

The Independent

Published Weekly

VOL. LIII

NEW YORK, THURSDAY, JULY 11, 1901

No. 2745

Survey of the World

Independence Day

Owing chiefly to the oppressive heat of the days immediately preceding the 4th, the anniversary was celebrated in a comparatively quiet way. The most notable public addresses on this side of the Atlantic were those of Representative Grosvenor, of Ohio, at Winfield, Kan., and Senator McLaurin, at Spartanburg, S. C. Concerning the disfranchisement of negroes, Mr. Grosvenor said:

"If a State of the South sees fit to say that the colored man of the South shall not vote because he is a colored man, it has a perfect right to do so; but such State must submit to a deduction of representation in Congress and in the Electoral College."

He denounced such disfranchisement, however, asserting that it was unwise as well as unjust. As to trusts, he urged the people to distinguish between the beneficial and the injurious combinations; defended the practice of selling the products of our combinations at lower prices abroad than at home; and asserted that the people would not be harmed "so long as the wages of labor should keep step with the advance in prices." On the other hand, Senator McLaurin, a Democrat, who supports the policy of the Republican party on nearly all important questions, declared that "trusts should be stamped out wherever they may appear," but asserted that "the legitimate corporation, however large its capital, is distinctly beneficial." The Senator, earnestly advocating a policy of expansion, emphasized the duty of the United States, "as sponsor for the Christian religion," thus to extend its power:

"Our nation, with its free government and its aggressive Christian civilization, is in a po-

sition to march forward and convert the world. With the isles of the Pacific in our possession, with the confidence of the millions of heathens in the East, and with our wealth and commerce and Anglo-Saxon love of liberty, we can raise the banner of the Cross and accomplish the heaven-designed work of having the Gospel preached to every creature."

Tammany's customary celebration at the Wigwam in New York was noticeably dull, in spite of encouraging messages from Boss Croker and Mr. Bryan. The most successful speaker was a local politician who denounced the reformers for raiding and closing gambling houses. The Constitution was defended by a Congressman from Virginia, who remarked that our forefathers in 1776 knew the spirit of it because "they knew the difference between a bird in the hand and a bobtail flush," the latter term being one used in the game of poker, which was unknown to those patriots. Ambassador Choate spoke at the banquet of the American Society in London, where Dr. Joseph Parker remarked that "Great Britain and the United States now hold the world's peace in the hollows of their hands."

Days of Intense Heat

Throughout the entire country east of the Rocky Mountains the American people have been suffering from intense heat that has caused a great number of deaths. At first confined to the West, the area of high temperature soon included the Eastern States, where for eight days following the 25th ult. the maximum ranged between 90 and 100 degrees, rising to a culmination on the 1st and 2d inst., when nearly 400 persons died of heat in the metropolitan district

Presbyterians and Their Creed

By Benjamin B. Warfield, D.D., LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF DIDACTIC AND POLEMIC THEOLOGY IN PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

WHEN Robert Burns expressed a longing for some power to give us the gift of seeing ourselves as others see us, he had had no experience with THE INDEPENDENT. The revelations made by the mirror so assiduously held up by it to the astonished denominations are often as startling (and as mortifying) as that which Burns wished to be made to the lady in church. Here are we Presbyterians for example. We appear to ourselves a not altogether unintelligent folk; a not altogether dishonest folk. But this is not how others see us—or, at least, not how THE INDEPENDENT sees us. We have just solemnly reaffirmed our hearty and unabated faith in the system of doctrine set forth in the Westminster Confession as nothing other than the Gospel of Christ taught in the Holy Scriptures; and declared afresh our settled purpose to maintain this system in its integrity. THE INDEPENDENT steps forward at once in an authoritative editorial (issue of June 6th, page 1329) to tell us that only stupidity can still pretend to believe this system and doctrine. It is kind enough, it is true, to add a word of excuse for the Presbyterians for thus “lagging behind Christian thought.” The highest court of that Church, it seems, is a body totally incapable of passing upon “difficult questions and technical and speculative scholarship,” and is inevitably determined “by traditions, prejudices and fears” rather than by reasons—since in such a body the “reasons are unknown or misunderstood.” Only on such grounds, it appears, can Presbyterians be acquitted of dishonesty. For in spite of all our professed faith in it, we do not really believe in the Calvinism we publish. In repeating its formulas we are paltering in a double sense. “The actual working creed of Presbyterians is no longer that of the Westminster divines;” and, at least “in all enlightened communities, differs from that of the Westminster fathers as much as the creed of the Andover or New Haven faculty differs from that of Cotton Mather.” This is cer-

tainly not a very engaging portrait to have held up to us. May we not cherish some faint hope that THE INDEPENDENT'S mirror is a somewhat cracked one?

