

**WHO ARE THE PRESBYTERIANS?**

As The Presbyterian goes to press this week, there is meeting in Toronto a convocation of those whose object is said to be "the preservation of the Presbyterian Church in Canada." It is assumed by those who are represented in the convocation that they are the true Presbyterians, and that the organization which they intend to perpetuate will be the true Presbyterian Church. With this assumption we make bold to take issue. The Presbyterian Church in Canada is going into the union. It will continue to exist as part of the united body. The real Presbyterians are those who go with the Church. It is the dissenters who are untrue to the principles of Presbyterianism and who have forfeited their right to the historic name.

The Presbyterian body is not a mere society, it is a Church. It is a real organism, independent in the spiritual sphere, with power to formulate its beliefs and frame its government. In the present union movement the Church in Canada has acted within the limits of its authority, and in harmony with its constitution and traditions. Under these circumstances it is the right of any member of the Church to dissent from its decisions and if need be, to separate himself from its communion, but he cannot do so and yet claim to be loyal to the Church.

What is it that the Church has decided to do at the present time? It has decided to unite with other evangelical Christian bodies for the more effective prosecution of Christ's work. There is nothing un-Presbyterian in such a decision. On the contrary it represents the historic attitude of Presbyterianism—that there should always be union between Christian bodies where there is nothing essential to keep them apart. It may be said that in the act of union the Presbyterian Church lays aside its name. But that does not extinguish its Presbyterianism. In the mother country there is no Presbyterian Church so-called. There is the Church of Scotland, and the United Free Church of Scotland. Why not the United Church of Canada?

It may be said that in accepting the Basis of Union the Church has changed its statement of doctrine. That is true, and the change, though not great, is for the better. All the fundamentals of the Christian faith are clearly set down and liberty is allowed in non-essentials. If any one maintains that the Church had no right to make these changes, that contention cannot be allowed for one moment. There are only three possible positions with regard to this matter: (1) That the creed of the Church is unchangeable. That means that the Church is dead. She has ceased to think. Her intellectual life is wrapped in grave-clothes. No fresh light from Scripture or from God's great book of the universe can break open her sealed vision. From the age-long experience of God's people no new knowledge is to come of the unsearchable riches of Christ. (2) That the Church's right to change her doctrine must be defined by the secular courts. That means that the Church is enslaved, that her spiritual independence is gone; that her fate is in the hands of men who may be entirely indifferent, or even hostile to her sacred mission. (3) That the doctrines of the Church are to be defined by the Courts of the Church, as may from time to time be desirable. That is the only reasonable position, it is the traditional position of Presbyterianism, it is the position taken by the Presbyterian Church in Canada. The power to define the doctrines of the Church rests with the Supreme Court, the General Assembly, subject to the pro-

vision that no change can be made until it has been submitted to the Presbyteries. In this case the doctrines of the Basis have been heartily approved both by the Presbyteries and the Assembly.

What we have said applies with equal force to the polity of the Basis. To this also, the Church, speaking through Presbyteries and Assembly, has set her approval. Beyond doubt it is a Presbyterian polity. There are three great forms of Church government—the Episcopal, the Congregational and the Presbyterian. The government proposed for the United Church is not Episcopal, it is not government by bishops; it is not Congregational, it is not government directly by the people; it is Presbyterian, it is government by elders, the people's chosen representatives, meeting together in Church courts.

The statements, then, which are made by the opponents of union about the incompetency of the General Assembly to decree the extinction of the Church are wide of the mark. At every step of the union movement care has been taken to observe the constitutional forms. The General Assembly has legislated only on matters that are within its powers. And it has not decreed the extinction of the Presbyterian Church. None of the churches entering into the union will become extinct any more than the individuals who are joined in marriage become extinct. A few miles above Montreal the River Ottawa enters the St. Lawrence. For some distance beyond the meeting point the clear water of the St. Lawrence can be distinguished from the brown water of the northern river. Gradually they blend until, at last, the distinction is no longer visible. But neither river is lost. Each contributes its force and volume to the mighty stream which flows on to the ocean. So will it be with the United Church. For a while after the union there will be lines of demarcation. Gradually these will fade away and the Church will be truly one. But none of the uniting churches will be lost. The vital forces of Presbyterianism, of Methodism, of Congregationalism will persist, and will make themselves felt in the onward sweep of the glorious River of Life.—Toronto Presbyterian.

**A QUESTION OF ATROCITIES.**

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Since the outbreak of the awful war, which has devastated so cruelly the fair plains of Belgium, many thoughtful people have believed that they could establish a parallel between the Congo atrocities and the ill-treatment suffered by the Belgians from the ruthless German invaders. Is that position justified?

