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Miscellaneous Articles.

UNITY, PEACE, AND BLESSEDNESS.

A SERMON, PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, IN THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, NEW ORLEANS, MAY 6TH, 1858.

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"Be of one mind; live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."
2 Cor. 13 : 11.

UNITY, PEACE, and BLESSEDNESS are the three thoughts which shine forth from the text, in the blended rays of Divine truth.

May the Head of the Church help us to speak and to hear, to the glory of His name.

I. "BE OF ONE MIND."—Be unanimous in your general views of religion. So this part of the text may be interpreted. Let there be no division among us in regard to Bible doctrine, Christian experience, or religious duty.

1. DOCTRINES are the glory of revelation. When sin had smitten with death the souls of our original parents, the dawn of the first promise of a Redeemer came to the world with the joy of angels, and with hope to lost men. The atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ is revelation's substance and glory. As our blessed Lord was born and ascended to Heaven again, with the retinue of witnessing and glorifying angels, so his atonement upon the Cross receives the homage of all the promises, prophecies, and providences of unfolding redemption. Every promise in the darkness of the old dispensation twinkled with the God-light of Jesus Christ. The prophecies, like attending guards, relieved each other with renewed strength to watch over the advent of the Son of Man. All the

providences were the demonstrations of God's ceaseless care of his truth, and were the perpetual memorials, in the vista of ages, of the great principles of salvation. Doctrine is the basis of the temple, which goes up with the shoutings of "grace unto it." The truth makes free. The truth is the instrument of sanctification. The truth establishes the soul, by Divine grace, in its new life of love and joy and peace. Doctrines are essential, inborn characteristics of the plan of salvation. They are the mountain ranges which traverse the system of the world of grace, whose solid strata are old as the eternal ages; from whose sides flow down rills and rivers to gladden the earth; and whose peaks lift up their heads to the skies, in the grandeur and mystery of heights inaccessible. Let all who depreciate doctrine, acknowledge their want of sympathy with God. Truth and love are the majesty of His throne. "The word of the Lord endureth forever." God "has set his glory above the heavens," but never above his law. His word is the reflection of his own nature, perfect, glorious, and everlasting.

The Church ought to be unanimous in regard to the *nature* of Christian doctrines. The crucifixion of the Son of God, as an atoning sacrifice for sin, is the representative doctrine in the scheme of grace. Oh, what a sight to the universe is Christ on the cross! Incarnate Deity was crucified! Rocks rending, the vail broken, the sun darkened, the earth quaking, the dead arising—these are sympathizing testimonials to the great moral phenomena of sin overcome, Satan vanquished, mercy triumphant, and Heaven opened to a rebellious race. The churches of the Reformation enjoyed a substantial unity of belief. The doctrines of original sin, total depravity, regeneration by the Spirit, justification by faith, electing love and persevering grace, resurrection from the dead, and eternal retribution in heaven or hell, received universal homage. The world never loved these doctrines and never will love them. Error tampers with them, ignorance misrepresents them, depravity rejects them; but out of every trial they come forth bright with intenser purity; out of every condemnation vindicated with higher honour; out of every conflict triumphant with greater victories.

The Church of God should *guard* these holy doctrines with a holy vigilance. Be of one mind, brethren, as to the importance and value of creeds and confessions. The ingenuity of perverse interpretation is unwilling to submit to tests which expose its object. Creeds are by some declared to be hostile to freedom of inquiry, and to liberty of conscience; by others they are received for "substance of doctrine," or for shadow of truth. No wonder that errorists dread them. Confessions of Faith framed from the Bible search out heresy with the mighty power of discerning and uncompromising orthodoxy. Honest creeds explain the word of God; hold it forth with terrible discrimination to alienated minds; form a bond of union among the intelligent and pious, and tend to keep out invaders from the holy hill of Zion.

Let us "be of one mind" in *preaching* and *teaching* these doctrines of salvation. The Presbyterian Church has been truly characterized as a doctrine-loving Church. Doctrine is the basis of effectual instruction. Exhortation, good in its place, degenerates into sound, when unaccompanied by appeals to the understanding. Moral essays and philosophical speculations are disingenuous substitutes. God moves the heart through the mind; and the mind through the truth. Doctrine must be preached and taught with zeal and earnestness, with passionate sensibility, in demonstration of the Spirit, and with power. It must be taught, not only in the public preaching, but in the forms of the Catechism—of the renowned Catechism of the Westminster Assembly—a Catechism, which boldly, simply, expressively, conveys the sublimest truths of God to the minds of children and youth. It is the religious master-work of question and answer. Through Divine grace, it has catechized many a soul into the gates of Heaven; and its very echoes, sent back to the earth, urge to perseverance in the "good old way" of teaching sinners to "glorify God and enjoy him forever."

