

# PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW.

Vol. V.

TORONTO, MAY 30, 1880.

Whole No 231

PUBLISHED EVERY THURSDAY  
BY  
The Presbyterian News Co.  
TORONTO (Limited).  
Incorporated by Royal Charter.  
W. MARTIN CLARK, President  
HAMILTON GASSLIN, Vice-President  
H. H. ROBINSON, Managing Director  
15 AND 17 FRONT ST. W.

## THE DAY STAR.

Shine on me and even,  
Shine on Heaven's heaven,  
Saviour high and dear,  
Toward us turn thine eye,  
Through what'er may come,  
Thou canst lead us home.

Though the gloom be grievous,  
Though we faint on leave us,  
Though the coward heart  
Quit its proper part,  
Though the tempter come,  
Thou wilt lead us home.

Saviour pure and holy,  
Lover of the lowly,  
Sign us with Thy sign,  
Take our hands in Thine,  
Take our hands and come,  
Lead Thy children home.

Star of morn and even,  
Shine on us from Heaven,  
From Thy glory throne  
Lead us to our home!

—Pulcrav.

## PERFECTIONISM.\*

BY REV. ISAAC CAMPBELL, CUSTON, W.

PERFECTIONISM is no new doctrine. With many it passes as such; it is pretty generally talked about as the "new theory of holiness." But is it new? Every intelligent theologian or Church historian knows that it has been a long time in existence. But systems, like men are not always good in proportion to their age. The age of some systems is only matched by their badness. Like many of the errors of the present this is an old one resurrected and dressed up anew. It has had its advocates in almost every period of the Church's history. I find an exponent of it a long way back, and he evidently was in full possession of the system when he said, "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are."

In the discussion of this topic some things will have to be candidly admitted and some things will have to be emphatically denied. No system of unexamined error can stand intelligent investigation for a moment. This theory is not without some elements of truth. These we must conserve. But this making a drop of truth with an ocean of error deceives many a one. It is dangerous to teach less than the truth. It is dangerous to teach more than the truth. The theory of perfect holiness is clearly a misconception of the work of sanctification. Here we must follow the clear teaching of the Word of God. You are all familiar with the teaching of Scripture regarding the nature and progress of divine grace in the hearts of believers. The Shorter Catechism of our Church defines it beautifully and scripturally when it says, "Sanctification is the work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed in the whole man after the image of God, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness."

The sacred writers invariably speak of it as a progressive work. In this matter, grace-like nature is gradual in its developments. In the physical world the plant does not reach perfection with a bound. It is a matter of gradual development. The rose does not burst into beautiful perfection in a day, nor does a man become a full-grown Christian in a day. The analogy between grace and nature is close. One of the divine injunctions is, "Grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." Unlike illiterate school-boys the sacred writers never used words at random. They knew the meaning of the terms and figures which they used. Two of them, at least speak of fairly well-informed Christians as "babes in Christ." Paul is one and Peter is the other. Surely they knew the force of what they said. What did they mean? Simply this: That the babe must pass through all the stages of development between babyhood and manhood in Christ. That the babe in Christ must yet reach the stature of manhood in Christ. How long will this take? A lifetime; for the soul to see the Saviour in his unclouded glory is to be freed from the last stain of sin. "We shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." It would seem that the souls of believers are purified from the least and last defilement of sin in the act of passing from time into eternity. All believers shall be perfectly holy. Conformity to the image of Jesus was Paul's great idea of redemption. Every believer shall therefore arrive at perfect holiness. But when? In this life? I think not.

Is perfection attainable in this life? This is the question that I propose to discuss in this paper. My answer to this question is, No. Should it be said that we are commanded in Scripture, 1st. be

perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect, I freely grant this. But we must be careful and not mix matters. When Christ gave a standard He gave one like Himself—perfect. He said to his disciples "Be ye therefore perfect even as your Father who is in Heaven is perfect." This passage is quite clear to an intelligent reader. It must be read in the light of the context. For only in the light of the context can it be rightly understood. Clearly, the excellence demanded of the disciples here is not a matter of degrees but of kind. The word perfect never signifies in New Testament usage *incomplete*. It points out a true Christian character as contrasted with a defective, half-finished and partial character. We are frequently reminded by the advocates of Perfectionism that God commands his children to be holy and that he has power to make them perfectly holy even in this life. I gladly admit all this. But we must remember that there is a vast difference between what God could do and what He has promised to do. There are many things that He could do that He has nowhere promised to do. Has God anywhere in His Word promised to make His children perfect in holiness on this side of the grave? Are there any cases on record in which the promise has actually been fulfilled? I have no hesitation in answering these questions in the negative. The best Christians the world has ever seen confess sin and pray for pardon. It will ever be so. So long as believers are in this world they will need to pray for pardon. How do I know this? I gather it from several Scriptural sources. First, I gather it from the spirituality of the divine law. A man is perfect when he comes up to the requirements of a perfect standard. There is a standard for almost everything. And there is a standard by which man's character is to be tested. What is it? It is the divine law.

