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## The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 9th, 1889.

MR. A., Mr. B. and Mr. C. write letters to the press endorsing the theology of the persons suspended by the Session of Knox Church, Galt. Now who will endorse Mr. A., Mr. B. and Mr. C.? And who will endorse their endorser?

THE Galt case promises to throw some light on the peculiar ideas that some people have as to the fitness of things. Most of the writers—Methodists no doubt—seem to think that they will have settled the matter if they can show that the views held by the suspended parties are the doctrines of John Wesley. It never seems to dawn upon their minds that the doctrines of Wesley are not the doctrines of the Presbyterian Church.

AN eminent minister of the Church of England who lately visited New York, says:

I honestly declare that I never met with a company of ministers like the clergy of all denominations in New York, especially for this, that they have no jealousies and no rivalries among them. They stand shoulder to shoulder for the truth on all occasions, have confidence in each other, rejoice in a brother's prosperity, and are ever ready to stand round each other in trouble.

That is a decidedly pleasant state of affairs. Of how many other cities can the same statement be truthfully made.

OUR readers must have been considerably amused at the fact stated in our last issue that the Presbytery of London, Eng., had been asked to say whether ministers should become county councillors. Municipal institutions are a new thing in England. When Englishmen know how to work the system of local government as well as Ontario people do, nobody will ask a Presbytery whether clergymen should run as Reeve or Deputy Reeve. Some of the ministers over there cannot be as busy as most of their Canadian brethren or they never would have thought of entering county councils.

THE troubles in one of the city Methodist Churches have culminated in serious charges being laid against the ex-pastor. The authorities of the Methodist body owe it to themselves, to the accused, to the other denominations and to the cause of Christ, that the trial be conducted with dignity, impartiality, and as much judicial ability as the denomination can command. There is a wide-spread feeling that ecclesiastical tribunals are wretchedly poor instruments to find out the truth of any case. Contrasts are drawn between the cool, orderly, dignified and almost scientifically accurate way in which a competent judge goes to work on a case, and the heat, disorder, interminable talk, and alleged bias which too frequently characterize ecclesiastical trials. It is a thousand pities that such trials should ever occur, but when they must take place they should be conducted with as little discredit to the cause of Christ as possible.

IN a letter to the press, Dr. Sutherland states that, three years ago, the editorship of the *Christian Guardian* was pressed upon him by brethren acting in the name of nearly two-thirds of the General Conference, but he declined the nomination. By the way, how did these brethren know that they had nearly two-thirds of the votes in the Conference for Dr. Sutherland? Did they canvass? Did they hold a caucus? Innocent Christian people are of the opinion that canvassing and caucussing are unknown in spiritual courts. Dr. Sutherland also states that at a certain meeting of the Board of Vic-

toria University, he had a majority of two for the Presidency, had he been willing to stand against Chancellor Burwash. How was that fact ascertained? Two is a narrow majority, and there must have been some rather accurate counting done by somebody to ascertain such exact figures. The most experienced election managers are seldom able to figure so closely. As one reads these tales that are being told out of the Methodist school, one cannot help wondering if the Methodist is the only Church in which majorities are known before votes are taken. Alexander the Great once told a namesake in his army, that he must change his character or change his name. The Churches should stop berating politicians or stop using their methods.

IN a friendly and sensible article on the relations of Canada and the United States, the *Interior* says:

We have a northern frontier of over three thousand miles, and yet neither our northern neighbour nor ourselves have what may be called an army. We have over a thousand miles of water frontage between ourselves and our northern neighbour, and yet we have agreed to have no armed vessels on the peaceful waters. Both sides act on the conviction that hostilities between the two powers is a possibility so remote that neither side is justified in taking any precautions. This confidence of each other, is a greater protection to each than any amount of military preparation would be.

Certainly it is, and cultivating this confidence is a much better thing for both nations than maintaining standing armies. The confidence that Canadians have in the fairness and common sense of the great body of the American people was clearly seen a few weeks ago. When the election managers over there raised a slight disturbance, sensible Canadians quietly said, "The politicians may manoeuvre and bluster, but the great body of the American people don't want any trouble." Neither did they. The *Interior* concludes its article with the following friendly words:

In our opinion the proper thing to do is to secure the advantages of a free and generous reciprocity, and let the question of union take care of itself. We should treat each other as if we were already a nation, and get rid, as speedily as possible, of any hindering and annoying discriminations. That done, we shall have the benefits of union, and can leave the questions of organic union to the future.

Exactly so. Let us be good friends and make all the money out of each other that we honestly can. Let the fisheries and other irritating questions be speedily and amicably settled and if the great grandchildren of Canadians now living wish to annex the United States to Canada, why let them. Amen.

