

## THE SUPREME EXCELLENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

AT the opening of the Theological College in Montreal, on the evening of the 3rd inst., the Rev. Professor Campbell was the speaker and gave a lecture which, judging by the reports of it, must have been of more than usual interest. It was devoted to pointing out the superiority of Christianity to other forms of religion. In connection with Prof. Patton's brilliant argument in defence of Christianity as a supernatural religion, we give here such a condensed report of the lecture, as the condensed reports of the Montreal papers enable us to give.

To know the superiority of Christianity it is necessary to know and compare other religions with it, an enquiry to which has been given the name of Comparative Religion. The study of this subject is yet but in its infancy, and has become possible only by the increased knowledge of foreign languages which has been slowly gathering for years past. The tenets and teachings of those religions have been shut up in these languages, and it has only been by an increasing knowledge of them, that men have become able to speak with any authority about what they teach. It is very important to know this, for they have ever been in active conflict with Christianity, the Christian missionary has to meet and combat them to-day, and an impression has even been made by them and left upon some forms of Christianity now to be met with. With the exception of Mahometanism, during a brief period of its proselytizing career, Christianity is the only aggressive religion. Attention has been more drawn of late to some of these ancient faiths, because of a revived activity amongst them, whereby adherents have been gained to the old creeds of Zoroaster and Brahma, of Buddha, Confucius and Mahomet in many Christian centres of thought. We may ridicule or despise some of these converts, but whatever may be thought of their moral motives, they cannot be said to be unlearned or unthinking. They must imagine that they have discovered some good in these old faiths, and that they must contain some truth so powerfully to appeal to and hold under their sway millions of men it is only reasonable to admit. This does not detract from the superlative excellence of Christianity as compared with these other religions, or abandon its exclusive claims to be accepted by men. It simply reveals to us the strength of those hoary forms of religion which have held under their sway for ages so many millions of the human race, and by knowing more of the secret of their strength the better fit the missionary of the cross to cope with and in God's name and by His help to overthrow them.

Polytheism, the lecturer showed, inasmuch as it depended upon a conception of human attributes, was really a worship of man by his fellow, and could not therefore exert any ennobling influence upon him. Such was Brahminism, and to a still greater extent Buddhism, the religion of the millions of China and Japan. On the theoretically moral side the Buddhist is strong. His morals are unselfish. His code is the external semblance of love to his fellow man, that he may acquire merit, and pile up golden opinions of himself. That sort of thing, Professor Campbell said, could never face a robust, hearty, loving Christianity. It could discount a fighting Christianity, a mean Christianity, a save my blessed self and let the world go Christianity, a so-called higher Christian life, that makes clean the outside of the cup and the platter, and has no true lodgement in the heart for Christ.

The dualism of Persia mirrored forth a great spiritual reality, made more fully apparent by Christ and His apostles, but monotheism in its various forms has asserted itself over this dualism. Shintoism and Confucianism are other faiths of China; the former is simply polytheism, and as for Confucianism, it is no religion at all, but simply an ethical system such as made it a real danger to Christianity. It made religion simply a life, which might mean the sublimest truth or the most pernicious error.

Materialism was an impossibility as a religion, for religion is a spiritual thing. Christianity as a spiritual religion, takes the highest place. It held that the essence of being is spirit: "God is a spirit." The particularly Christian conception of the divine character is Christ himself. It is that of supreme divinity, emptying itself for a time of glory, and power, and blessedness, of the Lord of all worlds coming to one of the least of them, wherein He had no place to lay His head. The Christian ethic sinks itself. "Christianity is the grave of selfishness."

The lecture was listened to throughout with the closest attention and its close was especially inspir-

ing. "There is a good time coming. There is an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains. Its fruit some day shall shake like Lebanon. It came, that handful, from Calvary, and 'mid thorns, and thistles, and noxious weeds, and wild fruit bearing brambles, that handful has continued to grow and spread. Interspersed throughout are scarlet poppies, and blue cornflowers, and purple tares, and they spread abroad are goodly stalks, bearing nothing but chaffy scales. But, let the field be ploughed by the deep, sharp share of the hungering soul, and watered by the tears of them that are reproached with the taunt, 'Where is your God?' Shake out from all full ears the living kernel of Christianity, which is Christ in man, to fill the furrows full, and when the harvest comes and the yellow fruit shakes like Lebanon, thither shall all the tribes of the earth repair for good, saying, 'This is the hill of God.'"

