

# The Canadian Independent.

Wm Reid  
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ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN.

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## THE ABBE'S DREAM.

BY NATHAN HASKELL DOLE.

The Abbé Michael dreamed one night  
That Heaven was opened to his sight,  
And first among the radiant throng  
Which filled the streets with praise and song

He saw a man whose reckless might  
Had seamed his early life with wrong.

The Abbé heeded not the gold  
Nor sparkling jewels manifold,  
Nor mansions fair, nor sea of glass,  
Nor pearly gates through which did pass  
The hosts of angels richly stoled;—  
He only saw this man, alas!

The hymns of glory reached his ears,  
But brought no solace for his tears;  
Peace from his soul had swiftly flown,  
"My life is spent for God alone  
And yet this godless man appears  
Among the nearest to the throne."

But ere he woke he heard a voice,  
Which said unto his heart: "Rejoice!  
The diamond which is full of light  
Was once a coal as black as night!  
Judge not the means which God employs  
To make the wrong bloom into right."

—Congregationalist.

## THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

REV. J. M. ROY, M.A.

Second Paper.

BY WHAT MEANS may the Church legitimately perform its mission? endeavour to secure this end?

1. By preserving its own integrity. When a man commences his life's work his first duty is to maintain, in unimpaired efficiency, his being, as a unit. His body is one, and the unity of the organism is necessary to its efficiency. He cannot afford needlessly to part with a finger nail. The excrescences of particular members need, at times, to be curtailed; but, for efficiency in work, the unity of the body must be preserved.

The Church of Christ, "the blessed company of all faithful people," is one body. For efficiency in the accomplishment of its work it is expedient that it should have a common organization. The members of that Church are not less members of it because no outward organization represents the whole, and corresponds to it; and they would not be more truly members of Christ's Church if such a comprehensive organization existed. But the rivalries of bodies which look up to no superior head, whose principles may be a check on the exclusive, foolish, or selfish tendencies of any party, tend to bring into prominence specific differences, instead of the characteristics of the genus Christian.

The chief obstacle to the organic union of Christianity is the dread of tyranny; and the past history of the Church shows that the dread is well-founded. Disunion, however, has not arisen from opposition to central government in itself, so much as from the bad political economy of church rulers. Mr. Goldwin Smith, in his Essay on "Falkland and the Puritans," says that in the time of Falkland "many Puritans were Low Church Episcopalians, wishing only to moderate the pretensions and curb the authority of the Bishops.

"Episcopacy is not one of the grievances protested against in the Millennium Petition." "In this memorable document," says Aubrey, "the petitioners declared their sincere affection for the Church, of which they were ministers,

rejecting the charge of schism and faction as a calumny."

Principal Fairbairn says that the opposition of the Independents to an ecclesiastical political organism lay in the fear "lest it should do violence to the rights of conscience, or prevent, or even supersede the duty of the exercise by the individual of his own judgment in matters of religion."

Church rulers have often confounded the optional functions of government with the necessary, and schisms have been the inevitable result.

He would be a poor logician who would, in defining generic terms, forget that extension varies inversely as intension, and would, in his definition of a genus, describe qualities which inhered only in a species. What should we think of a writer who would define man as a rational animal with a white skin? Then, what should we think of a government that accepted such a definition, and immediately proceeded to treat as beasts, to be enslaved or killed, all whose skin was black or red? Substituting for the colour of the skin the complexion of philosophical belief, or æsthetic taste, or political predilections, in a analogous case has often occurred in the Church since apostolic times. The safety of the individual does not depend upon the absence of organization, but upon the logical correctness of the definitions, and the soundness of the principles on which the organism is based. The tyranny of Elizabeth, James, and Charles I. was based upon a logical fallacy. That fallacy was in the assumption that uniformity is essential to unity. Those who object to Christian union on the basis of the *minimum* of qualities that go to make up a Christian should remember that, as the laws of mind exist, no other principle of classification can become sound or permanent. By *minimum* is, of course, understood the residue left after eliminating individual and sectional peculiarities. It is, also, the *maximum* of what distinguishes the genus Christian from the genus Mohammedan or heathen.

The first duty of the Church, then, is openly and formally to recognize, as part of the Lord's body, every individual and every community that bears the marks of the genus Christian, every one who believes Christ's truth and follows Christ's righteousness, however his specific characteristics differ from others and most carefully to watch over every such person or community, as a precious portion of Christ's inheritance, guarding him and it, so far as is possible, from even their own failings and follies.

Let an organization of the whole embody that thought, and tyranny will be checked, while party exclusiveness will be authoritatively rebuked; and, in the ministrations of Christian ministers, the points of unity will necessarily become more prominent than those of sectarian diversity.

Meanwhile, it becomes our duty everywhere to emphasize that thought, to show its truth, and consistently and practically to carry it out. Then, as the truth is felt, in the process of time it will naturally find for itself some visible and formal expression.