Now, regarding this law two questions suggest themselves: What are its demands? and Does it ever change? The moral law demands perfect obedience—nothing more, nothing less. Paul quoting from the Old Testament says, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Gal. 3:10.) James' reading of the law is equally clear. "This is what he says of the matter: 'For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point he is guilty of all.'" (James 1:10.) It is a beautiful seamless robe that is ruined by a single rent. It is a delightful musical harmony that is marred by a single discordant note. Just here I shall quote two sentences of the celebrated Dr. Guthrie: "Even so, though you may start at the bold assertion, and when you think of some gross and horrid sins may be ready to exclaim, 'Is thy servant a dog that he should do this thing?' the man who is capable of breaking one of God's commandments is capable of breaking them all in mind and in spirit; "he that offendeth in one point is guilty of all." The scribe's question drew from Jesus this concise but comprehensive answer, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. This is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." This is man's duty in a nutshell. He who fails to love God with all the powers of his complex nature, and to love his neighbour, fails to come up to the divine standard and therefore commits sin. But some one may say "O that the law in all its old-fashioned rigour. It has been modified. It has been toned down to meet infirmities of God's children. The law of perfect obedience is no longer the standard of Christian duty, but the law of love. We are not bound down to the obedience of immortal man in paradise." It is well to be wise. But it is dangerous to be wise beyond what is revealed. This is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church—the doctrine of those that talk about "the higher life,"—the doctrine of the great majority of the pretenders to perfection. It has the smack of holiness about it. It sounds well. But to me it sounds painfully like nonsense.

The Bible recognises but one standard of Christian duty. God has never lowered this standard to meet the circumstances of sinful men. That they have rendered themselves incapable of keeping it is their own sin. This rule of duty changed impossible. As well might God change. Why, it is the very transcript of God himself. The Bible knows no toning down process. But it knows and makes provision for a toning up process. Instead of toning down the standard to man it aims at toning up man to the standard. Why do men so frequently overrate themselves spiritually? Because they apply a false test. Because they fail to make their lives square with the true test of Christian duty. In a word they fail to compare themselves with the divine law. Conclusions are right or wrong according to the process by which we arrive at them. It is an easy matter to elevate ourselves to a very high spiritual plane when we adopt a false measure. Let a man choose his own measure and he can put himself just above where he pleases. He might say: "I'm three yards high," if he used a two-foot yard in the measurement. But the process is wrong and consequently the conclusion is wrong. His legitimate height therefore would not be nine feet but six. Any man might claim perfection after this fashion. Judas might have claimed for himself at least a respectable Christian standing. A boy unaccustomed to the use of carpenter's tools sets to work to plane a board. He works hard and finally comes to the conclusion that he has made a splendid job of it. He runs his inexperienced eye down it and pronounces it perfect. An older and more experienced mechanic comes along and advises him to test the correctness of his work. "How shall I do it?" says the boy. "Apply the straight edge," says the mechanic. Down goes the straight edge, and to his astonishment he finds that rats could run between it and the board. The straight-edge did two things. It took the conceit out of the boy by revealing the imperfections of his work. There is nothing like an honest test. Women are generally good housekeepers. Many of them are scrupulously clean and exact. Some take a special but mistaken interest in the principal room of the house. The doors are shut, the shutters are closed, the blinds are drawn down, and so it stands—it must be clean for you cannot see any dust around anywhere. But is it? No. How is the matter to be tested? Very simply. Raise the blinds, open the shutters and let the light in. Then you will soon learn that you could write your name on many of the articles of furniture in the room. Light never fails to show up the dust. It is a grand thing to have plenty of light. All we need to arrive at a just conclusion is a true test. A true test intelligently and honestly used will always secure a just conclusion. Men into whose heads and hearts the light of God's law has shined will be the very last to claim perfection. (To be continued.)

