

Mr. McKay on The Union Question.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—I was purposing to transmit for insertion in your paper, the report, which has just come to hand, of a committee appointed by the General Assembly of the Australian Church, to "the parent churches," the object of which is to secure labourers for that extensive and needy field. Said Committee declares that "it is happy to say, that the Australian Church represents not one branch of the Mother Church, but of all the churches"—all the Presbyterian Churches in Scotland, and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. And therefore they appeal to all the churches for help. Still it appears that notwithstanding their united effort, and readiness to receive ministers from "all the parent churches," they are in pressing need of labourers to supply our capricious countrymen with Gospel ordinances.

My attention was however, arrested by the following quotation, which occurs in the last editorial of your paper. "When, however, as Mr. McTavish has shown the United Church is bound by its articles of Union to receive the ministers of the State Church, though avowedly or in sentiment or very broad in their theology, it may not be amiss to insist upon an article on the Headship. It may be said that this indicates suspicion. Nothing of the kind it indicates knowledge; knowledge of the fact that there are Unitarians and broad churchmen among the clergy of the Church of Scotland; and a perception of this result as flowing from Union on the proposed Basis, that the United Church would be bound to receive such men as Drs. Tulloch, Caird, Wallace and McKnight, without question or remonstrance." The italics are yours, and should be noted. Now, Sir, had the above sentiments been allowed to rest over the signature of Mr. McTavish, we should not condescend to take any notice of them. Any one who has had opportunity of hearing *ad nauseam*, his oral effusion, indulged in for many years, cannot be the least surprised at what he has written. One half does not yet appear on record. But we were somewhat surprised and much grieved to see these sentiments endorsed by your paper, avowedly published in the interests of Union. We had been entertaining the belief that his efforts to blacken the Church of Scotland, and especially his last letter, should have prevented every sensible Christian man, who had any respect for himself, from endorsing his sentiments. It is utterly inconceivable how any one who has proper regard for truth, or any thought of God's solemn warnings in his word against slanderers, could so coldly connect and subscribe such a letter. To us it appears an insult to Christian intelligence to find one that manifests such a spirit and so opposed to the Spirit of the Divine Master, setting himself forward, as the Champion for the Headship of Christ over his Church. It would certainly be wiser for him first to learn to acquire the mastery over his own spirit. What could be more reckless or more opposite to truth than to say that if the state required it, the Scottish Church must worship the Virgin Mary? Is there anything in the entire history that can justify such a statement? The Scottish Church always maintained the most consistent opposition to Popery, and never had any complicity with that church. For this we love her dearly. Another Presbyterian Church has been associated with Popery in Parliamentary efforts to weaken the influence of the Church of Scotland, but the Scottish Church never used her influence in concert with Papists, to encroach on a sister Presbyterian Church, or for other purposes.

While, Mr. Editor, we would not offer one shadow of a defense for unsound teaching in the Scottish Church, I trust you will permit us to offer some remarks on unsound teaching in self-defense and in the interests of justice. If we have to record what may not be pleasing to some, it must be considered that we have not been the aggressors.

