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All communications for the Editorial News of Churches, and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2648, P. O. Toronto.

Pastors and church officers are particularly requested to forward items for "News of the Churches" column.

MUTUAL DUTIES.

VERY few good people even have ever realized the full meaning contained in our Saviour's sublime saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." The latter part of it is quite clear. They know it is good to receive, and are always open to the reception of everything in the way of attention, and visiting, and kindly offices to which members of Christian churches are entitled by virtue of that relationship. But the thought that others are equally entitled to the same kindly offices from them scarcely ever enters their heads. They are like sponges, with mouths ever open for a few drops more, but which give only under pressure. "I have been a member of your church for thirty years," said a good man to his pastor, not long ago, "and during my recent sickness only one or two of the members ever came to visit me. I feel that I have been badly neglected." "And during all those years, my friend," inquired his pastor, "how many sick ones have you visited?" The idea was quite new to him; it had never struck him in that light before; he had thought only of the relation of others to him—not of his relation to them!

It is to be hoped, indeed, that all church members are not equally thoughtless and selfish, but it must, at the same time, be confessed that there is a good deal of this kind of feeling in all churches. This is at the bottom of much of the complaining that the pastor does not visit as much as he should. He may have been unusually laborious and attentive in that way to most of the congregation, but Mrs. Smith, or Mrs. Brown, not having received the full amount of attention to which she thinks herself entitled, being, as she considers herself, a somewhat prominent member of the church, she feels herself, of course, proportionately aggrieved.

Now, let our querulous friends try the other plan—the plan of giving instead of receiving. Dr. T. L. Cuyler says that, in his experience, the grumblers are always the idlers. We think all Christian ministers will substantially confirm his testimony. And if, therefore, those who are now all the while awaiting attention, and watching for slights and neglects, will hereafter try to fulfil the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," and will go out among their fellow-members and endeavour to do them good, they will forget their own troubles in the new and untried blessedness of blessing others.

The good we endeavour to do is too often done on the plan which our Saviour rebukes, of those who, when they make a feast, call together their friends and their brethren, and kinsmen and rich neighbours, that they may be invited in return; whereas we should think more of those who "cannot recompense us," and expend our time and attention more upon the poor and the halt, and blind. "Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and keep ourselves unspotted from the world." Try it, brethren, and for every visit and kindly office you receive from the members of the church to which you belong, return them double, and learn now, if never before, the blessedness of doing and giving.

THE CHRISTIANITY OF CREEDS.

IT is well known that the Presbyterianism which is fast passing away was decidedly opposed to the use of instrumental music in the public service of praise. That opposition, though bitter and apparently capricious, is not altogether unreasonable in the eyes of those who have followed the history of the struggles in the fatherland for freedom to worship God. In a narrower circle a similar determined opposition

obtained against uninspired psalmody or hymns. In a Canadian village is a Presbyterian congregation. Some time ago it was resolved to bring into the Sabbath school a small organ, and into the church a hymnal in use in one of the branches of the Presbyterian family. In the same village was an Episcopal church whose incumbent was decidedly High and who brought as much ritualism into the services as a fair village community could well sustain. In the Presbyterian church was a worthy member, tenacious of the "good old ways" and jealous of innovations. Were not organs the invention of Jubal, of Cain's accursed race? and hymns—mere human compositions—what right had they to supplement the grand old psalms of David? and when a degenerate taste prevailed to bring in these rags of prelacy and popery, what remained for our friend but to protest energetically against such folly and declension? He did so; he collected up his bibles, pew cushions and stools, wife and children, and landed them all, with himself, in the aforesaid Episcopal church, where they now worship and have been rebaptized and confirmed. When asked how he could endure, in addition to organ and hymns, ritual, vestment, priest and altar, he urged, "Not in a Presbyterian church. I never would endure them there." Though apparently inconsistent, there was in that course fidelity to a principle. Our friend would not deny that Christianity could exist under prelacy, even popery, but not Presbyterian Christianity. In other words, Churches were not catholic but sectional, each designed to hand down in perpetuity its own peculiar form of Christian life. This is the Christianity of the creed. John Bunyan's fidelity to evangelical truth was never questioned; his conscience would not permit him to conform; the Church by law established visited him with pains and penalties. An acknowledged Christian minister and faithful pastor reads that the atonement is not only to be offered to all, but that in good faith it was made for all, and the Presbyterian Church casts him out from its ministry. A candidate for the ministry, and the choice of a people, believes that the Lord's table is not the table of sect, but of the professed followers of Christ, and a Baptist Council refuses to recognize and induct. An earnest believer finds no solace in a class-meeting which, to him, is in its present form a more than questionable means of grace, and his name must be dropped from the Methodist roll. And so on and so on, time without end. Our friend of the organ and hymns has a goodly companionship. "I would not have allowed the apostle Paul himself to preach in my pulpit unless he produced his Presbyterian certificate," said a certain Scottish minister. How could he know otherwise whether the apostle were sound in the faith? That men have a right to form themselves into religious guilds may be conceded; that certain advantages arise therefrom may be as readily acknowledged, but the New Testament authority for such close corporations must be stoutly denied. Did these ecclesiastical fetters truly restrain and conserve unity they might demand consideration, but we have shewn that in practice they utterly fail in their avowed object. Men do subscribe the same formula and yet intellectually and sympathetically are sundered far as the north is from the south.

