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## The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25th, 1889.

THE *Herald and Presbyter* is, so far as we know, the first to come down to particulars and say what it wants in the way of revision. For one thing it wants to make chapter 10, section 3, read thus:

All elect persons, who are incapable of being outwardly called by the ministry of the word, are saved by Christ, through the Spirit, who worketh when, where and how He pleaseth. This change would be universally understood as including infants and idiots, they being the only persons incapable of being called by the ministry of the word.

AN exchange says:

There is no more effective way to close the door of the heart of the unconverted against the appeal of the pastor than by speaking disparagingly of him in their presence.

True, and yet it is no uncommon thing to hear elders and even ministers speak disparagingly of sermons, not only in presence of unconverted neighbours but in presence of their own unsaved children. That disparaging remarks tend to harden the heart is a sad truth which has many a time been sadly illustrated. If people must make disparaging remarks about the means of grace they might surely find some way of doing it that would not imperil the salvation of their own children.

CITIES like individuals and families, have their bright and their dark days. While Toronto was unusually lively last week and thousands of Ontario people were enjoying themselves in their Provincial capital, one of the most heart-rending calamities befell the sister city of Quebec that has ever occurred in Canada. Not even the great fires that have at different times laid large portions of the old city in ashes are to be compared with this terrible visitation. The fires were over and the worst known in a short time. Buried beneath this fallen cliff human beings lay mangled and dying for many hours but no human power could bring relief. Men hunted among the ruins for their wives and children and more terrible than death itself was the agony of looking upon their mangled bodies covered with fallen rocks. We hope it is needless to say that the sufferers of the ancient capital have the profound sympathy of all Christian people in Ontario.

THERE is at least one man in the world who is quite satisfied with the day of his birth. In a recent conversation with Mr. Depew, of New York, Gladstone said:

If I had to select from the beginning of the world down to the present time and so on to its close, the fifty years in which I would pass my active life, I would choose the half century in which I have lived, because, in that half century there has been the emancipation of the slaves; there has been the emancipation of the restrictions on the Catholics; there has been the emancipation of all the restrictions upon the corn law; there has been the emancipation of the voter from restrictions upon suffrage. It has been fifty years of emancipation and the only half century of which that can be said.

If the people who never tire of denouncing the present age,—some of whom consider such denunciation evidence of very superior piety—knew as much history as Gladstone knows, probably they would be more satisfied with the date at which this planet was honoured with their presence. We all know the drawbacks of our own age but only those who read history know the drawbacks of other ages. The same is true in regard to the advantages and disadvantages of different countries. We all know the disadvantages of our own country but only those who travel know what the people of other countries have to contend against. Ignorance is the mother of many quarrels with age and country. A tour through some other part of the world would be a means of grace to many a Canadian.

KEEN competition in the show business in Ontario led to the adoption of some "features" of doubtful propriety. Anybody might have known that this would occur. Shows cannot be "run" without money, and money cannot be obtained unless the people come in and pay at the gate. Hence the problem is to get something that will draw the crowd. Doubtful "features" are however, a mistake. The class of people who patronize the Industrial and other great shows will not continue to visit exhibitions that their wives and daughters cannot attend without seeing performances that are not in keeping with good taste, to say nothing of good morals. Nobody supposes that the directors of these shows take any pleasure in keeping so near the line of propriety that some of the performances are in constant danger of going over the line. What they want to do is draw the crowd, and, in common with too many other people in Ontario whose business it is to draw crowds, they may use means that personally they do not much admire. In our opinion there is altogether too much done in many lines in this Province to draw crowds.

DR. WARFIELD accounts for the agitation for Revision of the Confession of Faith in a manner not very complimentary to those who are working for Revision. He says:

Most of the presently urged objections [to the Confession] have arisen primarily in the minds of enemies of Calvinism, whose misapprehension or misrepresentation was a foregone conclusion, and have by dint of much proclamation, been conveyed from them to us—for the best of us are not proof against outside influences. We have tested assertions of this kind, not as we should, by grounded and consecutive study of the whole document, but by momentary adhesion to the passages especially attacked, with our minds full of the attack. And so we have seen the sense in them which we were sent to look for. The remedy is not in revising the Confession in the hope of rendering misapprehension of it impossible, but to revise our study of the Confession in the hope of correctly apprehending it.

That is pretty plain talk, but no doubt there is a good deal of truth in it. Too often we all get our primary impressions of men and things from people who speak against them. Then with our minds "full of the attack" we begin to form opinions of our own about the men and things. This is no doubt often done unconsciously but it is done all the same. It would be going too far to say that all who favour Revision got their primary impulse from the enemies of Calvinism, but perhaps more did than knew the fact. Impulses got in that way should be carefully watched. What the enemies of Calvinism want is to revise the book out of existence.

