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I. SPURIOUS RELIGIOUS EXCITEMENTS.

It is believed all thoughtful Christians are alive to the fact that religious excitements, which consist of temporary movements of the emotions devoid of any saving operation of the Truth on the reason and conscience, are equally frequent and mischievous in America. This judgment not seldom expresses itself in very queer and inaccurate forms. Thus: good brethren write to the religious journals grateful accounts of a work of grace in their charges, and tell the Editor that "they are happy to say, the work has been purely rational and quiet, and attended by not the slightest excitement." They forget that the efficacious (not possibly, tempestuous) movement of the feelings is just as essential a part of a true religious experience, as the illumination of the intellect by divine truth; for indeed, there is no such thing as the implantation of practical principle, or the right decisions of the will, without feeling. In estimating a work of divine grace as genuine, we should rather ask ourselves whether the right feelings are excited; and excited by divine cause. If so, we need not fear the most intense excitement. This misconception is parallel to the one uttered by public speakers, when they assure hearers that, designing to show them the respect due to rational beings, and to use the honesty suitable to true patriots, "they shall make no appeal to their feelings, but address themselves only to their understandings." This is virtually impossi-

ble power and sequence of natural law" were left unchanged—unsuspended as to all other nature around the scene!

And if we take all the great miracles wrought by Christ, "God manifest in the flesh," and attempt to apply Rev. Mr. Lyman's theory to them, we shall speedily find that theory worse than impotent. His talk about the "boomerang" and the "easy manipulation" by which, as he seems to suppose, the fixed belief of our blessed religion as to the nature and purposes of miracles has been overthrown "by our scientific opponents," as he is pleased to call them, are specially unfortunate.

Miracles are facts, and therefore capable of being proved by testimony like any other facts. Hume's shallow argument has been, long since, exploded. The very best trained legal minds, like those of Starkie in England, and Greenleaf in America, have demonstrated that human testimony is capable of proving the existence of a miracle so completely that to doubt is far more irrational than to believe. And the miracles, on which our faith stands, are proved by testimony many thousand fold stronger than that which proves any other facts that have ever occurred in this world.

R. R. HOWISON.

## REASONS FOR REUNION.

I gave in full, in my address before the General Assembly at St. Louis, the reasons that influence me to favor the reunion of the two great branches of our now divided Presbyterian Church. That address was taken down by short-hand reporters, and has been widely published in both the religious and the secular press. And some others have presented to the public condensed statements from the short-hand report of what seem to them to be the reasons by which I support the position which I have taken. Under these circumstances, it is not a matter of wonder that my views have been incorrectly reported in some points, and misunderstood in others. A stenographic report at best is but a photograph of the original address, the shadow of a substance. The representation of one's views made by others from such a report is but a pencil sketch of the photograph, a shade of the shadow of the original substance. In this way words have been put in my mouth which I never used and arguments have

been attributed to me of which I never dreamed. I am therefore grateful for the space accorded me in this journal to set forth, in my own language and over my own signature, a few of the reasons that lead me to desire the reunion of the two Presbyterian Assemblies of the United States, as soon as it can be effected on terms and conditions safe and honorable to both sides. I will state some of these reasons in the fewest possible words, and leave them to stand in their own strength or to fall of their own weakness.

1. The Church is the kingdom of Christ in this world, but not of it. It is a divine institution, and is one and the same throughout all dispensations, and in all generations. Under existing circumstances human weakness and imperfection render a plurality, and even diversity, of denominations unavoidable. But separate denominational organizations, so long as each holds the essential elements of Gospel truth in charity for, and in Christian recognition of, all others, do not destroy the unity of the whole Church. But there should be no more denominations than *there is a reason for*. Therefore each denomination must show a sufficient and justifiable reason for its separate and distinct existence. What are justifiable reasons for separate and distinct denominational organizations? Such a difference in articles of doctrines as cannot be reconciled in a common creed, or such a divergence in principles of polity as cannot be harmonized in a form of government, necessitates the formation of different denominations. The difference in doctrine or polity must be fundamental and irreconcilable in order to constitute a sufficient reason for denominational division and separation. On this ground alone can we justify the separation of the Church of Christ into distinct denominations as Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Baptists and the like. But this ground does not justify the separation of those of like precious faith and similar polity into sub-denominations.

