

British American Presbyterian.

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TO CONTRIBUTORS AND CORRESPONDENTS.

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We invite the active cooperation of friends in every section of the Dominion, in order to secure a larger circulation for the British American Presbyterian, and to promote the interests of the paper by circulating it in every household of the Dominion, and by sending it to every church and society.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 1872.

UNION.

In our last number we gave our readers two communications on the subject of union, the one condemning delay, and the other advocating it. We believe the interests of union will thus be best served by affording every opportunity for courteous discussion, so that by June next, after the subject has been fully considered in Congregations, Sessions, and Presbyteries, the Assembly will be prepared to take action, with a full understanding of the differences of opinion that exist, and either consummate union at once, or delay action for reasons which are felt to be sufficient. There is much truth in what has been said as to practical issues and feelings being involved in the proposed union, and it is just possible that these require more careful consideration than has yet been accorded them by the Supreme Court. The Edinburgh Presbyterian puts the college difficulty in a very fair light in an article, part of which will be found in another column. It says: "Here is enough to put a drag upon the wheels, if there is not uncommonly careful driving," speaks of it as "a matter of administrative detail," and adds that there were "raised certain side questions of great importance." It may be well for those who hold the opinions of our Whitty correspondent to ask themselves whether, by having their attention so much directed to the manifest duty of seeking for union and the advantages to be derived from it, they may not have overlooked the delicacy and importance which attach to the objections felt by others, and may not have failed to show sufficient deference to opinions not coinciding with their own. The questions asked by "Cunctator" may be answered differently by different men; but there can be little doubt as to the feeling of the large majority of the Assembly, and that our other correspondent is right when he says, "the determination of our Church to unite with the Kirk has been unmistakably expressed in the Assembly by voting down every motion and amendment that threatened or was intended to postpone union indefinitely." Nay, we might add the majority would agree to any arrangement regarding Queen's College that the Kirk might insist upon, believing that, after union, the Church would and could do what then might be right. We have no doubt that, unless a change of sentiment is produced by discussion in the inferior courts, the next Assembly will at once vote proceeding to union, and arrange all interests afterward. As may be found expedient. Union first, as there is no reason for doubt, then everything else can be easily arranged.

Now, although we are anxious for union, and that without unnecessary delay; we are satisfied that to proceed as indicated above would prove disastrous to the Church, if an Assembly could be found so unreasonable as to attempt such a thing. This is not the "first union" which has been attempted, and it is not the first that has been delayed because "the logic of events" has not made it practicable. We must look at our position, and not act precipitately, nor in such a manner as indicates a

want of Christian dignity or disregard for our past history. There are reasons, and good reasons, why our haste should be deliberate. Congregations which are "weak and their ministers half-starved," because two small congregations insist on existing where one would do, may be blind to considerations which weigh much with others not so pressed; and our missions may also suffer for want of union. Yet it may be well to remember, as experience shows us, that union of the Churches does not necessarily produce union of congregations in particular localities, and might not relieve those who feel so deeply interested in its consummation. We may also just ask, if this rivalry has existed for a quarter of a century and it has been justifiable, is it not justifiable still, until a proper way be found of healing this schism?

We are then asked, what reason can you give, which is not a "pretext" why union should be delayed? To this we answer:

1. "There is a small minority in both Churches totally opposed to union on different but conscientious grounds." These are the words of our correspondent. Now we say that a reasonable time should be given for an effort to remove these grounds, if possible, and prevent violence being done to the conscience of the weakest brother. It is not well to bear down such a minority by force of numbers. Nor can we believe that these men will "make the most of any difficulty that may arise," possibly they may defer the union still longer." Such language can only irritate. Surely these brethren should be treated generously; and if, as is suggested, difficulties may arise producing discord, surely it is better that the cause of discord should be manifest and be removed before union takes place. Only this will union be a blessing.