As regards Dr. Tulloch, who is by general consent, one of the most learned Theologians and enlightened Christian Philosophers in Britain, whose work on Theism about twenty years ago, obtained the second prize out of nearly three hundred competitors of the most learned Theologians from all parts of the world,—it is readily admitted that he advocated more liberal subscription to the Westminster Standards; but we could never ascertain that he has ever advanced one word in his many writings, that could be found censurable by his Church. Had he done so, we are doubtless eagle-eyed heresy seekers in his own Church, who would have called him to account. As regards Drs. Wallace and Caird, they are called to account before their respective Church Courts. What then could any faithful Church do? It would surely be unfair to pass judgment on them before being tried before their several Church Courts, as was done in another Church in the case of Mr. McMillan of Carlisle. Is it not premature to condemn any church for heresy, for the utterances of individuals while they are summoned to answer for these utterances. And as regards Mr. Knight, he cannot as yet be a minister of the Church of Scotland. We know very little of him, beyond what we have read of him on trial before his own Church. Possibly he may have applied for admission to the Church of Scotland. On his trial he appeared to be a man of considerable ability, but he may yet be required to attend the Theological Hall of the Scottish Church before he can be received as one of her ministers. Other applicants from the same Church, after being licensed and preaching for years, had to attend our Theological Hall before they could be admitted. One of these sat beside me in one of our Scottish Theological Halls, when pursuing my studies there. It must be very manifest that Mr. McTavish must be sorely at a loss to prove unsoundness against the Church of Scotland, when he must travel beyond its charge, and compare Mr. McTavish's past and present utterances, the Church of Scotland must be in a very hopeful condition. Not long ago, according to his repeated declarations, the Church of Scotland was only a mass of unsoundness and corruption. Now he must travel out

side of our Church ere he can find a fourth thimble with heresy even by insinuation, but we should like to ask how the Church of Scotland can be regarded unsound on account of Mr. Knight, although he was actually one of her ministers. We find, as reported in your paper some time ago, that after trial by his own Presbytery, the Clerk of said Presbytery said in reply to a question put by an elder of Mr. Knight's congregation, anent the deliverance, "that the finding of the Presbytery did not convey the slightest degree of censure upon Mr. Knight, and did not in any way compromise his position in the Church." Should Mr. Knight be seeking admittance into our Church, what odium can reflect on the Church of Scotland therefrom? If Mr. Knight is the dangerous teacher that this accuser of the brethren insinuates, surely the odium reflects in those who gave him the exculpatory certificate. So much for the imputations of unsound teaching in the Church of Scotland, and the consequent danger of receiving ministers trained there.

Let us now inquire in self-defense whether anything of the kind may not be found elsewhere, whether our Church in Canada has not greater reason to fear unsound teachers from other Presbyterian Churches. The old adage will be found true here: "Those who live in glass houses should be careful not to cast stones at their neighbours."

Only last year Dr. Marshall, a leading minister in the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, published a book criticising the Westminster Confession of Faith. In this work he not only criticises the chapters in our Confession referred to in the proposed Basis for the Union of the Canada Churches, but also represents the teachings of "the larger Catechisms" as containing dangerous lessons. And this Catechism, he it observed, has been unanimously adopted as a Basis for Union by all the Canada Presbyterian Churches. Does any one suppose that Dr. Marshall shall be called to account by his Church? He knows well he need not fear this. He knows that similar sentiments have been repeatedly expressed by office bearers of his Church against the confession of Faith, and no Church Court took any notice of their sayings. And what Presbyterian does not know that an eminent Theological Professor in the same Church was arraigned before her Church Courts under the charge of erroneous teachings, and although he was never cleared of these imputations, he was continued teacher of Theology to the end of his days. This was the grand charge of the Free Church against her sister Church in their opposition to Union; nor can we discern why the minority succeed in preventing Union in Scotland, except on the oft repeated plea of unsoundness in the Sister Church. (Let us express the hope that those in this country who regard said Church their parent Church, will pardon us for adducing these things. It would never been done had we not been constrained by one that sits in your Church Courts. We are ready to allow that said Church has taken the lead of all the Scottish Churches and Colonial also, in Missionary operations. Again is it not well known that the late Dr. Candlish has set forth erroneous teachings in his work entitled "Fatherhood of God." Yet he was continued Principal of the new College to the close of his life, and his Church never summoned him before her tribunal. Were it to promote edification or advance morality,—we might advance nearer home, to specify circumstances of past years connected with Theological institutions not less discreditable, and which should lead the adherents of the Church of Scotland to be careful as to whom they would receive as Ministers of the Gospel. But although individual instances occur in a Church who are charged with unsound teaching, is it not uncharitable to represent the entire Church as a dangerous institution. Although Dr. Candlish has in one point transgressed the recognized limits of sound orthodoxy, it would be very unfair to bring a general charge of unsoundness against him or his Church. And can it be less unfair to condemn the Church of Scotland because Dr. Caird has expressed sentiments on a very abstruse subject—by some regarded as dangerous, while he declares that his words were misconstrued, and especially when his Church is sitting in judgment on him. It is manifestly impossible for any Church—the purest on earth, to prevent instances of this kind arising. What can any Church do, in justice to all, and annul such before her, and expel them when found guilty. This the Church of Scotland has done repeatedly, and this she will do again when circumstances require it. And we may safely challenge comparison with any other Church on earth in this respect. The Theological Institutions of no other Church—so far as we know—has exercised greater vigilance over the Theological teachers, and no other church has so uniformly demanded so high a standard of Theological training of all her students.