It is permissible, and generally advisable, and may even be necessary, for those of like faith and polity existing under different human governments, or in different provinces of the same government, to be separated into distinct organizations; and so there are, very properly, the Presbyterian Churches of Ireland,\* of Scotland, of Canada, of Australia, of the United States, and so on. They are not different denominations, but the same denomi-

nation in distinct organizations for convenience of work and worship. And further, a total difference of race or language may justify the separation of those of the same faith and order, even when living in the same geographical territory, into distinct organizations. It may be totally impracticable for Presbyterians of different races or languages, even when living side by side, to mingle and worship together in the same congregations, or to work together in the same Presbyteries and Synods.

Does any one of these considerations justify the now divided and separate existence of the two great branches of the Presbyterian Church in these United States? They are identical in faith and of like order and polity, and now exist under the same government. It is admitted that there have been and may yet be significant differences between them at certain points; but, is the divergence now between them of such a fundamental and irreconcilable nature as to constitute a real and distinctive denominational difference? Let it be admitted that the Northern Presbyterian Assembly in the famous "Spring Loyalty Resolutions," at Philadelphia in 1861, did err and transcend the Constitution to the fullest extent ever charged. Did that action in itself constitute a sufficient reason for the division of the Church? We will let the Southern Assembly answer this question. In the famous Address of the Southern Assembly to all the Churches throughout the earth, adopted at Augusta, Ga., 1861, which, among other things, sets forth "the causes of our separation from the Churches in the United States," it is emphatically declared, "We frankly admit that the mere unconstitutionality of the proceedings of the last Assembly (Old School at Philadelphia, 1861) *is not in itself considered a sufficient ground of separation.*" That Address then goes on to justify the separation on the ground that there were *two countries*, the United States and the Confederate States, and says, "That the division into National Churches, that is, Churches bounded by national lines, is, in the present condition of human nature, a benefit, seems to us too obvious for proof." And now that there are no longer two countries, we, who favor the reunion of the divided Church, plant our feet upon the principles announced by the Southern Assembly in the very act of separation, and say, since the cause, which at the time constituted the *sufficient reason* for the separation, has ceased to exist, the reunion should now follow.

2. The same Address, while frankly admitting that the uncon-

stitutionality of the "Spring Loyalty Resolutions" did not in itself considered constitute a sufficient ground of separation, goes on to say, "the two Confederacies hate each other more intensely now (December 1861) than they did in May, and if their citizens should come together upon the same floor, whatever might be the errand that brought them there, they could not be restrained from smiting each other with the fist of wickedness. For the sake of peace, therefore, for Christian charity, for the honor of the Church, and for the glory of God, we have been constrained, as much as in us lies, to remove all occasion of offence. We have quietly separated." But now, since the Southern Confederacy has ceased to exist for more than twenty years, and since the hatred and prejudices engendered by the war have passed away, and since the people of the North and the South are now more harmonious in all the political, commercial and social relations of life than at any time for the last fifty years, this second reason assigned for the separation has also ceased to exist. Its removal is one more reason why the reunion should now take place.

3. The question of slavery, which was assigned as one of the causes of the separation, is now a dead and departed issue. Whether or not slavery as it once existed in this country both at the North and at the South was a sinful institution, is a question about which this generation concerns itself but little, and about which the future generations will concern themselves less and less. At all events, there is not enough in the now dead question of slavery, either in a moral or political point of view, to constitute a sufficient denominational basis for the continued separation of the two great branches of our Church. We cannot now find in this question a sufficient reason to justify our continued denominational existence.

