

THE PROPOSED BROAD CHURCH REVIEWED.

BY PRESBYTER.

The Rev. Mr. Grant, of Halifax, in his paper read by him before the Evangelical Alliance at Montreal, an outline of which appeared in the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN a few weeks ago, expounded his wishes and hopes as to the national Canadian Church which is to be hereafter. He expects and desires it to be a Broad Church. He very sensibly admits that Christians will continue to differ in details. He sees very clearly that there cannot be a universal uniformity of doctrine, unless we can have an earthly infallibility, and, like the rest of us, he does not believe in a Pope. Hence, of course, since Mr. Grant wants a single Church, it must be a Broad Church. He thinks that, by reason of the stubbornness of us orthodox, it must be long in coming. But we can encourage Mr. Grant here: we think it already exists, and has at least one member (Mr. G.), namely: for if he is not a member of it, we know not what he is, since he clearly proved himself not a Presbyterian.

He is so much in love with all comprehending churches that he has no objection whatever even to the development of a papal unity, in the usurpation of the Roman Bishops, not even in the extreme form of Hildebrand's Church theory. His only objection seems to be, that Hildebrand's successors, naughty fellows, would not understand the signs of the times in the 16th century, and would not consent to be developed into a universal Protestant Broad Church. [Had they only done this, Mr. Grant thinks, the whole history of Popery, including its doings in the middle ages, would have appeared a normal and legitimate, yea beneficial, development of Christendom. Indeed, he evidently adopts the semi-panthoistic stand-point which is so characteristic of M. Ohsan's historical lectures; that whatever grows up in history is necessitated to grow up, and so, has a right to grow up, and to be approved. A moment's thought will convince the Christian historian of the enormity of Consin's principle. For, if it accounts for and justifies the lesser, it will equally, the most flagrant outgrowth of wickedness, and even the existence of sin itself. (A conclusion, which the panthoist consistently accepts.) And it supposes, as the ruling power in human history, not a personal God, governing national free-agents under a consistent and unchangeable rule of right and wrong, approving and rewarding all right progress, and condemning and punishing all wrong or false progress; but an immanent, mechanical law of blind necessity. But this grave defect of Mr. Grant's view, is not the one we have chiefly to oppose.] *Revenos a nos montons.*

As to Pope Leo X's carrying out his torical development of Hildebrand, in the amiable mode desired by Mr. Grant, we surmise his Holiness would have met this grave obstacle, namely: That the reform, or Protestantizing of the Universal Broad Church, desired by our lecturer, would have been found to imply inevitably that Protestant trait of individuality of conviction, combined with sincerity and conscientiousness, which render Broad-churchism impossible. Were we occupants of Mr. Grant's semi-panthoistic point of view, we should retort upon him his own argument, that this is precisely what the historical development of the Reformation disclosed; and it is therefore the right development. Popery was the great world experiment of the Broad-churchism which he admires; and the ages have already pronounced its historical condemnation.

In arguing that our Dominion ought, in due time, to have its national Broad Church, Mr. Grant assumed among others, the following assertion as postulates.

- 1. That the Church is for the nation; and should therefore shape its own development primarily to promote the national greatness and unity.
2. That all denominational distinctions are the sin of schism; and therefore it follows that there must be a legitimate way for the visible church to extinguish them.
3. That the creeds of the denominations are mischievous, and that all good and noble "sectarians" have really disesteemed the distinctive points of their own creeds and church order, in the direct ratio to their magnanimity; and that these creeds, even those of Westminster, are most venerated by those most ignorant of them.
4. And that the recognition of brethren holding the fundamentals of redemption, as of the visible church—Catholic, must logically involve their assimilation into one church. (We take the liberty of numbering them for the reader's convenience.)

