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Contributors & Correspondents.

THE UNION.

EXPLANATORY REMARKS ON THE ASSEMBLY'S ACTION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.
Dear Sir,—We may be very thankful that we have now a paper of our own in which the Union question or any other affecting the welfare of our Church may be freely discussed. I do hope that it will be wisely circulated and that the originator of it will be worthily remunerated.

Permit me to offer a few explanatory remarks on the Assembly's action in reference to union, which, it is humbly hoped, may help to guide some of your younger correspondents.

1. The reason why *three years* were mentioned in the resolution, was, that it was supposed the endowment of the Colleges could not be effected sooner, and that, in the ordinary course of church procedure, this period would elapse before the Union could be consummated. No one however voted in the dark on this point; as, before the vote was taken a question was put in answer to which the idea was conveyed that neither the time, nor the endowment expected to be made in the time, was to be considered a condition of Union.

2. The Assembly did not—and indeed was not competent to—draw up a Basis of Union. This is clearly the work of the Joint Committee, so that the verbal alterations made by the Assembly, or essential changes, as in the case of the College resolutions, and to be considered simply instructions for the guidance of our members of the Joint Committee. This accounts for the absence of more distinct statements and of anything like an authoritative formal resolution.

3. The Basis of Union and accompanying resolutions were not sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions in terms of the Barrier Act, but simply for mature consideration. The Assembly thus appointed the inferior courts of its action in this matter. The reports which may be sent up in reply to this remit may be of further use in guiding the committee, and, if favorable, in confirming informally the Assembly's action.

4. The subject of Union will clearly not be before next Assembly in June. The Assembly has given its opinion on the Basis. It remains now for the Synods of the other agencies churches to give theirs. After this is done, the Joint Committee—should the other churches see fit to appoint members to it—will, in view of all the instructions received, endeavor to draw up a Basis which may satisfy all parties. But this, of course, cannot be done before our Assembly meets. The Assembly of this year may hear the report up, and perhaps give instructions to the College Endowment Committee, and informally receive the reports in reply to the remit, and, if it is very anxious to discuss the Union question, may appoint an extra meeting for this purpose in the fall.

5. It is perfectly clear that our Kirk brethren will not—and rightly too—the reception of their Colleges as a condition of Union. But surely we may trust in one another, and above all trust in God's guidance, in reference to any future arrangements which in course of time will require to be made for the general welfare of the church. Perhaps in course of time it will be found unnecessary to have a theological institution in Montreal or Kingston. It will be sad if the interests of particular localities, or of particular professors, should be allowed to complicate a matter so important and so desirable as the Union of these large Presbyterian Churches.

I am, dear Sir, yours truly,
"Alcuin."

CHRISTIAN ASSURANCE.

That the attainment of a comforting assurance of an interest in Jesus is possible for the Christian, may, a duty, is most certainly implied in the chapter on that subject in the Confession of Faith. Still, we fear that the want of assurance is more common among us than its possession, even where men do not strongly believe that a doubting state is an evidence of humanity and true spirituality. When we read for the reason of this, we may be told that no one should speak confidently in such matters, because we may be deceived. Is there, then, anything wrong, in saying what the Chris-

tion knows, and daily sets up? We have often seen assurance coming out brightly on the death-bed, and we have as often said, "Would that that Christian had appeared as glorious during life!" Perhaps we think too much of ourselves and our doings, as compared with our thoughts about Christ. Thus we see importunities and sin, which makes us fear, as Satan accusingly whispers, "Can one like you be a Christian? Even if you are, you should be ashamed to say it," while we forget the sinless, perfect, and complete obedience which our Father in Christ Jesus, and are unable to say, "The Lord rebuke thee, Satan; I am a sinner, but a pardoned sinner, trusting to Jesus." Want of assurance puts the highest experience of private communion with God, the speaking with him as a father, as a friend; it paralyzes Christian effort when we doubt whether "I should do what I am a Christian may;" it brings a reproach on God's people, and puts a stumbling-block in the way of the inquirer. Why, Christian, can you not say, "I know who I have believed?"

POWER OF THE WORD.

"Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against Thee." It is the sharpness of our hearts that causes so many slips in our lives. Conscience cannot be urged or awed by forgotten truth, but keep it in heart and it will keep both heart and life upright. "The law of his God is in his heart, now of steps shall slide." Or, if they do, "Peter remembered the word of Jesus, and he repented and wet better life." We never love our hearts till they have first lost the efficacious and powerful impressions of the Word.