2. Though Queen's College presents no difficulty to some it does to others. We admit that the difficulty is felt more generally among laymen than ministers, and that singularly, enough in some cases, because, as your correspondent says, "ministers have their passions and prejudices like other men, and are not generally slow to act upon them." Some laymen are afraid that if the Presbyterian Church had a literary institution, the temptation to accept State aid would be too great for its integrity, and therefore they insist that we shall not go into temptation. In this feeling we do not share. But a little delay, not three years perhaps, may remove the difficulty altogether; and if harmony can thus be secured, delay is gain.

3. The real difficulty, however, lies in this. If union takes place as proposed, we shall have four Theological seminaries in Ontario and Quebec. The Church does not need that number; and which shall be discontinued? Naturally the Montreal College is deeply interested in this question, as, if King's is continued, it must cease to exist. And the Kirk will give up its Theological Faculties. This is a question quite distinct from the continuance of a literary institution connected with the Church; and it is this that to many seems to interfere with the scheme for College endowment. If, we are asked, we have an endowed Theological College at Kingston, do we need other two in Toronto and Montreal? We think not. Time may be required to settle this also; and we think that time and good feeling will accomplish it.

4. The Assembly gave instructions to their committee in November, as to certain duties to be had in joint committee with the representatives of the other churches. The C.P. Church has considered the report of the Joint Committee, and given its deliberance on the matters therein contained. The Kirk on the other hand, though a special meeting of the Synod was called to consider the report, thought there was no haste and did not meet; and now no action can be taken by them on that report before June, nor do the other negotiating churches intend before that time to consider the report. Delay there must be, until such time as all the several bodies have considered the Joint report. Even if our Presbyteries approve of what was done in November, union cannot be accomplished before June 1873, unless special meetings of the Churches be held for the purpose.

While therefore we wish to hasten union, we see clearly that time must

elapse before the consummation. Two or three years delay is not unreasonably for a measure so important and delicate, and we earnestly deprecate a precipitancy which cannot possibly hasten matters and may give rise to new complications of a serious character and productive of longer delay.

We notice before closing a singular misconception which warps the judgment of our Whitty correspondent. He says, "the all-controlling reason of delay is to raise a certain amount of money," referring to the scheme for endowing our colleges. That scheme has unfortunately become mixed up with question of union. It is to be regretted that the resolution adopted by the Assembly in a certain measure has produced this opinion by referring to the intention of the church in that direction, and it is certain that many men cannot think of the one object as distinct from the other. Nothing, however, is more certain than that the endowment had become almost a necessity for C.P. Church, and that it was resolved to move in the matter at the Assembly in June on wholly other grounds. Union or no Union, we must have endowment. The latter may be delayed by union complications; but the raising of that money has nothing to do with delay of the Union.

WORDS OF CHEER.

We continue to receive many kind words—from ministers and laymen. It is needless for us to say that we feel greatly cheered by these numerous offers of sympathy and support.

"I wish," says an old and valued friend, "the undertaking very much success. As soon as I can, I shall bring the matter before my congregation."

Another minister writes:—"I like the appearance of your paper very much, and hope that it will be sustained. I will endeavour to get additional subscribers as I have opportunity."

"I am much pleased with the paper," says a layman, "and wish it every success."

An earnest minister states:—"I have been anxiously looking for the first issue of your paper, and during the waiting have endeavoured to prepare my people to support it. I look upon such paper as an absolute necessity of our Church; and, consequently, heartily lend it my support. Though I do not know what your views may be on many points, which are of importance to me, yet will do all I can to get your paper a good circulation in this neighborhood." [A sensible, practical way of giving assistance to an enterprise such as ours, which most requires a helping hand at the outset. It is the waiting to see how a paper is likely to succeed that has consigned many a literary venture to an early grave. We trust that all those favourably disposed to the British American Presbyterian may take pattern after our correspondent.—Ed. B. A. P.]

One of the active Ministers of the Canada Presbyterian Church in the West writes:—"I shall endeavour to find a suitable person to canvass for the paper, and do what I can to recommend it. If it keeps up to the standard of even the first number, so far as I can judge, it will be a decided boon to our Church."

