

Our Contributors.

SHALL COMMON SENSE PREVAIL?

BY KNOXONIAN.

To butt against a Synod or a General Assembly is a somewhat serious undertaking. Yet two or three esteemed ministers, not a thousand miles away, have done that very thing and have lived. Not only have they lived, they seem to prosper in their work quite as much as those who say amen to every deliverance of the majority. If the amount contributed by the congregations of these ministers to the Schemes of the Church were taken out the withdrawal of the specie would leave a hole not easily filled. It has been said that a sermon preached by one of them was nailed up in barrooms during the late Scott Act contests. Few places are more in need of good sermons. Nailing a sermon on the back wall of perdition would not affect the truth of the sermon. The main question about any sermon is, Is it true? Not: Where is it nailed up? The Ross Selections have been burnt before now, but that did not prove anything in regard to the Selections. The whole Bible has been burnt, but that did not make anything against the Bible.

This *excursus* is merely meant to show that a minister may differ from his Church court and rub along down here in a reasonably useful sort of a way. If distinguished men may differ from the majority on a burning question and still prosper, perhaps one not distinguished may ask the majority a civil question on a business matter without being extinguished.

The question we propose to ask is, Would it not be better to have Synods and Assemblies meet in central places? This is not a deep metaphysical question. It is not a profound theological problem. We have not the slightest hope of ever being made a Doctor in Divinity for writing a paper on any such useful subject. It is, however, a question which gravely affects the welfare of the Church. The week before last the Synod of Toronto and Kingston met in OWEN SOUND.

Considered apart from its location, there is no better place for a Synod to meet in. We have two splendid church buildings there with every possible convenience. The Owen Sound Presbyterians are a whole-souled, generous, hospitable people. They entertained the Synod in right royal style. In the matter of kindness and personal attention, the members were probably much better cared for than they would have been in a large city. If the main thing is to have a good time, give us Owen Sound every year.

The chief defect about this meeting of Synod was that the Synod was not there. Technically it was, but actually it was not. How many members were present from the Presbyteries of Kingston, Lindsay, Peterborough and Whitby? No blame can be attached to the people of Owen Sound for the thin attendance. It is no fault of theirs that their beautiful town is in one corner of the territory covered by the Synod. They could not reasonably be expected to move their town into the centre.

Gananoque is about 180 miles east of Toronto. In going to the meeting of Synod Brother Gracey and his elder—if they attended—would have to travel 180 miles to Toronto and then start out on another journey of 122 miles to Owen Sound—in all, 300 miles. Is it a reasonable thing to suppose that anybody will travel 300 miles to a meeting of Synod which lasts less than two days and does little more than receive, discuss and adopt the reports of two or three standing committees?

Kingston is a Presbyterian centre. The professors of Québec and other members of that historic Presbytery should be in the Synod. Could they be expected to travel nearly 300 miles to a two days meeting at which there was little done but routine business? The members in and around Kingston were a hundred miles nearer the meeting of the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa than they were to the meeting of their own Synod. Is it Presbyterian common sense to ask a Presbytery to travel more than a hundred miles farther to a meeting of their own Synod than they would have to travel to the meeting of a neighbouring Synod? To get to Owen Sound a large number of the members of Synod would have to travel about 100 miles to Toronto, and then start out on another journey of 122 miles.

The utter lack of business capacity and common sense shown in these matters is still more apparent in the General Assembly. This year the Supremo Court meets in

HALIFAX.

In everything but its location Halifax is a pre-eminently suitable place. It is perhaps the most hospitable city in the Dominion. The kindness of the people knows no bounds. No western city would be likely to take as much interest in the Supremo Court as will be taken in Halifax. If the main thing is to accept the hospitality of the kindest people on the continent then go to Halifax until the millennial era dawns.

But let us see what going to Halifax means. It means that the commissioners from British Columbia travel about 3,000 miles to Montreal, and then start on another journey of about 1,000 miles to the Assembly! The commissioners from Calgary travel 2,262 miles to Montreal, and having rested, start again for another long journey. Even the commissioners from Winnipeg are only a little more than half way to the Assembly when they get to Montreal, and about half way in Toronto! If the ministers and elders of the North-West can stand any such expense all we have to say is that they have more money than many of their neighbours.

Going from any part of Western Ontario to Halifax will spoil a month and \$100. Whether it is the duty of a minister or elder to spoil both these good things for the sake of attending a meeting of Assembly each one must decide for himself. Few ministers can take the 9th of June for Assembly purposes, and then take a much-needed holiday in August.

The common-sense remedy is to hold all such meetings at central points. Toronto is the natural place for the Synod of Kingston and Toronto to meet. No one would have any reason to complain if the Assembly met no farther east than Montreal and no farther west than Hamilton. There may have been good reasons why the perambulating system should have been adopted for a time after the Union. Now that the Supremo Court has met as far west as Winnipeg and as far east as Halifax, and at all important points between these extremes, would it not be as well to drop the perambulating system at least for a time and let common sense prevail?

IS CHRIST OR PETER THE FOUNDATION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH?

BY THE REV. R. WALLACE.

Continued.