## AS TO CANDIDATING.

NOTWITHSTANDING the examples of some strong and eminent men, and of certain churches, it yet seems likely that the practice of choosing a minister from a number of candidates will continue. No doubt it is a mortification for a candidate to be rejected. It snubs his vanity and humiliates his pride. Well, what if it does? This may not be the worst thing in the world for him. On the contrary, it may do him immense good, proving, if properly considered, a much needed means of grace, and teaching him certain lessons of adaptation in making the truth more clear and effective.

Here is a part of the discipline of life to which men in all other professions and trades are subjected; and why should the minister refuse to take his share? Everywhere else outside of the pulpit, places of usefulness are sought—sought by personal application, by letters of introduction, by calling in the aid of friends, and by exhibiting a record of good work done. Merchants, lawyers, doctors, mechanics, have often to try hard to attain a commanding position; and often, too, they have to endure whatever humiliation and disappointment there may be in failing to get the position they aim for. No man can run towards the goal of enlarged influence and power without finding himself sometimes tripped and thrown into the dust much to his temporary chagrin, not to say disgust. But is he to give up, lest he may experience an occasional defeat? Dr. James W. Alexander, as quoted by Mr. Williams, had certainly a better thought when he said: "I am convinced that in the sight of God my declining to preach as a candidate has often been a sinful tribute to my own pride. We ought to be as willing to seek a place of labour for Christ, as the people to seek our services. This is my serious opinion, after having acted on the other and worldly plan."

The question ought not, however, to be decided by the tastes, the likes or dislikes of candidates, but solely by the utility of the method. It certainly seems unreasonable that a congregation should be expected to call for their pastor a man whom they have never seen nor heard. He is to sustain to them the tenderest and dearest relations outside of the family circle to be found in life. He is to baptize and marry their children, to minister to their sick and aged, to win them by voice and manner as well as by the truth to higher and nobler conduct. And they are to reward him not only with a life support, but with reverence, affection, and truthfulness. Why then should they not be allowed to see his face, to hear his voice, and to judge for themselves what manner of man he is, and whether he is adapted to be useful and

happy among them? Frequently it happens that a minister is exactly fitted to one field of labour, but not at all for another; and this fitness can best be determined by bringing him and a people together, as preacher and hearers, and still further by some personal and social intercourse.

The difficulty in the system of candidating lies rather in its abuse than in its true use. It is, for example, a gross abuse of the system, and a great injustice to ministers for a congregation to get a list of fifty or a hundred possible candidates, and then to go through it entire list before attempting to decide on any one of them. This is apt to end in divisions and strifes, and often, moreover, in the final calling, of a man in despair of some inferior and ill-adapted person whom in the outset the people would have summarily rejected. Again, it is an abuse of the system to accept an entire stranger who may have managed to thrust himself before a church, and whose one or two sermons may have caught the fancy of certain influential, or even domineering members. In every case the candidate's record should be inquired into, and all due safeguards taken as to his previous character, his fidelity to duty, his prudence, and tact, his pastoral abilities and adaptations, his consecration to his great work and likelihood of success in the new and untried field. Under these restrictions it is safe to conclude that a custom, which has been so long tested, and which in the great majority of cases has issued in good results, deserves a further lease of existence.—*Christian at Work.*

## RECONSTRUCTING THE CONGREGATION.

WHEN Mr. Lincoln was entering upon his duties as President, and when nearly every branch of the government had been organized, as his political party thought, he still said that "he proposed to run the machine as he found it." As a fact, that machine never got so much reconstructing as it did during his administration. No change, however, was made by him, except under the pressure of manifest necessity for the purposes he had set before him. It is not ordinarily wise to assume that whatever is in a machine, if a machine has run well, and does good work for many years, it has a strong presumption in its favour. The pastor who enters upon a new field with the assumption that his predecessor with his whole heart sought bad methods, and the people with willing minds took to them, and they both were instigated thereto by the devil, should recollect that some day he, too, will have a successor. By so much as that successor would be mistaken in judging of him as above, by so much, also, is he probably mistaken in judging as above of his own predecessor.

Tradition says that Charles the Fifth, in his old age, after his life-long struggle to make Luther and the Pope, his Spanish subjects, and his German electors and people think alike, tried, after his abdication of the German throne, to make two clocks run precisely together. Those who have never tried that task might be as much surprised as the old Emperor at its difficulties; and might be profited by arriving at his conclusions early in life. "If I cannot make two machines agree, why should I hope to make men's minds?"

