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TORONTO, JULY 1st, 1891.

The Northern Presbyterian
Church

AND THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

We are late in referring to the report of the committee appointed last year by the above named church to consider the matter of revising the Confession of Faith. The Committee presented a report at the recent General Assembly in Detroit. It will be remembered that the Committee were to make no changes that would interfere with the Calvinism of the Confession. It was a singular limitation for a professed church to make. Why was not the Committee instructed to make such changes as the Word of God required? We need not try to answer the question. But we are sure there is no future for the church which is unwilling to throw away its creed however venerable when the Scriptures so demand. As an illustration of the proposed changes take from the chapter on "Effectual Calling," section 8, which as it stands in the old confession reads, "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth. So also are all other elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word." It has been a question much discussed whether that section teaches by implication that some infants—non-elect infants—dying in infancy are lost. There are eminent Presbyterians even on record on both sides of the question, strange as it may seem. For if there be elect infants, there must be non-elect infants, and consequently the Confession of Faith as it stands reaches infant damnation, as the phrase has been. But the proposed change involves no infant damnation; it is as follows: "All infants dying in infancy, and all other persons who, from birth to death, are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word, are redeemed by Christ and regenerated by the Spirit, who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth." Now that language is plain and unequivocal; as much so in fact as the language it is intended to displace in the Confession. The one is genuine Calvinism, the other is not. And yet Dr. Patton, President of Princeton College, speaking in Detroit of the work of the Revision Committee in general, is reported as saying: "Not a solitary doctrine of the Calvinistic faith has been touched or tampered with." And further, "If outsiders who seem to be so much interested in our proceedings expected the Committee to de-Calvinize the Confession of Faith, they have been most woefully disappointed." One is amazed at such language from a man of learning, of probity and of piety. It is difficult to believe him sincere. Should this particular change be adopted, then

the doctrine of the Calvinistic faith with regard to infants will be touched, tampered with and altered.

How does the Committee know that all infants dying in infancy are saved? That is, that all infants dying in infancy are of the elect? Has the Committee had a special revelation on the subject? How can it be determined that none of the non-elect die in infancy? And what is there more dreadful in the thought of a babe going to perdition because God was pleased "not to elect him unto everlasting life," than in the thought of an aged person being lost for the same reason? We confess that our sympathies would be with the old man rather than with the child.

The doctrine of Calvinism on Election is set forth in the old Confession, chap. 8, sec. 8, in these words: "By the decree of God for the manifestation of His glory, some men and angels are predestinated unto everlasting life, and others are foreordained to everlasting death." The proposed revision aims no doubt to re-affirm that doctrine, but as the section on infants shows, as well as other expressions that might be quoted, there is an admixture of Arminianism, which may beguile the unwary and keep the Presbyterian ship afloat awhile, but it cannot satisfy the anti-Calvinists among them nor ensure the permanence of their church.

Sir John Macdonald.

It does not come within the special sphere of this paper to have much to say about matters or persons political. The death of so prominent a man as the late Premier should scarcely be passed by without notice, especially if there be circumstances in connection with his death which suggest lessons of practical importance from the moral and spiritual standpoint. That Sir John Macdonald was a remarkable man, a wonderful man, is universally conceded; that he was a master of political strategy is likewise beyond question; and that he exerted an immense influence on Canadian public affairs and public men no one can deny. Further, while the great end he persistently sought during his long political career was certainly not inconsistent with the character of a man noble, just and great, yet his best friends, we think, must allow that had the means be used always been as worthy as the end he sought he would be entitled to a higher niche in the temple of fame. Two or three of the lessons to be drawn from Sir John's life and death we specify here.

1. That all good citizens, and in particular all who prefer to be Christians, should beware how they submit their minds to the partisan political press. Conservatives will remember how their party papers treated such men as George Brown, Alexander Mackenzie, and Edward Blake when they were prominent and aggressive in their opposition to the Conservative party. And the same Conservatives know with what we might call an excess of kindness and justice the same papers often speak of the same men now. Reformers will remember how their party papers were accustomed to treat Sir John Macdonald—he was spoken of as the incarnation of all political badness. The same Reformers know how the tone of the same papers changed when it was announced that Sir John had but a few days, or maybe but a few hours to live; many of them became at once appreciative of his good qualities and apologetic for the rest. Let us learn not to estimate our public men by what the party press says of them in the next partisan conflict.