It is easier, no doubt, to journey alone in the broad sunshine and on the beaten highway of our lot, but over the midnight plain and beneath the still immensity of darkness the traveller seeks some fellowship for his wanderings. And what is religion but the midnight hemisphere of life, whose vault is filled with the silence of God, and whose everlasting stars, if giving no clear light, yet fill the soul with dreams of memorable glory.

Trouble landed round is like delicate glass ware, which passing through a good many hands, drops and breaks all to pieces, and there is nothing much left of it. If you belong to a church where there are six hundred members, you ought to be obliged to carry only a six-hundred part of any trouble. Every Christian coming near you, ought to subtract his part of the annoyance.—*Talange.*

THE SMALL-POX.—There should be no deaths, or next to none, from small-pox," says Dr. S. W. Butler. "Either the profession or the people have been negligent about vaccination. Do incidently perform the work thoroughly." This virus should be inserted till it ceases to offend. Then, and not till then, we should regard a person vaccinated for all time, at least as thoroughly as he would be by an attack of small-pox. The matter should always come from just vaccination in healthy young children; we should prefer it from young children. It is all to have a "pause" once occasionally, to stimulate the profession to their duty in regard to vaccination.

CASE-HARDNESS.—It is often desirable to convert the surface of small iron articles into steel, and to prevent wear and tear, and also to prepare them for a high polish. To do so is much quicker and cheaper than to make these articles out of steel. The best process consisted in placing them in an iron case, with burnt bone dust or other charcoal, exposed for some two or three hours to a dull red heat, and plunged into oil or cold water, which cooling is called "quenching." The process is varied at times by leaving the subjects to cool in the case and then immersing them. A later mode is to use prussiate of potash. This consists of two atoms of carbon and one of nitrogen to one of potash. Its decomposition leaves no solid residuum that can interfere with the chemical change or injure the quality of the steel. It is rubbed on the iron at a dull red heat; the metal is then put in the fire for a few minutes, and the case is tempered in iron. It was formerly customary to case-harden burglar proof safes, the iron doors of banks, etc., so that they might resist the drills of thieves. Such articles are now made mostly from Franklin iron, which is manufactured from an ore found at Franklin, N. J., and now known as the world. This iron is peculiarly hard, and is found to be about as effective as if case-hardened.

Scientific and Abstrait.

THE DEER AT WORK.—When a bee goes out after food, it alights on some kind of flower and gathers a part of its load; then goes to another of the same kind, and plants a third, to obtain a load. Another bee goes out, and if it alights on another kind of flower, it keeps to that kind till it gets a load. But how is this known? You go to the hive and watch them as they come in; some have yellow pollen on their legs; others have light colours; others have dark; but no bee has two colours on his legs.

RAREY TOMATOES.—A correspondent of an exchange suggests that tomatoes should be started in the autumn, and sown in six-inch pots, in an atmosphere of 40 or 50 degrees, with just water enough to keep them alive. In the spring the plants will be thick and strong at the base, and as woody almost as a wall-flower. We have seen a few plants started in a cool greenhouse where the growth was slow, and they gave us a fine crop. There is a great deal of lumber about the varieties of tomatoes; more depends on the way they are grown than on the variety.

ABSORPTION OF MOISTURE BY LEAVES.—Mr. M. S. Ellis, of New York, has been investigating the question as to whether the leaves of plants are capable of absorbing water in a liquid state, and summing up the result of his experiments by stating that the fact seems to be demonstrated that a plant growing in a humid soil and receiving by its roots the quantity of water necessary to its normal condition, does not absorb that water which moistens its leaves, but that such absorption takes place as soon as the leaves begin to wither, in consequence of the desiccation of the soil. In this way he explains the phenomenon of certain plants maintaining a healthy condition, without any contact with the soil, and was absolutely isolated from all assimilable substances. Thus a specimen of *Fougerea*, a potted Chlorococcium plant, maintained a healthy existence, and exhibited considerable increased weight, when suspended for many days in the air by its roots. No moisture ever reached it except that from the garden spraying, and yet it was continually putting out new leaves and flowering abundantly.—*Monthly Agricultural Report.*

