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HAMILTON, MAR. 15, 1893.

The Union Question.

THE TORONTO CONFERENCE.

The conference on union between the Toronto Ministerial Association and the Anglican clergy of the same city was continued on Monday morning, March 6. The feature of the occasion was a paper by Principal Caven, of Knox College, entitled "Points of Agreement," which we observe a number of papers styled "Points of Difference." The Toronto Globe gave what appears to be a verbatim report of the address, and for the benefit of our readers we shall make some extracts here, as our space will not permit us to publish it entire.

The following, with regard to the place and authority of the word of God, is very satisfactory:

"In speaking of matters of ascertained agreement between the parties to this conference, I mention first the place of authority which we all give to the Bible. We all regard the canonical Scriptures as the Word of God, and the supreme and only infallible rule of faith and practice. 'Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation.' (The Thirty-nine Articles.) 'The ground of our religion and the rule of faith and all saving truth is the word of God, contained in the Holy Scriptures.' Of the canonical books the same authority says: 'All which we acknowledge to be given by the inspiration of God, and in that regard to be of most certain credit and highest authority.' (The Irish Articles.) 'The authority of the Holy Scriptures, for which it ought to be believed and obeyed, dependeth not upon the authority of any man or church, but wholly upon God, who is the author thereof; and therefore it is to be received because it is the Word of God.' 'The whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith and life, is either expressly set down in Scripture, or by good and necessary consequence may be deduced from Scripture; unto which nothing at any time is to be added, whether by new revelation of the spirit, or by traditions of men.' (Westminster Confession.)

"These statements will, I think, be accepted by us all. The Scriptures are the Word of God. They were given by inspiration of God. They contain all things which a Christian man may be required to believe or do. Nothing which is not set forth in Scripture should enter into the credenda of the church, or be laid as duty upon the conscience. The church of Christ may be properly spoken of as the custodian of Scripture, and her testimony concerning it is of great value; but, since the close of the canon, her utterances are not to be placed on a level with the Word of God; their authority depends upon their agreement with that word.

"Nor can the Christian consciousness, so-called, ever become the rule of faith and duty, and so claim rank, in this respect, with the Bible. The human mind is too limited and too much darkened and biased by sin, even in the best men, to admit of any such place

and function being assigned to anything in us.

"In the belief and teaching of our churches regarding the Scriptures we have thus common ground of the utmost importance. We here find ourselves together, in opposition, on the one hand, to the Church of Rome, and, on the other, to all types of rationalism. We agree in co-ordinating no other authority with that of Scripture."

The following paragraphs bring out well a distinction very familiar to the Disciples of Christ. It is very gratifying to know that a man of Dr. Caven's eminence and prominence apprehends it so clearly and states it so well. The Disciples have been in the habit of putting it this way: "Nothing should be required as a test of fellowship, or a condition of church membership for which we have not a 'Thus saith the Lord' in express precept or approved precedent."

"I am not expected to discuss the question, what measure of agreement as to the doctrines, ordinances and government of the church is necessary to ecclesiastical unity? If disunion is an evil, if it tends to obscure the glory of the church, to weaken her testimony to the truth, and to retard the evangelization of the world, we should labor and pray for its removal, and we should carefully avoid making anything essential to the integrity of the church which her Lord has not made essential. To do so is an error of a very serious character, for it not only prevents union, but gives to the world a false and injurious impression of her who is the spouse of Christ, who is 'all glorious' and 'whose clothing is of wrought gold.' And this is an error into which good men in their anxiety to maintain some position or principle which they deem correct (and which may be correct) may readily fall. No one has a right to characterize any part of the teaching of Scripture as unimportant, but as little has he a right to admit into his definition of the church or of her ordinances, or to prescribe as a term of communion with her anything to which the word of God does not give that place. Perfect loyalty to Christ demands that, on the one hand we should hold fast all that we believe to be of His truth, and that on the other we should add nothing to the conditions of ministerial and Christian fellowship prescribed by our Master. To do this were to usurp the prerogative of the Lord and to sin against the brethren.

"The harmony of church life and action (not to speak of Scripture) requires that the church should have a definite constitution, and that elements of discord and disunion should not, under plea of comprehension, be admitted into her. But the solution of the difficulty caused by the want of perfect unity in our point of view cannot surely be acquiescence in permanent denominationalism. For my own part I accept no definition of the church which does not find its essence in that which is spiritual and recognize as truly of it all who, in any communion, hold the head, even Christ, but I would not the less strive to unite the disciples of the Lord in the perfect visible fellowship and to remove the offense of sinful rivalry among brethren, and of the waste of means (for this is sometimes involved) in carrying on the work of the gospel. Thus outward union would become the expression of inward and spiritual oneness."