Dr. MacVicar says the programme of the Vatican and the Jesuits at present is the capture of Britain and America, and through them the subjugation of the whole world. Nor is it spiritual subjugation alone that is aimed at, but temporal as well. *La Verité*, the strongest Ultramontane journal of Quebec, on December 31, 1887, says, "The Church is not only absolutely independent of the State, but what is more, superior to it." If we have any regard to the welfare of our country, whether as patriots or Christians, we must resist to the utmost Romanism as both a political and religious system. Why? Because it perverts and suppresses the truth of God—is now in the main Jesuitism—it corrupts and poisons the fountains of education, elementary and advanced, makes national education and national unity in Canada impossible, it cripples human freedom and undeniably impoverishes the people. The Bible is interdicted and has been burned in the Province of Quebec at the instance of Rome. The schools are hotbeds of superstition, in which pupils waste their time over vapid legends of the saints, and are obliged to sacrifice their manhood in the confessional. The vast majority of the people are made poor and non-progressive by the unlimited exactions of the Church. They are not free in any sense; but the spirit of liberty is rising in their breasts, and all true patriots should help them to cast off the yoke. It is not too much to look for the downfall of Romanism. That which it hates and fears most—the Word of the living God—is the appointed instrument of its overthrow. It declares that the great apostasy shall be destroyed with the breath of His mouth and the brightness of His coming—that is, with the general circulation of the sacred Scriptures and the general reception by the deluded followers of Rome of the pure and simple Gospel of salvation through faith in Christ only.

Already about 40,000 French-Canadians have been thus converted by the efforts of the Churches of Christ.

Let us then speedily give the Bible to all; and in this terrible battle with error, daily increasing in magnitude, let us, with the faithful and heroic Baptist missionary, William Carey, "expect great things from God and attempt great things for God." Fifty years ago the Romanists of Great Britain constituted nearly one third of the population, now only one-seventh. With all the efforts of Rome the gains of Protestantism have been vastly greater in the United States than those of Rome. From 1851 to 1881 Rome added 5,000 to the ranks of her priesthood, to the Protestant ministry there were added during the same time 44,315. In twenty years (1850-1870) Rome built 2,500 new churches, the Protestants of the United States during the same time increased the number of their churches by 21,000. Rome sways about 7,000,000 of the population of the United States; whereas there are over 50,000,000 Protestants, 70,000 Protestant ministers and about 100,000 Protestant churches. It is evident both from the predictions of the Word and the signs of the times that the progress of Protestantism and evangelical religion is onward and upward, and the destiny of Rome is downward. I would therefore warn politicians that those who ally themselves with Rome and lean on her for strength and support are destined to disappointment. They lean on a broken reed—like Israel of old when they looked to Egypt for help—a reed that will pierce the hand that leans on it. Dr. Watts, of Belfast, Ireland, after approving of the action of the Emperor of Germany in sending his son, the present Emperor, to take part in the Luther festival in 1883, says, "The history of Western Europe proves that no Government can with impunity espouse the cause of the Papacy (witness the case of Napoleon III.); or treat with indifference the Gospel of Christ and prosper (Isa. lx. 12). Statesmen would do well to hearken to the voice, for the doom of the nation which legislates in the interests of Rome is written so clearly in the history of the past four centuries that he who runs may read. Recent explorations in the ruins of Babylon and Nineveh bring to light the causes which wrought their overthrow. Deeds of cruelty, robbery and oppression, for which the patronage of their false gods was claimed, brought down upon them the judgment of Jehovah. And just as clearly are the causes of the judgments wherewith the Papal Governments of Europe have been visited portrayed in the history of the post-Reformation period. In her has been found the blood of prophets and of saints and of all that were slain upon the earth (Rev. xviii. 24). Cruelties perpetrated in some instances on a scale of provincial or even national magnitude, and culminating in wholesale massacres—cruelties inspired and patronized by Rome—have been visited by the fearful penalties of judicial blindness and national humiliation." Like causes are always sure to produce like effects in all nations and times. Let us see to it that we do what we can to avert such judgments from our beloved Canada by not allowing our Governments to form unhallowed alliances with Rome, for if we do we become partakers of other men's sins, and we must suffer from the judgments that are then brought on our nation.

We should not hesitate, with the Reformers, to describe Popery as the Great Apostasy, or as in 1 Tim. vi. 1, it is called "The Apostasy" in the Greek, with an article to give it emphasis. Let any intelligent and candid student of God's Word compare Daniel vii. and viii. with 2 Thessalonians ii. and i. Timothy iv., and he must come to the conclusion that Popery is the greatest Apostasy with which the Church of God has had to contend. In 2 Thes. ii. 8, it is described as "The Lawless One," the power that sets aside and nullifies the law of God and sanctions immorality and sin among men. This accords with what Daniel says of the Little Horn (vii. 25), "He shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws." "He shall exceed in wickedness all that went before him" (Sept. on Daniel vii. 24), either by promoting wickedness in general or idolatry in particular, as the term sin often signifies in Scripture (see Bishop Newton on the Prophecies, p. 390). In proof that this description refers and those titles belong to the Papacy we need only refer to the system of indulgences (commenced in the thirteenth century to increase the power of the priests over the people), to the tariff of sins by which many iniquities are sanctioned