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The Canada Presbyterian

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 15TH, 1893.

Some of the friends of Prof. Briggs are making an appeal to the other side to let the ecclesiastical proceedings drop so that all parties can go on with their work. The triumphant and suggestive reply is,—We never stopped working!

The great brotherly love about which the Brethren boast may be judged by the fact that when Brother Loughnan had "transferred" most of young Morley's funds he told one of the witnesses he felt as if he could kick him off the door-step.

The organ of the Higher Criticism in Scotland has breathed its last, after a precarious existence of two years; during which time it absorbed so much of the capital of its shareholders that there was scarcely enough left to give it decent burial.

As the meeting of the American Assembly draws near the Briggs and Smith people are beginning to call lustily for peace. Peace they say is a great thing. Undoubtedly it is; but why did not Dr. Briggs think of that when he published his inaugural.

Dr. Proudfoot writes wisely in the Knox College Monthly when he says that a student in taking charge of a Home Mission Station, should study its "individuality, character, and environment." There is a smuch variety in mission stations as in old established congregations.

President Cleveland has manifestly not forgotten his manse training. The local authorities at Washington arranged for a Sabbath concert on the 5th inst., as part of the inaugurative programme. The President immediately telegraphed that he was "strongly opposed" to holding a Sabbath concert in one of the national buildings, and "to regarding such a thing as a feature of inauguration." The concert did not take place.

Politicians are often blamed for trying to obscure real issues by raising side issues. No politician living or dead was ever more guilty of that kind of thing than those people who say that Briggs and Smith are being persecuted for making investigations. Neither the American Presbyterian church nor any other Presbyterian church ever dealt with a man for investigating a subject. These Professors are being dealt with because they propagated not because they investigated. Investigation and propagation are widely different things.

Spurgeon told his students that he would suggest listening to the "common ruck" in the House of Commons as a substitute for capital punishment. The suggestion rather discounts the success of Mr. Blake's first speech. The standard of oratory may not be as high there as we were colonists suppose. We have seen more than one Canadian who fondly believed that every preacher in Scotland preached like Dr. Guthrie. Every member of the House of Commons is not a Gladstone or a Bright. The average speaker could not have been very interesting if Spurgeon thought listening to him about as trying as going to the gallows. And Spurgeon knew everything about public speaking that is worth knowing.

Honest men make no money in public life even in the United States. When President Cleveland finished his term four years ago he had to resume the practice of law and work at his desk like any other lawyer. And now Ex-President Harrison is about to begin work as a professor of Constitutional law in the Leland Stanford University of California. The only men who make anything in politics are those who have no business at home; and those who sell themselves to the highest bidder.

The most loathsome thing about the recent Loughnan-Morley trial was the flippant manner in which the Brethren paraded their pious phrases and assumed the most sanctimonious airs even when the Court was going to the bottom of the fraud. They "went to the Lord" with everything and could have no dealings with the "sects" or with "men of the world." They even hunted up a "Christian lawyer" but the lawyer happened to be a "brother" and the duty required of him was to make a change in young Morley's will so that \$250,000 might be paid to the Brethren in cash and not appear in the will.

Current events at Ottawa prove that the Canada Presbyterian was right when it said months ago that the Dominion government would be sustained by almost its usual majority no matter what course it took on the Manitoba School question. Remedial legislation, or no remedial legislation, reference to the Supreme or nothing at all, Sir John Thompson will be sustained by a majority anywhere between fifty and sixty. Party ties in this country are strong, especially the ties that unite the supporters of the party in power—whatever party that may happen to be.

There was a lively debate in the Dominion Parliament last week on the Prohibition Commission. Mr. Charlton declared the Commission a "screaming farce" and the evidence it is collecting "a mass of rubbish." The Finance Minister thinks the Commission is doing a good work. Temperance men seem to be divided on the question and we fear the line of cleavage is much the same as the one that divides them in politics. Mr. Davies is of the opinion that a plebiscite would be the right thing. Undoubtedly the opinion of the whole people would be of more use than the opinion of the few examined by the Commission.