4. There was at the time of the separation far more difference between the Boards of the Northern Assembly and the Committees adopted by the Southern Assembly than there is now. Both their Boards and our Committees have been modified in some important features, and they are now almost identical in theory and practice. At all events, there is not now enough of difference between them to form a justifiable reason to continue the separate existence of the two Churches as distinct and independent denominations.

5. It may be said that we are justified in continuing the separation because the Northern Assembly has, subsequent to the Spring Resolutions, passed a series of actions of a like political nature. If the passage of the "Spring Resolutions" in itself considered was not a sufficient reason to justify the separation, can the repetition of the same offence in itself considered be a sufficient reason to continue the division after the other causes for it have ceased to exist?

In regard to the "Spring Resolutions" and all similar actions of the Northern Assembly I will express my own views in the words of Dr. John B. Adger, taken from his very able review of the Northern Assembly of 1861, as they are found in the Southern Presbyterian Review for July, 1861. I was then a pupil in the Theological Seminary at Columbia where he was then the Professor of Church Polity. I received from him the views of this great question which I have ever since entertained and defended. He says, "With regard to the question of the right and duty of the General Assembly, or of the Synod, or of the minister in his pulpit, to enjoin upon the people their duty to the Government, we have no doubt whatever. We think in nothing was the weakness of the Southern Commissioners (in the Northern Assembly at Philadelphia, 1861) more manifest than in their constant, but vain, effort to disprove this right and duty. None have been more hostile than we to 'political parsons,' or to *untimely* intermeddling with civil affairs by bodies of ministers. But there are, without doubt, *morals in politics, which sometimes demand a testimony*. There is duty to God in respect to country and to rulers, to ancestors and to posterity. The second table of the law must be preached as well as the first. And not only may a Church-court, as we conceive, testify to the citizens, individually and separately, respecting their civil duties, but that Court may sometime, be required to testify to the nation itself. The nation is a moral person. \* \* \* It does seem to us if there ever was occasion when Church-teachers might legitimately have spoken, and were under obligations to speak, to the Church and to the Country, about duty and about sin, that occasion was when the last Assembly met (in Philadelphia, 1861). \* \* \* It seems to us to be the absurdest possible notion of our Church Government that the Confession of Faith forbids the Church-court from speaking out for justice and right and peace, in such a case as this. It

was their duty to testify to whatever might seem to them right in the premises." In the same article, Dr. Adger goes on to say that he could not see how any gathering of ministers and Christian men at that time could neglect to speak out, loudly and distinctly, their views of the war; and adds, that "*the only misfortune of the Philadelphia Assembly in 1861 was, their views were on the wrong side;*" but, he also adds, "it is their own responsibility if they speak for the wrong side." While holding in the main to the views of Dr. Adger as above set forth, we are now of the opinion that the Northern Assembly in the "Spring Resolutions," and especially in some subsequent enactments along the same line, went too far, and that many of the actions of that Assembly in the exigencies of the trying times were extra-constitutional if not contra-constitutional. But since the excitement of the war has passed away, that Assembly has done all that it can do to retrace its steps and to put itself right on the doctrine, which we proudly call *our doctrine*, "of the purely spiritual and non-political nature and province of the Church." After the Northern Assembly at Omaha has, *by a rising and unanimous vote*, heartily approved and reaffirmed the PRINCIPLES of the Missouri-paper, and adopted the said paper as the declaration of "THEIR OWN PRINCIPLES of the non-political and purely spiritual nature of the Church," I cannot see how any one among us can possibly demand that our brethren of the Northern Assembly should do more.

