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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### EVANGELICAL UNION.

GREAT MEETING OF CHRISTIANS AT NEW YORK—FRANCE AND GERMANY UNITE IN THE GOOD WORK—A TOUCHING SCENE—"THE GREATEST ECUMENICAL COUNCIL OF OUR TIME"—PRESBYTERIAN UNION THROUGHOUT THE WORLD.

Mr. Editor.—I send you a few random notes of the great Conference of the Evangelical Alliance which grows in wonder and interest as it does in numbers and vastness every day. Day after day crowding thousands fill three and sometimes four of the largest churches in this city simultaneously, and stand for hours together in aisles and passages listening with unflagging interest to the papers which these authors are compelled to repeat in some cases as many as three times. The opening meeting last Thursday in the Association Hall of the Young Men's Christian Association, struck the key note of this magnificent and indeed almost apostolical gathering. French, Germans, English, Irish, Scotch, Americans, Canadians, Hindoos, Africans, Italians, Spaniards, Hollanders, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists—all met on one platform, and no one thought of ascribing another's card or nationality. All felt they were one in Christ. The stately and patriarchal address of welcome of Dr. Adams touched all hearts, and called forth a response which all felt to be a cheering augury of the future spirit of the Conference. When Dr. Fischl, of Paris, remarked that there were neither French nor Germans on that platform, and when Prof. Christlieb, of Bonn stepped forward in the course of his remarks and clasped the hand of the French delegate, the effect was indescribable, and the audience rose to their feet in a perfect oration of irresistible enthusiasm. Perhaps the climax of the meeting was reached when the Rev. Narayan Shesbudrai, of Bombay, clad in his white cambric turban, and his drab tunic of camel's hair, stepped on the platform and announced himself as the vindicator and the fruit of Christian Missions, and the answer to the challenge of Rationalism, regarding the futility of Missionary enterprise. The audience scarcely knew whether to laugh or applaud when with a broad Scotch accent, which was unmistakable, (he was educated in the Free Church College, Edinburgh,) he began a speech of marvellous clearness and power. He has been all through the most prominent popular attraction of the Alliance, and you will be glad to know that he intends visiting the Dominion before his return.

It would take a column to give the names of the Foreign delegates, almost every one of whom is remarkable in some department of Christian science or theology. But while the intellectual resources of the conference are so immense and indeed almost inexhaustible the great attraction is the simple and fervid and Evangelical spiritual tone. There is no straining after new sentiment, but all hearts seem softened and united by one heavenly tide. As if drawn by one common spiritual impulse of spiritual attraction, all hearts seem drawn closer to Christ and in Him to each other. He is the recognized bond of union, the one theme to which all thoughts and themes instructively gravitate. The most pleasing feature of the meeting is the complete freedom from all strain after sensational feeling and the perfect naturalness and simplicity of the spirit of the Conference. The ablest papers yet given have been those of Dr. McCosh, on Development; Dr. Hodge, on Christian Union; Dr. Dawson on Primitive Dr. Arnot, on the Relations between Christian Doctrine and Christian Life, and Dr. Christlieb, of Bonn. The highest point was probably reached at the meeting yesterday, when Dr. Parker, of London, Dr. Hall, and Henry Ward Beecher, spoke on the Pulpit of the Age. It was impossible to compare where each address was so individual, but all were masterpieces of intellectual and oratorical and spiritual power, and during their delivery the immense audiences (for they were given to two audiences) were roused to the highest enthusiasm, and aens and hallelujahs might be heard from many lips, while others, less demonstrative, showed their deep emotion by silent tears. The conviction is deepened every day of the great importance and the immense and far-reaching influence of this, the greatest Ecumenical Council of our time. It will give an impulse to the Christian thought and life of our day which were impossible to estimate.

The hospitality of the Americans is unbounded. Free excursions to Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and the Falls are

but a few of the magnificent courtesies shown by the people of the American metropolis to their guests, and when it is remembered that they number about 400 the magnitude of the task will be realized.