Now, sir, we should like to ask when, or if there is any prospect of there being an end of this abuse and vilifying of the Church of Scotland, and what possible good can result from it? It is more than questionable if any such persistent treatment of a Sister Church can be found in Christendom. According to the admission of this accuser, the proposal for Union did not originate with us. It came from the C. P. Church. This proposition was received in a kindly spirit, and, in good faith, we received the assurance from said Church, that "by-gones should be by-gones." And now when the majority in both Churches have declared favourable to Union, we are still woe after work pursued with the most virulent accusations. Did not the C. P. Church know the relations of our Church and her teachings before Union was proposed? If not satisfied with these, why propose or connivance Union with us at all? Why did not the Sister Church rather try to unite with the Methodist or Baptist, and leave us alone? Can it be supposed that any Church, having any respect for herself, could be driven into Union by such insulting means? The adherents of the Church of Scotland have been too long accustomed to bear "ill-reports" to serve us from our convictions by such means. Union or no Union, such a course can only be productive of much harm. We had been anxiously hoping there would be an end to the

onslaughts in your paper, that we might have circulated among our people. We should much prefer to have a Presbyterian weekly than any other; but while the vituperative effusions of Mr. McTavish obtain place and are endorsed, we should have as much credit from those who know his precedents, in circulating these sentiments, as if we circulated parcels of poison, truly labelled. And whether there is union or not, can it be assuring or comfortable for the ministers of our Church to come before the congregations of the C. P. Church, as we are sometimes required to do, with the imprimatur of your paper, of being dangerous instructors. It cannot serve to induce the adherents of either to join heartily with the Sister Church in districts where he cannot possibly have the ministrations of the Church of his early attachment. Can such a course serve in any conceivable way to promote truth or righteousness, or the interests of Union. What possible good can be accomplished by continuing to stigmatize us as Unitarian and so forth, without one shadow of proof? It cannot hurt us. It must injure those who indulge in it. If your paper should secure the laudable and rightful claim of helping forward the union of Presbyterians, allow me to assure you that it is not by adopting the unguarded statements of Mr. McTavish and his class. There can be no more effective method of putting a speedy end to all negotiations. We know not that any special benefit can accrue to ourselves as individuals from this proposed Union; and certainly nothing but what must be most unpleasant in prospect and worse in its accomplishment, if we are to be pursued with this everlasting persecution, because of our association with our beloved Zion. We desire union if it can be attained on honourable terms—that the principles of our Westminster Confession may be more extensively taught, and that every Presbyterian within the bounds of this vast and growing Dominion may have the means of sound Gospel instruction within his reach. But for myself I am constrained to declare—and I suppose that I express the sentiments of the entire Church—that if the sentiments of Mr. McTavish are to sway the General Assembly of the C. P. Church, there must be a speedy end of this correspondence on Union. We shall wait with some interest to see whether the C. P. Church shall endorse in any way his utterances, and as now terms in accordance therewith. If so, more than enough time has been spent discussing the terms of this proposed Union. We should dread becoming part of any Church, who would endorse his spirit or submit to his dictation. Indeed we might regard that Church as making hopeful progress to have done with his effusions, whether by Union or otherwise.

