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THE ONTARIO EVANGELIST.

SHALL IT BE PUBLISHED MORE FREQUENTLY?

The question is often asked, why not publish the EVANGELIST twice a month, or once a week? It can be, and will be, if a sufficient number of its present subscribers want it to be.

THE WORD "CHURCH."

Is it proper to call the people known as Disciples of Christ "The Church of Christ"? This is a question which is receiving a good deal of attention from our papers on the other side.

What does the word "church" literally mean? What did it originally mean? To what was it first applied by Christians? Dr. Trench in his work "On the Study of Words" says:—

"How much history lies in the word 'church'. I need no sufficient reason to dissent from those who derive it from the Greek *kuriakos*, 'that which pertains to the Lord' or 'the house which is the Lord's.'"

Dr. Trench is high authority; and according to the derivation he accepts, the primary meaning of the word "church" is "the Lord's house". His language however, implies that some do not accept that derivation. The question then arises, if the word is not derived from the Greek, from what is it derived? "Alden's Manifold Cyclopaedia" has this note:—

"The derivation of church from the Greek is open to question notwithstanding the high authorities in its favor. The word is found in the Teutonic and Celtic languages with the primary signification 'a circle of stones,' thus indicating the sites of the old heathen worship on or near which Christian crosses and churches were erected in the earliest times."

If this be the preferable account of the origin of the word, then we would say that the word "church" primarily meant "a circle of stones;" secondly "a site of the old heathen worship."

There appears to be no other account of the origin of the word proposed; and so whichever derivation be adopted, we are led to this conclusion that in the language of Christians the word "church" was first applied to a place or house of worship, and therefore it is entirely proper to call our meeting houses "churches." Upon consulting "Worcester's dictionary" we find that he gives as the first meaning of the word "church;—

"A building consecrated to christian worship and ordinances."

And we observe, too, that he favors the derivation as given by Dr. Trench. One's feelings are on the side of the Greek origin. "The Lord's

house" seems such an appropriate designation for the building in which "the Lord's people" meet to worship.

We notice that one brother, who writes a good deal in one of our papers, is very anxious that the brethren should style their meeting houses "chapels" rather than "churches." But the brethren will not to any large extent, and we predict that the use of the word "church" in the sense of a meeting house will increase rather than diminish among us.

It is, of course, well known that the word "church" occurs quite frequently in the New Testament, but never means a house of worship. Its New Testament usage will be considered next month.

THE CONFESSION OF FAITH.

WHAT SOME WHO HAVE SUBSCRIBED TO IT ARE SAYING ABOUT IT.

[While an article with the above heading was in course of preparation, the Christian Oracle for Nov. 21st came to hand, containing the subjoined article. It answers our purpose so well that we take the liberty of having it re-printed here. We know our readers will enjoy reading it. The discussion now going on among the Presbyterians in the United States is exceedingly interesting and we shall endeavor to keep our readers as well posted on the question as our space will admit.—EDITOR.]

A reporter took the pains to interview all the Presbyterian ministers of Indianapolis, on the question of the revision of the Confession of Faith, and the answers make some very fine reading. As these men are representatives of all phases of Presbyterianism their opinions are worthy to be quoted.

J. A. Rondthaler, pastor of the Tabernacle Church, one of the most popular in the city, said:

Of course I am in favor of the revision, and the more the better. We are living in the nineteenth century, and not in the seventeenth. Truth is unchangeable, but it needs to be adapted to different times and circumstances. We need statements that meet present issues. Working with a confession that is 250 years old is like plowing a field with an ox hit head to a wooden plow. Our whole system is not so old, that we need fear Uzzah's fate if we put up our hands to touch it. Uzzah's fate is a warning, but our present standards give only the harsh and severe side of the truth. There is nothing in them, the gentle, winning, tender spirit of the New Testament. The sledge-hammer style of preaching belongs to the past. We want a confession that will not make men shudder at the thought of God, but will impress every one who reads it that "God is love." The confession is a warning, but helps no one to look up and say "Our Father." We want a confession that so clear and plain as to be read by the ordinary man, and that will not see a whole library of books to explain it. People generally can afford neither time nor money to be theological seminarians.

