

tude of the Roman Catholic Church at the Parliament. We know what its attitude hitherto has been with regard to its own absolute authority, the right of private judgment, the liberty to discuss doctrines before the laity, and the practice of joining in common prayer and praise with those outside of its own fold. Probably it would still assert in words its old positions on those points. But its adherents will judge, as everyone judges, not by words but by deeds. There is a very rigorous logic in facts, and a logic that is understood and pressed home by the common people. If Cardinal, Archbishops, Bishops, and priests may unite in religious services on a common platform with men and women of other forms of faith, why may not the laity do the same? If it is right to inquire, to investigate, to compare, to hear courteously what we believe to be the erroneous beliefs of others in the Hall of Columbus, how can it be wrong in any other hall? Every morning the vast audience united in praise. Never did I hear the long metre Doxology sung with more fervour. Then, on the first day, Cardinal Gibbons led us in the words of the Lord's Prayer. On another day we were led by a Presbyterian, on another by an Anglican, on another by a Methodist, and so on. I envy not the man whose heart and soul did not exult with joy as he joined in these devotions, or the man who would seek from them only the gratification of denominational pride, or use them for the purpose of taunting others with inconsistency. There are inconsistencies for which we should only thank God and praise men. And I mention the attitude of the liberal party in the Roman Catholic Church in the United States, simply to praise it, and because it puts to shame the reactionary attitude and tone of some who call themselves Presbyterian. To quote language which I used in my second address and which was listened to respectfully by Bishops and priests on the platform and in the audience: "The Democratic principle has now triumphed in the Church as well as in Society. The most despotic and the most aristocratically constituted Churches admit it and pay homage to it as the real king. Can we ask for a more significant illustration of the fact than this Democracy has triumphed, the question is, shall the children of those who fought and bled in its cause, who stood by it in the dark and cloudy day, when no man regarded, be afraid of it or false to it, when perhaps their aid is needed more than ever? For, Democracy does not mean disorder in Church or in State. It must be organized, and it cries for leadership and organization; but it demands that those who would be its guides shall trust it; for they who do not trust may betray."

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NOTES BY THE WAY.

Why indeed, and therefore I begin, i.e., begin my introduction, and then— if not exhausted—my subject, for is not the saying of what you have not time to say, the way of telling what you set out to tell?

Having had occasion to visit Nova Scotia, there has fallen upon me the irresistible desire to record my impressions. Why not? Every traveller has impressions, even though the guide-book gives the inspiration, both plenary and verbal, and the sleeping car rounds all off with its dreams. I had impressions, and why should their light be put under a bushel, when in the columns of the Canada Presbyterian they may shine forth, from where the Atlantic billows roll to where the waters of the Pacific sleep? Then firstly (hard to forget the sermonizing habit), as I have nothing to expect from the Government, and have not fed on its pap, it may be permitted to tell my "impressions" of the Interior to my colonial management. Of course, my experience was confined to a single going and coming, but then, are not very positive opinions formed on a much smaller experience than mine? Certainly, why not boldly tell all about the ocean, seeing that you have a thimble full in your laboratory? Well, here is our record: from Lewis to Halifax and return, the journey was exceedingly comfortable and made on schedule time; civility and promptness characterized the train hands; so far as we could discern, the one important personage was the negro porter on the Pullman, who was kingly in his services and princely in his bearing. We learned afterwards—or before, pardon the uncertainty—that he did not as yet own either the car or the road. The road-bed appears to be in good condition, and no reasonable man could ask for a less fatiguing railway journey than we enjoyed. We, at least, have no fault to find with the Intercolonial management; not even with the buffet or dining-rooms.

As the road skirts the Southern shore of the broadening St. Lawrence, with its tidal waters, the eye travels over ample variety to satisfy many tastes: bold headlands, the blue line of distant hills, at times scarcely to be distinguished from the horizon clouds, the widening river and rocky islands, ought to charm the artist's heart and inspire his pencil; the student of nature can meditate upon the long spent forces that cut those rocks into fantastic shapes, and clothed their surface with successive rounds of varied life; our impressions were made in somewhat other directions. We noted the human dwellings, and wondered as we crossed the Gaspé heights, as here and there amidst the waste of rock and scrubby spruce, a single log cabin appeared, what kind of life do those solitaires live? Does nature hymn a daily chorus, or as the grey lichens on the rock's side, do they live an aimless life, sustain a mere existence? How many existing Christians there are whose new life is a solitude, who live apart and waste their sweetness—if they have any—on the desert air.

