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PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 1869.

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METHODIST AFFINITIES FOR PRESBYTERIANISM.

The recent declaration of Dr. Abel Stevens in the *London Watchman*, which is copied in another column, to the effect that Methodism is a Presbyterian form of Church government, awakens some serious and hopeful reflections on the affinities of our various truly Protestant bodies. Without pausing closely to criticise the ecclesiastical accuracy of the language, we may say unhesitatingly, that such a use of the term betokens a degree of friendliness and fraternal feeling for which there must be a deep, underlying foundation in the truth. And we hesitate not to say that this fraternal feeling is fully reciprocated by multitudes who bear the name of Presbyterian. It has become simply impossible for any intelligent Christian to ignore the great advance made by the Methodist denomination in all the elements and appliances of theological and general culture, or to overlook the eminent services they have begun to render in theological literature both periodical and permanent. It looks as though we should soon owe to Methodism the only great Cyclopedia of Theology in the English language. Presbyterians would not be true to themselves if they failed to feel a lively sympathy in such movements and their authors.

And if Presbyterians have for nearly a century regarded Methodist revivals with suspicion, and reckoned the success of their camp meetings and their special measures as a very doubtful benefit; from the beginning it was not so. The same spiritual impulse which made Wesley the apostle of Methodism, sent Whitefield as a flaming star across the ocean among the Congregational and Presbyterian Churches in America. The Calvinistic Methodists of Wales are a fruit of the same movement. The Countess of Huntington, though a Calvinist, went warmly into the movement, "and such," says Dr. Stevens, writing of the early history of Methodism, "was the moral unity of both parties, the Arminian and the Calvinistic, that the essential unity of the general Methodist movement was maintained." And if Calvinists feel that the Arminianism of the Methodists is precisely the weak point, the doctrinal defect which has led to shallowness of inward experience and evanescence of results, and even disastrous reactions, they cannot deny a persistency, a tenacity of life, and an extraordinary power of growth to the body, which points to an inner and a great reality. Moreover, the Methodists themselves no longer shut their eyes to those extraordinary delinquencies of their probationers, which have been a matter of unfavorable criticism so long among other denominations. They view them with grief, and they have started the inquiry, How the abuse is to be remedied.

If it has been made a reproach to the Methodists that they know nothing of the Presbyterian principle of government by representation, they have answered, on the one hand, that our ordained elders were ministers almost as truly as their local preachers, and their presence in the judicatories is not, therefore, lay representation; and besides, holding office during good behaviour, they are not, in the full sense of the word, representatives of the people. On the other hand, the Methodist Church is now passing through an agitation for lay representation in the strict sense of the word, and may yet turn out more republican and popular in its form of government than Presbyterians or Congregationalists. Certainly Presbyterian ideas, or ideas quite as good on church government, are becoming familiar to them. And that some ideas on the same subject, hitherto supposed to be quite peculiar to the Methodists, are getting currency among Presbyterians, appears from Mr. Barnes' suggestion at the Clinton St. installation of elders, which was in substance that Presbyterian elders would do well to assume not a few of the functions of class-leaders.

As to doctrine, we cannot doubt that a like assimilation has been going on. Calvinism and Arminianism are represented as opposite poles of theology, and so they are. But the fact that the earth has two opposite poles does not contradict the fact of its geometrical unity, but confirms it. Neither of its poles could be dispensed with. Every Calvinist who has not theorized himself into fatalism, or something very like it, admits with every pulse of his practical life, the grand truth of human freedom involved in Arminianism. Every Methodist who philosophizes, and they are not a few, confesses the supremacy of the divine will and purpose in the universe, as the only escape from chaos. Both, when they come to the Bible without dogmatic prejudice, must see both doctrines: divine supremacy, and human freedom, clearly

stated there, and sometimes interwoven in the same sentence. Increasing numbers in both Churches admit, that if the two doctrines can no more be reconciled than the two poles can be brought together, they must both be simply believed in, as they are. The Calvinist does not need to loosen his grasp upon the iron pillars of the divine decrees in order to admit the mystery of free will. The Arminian need not sacrifice free will in embracing decrees. Only those rationalistic types, of mind, who insist on having everything logically explained and systematized, need have any trouble about it.

Here it is interesting to observe, that the Methodist articles of religion contain not the slightest trace of Arminianism, but, if anything, are Calvinistic. The section XII. "of Sin after Justification," uses no such phrase as "falling from grace," and contains nothing to which the opponents of that doctrine would not subscribe. Section VIII. on Free Will, would pass muster at Princeton. It is as follows: "The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith, and calling upon God; wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will."

Thus it appears that there is no hindrance but rather encouragement in the written creed of the Methodists to the further development of affinities for Presbyterian doctrine. May the good work go on.

