

The Canadian Evangelist.

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"GO . . . SPEAK . . . TO THE PEOPLE ALL THE WORDS OF THIS LIFE."

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The Canadian Evangelist

Is devoted to the furtherance of the Gospel of Christ, and pleads for the union of all believers in the Lord Jesus in harmony with His own prayer recorded in the seventeenth chapter of John, and on the basis set forth by the Apostle Paul in the following terms: "I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beseech you to walk worthily of the calling wherewith ye were called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; giving diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, even as also ye were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all, and through all, and in all."—Eph. iv. 1-6.

This paper, while not claiming to be what is styled an "organ," may be taken as fairly representing the people known as Disciples of Christ in this country.

The Two Gates.

A pilgrim once (so runs an ancient tale),
Old, worn and spent, crept down a
shadowed vale;
On either hand rose mountains, bleak
and high,
Chill was the gusty air, and dark the
sky.
The path was rugged, and his feet were
bare;
His faded cheek was seamed by pain
and care;
His heavy eyes upon the ground were
cast,
And every step seemed feebler than
the last.

The valley ended where a naked rock
Rose sheer from earth to heaven, as if
to mock
The pilgrim who had crept that toil-
some way;
But while his dim and weary eyes essay
To find an outlet, in the mountain-
side
A ponderous sculptured brazen door
he spied;
And tottering towards it with fast fail-
ing breath,
Above the portal read, "The gate of
death."

He could not stay his feet that led
thereto;
It yielded to his touch, and passing
through
He came into a world all bright and
fair;
Blue were the heavens, and balmy was
the air;
And lo! the blood of youth was in his
veins,
And he was clad in robes that held no
stains
Of his long pilgrimage. Amazed he
turned;
Behold! a golden door behind him
burned.
In that fair sunlight; and his wondering
eyes,
Now lusterful and clear as those new
skies,
Fre: from the mists of age, of care, of
strife,
Above the portal read, "The gate of
life."

—SELECTED.

A Sign of the Times.

A notable conference was that which met week before last in Dr. Hiram C. Haydn's church, Cleveland, O., notable alike for the number, ability and standing of the men who composed it, and for the character of their proceedings. About sixty Presbyterian ministers and laymen representing the views of the minority element of the church in regard to the action taken by the General Assembly, and more recently by the late synod of New York, in the case of Dr. Briggs, met to express their dissatisfaction with that action, and

through their committee issued the following "Declaration and Address," which, though it deals mainly with matters of denominational church polity, is likely to become a matter of history as marking a new era in the Presbyterian Church, and is therefore given herewith in full, as being a most important sign of the times:

We, the undersigned ministers and elders of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, being seriously concerned in view of certain facts and tendencies in our church, hereby make the following statement:

First—We believe that the General Assembly has no right to impose upon the church with doctrinal statements under the guise of interpretation, whether by deliverance or through judicial process, and, further, that interpretations of doctrine by the courts of the church ought always to be strictly within the letter of the standards and with sacred regard to the broad and generous terms of the reunion of 1870.

Second—We believe that the most scrupulous care should be used in all trials for doctrinal divergences from the standards, especially now, when a large majority of the presbyteries have expressed, after much deliberation, their dissatisfaction with our Confession of Faith as it stands, their desire for its revision, and many of them their desire for a new creed. We view with great concern procedures at such a time conducted to severest sentence by what seems to us interpretations of our standards, strained beyond their letter and far beyond any just regard for the compact of the reunion.

Third—We believe that no court of our church has a right by deliverance or resolution or rebuke, or otherwise, to seek to suppress respectful action, by judicatories below it expressive of their anxiety and apprehension concerning anything in the church which seems to them to imperil the constitutional liberties of the church, or of any of its members. The right of petition and remonstrance must not be denied in the Church of Christ.

Fourth—We believe that the interpretation of one or two phrases in our book of discipline, as meaning that a prosecuting committee should become, from the moment it enters on its work, independent of the court which appointed it, capable of living on, even after the judicatory has died, and of prosecuting after the judicatory has acquitted, is a strained interpretation, leading logically to many absurdities and easily possible miscarriages of justice. If these phrases are fairly susceptible of such interpretation, they ought to be eliminated from the book.