It is the misfortune of ministers and politicians, that disagreements toward them, on the part of a considerable minority of their congregations and constituencies, make their present position very embarrassing, if not wholly untenable in the future. Reasonable patience is therefore necessary, with those people in the congregation or constituency who refuse to be reconstructed. Many of them, if let alone, will get on very well indeed in their unreconstructed state. They may be entirely willing to let others hold different opinions from their own, if these others will let them enjoy their private opinions. The moment, however, either pastor or politician undertakes to compel them to surrender their personal convictions to others, the stubborn element (very large in all of us) takes control; and that means an obstinate fight on the part of both. If the Sabbath-school superintendent is efficiently managing his school, the pastor may not improve matters by undertaking to reconstruct him. If the trustees are efficiently managing the property, the pastor will not generally succeed in reconstructing them, so long as the people are satisfied. If the women are efficiently doing their work, it will be wise for the pastor to "help those women," instead of undertaking to reconstruct them.

All this, however, applies only to matters of measurable indifference, and does not require a pastor to give his assent, either explicitly or implicitly, to positive or aggressive evils. And yet, even in regard to these, unless a pastor is supported by his church officers and

a decided body of the influential and pious people of the church, his efforts at reconstruction will probably only terminate in his own ejection. It will pretty certainly terminate in his ejection if he undertakes to drive them by the threat of his resignation. He had better not issue any manifestoes containing an ultimatum. He had better resign first, and assign his reasons therefor for the benefit of his successor.—*Interior.*

## Mission Work.

### MISS BLACKADDER.

THE many friends of Miss Blackadder, of Trinidad, will be glad to know that she is so far restored to health as to be able, within the past week, to speak to the ladies at some of the Toronto Auxiliaries of the W. P. M. S. Her addresses have produced a most favourable impression. Miss Blackadder possesses in a marked degree the quality of directness of speech, and was able to give her audiences a very vivid idea of mission life and work among the Coolies, and also, by a few skillful touches, to present a striking portrait of the Coolie himself, physically and mentally. The life of a missionary among these people is one of hard, practical toil, and though brightened with many encouragements and compensations not found in larger and more remote fields, requires unwearied patience, faith and energy on the part of the messengers of Christ. It is only by patient continuance on their part, under the Divine blessing, that results of a satisfactory nature are to be expected. The material is of the crudest nature. Miss Blackadder said she had never met with the hungering and thirsting for the Word of Truth, which was sometimes referred to. On the contrary, it was extremely difficult to make a beginning in winning the attention of the Hindus. "Your Gods (meaning the three persons of the Godhead) are well enough for the English, ours are the best for us." The sophistries and casuistry of the Hindu mind are a strong barrier against the reception of Christianity, and these characteristics seem to pervade the race. In nine cases out of ten, the attendance at the schools began from a selfish or grasping motive. The idea of the work of the missionary being one of pure benevolence never seems to enter their thoughts. "How much does the Queen give you for making a convert?" By and by, however, under persistent kindness mingled with judicious firmness, and the daily line-upon-line of Christian instruction, the light dawns upon the darkened soul, and the poor Hindu awakes one day to a sense of sin and a desire for a better life and a better worship than the idolatry and superstitions of his forefathers. The value of some kind of general preparation, and also of theological training for young women contemplating foreign mission work was dwelt upon. Many go out from the shelter and pure atmosphere of a Christian home not only innocent but to a large extent ignorant of the evil that is in the world through sin, and the shock of contact with the depravity of heathenism is very great; not only this, but the subtleties of argument with which Christian teaching is met render it very desirable that the preacher of a new doctrine should be furnished by study of the various phases of belief, otherwise she may appear helpless at a critical moment. The educational part of the work in Trinidad was presented in a most interesting manner. In answer to the question, "Are there many relapses into heathenism?" Miss Blackadder said she was glad to be able to state that she did not know of any; on the contrary, cases had occurred where the missionaries had received applications for baptism and admission to the Church from those who, in the early days of the Mission, had attended the schools, but who through circumstances had drifted away and been lost sight of completely for a time, but in whose hearts the good seed had lain for years, and had taken such firm root as to lead them back to the friends and teachers of their childhood, and better than all to the Lord Jesus. Both Hindustani and English are taught. Without the study of English in the schools no Government aid would be obtained. This renders the obstacles in the way of a novice less formidable. A teacher or preacher can be of some use immediately, and does not need to wait until the language is mastered before making a beginning. Ninety per cent. of the children in attendance at the mission schools abandon heathenism, and turn out respectable, intelligent Christian people. The change wrought in places where the good work has been going on for a long time is very gratifying, and decent, attentive and reverent congregations of Asiatics might be seen Sabbath after Sabbath worshipping the true God. Miss Blackadder dwelt briefly, and in a somewhat humorous vein, on the difficulties