2. That our public men of opposing views and parties are not necessarily thirsting for one another's blood, and are not so blinded by passion and prejudice, as to be unable to recognize and to admire the talents and services of one another. In witness of this read the speech of Mr. Laurier in the House of Commons, Monday, June 8th, after the formal announcement of the Premier's death had been made. Not only the Reform party but the Dominion of Canada had reason to be proud of the Leader of the opposition that day. Had Mr. Laurier failed that day he could never have redeemed himself in that respect, for such an opportunity will never come to him again. How gratifying to him it must be that on the testimony of friend and foe his address was perfect in conception and expression! The Hon. Oliver Mowat is worthy of honorable mention in this same connection. When he accompanied the Lieutenant Governor in a carriage at Sir John's funeral he showed himself to be Premier of Ontario as well as head of the Reform party in the Province. In the second place let us learn to think as favorably of the public men of the opposite party as the Leaders of our own party do in their calm moments.

3. Let us remember that if the politicians are more or less corrupt, it is not because the people are pure; if a political Leader maintains his position by questionable methods it is not in spite of but by the consent of the majority of the people. The people and the politicians should receive the greater condemnation. If the people of Canada would have pure statesmen, they must themselves be pure.

4. Let us observe that the life of a nation and the nature and permanence of its institutions do not depend upon the life of any one man. Sir John Macdonald is dead—yet the Government lives, the business of Parliament goes on and we realize that with the people of Canada rests the destiny of the Dominion, and that if we be a worthy people we shall not lack worthy men to lead us and to carry out our will.

All the emphasis of "Except a man is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God," should not be placed upon the word "water."—*Texas Christian Courier*.
Nor upon the words "the Spirit."

Life's pathway is up-hill. He who is making true progress is having a hard time of it. Every step costs effort. If a man finds his way an easy one, he may be pretty sure that he is going down hill; and that is no direction for any man. Let no man complain, therefore, but rather take heart in the fact that his progress is toilsome; for it could not be progress if it were not toilsome.—*S. S. Times*.

Are you having a hard time of it, brother? Do not repine; rather rejoice therein. "Blessed is he that overcometh."

Further evidence that the Baptists of Ontario stand by the New Hampshire Confession of Faith was given at Freeleton recently, when a Regular Baptist church was recognized there which had adopted that document as its rule of doctrine.

J. Denovan, in the *Canadian Baptist* of June 18, says, that the Lord's Supper ought to be an ordinance of weekly observance if the practice of the primitive and apostolic church is to be regarded as correct. The Disciples of Christ stand as a people for the apostolic practice; but many of them

in fact are content with unapostolic practice; some once in two weeks, or three, or four, and so on.

All the papers are having their say about the connection of the Prince of Wales with the "baccarat" affair. When we think of our prospective king figuring in such a capacity it makes us ashamed. The good book tells us to "honor the king." It would be pretty hard to honor the Prince of Wales were he king now. Should he become king and continue his evil ways he will make a curious "head" for the Church of England. Perhaps he does not expect to be king; it may be his idea that by the time his mother dies Britain will be ready to become a republic, and that he may as well "eat, drink and be merry."

Bro. George O. Black, of Everton, is home from Bethany College, where he has just graduated Bachelor of Arts. We congratulate him heartily and wish him many years of health and strength in which to use his talents and education for the furtherance of the gospel of Christ. He reports a grand time at the Bethany jubilee. The resignation of Bro. A. McLean as President of the College caused a feeling of sadness amid the general rejoicing. Bethany's loss will no doubt be a gain to the Foreign Mission work. It is not known, we understand, who will be the next President of Bethany College.