We must first recognize that the "Congo atrocities" were true. The Protestant missionaries—British, American and Swedish—have well earned the admiration and gratitude of all lovers of mankind and the oppressed natives. Their courageous protestations have saved the Congo natives, and rendered an immense service to the Congo colony, which was utterly exhausted by the greed of commercial companies in complicity with the Congo Free State.

The beginnings of that unique colonial empire, created by the political genius of King Leopold, were really inspired by humanitarian and lofty ideals. The heroic campaign of the Free State officers against the Arab slave traders was one of the most glorious pages of the history of civilization in Africa in the footsteps of Livingstone. The prohibition of the

**Which Do You Prefer?**

It is important for reasons of health and practical economy for every housekeeper to ask herself this question:

"Do I prefer a pure baking powder like Royal, made of cream of tartar derived from grapes, or am I willing to use a baking powder made of alum or phosphate, both derived from mineral sources?"

The names of the ingredients printed on the label show whether the kind you are now using or *any brand, new or old, that may be offered* is a genuine cream of tartar powder, or merely a phosphate or alum compound.

Royal Baking Powder contains no alum nor phosphate.

**ROYAL BAKING POWDER CO.**  
New York

sale of alcohol to the natives was a most beneficial measure, which many an African colony might have envied. For that reason, the native tribes of the Congo have remained splendidly fit physically and intellectually.

By and by, the humanitarian policy of the Congo Free State gave way to the ruthless exploitation of the trading companies, in which King Leopold and his puppets were principal shareholders. As everywhere, and in all time, money was the root of all evil. The splendid intelligence of King Leopold, one of the greatest statesmen of the nineteenth century, became the slave of an obscured conscience. As a Congo official observed to me: "Leopold was a great intelligence, but he had a rubber conscience!"

What was the responsibility of the Belgian nation in that change of policy? Practically nil. The Free State was in no wise a Belgian colony. It was the exclusive property of the King, whose power was more absolute than that of any living emperor or potentate on earth. Once the Belgian Parliament had authorized him to organize the Free State under the guarantee of the powers at the Berlin Conference (1884), the Belgian nation had nothing more to say. The Belgian government could not interfere more than the British, German, Italian or American governments. If some Belgian officers were acting as officials in the Congo, they were no more under Belgian control; with some sad exceptions, most of these officers were very fine men, quite different from the cosmopolitan mob of trading agents. Only an international conference could take steps to protect the natives, so long as the Free State was independent and sovereign.

Belgian public opinion was misled by the press and bribed by the Congo administration. The leading Belgian newspapers accused the Protestant missionaries and the Congo Reform Association of being secret agents of the British missionaries, trying to make trouble in order to allow Great Britain to take the rich mines of Katanga and a strip of country for the Cape-Cairo railway. The most enlightened and honest Belgians believed these slanders. The position of the very few men who tried to throw some light on the situation was exceedingly difficult. I can speak from personal experience, for I fought for the missionaries and for the natives since 1901.

A Belgian magistrate, who had served under the Free State in the Central

administration, told me: "We knew that the accusation of the missionaries were not only accurate, but very moderate in face of the many awful facts known to us. But we didn't dare to forward the information to Brussels, because we knew that it was not wanted there!"

A short time before the death of King Leopold the Free State was handed over by him to Belgium as a colony. Immediately, the Colonial Minister, responsible to the Belgian Parliament, started a strong program of reforms, embodying the main demands of the Protestant missionaries and of the Congo Reform Association. The Minister, Mr. Jules Renken, succeeded in overcoming the opposition of the very reluctant old King.

When Leopold died, his nephew and successor, King Albert, gave a very strong impetus to the reform movement. As a prince, King Albert had made a thorough exploration of the colony and received personal knowledge of the real situation. With the help of Mr. Renkin, Clerical Minister, and the hearty co-operation of the leaders of the Opposition, Mr. Paul Kymen and Mr. E. Vandervelde, the King carried out the reforms methodically and thoroughly, in spite of all the invested interests and of the great power of the trading companies. That was a splendid political and moral achievement.

When I traveled in the Congo, five years ago, I could see and hear that the administration was utterly transformed and working to the complete satisfaction of the missionaries and of the natives. The local abuses, inevitable in any African colony, have always been handled with energy and straightforwardness by the Belgian government.

A distinguished bishop of the American Methodist Church, who visited the Upper Congo in January, 1915, said to me: "The Belgian administration is excellent. I have only two criticisms to offer: (1) the number of white officials is too small for such a big country, and (2) the officials are apt to be too lenient towards the natives and to endanger the prestige of the white race."

When the war broke out, the Belgians were stronger than the Germans in Central Africa, but the Colonial Secretary sent an order to the Governor-General not to attack the German colonies in order to avoid the bad influence on the natives for the sake of civilization and the missionary work. The Germans, however, had no