Let us "be of one mind" in magnifying the importance of doctrine, in receiving the old doctrines of the Bible, in guarding these doctrines by creeds and confessions, and in preaching and teaching them with all zeal and fidelity in approved forms, "till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto perfect men, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

2. Again, unity in regard to the views of *Christian experience* is of the utmost consequence to the Church. Truth is promotive of godliness. Those who are favoured with purity of doctrine are bound to hold it in purity of life. Orthodoxy is associated in dull and inimical minds with want of spiritual devotion; whereas, the true knowledge of God is the natural and spiritual antecedent of holiness. God himself is infinite in knowledge and infinite in holiness.

Christian experience has its *origin* in the power of the Holy Ghost. "Be ye of one mind," brethren, in reference to the true source of spiritual life in our fallen nature. Error imperils immortality. God alone can give life to the "dead in trespasses and in sins." "Which were born *not of blood*;" what has human genealogy and birthright to do with the heirship of heaven? "Which were born not of blood, *nor of the will of the flesh*;" how can the fleshly will of a fallen creature originate holy affections, since "that which is born of the flesh is flesh?" "Which were born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, *nor of the will of man*;" how can men accomplish for others that great change, which they cannot produce in their own souls? These three negatives exhaust all supposable cases of human instrumentality. The renewed nature does not have its source in anything in our parents who preceded us; in our own

wills which have no power to originate it; nor in the will of any other human creature, necessarily and equally impotent. What then? What is the only other conceivable supposition? "Which were born, not of the blood, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, *but of God.*" The only possible author of regeneration is God himself. And as the power is divine in its source, it is infinite in degree—"the working of a mighty power, which he wrought in Christ when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places." It is the power which raised Christ from a human grave to the throne of the universe. Oh let the Church ever be of one mind, in ascribing the glory of conversion to the blessed Spirit of grace and might!

The work of grace is, in its *nature*, a *progressive* work, in the experience of the saints. They "go on from strength to strength." They "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus." "Not as though they were already perfect," but they "press toward the mark." Behold the verdure of spring, how renewed life expands in the leaf and the bud, which grow up in gladness to their perfect form; blown about, indeed, by rude winds and stormy rains, and yet nurtured into maturity by the invigorating roughness of elemental strife. So the Christian has growth in the implanted power of quickening grace. "He is like a tree planted by the rivers of water." The inward struggles of his spiritual nature show his weakness, but develop his strength. The rage of principalities and powers, the fierceness of natural lusts and passions, the temptations of the world in their ten thousand forms of searching, ceaseless, terrific exposure, only teach him how to live, and stand, and move, and grow, and act, to the praise of the riches of renewing and sanctifying grace.

The *evidences* of conversion are in holy living. "By their fruits ye shall know them." Let no man say, "we have Abraham to our father." Let no confidence be placed in Church organization, or in sacramental grace, or in outward rite, or in the form of sound words, or in visions and dreams, or in old experiences, or in mere external morality, or in the soothing judgment of flatterers and self-deceivers, or in enthusiastical frames of mind. The greatest test of conversion by the Spirit is in walking in the Spirit. "For they that are after the flesh, do mind the things of the flesh; and they that are after the Spirit, the things of the Spirit." "For whom he did foreknow, them also he predestinated to be conformed to the image of his Son." Likeness to Jesus Christ is the great aim and result of the plan of redemption. The Church is to be presented to her Lord in the attire of spotless holiness; changed into his image here "from glory to glory," she is in Heaven to possess his perfect image "face to face."

Vital piety should ever claim in the Church uniformity of mind. Let us take care that the Gospel be preached by faithful men. Let us take care that the Church receive into her communion, so

far as human administration can secure it, true sons and daughters. Not numbers; not the mighty, or the learned in fame; not the self-confident in character; but the poor in spirit, the children of penitence and faith, the broken-hearted, the baptized of God, the pure in heart, and the holy in life—these constitute strength in the Church; these bring glory to the eternal King. Christian experience should ever preserve its true relation to Christian doctrine. Be of one mind in regard to the source, and nature, and evidences of conversion; to the true meaning and power of religious experience.

