

themselves to blame. Catholics and Protestants alike allow men to inflame their minds and keep themselves before the public by stirring up sectarian strife.

SIR JOHN MACDONALD once said that nothing was more uncertain than an election, except a horse race. To the list of uncertainties Sir John might have added, and—had he thought of it—perhaps would have added, a law suit. An eminent English lawyer declared that the uncertainties of jury trials had shaken his faith in the doctrine of Divine Omniscience. Everybody who knows anything about litigation knows—many of them to their cost—that the result of almost any kind of a law-suit is as uncertain as the weather in a showery April. And yet the very man who thinks the administration of civil law cruelly uncertain is quite satisfied to hang a fellow-man if a jury finds him guilty. An ordinary "horse case" may be appealed in Ontario from the court of first resort to the Divisional Court, from the Divisional Court to the Ontario Court of Appeal and from the Court of Appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada. Put if the man who owns the horse should be found guilty of murder by the most stupid of juries after a trial in which he was so over-matched by the crown that the trial was unfair, he has no appeal even if innocent. Small wonder that the legal authorities in England are taking steps to remedy such a gross and cruel absurdity. It is time that a similar movement were made in Canada. We have too many appeals in civil cases; and none at all in criminal matters.

THE NEW PROFESSOR. WHAT SHALL BE DONE?

LAST week we published a communication highly complimentary in general terms of the nominee of the Board of Knox College to the General Assembly for the chair to be filled, now vacant through the death of the late Professor Thomson. This week, from among other communications which have reached us, we publish two bearing upon the same important subject. For reasons given they call for a different line of action than proceeding at once to appoint. Our readers can all judge for themselves of the validity of these reasons.

For ourselves we reiterate what we have already said, that but two things are to be regarded as absolutely indispensable qualifications for this or any other chair to which an appointment may be made, namely, (1) the assured possession of ample special knowledge of the subject to be taught, and (2) *aptness to teach*. For it makes little difference how ample a man's knowledge of any subject may be, if he has not the capacity to impart his knowledge. Better than this is one of more slender attainments, but who has the capacity to teach. As subordinate to these two qualifications, but yet regarded as important by all whom we have heard from, is that the new man should, if possible, be a Canadian and a graduate of the college, acquainted with it, deeply interested in its success, and, in the broadest sense, in close touch and heartiest sympathy with the spirit and work of our Canadian Presbyterian Church. These latter requirements, though held to be reasonable and just, are yet subordinate, and we do not know of any who would sacrifice to them the other two, of ample special knowledge and undoubted teaching ability. It is wholly out of date now, when theological knowledge is being so specialized and subdivided, to foist into a chair, on the strength of general qualifications, any man whose knowledge is not fully up to date in the special department or departments he is to teach. Let there be no mistake in this respect in the man to be appointed.

Delay is called for in taking final action at this Assembly chiefly on two grounds. First, because of a rearrangement of subjects for the new professor or professors being talked of; and, second, because the time given in which to look out and make the wisest selection of a professor has been too short.

With regard to the first, it need not necessitate delay if the Assembly is otherwise prepared to take action. The question of re-arrangement of subjects is comparatively a very limited one in its scope, and there should be no difficulty in the Senate or Board having this fully decided upon before the meeting of the Assembly.

The other ground for delay is not so easily got over. Fully competent men in every way are not

so plentiful as to be picked up at brief notice any day, and the notice given to the Church to seek out the best men has, all must admit, been very short. Not to appoint at once, it may be argued, will leave Knox College for another session very partially equipped. It cannot in all likelihood be so well equipped as it would be with well qualified professors appointed; but surely, under the wise and experienced guidance of Principal Caven and his colleagues, the Church has men who for one session could to a good extent satisfactorily carry on the classes for another session. Better far do this, and make sure that, when a permanent appointment is made, it will be a wise one, than in so important a matter act in haste and repent at leisure, while the college and the Church and the cause of truth are all suffering. It may justly be doubted whether the appointments to be now made in their present and prospective importance, and this latter should be clearly kept in view, as affecting the college and the Church are of more moment than was the appointment of a new Principal to McGill University in Montreal. We shall do well in this matter to take heed to the example of that university as to the superior wisdom of waiting over acting in haste. In fact the wisest possible action is more important for Knox College, for, while, in an institution in which there are many professors, one or two inefficient ones may not greatly injure it, in another, where there are but three or four professors, it is of the utmost importance that every one should be good.

Perhaps when the subjects are readjusted and settled and the Assembly meets, it may be able to fix either at home, and that if possible, or if not, then abroad, some one who can be obtained, and who is known to have such evident qualification, or such rich promise of special ability, that the Assembly will feel safe in making an appointment and so no delay be necessary. If not, then surely nothing is more to be deprecated than hasty action. We have yet to meet the first person, who is interested enough in Knox College to give it any thought at all, who does not feel that it is, at the present juncture, at a point where two ways diverge—the one leading onward and upward to bright, and ever widening and enduring usefulness, to the increasing confidence, love and support of the Church; and another way which leads in the very opposite direction, one which will fill the Church with pain and sorrow, and cripple the sources of the support of the college, a consideration of very grave importance, and a thing which it cannot well bear, seeing how theological colleges now require to be equipped, and yet serve to the Church, and the cause of truth in the land, those high ends which the piety and wisdom of its founders designed it to serve.

