

The Canadian Independent

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TORONTO, FEB 24th, 1884

NOTICE:

Mr Wm. Revell has kindly undertaken the business management of the INDEPENDENT. In the future, therefore, all remittances and letters about the subscription, or complaints, should be addressed to him, Box 2648, P. O., Toronto, and all articles for insertion, news of churches, &c., to Managing Editor, same address.

M. A. Christie, 9 Wilton Avenue, will continue to attend to the business of the Congregational Publishing Company, including arrears for the INDEPENDENT and the Year Book.

We will call the attention of our readers to their labels. All whose subscriptions expired Jan. 1, 84, or earlier, are now due another year. Will they please remit?

We want as many items of news of the churches as possible, but will our correspondents be more than our space is limited, and we will like to cut down.

A SUBSCRIBER returns his paper-writing upon it, "Not wanted here, we have four churches in town," the suggestion being, we suppose, that four churches give sufficient religious teaching. Unfortunately, they have not taught that subscriber, or he has not profited by the teaching, to pay his lawful debts, as now, when stopping the INDEPENDENT, he owes for 18 months' papers, which he does not say a word about paying. Query, Which has most to do with stopping the paper, the four churches or the dollar and a half?

ARE WE BORROWING?

Our good contemporary the *Canada Presbyterian*, to whom we are bound by many ties of sympathy and kind offices, is somewhat astray in thinking Congregationalism is Presbyterianized by united action, or by the declaration of what our terms of fellowship may be. Congregationalism acknowledges ever the essential oneness of the church, and on broader platforms than mere denominationalism can give, has co-operated with all Evangelical Churches, and maintained, or sought to maintain the terms of fellowship laid down in the New Testament. The true liberty enjoyed by our Presbyterian brethren is in virtue of the principles they hold from, or in common with, us, we may learn something from their adhesiveness, but in Presbyterianism pure and simple there are a few things we do not accept, neither are we learning from them; e. g., the shibboleth of pure and undiluted Calvinism, as pronounced by the Westminster Confession, is but the utterance of a sect, not of Catholicity. We question the New Testament right of imposing it as a *sine qua non* of the ministry, especially seeing it is not required at all of the membership. Again, there are some remnants of priestly rule remaining. Looking over the report of the late Presbyterian Council at Philadelphia, we find much diversity among our brethren as to the place and function of the Ruling Elder. We, of course, cannot be blamed for not understanding that office; but the rule of the Presbyterian Church, as we see it, is vested in a

class of men *elected for life* and then, so far as we can see, in thorough-paced Presbyterianism, *no subsequent voice can be heard from the people who are thereafter to be ruled and taught.* An individual church once constituted on the pure Presbyterian model, with deacons and sessions, the voice has passed from the people utterly; and if the argument used, as against Episcopacy, that the bishop and presbyters are one, stands valid, the Presbyterian Church properly has no lay representation, its elders being all bishops. That, in the *actual* Church of the Presbyterian denomination the general voice of the members is heard, we know, but only at the expense of consistency, and by thus far conceding what we understand by Congregationalism. We doubt whether our contemporary can make against us a single point wherein we have even tended to the silencing of the voice of the church. That our liberty has not ever been used wisely we admit, the richest soil grows the rankest weeds when weeds get in; that the difference between our practical working and that of our Presbyterian brethren is lessening we know, but we must be permitted to urge that if we shake hands over a lessening chasm it is they who have moved the more rapidly to us, for who in the preached theology of our Presbyterian pulpits to-day, with hymn and organ accompaniments, would recognize the same church of even a quarter of a century ago? Indeed, in this free land of the West, may we not hope that there is developing among all Christian churches a broader charity than the stripes and castles of the old land permitted. The lay, or congregational elements, meeting oft in the business of life, are longing for the removal of barriers in their religious life, and such movements as the Evangelical Alliance may bring home the truth that we are one body in Christ. So mote it be.

A NEW WAY TO MAKE DOCTRINES

Many of the bold theological thinkers of our day who think themselves out of evangelical position do not let the public see how they came to their conclusions. Their processes of thought are kept in the background. Their results are paraded, but not the way in which they reached them. But the Rev. Myron Adams, of Rochester, recently dis-fellowshipped by the Ontario Association of New York, allows us to see how he comes to his opinions. We have before us his sermon in full, in response to the action of the Association. So we know of what we write. If we come to a wrong conclusion concerning Mr. Adams, his own language is to blame for it. Mr. Adams some time ago announced that he had given up the current doctrine concerning future punishment. He inveighed against it. He branded it as dishonoring to God. It was weakening the hands of the Church. Eternal hope—by which he meant Universalism, only known by some other name—was the only tenet by which the Church could be saved to the world. Some of Mr. A's friends wondered where he had gained so much light as to lead him to contradict the

very clear and forcible declarations of Jesus Christ, who it might be presumed knew more about the matter than Mr. A. possibly could.