There is trouble even with "Apostolic Missions," as witness this statement from the *Christian Leader*:—

We wish to say to our readers that we do not regard Professor Jules de Launay as a true and sincere exponent of the teachings of the disciples of Christ, or as an honest representative of the church of Christ. We have sufficient reasons for making these statements, but deem it not necessary to give them now unless called upon to do so. Soon after he came to this country, and after we met him for the first time, we told him frankly that he could do no good here, and advised him to return to Paris at once. Five or six months ago Madame de Launay, at our suggestion, peremptorily ordered him to return, but he obstinately refused to listen to her, or to us, but replied: "I will not return; God will lead me; God has a work for me to do."

President, Secretary, Treasurer, Executive Committee of "Apostolic Missions," John F. Rowe, advised and suggested, and Madame de Launay peremptorily ordered, but the Professor obstinately refused to listen. What defiance was there, my brethren! And what a flagrant disregard of the Scripture which saith, "Husbands, obey your wives!" It will be in order now for some one else to take up the Professor and support him.

There was a very large and pleasant surprise party of relatives and friends at Bro. Andrew Henslar's, in the Township of Pelham, June 19th. Bro. Alex. McMillan and the writer were so fortunate as to be of the company. It is evident that Brother and Sister Henslar dwell in the hearts of their large circle of friends. Among those we were glad to meet there was the Baptist minister at Fonthill, Bro. C. W. Cook.

A little Brooklyn girl returned from Sunday school in a great state of mind because she had heard that Jesus was a Jew, and appealed to her mother. "Yes, my dear, Jesus was a Jew," said her mother. "Well, mamma, he was the Son of God, wasn't he?" "Yes dear." "Well," said the little one, "I don't see how Jesus came to be a Jew when God Himself is a Presbyterian."—*Pioneer*.

Notwithstanding the great amount of discussion among United States Presbyterians relative to the revision of the Confession of Faith, we hear little or nothing about it from Canadian Presbyterians. How is that? Is it that the Presbyterians here long to unite with the Methodists, and therefore think it is not worth while bothering about the revision of the Confession? It certainly is not because there are no Presbyterians in Canada who desire the Confession revised.

That lively times are in store for the Presbyterians of the United States is evident from reading the following extract from a recent sermon by Dr. Chas. H. Parkhurst, of the Madison Square Presbyterian church, New York:—

We will not be bound by any Confession of Faith, nor by the Bible when it appears to go against Christ's teachings. The General Assembly stultified itself last year when it bound itself to keep within Calvinistic lines. As Dr. Vandyke said so aptly the other day: "If we cannot have liberty and orthodoxy both, let us have liberty and let orthodoxy go." If there are errors in the Bible, sooner or later they will be known. The more effort we make to keep them hid the more the Bible will suffer when they are known. If the church is to go on in the way that some are trying to persuade us it ought to go, the sooner it gives up the ghost the better to save the medical expense.

It is exceedingly well put to say that "the General Assembly stultified itself last year when it bound itself to keep within Calvinistic lines," for that is just what the General Assembly did, and very discreditable it was to the Assembly.

We find the following in a late number of *Toronto Saturday Night*:—

Miss Nettie A. Sheppard, a Canadian girl, for the past two years teacher of elocution in one of the Normal schools of Michigan, has received an exceedingly pleasant and profitable appointment in the state of Texas.

And this reminds us that Miss Nettie was another of those whose names the committee on enrolment failed to get at the Annual Meeting. Many of our readers will understand that she is the youngest daughter of Bro. E. Sheppard. We are glad to know that she is advancing higher and higher in her chosen profession, and we trust she will find her Texas appointment in every way to her mind.

In clause d of report of Committee on Missions in last *EVANGELIST*, for "city of Toronto" read "city of London."

THE TORONTO EXHIBITION.—The Prize List for the next Toronto Industrial Fair, which is to be held from the 7th to the 19th September, has been issued. Copies can be procured by dropping a postcard to Mr. Hill, the secretary, at Toronto.

Bro. John Thomson and Bro. M. McKinnon, of Erro, are off on a visit to Manitoba and the North-West. We would advise the Portage brethren to be on the look-out for them in the course of a week or two, as we understand they intend to spy out that favored portion of Manitoba on the return journey.

After Great Britain and Canada, the French Protestant subscriptions for foreign missions are higher than in any other country.

Christ became man that He might save man from sin, and that He might have the fullest sympathy with the sorrows of humanity.