To Mr. Grant's first postulate we were about to reply, in the words of his own creed; but we remember his declaration that people venerate it just in the ratio of their ignorance of it, and were reminded that, as he is not in the latter number, his own creed will carry little weight with him. But as we are in that category, venerating it all the more after some thirty years of

diligent study of it, we shall indulge ourselves in quoting it. The confession then chap. xxvq. 3, instead of saying that the promotion of national unity and civilization ought to be the church's end, says: it is "for the gathering, and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world." We would remind Mr. Grant also of the words of Paul: "For our citizenship is in heaven;" and of the fact that he and the apostle Peter, even in enjoining on Christians obedience to, and prayer for, the civil power, never propose any other motive than the evangelical; "that we may live peaceable lives, in all goodness and honesty;" and that the gospel be not evil spoken of. Especially would we remind him of the words of one greater than Paul or Peter: "My kingdom is not of this world." The true Christian rejoices in the blessings which civil society derives from a pure gospel, as subordinate side-results. But his primary allegiance is to the everlasting kingdom; and his ends are eternity, not time.

Mr. Grant claims that intelligent Christians place their patriotism above their loyalty to their church. Did Peter and the apostle do this, in Acts iv. 18, or v. 29? Search and see. Did "the noble army of martyrs" do it? Nay verily! If to be an intelligent Christian is to despise his own church as a "sect," then Mr. Grant's statement may be true. But if the intelligent Christian regards his own Church as that branch of Christ's spiritual kingdom, through which his conscientious convictions attach him to the Catholic body; then in his eyes, that body, and his denomination in it, are the glorious and all-important kingdom, "for which Christ is made head over all other kingdoms and things; for which time itself endures, and for which the nations are permitted to exist. For it he forsakes all on earth, and life itself. Mr. Grant finds evidences that his view is the practical one, in the recent revolution in the United States; where, as he supposes, the rendering of all the leading Protestant denominations. The fact, are, unfortunately, totally against Mr. Grant. Of the three great denominations which divided, two were sundered, (the Methodist and Baptist), years before the revolution; and these were divided by the doctrinal and ethical heresies introduced in the Northern parts, not by any political events. The separation of the other, the Presbyterian, was indeed synchronous with the revolution; but the Southern Presbyterian branch has always assigned an ecclesiastical, and not a secular ground, for it; and demonstrates her sincerity, by maintaining the separation because the ecclesiastical and doctrinal differences still exist, and exist alone; the consolidation of the former union into a military empire having obliterated all political lines of distinction. The two national denominations in the United States, which did not divide, were the Episcopal and Puritan, the ones with which, we may suppose, Mr. Grant has least sympathy.

When, in the 2nd postulate noted, Mr. Grant assumes that all denominational distinctions are the sin of schism, he begs to a very point which it behoved him, if possible, to prove. If, as was argued by the paper of Dr. Dalney, of Va., the Church which must be one is the invisible church, if the unity which Christ requires of its members is not organic, but spiritual, if the nature of man necessitates, and the Gospel itself provides for, this unity in diversity, then denominational distinctions are not schisms; and it does not follow that it is the church's duty to extinguish them at all hazards. Mr. Grant draws his picture of the little village with its four rival spires affronting the skies, where there should have been but one, and the four denominations rending each other, instead of building Christ's house. If this picture is drawn from the life, Mr. Grant must have been singularly unfortunate; and we must have been as singularly fortunate, in our relations to other denominations. We have seen the partial and tolerable evils of small Christian communities unduly divided, and of means and labour partially misapplied. We have witnessed temporary controversies and alienations between denominations, but we have seen no such picture as is drawn before us. We are persuaded—and the alliance which Mr. Grant addressed, harmoniously constituted of differing denominations bears us out—that the customary relations of the evangelical denominations are these: They respect each other's honest convictions; they look far more at the points in common, than at the points of difference; they are mainly engaged, not in rending each other, but in doing each one the Master's work, in his own way; the effect of a laudable emulation does something to compensate for the divisions unavoidably arising from human infirmity. And may not God whose honour it is to bring good out of evil, actually make evangelical Christianity embrace more souls, by reason of these very diversities growing out of the minor differences of denomination, by presenting phases of Christianity not perfect, yet saving; diversified to suit varied temperaments? We are aware of the usual reply. That since, of two parties who differ, one at least must be in error, this question represents error as a good thing per se. We rejoice; No; but we assume, not that the partial error of the Christians who differs from our orthodox, is a good thing; but that it is a good thing if a man of perverse temperament finds a church where he may be saved, notwithstanding that partial error, when we could not possibly persuade him to find it in our more orthodox communion. May not this matter be tested by experience? There are towns in Scotland which are nearly devoid of denominational varieties—all Presbyterian. It is certain that their spiritual condition is better, and better because of that homogeneity than the condition of some other towns divided between the evangelical denominations?