The villages and towns on the route till the Lower Provinces are reached, present one aspect in common: small dwellings of an almost uniform type, gathered around one imposing structure, the parish church. Man's homage to the great Unseen, a comment in stone upon the truth, that, not by bread alone does he live. Yet that condition speaks of a sacerdotal system, which exacts to the last farthing, religiously keeps the poor ever present, and cultivates ignorance as the incentive to devotion, and here, where it reigns supreme, may be studied the tree by the fruit it bears. We passed through at the time of harvest. Men were scarcely to be seen in the fields where the ripening grain was standing, away we judge, forking or piloting rafts; women doing the harvesting, cutting the grain with the old-fashioned reaping hook, and carrying the sheaves into the barn on an ox sled or one-horse cart. No doubt there is a kind of contentment in this state, reminding one of Tennyson's Northerly Farmer:

"An' a tow'd ma my sins, an's toithe were due, an' I gied it in hond;
I done my duty boy 'um, as I ha' done boy the lond."

Nevertheless, as returning, we entered upon the busier, more progressive scenes of our Western life. We turn over the leaf of the volume, and read approvingly:

"Better, fifty years of Europe than a cycle of Cathay."

There was heroism and advance in those who first planted the crucifix on these wild, inhospitable shores, but its constant shadow has stunted promising growth, and reared ecclesiasticism at the cost of impoverishing the people. On this continent, Romanism is still the statesman's unsolved problem and the political Sinbad's Man of the Sea. "Holding forth the Word of Life," is the true attitude for the Christian Church.

Passing along in the vicinity of Truro, the singular appearance of the banks of the streams, attracted attention. Wavy slopes of shining mud; for the moment we were perplexed. Skirting those banks, too, were winding dykes of earth and turf, which at the first glance seemed earthworks: had we sighted some old Acadian encampment? As several such fields swept across the field of vision, we remembered some tales of early settlement, and how the settlers, not entirely ignorant of land, reclaimed from the German Ocean by the ingenuity of their old Dutch neighbours, had on a smaller scale, taking advantage of the Bay of Fundy's tides, reclaimed from the tidal rivers of Acadia, large tracts of marsh land, which after a century's cropping, still retain their fertility. These "dyke lands" still form a prominent feature in the agricultural industry of these provinces. The Intercolonial runs through regions which cannot be described as agricultural paradises, yet we are constrained to confess that no sign of want met our eye; bread enough, if not to spare, seemed to be in sight; only among the loungers at such stations as Moncton and Truro did aspects of shiftlessness present themselves. We thought, moreover, as untitled lands and broad expanses of spruce forest were seen, Malthus to the contrary, notwithstanding, that for some generations, at least, there is abundant room on the Father's domains for all His incoming children, and that when the more fertile lands of the West shall have become overcrowded, in these earlier discovered fields, plenty with contentment may be found. Canadians should have more faith in the vast probabilities of those domains over which still floats in the breeze the Union Jack.

We have finished our introduction; our impressions will come next.

RESPECTING ELDERS.

To the Editor of The Canada Presbyterian:

Sir,—Some weeks ago it was announced from the pulpit of the church that I attend, that five new elders were necessary, and that the election would be duly proceeded with. This announcement set me thinking—not for the first time—on the office of eldership.

We have nineteen elders at present. They are all, so far as I know, blameless men, comporting themselves in a manner befitting "pillars of the Church." And, as I have always considered that nineteen legs are quite sufficient to preserve the equilibrium of any Church, and that ours especially, though large, seems steady enough, it has extremely puzzled me why five more props were wanted. So, I have been trying to find out what elders do besides giving dignity and stability to the Church, and what is expected of them, and why they are so necessary to the well-being of a Presbyterian congregation. I have asked ministers, elders and managers, and all shake their heads. Will The Canada Presbyterian or some of its correspondents, enlighten a bewildered young man? I should like to hear some expression of opinion on the subject of eldership, and some discussion as to the duties the Church attaches to that office. Perhaps "Knoxonian" will consider this subject worthy his attention.

I have been active in connection with two Presbyterian churches, and have been a member for some time, but have never yet met "my elder," except as I meet any other man. I have only known whom they have been by reference to the annual reports. Even my communion card is left by a messenger. All others to whom I have spoken to, have had the same experience. Is this state of things general? What has the Church to say about it?

Some of the elders I have known are active as Sunday-school teachers, prayer-meeting leaders, and in other ways; but not as elders. No practical duties seem to attach to that office, as viewed by them.