Fifth—We believe that it is no part of the constitutional power of any court of the church to warn honest and God-fearing men to withdraw themselves from its ministry or eldership because they cannot accept as binding upon them, interpretations of doctrine which are outside the letter of the confession, and which have never been settled by or sanctioned by the presbyteries in any legal way. This method of discipline by withdrawal enjoined by resolution of a church court is not provided for in the book of discipline. Such warning carries no obligation of obedience.

Sixth—We believe that our church is broad enough and strong enough to abide by the spirit of the compact of reunion and to embrace in its communion and its ministry all forms and schools of reverent scholarship which accept the essential and necessary articles of our common faith, acknowledging the Lord Jesus as Divine Master and Saviour, and the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

Seventh—We call upon all Presbyterians to stand together in defense of

reasonable liberty of opinion in the church and of the constitutional rights of individual members wherever assailed; and we heartily approve of the protest of Dr. Herrick Johnson, Dr. Nichols, and eighty-three others at the last General Assembly.

Eighth—We do most urgently counsel our brethren who may be perplexed concerning their duty to abide in the communion and service of the church, assured that in so doing they remain well within their constitutional rights.

Finally—Only a profound sense of the peril that now besets our church has led us to make this declaration of what seems to us fundamental principles.

In behalf of the conference held in Calvary Presbyterian Church, Cleveland, O., November 8 and 9,

HIRAM C. HAYDN, Chairman.
THOMAS C. HALL, Secretary.

The comment of the Presbyterian press upon the conference and its resolutions varies, of course, conservative papers condemning, and the more liberal, progressive papers approving. *The Mid-Continent*, of St. Louis, says of the address:

"It is a declaration of antagonism and of hostile intent for the future, to which the signers commit themselves. Without as yet knowing the names of many of the brethren participating in the Conference, we judge they could not be of those who a year ago sang the song of 'peace and work.' Whatever grounds for the sweet plea existed then, should be felt now with increased force and persistence. After the church in a constitutional way, and by an overwhelming vote, had brought to a finish that issue and its concomitant features, it is not seemly nor an arguery of good that dissenting minority should now seek to organize an opposition, and to rekindle the embers of strife. Protesting is this conference does against the Assembly's right to interpret its standards, against its sentence in the case of a minister's perilous departure from them, and against the provision of our Book of Discipline in respect to prosecuting committee—this is but the threshing of old straw. And as for the Synod of New York—even if, as intimated by these murmuring brethren, it may have suppressed action by judicatories below it, we do not see that this constitutes a grievance for those not subject to that body, or can make much of a 'bugle call' to resound through the rest of the church. We are not calling in question the right of ministers and elders to freely criticize actions taken by the church judicatories. Such protest was made in the Assembly according to constitutional prerogative and was duly made part of the minutes of that body. But we see neither the wisdom nor the practical outcome of any good for the church or its work in this aftermath."

The Interior, of Chicago, after a brief review of the eight points in the declaration, says:

"On the whole we do not think that anything divisive, threatening or disloyal, will be found in this declaration. Like the Auburn Declaration of the past generation, its principles laid down in this paper are such as commend themselves to the general catholic judgment of our and other churches. There would doubtless be differences when it came to the practical application of the principles set forth, but not much in regard to the principles themselves. We must remember that there are two types of mind arising out of constitutional temperament which manifest themselves in every deliberative organization of assemblage of men. The questions raised by these brethren are upon almost precisely the same line as that which divided our people at the formation of our federal constitution

into the old Republican and Federal parties, the one party jealous for the rights of the populace, and the other solicitous for the centralization of the national authority. The differences were happily compromised in the constitution, and no one will now say that the contribution of one of the old parties to that instrument was any less valuable than that of the other. It required them both to perfect an instrument which has challenged the admiration of the world and enkindled perpetual devotion in the people. We, as a nation, have peace and prosperity only by loyalty to the organic law."