But he has told them now. And substantially it is the following: In the war for the Union he saw a number of soldiers fall while fighting bravely for the "stars and stripes." He knew them to be brave fellows, possessed of fortitude enough to face the sabre, shot, and shell of the battle-field. He could not bring himself to believe that those who were not Christians of the thousands who fell, were to be consigned to the punishment outlined in the Bible. They were brave, and God could not overlook their bravery and banish them from His presence. So here, amid the carnage of the battle-field, he came to the conclusion that there could not be such a thing as everlasting punishment, and therefore there is no such thing.

That strikes us as rather a novel way of manufacturing a doctrine. Mr. Adams did not reach his conclusion by any consultation of the words of Christ, but by consulting his own benevolent feelings, stirred up to highest activity by scenes of blood. And because he saw men brave enough to face a bullet and defend the flag, he must needs forsake the statements of the Master, and hold out the certainty of restoration to such men. How mistaken his position is, is plain to all. Unless facts lie, there were scores of men who fell in that war with shameful blasphemies upon their lips. What was the Saviour to them? Only a name for them to curse with. But because of the accident that they were shot or bayoneted in the interests of the Union, they must be ultimately saved. This is as unique as it is novel.

We are inclined to think that in some such way all these modern improvements upon the simple—though terrible—doctrines of God's Word are engendered. Men—for some cause or other—wish the improvements, and then announce them as facts. But if that is not treason to Christ, then we do not know what treason is. Either the words of Jesus are infallible or they are not. If not, then they should not be followed at all. If they are, then they should be announced unhesitatingly, though we may not fully comprehend them, nor our fellow-men be able to feel gratification over them.

Mr. Adams announces himself an ambassador of Christ, says he was called of God to that post. Now, does an ambassador make the despatches and terms, or merely bear the despatches and terms already made by those who send him forth? Then what would be said of that ambassador who would tear open sealed despatches, run his pen through important sentences, and interpolate his own views, radically different from the views already recorded? Would he not by such an act cease to be an ambassador, and become an originator? And so a man ceases to be an ambassador for Christ, when he runs his pen through the infallible Master's words, and puts in their place his own thoughts on the matter. And even though he should do this amid the excitement of the battle-field, and though his "large and influential" church should stick to him through it all, still it is true that he

ceases to be an ambassador for Christ. At least that is the opinion to which persons with a grain of common sense are likely to come.

THE LOST TRIBES.

Looking over our pamphlet corner the other day we stumbled over an almost forgotten copy of the "Forty-seven Identifications of the British Nation with the lost House of Israel, by Edward Hine." By a strange coincidence the same day there came to hand a newspaper cutting with an article on "Are we the Ten Tribes?" by Dr. H. Bonar, and memory being thus jogged, there flitted before us a semi-monthly journal offering exchange, whose sole mission was to establish this same identity. We naturally ask *cut bono*? but we are assured that the question is momentous,—the striking of the earth by the next comet may depend thereon. Well, really there is not much to be said on the obverse side of the question, only the other day we received a letter, bearing the New York post stamp, addressed to us and containing a printed telegram from heaven, declaring that within the next fourteen years, by sword, famine, and pestilence, the entire animal kingdom outside of Great Britain and Ireland would be destroyed. With it was a poem (?) of two hundred and fifty-six lines, and as much prose comments upon Scripture prophecy bearing upon the subject. We have little doubt but that our unfortunate friend from whom we suspect these lines came, could talk *ad infinitum* thereon, we can say little save that we can find no case. What can be said to such an argument as the following by the learned E. Hine? We quote literally:—"Israel *must* have Jacob's stone with them. It is impossible to suppose that Jacob's stone can be actually lost, because it *must* exist as a signet ring to the Almighty, i. e., as a seal of witness that the promises should be verified; therefore wherever Israel may be at the present time, they *must* have this stone in their possession. This identity is really an *important* one." We naturally ask the relevancy of the *must* three times repeated; we really can do no more, and if the mere statement of the argument (?) does not prove its own refutation, well, all we can say is that human credulity has swallowed another camel. Dr. Bonar is a premillenarian, and looks forward on grounds of Scripture interpretation to Israel's restoration; were there the slightest ground for the identification, we would suppose him to lean that way; but Dr. Bonar has a respectable scholarship and a reputation for sincerity to maintain, and this is the way he puts it, we venture to say, as every one must put it who has read the question in the light of known history* :—

"That the inhabitants of Great Britain are Israelites is a modern theory which has been widely propagated. Its defenders have *invented* a large number of resemblances, or "identifications," on which, *in the absence of authentic history or national tradition*, they rest their proof. The languages of our country, Saxon, English, Welsh, Celtic, *have no affinity with the Hebrew*, but *what is made of no ac-*

* The italics are ours, as also in the previous quotation.