I have in my mind the picture of an elder, who is truly the sub-minister of his district, who knows each family, and every member of it, body and soul. If a family is in want, he knows of it, and the causes of it, and brings the proper remedy, so far as that is within his power. If a youth is becoming vicious, he knows of it, and the causes of it, and concerns himself about it. If a man is out of work, he knows of it, and is ready with counsel and help. He is a man, a parent, a brother or sister can consult with. He is ready to take time from his business, and to lose thereby, that he may gain a better thing. His eldership is a real business, and the fag ends of his time won't do for it. It might be answered, "this requires much expenditure of time, much wisdom, and much spirituality; and, besides, it is almost impossible to establish such relations now, and where are the men to come from?" Unto what were we baptized? and into what office is an elder ordained? Surely there are in every large church at least 20 or 30 men having capacity. Of them, Christ asks all this or nothing.

The Church is rapidly becoming to be regarded by most men as an institution having no real part in practical life, and work in connection with it is despised as beneath the dignity of men of ability and standing. And so long as the Church's officers consider that their duties are limited to passing round the elements at communion time, offering an occasional prayer at a meeting, and consultation with the minister on petty matters; so long as they allow societies of different kinds, and chance benevolent persons to do what practical good there is done, the men of the world will be coldly contemptuous, and will continue to feel a certain superiority when they fall to comparing our professions with our practice, and our lukewarmness with their coldness. When we consider our professed beliefs about human life and its issues, our apathy is most ghastly and tragic.

I do not write, having any particular elders in view, (except as instances of what seem to be general); nor do I write in the spirit of ungenerous criticism, nor from the standpoint of one who sees his own part well performed; but because I earnestly desire more vigorous action on the part of those who are our constituted leaders, who have been selected as our best men to fill this holy office.

I am sure most elders would sorrowfully confess that what I have been saying is true, and I am also sure they most earnestly desire a better state of things, but feel themselves helpless. Cannot a better state of things be? I am respectfully yours,

W. H. M.
Monday, September 25, 1893.

Christian Endeavor.

FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST.

BY REV. W. S. M'TAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

Oct. 8th.—Rom. 3: 22; Eph. 3: 17-21.

The topic indicates that faith must be defined. Various definitions have been given of it. One says that faith is assent and consent. Another says it is the assent of the will and the consent of the understanding. Still another says it is the result of a silent interview between the spirit of God and the spirit of man; the former taking of the things of Christ, and showing them to the latter, and the latter giving the assent of the understanding and the consent of the affections to this demonstration. This definition is more satisfactory than the others, because it implies that faith is the gift of God. Dr. Charles Hodge says, "Faith is a conviction of the truth founded on testimony." Dr. A. A. Hodge says, "Faith, in the most general sense of the word, is the assent of the mind to the truth of that of which we have not an immediate cognition." The author of the Epistle to the Hebrews says, "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." (Heb. ii: 1- R. V.)

So much for faith in general. But what is faith in Jesus Christ? Let the Shorter Catechism answer—"Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation, and as He is offered to us in the Gospel." The Confession of Faith says, "The principal acts of faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace."

By faith we receive and rest alone upon Christ for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel. How is He offered? As a Prophet to instruct us; as a Priest who once offered Himself a sacrifice for sin, and who now intercedes at the Father's right hand; and as a King whose right it is to reign over us. By faith we surrender ourselves to Him, as a child in the window of a burning house would throw himself into the arms of an elder brother.

How does this faith justify a sinner in the sight of God? The answer to this question is presented so fully, and yet so concisely in the Larger Catechism, that we shall quote it. "Faith justifies a sinner in the sight of God, not because of those other graces which do always accompany it, or of good works that are the fruits of it, nor as if the grace of faith, or any act thereof, were imputed to him for his justification; but only as it is an instrument, by which he receiveth and applieth Christ and His righteousness."

This statement should be carefully pondered by us all. It is natural to us to take credit to ourselves for what we are. There is always a danger that we may be exalted above measure, especially when we compare ourselves with others less favoured than we. It is well, therefore, for us to frequently call to mind how we were justified in the sight of God, and to remember that even our faith was wrought in our heart by the Spirit and Word of God. We shall not think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, when we remember that God has dealt to us our portion of faith.

At the same time, let us not forget our vantage ground. By faith we have accomplished something already, but surely we do not imagine that we have attained to all that lies within our reach! Who feels that he has been filled unto all the fulness of God? This is the goal to which we look forward, and though we may not make as constant nor as speedy progress towards it as we could desire, yet faith is ours, and by the exercise of that faith, we can overcome the obstacles, and surmount the difficulties which lie before us. Thus, while faith keeps us humble, it inspires us with courage.