A very interesting meeting was held on Monday evening under the Presidency of Dr. Crosby, Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly here, to take measures towards Presbyterian union through the world, and the formation of a great general Presbyterian Council. Assurances were cordially given of co-operation not only from the Presbyterian churches of Britain and America, but also from the great Lutheran Churches of Germany. Such a church would represent over fifty millions of people, and be the largest Protestant Church in the world.

Yours, &c., N.

New York, Oct. 7th.

### Union Discussion.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I feel gratified by the discussion in your columns of the questions involved on the proposed Union, as I believe it very desirable at present. Truth is not afraid of, but courts and profits by discussion and asks only "a fair field and no favour." "He that doeth truth cometh to the light that his deeds may be made manifest that they are wrought in God." It is needful, however, to this end that your correspondents be fair in their representations and respectful in their tone as far as is reasonably possible. With this impression I regretted to observe in a recent communication, signed "Presbyter," that he introduced his remarks on the subject of Mr. Middlemiss's by charging him with "cant" and other traits of a like contemptible nature. Though "cant" is considered a contemptible thing he does not attempt to show wherein it appeared, and I feel assured, after careful perusal of M's letter, that he would have found it very difficult or rather impossible, to justify the charge. Such epithets are used to engender scorn and contempt against the communications or causes to which they are applied. Nor has their use been most commonly indulged in by those who have the right on their sides or the proper advocates and exemplars of Christian principles. We are familiar with them rather from the lips and pens of scoffers against the best of causes, argumentations and men, and we know by very common and large experience that they are usually the resort of the unscrupulous from consciousness of the lack of good argument for their own positions. From such considerations and some others it seems to me the term referred to, with all its kind, should be excluded from the "Presbyter's" and Christian's category. They impress one with the feeling of the user of them that his spirit, if not his cause, has too much affinity to that large section of humanity of whom "haughty scorner is their name." For one thing they prove nothing against the parties or cause assailed by them—so can well be dispensed with in the cause of enlightenment in the truth while, as to their history, they are very often equivalent to odious slander, or unseemly in the lips of a Christian and awaken feelings on both sides which every lover of the cause of truth and amity should carefully avoid.

My regret has been renewed and increased by observing in Mr. McKay's Criticism (3rd Oct.), of Mr. Middlemiss's communication, a continuation on an extensive scale, of this abusive style and inexcusable misrepresentation. I propose therefore, Sir, with your permission, and to aid in the promotion of profitable and honourable discussion for my own sake and others, to point out some specimens from that criticism of what I complain. In his introduction Mr. McKay expresses desire to say anything unpleasant to Mr. M. or his sympathisers "as inoffensively as possible." I liked that the pleasure, of course, arising from the expectation of fulfilment. Immediately after this promise, however, he asks "to differ from your views of his (Mr. M's) letter as expressed in your last editorial," and adds "To my mind the letter is void of liberal 'Church spirit' and true 'manliness.'" He thereupon heaps on Mr. M. the epithets of "insinuating," "arrogating the right of judging the piety," &c., of others, "lording his views," and concludes, "He evidently thinks that no one values sound principle who does not in all things concur with him." This is strong at any rate, apart from its merits otherwise, and ought at least to be very well founded. Let us see. Compare the above with the following, which Mr. M. had said and with which his whole letter harmonizes. "I know that many persons of the most decided piety are strongly in favor of Union. Surely that shows from his own pen that he evidently thinks there are many who

value sound principle who don't concur with him in several things which he esteems of permanent importance. Mr. McK. had that sentence, &c., before his eyes. Has he then at all shown a desire at the very outset to express himself "as inoffensively as possible?" Reverse the phrase, "as offensively—unjustly so—as possible," and it will suit better. Mr. M. clearly indicated the very opposite of what his reviewer ascribes to him.