"Nor let us confound the question, whether such and such a tenet is right and Scriptural with the other question, whether the holding of such tenet or position by brethren is sufficient reason for those who hold otherwise to decline fellowship or union with them. Diversities of belief or practice may be of a character to prohibit union. It is an important question whether, in any given case, they have this importance. The church of Christ in the present day is bound very carefully to consider the ethical and Scriptural principles involved in union. She sins if she affects un-Scriptural coalitions; she sins if she unnecessarily perpetuates division."

A number of speakers followed Dr. Caven. Rev. Septimus Jones (Anglican) said: "Christ himself had prayed for the consummation of union, and they might therefore feel that they were on the right track in seeking it."

"They further agreed that unnecessary division was a sin, and, like all sin should be repented of."

Rev. W. S. Blackstock (Methodist) said: "To reach anything like union they must go back beyond theology or ecclesiasticism. Christ was not a theologian, nor did anything in his sayings savor of ecclesiasticism. Christianity existed before either, and it was on the broad basis of the Gospel that union, if it were to come, must be established."

Dr. Thomas (Baptist) said: "They must bring their differences and difficulties to the light of God's Word. Why could they not enlist the services of the most scholarly men in each branch of the church, and, sweeping away all the rubbish of the past, pedigree and ancestry and such like, let them start afresh on a new and equal footing."

Rev. Provost Body (Trinity College) declared that "He cordially appreciated the platform laid down by Dr. Caven. The New Testament standpoint was the only one by which they could arrive at union. They (the Anglicans) agreed with the New Testament position, because it was the Word of the Supreme Teacher who inspired His followers and gave them the authority on which they acted. Coming a step further it was perfectly consistent, while cheerfully recognizing the bonafides of each other, to admit that they should differ in certain points. It was perfectly consistent, too, if they could not get light from the apostles on certain points, that they should go to other contemporary testimony." With reference to this last statement, we would say that any point on which we cannot get light from the apostles cannot be of much importance and certainly should not be treated as essential.

It is curious to notice how high and low Anglicans differ with regard to the "historic episcopate." Principal Sheraton, of Wycliffe College (low church), is reported as saying that "He repudiated entirely the idea of a sacerdotal episcopate and its accompanying condition, that except through it there was no communion with Christ; the only reason why he held to the episcopate at all, simply was, that it was the most helpful and efficient form of church government." Dr. Langtry (high church), who followed Principal Sheraton, "thought the previous speaker had drawn somewhat upon his imagination. The Anglicans did not believe that the internal created the external, or *vice versa*, but that each and both were of divine origin." Dr. Langtry, of course, holds the "historic episcopate" to be an "external" of "divine origin," and certainly if he is right, it is right to contend earnestly for it. We repeat that it is curious that two leading men, and able men too, in the same church should hold such diverse views on the one point, and not only so, but that the one should charge the other with not understanding him. It would seem that the common subscription to a man-made creed increases rather than diminishes the difficulty of persons understanding one another.

At the conclusion of the speaking it was arranged that the Ministerial Association should appoint a committee to meet a similar committee from the Clerical Association, and that when this joint committee had arrived at some tangible scheme another general conference should be held to receive their report.

This second discussion, as the *Week* says, "seems scarcely to have advanced the project" to any perceptible extent. Yet we feel that the clear enunciation of the principle that no unscriptural tests of fellowship must be applied, as was done by Principal Caven, is a gain, and would probably set some thinking along a new line for them.

Notes.

"Religious teaching, we think, might well be left for the family, the Sunday school and the church, teaching in the day schools being confined to secular subjects, so as to give offence to none," so says the *Hamilton Times*, and so say we.

We notice that it is claimed by some members of Parliament that the public schools in Manitoba are Protestant schools. How is it, Bro. Finch, in your part of Manitoba? If they are Protestant schools, we shall join with our Catholic friends in opposing them.

When the Royal Commission on the Liquor Traffic was appointed, we expressed the opinion that the appointment was made in good faith and with an honest desire to discover what would be beneficial and practicable. Now it appears to us quite certain that the object was to relieve the Government from the necessity of dealing with the question of prohibition for a few years. There is something ludicrous in the spectacle of the commission perambulating around at great expense to the country to find out, as some one has said, what every body knows, viz., that prohibitionists favor prohibition and liquor dealers do not.