I am, yours sincerely,
ALEXANDER MCKAY.
The Manse, Eldon, 31st March, 1874.

The Basis of Union.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Might I request of you the favor of an insertion in the PRESBYTERIAN of the following decision come to by our Session and Congregation, respectively, on the Basis of Union, now before the Church.

On the eight of Dec., last, the Session, according to agreement at a previous meeting, resumed the consideration of the Basis of Union, and after a careful examination of its different articles, as also of the Resolutions accompanying it, the following decision was come to, viz:—"That this Session disapproves of said Basis of Union, as also of certain of the Resolutions herewith referred to.

1. Because, in the second Article, the larger and shorter Catechisms are not, as heretofore, included with the Westminster Confession of Faith, as *Standards* of the Church, but have assigned to them, in that Article a position of inferior importance, which deprives them henceforth of the weight which hitherto they possessed in the eyes of the Church as Symbols of her faith. The Session cannot but regard the fundamental change thus contemplated as most unwarranted, and as dangerous to the doctrinal purity and spiritual prosperity of the Church.

2. Because, that while the third Article, if taken alone, and unconnected with any Deliverance or *Resolution* on which might effect it, is unobjectionable, yet the utility and force of said Article is taken away by the adoption of the Fourth of the series of Resolutions that accompanies the Basis, which states—"that with regard to modes of worship, the practice presently followed by congregations in the matter of worship shall be allowed; and that further action in connection therewith be left to the legislation of the United Church." By this Resolution, those practices which have already crept into the Church, as to modes of worship, and which are not in accordance with her Standards, and which give great offence to a large number, if not indeed, to a majority of her members, but which have not as yet been sanctioned by the supreme judicatory of the Church, will, at the moment Union is consummated upon this Basis, not only be sanctioned and become law of the Church, but will even become a part of her Union covenant, and consequently of her constitution; and will thereby be, for all time coming, shielded from any interferences on the part of the church even if she wished it. Moreover, the Session has been led to understand from current report, and this report has not been contradicted, that into congregations within the Body in connection with the Church of Scotland, practices in worship have been introduced even more objectionable in their character than those that are nearer home, and better known to the Session. The Session believes that this circumstance ought of itself to be a sufficient reason why the Church should pause before assenting to the Basis as it now stands; it at once suggests the propriety and expediency of making enquiries into this matter, and of obtaining full information as to what "practices are presently followed," as to modes of worship, in the churches with which she is negotiating for Union, before she would give her consent to any Basis whatever. The Session, moreover, believes that there ought not to be any, especially for such a Resolution as the

one in question.

3. In the judgment of the Session there exists no reason for the fourth Article of the Basis, believing that the United Church ought to be left free to define and declare her relation to other churches as occasion arose; and ought, in the meantime, to avoid all entangling conditions and engagements in this respect. Besides, the Session has the most decided objection to the fourth Article, inasmuch as it introduces an element into the Church in regard to ecclesiastical relations hitherto unknown. By this Article the Church is again brought back into ecclesiastical relations with the Church of Scotland, which she has renounced, and which involves consequences which, if plainly stated in the Article, the Church would, without a moment's hesitation emphatically object to. By it we are required virtually to undo and condemn all that we, in common with others with whom we acted, has done and testified for, since the disruption, both in Scotland and in Canada. The Session cannot but view with deep sorrow the assent given by the General Assembly to the Basis of Union in its present form, involving, as it does, in each of its three main Articles, a retrograde action of a most serious character.

