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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20th, 1889.

REVISION has carried in the Presbytery of New York by a vote of sixty-seven to fifteen. It is said that it will carry in the Presbytery of Chicago by a majority about as strong as that in New York, in the Presbytery of Cincinnati by about two to one, and in the St. Louis by a majority not quite so large. Many of the strongest advocates of Revision are among the safest and most conservative ministers of the Church. Now that the question has come, they contend that it is better to do the work now under safe and conservative auspices than to make radical changes later on. So far as one can see at present, Revision will amount to nothing more than a re-statement of two or three sections. It is a gratifying fact in all the discussions that have taken place not one single representative man has suggested a change in doctrine—not one. The Church is sound to the core.

IN a recent address Dr. Dale related the following incident:

There are times when the most buoyant sink into despondency, when a great chilly mist creeps over the soul of those who have the largest happiness in the service of God, and they feel as if all their strength were gone. Not very long ago—if I may venture once more to speak of myself—one of these evil moods was upon me; but as I was passing along one of the streets of Birmingham, a poor but decently dressed woman, laden with parcels, stopped me and said, "God bless you, Dr. Dale!" Her face was unknown to me. I said, "Thank you. What is your name?" "Never mind my name," was the answer, "but if you only knew how you have made me feel hundreds of times, and what a happy home you have given me! God bless you!" she said. The mist broke, the sunlight came I breathed the free air of the mountains of God.

Salutations like this are the highest reward a minister ever gets in this life. Compared with such greetings the compliments of thoughtless admirers, the applause of excited crowds, the honours of college senates, or the highest ecclesiastical offices should be considered of small value by any ambassador of Christ.

WHEREVER you see a head, strike it, said an Irishman, on going into a scrimmage. Wherever you see property, tax it, seems to be the motto of a great many Ontario people at the present time. Well, if that is the right thing to do, and if a majority of the people want it done, we do not believe that any Protestant church in the Province will utter one syllable against it. But let the work be done thoroughly. If the church buildings in Toronto are to be taxed, tax all the public buildings as well. Why tax the churches and allow the new parliament buildings, the lunatic asylum, the Normal School, Upper Canada College, the post office, the custom house, the Collegiate Institute, the Public Schools and the Universities to go free? We say, Tax away, gentlemen, if the people want it so, but don't single out churches and allow other public buildings worth millions to go free. There are eight millions of exempted property in Ottawa—six millions of Government property, and less than two of church property. Is it proposed to tax the two and exempt the six? If there is to be any change, let us have fair play all round.

THE following is the sentence in the sermon recently preached by Dr. Dods, on which a libel will perhaps be based if proceedings are taken:

I do not understand how anyone who thinks that Christ was merely man, and that now He lies in his grave in the "lone Syrian town," can at the same time trust Him to lift us to fellowship with God; and I cannot think that anyone who earnestly strives to live as Christ lived will long retain such an opinion; but reunion to God depends so much more on the conscience and on the heart than on mental enlightenment, that I would hope that the faith, small even as a grain of mustard seed, will yet grow up to a sound and healthy plant.

It was first reported that Dr. Dods had denied that faith in any theory of the atonement is necessary to salvation, and had conceded that one may be a Christian and hold that Christ never rose from the

dead. Our readers may study the foregoing sentence for themselves, and come to their own conclusions as to whether the new professor taught that belief in the resurrection is not necessary to salvation. Most of our readers will conclude, we think, that if he does not exactly say "one who thinks that Christ was merely a man, and that now he lies dead in the lone Syrian town," may be a Christian, he vividly suggests something in that direction. Should a man who trains preachers make such suggestions?

PRESBYTERIANS who remember the feeling created in Woodstock when the Baptists broke faith with the town and decided to establish their University in Toronto, and who have been reading the evidence in the Cobourg case now before the courts, will perhaps conclude that the General Assembly did a wise thing when it refused to pull up any of our theological colleges. It is no easy matter to move a college. In this country all such institutions have been established by the liberality of the people, and every one knows that local considerations induced many to give more liberally than they would have given without those considerations. Others have given for local reasons purely. Moving the institution always gives a painful wrench to these donors. It is a great pity that a church should wrench anybody. No doubt the Methodist Church is willing to deal reasonably with the Cobourg people, but differences of opinion are sure to arise in regard to what is reasonable. Had any of our theological halls been removed the people locally interested might not have started a lawsuit, though one can never be quite sure of even that, but most certainly some of our very best people would have felt hurt, and that itself is a consummation devoutly to be avoided.

THE *British Weekly*, evidently an ardent admirer of Dr. Dods, seems to think it should draw the line at his St. Giles sermon. In a leading article, under the suggestive heading, "Theological Blondinism," after saying all it can fairly say in defence of the sermon, the *Weekly* says:

So much we are bound to say, for we hold, in opposition to Dr. Dods, that the question is unwholesome, that it ought not to be asked, and that it is not the business of Christian teachers to answer it. Blondin proved that it was possible to cross Niagara on a tight rope, but we do not advise people to follow his example. It may be possible to get to heaven on a very slender thread of faith, but why should the experiment be tried? Why should we cultivate a theological Blondinism? The preacher has a word as grandly brief as it is simple and faithful: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Those taking hold of Him grow in faith and knowledge. The trust which grasps him must, wherever it is logical, take him as God and Reconciler.