It is certainly sincerely to be hoped that the Presbyterian Church is honest in its expressed adherence to the Calvinistic system, and does really believe that “Calvinism is the Gospel,” and does loyally purpose to maintain this Gospel in its integrity. Otherwise it would be indeed a thoroughly dishonest Church, and would richly deserve all the scorn which THE INDEPENDENT now so unjustly pours upon it. Did THE INDEPENDENT remember, as it brought its railing accusations, that every office-bearer in the Presbyterian Church has voluntarily stood up in the sight of God and man and solemnly affirmed his belief that the system of doctrine embodied in the Westminster Confession is the system of doctrine taught in the Scriptures—is, in a word, not something to be set over against the doctrine of Christ, but the very doctrine of Christ itself? He holds his office only on the faith of that declaration. And that is the reason why the Presbyterian Assembly not only did, in the case of Prof. Henry P. Smith, maintain “unblushingly,” as THE INDEPENDENT says, but always will, we hope, maintain equally “unblushingly,” that the truth or falsehood of novel views announced by its office-bearers is not the primary question to engage its attention, but rather “whether these views agree with the Confession of Faith.” THE INDEPENDENT will not find—we believe it has not hitherto found—Presbyterians particularly unwilling to discuss the claims of Calvinism to be the truth of God. So little are they careless of the truth or falsehood of their professed faith that (rightly or wrongly) they have acquired some little reputation for polemic zeal. But they desire to deal with all things decently and in order. And when one of their office-bearers seems to assail the very truth to which he is publicly committed by the most sacred act of his official life, their first care, very prop-

erly one would think, is to ascertain whether he has really assailed it. It is hard to discover any inherent dishonesty lurking behind this.

But Presbyterians must nevertheless decline to have their reputation for honesty saved at the cost of their intelligence, as *THE INDEPENDENT* so kindly proposes. It is only on the hypothesis of gross ignorance of the present state of religious thought that *THE INDEPENDENT* can account for the persistence of even the modified Calvinism it will accredit to Presbyterians. There is, however, another way of accounting for it. It is not because they are ignorant of recent theological thinking that Presbyterians continue Calvinists. It is, briefly, because "harmony with present Christian thought and scholarship" is not with them the test of religious truth. They make no pretention of being in harmony with these things. What they pretend to be in harmony with, and what they purpose to remain in harmony with, is the teaching of the Scriptures. "Present Christian thought and scholarship" is, after all, nothing but a high-sounding name for current opinion. And current opinion is a sorry substitute for the revealed word of the omniscient God as the test and name of truth. Presbyterians have no wish to anchor to the "winds of doctrine" that blow up and down in the barren spaces of the so-called "scholarly" world. Their ideal of Christian living and teaching is not to have

"A creed for every clime and age,
By mammon's touch new moulded o'er and
o'er;
No cross, no war to wage."

They are content even in this age to bear the cross of the world's scorn, and to wage as faithfully as God grants them ability to do so the war of revealed truth. It is the old mystic's motto which they would adopt for their own—tho, of course, not precisely in the old mystic's sense, since their eye is primarily on the written word:

"Blest are the ears that catch the throbbing
whisper of the Lord,
And turn not to the buzzings of the passing
world."

No, this is not the glorification of obscurantism. There is a difference which it would be well for *THE INDEPENDENT*