3. Once more. "Be ye of one mind" in views of *Christian duty*; be unanimous in advancing the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the utmost of all capability, in the individual believer, or through organized Church effort. Christianity first recreates, and then sends forth into service. It makes anew, in order to set to do. The work of advancing the cause of redemption is co-work with God. To help forward the kingdom of the Son of Man is to sympathize with his life of benevolence, his mediatorial sufferings, his exalted intercession, his universal dominion. He came to "seek and save that which was lost;" and it is the disciples' privilege of dignity and opportunity of grace to rise up to the divine employment of saving souls from death.

Fathers and mothers of the Church, be ye unanimous in self-denying and persevering efforts, through Divine grace, in impressing religion upon the minds of your children. Never can there be a substitute for household education. The family is the church in the house. After the flood, God gave the bow as a pledge of perpetual seedtime and harvest, and he gave the covenant as the pledge and channel of salvation to the children of believers, until the harvest of the end of the world. The covenant with Abraham was a family covenant; and the Divine promises, like the coverings of the tabernacle, curtain with miraculous texture the cradles of babes. Oh, said Richard Baxter, if parents did but do their duty to their children, few souls need be converted under the preaching of the word.

The carrying of the truth to living men by the living ministry is the divinely appointed method of public aggression upon the world lying in wickedness. And the Presbyterian Church, in Divine providence, is of one mind in doing this work in the name of the Church, and under the authority of the Church. Being absolutely unanimous in our views of the duty, and of the methods of evangelizing the world, what we lack is, to press forward in our plans. By the mercy of God, by the sufferings and death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the wonderful effusions of the Holy Spirit, Go ye out, and possess the land, for ye be able to bear your part in the great militant service. During the year, three great events, in Providence, seem to be summoning the Church to renewed activity, as with voices from earth, from hell, and from heaven. First was witnessed what was called the financial crisis, when we beheld

the world proclaiming calamity to worldly enterprise, and denouncing from her shrine her own worshippers. Satan, too, with a rage indicative of the last conflict, summons Moslem and Brahmin to do and to dare against the saints of the Most High. But hark! A voice from Heaven declares that "the tabernacle of God is with men." "Behold, now is the accepted time, and now is the day of salvation." "Ministering spirits are sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation." Supplications ascend from household altars, from the marts of commerce, from halls of promiscuous assembly, from Zion's holy sanctuaries. The windows of mercy are opened, and men out of every age of life, and every profession of pursuit, turn to the Lord with songs and everlasting joy.

These events of Providence reaffirm, with Divine authority, the great commission, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature." Let us work in sympathy with the times and the seasons. Let us, with one mind, press, to the full capacity of well-doing, all our Church instrumentalities for the spread of the Gospel. Let education, domestic and foreign missions, publication and church extension, pursue their world-conquering aspirations, in connection with all other private and public methods of salvation, until there shall be an ingathering, shadowed forth, indeed, by the present awakening in the land, but whose power, mightier in the degree of gracious display and grandeur in the extension of its scenes to every continent, shall bring forth resounding praises in full exulting unity with the everlasting song, "Unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the lamb forever!"

"Be ye of one mind" respecting doctrine, religious experience, and Christian duty.

II. "LIVE IN PEACE."—This is the second injunction of the text. Living in peace is a true correlative of being of one mind. Spiritual congeniality of feeling sweetly accompanies agreement in sentiment. Heart unanimity is a glorious form of religious oneness. Having attempted to catch some glances of mental unity in the sublimity of its heights, let our eyes rest upon the meadow-land of peace, watered with its quiet stream, and rich with the loving landscape of the wisdom and goodness of God.

"Be ye of one mind; LIVE IN PEACE."—Religion is "first pure; then peaceable."

1. The *nature* of the peace recommended, includes *love to our brethren* in Christ, and *good will towards all men*. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth, through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another, with a pure heart, fervently." To live in peace, is to love the saints of Christ. Our blessed Lord laid great emphasis upon the kind treatment of every soul redeemed by His blood. "Verily, I say unto you, inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Hence the urgency of the injunctions: "Be kindly affectioned one to another; in honour

preferring one another." "Let brotherly love continue." "Love as brethren; be pitiful, be courteous." Yea, we are even commanded to "lay down our lives for the brethren." All who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and in truth, have claims to our brotherly regard, to our religious sympathies, to our self-denying deeds, and, of course, to a life of peace in our intercourse with and conduct towards them.