A revision might be destructive to some old sermons, but then they might be put up in glass cases, together with the venerable old document, and stored in some proof museum of ecclesiastical antiquities. I have known instances of earnest, spiritual, devoted men who have positively refused to serve as elders in the church because they could not accept the repulsive way the confession stated some truth. There is a way of telling truth that will make men swear, and there is a way of expressing it that will make them pray. It will probably be 10 or 20 years before a revision is reached. The conservative element is very strong in the church, but there is no doubt that the spirit of progress and common sense will prevail. I do not believe in accepting everything just because it is new, but as little do I believe in smothering ourselves under our grandfather's old feather beds. Evolution is not such a terrible word.

This is rather a refreshing statement and a candid confession that the horrible doctrines of the Confession can never be reconciled with the Lord's prayer. In 1843, when Alexander Campbell discussed the creed question with N. L. Rice, if a Presbyterian preacher had made an utterance like the above he would have been excluded from every Presbyterian pulpit in the land. If Campbell were on earth to-day he could see the fruits of some of the hard thrusts made at dogmatic creeds of his time. Dr. Rondthaler needs only one step more, when "the venerable old document is put into a glass case in some fire-proof museum of ecclesiastical antiquities," and that is to open the New Testament and "hold fast the form of sound words," the words of inspiration, and the contrast will be so marked that he will wonder how any body as intelligent as the Presbyterians ever subscribed to the dogmatism of the Westminster creed-makers.

Dr. M. L. Haines, pastor of the first Presbyterian Church, the one in which President Harrison, holds his membership, said:

For one I am in hearty favor of such a revision or re-statement, and I believe it will come. The tone and spirit of the discussion of this whole question by our ministers and laymen is, to me, a striking evidence of the

vitality and spirit of progress that now characterize our Presbyterian churches. I am not wise enough to predict just what method of revision will be adopted. Probably first there will come striking out of certain objectionable phrases which have so often been misconstrued, and the addition of some passages making more prominent the great central truth, the Gospel of God's love, that "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Dr. Haines is one of the best and most liberal Presbyterians in his practice we have ever met; in fact is so much better than the old confession of faith that it is plain to be seen that he is more influenced in his life by the teachings of the New Testament than by the dogmas of Calvin.

S. S. Mitchell, pastor of the Sixth Church, said:

I am in favor of a change in the confession of faith. The old days of the General Assembly are gone. They were too narrow and limited; too conservative. The intense radicalism of the men and doctrines of those days has gone. The tendency is to better things; eliminate everything that is intolerant; leave every essential gospel principle untouched. My creed is Christ and him crucified. The Gospel I preach is salvation to any who believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; elevation of the standard of life and duty. The church of to-day wants no less of God but more of Christ.

Dr. R. V. Hunter, pastor of the Seventh Church, said:

If we can do no better, let us have a "declaratory statement," as another branch of the Presbyterian Church already has. A half-loaf is better than no loaf. The "confession" is an admirable system of theology, but, as another has said, "Adam has been overloaded." When one comes seeking admission to the Presbyterian Church, and asks for the confession, in the majority of cases experience has proven it best not to be able to find the book. It will disturb the average mind on a first reading. I have ordained elders and deacons who could not truthfully answer the questions of the book. I was compelled to frame the questions in a less objectionable form. The old-fashioned sickle and stage-coach were good enough in their day. The self-binder and express train are better now. Our new confession must be more biblical, not less so. However, the important thing is not so much what we believe as what we are.

Dr. Hunter is a very practical, large-hearted man, entirely too large for the old confession. The naive way in which he says that in case a man wanted to unite with the church, "experience has proven it best not to be able to find the book" is one of the expressions that show that there is something so inherently horrible in the doctrine of the decrees that no man in his sober senses can read it without a shock to his sense of right and justice. Let the discussion go on. We could fill a volume with like sentiments, but publish these because they are by men we know to be good men and leaders of Presbyterianism in Indiana.

AN IMPORTANT MATTER.

