

# THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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## Notes of the Week.

We hear, says an English exchange, too much of the progress of Roman Catholicism in England, and too little of its remarkable decline elsewhere. Within the past few years half a million of Roman Catholics have emigrated from Ireland. Some of the bishops and priests are dead against the exodus. Why? The reason as given by one of the bishops at a recent confirmation is exhilarating:—Seventenths of the Roman Catholics who leave Ireland cease to have any connection with the Church of Rome.

MR. SPURGEON, in the *Sword and Trowel*, writes:—A certain minister says, somewhat spitefully, that Mr. Spurgeon's sermons are largely used in many pulpits; and we confess that we are not grieved by the information. If the Lord has ever given to His servant a thought or an expression which tended to edification, it is the common property of the Church of God. We will raise no cry of plagiarism. We have never taken out letters patent. He who pays his penny, and buys our sermon, may preach it if so it pleases him.

A PRIZE of \$500 is offered for the best essay on the title of the miracles of our Lord to credence. One of the conditions is that it answers the arguments against Miracles presented in the book "Elsewhere Elsewhere." A prize of \$100 is offered for the best essay on Prayer. One of the conditions is that the latter essay prove that supplication is not merely a vehicle for aspiration, that objective as well as subjective benefits are realized from prayer. The circular is signed by F. S. Abiff as secretary of the Committee of Award, 131 Tremont St., Boston.

FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE has written the following to the Band of Hope of the Rev. Lewis Davidson, Mayfield Free Church, Edinburgh. Don't think you can do anything worth doing in a fit of enthusiasm, but train yourselves carefully to any work you are called on to do: and think nothing too small to do carefully, or to train carefully, for that is for the good of your fellow-creatures. For instance, good or bad cooking may make or mar the lives of thousands, and those, too, who are trying to do great things for our race. God sends us real and lasting enthusiasm—that is, the spirit of love and of power, and of a sound mind to carry us through our training and our discipline. It is He dwelling in us. That is His goodness to us. I knew Gordon. More than in any one, you felt that when you were with him that there was One always closer to him than anyone with him, in whose immediate Presence he always lived. That was the secret of his life. Fare you very well, my dear Band of Hope and your good minister.

IT would surprise few people, says the correspondent of an English journal, who are behind the scenes of the Church of Scotland if Dr. John Watt, minister of Anderston Church, Glasgow, were to be appointed by Lord Lothian to the chair of Church History in Aberdeen University, rendered vacant by the death of Dr. Christie. Dr. Watt is an Aberdonian by birth and education, and carried off the Ferguson Scholarship for classics and philosophy, when the two subjects were conjoined in one competition and for one prize, and has been Assistant-Professor of Humanity in Aberdeen. He has, further, taken an active interest in the education of the divinity students of his Church, but is not a pronounced partisan in any way. Dr. Watt's most formidable opponent will be Dr. Henry Cowan, minister of New Greyfriars, Edinburgh, who previous to his translation thither, held a charge in Aberdeen. Dr. Cowan is believed to have many warm friends among the clergy and laymen who manage the schemes and affairs generally of the Church. He is an ardent evangelical, and was in his day a great Greek scholar in Edinburgh University.

A GREAT deal is talked, writes a correspondent of the *British Weekly*, but very little is accurately known, about the successor of Dr. Jebb as Professor of Greek in the University of Glasgow. The choice

of a successor will be made next month, but the appointment is in the hands of the University authorities themselves, and they are very good at keeping their secrets. Of Dr. Jebb's two unsuccessful competitors at Cambridge, Dr. Jackson and Dr. Fennell, the former, at any rate, is expected to become a candidate, and he is likely to have a good chance, for our local patrons are rather contemptuous of local talent. Mr. John McKail, one of the finest scholars that Scotland has ever produced or Oxford ever bred, a son of the Scotch manse, and the son-in-law of Mr. Burne-Jones, has also been talked of. But he will probably be accounted too young. Then I hear a good deal of muttering about the desirability of some academic teacher such as the Rector of Edinburgh, or of Glasgow High School, or the Rector of the Edinburgh Academy being appointed, on the ground that, after all, it is boys that a Professor of Greek in a Scotch University has to teach. But I suspect that this talk will end in smoke.

ANOTHER view of Dr. Dods' appointment is that presented to its readers by the *British Weekly*:—We thankfully record that Dr. Marcus Dods has been elected to the vacant Professorship of New Testament Exegesis in the New College, Edinburgh, by a majority of 103 over both his rivals combined. There is no danger of this action being misunderstood. It means simply the recognition of pre-eminent claims,—claims which hardly twice in a generation meet in one man. It is not needful to discuss all the incidents of the election. If anything was done ungenerously it cannot hurt a man who with all his claims has ever been the last to assert them, the first to stand aside, the quickest to discern merit or promise anywhere, and the most eager to make it known. The students of the New College are to be envied in the possession of two such teachers as Dr. A. B. Davidson and Dr. Marcus Dods. It will be their own fault if they do not come forth mighty in the Scriptures. Those who believe that the true cure for the vast unrest of the time is a recourse "to the law and to the testimony"—a deep and patient study of the Bible—will rejoice in this appointment. Some men, greatly to be respected, have confused Dr. Dods with the advocates of ignorant and heartless negation; but the more they see of his work, the more they will be convinced that it is not so, and that he is one of the wisest and most helpful teachers of all faithful students of the truth as it is in Jesus.

