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"I am in the place where I am demanded of Conscience to speak the truth, and therefore the truth I speak, impugn it whoso list."—JOHN KNOX.

Toronto, November 23, 1893

The Bounties of Providence.

TO-DAY Canada, as a Dominion, gives thanks to God for the blessings of a bounteous harvest. Thanksgiving Day is an old and a sacred institution. It is well that the day is set apart by the state, for thus we make as a people a public acknowledgement of God's good hand in His providence. We hear it too often that this observance with this meaning, is old fashioned and that all the Government is entitled to do is to proclaim a general fall holiday. May that day never dawn on Canada! If antiquated ideas be true let them stand, nay they shall, in some form or other, stand. Thanksgiving Day as an institution gathers strength as the years roll by, for sacred associations accumulate around it giving it a strong setting in the affections of the people. Of course much depends on how it may be observed. If it be put to the real purpose for which the day is set apart, if it be a real day of giving of thanks, then it will be perpetuated. Looking over the past year, God has been kind to Canada. Amid financial disasters and commercial catastrophies, she has held her own quietly and safely; she has had no political upheaval or strife, her harvests have been abundant, her people prosperous, her laws respected, and her peace undisturbed. Her seasons have been favorable for the farmer and her climate never more salubrious than during the past year. What is true of our country is true of the Church, upon whose operations a blessing has rested from on high. There is no individual who has not something to be thankful for, some token of mercy and of grace. God's children ought always to praise Him, who is their continual help, and on the day of Thanksgiving their hearts will go forth to the Source of their life and comfort. Those still outside the fold, who know not their obligations to their sovereign God, are still in the place of hope. Theirs it is to thank God for a waiting Saviour. One and all owe everything to God, and to-day as these words are read may hearts feel and lips own the debt.

Still a Live Issue.

SLOWLY but steadily the machinery of the Church is pursuing the Briggs' case to its conclusion. The noise of the old battle was again heard last week at the meeting of the Presbytery of New York. The question arose on the resolution of a committee appointed to report on the theological education of candidates for the ministry. The committee reported "that students shall not pursue their theological studies in seminaries disapproved of by

the Assembly, and that no candidate can present himself for licensure without fully complying with these instructions. This was plainly meant to hit at Union Seminary, and it was so regarded by the Presbytery. But the old lines were not observed. Rev. Dr. Hall and Rev. James P. Ramsay, both anti-Briggs men, could not agree to the resolution, the former holding that the committee had confounded the receiving of candidates with the matter of licensure. Ultimately the report of the committee was allowed to stand over to a future meeting. It was significant that the tone of the President of Union Seminary was conciliatory and apologetic instead of defiant and threatening.

Almost alongside the meeting of Presbytery the friends of Rev. Dr. Briggs met in Cleveland to decide upon common action. The result of their communings was a circular in which the case for Dr. Briggs is once more placed before the Church in a circular letter prepared by a committee consisting of Rev. Drs. R. W. Patterson, J. P. Egbert, A. S. Fiske, N. Millard, H. C. Haydon, Prof. Francis Brown, and E. E. White. The points taken, although neither fresh nor particularly well constructed to be effective, are very interesting. They are set forth thus:—

We, the undersigned ministers and elders of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, being seriously concerned in view of certain facts and tendencies in our Church, hereby make the following statement:

First—We believe that the General Assembly has no right to impose upon the Church new doctrinal statements under the guise of interpretation, whether by deliverance or through judicial process, and further, that interpretation of doctrine by the courts of the Church ought always to be strictly within the letter of the standards, and with sacred regard to the broad and generous terms of the reunion of 1870.

Second—We believe that the most scrupulous care should be used in all trials for doctrinal divergences from the standards, especially now when a large majority of the Presbyteries have expressed, after much deliberation, their dissatisfaction with our Confession of Faith, as it stands, their desire for its revision, and, many of them, their desire for a new creed. We view with grave concern procedures at such a time, conducted to severest sentence, by what seems to us interpretations of our standards strained beyond their letter and far beyond any just regard for the compact of the reunion.

Third—We believe that no court of our Church has a right, by deliverance or resolution, to rebuke or otherwise to seek to suppress respectful action by judicatories below it, expressive of their anxiety and apprehension concerning anything in the Church which seems to them to imperil the constitutional liberties of the Church or of any of its members. The right of petition and remonstrance must not be denied in the Church of Christ.

Fourth—We believe that the interpretation of one or two phrases in our Book of Discipline, as meaning that a prosecuting committee should become from the moment it enters on its work, independent of the court which appointed it, capable of living on even after the judicatory has died, and of prosecuting after the judicatory has acquitted, is a strained interpretation, leading logically to many absurdities and easily possible miscarriages of justice. If these phrases are fairly susceptible of such interpretation, they ought to be eliminated from the book.

Fifth—We believe that it is no part of the constitutional power of any court of the Church to warn honest