6. The question of organic union is one of reunion. On the removal of the causes that led to the division, the two Assemblies should reunite. If all obstacles in the way of reunion are not yet removed, it seems to me to be the duty of both sides to inquire whether or not the remaining difficulties are of such a nature as to constitute a fundamental and denominational difference between the two Assemblies. If they are only two branches of the same denomination, then let each yield as much as possible to the other, and thus let them meet and reunite, and together go forward in the greatest economy of men and means to possess the whole land. But, if, indeed, there is enough of difference between the two Assemblies to constitute a sufficient reason for the existence of two denominations, then let each go forward to possess the whole land for itself, regardless of the presence of the other in any part of the field. If we cannot unite with the Northern

Assembly, we have no right to forbid, or even to object to its presence and occupation in our Southern States.

7. The divergence in the interpretation of our common Standards, which led to the unhappy division of our beloved Zion, had its origin in times of great political differences and prejudices, and, there are yet opinions and sentiments on both sides which help to hold us apart, that strike their tap-roots down into a political subsoil from which they draw their life and strength. I do not mean by this that the point of difference between us *is itself a political issue*, but, that it had its origin in close affinity with certain political issues of a departed day. What is the historical fact that lies back of the popular names, the "Northern Assembly" and the "Southern Assembly." These words have not a geographical but a political origin, and carry in the minds of the people at large a political significance. In the popular mind, the Northern Assembly is regarded as representing the Presbyterian Church that *prayed for the conservation of the Union*, and the Southern Assembly as representing the Presbyterian Church that *prayed for the success of Secession*. It may be said that all this is a misconception of the origin and causes of the separation; but if it is a misconception, it is one that has gotten itself deeply rooted in the minds of the people. The Southern Assembly is sectional in its boundaries, and many look upon it as sectional in its origin and sympathies. The churches of the Northern Assembly in the Southern States are regarded by many "as Yankee churches." Some Northern people who come South to live, cannot connect themselves with our churches, because they look upon our Assembly as a sectional Church, and they do not wish to connect themselves with churches of the Northern Assembly, because there is, they find, in the minds of many of our people a prejudice against them which carries an influence into the social relations of life. Not for the glory of the Southern Assembly nor for the glory of the Northern Assembly, but for the glory of God in the more rapid progress of Presbyterianism in the Southern States, and throughout the whole land, I desire to see all prejudices against the Presbyterian Church in both its branches removed from the popular mind. For this reason I most ardently pray that the unhappy division in our beloved Zion, which had its origin in the times of a dreadful war, may be speedily healed, and that our Church may



not carry, in the very names of its divided branches, the memories of a bitter fratricidal war forward into history.

8. It is said that the Southern Assembly must maintain its separate existence as a perpetual testimony against the betrayal of the crown of Christ to the throne of Cæsar. Let it be granted that there have been cause and a call for this testimony; and thereupon we have two questions to ask. Does the duty of bearing this testimony to-day constitute a sufficient reason for a separate and independent denomination? Will not the popular name of the Southern Presbyterian Church, and the fact that it came into existence as the Presbyterian Church of the Southern Confederacy, obscure in the public mind the very point against which its continued existence is meant to be a standing protest? As soon as the present controversy dies away, if it does not result in the reunion of the two Assemblies, the great mass of the people on both sides will begin again to lose sight of the real points at issue, at first slowly and gradually, but, as the years roll on, with an ever-increasing forgetfulness. This was beginning to be the situation when the present movement toward reunion revived the old issues. And further, has not the testimony of the Church on the main point of divergence already accomplished its purpose? Has it not brought the majorities in both Assemblies into agreement on the question of "the purely spiritual and non-political nature and province of the Church?" Our Assembly at St. Louis approved of the principles of the Missouri paper in approving of the Minutes of our Missouri Synod without a voice of dissent or a word of comment. The other Assembly at Omaha heartily approved and unanimously adopted the same paper as the declaration of its own principles. And let us bear in mind that that paper is not merely the quotation of the paragraphs of our common Standards which define the non-secular and purely spiritual nature of the Church, but is the explicit declaration of "that peculiar interpretation of our Standards which affirms and emphasizes the purely spiritual nature of Christ's kingdom, and forbids her legislating on political and civil matters." And one of our Synods, which has been in the very front of the great controversy from the beginning, has declared its judgment in advance that the said paper constitutes the all-sufficient basis for the reunion which was the avowed object designed to be accomplished by it. Shall we now sit in judgment on our brethren at Omaha, and say that they did not mean