"I am much pleased with the British American Presbyterian," remarks another minister. "The lack of such a periodical has been a great loss to the Church, and I hope that yours will successfully supply that lack."

We will conclude these extracts from letters of correspondents by quoting "A Presbyterian's" communication in full, embodying as it does the feelings of a large proportion of the Presbyterian public, and conveying a pretty clear idea of "the situation," both as regards the Publisher and the Church:—

Editor British American Presbyterian.

Sir,—I am delighted that you have seen your way to establish a newspaper specially in the interests of Presbyterianism, and sincerely hope that you may be abundantly successful in your enterprise. Such a paper is greatly needed, notwithstanding all the periodicals that are in circulation. There is a large class of subjects which needs to be discussed, but which the ordinary political newspaper, whether daily or weekly, as a matter of fact does not touch, and which, perhaps, at times as well as it does not. A considerable number of

not the worst people in the country begin, besides, to be rather tired, not of the discussion of political matters, but of their discussion in the coarse, unscrupulous way that is unfortunately too common with all descriptions of partisan newspapers. It is felt by these middle-aged and settled people of country life, in all countries, to be carried far enough, and they sigh for a change.

If you in some good measure meet the wishes of such, you will accomplish a good work. No doubt you will have many difficulties to encounter, and you run a considerable risk from various influences that may be arrayed against you. Success, however, is far from impossible, and a stout heart and steady perseverance will, I hope, carry you successfully through.

Presbyterians have really no means of communicating with each other, and we ought all, therefore, to be thankful to you for incurring the expense and running the risk involved in supplying such means, and each and all of us ought to do everything in our power to make the undertaking a success. With cordial good wishes, I am, etc.,

A PRESBYTERIAN.

MANITOBA.

The following extracts from letters addressed to the Contractor of the Home Mission Committee have been handed to us for publication. We give them a place in our column with much pleasure, and only wish that anything we can do or say might have the effect of advancing the interests of the Church in that Province:—

MANITOBA, LOWER PORT GARIN P. O., LITTLE BRITAIN MANSE, JAN. 15, 1872.

DEAR SIR,—I am requested by order of the Assembly to write to you again under the necessity of meeting the missionaries being sent here as soon as possible. The Presbytery failed to get any one to act as catechist, and we have no prospect of getting one in the Province. The Presbytery presses most strongly the necessity of more labourers being sent at once, or at least early in the spring. You are aware that our work is very much retarded, and in this season of the year especially it is impossible for us to visit some of the places where we have people. There are about fourteen Presbyterian families at the Third Crossing of White Mud River. Our nearest station to that place is Rat Creek, which is at least thirty miles from it. The Episcopalians have a missionary at White Mud River, and if we are not able to supply our people there before long our cause may be materially affected. I intend, if possible, to visit them about the middle of next month. The distance from this is about 120 miles. We have some families at the Boyne River. I do not know the number, but do not doubt there will be a large settlement there as close to White Mud River. The Boyne is about thirty-five miles from Headingley, which is our station nearest to it. We have people at Stony Mountain, a settlement about twelve miles east of Kildonan. All these places are unsupplied by us. The Episcopalians are giving occasional services at all these places, and have a missionary at White Mud. If we have there at least forty Presbyterian families in the Province to whom we cannot at present give any supply.

Mr. Fletcher has by far more work at the Portage district than he can undertake, and we have the same in this end of the settlement. Men can come at any time. Stages are running between Port Union and Breckenridge all winter. Do send us help. Souls are crying for aid. Our cause there is at stake if we do not take hold of these new fields without delay.

(Signed) JOHN McNAABB.

Prof. Bryce, after stating that he has written to three students now attending College, trying to induce them to go out and in two cases finish their studies in Manitoba, and showing how they may be supported and employed, says, "We are intensely interested in the Union here, and I think the same of my best folk are Old Kirk people, and I hope and pray that nothing may prevent a speedy and hearty consummation of the Union, which in this Province would be a great boon. My week, the Toronto Church and the College, is going heavier. You will no doubt see the letter I have sent Mr. Reid giving some account of the success with which God has been pleased to bless us."