While we are interesting ourselves in the good work of carrying the good news of salvation to our fellow-men, both at home and abroad, and while we are cheered by the knowledge that the Scriptures are more and more taking the place of human creeds and confessions of faith, let us not forget the importance of giving heed to that fine exhortation of the Apostle Peter, to "grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," and that of the Apostle Paul, "Having therefore these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God"; let us keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, "If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow me."

DO YOU KNOW THIS?

What? Why, that the Disciples in the United States have lost 230,000 members and 67 preachers since 1881. At least so it has been asserted in this part of the world. This will seem rather strange to those who saw reported in the Christian Standard in one week's issue last winter, 2,111 additions, and in another week's, 1,712. We had been entertaining the idea that, perhaps, no religious people was multiplying more rapidly than the Disciples in the States. Will the Christian Standard and the Christian-Evangelist tell us what they think of the statement quoted above?

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

THAT \$1,000.00.

Elsewhere in this number will be found a report of the proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society. It will be seen that the \$100,000 proposed to be raised was not reached, the total contributions for the year being \$57,289.15. Nevertheless the friends of the Society have no reason to feel discouraged; on the other hand there are various reasons for encouragement

as indicated by the report we publish. There are many grounds for believing that the contributions of the Disciples to Foreign Missions during the current year will far exceed those of any previous year.

In comparison with the whole amount raised, the sum contributed by Disciples in Ontario is quite creditable. Not that there is any ground for boasting. But if the increase in the States had been as great as in Ontario, the whole sum raised would have been upward of \$70,000.00.

The EVANGELIST was urging the Disciples in this province to contribute at least \$1,000.00 during the last year; and our readers will be glad to know that though that amount was not reached, about \$950.00 was contributed, being an increase of some \$200.00 over the previous year. This is unquestionable evidence that we are a missionary people. Let us make it a good round \$1,000.00 this year, if not more.

BAPTISTS AND DISCIPLES.

It was our purpose to lay before our readers some thoughts on the subject of union between Baptists and Disciples; but certain facts we are in search of did not reach us in time. In our next number we shall try to deal with the matter as its importance merits. Two observations may be made here:

1 The church in Lobo in the resolution published last month was not seeking admittance into the Baptist denomination. The impression seems to have become current in some quarters that the Disciples were preparing to give up their distinctive plea and work and become Baptists. Those who expect that, expect the impossible.

2 There is no reasonable ground for hoping for an early union between the Baptists and the Disciples. Those who are tolerably well acquainted with both bodies in Canada know that there must be a far better understanding of one another's views before a union is either possible or desirable.

GOOD READING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

We have heretofore directed the attention of our readers to the Young People's Standard, a weekly four page paper published by the Standard Publishing Company. Having made arrangements with the publishers to club it with the EVANGELIST, we make special mention of it here: We have now examined it with some care for some months, and we have no hesitation in recommending it to parents who want good reading for their boys and girls. We would like to know that it was making weekly visits to every family in our brotherhood in Ontario. The regular price is 75 cents per year—five or more copies to one address, each, 60 cents. We are able to send the Young People's Standard and THE ONTARIO EVANGELIST both for one year for one dollar. Sample copies sent by us on application.

"THE CRITIC'S CORNER."

We are pleased to announce that in the January number Bro. E. Sheppard will open a new department called "The Critic's Corner. Its purpose will be obvious. In advance of Bro. Sheppard's own announcement we take the liberty of inviting our readers "to prove him with hard questions." All queries and other matters pertaining to "The Critic's Corner" should be addressed to

E. SHEPPARD, WALKERTON, ONT.

NOTES.

We are still patiently waiting for the Christian Leader to give us "chapter and verse" for its Scriptural methods of spreading the Gospel.

Please change my address from Rosedene, Ont., to Butler, De Kalb Co., Indiana. I enter upon the work here with good spirits and much hope. S. Moor.

Contributions from Ontario to Foreign Missions since last report:—

Mission Band, Aurora	\$12.00
Church, Everton	27.00
" Lobo	11.00

The Report of the Foreign Christian Missionary Society has been printed and mailed to contributors. Any who have been overlooked may have copies on application.

A. McLEAN, Cor. Sec. Cincinnati, O.

In looking over our list we find that quite a large number of our subscribers are in arrears more or less. With most perhaps it is forgetful-