INSULATION OF DUST BY WORKMEN.—The injurious effect of exposure to the dust of various manufacturing establishments has not infrequently been dwelt upon with more or less force; but we have lately prepared for the result of certain specific investigations on this subject. It has long been a disputed point whether the particles of iron, silicon, etc., merely lodge within the cells of the lungs, or penetrate through their walls into the tissue between them. But Professor Zeuker informs us that, on examining the lung of a woman who had been employed in the manufacture of iron oxide, used in preparing books of color, he found the powder in the tissue between the air-cells and in their walls, as well as in their cavities. From less than two ounces of this lung over twelve grains of iron oxide were obtained by chemical methods, so that, if equally distributed throughout the lung, there is at least one grain of iron oxide in each of an ounce inhaled. In another case that of a workman exposed to the dust of a mixture used in preparing ultramarine substances—he found a quantity estimated at fully an ounce.—*Harpur's Magazine.*

TIPS FOR SLEEPING. 1. Go to bed when you are sleepy. Do not undertake to force wakefulness when attention fails, and the brain finds its blood running sluggishly. 2. Go to bed when you are tired. One may be fatigued without being drowsy, and may wish for the freedom and relaxation of a couch, and it is only a sin against nature to sit up in such a condition. 3. Late evening suppers should be shunned. 4. No unwholesome drink before going to bed. 5. Amusements which try the brain and excite the nervous system unduly are not to go before going to bed. 6. To get sufficient sleep in the night, go to bed early enough to get all the rest that the system needs. 7. There should be at least a regular hour for rising in the morning. 8. Do not, however, fix the hour for rising too early. 9. Do not work before breakfast. 10. Do not take much exercise before breakfast.—*Harper's Health.*

Random Readings.

Man begins with God when he gets to the end of himself.
"Footprints on the sands of time." The fires of the last day will melt and coagulate those sands, and our footprints will be seen forever.

To be firm is to maintain what is good; to be stubborn is to perpetuate an error which need have been only an error of a passing moment.

"The servant is above his Lord." These words should be ashamed to complain of our sacrifices when we remember what Jesus, our Master, endured for us.

The devil chinks up "Too late!" wherever he thinks anybody will stand to read it. But God has only written it once—and that is on the inside of the door of hell.—*Edward Barrett.*

On earth we have nothing to do with, success or with results, but only to give to God and for God, for it is in His hand and not success which is thus our savor before God.—*Isolation.*

The blossom cannot tell what becomes of its odor, and no man can tell what becomes of his influence and example, that will away from him and go beyond his or their periculous mission.

Patience is always crowned with success. It may be without an exception. It is not to be extended success, but patience never takes anything in hand that she does not succeed with in some form.

The prayer the self-control, the daily example by word and even look, needed by every mother makes, her vocation one of the greatest self-improvement. If used aright, and the little rewards applied along the way, the unpolished for reborn in deeper affection—and sometimes overwhealing.

A Scotch minister recently said his neighbour that he spoke two hours and a half the Sunday previous. "Why, minister, were you not tired to death?" asked the neighbour. "Awi me," said he; "I was as fresh as a rose; but it would have done your heart good to see how tired the congregation was."

Do not let us be idle. Do not think of one's family as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unimportant. Cast them all aside; they may be light and accidental, but they may be soot from the smoke of the pit, for all that; and it is better that our hearts should be swept clean of them, without one grain as to which is largest or blackest.—*Isidore.*

Charles Dickens says that "the first external revelation of the dry rot in men is a tendency to lark and lounge; to be at street corners without intelligible reason; to be going anywhere when not to be about many places rather than any; to be doing nothing at all; but to have an intention of performing a number of tangible duties to-morrow or the day after.

Where there is great strength, full of sweet and gentle feelings, there is gentleness in its most perfect form. And the true Christiana disposition is seen when a man is clothed with all manner of vigour, and power, and knowledge, and institution, and carries them in the midst of an offending, sinful world, not with the utmost long suffering, but with extreme gentleness.—*Plymouth Pulpit.*

There is no youth a beauty and purity of character which, when once touched and defiled, can never be restored; a fringe more delicate than frostwork, and which, when once torn and broken, can never be re-embroidered. He who hath spotted and soiled his garments in youth, though he may seek to make them white again, can never wholly do it, even were he to wash them with his tears.

Jesus Christ changes the heart of the man whom he deigns to bring to God; he annihilates the moral distance between a holy God and a corrupt heart; first, by the precepts of his Word, and the motives he presents to induce us to love God and despise the world, secondly, by his example which he proposes to our imitation, thirdly by his spirit which mortifies the old man and forms the new man within us.