### REV. PROFESSOR GORDON, B.D.

THE appointment by the Synod of the Maritime Provinces of the Rev. D. M. Gordon, B.D., of St. Andrew's Church, Halifax, to the professorship of Systematic Theology and Apologetics, made vacant by the death of the late Principal Dr. MacKnight, is one which will be received in the church with general and sincere satisfaction. In addition to his present charge, Mr. Gordon has filled with ability and great acceptance the important pastorates of St. Andrew's Church, Ottawa, and Knox Church, Winnipeg. He has been well known as taking a deep interest in the mission work of the church, and has from time to time been called by the General Assembly to discharge duties for the church requiring the exercise of superior judgment and ability. His name has been more than once proposed for the moderatorship of the General Assembly, and but for his courteous declination, in all likelihood before this he would have filled that place of high honor. In addition to these proofs of the confidence and esteem in which he is held in the church, he is well known as a man of scholarship, culture and ability. His brethren in the Maritime Provinces, to whom he is best known, have called him to an office in which he will be supported by the goodwill, the sympathy and prayers of the whole church, and whose duties he will, we doubt not, under a due sense of their solemn and weighty responsibility, discharge with credit to himself and to the good of the church at large. We heartily wish for Mr. Gordon a long, happy and most useful professoriate.

### FOREIGN MISSION FUND.

DR. REID has paid out since the beginning of the financial year, up to the 11th of October, \$35,623.43, and only \$8,388.16 have come into the treasury during that time, thus leaving a deficit of \$27,235.27, at the present date. Unless the friends of Foreign Missions throughout the church make an effort this year, our Foreign Mission work will be in deep waters. Much relief could be given by congregations, if instead of holding their contributions over until the Spring, whatever is already contributed were sent in at once. Interest on such large loans is a serious loss to the Fund.

R. P. MACKAY.

In the September issues of *Littell's Living Age* are to be found "Iceland of To-day," a remarkable article of great interest; the value of the article by Gladstone, "The Place of Heresy and Schism in the Christian Church," goes without saying. "Six Weeks in Java," by H. Collett; "Death in Classical Antiquity"; "Lucretius and his Science," by E. W. Adams; "Mr. Secretary Thurloe"; "The Outskirts of Europe," by J. D. Rees; "The Art of the Novelist," by the late Amelia B. Edwards; the series of articles on "The Beginning of the British Army," are all papers of interest and value deserving a permanent preservation. Many other noted writers are represented in these September numbers; Fred Wishaw, Lady Verney, R. B. Cunningham Graham, W. W. Story, Mrs. Andrew Crosse, George Saintsbury, A. Henry Savage-Landor, etc., etc. In addition to all this, each number contains a fair proportion of excellent poetry.

*Woman's Work for Woman*, for October, opens with editorial notes. A long list of missionaries is given, laboring in Persia in connection with Women's Societies, and accounts of various kinds of missionary work in that country absorb a large amount of space in the record for this month. Japan, Kurdistan and Corea are also referred to in items of work or travel mentioned. "Letters from the Front," are from Syria, China, Africa, Laos, Mexico, and Guatemala. The Home Department is taken up with a large number of matters of interest. *Woman's Work for Woman*, 53 Fifth Ave., New York, U.S.

## Books and Magazines.

**BLACK BEAUTY.** The Autobiography of a Horse. William Briggs, Toronto.

This is a Canadian copyrighted edition of a well known, most interesting and most useful book. It is profusely illustrated, and if anywhere, it is in the execution of this part of the book that it fails. The binding and printing done in the city are excellent, the latter clear and easy for the eye of the reader. We congratulate Mr. Briggs and the establishment of which he is the head, on their spirit and judgment displayed in publishing this book. It is written, it is well known, in the interest of the humane treatment of animals, and every work of this kind which can make the young especially, more tender and kind towards our dumb fellow-creatures, is a positive blessing. We cannot have too many well written books like "Beautiful Joe" and this one. It will make a beautiful Christmas present for the young members of the family; we cordially commend it and bespeak for it a large circulation.