Good will towards all men is also an element of a life of peace. True benevolence of heart seeks the good of others and never their harm. "As much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." "I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you."

A disposition, therefore, to love as brethren those who bear the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to cultivate benevolence and good will towards all men, is an effectual guarantee of a life of peace. This disposition is contrary to our natural temperament; but when acquired and nurtured, peace follows in its train, and glory from above goes before it.

2. The *obligations* to peace are manifest and manifold.

(1.) Peace is the *fruit of the Spirit*. "We have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." The Holy Spirit is the author of all spiritual loveliness, and adds "to godliness, brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness, charity." "Ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another."

(2.) *The good of the Church* is another of the obligations to live in peace. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity;" it is good in itself, and it is a pleasant and commendatory exhibition of the power of the Gospel. The Church suffers immeasurably by needless and sinful controversies. The controversies in our own Church, in past years, however necessary on the side of righteousness, produced much serious injury. Divisions in the Corinthian Church impaired its early glory. Contentions end in every evil word and work, while peace brings honour and power into the gates of Zion.

(3.) *The happiness of the individual* is an obligation to live peaceably. The stirrer up of strife among brethren is, first a murderer, and then commits suicide. He destroys his own peace of mind in his work of injuring others. Deadly and tormenting are "hatred, variance, emulation, wrath, strife." How widely different is the peacemaker! "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God."

(4.) *A regard for the salvation of others* is an obligation to live a life of peace. Much evil is done to thousands who are without, by unamiable exhibitions of spirit, and by a persistence of controversial inclinations, which savour not of the things that be Christ's. Many a controversy has turned away hearers from the instructions of the sanctuary, and thus incidentally, and at times more directly,

has tended to their perdition. Oh, let us "have peace one with another," if we would foster the highest influences in winning sinners from the error of their ways.

(5.) The *Heavenly state* shows the obligations to a life of peace. No angel in glory disturbs the harmony of the heavenly abode; no saint in light provokes discord among the perfect ones in Christ Jesus. The spirit and the conduct of all the holy in glory persuade to peace the children of our erring race.

In view of such and so many obligations, let us endeavour, brethren, to "follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."

3. The *manifestations* of peace in our lives, may be briefly illustrated in reference to our own Church, and in its relation to other churches. *In our own Church*, the manifestations of peace consist, in part, in a kind and conciliatory treatment of *all sectional questions*. Few strifes are more violent than those of this character; nor is the Church free from them. The mighty torrent of political agitation, which has its periodical seasons of high overflow, sometimes crevasses inundation into the rich and cultivated possessions of the Church. But, instead of contention, such a crisis demands harmony. All Christians must learn to bear and forbear with one another. Fortunately for the Presbyterian Church, the world has not only witnessed a mutual forbearance in different sections of our country, on one of the most divisive of all sectional questions, but also a substantial agreement in the principles, which underlie the whole subject. Whilst other parts of the Christian Church have dis severed connection with each other, in fearful scenes of hostile discussions and of harsh acts, the Presbyterian Church has been enabled, by the grace of God, to preserve peace in her General Assemblies by a series of deliverances, which, taken as a whole, will command eventually the admiration of the Christian world. The meeting of our body in this great city of the Southwest, the capital of the first slave territory acquired by the United States, is, itself, a telegraph to the whole country of the peace which prevails among Old School Presbyterians. At a period of intense general excitement throughout the land, it may be affirmed in advance, that, on whatever other questions divisions of sentiment may arise in this body, its peace cannot be interrupted by discussions on this one. And the reason is, not that the General Assembly ever has, or ever will, compromise principle, before God or man, but because its deliverances have been made in the light of Scriptural truth; received, perhaps, with some shades of difference, but acquiesced in and acted upon in the spirit of Christian moderation. May God enable our beloved Church ever to hold forth and maintain the principles of Christ in regard to all moral and religious questions; and exhibit the graces and glory of a life of peace, by preaching the Gospel to all classes in the community, white or black, high or low, bond or free,—Anglo-Saxon, French, German, Irish, or African!