Mr. Grant's picture of his ideal Broad Church shows that he does not regard theological differences, nor the candid public assertion thereof, as necessarily the sin of schism. Why not, since they carry all the risks of ill-feelings and unfraternal acts?

"Because the dissentients are combined under common names and church courts," he must answer—But now we reply: Suppose these dissentients are combined in a common visible church, Catholic, constituted of distinct communions recognizing each other, why do separate opinions and teachings thereby become any more schismatical? We shall show that, in fact, they are less so.

Mr. Grant thinks that good men disregard the distinctive features of their own creeds, just in proportion to their nobleness. This raises in our minds the inquiry, whether it was true of Knox, of Melville, of Chalmers, of Cook, of Belfast, of Andrew Fuller, of William Carey, of Thonwill, of Hodge? We know not where Mr. Grant formed his instances. As we read history the noblest Christians of the different communions are always the very men who present that combination of a truly Catholic spirit, with the most distinct denominational convictions, which to Mr. Grant's mind seems so impracticable.

He attempts to substantiate his fourth point, thus. Recognition must involve fusion: because if we recognize the ministerial character of a Wesleyan brother, we invite him to preach in our pulpits. But, asks Mr. Grant, with great triumph, how preposterous is it, to turn your brother Presbyterian out of your church for preaching an Arminian sermon, while your brother Catholic is allowed to do it with impunity. (This showed point evoked much applause.) We have two very complete answers ready. First, if our brother Wesleyan is a gentleman, when he is invited into our pulpits, he will not preach distinctive Arminianism. If he does, we shall not invite him again. But, second, if he does, we are not responsible for him, as we should be for a heretical Presbyterian brother. The Wesleyan does not preach by our ecclesiastical authority, our responsibility for his erroneous teaching ends with a disclaimer of his sentiments. Not so with the erring Presbyterian, whom we have helped to empower for his teaching.

And this suggests a fatal objection to the Broad-church theory, for which there is no honest evasion. The church utters her organic testimony through her ministry. It is to empower them for this, that she ordains them, the truth is practically to her what she conscientiously deems to be true. This is what she must require her organs to utter, or she is not honest. Moreover, that truth is a system, its propositions are connected truths, so that to drop out one is to jeopardize all the rest. She cannot permit her official builders to leave a single stone out of the arch, when she knows that the consequence will be the loosening of the whole. Mr. Grant's theory is inconsistent with the great witnessing duty of the Church. He may attempt to reply by asking: Why may not each group or party of church teachers in the one broad communion assert its own type of opinion, and refute those which it dislikes? We reply. They will not do it; or can they. Mr. Grant, after he has voluntarily used his office-power as a presbyter to confer on Mr. Z. the right to preach Arminianism in the same communion, cannot consistently exercise that same office-power in refuting Mr. Z's Arminianism. The inconsistency is too glaring; if he practically stop him from doing so; or, if he does so, Mr. Grant will certainly find that his refutation will be resented. Thus the Broad Church scheme must inevitably result in one of two things: strife, or indifference. If the teachers of a Broad Church have honest convictions and assert them as honest men must, the controversies will be far angrier than those between different denominations. This was notably true of the parties in the Scotch Church in the days of "Moderatism"; and of the new and old Theologies in the American Presbyterian Church, prior to 1837. In both cases the co-existence of clashing opinions, honestly held in the same communion, produced angry strifes, and the formal separation was the date of an almost immediate calming of the contests.