2. Another specimen. Mr. M. had said: "My conviction (of the impropriety of Union in the meantime) is strengthened by the fact that it is shared by a large proportion of the religious people that I am in the way of associating with. I have no doubt that the experience of others may be different, and I know that many persons of the most decided piety are strongly in favor of Union. But such is my experience. So far as my own personal religious associations are concerned, I find that aversion to the proposed Union is most decided on the part of those whose piety is most unquestionable." To a reader with any degree of judgment and candor, the above amounts simply to this, that while many decidedly pious are to his knowledge much in favor of Union, there are also many to his knowledge like himself opposed to it; and on this ground he proceeds to appeal to the brethren in his own Church favorable to Union to give that fact due consideration, and to endeavor to gain an amendment to the basis, which he suggests, so as to meet the conscientious difficulties of the latter. He evidently does not say nor mean that the Union proposed has had the effect of bringing the unquestionably pious on one side in opposition and bringing them out to view, thereby separating them as wheat from chaff, and enabling him now to associate with them. Yet that is what Mr. McK. represents him as doing! He first gives two-thirds of the last sentence of the above quotation. From that he exhibits Mr. M. as intimating "that the proposed Union has enabled him to associate and combine with those of most unquestionable piety." Of this he next makes a premise, coupled with another, and thence proceeds to deduce so no odious conclusions—that Mr. M. "becoming the arbiter" as to who are and are not pious, "he would rejoice in embracing the opportunity of separating the wheat from the supposed chaff," &c. &c.—all which his statement above, and the gist and tone of his letter throughout, contradict, while he expressly asserted, "I shrink from the very thought of disruption."

It would appear, moreover, it is from those references of Mr. M. to persons of piety that Mr. McK. thinks fit to charge him with the arrogance of "arrogating the right of judging the piety and principle of others." Surely Mr. M., a Christian minister, whose gifts, amiability, and piety many, like "Presbyter," admire—surely it may be admitted that he may be able to discern among his acquaintance those of them who give good evidence of piety. It may, I think, without making him justly liable to the vile epithet of arrogance. On that he simply made a statement of observed fact, while, as said before, he avows his conviction that many of that estimable character are on each side of the question at issue.

3. Mr. McK., after expressing "a high estimate of the tender, kind, prudent, and skillful manner in which those favorable to Union treated those opposed," says: "In their patient efforts to satisfy them, Union has been retarded these past years." Now this last sentence is as plainly contrary to the facts as it would be to say that but for Mr. McK. it would have been consummated in 1871. The Union (whatever may be) has not been retarded one year or one hour as yet by them, much less "these past years." It is only a fraction over three years since the negotiations were initiated in the church courts. The progress towards the present stage has been unprecedentedly speedy. There arose some serious difficulties about the Colleges after the Assembly of 1871, which was mainly shared in, and discussed earnestly, however, by those favorable to Union. But even that did not retard the progress, which could not have been more speedy.

If those favorable to Union shewed patience, &c. to those who opposed it, it must be admitted that the latter did not tax it much. They did present their difficulties from time to time during that short period, but not more or as much as they might, and they always did so quietly and respectfully. According to Mr. McK. even that was, in his estimation, a great trial of patience to the other side. Judging from his style and manner of treatment of Mr. M. for his respectful and temperate letter—which, by the way, he evidently addressed to brethren in his own church, not to Mr. McK. or his church—it is to be expected his impertinence and vituperation would have been incited were he among them, for their venturing to express any difficulties, and however respectfully. That those opposed were treated with "kill" may be admitted, for instance, the manner in which the Union Committee did not carry out the instruction to them of the Assembly of 1872, "to endeavor to secure in some way,

a deliverance in recognition of the Headship of Christ, such as should meet the views of all parties in the Church." But I know that even among those who rank as having been all along favorable to Union, there are many who did not advance that skill and other examples; and there are many of the favorable to Union whose favor for Union is very small and considerably mingled with a different feeling. In private intercourse this is frequently met with, while some have not been able to keep it in in Assembly and Presbytery, although they mean to go into the Union if the Church go.

4. And lastly. Mr. McK. observes, "Now, sir, I entertain the confident belief that I hold this important truth (the Headship of Christ over his Church) as fully and broadly as Mr. M. and his friends can do, although I do not laud myself so highly for doing so as he does."