There are fifteen students now in attendance at the College.

The Convention appeals to the young ministers of the Church, to the probationers and the students, and desires any one who may think of entering on the mission work in the North-West, to communicate with him at once.—Rev. John Laing, Toronto, Dec. 1872.

Real foresight consists of reserving our own forces. If we labour with anxiety about the future, we destroy that strength which will enable us to meet the future. If we take more in hand than we can do well, we break up, and the work is broken up with us.

THE ALABAMA CLAIMS.

A great deal of excitement has been occasioned in England by the claim laid before the Tribunal at Geneva, for compensation for indirect losses to the United States occasioned by the pirate ships *Alabama*, *Florida*, and *Shenandoah*, and the prolongation of the war which resulted from their depredations. The claim would be for fifteen hundred millions: a sum more like what comprising nation might extort from a fallen foe who had been in the wrong, than an indemnity, accompanied with an apology, from a neutral and financially powerful for a supposed infringement of its duties. The claim cannot, we suppose, be allowed, and as much as England has conceded to America for the sake of peace, we sincerely hope this will never be granted. There is something even worse than war with all its horrors, and abject submission must sooner or later be followed by suffering, if it will not contend for the right. The claims of England for the Confederate Bonds was disallowed, also the claim of Canada for compensation on account of the Fenian Raid. As seems to us, this claim of America must in like manner be disallowed. An offer seems to have been made at an earlier period by the American Government to accept twenty millions and settle the matter, but Britain thought that exorbitant. It may turn out that the claim is made merely for political purposes in view of coming elections, with the certainty of its being rejected; and the claimant Great Britain which will be held as good, may reduce her liability to seven millions, or at least the New York Tribune seems to hint. This much appears certain, that the wording of the protocols gives no direct countenance to claims for consequential or inferential losses, and hints the liability for what may have resulted from the failure of Great Britain to fulfil her duty in respect to each vessel separately.

Both governments appear to be decided in taking their positions, but they are temperate and happy have so far avoided irritating statements. It is to be hoped that a friendly settlement may be found; but it seems well that when too late their mistake, if they endeavour to secure peace by encouraging arrogance, or sacrificing the rights of any party. "Fiat justitia, ruat cælum."

THE GREAT WALL.

One of our Missionaries writing to the N. Y. Evangelist from China, thus speaks of its great wall. After seeing it at many points, I am forced to believe that it has never been of any service to China. It has proved a vain thing for safety. The greater portion of it presents only the appearance of a rough stone fence. It is, in fact, but a heap of small stones thrown together without mortar, except at the points near the gates. The most of it is not more than eight feet thick at the base, and it tapers abruptly, the two sides uniting in a ridge over the base, and only a foot or two higher than the base is broad at the top. The wall varies in size and strength. Near the gates and near the highways it looks more formidable. Seeing it at these points, at first I had formed an erroneous view of it, and supposed it to be about fifteen feet at the base, and about a high as, or a little higher than, broad. But even near these points the inclusion is such, that the wall is only a scale. I have scaled it repeatedly, and coming Kilgarn. I do not believe it was ever anything of a barrier to any enemy that could anything for the conquest of China. Seven centuries ago Genghis Khan, the Tartar chief, pierced it at one point he pleased, and his barbarian hordes swept across the whole land, bearing down everything before them. This is the "Great Wall," which has had been so long in building, at a levy, it is said, of every fifth man in the kingdom, and at a great deal of outlay of money, to be wholly useless. At present it is out of repair, and has been for centuries. A man on horse back could ride directly across it at many points, and here and there you will see that it has been wholly destroyed and cleared away.

An aged brother said:—"I have been giving of my means to the Lord's cause for many years, and have never lost anything by it. If I have not received it back in dollars and cents, I have in good feelings, and that is better than gold."

A good definition of the difference between the "old school" and "new school" was given by the Hon. J. B. Grinnell, of Iowa. "As near as I can understand," said he, "the children of the Old School Presbyterians are as soon as they are born, and the children of the New School Presbyterians are as soon as they know how."