and trials of the missionary's life, but no one of any insight could conclude that their trials are either few or insignificant. The climate, the strain of the work, the depressing and often repulsive surroundings, the low moral atmosphere, all make life a very draught upon mind, body and soul, and an occasional lull has become a necessity. The hope was expressed that some one would be found with courage enough to take Mr. Knox-Wright's place at Couva.

We understand it is Miss Blackadder's desire and expectation to return very shortly to Trinidad. The friends she has made in Toronto will assuredly follow her with their prayers and affectionate interest.

## ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN MISSIONS.

### THE ANNUAL REPORT.

FROM the Report on Foreign Missions, submitted at the recent meeting of the Synod of the English Presbyterian Church, by Rev. Wm. S. Swanson, in the unavoidable absence of Mr. Hugh M. Matheson, the Convener, we make some extracts:—

"In China and India; Total congregations organized, 43; not yet organized, 84. Native pastors, entirely supported by their own congregations: Amoy, 6; Swatow, 2; total 8. Native Evangelists: Amoy, 33; Swatow, 24; Hak-ka Country, 11; Formosa, 26; Singapore, 4; Kampore Bauleah, 2; total, 100. Theological Students: Amoy, 4; Swatow, 11; Hak-ka Country, 6; Formosa, 13; total 34.

"The Mission in China during the past year has had its lights and shades its disappointments and encouragements. But its record has been, as previously, one by which we are made thankful and hopeful. It is now at such a stage that its annals from year to year are simply those of consolidation and extension. Its base is a native Church fully organized, and its methods as well as its operations are almost identical with those at home. We have passed the initial stages, and we are now facing new conditions. The native Church gives us a leverage which, by the power of the Spirit of God, is producing great results, and which will in due season produce still greater. Our active membership is growing, and all the departments of the native Church are showing a sound and healthy vitality. Our educational methods are being improved; our Medical Mission is an increasing force; and our ladies' work is leaving its mark unmistakably on the young, is sending its healthy, purifying influence into the homes of the Christians, and is reaching the women of China in a way open only to itself. From Hainan in the south to Manchuria in the north, from the seaboard on the east to the mountain-fastness in the west, the pioneers have gone. Christianity is growing visible. China has been projecting itself into the plane of power among the nations. In a peculiar way it is slowly allowing an entrance to Western light, and at the same time trying to preserve the old ways. The task is a difficult one. Our native Church must be wisely and prudently led, and an abundant outpouring of God's Spirit must be asked.

"In regard to finance, the Committee have been enabled to close their year with practically no adverse balance. The weakness of our staff in Formosa has been a cause of great anxiety to the Committee. The burden thus laid on the brethren there was more than they could bear. The Committee feels that this state of matters cannot be allowed to continue, and so they have resolved to send out an ordained missionary to that centre. Mr. Campbell, who has been home on furlough, has, during his stay in this country, been preparing work for the blind of a valuable kind, and also published the Gospel of Matthew in an old dialect of one of the aboriginal tribes. This translation was prepared by one of the early Dutch pastors who laboured in Formosa when the island was held by his countrymen. In the several centres in China, our work has been carried on under the evangelistic, pastoral, medical, and educational departments.

"The statistics for the year 1888, show, for the several centres of Amoy, Swatow, Hak-ka, Formosa, and Singapore the following totals:—Communicants: to 31st December, 1887, 3,520; adults baptised in 1888, 175; received to communion having been baptised in infancy, 14; received by certificate, 23; restored to communion, 21; suspended in 1888, 51; died in 1888, 97; gone elsewhere, 17; communicants 31st December, 1888, 3,357; children baptised in 1888, 160; total baptised children, 2,224; numbers under suspension, 296; total membership, adults and children, 6,016. With regard to Antoy, the native Church there is extending itself in a very gratifying way. The expense of this extension is almost entirely defrayed by the gifts themselves. In the south the prospect is brighter than it has been for a long time."