Yet under all these creeds there is a common consensus, not, perhaps, to be rigidly defined, nevertheless truly there. Is the distinction between animal and vegetable life the less real because hitherto it has defied the power of language to formulate? and is Christianity less a bond of union because it will not be cabined, cribbed, confined by our poor attempts to spell its truths? The necessities of our nature seem to demand that our principles should be put in form that we may rally together and not be mere isolated particles floating in vacuo. In this sense a confession or creed may be a necessity. The evil is in so adopting such confession as to make it an authoritative definition of the limits of Christian brotherhood rather than an indication of where a Christian Church is standing. To this latter position regarding creeds the Churches must come, are coming; there the Congregational body does stand; and in proportion to the growing acceptance of this position will be the approach not to

the Christianity of the creeds, but to the Christianity of Christ and His Gospel. For thus

"— the Word had breath, and wrought  
With human hands the creed of creeds  
In loveliness of perfect creeds,  
More strong than all poetic thought."

MORE CONCERNING A LATE VISITOR.

A FRIEND, who does not wish his letter published, asks if we were not "a little too hard" on Col. Ingersoll in the article of last week "Concerning a Recent Visitor," and if we did not transgress somewhat the law of Christian kindness. To this we say, after a quiet and careful perusal of what we wrote, certainly not! For all honest doubters and sincere sceptics we have only words of kindness and help. No soul that has passed through the horror of great darkness, that has been tempest-tossed in the long night of unbelief, can withhold sympathy from another struggling through a like storm, clinging, it may be, with death-grip to the last plank of hope, with the bitterness of death upon him. In our recent visitor, however, we have to do with a different stamp of man. No one, by the wildest stretch of imagination, would think of him as an earnest inquirer after truth. Among the gods he worships in place of the God of heaven, such as Nature, Tom Paine and others, Truth is not included. With such men we have no truce, no not for an hour. They are the enemies of the Gospel; they are using every power and opportunity to destroy it, and the combat is to the end.

We regret to find by a report in one of the Toronto papers, that the Rev. W. F. Clarke thought it right to seek, as we understand, an interview with Col. Ingersoll, and to give a report of that interview for publication. When we saw the announcement of Mr. Clarke's lecture in reply to Ingersoll we were pleased, for although the judgment of Mr. Clarke in coming from Guelph to Toronto without, so far as we could ascertain, being asked, was open to question, and although the title of the lecture, "The Beauties and Blunders of Ingersoll," somewhat surprised us, having, after reading two of Ingersoll's orations, failed to find the "beauties," yet there was so much of the old chivalrous dash in the action, and we had such confidence in Mr. Clarke's ability to reply that we thought little of these drawbacks; but the report of the interview as published, and a private report of the lecture, which we were unable to attend, made us feel that to a large extent, Mr. Clarke had given away himself and his cause. Surely a minister of the Gospel can do better than strike hands with a man like Col. Ingersoll and pose himself as a companion sufferer from their mutual *bele noir*—orthodoxy; and surely with the noble record of men in all denominations—men of profound thought, of finished culture, of genius and piety alike unquestioned—it ill became him to echo the sneer of an infidel that "it takes very little brains to make an orthodox minister." We doubt not that a very general question in reply to this would be, "If it takes very little brains to make an orthodox minister, how much does it take to make an Ingersoll unbeliever?" We imagine the reply would be something analagous to the mathematical definition of a point, it has "no magnitude."

It is no satisfaction to us to write thus of Mr. Clarke. We have a high opinion of his ability, and the kindly words of greeting sent to us so lately would make us hesitate to pen a word of condemnation, but we must say in the interests of the truth which we follow, even as he does, we think that in this matter he has erred. Surely it should have made him question his position when he found that the parts of his lecture most loudly applauded, if we are correctly informed, were those in which he abandoned certain points of belief, not those in which he maintained others.

A great outcry was raised in Toronto because the principal dailies refused to insert the advertisement of Col. Ingersoll's lecture, and there was the usual whine about "clerical influence." We don't know if any representations were made to the Press by ministers of the Gospel on the subject, but of this we are sure, that if such was the case, they would have met with no response if such views had not accorded with the