Another mode in which peace may be exhibited, consists in avoiding the dangers arising from *parties, formed in admiration of men*. Although the idea of leadership is foreign to the principles of a Church, which recognizes in her public bodies, an entire parity among both ministers and elders, yet intellect will always receive homage. There is, perhaps, a tendency to honour genius above its real aims or claims; and one of the dangers of the Church has always consisted in divisions, growing out of the transcendent influence of the intellectually gifted. The general sentiment of the Presbyterian Church is so thoroughly and eminently conservative, that no serious troubles are now apprehended from this quarter. Our most influential men fortunately possess, at the present time, the confidence of the whole Church; but, if we would avoid trouble and live in peace, it is wise not to enlist under the banner of men. Whilst "one says, 'I am of Paul, another of Apollos, and another of Cephas,' is not Christ divided?"

A life of peace may be further manifested in the Church, in our *personal intercourse with our brethren*. Happy is he who lives with prayer on his lips and with love in his heart! Oh, how lovely is a loving man! Human infirmity often sins against fraternal intercourse; sometimes by omission, sometimes by commission, sometimes without premeditation, sometimes by a form of language which gives rise to an unintended interpretation, and sometimes, alas, by a wilful outbreak of anger, followed by a sad experience of penitence and mourning.

Fathers and brethren! May the manifestations of peace in these and in all other respects, show our prevalent desire to serve God in all sincerity, wisdom, and meekness; and may the world say of us, with an admiration compelled by our peaceful lives, "Behold, how these Christians love one another."

The manifestations of peace in *our relations to other Churches* may be shown in two particulars: by avoiding a too ambitious or prominent display of our own denominational peculiarities, and by avoiding unnecessary controversy about the peculiarities of other denominations.

Presbyterians, so far as I am aware—although being one of them, not, therefore, an impartial witness—but so far as I am aware, Presbyterians are not specially obnoxious in the community, for the exclusiveness of their religious claims. They, indeed, love their own Church, as a dutiful child loves a precious mother, who has nursed with tenderness, consecrated to God with faith, and trained up for heaven with zeal. But Presbyterians love all other evangelical Churches,—all "mothers in Israel,"—to whatever tribe in the true commonwealth they belong. It is sufficient, and I hope not too much, to say, that Presbyterians do not unchurch other denominations; that they always recognize as brethren, the ministers of other Christian Churches; and that they have never exalted either the Lord's Supper or Baptism into the necessary

means of true access to God on the part of the penitent believer. At the same time, it cannot be affirmed that Presbyterians are never guilty of pressing some of their denominational peculiarities too far. Perhaps, at times, we may all have transgressed in this particular. At least there is danger of it. Let us be on our guard, and not give unnecessary offence to other Churches, but endeavour to "live in peace" with all our brethren.

Another temptation in our relation to other churches, is *unnecessary ecclesiastical controversy* with them. Let me not be misunderstood. There are times and seasons when it is the duty of Christians to follow controversy, to resist error, to "contend earnestly for the faith." Praise be to the God of Zion, for the champions whom he raised up in periods of danger, to protect our banner upon the ramparts! Yes, brethren, there is a time to fight; we have all seen that day, and may live to see it again. But there is too much controversy; there is a time for peace. Although we may not agree with the denominational peculiarities of other Churches, it becomes us to cultivate their fraternal intercourse. When controversy is forced upon us, it, of course, cannot be avoided; but we may so live as to disarm controversy of much of its offensive and aggressive power. Above all, our Church need not contend with other Churches in regard to externals, which do not necessarily involve error of doctrine. For example, an Episcopalian may hold to the Apostolic succession, as Cranmer did, in a sense that does not exclude the acknowledgment of the ministry of all evangelical Churches, or may defend the rite of Confirmation on grounds perfectly consistent with religious toleration. Other points might be specified. The principle of peace is, for all churches to endeavour to hold the peculiarities of their own inalienable liberty in a way that does not encroach upon the liberty of others. It is preposterous for Christians to be always contending with each other, even although they differ on important doctrines. Not unfrequently, the best policy is to let a controversialist alone. The best way to make him a peaceful man, is to let him weary himself with brandishing his weapons in the air. As a common thing, it is believed that a disposition to controversy is not favourable to the character of any Church. The Scriptural rule is, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." The nature, obligations, and manifestations of peace, enforce the wisdom of this Bible requirement.

May God give grace to his people to cultivate unanimity of Christian feeling. Let us all "pray for the peace of Jerusalem." "For my brethren and companion's sake, I will now say, 'Peace be with thee.'"

"Be of one mind; live in peace, and the God of love and peace will be with you."