Perhaps the silliest thing a young man can say is, "I have resolved never to marry." Great though the error were over so proper, it is one which others have no probable or obvious cure, and proclaiming it is a virtual intimation that you are so attracted to the other sex that you are obliged to ward them off from a hopeless quest—a stultified aspiration—whereby their cause is likely to suffer shipwreck.—*Harper's Health.*

Societies and Antisocialists.

We learn that the Union held in the Presbyterian Church, St. Mark's, on the evening of Friday last, for the benefit of the Misses Building Fund, proved very successful, the church being well filled. The pastor, the Rev. Mr. Chalmers, occupied the chair. Addresses were delivered by the Rev. Mr. Hill and John Woodhead, Esq. The report, after paying all expenses, amounted to \$50.

At the annual meeting of the "Young Men's" of St. Mark's Church, Toronto, the report presented showed that the amount collected for missionary purposes and the Widows' and Orphans' Fund was \$1,250.15. Of the amount subscribed for the Bazaar of the Street Mission, \$2,215. \$1,019.84 have been paid, and further for current expenses \$29.48 total, \$1,096.77. A lot of 1000 purchased on the corner of Beverley and Adelaide streets, for purposes of church extension, and \$610 contributed towards its purchase. A sum of \$200.01 has been subscribed by the Young Men's Association for the purchase of the new western part of the city. The amount raised in the course of the year for evangelistic and missionary work amounts to \$3,860.64. The committee recommend the following distribution: To Home Missions, \$277.11; Foreign, \$100; Knox College, \$200; Scholarship Fund, \$50; and to three French Canadian Missions, \$200, making a total of \$1,117.11. The meeting was addressed by Rev. Mr. Phillips and C. W. Davis, T. Wardrop, Esq., and Honorable V. C. Moray and George Brown.

This congregation stands in a position of marked prominence among the more liberal and energetic of our churches. The annual meeting of the congregation of Zion Church, Bradford, was held last week, the Rev. W. G. Gozard, M.A., presiding. The Treasurer, Jas. Wallace, Esq., submitted the financial report for the year ending Feb. 1st, showing a balance in the treasury after every claim had been met. The handsome sum of eight thousand dollars has been raised during the past year—a large portion of which was devoted to the final payment of the church debt. The usual order of business was attended to, and the ensuing year. Not the least interesting part of the proceedings was the resolution passed adding four hundred dollars to the pastor's annual stipend. Comment on this is altogether unnecessary, as showing the attachment of Zion Church to their talented minister. We are glad to note, says the *Express*, the progress and prosperity of this church. Ten years ago, when Mr. Gozard was settled in Bradford, the congregation was sadly burdened by a debt that well nigh threatened its extinction. Since that time the church has been greatly prospered, and now is entirely free of all liabilities. To Mr. James Wallace, who has for so many years labored so faithfully, and with so much success, as pastor, and the other officers, much praise is due for the energy they have displayed in this matter. We hope that all the members of the church, and free to aid in the general support of the denomination, will not neglect their part of the duty that has distinguished this church in the past year.

SABBATH SCHOOL ENTERTAINMENT, KING CAROLINE.

On the evening of Wednesday, 7th Feb., a musical and intellectual entertainment was given in the Town Hall, for the benefit of Knox Church Sabbath School. The evening was very successful, and a large attendance, though not so large as was expected from the number of families connected with the congregation. Owing to the indisposition of the pastor, the chair was occupied by Mr. P. McInnes, Assistant Superintendent. The programme consisted in part of a number of choice pieces of sacred music, which were well rendered by a choir of young people, members of the school, led by Mr. Wm. Kay, the Superintendent, and accompanied on the melodeon by Mr. McInnes. The intellectual part consisted of readings by Messrs. D. Cameron, D. Fraser, A. Andrews, M. McInnes, and Wm. Kay, an address on Sabbath School work, and a recitation by Mr. T. Robins, and recitation, with a song of welcome, by three young girls, Sabbath School scholars, which was one of the most attractive features of the evening. The net proceeds of the evening were \$30, which will be spent in procuring an addition to the library.—*Continued.*

The Rev. Robert Johnson's discourse on "Instruments of the Spirit," was a most interesting and instructive one, and was accompanied by a number of illustrations, which were very judiciously selected, and which, in our opinion, were of great value to the hearers. At all events it is a fact that those who attended the meeting were greatly benefited, and that the public course of the Deacon and Professor, as well as that of the students, was of great value to the hearers. The net proceeds of the evening were \$30, which will be spent in procuring an addition to the library.—*Continued.*

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