SEARCH AFTER TRUTH.

By Rev. E. E. Adams, D. D.

Said a wise man: "Were the Almighty to give me the choice either to accept truth, or to search after it, I would, with all deference, prefer the latter."

There is extravagance in this assertion, no doubt; yet it contains a very important thought. We are so constituted that possession is not to us the largest source of pleasure. The excitement of pursuit, the expectation and fact of conquest, are often more rapturous and absorbing than the sense of proprietorship. This is especially true of objects which have no power of development, no qualities which may be successively unfolded to afford us repeated instances of wonder and delight. And we are satisfied with what we possess only when it does yield us new and unexpected proofs of excellence. Hence when our minds and hearts have put forth their energies for that which only seemed a good, which is found, in the possession, to be an evil; the reaction is, in equal measure, painful. And by the same law we find that only to be a good which is capable of successive disclosures of new and surprising qualities; which is fitted for our enlarged experience; for our natural and our artificial wants; for our improving taste, our growing intelligence; our better views and nobler desires.

The rapture of discovery is succeeded by the calmness, even by forgetfulness of possession. The huntsman who has stricken the chamois from his alpine peak, or prostrated the bison on the prairie, thinks more of repeating that success than of possessing what he has gained. The astronomer, across the field of whose telescope a new planet has rolled, lingers not long in the joy of his discovery, but lifts his lenses to the firmament, that he may win to science another of its wanderers. Man desires to know. His mind is for truth, and truth is for the mind. The world is full of experimenters. They dig into the earth in search of tokens, making dead things eloquent and tuneful. They breathe the fumes of the laboratory, seeking hidden affinities. They soar to the heavens, measuring worlds and systems, peering into space; now on the confines of Sirius; anon, within "the bands of Orion," then away with "Arcturus and his sons," applying that sublime arithmetic which they began to learn under the mother's eye, by repeating the units, or counting their fingers.

The discipline derived from these processes is invaluable, but the possession of truth thus gained is also of infinite worth. There may be more excitement, more ecstasy in the discovery and the conquest, but there is, doubtless, more good, more calm, diffused, enduring happiness in the possession. And this because truth is manifold. It forever unfolds its glory to the mind; adding to the wonder of ignorance the deeper wonder of revelation; bearing the spirit into clearer fields of light, until it lands us in the untroubled brightness of perfect ideals. The study of abstract truth is doubtless elevating, purifying to the mind, to society. We must have ideals, that they may win us above our actuality. It is thus that we rise as individuals, as families, as communities. There must be a

goal for the mind, for humanity. Our aspirations should go out, and upward. But truth is not a mere abstraction. It is reality. It is the life and soul of facts. It grows into States, into revolutions, into grand activities and growths of power. It embodies itself in the popular interest, and marches, as with the footsteps of God, over thrones and through empires. It takes possession of Cromwell as a conviction of liberty and self-rule, and makes the palace of Charles 1st kingless. It takes up its abode in the workmen of Paris, and the miserly Louis Philippe leaves his throne and his "French people," and hastens across the channel in the guise of a pilot. It enthrones itself in the heart of Luther, and revolutionizes Christendom. In the years which have just gone by in our country, it embodied itself in the might of a million warriors, and in the persons of twenty millions of freemen, whose pulsations for justice and liberty shook the world. We hear their echoes now from Italy and Spain. Truth is life. When we have truth we have life. When truth comes to us it comes to stay, for it is sent of God. Let us welcome it, and enthroned it in our hearts. Nothing is great, beautiful, healthful, divine, but truth.

A PLEA FOR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS.

"At the present day, the ten commandments are having a hard time of it," suggested a friend recently. It was an odd way of putting it, but the idea is important, and worth considering. Are these old mandates obsolete? Have the tables of the law become fossils? Is it to be deemed a piece of old fogysm to regulate our conduct by the ten commandments?

That young America does not like these antiquated leading strings, is sufficiently patent. Money and Fashion and Pleasure are very popular divinities, foisted idolatrously into the place where the first commandment puts the living Jehovah. The good old precept about honoring Father and Mother is taboed utterly in many home-circles. The Sabbath is kept holy after a very queer sort of keeping, and in a way that reveals the vaguest and loosest notions of sanctity. "Thou shalt not kill," as interpreted by the New Testament, finds many violators of whom our laws take no cognizance. And "Thou shalt not bear false witness," is conveniently ignored by many who would be shocked, if their Christian integrity were to be directly questioned.