Referring to the exposures of close Brethrenism made in the Loughnan-Morley trial the British Weekly says:—The whole system is bad. It provides a soil in which scoundrels flourish. The weaker members live in constant terror. Each so-called "leader" is a little pope, supreme within his own circle and merciless in his dealings. Busy enough in "judging evil" among the poor and simple, they cherish hypocrites in their bosom. The proudest and most Pharisaic of sects—the people who know so exactly where to look for "Christian lawyers"—may be silent and humble in their champion's disgrace. So careful he was about breaking bread, so careless about breaking hearts.

The Presbyterians of the United States know an orthodox seminary when they see it. Princeton has 209, all but four Presbyterians; McCormick 210, nearly all Presbyterians; Allegheny 108; Auburn, 70; Union, with its splendid position in New York City and rich endowments, has 175 and only one-half of them Presbyterians. Lane, the institution in which Dr. Preserved Smith, who was suspended the other day, teaches, has 17! The Herald and Presbyter from whose columns we take these figures, says that the four seminaries that stand with the Assembly have six hundred Presbyterian students, while Union, the wealthiest seminary in the church has only 175 and Lane 17. There is some force in the contention that the heresy trials are not much needed, because if Dr. Briggs and Smith are allowed to go they will soon have no students to teach heresy to.

FREE CHURCHES VERSUS PEW RENTS.

The question of what are called "Free churches" as opposed to those wherein the pew rent system prevails, is being discussed pretty freely now. To our way of thinking very much that is being said thereon is wide of the mark, and confuses things that differ. A correspondent, writing against the pew system as a hindrance to the advancement of Christ's Kingdom, gives several "unanswerable" reasons in favour of the Free church system. e.g. "All appearance of commerce and trade transactions is abolished, and the Church is felt to be a great spiritual society dependent upon a Spiritual Christ." Nevertheless, with the temperature below zero, some commerce and trade transaction is imperative in the form of furnace and coal; and worshippers ought to understand that somebody must pay the bill. A "Spiritual Christ" is certainly not antagonistic to comfortable surroundings, and a "Free church" where these comforts are not up to the mark would soon receive the go-by.

Again we are told "A more spiritual and affectionate relationship between pastor and people is possible, and loyalty and generosity are increased."

That depends upon whether a painful contrast exists between the comfort of some celled houses in the parish and the poverty pinched home of an underpaid clergyman; nor can we satisfy ourselves that by the mere abolition of pew rents "disputes, envyings, illwill, and selfishness would give place to peace and charity."

No divine right is claimed for the pew rent system. Indeed, a Christian common sense will adjust the means of providing the necessary income to the special wants of the assembling of ourselves together. But, if the renting of pews are supposed to give an exclusive proprietary right to the services of the sanctuary; away with them! We submit a few suggestions that may aid in determining the expediency or inexpediency of a system.

There is a manifest difference between worship and evangelistic efforts, between the edification of the believer and "work among the masses." In our present condition it appears inevitable that the two should in a measure be combined, still the distinction remains, a fact; and in overtaking the former we deprecate the weakening of the influence exerted by the "family pew", where father and son, mother and daughter together bow in the house of God. Allocated or rented, we care not which, but the assembling of the tribes, not their confusion, in their going up to their Jerusalem, is a practice we could only wish more preserved and practiced in its integrity. We moreover are persuaded, that in the growth of Christian charity, the case of a stranger being coldly received in a Christian assembly is becoming more and more exceptional. It is the ecclesiastical gipsy for the most part that cries the loudest because the chief seat in the synagogue is not offered to his patronage; and to whom already our churches in their endeavour "to draw" have paid too great reverence: not the stranger that strays within the gates.