It has been said that the early Puritans made a mistake in supposing reform to be the work of polity only. It would be an equally great mistake to suppose that reform and progress result from individualism only. Reform that is based

on individuality alone must fail. Public sentiment and united organization must combine to give efficiency even to the best laws. The instincts of caution and of healthy self-love and love of approval make individuals follow the mass in things good, as well as things evil. Canadian churchmen of all denominations rarely lead in any movement, but await the action of the English and the people of the United States. In India and amongst the French, the individuality of the Anglo Saxons finds an uncongenial climate; and even amidst the Anglo Saxons, solidarity asserts its right to consideration and its power. What is the proverbial British reverence for precedent but an unwillingness to move alone? Solidarity has its roots in human nature, and has found its expression in the language attributed to God at creation: "It is not good for man to be alone."

It is always dangerous to exalt into a universal principle what is true only within a restricted sphere. Because Peter or Paul is a perfect man, as compared with infancy and childhood, it does not follow that he should be subject to no court beyond himself in matters affecting other men. Because each "congregation of faithful men" has an autonomy as perfect as that of Peter or Paul, it does not follow that its independence is to be without limits.

Legs and arms have spheres of their own in which their authority is absolute; but the body is higher than both arms and legs, and even these can maintain their own healthy action only as they are naturally bound and subservient to the body as an organic whole.

It is the "head and front of the offending" of pure democracy that asserts that the relation of union to the individual is one of subordination and not of supremacy. In his sphere, the individual is supreme; and in its sphere, the sphere of the organized whole is superior to that of the individual, and, in that sphere, its authority is absolute over the individual. If the man who was rebuked by Christ's disciples for not following with them had not cast out devils, but rather introduced them, even the Saviour would have commended their rebuke. There is an end of society higher than the interests of the individuals composing it, and the duty of the individual does not terminate with the selfish aim of maintaining unity only so far as it ministers to his own advantage, even if that advantage is spiritual.

Thoughts become corrupt or perish if they are not embodied in visible forms. Were there no visible creation, speaking to the human mind the truths of Him who forms and sustains it; were there no Christ, completing in His perfect humanity the revelation of the Father, too dimly shadowed forth in the material universe; were there no body of Christian men, exhibiting in their lives the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit of God, the very thought of God itself would become corrupt or perish from the minds of men. While the Church's unity is unexpressed by any outward form or organism, it fails proportionately to be a power in deciding the action or moulding the destinies alike of the parts that compose the Church and the Church of Christ itself as "the pillar and ground of the truth." The first and imperative duty of the Church to-day is to embody

and express its widest and grandest unity. Artificially to bring this about is impossible. The Church must grow into it. But, in the smaller sections of the Church of Christ, we can gradually move towards the desired end by studying what may be the demands for united action in their more limited sphere, and by promoting such action within that sphere.

## TWENTY-FOURTH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION Y.M.C.A.

The following has been sent to us for publication:—

CLEVELAND, O., May 30, 1881.

MR. EDITOR, The Forest City has had the pleasure of entertaining during the past week the twenty-fourth Convention of the Young Men's Christian Associations of North America. The delightful weather, the hospitable reception by the citizens of Cleveland, the large attendance of delegates, and the encouraging progress reported in all departments of the work, made it a notable gathering.

The Association of this city has just come into occupancy of a new and handsome building, whose attractive apartments have been thronged during these days of meeting. It has been fortunate, also, in securing as its General Secretary, Mr. O. C. Morse, who has filled the same office, with great efficiency, in the Washington Association.

On Wednesday morning the sessions of the Convention began in the First M. E. Church of this city, and the farewell meeting was held in the same place Sunday night. The representation has been large, and among the delegates are found many leading men in business and professional life from all over the land.

The officers of the Convention were as follows:

President—John L. Wheat, Louisville, Kentucky.

Vice Presidents—Robert Kilgour, Toronto, Ont.; C. A. Hopkins, Providence, R. I.; J. B. Meriam, Cleveland, O.; Frank L. Johnston, St. Louis, Mo.; M. L. Blanton, Nashville, Tenn.; T. J. Gillespie, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Secretary—J. V. L. Graham, Baltimore, Md.

Thirty one States, Provinces and Territories were represented on the Nominating Committee appointed at the first session, and others reported afterward. Such distant points as Halifax, San Francisco and New Orleans have sent representatives. An interesting feature was the large attendance of delegates from special branches of the work which have recently been greatly developed by the efforts of the International Committee. The associations among college students, railroad men, and German young men were far better represented than ever before, while a number of commercial travellers were present to urge the importance of this new phase of the work. The report of the International Committee, which is the executive of the Convention in carrying on the general work of the associations was presented Wednesday afternoon, and the different branches of its work were afterwards considered in greater detail and awakened the greatest interest. Some \$20,000 were subscribed to carry it on, and the following were appointed to serve on the committee for the ensuing

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