To laud one's self highly is understood to be an odious thing, especially in such a connection and, in a minister of Christ, is radically opposed to the Word of God and the Christian character. Of course Mr. McK. knows that, and that he was in those words holding up Mr. M. to the public gaze as such a one. Yet there is not a word of self-laudation at all by Mr. M. on the subject or any other—unless a mild temperate expression of his mind on what he humbly and earnestly believes to be right and important on public questions—unless that be self-laudation, which it is not. I am forcibly reminded, by the incongruous accusation, of the known disposition of "sitters in the scorners' chair" to call undoubtedly humble, wise, and godly men "straightlaced," "bigoted," "self-righteous Pharisees," and the like. Nor does the other specimens of Mr. McK. advert to diminish the aptness of the similitude, but they confirm.

My object, Mr. Editor, in occupying your space at this time, is not to reply to Mr. McKay, but, as indicated at the outset, rather as a protest in my own name, and many others, I should think, and in the name of fairness, truth, and amity, against that style of vituperation and misrepresentation. I hope it may be of service, and am,

Yours respectfully,  
PRESBYTER JUNIOR.

18th Oct., 1873.

### The Proposed Basis of Union.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I wish to call the attention of the ministers, elders, and members of the C. P. Church to the proposed basis for Union and its accompanying deliverances.

The 4th deliverance reads, "That with regard to the modes of worship the practice presently followed by congregations in the matter of worship shall be allowed, and that further action in connection therewith will be left to the legislation of the United Church." I, and those with whom I act feel that this, if adopted, renders permanent some things of which we disapprove, and bids the whole church to sanction it knows not what. Is it a proper answer to this objection, "that the article does not sanction anything in the mode of worship which, so far as we are aware, contravenes the constitutional law of the Church?" Is one entitled to sanction what he does not know? All we ask is that the whole power which the separate churches have now been handed over to the United Church. The last clause of this deliverance leaves the United Church, (on this head), only the power to allow or prevent parties from diverging farther from the recognized practice. It is too much to ask that the piety and good sense of the Church of the future be left free to deal with the whole subject according to the 3rd article of the Basis.

But there are graver matters still. In the Assembly which met at Toronto, the 4th article of the Basis read, "That this Church, while cherishing Christian affection towards the whole Church of God, and desiring to hold fraternal intercourse with its several branches, as opportunity offers, shall at the same time, regard itself as being on such ecclesiastical relations to churches holding the same doctrine, government, and discipline with itself, as that ministers and probationers from those churches shall be received into this Church, subject to such regulations as shall from time to time be adopted." In this shape it was sent down to Presbyteries and Sessions, and reported on. I, the minutes of last Assembly the latter part of it reads "that this Church shall at the same time regard itself as being in ecclesiastical relation to the churches holding the same doctrine, government and discipline with itself, and that ministers, &c." As the article stood in 1871 the extent of the proposed relations was defined and limited: as we have it now, it is unlimited. In the Basis all evangelical bodies are divided into two classes, the one class we are to treat in a brotherly manner though we can have no church relations with them; with the other we are to have unlimited church relations, and if the expression "ecclesiastical relations" means anything, then those who approve of this article declare their readiness to become office-bearers or members in any of the churches that hold, that is profess to hold, our standards and our practice. I ask the sons of the Erskines and Gillespie, of Chalmers and Bam, if they are now ready to take their places in the present Established Church of Scotland? If so, why not at once say so and retain the phrase "in connection with the Church of Scotland?" Such a procedure would be mainly and the only proper one if the work of "the disruption" is accomplished; or the protest of the Free Church answered. I know that in May, 1873, a Committee was appointed for that purpose. Two drafts of an answer were laid on the table of the Established Assembly. The Committee was directed to do better, and report to the Commission