Bishop Begin, Cardinal Taschereau's coadjutor, Abbe Dupuis, of the Levis Theological Seminary, and several other dignitaries of the Province of Quebec, enjoyed the distinction recently of an audience with the Pope. It appears that these gentlemen were at Rome attending the Papal jubilee, and that his Holiness sent for them as a special favour. Abbe Dupuis, in a letter to *L'Electeur*, describes the visit: He says the little party on arriving at the Pontifical palace was conducted up four pairs of stairs into the Pope's private room. There his Holiness appeared, and all present prostrated themselves at his feet after having made three genuflections. . . . Abbe Casgrain secured a special indulgence of a hundred days for a crucifix to be venerated in his parish on Good Friday. Abbe Dupuis received an indulgence for the sick, and the entire party was accorded a blessing for their relations and religious communities. Altogether it was a memorable occasion.—*Mail*.

Ah! yes, a memorable occasion indeed. It reminds us of another memorable occasion of which we read in the tenth chapter of Acts. One Simon Peter, of whom Pope Leo claims to be the successor, said, to one Cornelius, who "fell down at his feet and worshipped him," "Stand up: I myself also am a man." Now Pope Leo may be a very decent old gentleman, but we really think it would have been better if he had followed Peter's example on the aforesaid occasion.

Kind Words.

WHAT SOME OF OUR FRIENDS ARE SAYING.

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"Please find enclosed \$2 for the EVANGELIST, with which we are well pleased."

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"We feel we could not do without

the EVANGELIST in our house. We wish it every success."

There is still quite an amount of arrears on our subscription list. We trust our friends will pay up as soon as possible. Remember, a paper like the CANADIAN EVANGELIST costs money right along

Our Omnibus.

Bro. John Thompson (formerly of Erin), we are sorry to hear, is now lying very ill at the home of his son-in-law, Mr. John McPhedran.

Our friends will be glad to read the letters from Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. We hope to hear from Bro. Harding and Bro. Murray again.

The first page of this number, we think, will have a peculiar interest for our readers. Such an insight into the feelings and views of Dr. Briggs is very valuable to those who are studying the religious movements of our day.

"I herewith forward you \$4 for Foreign Missions. Wish we could afford to give more, because I consider it a grand privilege to give for such a worthy cause." Right you are, brother. We shall send the money to Bro. McLean.

Ex-Gov. R. M. Bishop, of Cincinnati, O., died recently at Jacksonville, Florida. Bro. Bishop was a prominent man among the Disciples in the States, and was long and intimately connected with their missionary enterprises.

"Bro. MUNRO: If you hear of a good young Disciple who would like to buy 30 acres of land and rent 25, send him here."

Particulars of above will be furnished on application to the editor of this paper.

Hitherto the demand for Miss Mary Rioch's photographs has been greater than the supply, owing to the large number of cloudy days during the winter. We are requested to say that it is hoped that henceforth all orders can be promptly filled.

Bro. G. W. Jackson delivered his lecture on India at Wainfleet, March 9th, and is to give it at International Bridge on the 24th. We should like if arrangements were made for him to present it in every church in Ontario. His address is Box 626, Welland, Ont.

We are glad to have the "Crane's Corner" occupied again, both for its own sake and for the evidence it gives that Bro. Sheppard is now in better health. Our readers are reminded that they are invited to send their "hard questions" to Bro. Sheppard for solution.

We regret to learn from our United States exchanges of the death of the wives of two of our honored teachers at Kentucky University—President Loos and Prof. White. Those gentle Christian ladies are well remembered as the faithful companions of their husbands at the meetings of the church.

Mr. James K. Cameron, secretary of the Monetary Times Printing Company, died suddenly at his residence on Sunday night. While deceased was sitting at supper he was attacked by a fit of coughing which caused a profuse hemorrhage of the lungs. He only lived ten minutes. Deceased was well-known in business circles, and very highly respected.—*Mail*, Mar. 12.

Mr. Cameron was a son-in-law of our well-known sister, Mrs. E. J. Trout of Toronto, and was an honorable, intelligent and cultured man. His sudden death will evoke deep sympathy in many circles. He has left a little daughter, Grace, to comfort the heart of his sorrowing young widow.