On the other hand, when evangelistic effort is put forth as the chief endeavour of the assembling of ourselves together then no distinction as to seat should be observed, pews must necessarily be free, as also in churches purely Missionary though even in these Mission churches we should encourage the family integrity.—then "Each worshipper can choose his own place, near to or away from the door, within sight of the Lord's table or within hearing of the pulpit, close to or far removed from the organ and choir."

Let us record our conviction that all such matters as pew rents, free seats, and financial requirements will fall into their proper place in proportion as the church or congregation unitedly and prayerfully "follow after things which make for peace," and things whereby we may edify one another, and seek "not to please ourselves, but each one of us please his neighbour for that which is good unto edifying." We acknowledge that this reasoning will not appeal to those who desire an uniform and universal definite rule. We cannot help it. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

OLD TESTAMENT THEOLOGY.*

We venture the opinion that this book should be read by every minister who is not prepared to fall into a Rip Van Winkle sleep, and to wake up suddenly some morning to find the whole world changed and he with the habiliments of a century that has passed an object of curiosity and of mirth. We are not by any means endorsing all its assumptions and presentations, but those assumptions and presentations are in the air as surely as are disease germs when an epidemic rages; the wise physician will seek to know exactly what they are and mean. These volumes tell us of what is in the air, and tell us in ways to some extent unique, and of which we shall speak.

The work in the original is from a German brain and pen but in less German style than most theological writings from that land of wondrous patience and research. One misses gladly the half-page sentences and involved expositions which make those writings so wearisome in reading. And we question if any brighter, more terse and truthful rendering of a German original is to be found in any of the many volumes issued with the imprimatur of T. & T. Clark. Indeed we have throughout German research expressed with genuine English clearness.

The theological standpoint of the work may be placed midway between the positions represented on the one hand by such writers as Wellhausen, and on the other by Delitzsch; perhaps we ought the rather to say that Schultz, accepting largely the results of the critical school, maintains also the principle of Divine revelation. Moses e.g. was chosen by God "as his instrument, and endowed by God with religious and moral gifts of singular power" so that "not by study or learning, but by the direct illumination of divine certainty he became what he became." The division of the Old Testament records into the three traditional sources of the Elohist and Jehovistic documents, with a third author, who while using the divine name Elohim is distinct from the Elohist and "who specially enriched the records of Israel with additions from original sources belonging to the Northern tribes," is assumed throughout with that coolness of the specialist which so exasperates the plain reader and the more general scholar. To be quietly told that "side by side with the Jehovist and Elohist there is found in the second part of Genesis and the following books, a considerable number of stories which were formerly attributed to the Elohist (by specialists)—but which on closer examination (by another specialist)—has peculiarities enough of its own—to warrant our inferring the existence of a separate document is rather worrying to those of us who have still to turn over Gesenius when we would be assured of the original reading or rendering. We do pray—is it a vain prayer?—for the unity of the specialists' faith. Is it apparently hopeless as the unity of Christendom? At the same time we are constrained to pay respect to the expressed views of these scholarly men, knowing that even such a conservative and devout expositor as Delitzsch accepted at last some of their more general conclusions as to the composite character of the Old Testament records. We are not prepared for a pitched battle with the critics. Is it cowardly to be waiting for results until they have come among themselves to virtual agreement? However, we are saved just now from extremes. Schultz places these documents much earlier than Wellhausen, as early as the Eighth century, before the Christian era.

In treating of the Old Testament periods our author notices the fivefold division. I. The patriarchal, from Adam to Moses. II. The Mosaic, from Moses to Samuel-David. III. The Theocratic period, from Samuel-David to the decline of the divided kingdoms, say B.C. 800. IV. The Prophetic period, from B.C. 800 to the rebuilding of Jerusalem. V. The Hierarchical period, priestly legislation, from the time of Ezra and Nehemiah to the Assyrian princes. For the study of Old

* Schultz's Old Testament Theology, 2 vols. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark.