

conservative in conferring this degree and in full keeping with this care is the happy selection of Dr. Smith, who thoroughly deserves the honor.

The service rendered to the cause of Christ during the past year by the National Bible Society of Scotland has been most satisfactory. The annual report tells of 705,610 Bibles, Testaments, or portions of Holy Scripture distributed by more than 500 colporteurs and agents in thirty different countries of the globe. The income of the Society for 1896 was £31,070, an advance of more than £2,000 upon last year, but all of it save £45 was expended on the operations of the Society. The most notable incident of the report is the retirement of the Rev. W. H. Gould, D.D., from the secretaryship, which he had occupied with distinguished ability and acceptance for thirty-six years. It is sad now to have to notice his death, so soon after he had put off his harness.

A remarkable example of the fruit which may be borne from a seedling in good soil is the following: A Puritan minister named Sibbs wrote a booklet called, "The Bruised Reed." A copy of this was given by a humble layman to a little boy at whose father's house he had been entertained over night. That boy was Richard Baxter, and the book was the means of his conversion. Baxter wrote his "Call to the Unconverted," and among the multitude led to Christ by it was Philip Doddridge. Doddridge wrote "The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," and "the time would fail to tell" its blessed influence. By it Wilberforce was converted, and of his life and labors volumes could be written. Wilberforce wrote his "Practical View of Christianity," and this led not only Dr. Chalmers into the truth, but Leigh Richmond, to Christ. Richmond wrote "The Dairyman's Daughter," which has been published in a hundred languages, and many million copies have been sold.

THE ALLIANCE' APPEAL.

WE publish in full on the opposite page the appeal for support issued by the committee of the Ontario Lord's Day Alliance. It deserves the most careful consideration from the Christian public. The document speaks for itself. The direct work accomplished by the Alliance has been considerable, the indirect work—the educative, the testifying for principle, and the influence on the public conscience, these cannot be adequately measured, but they are very real. The outlook is such that no Christian citizen can afford to leave the Alliance in a condition in which for want of funds its usefulness would be impaired. Let the friends rally to the support of the Alliance with a cordial response to their appeal.

A FERTILE FEEDER.

THE transfer of Rev. John Kay from Milverton to Deer Park attracts attention to the number of ministers who have been translated from the Stratford to the Toronto Presbytery. Rev. Dr. Caven came from St. Marys; Rev. Professor Ballantyne, is a native of Stratford; Rev. William Burns is from Downie; the late Mr. Freeman of Deer Park was brought up at North Easthope; Rev. J. A. Turnbull, Rev. J. A. Morison and now Rev. John Kay have been received by Toronto from the Presbytery of Stratford. In each case Toronto has been materially the gainer and the latest addition will no doubt prove equally welcome.

HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIVING.

A SPIRIT of restlessness and anxiety is abroad as to the Christian life. The church is awakening to the fact that formalism is fastening its deadly fangs on the people to a truly alarming extent and that something must be done at once to effect a cure. One of the hopeful signs is the unanimity

with which the decadence has been acknowledged in almost every English speaking country. The worldly spirit prevailing in Australasia has been a source of pain to the pulpit there, and to its ally the religious press, for many years, but from a mistaken national pride the churches in the United States have refused until lately to own the canker-worm at the heart of the nation. Now, in England, Scotland and Ireland, in the United States and in our own Canada the red flag of danger is waving. Thank God for that. We gratefully welcome the sermons, the articles, the interviews which fill the pages of our contemporaries, for surely never was there a time when a quickening of the Spirit was more to be desired than the present, when Mammon reigns in the world and when God has been dethroned in so many hearts.

The causes for religions decline may be many. Some of them undoubtedly are to be found in the church itself. What has been mis-called the Higher Criticism is largely responsible. Fair criticism is to be welcomed. Scantified scholarship may find a fit field in the literature of the Bible, but many Higher critics err grievously in their aims and methods and by a deference to them, wholly undeserved, the church has contributed to the doubt and degeneracy of the present day. Not long ago a leading minister in Illinois expressed his belief that within ten years belief in the divine authority of the Bible would be a thing of the past, that even now he was merely tolerated in his preaching on orthodox evangelical lines, because of the influence of a few old and respected members of the congregation who were large subscribers to the church funds. So to more or less degree this is the experience of many ministers in town and country. Then there is the pandering to popularity rather than the deliverance of a full and free gospel truth. The temptation to succeed by popularity is a subtle danger. A strong man only can battle with it successfully, and then he must be strong, not in his own strength, but strong in the Lord. And, further, although we say it reluctantly, the power of the pulpit is to some extent sapped by the influence wielded now by the young people. The young are at once the pride and the care of the church. They require wise leading, nursing in spiritual things. When they become the potent governing force in congregation or church, then inexperience in spiritual things rules and disaster or deterioration will surely follow. This is in this suggestion food for Sessions and Presbyteries to digest. We feel assured this phase of church life will have to be taken into account in any general movement to restore the pulpit and bring about a higher Christian life. How often is it that the highest praise is lavished upon a candidate for a vacancy because "his preaching is acceptable to the young," or an adverse sentence passed because he "failed to please the young people." It is neither worthy nor wise for the older Christians to yield to such a condition of things. Their ease is being bought at a ruinous price. Other causes could be pointed out, but those referred to are everywhere obvious and within reach of removal.

Various causes have contributed to the present awakening, not the least being the widespread sway of an intolerant, arrogant worldliness, before, the dominance of which the church has been finding herself losing ground. All kinds of expedients were tried. Clever moral essays, elaborate services of praise, social fads, teas, pic-nics and bazaars; short prayers, short sermons, elocution and every device a fertile age of invention could suggest. Still no headway. The power of the gospel is the same as ever, and the gospel will prevail. But it must be through the conversion of sinners and the growth in grace of the children of faith. Hence such movements as those of the Keswick brethren