ONE who was present at the Assemblies in Edinburgh writes. There is no denying the fact that the churches in Scotland are marching with the times—whether that is towards the day or towards the night remains to be seen. I am not quite sure what has exactly happened in the Established Church; but I know this much, that Principal Cunningham may now say what he likes about the Confession, and yet retain his self-respect as an honest man. What the Free church has done is more easily followed. It has appointed a committee to consider what had best be done with the Confession, its want of harmony with the age on certain points being admitted by all but the Constitutionalists. The debate which led to this conclusion was exceedingly interesting; I don't think I ever listened to one that was more so. Two speeches in particular greatly impressed me. The one was delivered by Principal Brown, of Aberdeen; the other by Professor Bruce, of Glasgow. Dr. Brown, they say, is eighty-six years of age; but, except that his voice was a little feeble, he gave no sign of having failed either in memory or in vigour of intellect. But what specially struck me in these two speeches was this, that they both so manifestly welled out of full fountains, and that they were expressed in such choice and cultured language. It is quite true, what has been often said, that the English Universities produce a style of discourse which we cannot imitate in Scotland. But Drs. Brown and Bruce seemed to me more like English University Fellows than like men bred in the quite as vigorous but less refined colleges of Scotland.

THE Philadelphia *Presbyterian* thus reflects an opinion prevalent in the American Church as to the significance of Dr. Marcus Dods' appointment to a

theological chair in the Free Church College, Edinburgh: The General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland has elected the Rev. Marcus Dods, D.D., to the Chair of New Testament Exegesis in the New College, Edinburgh. He received 383 of the 658 votes cast, and the result was greeted with great enthusiasm by his friends. This is a result of great importance to the interests of the Free Church of Scotland, as it indicates that the party of "advanced thought" is in the majority in that Church. A few years ago Dr. Robertson Smith was condemned in the same Church for his free handling of the Old Testament. Dr. Dods, who certainly has affiliations with the same school of critics, is now advanced, by a vote of the Assembly, to a place of distinction and influence. Dr. Dods is a man of high standing in the Church, and has, undoubtedly, many qualifications for his new post, and his friends claim that he has been misunderstood, but it is impossible to avoid seeing that his election is a sign, suddenly made visible in the heavens, that hereafter the Free Church of Scotland will be no longer found among the conservative section of the Presbyterian body, but in one in which variations from the old faith and vague negations may be quietly tolerated. And when the origin and glowing history of this Church is recalled any drift or tendency of this kind made manifest is quite saddening. The Free Church has had great honour paid her in the general Presbyterian communion in the past. Her beginnings were grand, and the story of her heroism, her self-denials, her patient endurance and her marvellous success is still read with unabating, even with exulting interest. We cannot bear to think that this Church, with all her noble traditions, is to withdraw from the front line of the defenders of the ancient faith which she professed so distinctly before the world nearly half a century ago.

THE Irish in America honestly working for the cause of civil self-government in their fatherland, says the *Interior*, are looked upon as making a practical test of their capacity for the maintenance of free institutions, and the result is not encouraging. In politics they are the spoil and tools of demagogues to a larger extent than any other distinct race. Their attempts at combination and union in work have been sad, and even tragical, failures. The Clan-na-Gael have seen their hard-earned contributions to the Irish independence fund squandered by gamblers who have not hesitated to meet criticism by assassination. And the gamblers and assassins have had so strong a party of deluded and passionate followers as to be able to set the honest patriots at defiance. The rulers of this American-Irish party have gone on with their frauds and robberies to crimes which fill the civilized world with horror. The Englishman points with a grim smile at the American-Irish, and says, "There is self-governing Ireland for you. How do you like it yourselves?" The old historical incapacity of the Irish for union among themselves is again emphasized. The race has been trained for centuries to the blindest credulity and the fiercest prejudices. The English fully believe that if Ireland were free to govern itself today, without any outside influence, the island would be red with fratricidal blood in less than six months. The large majority of the Irish Catholics would honestly and indignantly repel the imputation that they have any sympathy with the assassination of Irishmen in America. And yet there stands the fact that assassins are able to dominate their organization in this country, and defend themselves with squandering the people's funds. What better evidence could there be of the incapacity of the Irish for self-government? What would there be to hinder an Irish demagogue from pushing Parnell aside—killing him if necessary—and seizing upon and wasting the public treasure on his own vices? Look at the record of the Tweed ring. This is the dark side of the Irish question. It has a much brighter side, but unfortunately the dark side is thrust year after year in the face of the world, and their attention compelled by some such shocking exhibition as the murder of Dr. Cronin. The Irish are fully alive to the very serious situation. They are rising up everywhere and putting forth every effort to bring the assassins to justice. They are determined to clear their escutcheon of this foul blot. Every true friend of Ireland hopes for their success.