Yes, why should we try to show men how little faith may save them? Our contemporary shows the unwholesomeness of discussing this question by putting another alongside of it, "With how little morality may I be a Christian?"

Suppose the question were put: "With how little morality may I be a Christian?" We feel sure Dr. Dods would say with us, that no answer should be attempted to it—that men should come to Christ, and strive after all the morality they can. Yet problems are suggested by that query at least as difficult as those suggested by his.

Would any minister care to announce as his subject: The minimum of morality with which I may be a Christian?

OUR PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

FEW subjects have received more consideration or evoked keener discussion than that of instruction in the public schools. Prolonged and earnest discussion evidences the fact that education is of vital importance. It is well that such is the case, and if a workable system that could receive full support and approbation of all had not yet been attained, eager investigation is surely clearing the way for one that will not be a target to be shot at steadily and promiscuously. Meanwhile generation after generation of pupils passes through our public schools, but still the angry gusts of passionate controversy sweep around the public schools, and judging from present appearances an educational *modus vivendi* seems about as remote as ever.

Within the proper educational sphere teachers and those specially interested in educational methods meet at stated intervals and freely discuss questions pertaining to instruction and management. No one who values the advance of education would wish that it should be otherwise. By these associations, the frank discussions that take place, and the full and free criticism that finds scope in these assemblages we have a guarantee that educational work will not stagnate. This much can be fairly said of that praiseworthy and ill-requited body, the Canadian teachers, that they are desirous of utilizing all the educational light they can receive from any

quarter. They are an energetic and progressive guild. While outside discussion has to a certain extent on some minds an unsettling effect in relation to education, and though in the best interests of the public schools, and of the community, it might be desirable to reach a larger measure of agreement than has yet been attained, the discussion of questions of vital importance by some of the most thoughtful minds of our time and country are by their carefully-considered utterances preparing the way for a comparatively final adjustment of the vital question of public education.

Of late there have been several important contributions to the discussion. The proposal to abolish Separate Schools in the Province of Manitoba has given occasion to the Bishop of Rupert's Land and Principal King for a full exposition of their opinions, and it is significant that in their utterances there is substantial agreement. It is felt that the religious difficulty is one of the greatest that has to be grappled with, and the one evidently least easy of solution. The greater part of Dr. King's calm, dispassionate and able lecture appears in the present issue, and it deserves a most careful perusal. While stating with the utmost fairness and candour the position of those who see, in a country where religious denominations are so numerous, and their claims somewhat conflicting, as the only practicable solution, the entire secularization of all state education, he nevertheless opposes it with strong and forcible arguments, and pleads for moral training in the public schools, and as such training can only be satisfactory when placed on a religious basis, he makes a suggestion deserving of earnest consideration. In pushing his conception of secular education to its last analysis, however, the illustrations he cites are open to the objection of being extreme. In France, where the reaction from clerical domination in educational matters has been violent and complete, the childish passionateness with which religious ideas have been suppressed, and the mutilation of school books urged by educational authorities, may no doubt serve as a warning, but in common-sense communities, where respect for religion has not been subjected to an undue strain, there is not much fear of a repetition of such irrational vagaries.

The scheme suggested by Dr. King is an admirable one, though it is in the nature of a compromise. Would the representatives of the various Churches agree to it in the first place? Let us suppose that it was adopted, how long after its inception would it be before the ominous mutterings of discontent were heard, and the warring elements of discord again let loose? It is an excellent scheme if only it could be carried out, and judging from past history in Britain and in Canada, it is doubtful if it would meet with general acceptance, or if it did, that it would receive a fair and honest trial. The fact must be faced that the Roman Catholic Church, to speak of no other, would not be content with any scheme in which it had not supreme control. That is what the Roman Church openly avows and is working for in every land. No sooner would a scheme mutually agreed upon by all the Churches be put in operation than the representatives of Rome would recommence the work of agitation. Whatever system of education is adopted that does not harmonize with papal deliverances on the subject is certain of antagonism from the hierarchy. A compromise system will not get quit of this difficulty.

Another somewhat remarkable contribution to the educational discussion has been made by a Mr. Josiah L. Bemis in the columns of the *Globe*. He flies to the extreme of clericalism. Apparently an Anglican layman, Mr. Bemis seems disposed to adopt the pessimism so vehemently expressed recently by Canon Dumoulin, and casts aspersions on our public schools that a fair-minded man would hesitate to endorse. Mr. Bemis is evidently a man of considerable culture and philanthropic instincts; he has the faculty of giving vigorous expression to his views, and that, too, with a clearness that leaves nothing to be desired. He deserves credit at least for the boldness with which he comes out in favour of the establishment of a State Church in Ontario as the only remedy for the godlessness and irreverence of our public schools. The marvel is that a man so intelligent as Mr. Bemis does not see the absurdity of his proposal. Are godliness and reverence the special or exclusive characteristics of the adherents of State Churches in the older lands? If he so imagines he must persistently shut his eyes to the events of the time and to the trend of thought in modern civilization. It would be a pity to pain the sensibilities of so courageous a man as Mr. Bemis, but candour compels the expression that possibly long before he has uttered his last sad wail over this degenerate age, not a few State Churches now existing as State Churches will have been relegated to ancient history.