

NATIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS.

SERMON BY THE REV. J. B. EDMONDSON, OF COLUMBUS, ONT.

Righteousness exalteth a nation; but sin is a reproach to any people. Proverbs xiv. 34.

Righteousness is something very frequently spoken of throughout the Holy Scriptures. No intelligent reader of the Word of God can fail to perceive that it is of vast and vital importance to every rational being, whether on the earth or in the heavens...

Let us humbly endeavour to answer the question, what is righteousness? By looking at it in God, we will get the fullest, brightest view of it that it is possible for us to obtain. The Lord is righteous. That is, He was always disposed, from His inmost heart, to be fair and just with all His creatures...

What God is in moral character men ought to be. The works of men should be the same in kind as those of their Maker. In substance the Creator says to men, "Be ye righteous." Were men of all classes and all positions in the lands, to incline their hearts to the right, and do it at all hazards...

during the time of the election of our rulers that a vote to bring the blush to the national cheek. On such occasions votes have been bought, and in large numbers...

To bribe a man to vote contrary to his convictions is a foul deed, which the God of heaven is ever watching. It is using unlawful, unblended means to reach an end—and that may be wrong. A man might better take unwieldy means to get his neighbour's purse than to get his neighbour's vote...

Bribery is a thing abhorrent in the sight of Heaven. The curse of the Almighty goes with it. A moral blight comes both upon the giver and upon the receiver. They may not be conscious of it themselves. The sin fellows may take no note of it. But a scar is left upon each of their souls...

This state of things has not sprung up all at once. A nation does not depart from its integrity, as far as we have gone, in a day or in a year. It is to be feared that the standard of public morality in this matter is not as high to-day as it was thirty or forty years ago in the land...

Let us not delude ourselves with the vain hope that, though the evil exist, it will run its course single-handed through the land. No, not for a century, or for half a century. Should this and kindred immoralities be come rooted and grounded in the land, what then? A day of national reckoning is just come...

ways of punishing national evils, and of purging away a people's guilt. At one time He forbids the earth to yield her fruit, and thunders, with rattle and rumble, and knock for admittance at every door. Again, He sends the pestilence, and the fever, and cholera, carries away its thousands, and the voice of mourning is heard in every corner of the land...

I appeal to you, as Christian men and Christian women, that you exert your influence in every way you can to banish the hateful practice from the land. We do not desire to transmit to posterity a heritage of shame, of crime, of woe. Don't stand by and see any man tarnish his natural righteousness without remonstrating with him, without rebuking him. Expose him if it be in your power. You ought to expose the best friend you have who acts thus. Righteousness should be dearer to your heart than any earthly friend you have...

I speak to-day, brethren, in behalf of no party in politics. The noblest from which such a course is given is degraded. I hope that the Church of which I am a member may never become identified with any political party. She should rise above all such interests, and embrace within her fold the good men and good women of all parties...

Union.

DEAR SIR,—I beg leave to request your insertion of a few remarks upon certain bearings of the Union question which have not been submitted by any of your numerous correspondents on that interesting subject. I know no feature of your excellent journal more hopeful than the complete freedom of expression which it allows, and en passant, permit me to remark that the general tone of your correspondents is, on the whole, manly and generous...

I am very much astonished to find so many of our excellent brethren so urgently maintaining an opposite view. I, for one, will never give my consent to union with such an article. It is a sine qua non, without which any scheme which may be devised will only rend the Church in pieces, instead of uniting her integrity. Now why? Because to leave out a formal statement in the Basis on the subject referred to would be so changing the habit of former unions...

to alter the position of all the Churches now united. He has formerly witnessed this good confession. If there have been seven Presbyterian Unions in British America since 1858, as stated in the article, it is not rather unhappy that at the least of it, that all of a sudden our proposed Union should be consummated without it?

With all due respect for Mr. McDonnell, I take strong exception to his mode of reasoning in this head. He speaks of our ministry as being "the extreme wing" of the Canadian Presbyterian Church. Now this is not the case. We are asking for no new doctrine. We make no other request than that our forefathers of the Church of Scotland demanded.

But what do the majority ask of us? They ask us to receive a document as unknown to history as it is extremely sectarian, viz., "The Act of Independence."

This Act reads as follows in one part, "The freedom and independence of this Synod, in regard to all things spiritual, cannot be called in question." Now, this is forced upon us, while all that we ask at the future Church is to declare in favour of a doctrine to which all parties profess their attachment. But we are thus expected to become Erastians by receiving an article which we cannot believe to be true...

The Synod mentioned in my extract is in full communion and sympathy, to this day, with the Church of Scotland, which is bound if the State chose to enforce the law to settle ministers, when the people render objections, against the most earnest remonstrances of the parishioners, in accepting the present Basis, then, we of the minority must become one with "the Kirk" in their present relations to the Scottish Establishment. Mr. McDonnell speaks also of enthusiasts on either side. That is a favorite expression with many. But my prayer is that the Lord may grant us a just enthusiasm, in advancing the cause of a true Presbyterian doctrine which we conceive to be just another name for Scripture...

I fear, however, that delay is imperative in the meantime. "How can two walk together unless they be agreed?" So far as my experience is concerned, I can see no co-operation or sympathy worthy of the name of fellow Christians between the two Churches, and a worthy Baptist minister made the same remark to me, not long ago, which shows how others are viewing our movements. Might it not be well to wait for sometime until an earnest co-operation and mutual affection, will compell the co-worker to say "See how these Christians love one another," rather than grieve and oppress a few of us, who are compelled, with the most sincere reluctance to resist the great mass of our brethren.

I am, yours most truly,

NATH. PATERSON.

Martintown, 8th Jan. 1874.