The opening article of *Knox College Monthly* for October is by the Rev. Dr. Reid, entitled "Some Reminiscences of Scottish Life." It will recall to many the memories of a by-gone day, and to many of the young, born and brought up in Canada, it will be a revelation. It cannot but be read with interest. The paper read by the same venerated father in our church at Knox College Jubilee, is also found here in full. An article that will have much interest to younger graduates of Knox College especially, is that on "Knox College Glee Club." "A Church Benefit Society" discusses favorably having a society of that kind within the church. Studies on Idylls of the King, are continued by Rev. Robert Haddow, this one being devoted to Guinevere. Rev. R. P. Mackay, our zealous mission secretary, writes on the Jubilee of Foreign Missions. The first paragraph bristles with figures of a most instructive and inspiring kind. Reference is also made to the honorable part which Canadians have taken in this work. A plea is made for introducing into our theological courses of study one on missions; the rest of the article is to help students how to decide those questions of personal duty as to giving themselves to mission work. Other briefer but yet interesting articles, notes and notices complete a number of much interest. *Knox College Monthly*, Campbell and Pantou, Milton Ont.

The *Methodist Magazine* is always varied and readable. That for October is no exception. "Canada by the Sea," by the editor, is well illustrated. "Cyril Lucar, a Greek Patriarch and Protestant," is by Rev. W. I. Shaw, D.D., of Montreal, and is also illustrated. "Around Chentu," is a missionary sketch by one on the field. The memory of Chalmers is of perennial interest, and he is made the subject of an article by Professor Wallace, M.A., B.D. The story of Hermannsburg, is well told by Mary S. Daniels, B.A. Helen Campbell contributes "Light in Dark Places," and the stories also by ladies, "Spindles and Oars," and "A Singer from the Sea," are continued. "Christian Culture" is a sermon by Rev. A. H. Reynar, LL.D., from Phil. i. 9. An extract from the striking addresses recently given by Mrs. Isabella Bird Bishop, in Exeter Hall, London, upon Heathen Claims and Christian Duty is given and should stimulate to greater and still greater missionary effort. Poetical contributions, religious and missionary intelligence and book notices complete the number. Wm. Briggs, Toronto.

The special features of *Harper's Magazine* for October are "Lahore and the Punjab," a journey in British India, with fifteen illustrations, by Edwin Lord Weeks; "A Day of the Pinocchio Club," the first of a series of East Side New York; "The Streets of Paris" (with eight pictures by C. D. Gibson), by Richard Harding Davis; "Iberville and the Mississippi," "Golf in the Old Country," fifteen illustrations by Caspar W. Whitney, and complete short stories by Julian Ralph, Mrs. B. F. Mayhew, Owen Wister and Thomas Nelson Page. It also contains the conclusion of Brander Matthews's charming two-part tale of Naragansett Pier, called the "Royal Marine, and the Old Gentleman of the Black Stock," "The Happiest Heart," by John Vance Cheney, and "Unafraid," by Richard Burton, are both poems. Charles Dudley Warner's novel, "The Golden House," grows in interest as the story moves to its close in the November number. The Editor's Drawer and the Editor's Study complete an unusually varied number. Harper Bros., New York, N. Y., U. S.

In the *Treasury of Religious Thought* for October, the Rev. George D. Adams, of the First Baptist Church, Amsterdam, N.Y., is portrayed in the frontispiece and is the preacher of the first sermon, on "The Mind of Christ." There is also a full sermon by Rev. Emory J. Haynes, D.D., and Leading Thoughts from Sermons of many distinguished preachers. The second of the sketches of "Presidents of Yale," by Rev. Burdett Hart, D.D., gives a striking picture of President Jeremiah Day (1807-36). There is a condensed reproduction of Rev. Dr. W. E. Griffis's article on the Korean War; and an account of a missionary work in Iconium, by Rev. H. Jenayyan. Thoughts on Questions of the Day are presented from the current secular and religious press; and there are valuable thoughts for the Prayer-Meeting, Family, Young People's Service, Pastoral Work, and discussions of current thought, both religious and secular, a Survey of Christian Progress and notices of new books and periodicals. E. B. Treat, 5 Cooper Union, New York.

In the Review Section of the *Homiletic Review* for October contains "The Four Gospels and the Faith of Christendom," by David S. Schaff, D.D. "The Study of Comparative Religion in our Theological Seminaries," "The Metropolitan Frontier," "Homiletic Helps from the Fine Arts of the Columbian Fair," and "Light on Scriptural Texts from Recent Discoveries." The Sermonic Section is full of helps and suggestive hints of many kinds to the preacher. In the Exegetical and Expository Section will be found "St. Paul's Sermons," by Prof. W. S. Blaikie, D.D., LL.D. The other sections, namely, Sociology and Comparative Religion, Miscellaneous and Editorial, are timely and up to date. Funk & Wagnalls' Company, 30 Lafayette Place, New York.