Would it not be well to give these commandments a little more airing in our papers and pulpits? Do they not need re-exposition and practical enforcement? Surely their observance has a very close connection with piety. Indeed, piety is out of the question, without faithful and constant effort to observe them. Yet we fear there are multitudes of professed Christians, who have little conception of the binding obligations of the commandments, and who are utterly unaware how "exceeding broad" they are. Take this matter of bearing false witness. How fearfully prevalent it is in society. Downright falsehoods—deliberately conceived and deliberately uttered lies, embrace not a tithe of the violations of this law of God. Truth withheld is sometimes a worse deception than a direct misstatement. The essence of a lie is not in what is said, but in the intent to deceive. Lying hearts are just as much an abomination to God, as lying lips. We may believe, when every word uttered is the exact truth. We may be liars, and yet say nothing. A look may be a lie. Silence may be a lie. If we make false impressions, with intent to deceive, purposing to mislead, we are guilty of falsehood.

Yet think what trickery, what guises, what shams, what pretense, what withholdings of truth, what flippant misrepresentations, what so-called "white lies," there are in the world! As if a lie could be "white" because it is about a little thing! As if an untruth could be washed to purity because it concerns a trifle! All lies are as black as the devil, who is the father of them. All liars, unless penitent and forgiven, shall have their part with him who first deceived the woman in Eden.

Yes: let us ventilate these old commandments. They are serviceable yet. If they are "having a hard time of it" in these days, let us see to it that their claims are more faithfully pressed to the conscience and the heart, and they doubtless will be given greater heed. The "go-easy" piety that makes profession of faith and love, without obedience, is of the garnished sepulchre sort, full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Send the ten commandments sweeping down through our hearts and lives, and many of us might feel to our hurt and healing, the force of their strong, broad negatives.

—We rejoice to learn that another Bible total-abstinence man is to be added to the number now in the United States Senate. We refer to

Senator Carpenter, recently elected from Wisconsin. It is reported of him that, on the evening of the 4th, he delivered a brilliant and powerful oration in favor of total abstinence from intoxicating drinks, at Music Hall, Milwaukee, taking for his text the following words: "Wherefore if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend." The speaker who followed said, that the Senatorial canvass had been conducted, both on the part of the candidate and his most active supporters, on the total abstinence principle.

CURRENT TOPICS.

The recent conviction of notorious defrauders of the revenue in the whisky business, has been followed by beneficial results of the most sudden and extraordinary character. It has been reported to the District Attorney that not a single distillery is in operation in New York City. Several of the prominent whisky men now under indictment have fled, and the Whisky Ring is struck with sudden panic. *The Tribune* ascribes this panic to the near approach of an administration which promises to be conducted upon principles of common honesty and wholesome economy—virtues which for four years have been divorced from the national politics. We have every reason to credit this view. The vampire-knives who have been robbing our treasury, and loading down honest men with a double taxation, foresee the wrath to come, and seek safety in flight. We should not wonder if Gen. Grant's administration were guided by such downright American common sense, such simplicity and purity of purpose, such an economical regard to the condition of the national finances, as to completely baffle those who have made politics a trade, and cleanse the ship of state of the myriads of barnacles, that, by their plundering and their heartless intrigue, have nearly brought it to ruin.

The flood tide of Exclusivism, of which we spoke some six weeks ago, is rising even in semi-pagan communities. Mohammedan Puritanism is gaining ground in every part of the Islamic community. There is, we think, a conspiracy on foot to destroy the present Sultan of Turkey, because of his leaning toward European civilization, and from the strict enforcement of Mohammedan usages. The Sultan of Muscat, the most powerful of the Arab states, has been dethroned by the chief of the Wahabees, a Mohammedan sect, whose object is to revive the ancient fanaticism and ferocity of their religion. The success of this sect, who are more hostile to Christianity than the other Mussulman rulers, will prove unfavorable to commerce, arts, agriculture, and general progress.

In the midst of an unprecedented number of murder cases, we hear of a movement to repeal the death penalty in our Legislature. Staid old Pennsylvania will not easily be led to try this dangerous experiment in dealing with capital crime. As to the whole question of the abolishing of capital punishment, we agree cordially with a member of the French Corps Legislatif, who said, "Certainly; certainly, only let Messieurs the murderers set us the example."

The outcry for prohibition as the true mode of dealing with alcoholic drinks, is echoed back from the old world. In Sweden, the great national vice of intemperance has become so alarming, that the Legislature is called upon to interfere. Even the victims, it is said, join in the cry. The King of Sweden sympathizes with the temperance men, but hesitates to act. The agitators call for a statute rigidly prohibiting the manufacture of liquor.

