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Contributors & Correspondents.

THE UNION.

FURTHER EXPLANATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE ASSEMBLY'S ACTION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I perceive that my former explanatory remarks have been misapprehended, especially by one of your correspondents. My object, at present, is not merely to correct misapprehensions of my remarks, but also, and mainly, to show the wisdom of the Assembly's procedure in remitting to presbyteries and sessions the basis and accompanying resolutions, and the importance of having them maturely considered and reported on at this juncture.

The three following things will, I trust, be admitted.

1st. That the basis and accompanying resolutions were not sent down to presbyteries and sessions in terms of the Barrier Act. This was repeatedly stated in the Assembly; besides, there is no allusion to the Barrier Act in the remit. Moreover, the terms of said Act are "for the presbyteries' opinions and consent;" whereas the terms of the remit are simply "for mature consideration."

2nd. That the whole union question is one of such magnitude, and one which affects so much the interests, and even the constitution, of the Church, that it must be dealt with strictly as the Barrier Act directs.

3rd. That the Assembly was competent and warranted to send the basis and resolutions down to presbyteries and sessions in the form which has been adopted.

In confirmation of this statement, permit me to give the following extracts from "The practice of the Free Church of Scotland," recently published:—

"Consistently with the principles of Presbyterian government, all reasonable means ought to be taken for keeping the action of the Assembly in accordance with the general mind of the Church; inasmuch as the ministers and ruling elders are entitled and called upon to judge as to the mind of the Great Head of the Church."—Page 95. Further, "The General Assembly may remit any subject to presbyteries for their opinion, apart from the terms of the Barrier Act, when it is not proposed to found any legislative change or declaration on the returns."—Page 96.

Now if these three statements be admitted, the inference is surely legitimate that "the subject of union will not be before the Assembly in June." There is no ground on which it can be taken up. The Assembly of this year will certainly not reconsider the action of last Assembly. There will be nothing submitted, either by the synods of the sister Churches, or by the joint committee, to bring the case up. The Assembly will surely not waste its precious time in considering returns upon which "no legislative action or declaration can be founded." It was in reference to this last circumstance I used the expression, "may informally receive the reports in reply to the remit,"—an expression which I now regret, as fitted to mislead.

Another inference is that the consummation of the union may require a considerable time. If there be not a meeting of Assembly in the fall, the basis and resolutions cannot be sent down to presbyteries and sessions, in terms of the Barrier Act, before the Assembly of 1873. I do feel that one of my statements has been inadvertently perverted by "Cunctator." He assumes that I conveyed the idea that "neither the ordinary course of Church procedure, nor the endowment of the colleges was to be considered a condition of union." Whereas the question with me was not one of constitutional procedure at all, but simply one of time. This is plain from the words "neither the time, nor the endowment expected to be made in the time." The main design of my article was to advocate deliberate constitutional procedure. This, however, cannot determine the length of time required; as the Assembly by meeting twice or thrice in a year, can do the work of two or three years in one. I am sorry that "Cunctator" has taken offence at my proposal "to trust in one another; and, above, all, to trust in

God's guidance." This trust is perfectly compatible with the use of our own judgment. Besides the point to which the trust referred to was by me confined was very narrow, viz.: the detailed arrangements pertaining to the colleges and theological institutes.

The other point to which I wish to advert is the importance of having the union basis and resolutions maturely considered and reported on at this juncture.

An opinion seems to prevail in certain quarters that the Assembly's action in reference to union is not approved by the Church in general. Indeed some go so far as to say that the presbyteries will very generally repudiate said action. Now this must have an injurious influence on the deliberations of the synods of the sister Churches. It must also weaken the hands of our members of the Joint Committee. It may even suspend the exertions of our people to endow our colleges; as the endowment and union schemes have become hopelessly mixed up in people's minds, although the endowment would, no doubt, have been attempted even had union not been contemplated. If the presbyteries were to express their general approval of the Assembly's action, a great point would be gained. This would not, in the slightest degree, obviate the necessity of sending the whole matter down in terms of the Barrier Act. It would confirm the Assembly's action without giving it the legal sanction which the Barrier Act plainly and imperatively requires.