THE BIBLE SOCIETY.

THE annual general meeting of this society, held last Thursday evening, calls attention again, and fixes it, if but for a brief period, upon what, in the abstract of the fifty-fifth annual report of the Upper Canada Bible Society, is justly described, speaking of the British and Foreign Bible Society, as "unquestionably one of the noblest institutions of the present age, for the advancement of Christianity upon the earth."

The heat of the day had been sweltering, and partly because of that, partly because of other and varied attractions the same evening in the city, the meeting was quite small. This society is now one of our old institutions, but although it has lost the attraction of novelty, it holds on its way with steady and, we might say, resistless step. It is like some of our ancient municipal or governmental institutions whose strength and beneficence cannot be judged by the noise they make, or the attention they exact. Or, to vary the figure, although the action of the heart, the circulation of the blood may attract no attention, make no noise, they are yet the seat and the means of life, so the multiplication and circulation of copies of the Word of God are the very life of Christianity, though this matter provokes but little noise or comment. It is, however, to be regretted that so many Christians should fail to manifest their interest by attendance, personally, once a year, even at the expense of some discomfort and inconvenience, at the annual meeting of this society.

"The cause is so good that nothing should make us indifferent to it. Its object is so noble and world-wide, that no difficulty or trial should discourage or divert us from supporting it. It has so

many enemies that all the energies of the people of God should be aroused to engage in the work and come to the help of the Lord against the mighty."

"In this Christian work," says the report, "it has been the privilege of the friends and patrons of the Upper Canada Bible Society to participate for the past fifty-five years in co-operation with our illustrious parent, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and while we can review a glorious past, we should be deeply impressed with the fact that the work is unfinished, and although much has been done, much more remains to be undertaken before the great purpose of the Society is accomplished."

The hold which this most blessed and God-honored organization has upon the Christian public, even although it may not indicate this by attendance at the annual meeting, is evident from the language of the report. Almost all denominational objects have felt this year the effect of business depression in a decreased revenue, but this Society says: "It affords your Directors the highest satisfaction to be able to report that the year (1894-5) just closed has been one of gratifying success. The monthly business meetings of the Board have been well attended, and conducted with much harmony of spirit and action. Ten meetings have been held with an average attendance of seven clergymen and seventeen laymen, clearly showing the deep interest of the members in the work of the Society."

Its operations extend over a wide territory, and embrace many Christian interests of various kinds, requiring constant attention. Few, unless they have kept themselves informed of the work it is doing, will be prepared for the statement that "nearly thirty-three thousand copies of the Scriptures, in whole or in part, have been issued from our Depository in Toronto, in twenty-eight different languages, during the year. This is an increase of 1,316 over the previous year."

In a Society embracing so many agencies as does the Upper Canada Bible Society, some will always be in a feeble and languishing state. During the present financially depressed state of things the efforts of the directorate have been turned more to revive the interest of the officers and people in those localities, and place the societies on a more efficient basis, and thus strengthen and establish branches in existence, rather than press for the extension and formation of new organizations. Ten new branches have, however, been established, making a total of 590 branches and depositories.

The work of colportage is more and more made use of in circulating the Scriptures, and quietly sowing the incorruptible seed of the Word. Forty-four Christian laborers have, for a longer or shorter period of the year, been engaged in this work, and of them the Secretary says: "The visits of those self-denying laborers were much appreciated and brought light and gladness to many dwellings, while the reading of portions of Scripture by your Colporteurs has, under God's blessing, been the means of reviving the zeal and hope of many of those hardy pioneers of our Canadian forests and prairies, who, on account of distance, were temporarily deprived of the social and religious advantages they had left behind in the older settlements. Religious services were conducted, prayer-meetings held, Sabbath-schools addressed, the sick and dying comforted, factories and workshops, saw-mills and lumbermen's shanties, etc., etc., were visited, and many persons were supplied with copies of the Scripture at cost price."

With regard to carrying on the work in the future, we commend to all our clerical readers especially, and to as many office-bearers of the Society as this paper reaches weekly, the following statement of the Directors: "Much expense could be saved if the officers of branch societies and the local clergymen would unite, at least once in each year, in advocating the cause and claims of the Bible Society, and co-operate in the management of the work and conduct of the annual meetings, without the assistance of an agent."

Every dollar saved in this way is a direct contribution to the great work which this society exists to do, namely, to produce the Scriptures in every language spoken, and important dialect, so that every man may, in his own tongue, "read the wonderful works of God," and so become wise unto salvation.