If, on the other hand, a spirit of indifference prevails, there may be indeed no assertion of distinctive points, and so no strife. But in order to this the teaching of the whole must be negative. The history of the Church shows, too plainly, that the result of negative teaching is positive and ruinous error. The distance from one to the other is short. There was, for instance, but a step from the negative preaching of Moderatism in Ulster, to Arminianism, and from that of congregationalism in Boston, to Socinianism.

Hence, it is as zealous friends of the Evangelical Alliance that we deprecate the Broad Churchism of Mr. Grant's paper. If it prevails, the hopes of Christians from the Alliance are doomed. Either, the pleasing harmony in diversity witnessed in St. Andrew's Kirk last week, must be replaced by controversies between brethren; or—what is more fatal—the lamp of distinctive truth, the only rallying point efficacious to collect and to warm Christian hearts, must be choked amidst the mephitic airs of indifference.

Mr. Grant might convince himself of the unreality of his theories, if he would advert to the fact that they derive their only plausibility from a circumstance. He is a Presbyterian: and it happens that Presbyterianism is predominant in the Protestantism of our Dominion. Hence he can flatter himself that the future national Church will be something near enough to Presbyterianism to suit him. But let us suppose that he lived in a country where strict, conscientious, close communion, immersionism was the predominant religion. Let us suppose (if we may be so rash as to suppose that Mr. Grant has any convictions that are such) that he cherished the sacred and conscientious conviction, that it was HIS DUTY to receive the child of God who was not immersed to the Lord's supper—could he and the major party get on in the Broad Church? Can communion be closed and open at the same time in the same society? This is as impossible as for Mr. Grant to be and not be, at the same time. Then where would the vision of his pleasant things be?

We close by recommending those who cherish these sentiments, to probe their hearts with this question. Are they prompted by true zeal for Christ's sacred truth and glory? or by a carnal ambition for power, numbers, wealth, and eclat?

Temperance.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—As you have lately been publishing many articles on the subject of Temperance, will you allow me to give you my views on the subject. There is a great difference between temperance and abstinence, but nowadays the words are so confounded or mixed up that one would suppose they meant the same things. Temperance, I take to mean the moderate use of anything, and abstinence the total abstinence of the same thing. Now, with regard to the doctrine of abstaining from the use of intoxicating beverages, there is no scripture warrant for such a doctrine; we know very well that our Saviour himself rebuked the people for their unreasonable behaviour to John the Baptist, and himself, "the Son of Man came eating and drinking and they said, Behold, a man gluttonous and a wine bibber." Unless the wine used had been intoxicating there would have been no reproach in the appellation of wine bibber, and we know very well from other passages, such as putting new wine into old bottles, &c., that it was the fermented juice of the grapes which made the wine used in that country. If the wine of Palestine was like the light French and German wines, a cup of such wine would not be a bit more intoxicating than a cup of strong tea, a beverage which abstainers use three or four times a day in this country. I have tasted these wines from the Rhine and Bordeaux imported first to Leith in Scotland, and so make the statement from experience.

But sir, it is neither the use of wine or beer that is the curse of Canada, it is whiskey, and that very often adulterated, and along with whiskey I would couple the excessive use of tobacco. I quite agree with what is said elsewhere about saloons. They are the resorts of the gamblers, the sporting gents, and the silly young men who like to be thought swells, and are of no use other than decent inns or travellers' homes, and should be abolished everywhere. I know Toronto pretty well, and I should say one hundred hotels and inns would be ample accommodation for the city and its visitors. I maintain, however, that unless the abstinence people exert some of their energy against the abuse of tobacco they will labor in vain. Smoking and drinking tobacco are not one bit better than chewing whiskey. I am sure the smell of that tobacco smoke is abominable, and the filthy puddles that chowers and smokers form around them in a smoking or excursion carriage for instance, is disgusting and unwholesome.