These are merely my own private opinions, stated with all candor, and without, in the slightest degree, reflecting on the judgment or Christian feelings of my brethren. I do not profess to speak for any party, great or small, nor to have any "following," young or old.

Yours, &c.,

ALIIQUIS.

THE STATE OF RELIGION IN THE CHURCH.

MR. EDITOR,—It is pleasing to see various topics introduced for remark or discussion in your highly interesting and, what I trust will prove, valuable paper. Will you allow me a corner for some plain observations in reference to a subject which from its both intrinsic and relative importance ought to hold a chief place in a religious Periodical—I mean the state of religion in our church. It is well known that the Assembly has appointed a committee to attend to that vital matter and that that committee has issued certain questions—fifteen in all—calling for answers by ministers and sessions with the view of forming an annual record of spiritual statistics, with the view, it is presumed, of stimulating to greater zeal and effort in regard to this highly important matter. This seems reasonable enough—provided it can be satisfactorily and truthfully done. There are, however, formidable difficulties in the way towards obtaining a full record, and perhaps some most anxious about the promotion of vital religion, and who are doing their utmost in the use of means to promote it, may be among the defaulters in replying to said questions. Far be it from us, however, to say one word against sending in the required replies. The queries are pointed and practical and well fitted to rouse ministers and elders to a sense of duty in reference to the spiritual welfare of the Church. The object of the present remarks is, to point special attention to the last of the questions referred to, as in our opinion the great question requiring an answer—we may even say the great question of the day. We mean the one referring to the best mode of promoting religion, or the spiritual prosperity of the church. It seems strange that amidst all that was said, first in Synod and then at the first Assembly, from the time of the excitement at Galt onward, the 16th query has never been formally put till now. The discussions or conversations, we might say uniformly took the form of a statement of facts, without any practical application in the way of drawing lessons from the facts stated. Now it appears to us, that such facts as were narrated are most instructive. For example anything of real revival shows the readiness of God to grant his grace, thus he waits to be gracious and teaches us that if others would be similarly favoured they must give themselves to more earnest prayer

as the appointed means of bringing down the divine blessings. These revivals, then, ought to have had a stimulating effect on the whole church in exciting to more earnest and importunate prayer. But, passing this, the question has been at last formally put. How may vital religion to most effectually promoted? and better late than never. It seems to have been too much taken for granted that as a church we have been doing all that could be done to promote revivals, and here there has been merely a call for fruit. This may be proper enough but there is a previous question. Have ministers and elders been doing all that could be done in the shape of spiritual cultivation? As labourers in the vineyard have they been daily digging about and manuring the fig trees? With an evangelical creed, and the Gospel more or less regularly preached, combined with labours among the young by means both of Bible classes and Sabbath Schools, the general feeling has been—what more can be done? we have reached the highest point of effort—we must wait patiently for the divine blessing. That all success depends on God is doubtless a great truth. But is it so that we have been doing all we can? Is there not such a thing as performing the operation of rowing, plying the oars with all regularity and apparent vigor against a head current while we make no progress but perhaps fall rather than advance? True it is that in advancing Christ's cause we have often wind and tide against us which force we do not duly estimate and hence are exceedingly apt to be satisfied with the mere routine of Christian effort instead of in humble dependence on promised grace, throwing more energy into our efforts and going farther to meet the enemy, as David did the Philistine, in the strength of the Lord. There is reason to fear that in some instances at least—to state the case as mildly as possible—the doctrine of divine sovereignty has been abused by cherishing the thought that we have done all we can, and have hence settled down into a species of spiritual so mambulism waiting, what some are pleased to call, God's time. That we are to wait on God is doubtless a great Bible truth but we may, and alas, often do wait in indolence and unbelief. While there is undoubted sovereignty in all God's providences it is not less true that he works according to certain principles and has clearly and distinctly laid down these principles in his word for our instruction and guidance. The question then still comes up—have we as ministers, elders or members of the church, availed ourselves of these principles for the purpose vitalizing the church and forwarding the work of the Lord? But as these remarks are sufficiently extended for the present, the principles referred to and their application will, with your leave, be considered in a future article.

D.