### STANDARD OF MORALS.

INTELLIGENT men who reject Christianity do not and cannot remain satisfied with the denial of the truths of religion. Is it because they can not dismiss religion altogether and think no more about it? If it is non-existent, why then does it continue to haunt their thoughts and disturb their equanimity? The human mind cannot rest content in negations; the soul of man cannot breathe freely in an atmosphere in which the hope of immortality has no part. Man's moral nature comes from a well-defined and authoritative rule of life. Mind, soul and conscience must have something more than the positivism of what is exclusively material. Their imprisonment in the region of the seen and temporal soon becomes intolerable. Those who have done their best to discredit the only true and stable basis of morality not without reason fear the chaos that would supervene on the exclusion of the religious sanctions of moral truth. All true and inspiring morality must rest on a stable foundation. It must have for its sanction the authority of immutable truth.

The unsatisfactory nature of doubt and denial is seen in the eagerness manifested by certain thinkers to provide what they vainly believe will replace the morality of the Bible. Each individual thinker produces his special substitute, and one scheme may have more or fewer absurdities than another, but there is no real basis of agreement; there can, from the nature of the case, be no substantial unity. The effort to construct a scheme of morality apart from and antagonistic to the morality of Scripture is a purposeless task. The stone of Sisyphus and the sieve of the Danaides are no better emblems of laborious and futile endeavour than are the efforts of the anti-Bible moralists of the closing portion of the nineteenth century.

The morality of the Bible is based on the infinitely holy will of the Omniscient God and the moral needs of man's nature. A universal code of morality is impossible on any other conditions. Have any of the ascertained facts of modern science, and legitimate deductions from these facts, disclosed any inherent defects in the Ten Commandments? Is the moral law only suited for man in a primitive state of existence, and has modern civilization left it far behind? Do not the Ten Commandments rather point forward to a higher stage of moral and spiritual development, yet unattained by the human race?

Anti-Christian schemes of morality can, in the most advantageous circumstances, only make but a limited appeal to man's nature. If the true test of morality is denied, what can be its measure? By what is it to be tried and its validity ascertained? Will the philosophers who excogitate moral codes, agree among themselves concerning what is moral and what is immoral? Suppose that the most unlikely of all things should happen, that German, French, and English speaking philosophers could agree with cordial unanimity on a table of laws for the regulation of conduct, by what means could they succeed in securing its universal adoption, and commend it to each man's conscience? Would its adoption or rejection be dependent on the mutations of the popular will, and would the highest sanction such a code of morality could receive, be decided by the ballot box?

What would be the practical effect of discarding the morality of the Bible for some scheme devised by our modern moral builders? It may be that a few men habituated to solid thinking might honestly attempt the practical carrying out of the system, but what influence could such a system have upon the masses anywhere and everywhere? Each man would virtually be a law unto himself, and the wildest confusion would ensue. When iniquity abounds we are appalled, but let one imagine all moral restraint withdrawn, let man for a time hug the delusion that there is no account to be rendered here or hereafter for the deeds done in the body, what would soon become of our boasted civilization? The saturnalia of crime that would ensue is too dreadful to think of. No, a better morality than that of the Bible is not within sight. Let anti-Christian moralists dream their dreams. The morality of the Bible accepted and practised would bring blessings beyond price to mankind. When that measure of conformity to the divine standard of living is realized it will be time enough to cast about for a new moral code, but meanwhile we may rest in the assurance that "the law of the Lord is perfect," and in the practical endeavour to live up to the moral light we possess we shall know that in the keeping of God's law there is a great reward.

### WERE THE FORMER TIMES BETTER THAN THESE?

MAN looks before and after. His thoughts and imagination cannot be bounded by the immediate present. Even he who would fain take for his motto "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," looks forward to to-morrow, for from that he forms his theory of life, such as it is. Is the world growing better or worse is a question frequently discussed, and widely different, according to the temperament of the individual, are the answers given. There are those who believe that there never was a time when goodness was more in the ascendant than now; there are others who, themselves excepted, think that the world, the older it grows, becomes more wicked and hopeless every day. Extreme optimism and extreme pessimism, like all extremes, are grievous exaggerations, which average common-sense and intelligence refuse to entertain.

The best way to test the progress of good and evil in the world, to note the advance in the irrepressible conflict between truth and error, between light and darkness, is to compare the history of the past, with the present. If the advancement made is not commensurate with our wishes, the conclusion is inevitable that immense gains have been made, and the outlook is one fitted to inspire with confidence and hope. Just such a comparison has been made in a paper by Dr. Herrick Johnson, of Chicago,