Doubtless our readers have heard that Positivism, the ablest and greatest system of scientific atheism that has ever appeared, has endeavored to organize a new worship, according to Mr. Mill's idea, that there may be a religion without a God. But it has not yet appeared that there may be a religion without material support for its teachers. So English Positivism, has its sustentation fund, and, if that is a test of the zeal of the members, the cause must be at an exceedingly low ebb. The report for 1867 shows a total of receipts amounting to barely £150. Even this amount is not kept up, and appeals for help to Paris for extra subsidy, are getting very clamorous. M. Comte himself, not only did not live with his wife, and had decided preference for the wife of another man, but quarreled with Mr. Mill and other friends, about money, because the sum they contributed for his support was not put in the form of an annual allowance.

—A suggestion worthy of the serious regard of Christendom, was made by the Berlin Clerical

Conference, October 15th, or, perhaps, by the *Sunday Magazine*, commenting on the action of the Conference, the purport of which is, that a united demonstration should be made by the Protestant churches, December 8, 1869, in response to the Papal allocution summoning the Ecumenical Council at that date. A testimony to the essential truths of the Gospel might be sent abroad by the simultaneous act of those churches, which might not only attest the inward unity of Protestantism before the world, but become a means of widely diffusing a knowledge of Gospel truth among Romanists themselves. It might properly become matter for action in the coming General Assemblies.

The Morning Post asserts that a community which had recognized the crime of theft, as the Mormons have that of polygamy, would have to be tolerated by the General Government, provided they only stole each others' property. On the same principle, we know not why any crime they chose to perpetrate in the name of religion: infanticide, Thugism, widow-burning would not have to be allowed, if perpetrated upon each other. Thus a State might run with the blood of innocents, and because it was done in the name of religion, it would be "downright persecution," for the nation to interfere. Roman Catholics might get control of a State and set up the Inquisition, and celebrate Auto da fe without interruption; and dreadful to imagine, Presbyterians might get control of the government of Pennsylvania, and suppress the *Post*, for heresy, and the *Post* according to its own principles would be guilty of "downright persecution" if it sought national intervention in its own behalf.

Pres. Blanchard, of Wheaton College, is reported as affirming that no Presbytery in the United States would dare dismiss a minister, though heterodox, if his church sustained him. We have a case in California, which is like to put this assertion to the test. Rev. I. Hamilton, the pastor of the Presbyterian church (N. S.) in Oakland, several months ago, preached some sermons, in which he was understood to maintain another probation for sinful men. In certain other directions, too, he was understood to be what is called "liberal." The Presbytery of San Jose enjoined him from proclaiming such sentiments in his church, which is under its care. Mr. H. appealed to the decision of the Synod. That body was convened on the 12th of January. After an earnest conference, the Synod, with one dissenting voice, sustained the Presbytery. And, if we may believe the papers, this conclusion was reached in the face of the popular feeling in the congregation. It should be said, however, that many earnest persons in the church are in sympathy with the Presbytery and Synod in their injunction. But there are few pastors who have been more generally liked in their congregation than Mr. Hamilton. He is a man of thought and reading; earnest and serious in his pulpit address, and apt to carry an audience with him from beginning to end of his discourse. The end in the matter is not yet. Mr. H. is not likely to retract his opinions; indeed a volume of the enjoined discourses is just coming from the press. No judicatory in the Presbyterian Church could, consistently with the standards, sustain him. There seems to be no issue of the matter, but in the organization of a congregation on an independent basis.—*Cal. Corr. of Congregationalist*.

Inadvertently we spoke once or twice in a former article, of Mr. Mitchell as Secretary of our Freedmen's Work; his correct designation is GENERAL AGENT. Dr. Hatfield, Chairman of the Permanent Committee of Home Missions, has been elected Provisional Secretary for this branch of the Work, which, we are glad to learn, is in a prosperous condition. Says the Secretary:

"More than 60 teachers have already been appointed. They are located in Maryland, Virginia, the District of Columbia, North and South Carolina, Florida, Missouri, Tennessee, and Alabama. Applications are coming in almost daily, both for teachers and positions. The work is almost without limits. We are restricted only by the want of adequate funds. The churches must determine for themselves the extent of our operations in this line.

"The average cost of supporting a teacher for one year is about three hundred and fifty dollars. Are there not many of our churches that will contribute, each of them, enough to support at least one teacher? Some of our Sunday-schools, we trust, will do as much. May we not receive a like sum from individuals to whom God has given abundant wealth, and the grace of heaven-born charity? Let your contributions be sent to the Treasurer, Hon. Edward A. Lambert, 150 Nassau street, N. Y., designated, 'For the Freedmen's Department.'"

The Annual Concert of Prayer for C. Rogers, & Co. will be held on Thursday, the 25th inst. in the Green Hill Presbyterian church, at 11 o'clock, A. M. and in the First Presbyterian church at 7 o'clock, P. M. Several addresses may be expected.