disgust and estrange the honest masses of the party, it is of course the honest masses who injure the party by expressing their indignation, and not the bad leaders who have compelled them. Is this the view of the matter which the *Morning Post* takes? Or does it know nothing of the pain and the shame which an honest Republican feels, when he sees the great and noble principles of his party made use of by the vilest men to get into power?

But we have a distinction to draw, which, perhaps, we too much overlooked in our first article. The late reform of the Democracy is creditable only as an attempt in a right direction. It fails utterly as a practical measure in two important respects. It only includes the "Row" offices half a dozen in number, and even in this limited sphere, it is rendered worse than useless by the conditions with which the new candidates are found to the old ones. The Republican candidates for these offices, for the most part, are acceptable men. It was not in this part of the ticket that reform was specially called for. And although the Democrats have placed some excellent names upon their ticket, the corresponding names on the Republican side will compare favorably with them personally, besides being entirely free from the taint of a bargain which mars the well-meaning attempt of the Democracy at reform.

But we did hope that even such an imperfect and partial attempt in the right direction, in such a quarter, would have thoroughly roused the moral sentiment of the Republican party to the fearful badness of other parts of their ticket. Especially we hoped that it would start the inquiry, whether our City and State should again be disgraced, as it was last year, by the character and doings of nearly every one of our representatives at Harrisburg. And we press the question, and hope it is not even yet too late for a favorable answer, is there no escape from a repetition of this disgrace? Is the party helplessly bound by the ruling of those corrupt managers, who renominated the same class of men, and, in some instances, the very individuals to the seats which they disgraced by the transactions of last winter? How long shall such audacious misrepresentation of the spirit and principles of the party be tolerated, and who is responsible if such proceedings disorganize it, and put its enemies into power? The *Post* is quite as able to answer this question rightly as anybody.

—An English rector recently refused to present a young lady to the bishop for confirmation, unless she would give up dancing. He said his family since then went off on a tour to the continent and let the vicarage—close to the church—to a family of Jews who spend the hours of divine service in noisy games of croquet.