Elsewhere in the same issue of the *Interior* is an editorial paragraph, suggested, doubtless, by this same matter. Bro. Gray says:

"There is never anything gained for the 'unity of faith' by the splits between the two natural divisions of mind, the progressive and the conservative, because the same lines immediately reappear in the fragments, and usually more pronounced than before. Take the original 'Covenanters.' They had a split-off by the 'Associates.' No sooner were they in working order than they split, and the new church was the associate Reformed. What was left of the Covenanters split again into Old Side and New Side. The Old Side split again and the New Side followed suit. All these churches were extreme and ultra-conservative. Thus the intolerance of the two types of mind toward each other was reduced to absurdity. The place where mutual tolerance should begin is at the beginning. We must go back to the Master for the broad platform upon which all can stand. No organization or association of men can be at its best without the activity of both types of mind. The progressive type is needed or we should have stagnation and decay. The conservative type is needed to give steadiness and certainty to the movement. We must have Peter and we must have Paul. What did the Creator mean by enacting this universal law of mind if it were not essential to the general and spiritual well being?"

Now, we endorse fully every sentiment of this paragraph, and yet we see far more in this Cleveland Conference than a "split" between "two types of mind, arising out of constitutional temperament." It is, as we interpret it, but another protest against denominationalism, against the bondage of creeds, and a sign of the decline and not distant downfall of ecclesiasticism. We do not belong to that class of religious metaphysical philosophers, who assume that we need different creeds and different politics, to accommodate varying "types of mind and religious temperament"—the Methodist church, for example, for the benefit of those in whose religion the emotional element predominates, and the Presbyterian church for those who are characterized chiefly by a love of "law and order"—so that "birds of a feather may flock together." On that principle every man would be in a flock by himself, as no two individuals ever existed who were exact duplicates in "creed and temperament," and the very idea of a church would be the emptiest chimera. The *Interior* gives the true solution of difficulty involved in conflicting "types of mind and temperament," and the panacea for all the evils of denominationalism, when it says, "We must go back to the Master for the broad platform upon which all can stand." And the "Declaration" sets forth what that broad platform is in its sixth resolution,

in words that we can most heartily and fully indorse, if instead of the words "our church," we may substitute the "Church of Christ." The sixth resolution reads: "We believe that our church is broad enough and strong enough to abide by the spirit of the compact of reunion and to embrace in its communion and its ministry all forms and schools of reverent scholarship which accept the essential and necessary articles of our common faith, acknowledging the Lord Jesus as Divine Master and Saviour, and the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice." Yes, brethren of the denominational churches, the "essential and necessary article of our common faith," that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God," and the great fundamental principle of Protestantism, that "the Bible is our only infallible and all sufficient rule of faith and practice," constitute a platform broad enough to accommodate the entire Church of Jesus Christ, no matter how various the "temperaments and types of mind" represented in it. For, holding the "common faith," Christians would cease to disfellowship one another over mere "opinions" about matters that only "gender strife," and grounded on the basis of true fellowship and filled with the spirit of love, they would "receive one another, but not to doubtful disputations." This conviction, we are glad to believe, is rapidly gaining ground among those in every denomination who deplore the unhappy divisions in the Church of Christ. And so we believe that denominationalism is doomed to a rapid decline and a speedy death, and that all associations of Christian churches hereafter will be formed, not around confessions of faith or doctrinal symbols or ecclesiastical politics and rituals, but for practical co-operative work alone, covering the whole field of human interests, temporal and eternal, and carried on in the name and in the spirit of the Master. In such associations, not the creed, but the cross, will be the center and symbol, and the only orthodoxy will be the orthodoxy of the heart and the hand, the "faith that works by love."—*Christian Evangelist*.

What You Can Do.

You cannot set the world aright, or the times, but you can do something for the truth; and all you can do will certainly tell if the work you do is for the Master, who gives you your share, and so the burden of responsibility is lifted off. This assurance makes peace, satisfaction and repose possible even in the partial work done upon earth. Go to a man who is carving a stone for a building: ask him where is that stone going, to what part of the temple, and how is he going to get it into place; and what does he do? He points to the builder's plans. This is only one stone of many. So when men shall ask where and how is your little achievement going into God's plans, point them to your Master, who keeps the plans, and then go on doing your little service as faithfully as if the whole temple was yours to build.—*Phillips Brooks*.

The seeds of our own punishment are sown at the time we commit sin.