III. First *Unity*, then *Peace*, then *Blessedness*. "The God of love and peace shall be with you."

What a hopeful indication of the blessings that follow unity and

peace is found in the very names here claimed by God! He is the God "of love and peace." The Head of the Church appropriates to himself a character that insures the prosperity of all his creatures, who possess the same moral attributes.

God is the God of "love and peace." Love goes with "peace;" and he is called the God of peace, *first*, because he is the source of all peace. He is the only, the all-sufficient, and the inexhaustible source of peace to angels throughout the universe, to the saints made perfect in light, and to human beings upon the earth. *Secondly*, God is the God of peace, because he alone secures peace to any of his creatures. As he is its source, so he is the author of it in others, wherever it is found. He originates it in created mind and cultivates it, and preserves it as the "prince of peace." And *thirdly*, he is the God of peace, because he takes infinite delight in its exhibitions among all who serve him, on earth or in heaven.

"And the God of love and peace shall BE WITH YOU."

1. He will bless his Church *with the indwelling of his Holy Spirit*. The Spirit delights to abide with them who love one another. "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace, of them that make peace." The cultivation of the graces of religion is impeded by divisions, "for where envy and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work." The Spirit has often been grieved away by the absence of love among brethren. He has been quenched in the hearts of individual believers, in the circle of the household, and in the sanctuary of the Most High. Oh, how often have revivals of religion been hindered or arrested by some rising jealousy, or disaffection, or disagreement! How often have meetings of Presbyteries, and Synods, and General Assemblies, been deprived of the presence and grace of the Holy Spirit, by ill-tempered zeal, and unfraternal conduct! If we would enjoy the presence of the God of grace, we must "endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." "Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thy health shall spring forth speedily." "Moreover, the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days, in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound."

2. Again, "the God of love and peace will be with you," to *enlarge the prosperity of the Church in his providence*. The Church makes the greatest progress in times of inward peace. When all her members love one another, see eye to eye, and work hand to hand; when prayer and supplication are united and fervent, when there is no division in doctrine or policy, and no alienation among her members, then her records show a power of advancement unknown to the evil times of discord. It is just twenty years since a number of our brethren organized a secession from the General Assembly, on principles deemed by them lawful. Since that period

the Presbyterian Church (Old School), has enjoyed unity and peace, and her prosperity has been wonderful. Her 1200 ministers have become 2500; her 110,000 communicants have become 250,000, and her 1600 churches have become 3300. The Gospel has been preached by her in almost every State in the Union. Her domestic missionary operations are on a magnificent scale, from north to south and from east to west. Her foreign missionary stations in India, China, Africa, and among the North American Indians, show a world-reaching influence of evangelistic operations. Her academies, colleges, and theological seminaries, everywhere testify to her enlightened zeal for education. Her Publication Board is scattering far and wide volumes of truth, for the healing of the nations. God is emphatically enlarging her borders and strengthening her stakes. With continued unity and peace in our councils, our Church, which is the largest national Church in the land, will go onward, with increasing prosperity, to win souls to Christ, and bring nations to the obedience of the faith. "Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad with her, all ye that love her;" "for thus saith the Lord: Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream." "Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces."

3. Once more, "the God of love and peace will be with his loving disciples, to *crown them with salvation in his glory.*" "The meek will he beautify with salvation." The unity and peace of earth shall end in the large rewards of heaven. Our blessed Lord, in his last prayer, had in special view two things: the unity of his Church in its estate below, and its glory in the world above. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may also be one in us; that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. . . . Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that *they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me.*"

Thus it is, that unity and peace terminate with Christ's glory, in the bond of everlasting blessedness.

Fathers and brethren of the General Assembly, I claim your indulgence before closing this discourse, whilst I appeal, in behalf of unity and peace, in the name of the faithful dead in Jesus Christ, who have gone to sleep since our meeting last year in Lexington. They have done with all the labours, strifes, temptations, and cares of earth. They have gone up to "the General Assembly and Church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven." The venerable form of Father MOODY, saint-like and lamb-like, will never more bless his brethren among the springs of Pennsylvania. AULD, of Florida, gifted in mind and heart, and abundant in missionary labours, even to the overburdening of a frail frame; his body shall yet be full of vigour, and his crown wear the ever-