The abstinence people want a prohibition law; well, although I am not a total abstainer but only a temperate man, I would not oppose it, believing that it might be expedient, although from my knowledge of Canada for more than forty years, I think it would be found quite inoperative and impracticable. I think, moreover, that closing saloons, prohibiting the sale of intoxicating liquors in the bar rooms, and limiting licenses to houses of entertainment, in the proportion of one to every five hundred people, would be practicable and greatly advance the cause of temperance.

Along with this, let ministers of the Gospel especially, and the Fair Sex in a body, discountenance the use of tobacco in every shape, and the good cause would be still further spread round. The use of the pipe and the cigar very often provokes to a drink of something after.

Yours truly, ADVANCE.

1st December, 1874.

Church Opening—Revival.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Knowing that God's people are at all times rejoiced to hear that the power of Satan is being diminished by the conversion of sinners to Christ, I beg of you to allow me through the columns of your valuable paper, to give a condensed report of the great things which God has been doing for His people in this place, through the agency of the Canada Presbyterian Church. I have looked for an account of the Dedication Services of the Adjala Presbyterian Church in this place, and also of the successful Soiree which took place on the following evening; but as nothing has as yet appeared, I venture to include in my narrative a brief account of these services. It is well known that the new Church recently opened for worship in this township. The work of building the Church was rapidly executed, and now there is in this place a neat and comfortable house of worship that will accommodate 200 persons. The cost of the Church as completed does not exceed \$900. On the 26th ult. the Church was dedicated to the service of the Triune God. The morning and afternoon services were conducted by the highly esteemed, and universally beloved pastor, the Rev. J. A. McConnell; who preached two powerful and effective sermons. The third sermon was preached by the Rev. Thomas McKee, of Essa; in which he earnestly and pathetically entreated all to make a full surrender to Christ.

On the evening succeeding a soiree was held, which was in every respect a complete success, and reflected great credit upon the ladies of the Church and community, for their energy, taste, and liberality, in furnishing and serving such a bounteous and sumptuous repast.

But the half has not yet been told. On the 8th inst., it being Communion day, eighteen came forward and stood up for Jesus. Well might angels rejoice at such a sight, for here were to be seen those whose heads are blossoming for the grave, others who have just reached the meridian of life, and stalwart youth merging into manhood. The joy of this pastor, who had laboured hard and faithfully, know no bounds; and the prayer of all is that he may be the means of causing many to seek after righteousness, that Heaven may bestow her choicest blessings on him in this life, and at last grant him an abundant entrance into that rest which has been prepared for the Israel of God.

PHILOS.

Adjala, Nov. 13th, 1874.

Random Readings.

We are bound to obey God in suffering His rod and crosses. For God in our baptism hath made this covenant with us, that we must die and be buried with Christ, and be grafted into his passion and death, if we will rise again and be glorified with Him in the kingdom of heaven, whereunto He is risen and ascended. Wherefore, mark well these lessons, that you may learn patience in all afflictions and adversities; whether you suffer sickness, poverty, reproaches, or persecution for the Gospel. And whatsoever kind of adversity troubleth you, persuade yourself, for a surety, that it is God's will that you should suffer and be tried. Desire him to send you the gift of patience, and say, "Thy will be done, good Lord, not ours."—Cramer.

No man has a right to live who refuses to take upon himself proper responsibility. To stand all the day idly while others are working, to do just what he wishes, and in ways and at times he chooses, is to prove unfaithful to the demands of the gospel. God appoints our work and gives directions as to how it shall be done, and he says, without consulting our opinion or convenience, "Son, go work to-day in my vineyard." One-half the Christian people find no load, because they refuse to take up and carry one. The cross is not laid upon their shoulders. It is hard to know what is the meaning of a Christianity in the profession of which there is no felt sense of responsibility with a corresponding willingness to assume it.