to mark between ignorance of what is going on in the world and helplessly dancing like a feather in the wind raised by the ever-changing hypotheses of what arrogates to be the world's thinking. If we are to infer ignorance of all that is not "swallowed," we might even accuse *THE INDEPENDENT* of ignorance of Calvinism. On this, however, there is no need to dwell; let *THE INDEPENDENT* square its accusations of lack of intelligence among Presbyterians with its own conscience and the Ninth Commandment—if, indeed, that Commandment can be thought to be in "harmony with present Christian thought and scholarship," according to which (in *THE INDEPENDENT*'s sense) it is, at least, not the direct word of God which Presbyterians think it. It is of more interest to remark that by their continued adherence to the system of doctrine embodied in the Westminster Confession Presbyterians do not imply that, in their view, no advance has been made in Christian knowledge during the quarter of a millennium that has intervened since the formulation of that Confession. Of course there has been advance, and Presbyterians have borne their full share in making it. But not all the theological movements of our day run in the direction of advance, nor have the real advances that have been made crumbled the foundations. The science of mathematics, too, has made great advances in our time; but the multiplication table stands firm, and it is not the Sylvesters and Earleys that propose to abrogate it. We must really learn to distinguish between advance and retrogression. And the astounding fact about the present day impatience with the old formulæ of faith is that they are not in the interests of advance, but of retrogression. Let *THE INDEPENDENT* search and see: it will find that no one of the objections it is accustomed to urge against the Calvinistic system has the slightest claim to novelty—that there is no one of them that is not a resurrection from the dead and decayed past, the validation of which now would be the rehabilitation of a transcended stage of religious thinking.

The fact simply is that teaching "present Christian thought and scholarship" is caught in a powerful, backward eddy, and it has fallen to the lot of Presby-

terians again, as so often before, to resist this retrogressive flood in order that advance may be possible. All the hope of progress in Christian thought lies today, as it has often lain before, in the hands of the Augustinian hosts. The question which is really raised by the present assault on the Westminster Confession in fact is just whether that advance post shall be held in order that we may go yet forward; or whether those who have been elected to march in the advance of Christian thought shall be forced to retire from their hard-won position and commit it to the future to recover again the ground thus given up. Presbyterians are determined to preserve in its integrity the system of doctrine em-

bodied in their Confession of Faith, not because they are afflicted with the disease of dead conservatism, nor because their eyes are below that they should not see what is going on in the world about them, but because they find themselves immersed in strong currents of restless thought beating aimlessly back and forth, through the tangles of which they know that they know the way, and because they feel the burden of the world upon their shoulders, and have settled it with themselves that they will not sink beneath the waves, but will bear that burden safely through and carry it up the slopes beyond.

That is how Presbyterians see themselves.

PRINCETON, N. J.

A Soul Above Leather

By Edward Boltwood

WHEN Henderson asked for a place on the *Open Air Magazine* he was just out of college and wanted to be a literary man. With engaging frankness he told this ambition to Mr. Bland, the proprietor, and Mr. Bland smiled indulgently and said that his editorial positions were filled. The publisher did not add that there was only one desk in the editorial room, and that the *Open Air Magazine* was to be conducted chiefly for advertising purposes.

Henderson had read about the value of determination, and so he clung faithfully to Mr. Bland's side, and became a nuisance to the promoter of the new magazine. In order to be rid of him, Bland turned him over to Colonel Terry, the head of the advertising department.

Mr. Bland had often done this sort of thing before, and Colonel Terry was mad.

"The old man has shoved another kid onto me," growled the Colonel to Jimmy Tate, his lieutenant, "and I'm good and sick of it. He'll ruin what little chance we've got to make this sheet go. He will be no more use in here than a piano player."

The Colonel was about right. Henderson knew nothing of advertising and cared less. Indeed, Mr. Bland had hinted something about the position being merely temporary, and so, when Hen-

derson took his desk, just outside Colonel Terry's gorgeous private office, he determined to spend his time there in writing stories and not to bother much about the sordid business going on around him. He was awarded the task of checking space and seeing to the proofs, but in a few days he succeeded in mixing things up in such a marvelous fashion that his duties were transferred to an aspiring stenographer. The ignominy did not disturb him in the least.

"This dude is too good for his job," said Colonel Terry.

Mr. Tate winked approvingly.

"Guess we'll have to send him out on the street," the chief continued. "That'll take it out of him."

"Sure!" assented Jimmy, grinning.

"Boy!" roared Colonel Terry. "Ask Mr. Henderson if he will be good enough to step this way."

Mr. Henderson *was* good enough, and stepped accordingly.

"Mr. Henderson," began the Colonel, with impressive condescension, "now that your time permits you to take up more responsible duties in this department, I have decided to intrust you with an urgent mission."

Jimmy Tate gazed with evident admiration at his superior. Such a command of language!