green of heaven. SHANNON, of Ohio, earnest in life, was no less earnest to depart, and to dwell beside the river that makes glad the city of our God. FINLEY, of Alabama, logical, candid, open-hearted, was wasted by disease, until his noble intellect became impaired; but he recovered his reason in the very hour before his final departure, and soared away into fulness of light. EDMUNDS, of New Jersey, youthfully energetic, with all the clothing of aged humility, went away in the vigour of years into the land where work is no more toil. Dear DANIEL BAKER, of the Lone Star State, with his tongue of truth and heart of flame, shall no more preach Jesus on earth, either in the new or in the "blessed old States;" but hundreds of stars shall flash the light of Christ's glory from his crown of rejoicing. DERUELLE was struck down by the visitation of God, in the woods of North Carolina, like a towering pine riven by a thunderbolt. WYLIE, of Tennessee, was rapt away from these scenes of darkness, in the holy mystery of a sorrowful and unsearchable providence. BROWN, descended from that noble spiritual ancestry of Virginia, which is loftier than the boasts of worldly genealogy, has gone to the fellowship of "the first born of every creature." JOHN C. YOUNG, of Kentucky, a prince of Israel in personal presence, character, acquirement, position, influence, and usefulness, and whose concern for Centre College was like that of Elijah for Bethel, has gone upward amid the exclamations, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel and the horsemen thereof!"

On Ganges' banks, "where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile," behold a company of beloved missionaries awaiting death with meek and undaunted spirit, before the double threatenings of Brahma's vengeance, and the false prophet's curse. The serene dignity of the disciples of the Lord in the hour of danger, exacts, as with the authority of their king, forbearance from the wonted personal indignities. The last prayer is offered from submissive and exultant hearts, and incense like, it is wafted to heaven, whilst the dark smoke of murderous musketry palls the dead bodies of FREEMAN, and CAMPBELL, and McMULLEN, and JOHNSON. Blessed followers of the martyred Stephen! Before ye "fell asleep," saw ye not "the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God?"

All these ministers of the Church, with a score of others, not less faithful, who have died during the year, and whose memorials will survive the scrolling up of time, admonish all of us, who remain, of our duty and our doom—of the divine contingencies, which, in another year, may make as strange selections of death—unexpected always to the living, but by God's grace, made welcome to the dying.

Fathers and brethren! Know we not that these departed servants of Christ, could they return to earth, would "seek peace and pursue it?" Oh, how the visions of heaven nurture unity and love!

Soon our own earthly labours will end, and we be laid in the grave, with guarded repose, until the resurrection. For us, pastoral relations, Church Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and General Assemblies, will very soon be no more. In the name of mortals ready to be transfigured into immortality, in the name of the spirits of just men made perfect, in the name of the Mediator of the new covenant, the Lord of all, "whose blood speaks better things than that of Abel," I beseech you to be united in the truth, and to love one another. "Be of one mind, live in peace, and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

THE PLANTATION BURIAL.*

"WE turn in here," said my friend, after a ride of five miles among the hills of Central Virginia. Dismounting, I opened the gate in the high worm fence, and we passed through. The morning was one when the heavens seemed lowering, and the air burdened with moisture. As we rode slowly over a private forest road, nature seemed weeping; each leaf had its drop pendent, ready to glisten as it exhaled in a sunbeam, or drop chilly and sadly upon the travellers who rode beneath the low branches; and the grass looked silvery with the condensed vapour which stood in tiny globules upon each spear or stalk. A well-beaten road, on which were frequent fresh carriage-prints, with horses' footmarks in a bridle-path adjoining, was followed nearly a mile through the woods. "Here lives Mr. H.," said my companion as I sat in a reverie, and we passed first a large tobacco barn, then a group of farm buildings and hovels on the left, and at last drew up where a row of carriages stood in a semicircle about the front gate. In the adjoining grove, saddle-horses were hitched by their bridlerins, and servants stood ready to receive all who came.

With that quiet step with which the house of mourning is always approached, we joined a group of planters at the door of the mansion. A gloomy, rusty hearse was near by, and inside the hall was a coffin, the dread house appointed for so many living. The locality was beautiful. The old brick double house was embowered in a grove of aspens, locusts, and maples. Fully a mile from the public road as it was, yet it was not too retired, for in its ample surroundings all of comfort and happiness might have found a safe lodgment. It seemed independent of the world outside.

Truly, not only is death at work on the sea, or busy selecting his victims from amid the city's densely packed crowds, or even choosing to rifle hearths of village homes, where many may join in

* This interesting account of a "Plantation Burial" is taken from the "*Christian Intelligencer*," of New York, the able paper of our Dutch Reformed brethren.—ED.