in August 1873, but the Commission met not, and I could never learn whether the Committee reported, or was discharged. Has the answer come at last? If not, what means the proposal? I cannot believe that any of our office-bearers are prepared deliberately to adopt this article, and in so doing, confess that we were either knaves, or martyrs by mistake. If any one can adopt it without a feeling of humiliation, I ask, if he is prepared to humiliate us who cannot do so, or drive us out of the Church, if only Union with others can be accomplished on his chosen basis? We do not wish to do any violence to the consciences of our brethren; is it too much to ask them not to do so to ours, or violate the compact so recently entered into, but rather to delay and let a new committee try to get what the old seems not to have attempted, even though enjoined by the Assembly of 1872, "to endeavor to secure, in some way such a deliverance as shall meet the views of all parties in this Church?" It is to me strange, that the committee so instructed returned to the last Assembly without implementing its instructions, and still more so, that it handed in as its main ground of justification, the Act of Independence passed by "the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland," in 1844, an Act, the very presentation of which in such circumstances, was an insult to the fathers of the disruption in Canada, and therefore to the whole Church. These fathers knew of the existence of that Act, they studied it, and regarded it not only as not justifying the conduct of those that passed it, but as not even an honest document, and designed to mislead the people. Nor is this all; our committee, instead of seeking a deliverance which we could accept, have given us a Basis far more offensive than that of 1871, and yet the last General Assembly, under the leadership of the very person who had drawn up the instructions which the committee set at naught, commended and thanked it, and approved of the Basis and deliverances as returned by it.

I regret exceedingly having to pen these lines, and wound brethren whom I love and honour, and I have been anxious to discharge this painful duty without giving unnecessary offence. I commend their motives and am satisfied they would not choose to treat me unkindly, but I am brought to bay and must no longer remain silent. I plead with them not to press me further. We do not wish to be separated from them but we cannot do what we know to be wrong. One of your correspondents warns us that the Free Church may treat us as it did those who would not join the Union in Australia. My answer to all such is, it will so much the worse for the Free Church. We are not bound to take it ourselves, or fulfil its wishes. If we are driven to take that step, we know there is one to whom we can appeal; for His honour and cause we witness, and He will not forsake us.

Yours truly,  
JOHN MAC TAVISH.

Woodstock, 8th October, 1873.

### Thanksgiving.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Can you explain how it has come to pass that the local Government of Ontario has so suddenly and so decidedly taken a stand on the subject of a Thanksgiving Day for the abundant harvest? All the leading denominations of the Province had, through their supreme courts or chief officers agreed upon the 16th Oct. as upon the whole most convenient and every way suitable. Neither Government nor Governor said anything on the subject for months when suddenly a week or ten days before the time fixed upon, there was an intimation given that the day fixed upon was not suitable, and that another altogether must be chosen. To say the least of it, this seems an abrupt, cavalier and uncalled for proceeding and scarcely compatible with ordinary civility and somewhat travelling out of the magistrate's proper sphere. When nineteen-twentieths of those who were at all likely to take any interest in the matter had agreed upon a day, surely if the Government could not conscientiously approve of the time fixed, it ought to have let the matter slide and taken no notice of it. Common civility even would have dictated this course. The result will be that there will be two Thanksgiving Days, and neither of them very particularly observed. Why all this unwelcome zeal? I have heard a reason given which surely is too ludicrous to be true. Do you know anything about it? It is, to be sure, possible that there may be a ground for Thanksgiving on the 6th of November which would not be available on the 16th of October. If so what is it?

A. M. S.

14th Oct., 1873.

[NOTE.—We are not in the confidence of the Lieutenant-Governor. It does seem rather brusque and abrupt to set aside the arrangements of the Assemblies, Synods, and Conferences in a purely religious matter, by the stroke of a pen and a mere *sic jubeo*. No doubt, however, there were reasons, though we cannot think what they were. We have heard what our correspondent seems to refer to but we agree with him that it is "too ludicrous to be true." The best plan would be to have a fixed day of the year as Thanksgiving day so that all could know and make their arrangements of business or pleasure accordingly. Surely there need be no fear that any year would come round in which the general feeling would be that there had been nothing in the occurrences of the season for which to thank God at all.—Ed. B. A. P.]