INDIVIDUAL GIVING.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—You must not tell some Presbyterians that this letter is about Christian giving or they will not read it. Do not let them know that my text is individual giving and frequent giving to the Gospel cause or they will perhaps say, "Aye always on the money, always give, give." As for your readers generally, and our many whole-hearted Presbyterians, the thinking, feeling members and adherents of our Church, I ask their patience and their thought. Allow me to begin a long way off to catch those who are not fond of the theme.

What a light thing is a flake of snow! How soft and pretty, a very child loves to see it coming down, laughs to see it fall on his upturned face, it falls so gently. And yet these very flakes of snow will cover the whole face of nature, and form an embankment that defies the mighty steam horse on his smooth iron road. He puffs and pants and comes to a dead stand and all owing to the snow flakes. How's that? Why there were so many. It is pleasant to look up and see how thickly the flakes come, and so continuous, they fall and fall and fall, then the wind gathers them into a heap forming a power, a regular barricade. Now what is wanted in Christian giving is all giving, and giving often, many givers and many gifts. It is not necessary to prove to the Christian, that it is a duty to give to the cause of Christ, that it is his individual duty to

give as God has prospered him that it is his privilege to give not grudgingly but cheerfully—that the Lord loveth such a giver. It is surely not necessary to state that this privilege belongs to every individual Christian—each member each adherent of the Church. It is my birth right, and who would sell it for a mess of pottage! Taking these as granted, first principles most surely believed among us, I would offer a few remarks in regard to individual giving to the cause of Christ.

You are aware of the old practice of each member of the family getting a collection for the meeting on Sabbath—parents would see to it on Saturday that their was change in the house. I say nothing of the amount given, but the practice of each giving. That was a right practice. It is also well known that the prevailing practice exists of the head of the giving one subscription say for stipend for the family. This one subscription covers all the numbers and adherents of the household. This practice I object to. I hold that every one ought to be a giver. It may be said the father earns the money. Is the wife's work in the house not worth anything? Is the son in the field, the daughter at the wash-tub or churn not worthy of wages? The father does not make all the income, and if he had to hire men and women to do their work he would find that to his cost. Perhaps he grants this and pays for all hands in his subscription. Then I say why not give each his share and let each appear on the subscription list as a giver? It is the duty and privilege of each; why not in this as in the collection on Sabbath? Certain am I if this plan were adopted there would be more money in the Lord's treasury. Will a Christian object to this personal giving because he would have to give more money? Does he feel that he gets off cheaper in the present mode—looks doing very well, and therefore prefers it? Where does such a man keep his conscience? Where is his Christian liberality? Allow me to give you a case that came under my observation without giving Mr. T. gave \$10 a year towards stipend for himself and family. He was a well-to-do farmer. In his family were five members, two working sons, adherents, beside children. Divide the \$10 among the members, not to speak of the adherents, and you have \$2 each. A hired man on the next farm paid \$4 and the hired girl \$3. Would you not come to the conclusion to which I came when I found he was dead against individual giving, that he looked better on the list under the \$10—that individually they would look small at \$2 beside a hired man \$4 and a hired girl \$3. Put down the names of the young friends and let them know it, and feel that they "have an interest in the concern," like the little London boy who had given a penny to the Missionary Society. It will prove a blessing to those who give as well as to those who receive. I believe there is a want of thought on such matters. Talking with a farmer on the possibility of the support of a minister in a station in his locality, I asked him "how much he considered would be a fair amount for each member to give annually? He said \$4 each. Well, I said, you have 50 members, not to speak of adherents, and you do not see how you can raise \$120 annually, the sum required—why 50 by 4 gives \$200. He was surprised. But, said I, remember how it stands with yourself: You have five members, beside adherents, in your family—\$4 per member, equal to \$20 per annum. He looked strange, but could not answer. He and his family had a 300-acre farm, which they worked without hired help, and he had been in the habit of giving \$5 a year for all hands. Surely that man had not thought of such things before—or if he did, alas for his religion.

So much for individual giving; with your leave, a little on frequent giving in your next, from

Yours truly,

IRIS.

A HINT FOR STUDENTS.

