

a return for her generosity to us in this matter. In making this admission with regard to the indirect benefits resulting to us from our partial exclusion from the vast market on our southern border, we are far from meaning to imply that that exclusion has not been an incalculable injury to us as well as to our neighbors. An influential English journal remarked the other day in effect—we have not the copy before us as we write—that the relation between Canada and the United States for some years past has been one of commercial hostility. That is the simple fact, obvious to everyone who has cared to observe it. We are far from believing, as many of our people seem to do, that the fault has been wholly on the part of our neighbors. It has been that of both parties, and it has done great injury to both, not only in obstructing that mutual trade which a wise and beneficent Providence so evidently designed to be for mutual advantage, but in creating to a greater or less extent feelings of distrust and bitterness where the relations should be those of the most cordial goodwill and confidence. At present, happily, the outlook is more hopeful than it has been for at least a decade. True, McKinleyism dies hard, as does every system which enriches and makes powerful large classes, while tending to weaken and impoverish the masses. But the turning point has been reached. The nation is on the return route, and the wheels, however they may be obstructed and clogged for a time, are not likely to be turned again backward. It cannot be that Canada will be slow in following so good an example. May we not hope from present indications of popular opinion that she will outstrip her great rival and take the lead in the path of commercial reform? Much as we appreciate the increase of our trade with British and foreign markets, we are fully persuaded that our highest prosperity can never be reached until we have again free interchange of products with our next-door neighbors.

Want of space forbids even an allusion to other grounds for our confidence that Canada is shortly to enter upon a new era of progress. We close with brief mention of one which we deem in the highest degree important and significant. We refer to the prominence which many of the most influential newspapers in Great Britain are now giving to Canada and Canadian affairs. This is largely due, no doubt, to the excellent position taken by our products at the Chicago Fair. This fair, by the way, deserves mention by itself as an event which has helped most beneficially to bring the great resources of our country into such prominence as they have never before had. We cannot doubt that our record there will have a powerful effect in directing to our shores a larger share of the kind of immigrants whom we especially need, the agricultural classes. But to return to the newspapers. Who can doubt that great good must result from—to specify no

others—the remarkable series of articles on Canada and its affairs, resources, and prospects, which have been appearing for some weeks in the *London Times*. We say “remarkable,” not that the writer does more than simple justice to our country, but because that great journal has never before opened its columns to anything like so full and fair a discussion of Canadian affairs. Too often such brief references as have been made to our country were written from so insular a standpoint, and showed so scant an acquaintance with the resources of the country and the genius and institutions of its people, that they availed little in extending the knowledge which might be so useful to the people of England as well as to us. But in this instance the subject is being treated fully, and with such evidence of correct and ample knowledge, in the main, that, though all Canadians may not assent to every statement or view of the writer, all must agree that a great service is being done to Canada and to those in England who are interested in learning about Canada. In giving to its readers such a series of papers the great Metropolitan journal is vindicating once more its claim to a leading position among the great newspapers of the Empire.

#### THE RELATION OF CHURCHES TO THEIR CREEDS.

An interesting article appeared from a Roman Catholic standpoint upon a recent and still unsettled “heresy” case in one of the Protestant churches. The tenor of the article was to contrast, on the one hand, the protracted and public discussion inseparable from the trial through the various church courts, and the division frequently occasioned by the settlement, which proved no settlement, with Rome’s simple plan by which the matter in dispute is referred to the Roman Curia, and the thing is done. Rome speaks, and the matter is at an end. A heresy trial, as in our Protestant churches, is unknown in the Papal communion. This aspect of the case received an instructive illustration in a series of articles in a leading review from the pen of a Roman Catholic theologian, which articles were broaching some rather revolutionary views regarding both the theology and administration of the Papal church. One of his superiors not only challenged his position, but charged him with rebellion against constituted authority; to this he replied, that hitherto the church had not spoken authoritatively on these matters, which were therefore open for discussion, but should the Holy Father signify his disapproval, he would at once concede the points at issue. In this connection it will be remembered that during the last Vatican Council the infallibility of the Pope was discussed, but since the dogma was decreed, it has been accepted, and now to doubt would be sin. *Roma locuta est*, let the world keep silence and obey! It must be confessed that Rome has a masterly method of dealing with heresies, and her subjects have well learnt to how to constituted authority.

Protestantism with its “liberty of conscience” cannot consistently follow such a course; true, there are instances in abund-

ance of churches that have cast out from their communion those who have departed from their articles or confessions, but scarcely upon the ground of a declared infallibility; in fact, the articles of the Anglican and the confessions of the reformed churches explicitly state that general councils and synods may err. Rome never errs, *semper eadem*. This indicates at once the difference between the Papal declaration of faith, whether by decrees of Council or by Bulls from St. Peter’s chair, and the creeds and confessions of Protestant Christendom; the one is the absolute declaration of truth, the others are the rather pacts or covenants for fellowship; the former may be capable of development and of adaptation, but not of change; the other may be modified, changed, even put aside and new compacts formed. Of course while the confessions are accepted, they are held to be true, and as truth to be finally and faithfully held, but the admission that they are the utterances of fallible men interpreting the infallible Word of God takes from the absoluteness claimed for the Papal decrees, and lays them open to revision; as a matter of fact they have been in most cases, if not in all, revised from time to time, and each revision claimed progression in the declaration of the truth. This characteristic of Protestant confessions and of creeds at once removes them from that class of covenants which demand adherence to every clause and word, inasmuch as they admit fallibility. Thus it comes to pass that as in the strict interpretation of law, injustice may arise, to correct which we distinguish between law and equity. So with confessions and creeds as covenants of fellowship, there is recognized the distinction between the spirit and the letter; the real difficulty is to trace the line beyond which the letter cannot be construed as allowing transgression or divergence, and the true divining of the spirit; to that aspect of the question we presume to indicate certain precedents or facts; any position taken, or apparently taken, must be held as tentative, the facts will be unquestionable.

This seems certain; all revision of creeds or confessions, or modifications thereof, must begin from within the body whose standards are to be revised. Instrumental music was long held to be at variance with both the standards and traditions of a church that in influence has never taken a secondary place; had they who agitated for a change “gone out,” as some argued that they should in all honesty, there would not only have been divisions, but on one side practical stagnation. None now regret that the party of a broader liberty eventually had the day. It must be admitted that the Articles of religion accepted by the Anglican clergy are in theology Calvinistic; it is as certain that a very large section of that clergy is anti-Calvinistic. The statement of a noble lord a generation ago is exaggeration, no doubt, but not devoid of truthfulness, that the Anglican establishment had Calvinistic articles, an Arminian clergy, and a Romish rubric. Here certainly a church not only comprehended more than its creeds would cover, but accepted even contradiction to the letter thereof. The Presbyterian churches in large measure stand in a similar relation to their Standards. The premillennial theory is utterly at variance with the eschatology of the Westminster Confession, nevertheless many of those who have subscribed to that Confession not only hold, but aggressively teach, that theory, and are not only tolerated, but even accorded official positions in their respective