4. The Session further, considers the said Basis as highly objectionable and unsatisfactory inasmuch as it does not contain a distinct and full recognition of the Headship of Christ, both as regards the Church and the nations of the world. Such a recognition the Session regards as essential in any Basis of Union which may be adopted in the existing circumstances of the Church. But so far is the present Basis from containing such a recognition that not even in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, nor the most distant allusion to Him, found in it from beginning to end. Besides the grave impropriety of completely ignoring, in such a place as a Basis of Union, the Head and Lord, the Foundation and Saviour of the Church, there are special circumstances which in the present case render the omission referred to the more reprehensible, viz:—(1.) It is a departure from our present Union Covenant, of which the recognition of Christ's Headship over the Church and the nations forms an essential portion—a portion, indeed, so essential that but for it that Union would not have taken place. (2.) The peculiar position in which we stand towards the Presbyterian Church of Canada in connection with the Church of Scotland, imperatively demands that the clearest enunciation should be given of the Headship of Christ in any Basis upon which this Church might propose to unite with that Body. (3.) Inasmuch as the Headship of Christ is, (not by mere oversight or inadvertence) but intentionally and professedly, left out of the Basis, now before the Church, as a concession to the Church above referred to and as a condition demanded by her, and without which she refuses to consent to the Union proposed. By consenting to this condition, the Church would be openly dishonouring Christ in an aggravated form, in order to secure for herself the supposed advantage of Union with the Body in question, she consents to have recourse to the unworthy expedient of keeping her King and Head out of view in the transaction, and of suppressing her testimony hitherto borne for Him. This, in effect, would be, to sell for a consideration that which she ought ever to regard as sacred and infinitely precious, and which she is not at liberty to part with."

From the above decision one member of Session dissented.

At a public meeting of the congregation held a few days later than the date of the above, the Basis of Union was laid before the people, and, after the consideration was disapproved of, the congregation adopting the decision of the Session, above given, as the expression of their mind upon the subject.

Yours truly,
L. McPHERSON.

East Williams, March 16th, 1874.

[While giving the above, because the first Sessional finding sent us, we cannot insert any more beyond indicating the mere character of the decision.—ED. B. A. P.]

Canon Kingsley.

We have seen several attempts at describing the personal appearance and oratorical gifts of this gentleman who recently visited our American cousins, but none is more piquant than this from the *Golden Age*—

As to his delivery it was like that of most of our English cousins, simply abominable. His gestures were miracles of awkwardness.

Like Frodoe, he is tall, thin, and ungainly in person. He stands in one spot, his body moving backward and forward in the most awkward fashion; sometimes he holds his hands as if in prayer, then he intertwines his fingers, and then he varies this gesture by that which Hood describes in Sir Jacob Kilmasegar as "washing his hands in invisible soap, in imperceptible water," and sometimes he puts his hand under his coat-tails, lifting them as if he were standing before a coal fire.

Occasionally he thrusts both thumbs into his waistcoat pockets, and with arms akimbo, stands wriggling backward and forward in an attitude which is the perfection of awkwardness.

During all the lecture his face wears a perturbed and careworn expression. His forehead is furrowed with anxious lines, and his mouth sympathizes with the trouble of his other features.

As an orator Charles Kingsley is not a success.

But we believe that it is not considered in England "the thing" to be a good speaker. The more blundering and awkward an orator is, the more gentlemanly he is regarded—so we have been informed from what purports to be good authority.

Judged by this standard, Canon Kingsley is a perfect gentleman.

Forms of Procedure.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—When it is resolved to revise and purge a Roll of members, should there be a new Roll written, or simply add names omitted and erase names of those who had ceased to be members, stating reason therefor?

Is it in accordance with the rules of our Church to hold joint meetings of Sessions and Trustees? If such meeting is held should the minutes be recorded in Session Book or Trustees' Book? Should minutes of Session be read and approved before being recorded in Minute Book, or should they be submitted for approval of Session after being recorded?

When there has been an error in a Minute Book, either from mistake of Session Clerk or from business being done irregularly, should the minutes be expunged (by cutting out the leaf if necessary) or should there be a resolution setting forth and correcting the error?

By answering these questions through the columns of your paper you will much oblige,

Yours truly,
A Session Clerk.

(We shall be glad if some one of our correspondents gives the desiderated information.—ED. B. A. P.)