THE announcement made by Mr. Balfour during the dying hours of the parliamentary session that the Government were about to establish and endow a Catholic university in Ireland fell like a bomb shell into political and ecclesiastical circles. Mr. Balfour of course gave no particulars further than saying that something ought to be done to give a higher education to the Catholics of Ireland, but as he made this announcement in reply to a speech by Mr. Sexton, and as Mr. Parnell appeared to assent with studied civility, everybody knows what is meant. The plain English of the whole matter seems to be that the Government have come, or are about coming, to an agreement with the Catholic hierarchy, and that Parnell and his friends are a party to the agreement. The great question now is, What will everybody do? What will Gladstone do? What will the Liberal-Unionists do? What will the Radicals do? What will Scotland do? What will the Ulster Presbyterians do? What will the English Nonconformists do? Nobody need trouble himself asking, What will the Parnellites do? They will take the university or anything else they can get as the first instalment of Home Rule. The Protestants of Ulster who have stood by the Government almost to a unit, are certainly in a most unfortunate position. It is said, one knows not with what truth, that they were never informed, much less consulted, about the negotiations.

DR. SHEDD is not greatly impressed with what might be described as the "Weak-brother" argument in favour of Revision. He thinks the deficient evangelical knowledge and experience of the weak brother should not be set up as a type of doctrine. The Doctor put it in this way:

It is said that there are some true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who cannot adopt all the Westminster statements, who yet should not be, and actually are not, excluded from the Presbyterian Church; that there are tender consciences of good men, whose scruples are to be respected. But these cases are referred by the Form of Government to the

Church Session, and power is given to it to receive into membership any person who trusts in the blood of Christ for the remission of sin, although his doctrinal knowledge and belief may be unsatisfactory on some points. He may stumble at predestination, but if with the publican he cries "God be merciful to me a sinner," he has the root of the matter in him, and is a regenerate child of God. But why should the whole Presbyterian Church revise its entire creed, so as to make it fit these exceptional cases? Why should the mountain go to Mohammed? Why should a genuine but deficient evangelical knowledge and experience be set up as the type of doctrine for the whole denomination? These "babes in Christ" need the education of the full and complete system of truth, and should gradually be led up to it, instead of bringing the system down to their level.

Parallel cases would show that there is not much in the weak-brother argument. Would the Masonic Order, or the Order of Oddfellows, or any other prominent order change its constitution to meet the exceptional case of a man who did not like their forms? Would a total abstinence organization change its constitution for the sake of a weak brother who wanted to take an occasional drink. Would the Ontario Law Society change its constitution or by-laws to oblige a youthful limb of the law who did not like to take the obligations required of barristers and solicitors? To ask these questions is to answer them. Special cases can usually be met without changing the constitution of a society. If you keep on changing to meet everybody's wishes, there would soon not be any constitution to change. Revise the Confession to meet the wishes of every man who is too weak to accept Calvinistic food, and soon there would be no Confession. The weak-brother argument is weak.

## HIGHER EDUCATION IN CENTRAL INDIA.

AS to the best methods of conducting Foreign mission work varied and conflicting theories are entertained. Of late the propounders of such theories have been somewhat numerous. From the time that smart reviewers aired their witticisms about "sanctified cobbles," the sending of "moral pocket-handkerchiefs to the heathen," down to the reports of self-sufficient and fussy tourists who do India with the rapidity with which a commercial traveller traverses his route, the cause of foreign missions has had its pronounced opponents. As the foreign missionary enterprise is one of the direct and most palpable of modern Christian evidences it is but natural to expect that hostility would be directed against this peculiar form of sanctified activity. From those who take an attitude hostile to evangelical religion little can be expected, and those who hold settled and deep convictions of the fundamental truths of the Gospel will be but little influenced by the jibes and sneers of such critics. At present something is to be apprehended from such friends of missions who attack the methods by which they are conducted. In some respects missions to the heathen are tentative efforts, and it is only what is to be expected that mistakes will occur. Those under whose directions missionary operations are conducted are not infallible. They may and do make occasional mistakes. At the same time they are representative and responsible men. They have been appointed to the positions they occupy by their respective churches. They enjoy the confidence and esteem of those who have invested them with their official standing in relation to the missionary undertakings in which their churches engage. For their own sake, and from the fact that they have been selected because of their deep interest in foreign missions, they will act under a deep sense of responsibility and will therefore do their best in the selection of those best fitted for missionary labour and in the adoption of the methods best calculated to advance Christ's cause in foreign lands.

Experience in foreign mission work has shown that uniformity of method is neither possible nor desirable. The methods best suited to African tribes would be out of place in India and China. In India itself local conditions and differences of race and religion have to be taken into account and the intelligent missionary must judge for himself what are likely the best and most suitable methods to be pursued in his particular field. One thing has been as good as settled by Dr. Duff and several of the earlier and most successful missionaries who have laboured in India. That is that education must form an important branch of missionary endeavour in that most interesting and hopeful field. The present condition of the people, the excellent results that have been produced in the past and the hopes that may most reasonably be entertained for the future, urge the importance of educational work by missionary agencies among the native races of India.