Home Mission Regulations.

MY DEAR SIR,—The illiberality of some of the Home Mission Regulations of the C. P. Church is striking. On page 43 of the minutes of 1871, we find the following enactment: "That ministers or probationers who have retired from the ministry, and engaged on some other calling for a time, shall not have their names put on the list of distribution without the permission of the General Assembly; and that ministers resigning their charges more than twice shall have their names put on the list only with the permission of the General Assembly to that effect."

The illiberality of the first part of this regulation has been made apparent from the letters of correspondents, anonymous and otherwise, in connection with the recent settlement at Dandas. I agree with those who say that it was in violation of this regulation that the settlement referred to took place; but I think the law should have been such as that it would not have been illegal. Mr. Laing has done nothing to make an investigation before the General Assembly necessary, in order to his becoming "eligible for a call." Professor Young has done nothing on account of which he should be excluded from the pastorate of one of our churches until after leave be obtained from the General Assembly. No provision, however, in the law, has been made for these or similar cases.

The second part of the regulation is, if possible, more illiberal than the first. I might write regarding the ambiguity of it, and ask, "Is it only prospective, or retrospective, too?" If retrospective, how far back does it extend?—to dismissals in Scotland, or Ireland, or United States. Whether retrospective or prospective only, it is far from generous, especially in view of some of the other enactments. Presbyteries are authorized to dissolve pastoral ties, when supplemented congregations do not give as the Lord enables them. The Committee, again, may withhold the supplement when there are arrears of stipend in the congregation. Can the minister do anything else than resign? Is it magnanimous? Is it kind to a brother to make laws necessitating...

it, and then to attach a penalty to resignation? The minister is not always to blame for the want of liberality on the part of his people. He is not always to blame when the congregation falls into arrears of stipend. We all know how easy it is to furnish a pretext for leaving the Church, and how difficult it is to fill up the vacated places. The faithful exercise of discipline will empty some of our pews. A good, sound temperance sermon may do it. The attitude of a minister on the question of the use of intoxicating wine at the Lord's Supper. The casting of a vote at the time of an election, the marrying of some particular young lady in the congregation, or the not marrying of half-a-dozen others, may do it. For only two or three families to withdraw from a small congregation is sometimes a serious matter. There is no material, perhaps, with which their places can be filled, and the congregation, as a whole, do not hold themselves responsible for the pecuniary losses incurred. In many of our country congregations there is no recognized responsibility, except for individual subscriptions.

Sometimes there is no alternative for a faithful, honest, upright minister but resignation. Why, then, should there be a stigma attached to it? According to this law, to resign frequently is disreputable.

Resignations are not always had things. A man may be very useful in his second, after he has ceased to be useful in his first charge. In the face of this law, it requires a good deal of moral courage spontaneously to resign. By implication, at least, it says that something must be far wrong with the minister who has to resign more than twice. The H. M. Committee cannot take the responsibility of putting his name on the roll of probationers. The case has a bad aspect on the face of it. Take care, fathers and brethren, that you do not resign too often. If you do, you are marked men; you are suspected; your case must be inquired into. Your name cannot again be put on the roll until the Supreme Court have an opportunity of sitting upon you.

That preachers who have been on the roll for three years, and ministers for two years, without settlement, shall have their names removed, is also illiberal. Some very good ministers have had their names on the roll for two years without settlement. The fact that the name of a minister or preacher is on the roll is no test of his ability or of impracticability either. An early settlement does not prove worth and wisdom, and a late settlement does not prove the opposite. I know of some very efficient ministers who are popular only at home. One case is also known to the writer of a good pastor who found a good settlement after his name had been dropped from the roll of probationers. There may be some other cases of a similar kind.

Another objection to these regulations is, that several of them have been openly and deliberately violated, as far as yet appears, with impunity. Better no laws than laws set at naught. The Committee itself even does not always carry out its own laws. There surely needs no law for a revision of these Home Mission Regulations.

Yours, &c.,

WM. F. SNEYD.

Springville, Jan. 12, 1874.

Sabbath School Anniversary.

On Friday evening, 9th January, the 14th anniversary of the West Church Sabbath school was held. Notwithstanding the inclemency of the weather, the basement was crowded with children, teachers, and friends. The report was read by Wm. B. McMurrich, Esq., showing that there are at present 19 teachers, besides superintendent and two librarians; and that more teachers are needed. The sum of \$142 has been raised by the Sabbath school, which was distributed as follows:—Boy's Home, \$20; Girl's Home, \$20; Sabbath School Association, \$20; Sabbath School Missionary, \$20; Saskatchewan Mission at Prince Albert, \$25; Home Mission of the Canada Presbyterian Church \$37. After this, the Hon. J. McMurrich, the superintendent, stated that he had received from the trustees of the Josse Ketchum bequest, the sum of \$20, to procure Testaments for the children of the West Church Sabbath school, and as this was not sufficient, he had supplemented it, and had now a supply of Testaments well bound, many of them gilt, for the older scholars. He then distributed 240 Testaments, and several picture books to the pupils of the infant class. The pastor, Rev. R. Wallace, then told the story of how Luther had presented a single copy of the New Testament, in German, as a New Year's gift, to the children of a German village, near the Castle of Wartzburg, 1st January, 1522. Some of the teachers also spoke, the exercises were interspersed with the singing of beautiful hymns. The whole closed by Mr. McMurrich's usual yearly distribution of a bag of fruit cake, raisins, and apples to 250 young people. This distribution the hon. gentleman has kept up for many years.

In the notice of the anniversary sermo of Cookstown Presbyterian Church last week, instead of eighty dollars it should have been eight hundred dollars,—announced as additional subscriptions obtained from the members of the church.