Church Psalmody.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—I have often been grieved, at the manner in which the singing is conducted in some of our Churches. I see in an article in your valuable paper, entitled congregational singing, that a good deal of blame is attached to the pastor but I think the congregation is to blame, and why. Is there a leader wanted, then he must have a good voice, and if he can sing a few tunes in a good high key that will do, although there may not be ten of the congregation able to sing with him.

Now, Sir, I think there are some qualifications required in a Leader, which are often overlooked. First, he should have a good knowledge of music, he can thus teach the congregation to sing second, he should have a good voice, so that it could be distinguished from all other voices, thus the whole Church would know how to sing, and not depend on each other so much, and sometimes lose themselves so, that they must stop to find where they are. Third, he must have a knowledge of the powers of the human voice. I think the want of this is one of the greatest hindrances to good Congregational singing in our Churches.

It is an understood rule in music, that all tunes are set in the key most suitable, for the majority of voices, although some tunes may be sung a note higher or lower, but some leaders having a high strung voice, pitch some tunes two or three notes higher than the key in which it is set, and as a natural consequence in the high parts of the tune nearly the whole of the Congregation break down, and becoming disgusted with everything in connection with the singing they sit in silence, and the singing is left to a few, and then we are pained with the seeming carelessness and indifference of the majority of the people. When the fact is they never have an opportunity to join in the praises of our God.

Before I conclude, I would say a word about choirs. We must have the best voices in the Church, for the choir. They meet once or twice a week to practice some new tunes, and out they come with a flourish. Before the people have time to learn them, out come some more. At last the people come to the conclusion that this is got up for their amusement, and they all sit dumb. Hoping that you will excuse this liberty,

I Remain,
A Congregational Singer

DIED.

On the 15th of March, at Metis, Que., Mary Evans, widow of the late Mr. Peter Logan, aged 86 years.

Official Announcements.

MEETINGS OF SYNODS.

MONTREAL.—Within Knox Church, Montreal on first Tuesday of May, at 7:30 p.m.

LONDON.—At London, on first Tuesday of May, at 7:30 p.m.

SEASIDE OF HAMILTON meets in First Presbyterian Church, Guelph, on the first Tuesday of May, at 7:30 p.m.

MEETINGS OF PRESBYTERIES.

LONDON.—At London, by adjournment, in 1st Presbyterian Church, on 1st Tuesday in May, at 11 a.m. Next ordinary meeting in Guelph, on 2nd Tuesday in July, at 12:30 p.m.

NEWCASTLE.—At Newcastle, (when Synod assembled) on the 1st Tuesday of May, at 2 p.m.

TORONTO.—At Toronto, on 1st Tuesday of May, at 11 a.m.

ONTARIO.—At Port Perry, on 1st of May, at 11 a.m.

HONOLULU.—At Honolulu, on the 1st Tuesday of July at 11 a.m.

GUELPH.—Next ordinary meeting at Guelph, in Chalmers' Church, on 2nd Tuesday of April, at 11 a.m.

MONTREAL.—At Montreal, on 1st of May, at 10 a.m.

STRAITFORD.—At Stratford, on 1st Tuesday in July, at 11 a.m.

OWEN SOUND.—At Owen Sound, on Monday after 2nd Sabbath in May, at 10 a.m., by adjournment; next ordinary meeting at same place, on 2nd Tuesday of July, at 10 a.m.

BRUCE.—At Kincardine, the last Tuesday of June, at 2 p.m.

DURHAM.—At Durham, on last Tuesday of July at 11 a.m.

SIMCOE.—At Barrie, on Tuesday 11th of July at 11 a.m.

PARRIS.—In Dunbride street Church, Paris, on Monday 14th April, at 11 a.m.

MONTREAL.—At Montreal, in Presbyterian College, on the first Wednesday of April, at ten o'clock for conference.

HAMILTON.—At Hamilton, in the Central Church, on the 2nd Tuesday of April, at 11 a.m.