what they said? They are intelligent men; they have said just what they meant to say; they are sincere brethren, they meant just what they said. Let that paper stand as the end of the controversy, and be made the basis of the reunion; and then it will stand as a perpetual monument to the doctrine for which the Southern Assembly has contended for the twenty-five years of its separate existence. To reunite on that basis would not be to surrender this testimony, but to accept, at this last act, the other Assembly as a joint witness in it. This ought to be satisfactory to those among us who have carried "the peculiar interpretation" to an extreme point to which some others among us cannot go. I, for one, believe that the Church has the right, and sometime finds itself under obligation, not to legislate, but to testify and to advise in matters of public morals, even when they may involve civil and political issues. The Church has the right to testify against the evils of Mormonism, Sabbath-breaking, intemperance, and the like, and to advise its members to *pray* and to *vote* for the success of all legitimate measures to suppress all such evils, even if it should involve the use of the strong arm of the law of the Commonwealth and of the Nation.

I have not presented, in the above lines, a restatement of all, nor of the most important, of the reasons given in my address on the floor of the Assembly, in favor of the reunion of the two Assemblies; but have given a statement in my own words of certain points in which I have been misunderstood. And even now I do not hope to escape all misinterpretation. I know how easy it is to find a meaning, in the most carefully written words, of which the writer himself did not dream. I remember the famous expression of Richelieu: "Qu'on me donne six lignes de la main du plus honnête homme, j'y trouverai de quoi le faire pendre." One of his secretaries wrote as a test: "One and one make two, and one and two make three." "*Heresy* against the holy sacrament of marriage, and *blasphemy* against the Holy Trinity," cried Richelieu, "for one man and one woman, in holy marriage, make *one flesh*, and one Father and the two persons, the Son and the Holy Ghost, make *one God*." With such possibilities in human language, who can escape being misunderstood at some point in a controversy in which some of the points of difference are of such a delicate nature, and are so finely drawn, that it requires a microscope to trace the lines of divergence? But here I leave the dis-

cussion, praying the great Head of the Church, who is the God of peace and reconciliation, so to guide us and our brethren of the other Assembly that neither we nor they may insist on anything that cannot be righteously conceded; and that neither they nor we may concede anything it were criminal to surrender, and so that the final result of this movement may be for His own highest glory, and the sweetest peace and largest prosperity of His kingdom on earth.

JOHN M. P. OTTS.

### THE MORAL CHARACTER OF GEORGE ELIOT.

It has now been more than two years since the press of the Harpers gave to the reading public in this country "George Eliot's Life, Related in her Letters and Journals, Arranged and Edited by her Husband, J. W. Cross." The appearance of this book was greeted with that general interest which ever awaits the personal history of one over the discrepancies of whose life men have been hopelessly puzzled. More than one of the ablest reviewers of the age gave George Eliot's character as thus revealed a searching examination. Yet it seems to us that there are some phases of that character which have not been clearly exhibited. Certain floating straws, which showed the direction of the currents of her being long before they took their sharpest bend, have not been pointed out. And we are only now arriving at the proper focal distance from which to view both the book and its subject with a fairness which shall err neither by partiality nor by prejudice.

Mr. Cross has earned a praise almost unanimous for the manner in which he has discharged his part of this task. The method which he has adopted is almost original with himself, and presents, along with some difficulties, not a few manifest advantages. George Eliot, not he, is the great *Ego* of this book. There is something almost pathetic in the self-forgetfulness with which he labors to enhance her reputation. If he fails in this, it is not from any lack of devotion. He relates her Life as she herself tells it in her Letters and Journals, contributing himself nothing more than the cord on which his selections are most admirably strung.