

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1879.

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

WE have just completed sending out the PRESBYTERIAN subscription accounts. They have been made out in all cases so that the subscriptions shall terminate with 31st DECEMBER, 1879. This will be very much more convenient to us, and, we believe, more acceptable to subscribers themselves. It does appear awkward to remit a fraction of a dollar, but as stamps are easily procured, we trust our friends will remit the exact amount required to bring their payment up to the end of the year.

We have to thank very many for prompt attention to our request for a remittance, although we find a few cases where repeated duns seem to have no effect, and several instances where subscribers *three and four years in arrears* have remitted and asked us to discontinue the paper to their address. This is certainly not what we expected after years of patient waiting, but still it is much better than to receive a notice through the Post Office Department that a paper is refused, subscriber left the country, or removed, without any reference to the one, two, three or more years for which the party is owing. The publisher of any paper who gives credit is sure to make the acquaintance of several dishonest subscribers, nor is the subscription list of even a religious paper exempt from such characters.

All in arrears are respectfully requested to make immediate remittance. We want all money due us, and we want it now! The subscription to THE PRESBYTERIAN cannot be a heavy amount to any subscriber—even should he be owing for more than one year, but the aggregate of several thousands of them becomes a very serious matter to the unfortunate publisher when a large number forget to pay up for several years. If there are any, however, who find it inconvenient to send us the full amount of their indebtedness, let them help us by a partial remittance at once—the balance to be sent on at an early date.

ORTHODOXY.

IT has become too common to sneer at orthodoxy as an antiquated thing. It was well enough for our fathers, but it is no good for the smart people of the present day. There are those who point with delight to the disaffected ranks of the clergy in proof that we have entered upon better times. They boast that the present is a day of Christian liberty, when the fetters of creeds and confessions are lying broken on the ground. They point to the day coming when even these rusty chains shall be swept out of sight.

But it is not so easy to remove these ancient landmarks. The turbulent waters that rage around the light-house may have to retire with the ebbing tide long before they can damage its foundations. And so those who are seeking to undermine the system of truth to which general adherence is given, will soon disappear out of sight leaving the object of their attack in bolder outline than ever it was before. There are certain great doctrines which will prove to be eternal verities. They are logically constructed from the scriptures. They are bound to one another as the links of a chain. They must stand or fall together. But for aught we can see they are likely to stand long after their assailants have passed into oblivion.

It is evident at a glance that for the two or three persons who try to turn the world upside down with their doubts and difficulties, the churches are massed together on the side of orthodoxy. It will be said that the loaves and fishes are dependent upon this. But why should it be so? There would surely be more of the good things of life given to those who make salvation an easy matter, who declaim against eternal punishment, who are ready to sacrifice doctrines for the sake of gratifying modern tastes and predilections. It cannot be said that any large number of teachers have shown themselves ready to give up what they regard as the eternal principles of religion even on the consideration that it would pay to do so. There is rather the opposite fact that, while it may even be unpopular to preach certain doctrines, the large majority of ministers stand firmly on such a basis as that of the Confession, or the similar documents of other Churches. The attitude of the United Presbyterians of Scotland, during the recent trial of the Rev. David McCrae is valuable in this connection. This Church has always been credited with liberality both in its interpretation of dogma and in the spirit in which it asks its licentiates and ministers to accept the Confession. Long before this it had struck out a chapter that was irreconcilable with its position as a voluntary Church. It had no scruples in doing so. It involved a question of liberty, and that reverent attachment to ancient landmarks which is characteristic of human nature, did not in this case prevent that Church from scrupulously guarding its conscience. The United Presbyterian Church of Scotland had but recently passed the Declaratory Act and had shown itself singularly careful to accomplish this end in a constitutional manner. With the remedial measure

of this Declaratory Act, which was intended to make adherence to the Confession an honest and conscientious act on the part of its ministers, this Church stood up as one man for essential doctrines, when these were violently assailed by Mr. McCrae. A small minority was composed of those who thought that the demand of the accused to be libelled should have been granted. But so far as the matter of eternal punishment was concerned, the entire Synod was a unit.

In this regard the United Presbyterian Church is but one of many. What an instructive spectacle was that presented by the pan-Presbyterian Council! Not only did it reveal the catholicity of Presbyterianism, but it was evident that the Churches of America and Europe with all their branches that connected them with every continent and with every island, were one in their acceptance of the essential principles of Scripture as embodied in the Confession. That means that hundreds of thousands of intelligent and pious minds present substantial agreement. When we add the consideration that the Presbyterian standards of different parts of the world, while very varied in form and treatment, present a pleasing harmony, it is evidence of the interesting result that minds which studied the scriptures through different media reached the same conclusions. This is nothing short of the miraculous, when we remember how different the Churches of a large number of countries are in education, in history, in language and in polity. And then the universal Presbyterian Church is but one of the many universal Churches. The Episcopalian, Methodist, Baptist, Independent, and even the Roman Catholic Churches, are united upon essential doctrines, while differing as to the many questions which account for the variety of names by which they are called.

The Evangelical Alliance recently held at Basle is a living protest against the tendency of individuals to go off at a tangent from the standards. It showed that the giants were on the side of orthodoxy. Those who contend against the Confessions are generally men of quick impulse, of hasty generalization, and of marked prejudice. They jump at conclusions. All with them is wrong because they feel otherwise. A mere sentiment carries them away. It makes them the popular idol for the moment, until heterodoxy is actually considered as synonymous with genius. Mr. McCrae is evidently a type of the class. But not only were those who constructed the standards men of learning, genius and piety, but in all countries the giant intellects are soundly orthodox. A man like Christlieb stands head and shoulders above the McCraes of our day. Orthodoxy need never hide its head when it is associated with such names as Chalmers and McCheyne, or those of Spurgeon and Hall. Nor is it the least interesting fact of the present moment that the Unitarian body is being split by two opposite tendencies, the one towards orthodoxy and the other to what we may call radicalism of the worst type. So marked is this that many Unitarian ministers are seeking entrance into one or other of the orthodox Churches, while others feel the importance of being endorsed by a council of