Before attending the Hebrew examination at college I tried to get into the professor's mind—I tried to be both student and professor. I then drew out questions and answered them; and you may imagine how glad I was when I found that I succeeded so well. I answered, in my own room, every question the professor put before me except two. His questions were put in a different form from mine; but the substance of his and mine were the same. Let students try this simple method, and they will seldom fail in their public examinations.—COW.

EXPRESSIVENESS OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE

(From *Christen's Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry*.)

There is no country in which the phrases of goodwill and affection are so strong as in Ireland. The Irish language actually flows with milk and honey of love and friendship. Sweet and palatable is it to the other ear, and sweetly can Paddy, with his deluding ways, administer it to them from the top of his millifolious tongue, as a dove feeds her young, or as a kind mother her babe, shaping with her own pretty mouth every morsel of the delicate viand before it goes into that of the infant. In this manner does Paddy, seated behind a ditch, of a bright Sunday, when he ought to be at mass, feed up some innocent girl, not with "false music," but with sweet words, for nothing more musical or melting than his brogue ever dissolved a female heart. Indeed, it is of the danger to be apprehended from the melody of his voice, that the admirable and appropriate proverb speaks; for when he addresses his sweetheart, under circumstances that justify suspicion, it is generally said—"Paddy's feedin' her up wid false music."

What language has a phrase equal in beauty to *cushla my chree—pulse of my heart*? Can it be paralleled in the whole range of all that are, ever were, or ever will be spoken, for music, sweetness, and a knowledge of anatomy? If Paddy is unrivalled at swearing, he fairly throws the world behind him at the blarney. In professing friendship, and making love, give him but a *taste of the native*, and he is a walking honey-comb, that every woman who sees him wishes to have a lick at, and Heaven knows, that frequently, at all times, and in all places, does he get himself licked on their account.

Another expression of peculiar force is *vick machree*—or, son of my heart. This is not only elegant, but a "elegantate, beyond almost any other phrase except the foregoing. It is, in a sense, somewhat different from that in which the philosophical poet has used it, a beautiful comment upon the sentiment of "the child's the father of the man," uttered by the great, we might almost say, the glorious Wordsworth.

We have seen many a youth, on more occasions than one, standing in profound affliction over the dead body of his aged father, exclaiming, "*Ahr, vick machree, vick machree—wail thu marra wo'bm? Wail thu marra wo'bm?*"—"Father, son of my heart, son of my heart, art thou dead from me; art thou dead from me?" An expression, we think, under any circumstances, not to be surpassed in the intensity of domestic affection which it expresses; but under those alluded to, we consider it altogether elevated in exquisite and poetic beauty above the most powerful symbols of Oriental imagery.

A third phrase peculiar to love and affection, is "*Mamm aitheas*," or, "*My soul's within you*." Every person acquainted with languages knows how much an idiom suffers by a literal translation. How beautiful, then, how tender and powerful, must those short expressions be, uttered, too, with a fervour of manner peculiar to a deeply feeling people, when, even after a literal translation, they carry so much of their tenderness and energy into a language whose genius is cold when compared to the glowing beauty of the Irish.

Maavurdeen Dhealsh, too, is only a short phrase, but, coming warm and mellowed from Paddy's lips into the ear of his *colleen ahas*, it is a perfect spell—a sweet murmur, to which the *lens susurrus* of the Hybla bees is, with all their honey, jarring discord. How tame is "My sweet darling," its literal translation, compared to its soft and lulling intonations. There is a dissolving, entrancing, beguiling, deluding, flattery, insinuating, coaxing, winning, inveigling, roguish, palavering, comovering, comedowning, consenting, blarneying, killing, willing, charm in it, worth all the philtres that ever the gross knavery of a withered alchemist imposed upon the credulity of those who inhabit the other nations of the earth—for we never read that those shrivelled philtre-mongers ever proposed in Ireland.

No, no, let Paddy alone. If he lutes intensely and effectually, he loves intensely, comprehensively, and gallantly. To love with power is a proof of a large soul, and to hate well is, according to the great moralist, a thing in itself to be beloved. Ireland is, therefore, through all its sects, parties and religions, an amicable nation. Their affections are, indeed so vivid, that the scruple not sometimes to kill each other with kindness; but we hope that the march of love and friendship will not only keep pace with, but outstrip the march of intellect.