JOYOUS union with God is the sweetest of all experiences. Our souls seek, hear, commune with, enjoy Him. He becomes more real, personal, substantial than any object of sense. We know that we have reached the imperishable, the living, the life-giving, the spiritual and loving Father, and are enabled to "an upon, love, trust, rejoice in Him. We get beyond the test of crucibles, glasses, and acids, where scientists never travel, and human wisdom never penetrates; where the mind asserts its supremacy, and speculation and logic yield to consciousness and certain knowledge. No knowledge, equals this spiritual discernment, which makes us know that our Redeemer lives, and loves, and holds fellowship with us.

A MAN diseased in body can have little joy of his wealth, be it ever so much. A golden crown cannot cure the headache, nor a velvet slipper give ease to the gout, nor a purple robe fray away a burning fever. A sick man is alike sick, whosoever you lay him—on a bed of gold or on a pad of straw, with a silk quilt or a sorry rag on him. So no more can riches, gold and silver, land and living, had a man much more than ever any man had, minister unto him much joy; yea, or any true or sound joy at all, where the mind is distracted and discontent. Without contentment there is no joy of aught; there is no profit, no pleasure in anything.—Gataker.

They who believed, confessed. They did not confess until they believed. You do not throw away one portion until you begin to get hold of a better. The prodigal, I suppose, kept his rags closely round his person as long as they constituted his only covering; it is when he gets the fair robe from his father's hand that he casts the filthy garments passionately away. You will never show your own deeds and count them vile, either before God or man, until you begin to see the way of pardon. When Christ forgives a soul, He gets that soul's secrets; when He gets a soul's secrets, He forgives that soul's sins.—Arnol.

GLOWING hearts, earnest praying, zealous co-operation, springing from, and suffused with the spirit of grace, have often been the harbingers of whole winters of revival. Every man is about as religious as he means to be. The stream cannot rise higher than its source. The churches which are refreshed are those which pray and labor for "the time of refreshing." It will be largely our own fault if our hearts and the churches to which we belong are not revived and strengthened. Coldness, formality, declension, are never from God.

A MARKED feature of the Scriptures is their dogmatism. There is an air of unconsciousness that any exceptions can be taken to them any more than the objects of nature can be denied. There is no painful anxiety for recognition, but they are assertive as well as secured position and authority. All truth is dogmatic, and this quiet self-assertion is one of the greatest charms of the Word, which, while it assures the believer, has often disarmed the enemies of the truth.

EVERY true hero grows by patience. People who have always been prosperous are seldom the most worthy, and never in moral excellence the most strong. He who has not been compelled to suffer, has probably not begun to learn how to be magnanimous; as it is only by patience and fortitude that we can know what it is to overcome evils, or feel the pleasure of forgiving them.

NOWADAYS we have been hedge-breakers, few hedge-makers; many openers of gaps, few stoppers; many makers of breaches to let in the flood of God's wrath upon us, but very few to make up the breach, and let down the sluices, that the gushing streams of God's vengeance may be staid.—Arthur Dent.

BECAUSE gold is rare, gilding has been invented, which without its solidity has all its brightness; thus, to replace the kindness which we are without, we have invented politeness, which has every appearance of it. The fear of God begins with the heart, and purifies and rectifies it; and from the heart, thus rectified, grows a conformity in the life, the words, and the actions.—Sir Matthew Hale.

THE rebukes of a minister, when steeped in love, and prefaced by commendation, descend like an excellent oil that doth not break the head.—Pope.

HUMILITY is a grace that adorns and beautifies every other grace; without it the most splendid natural and acquired acquisitions lose their charm.

It is never expedient to do wrong.