

Contributors and Correspondents.

The Law of Tithes, or the Rule of Giving to the Lord.

No. IV.

While we believe that the Law of tithes is still binding upon the Christian Church, we do not necessarily hold that it should be enforced by civil statutes...

If the members of the Christian Church would make this law the standard of their religious contributions, and conscientiously observe it, what a mighty revolution it would instantly cause in the system of our ecclesiastical finance?

Now we may reckon the number of families belonging to the Presbyterian Church in Canada, about 60,000, which is probably below the mark.

Not encouraging is the fact that the Crown Prince of Germany leans decidedly to Rationalism and Infidelity, and his otherwise very excellent wife is no more orthodox than he.

EXEMPLARY SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHERS.

BY REV. ALEXANDER MCRAE, D.D.

The individual Sabbath School teacher is responsible for the success of his class as to the example he sets before them both in and out of school.

It is of prime importance that Sunday School teachers should be an example to their class, and personally "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things."

Teachers should never forget that the gospel which they profess and seek to teach to their tender charge, urges them not only to live righteously and godly, but soberly.

But it is not with Dr. Macdonald as an artist that we wish to deal in this paper, but as a theologian. There is an evident purpose running, like a black thread, through all his novels, and that is, to throw contempt on the doctrine of future punishment.

The steamship Crocus arrived at San Francisco on Sunday last, from Hong Kong, with eight hundred and eighty two Chinese passengers.

THEOLOGY AND FICTION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN. Sir,—In reading the Rev. Mr. McDonnell's statement to the Presbytery of Toronto, as reported in your last issue, I was forcibly reminded of the story told of St. John Leslie, Professor of Mathematics in the University of Edinburgh.

It is by such sentimental appeals that Mr. Macdonald constantly seeks to make a revealed truth obnoxious to his readers. Like all Universalist teachers, from Murray to Whittemore, he bases a question of revelation into contact with human affections; he tries the justice of God and the demerit of sin at the bar of one human faculty—the emotional; and because the feeling—the "large light" of a "rebellious mother heart"—shrunk from the doctrine, he therefore the doctrine is false.

THE HETERODOX ELEMENT IN GEORGE MACDONALD'S NOVELS.

Dr. George Macdonald is favourably known to American readers as the author of sundry semi-religious novels. Though not a genius like Dickens or Scott, he is unquestionably a very powerful writer and a skilful delineator of character.

But it is not with Dr. Macdonald as an artist that we wish to deal in this paper, but as a theologian. There is an evident purpose running, like a black thread, through all his novels, and that is, to throw contempt on the doctrine of future punishment.

It is important that this feature of Dr. Macdonald's novels should be distinctly known to the Christian Church. His clerical character and ecclesiastical relations give his books unchallenged access to large classes of religious minds who shrink from contact with ordinary novels.

To convince the reader that these novels are teachers of Universalism, we will briefly dissect one of them, Robert Falconer, as an illustration of the sentiments of the whole.

The hero of the story is the son of a drunken vagabond, a man, whose delicate Saxon wife died, leaving her only child, Robert, in very young years.

The false theology of the story is brought out into its descriptions of the mental struggles of the hero, and his mother with her creed, in Robert's questioning, in the numerous conversations between Ericson and Robert, and in the final talks of Falconer with his friends and fellow-workers.

But eh! the elements that place I and the rock that gings up for ever and ever, smothering the stars! And my Andrew down in the hut o' crin', and me no able to win to him! O Lord I canna say, Thy will be done: But duna lay't to my charge; for gin ye was a mother yerse ye wad na put him there."

Then, after a rhapsody against a theology which, he says, represents "the absolute love slaying love," he exclaims: "O rebellious mother-heart! dearest to God than that which beats laboriously solemn under Geneva gown or Lutheran

surplus, if thou wouldst read by thine own large light, instead of the glimmer from the phosphorescent brains of theologians, thou mightest even be able to understand such a simple word as that of a Saviour," etc.

Again, the poor lad is made to speculate on the question whether the fallen angel in Klopstock's "Messiah," which mourns his apostasy, might be forgiven, that the author may have opportunity to say, "judged by his (Robert's) own instincts, there could be no question of his (the angel's) forgiveness;" "the better half of himself supported the merciful view of the matter."

Of course, this decides the question of the ultimate destiny of apostate angels, for what are Divine assertions when weighed against "the better half" of a boy's nature!

Once more: Robert is made to say that if he ever went to heaven and knew that souls were "doon there" in hell he would invite the redeemed to petition Jesus Christ for liberty to go to hell and bear the sorrows of the damned for a time, that they might be led to repentance and share the joys of heaven with them, otherwise they could not enjoy the bliss which he had given them.

The specimen passages are enough to sustain the charge of Universalism against Dr. Macdonald's novels—a charge not denied, we presume, but probably gloried in by that gentleman.

It is to be regretted that works containing so many good and beautiful things should be written in the interest of errors which work out spiritual death and practical immortality in real life. True, the author makes these theories bloom with beauty, and bend beneath the weight of rich moral fruit.

We have read many strange paragraphs from the pen of Talma, and the following exceeds all in enormity and vigor: Sin is on every side of me, it seems as though it is impossible to find anything that is good and true, and that the blasphemy rolls up from the jaws of hell, blasting the heavens, and the lost soul is heard at every step.

The Corruption of the Age.

The first century Christian Church was an association of poor people. In some of our large cities they say the 19th century Christian Church has become an association of rich people. The charge is an exaggeration of the truth, but it is well enough for the Church of to-day to remind itself that the conclusive proof of the Divine work is the preaching of the Gospel to the poor.

Dishonesty Begins at Home.

The crying sin of the day is dishonesty. One hears much of it in public life; but as we have said before, there is too much of it altogether in private life. And its cause is to be found in the want of self-control in the indulgence of tastes and appetites.

Random Readings.

The fear of the Lord prolongeth days, but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

We mount to success mostly over the ruins of our cherished schemes, finding our failures were oftentimes successes.

In every sin which a man deliberately commits, he takes down a draught of deadly poison. In every lust which he cherishes, he embraces a dagger.

Men must not only pray that God would help them, but they must make an effort to help themselves; God answers prayers in such a way as to encourage the performance of duty, not the neglect of it.

(POSITIONS IN PRAYER.) The publican standing; Job sitting, (Job ii. 8); Ezekiah lying on his bed, (2 Kings xx. 2); Elijah with his face between his legs, (1 Kings xviii. 42); St. Paul kneeling, (Eph. iii. 42).—Fuller.

"I HAVE been all over the world," said a man, "and lived a roving career. I have seen the world, for the first time, on the American shore. I have seen the world, for the first time, on the American shore. I have seen the world, for the first time, on the American shore."

All the ritualism beneath the stars can not bring ethereal fire into a human soul, or quicken it into heavenly wisdom. When the people, therefore, turn aside from our ministry, let us not suppose that we can retain and benefit them by multiplying ceremonies.

People are always talking of perseverance, and courage, and fortitude; but patience is the finest and worthiest part of fortitude, and the rarest, too. I know twenty persevering girls for one patient one, but it is only that twenty-first who can do her work out and out, or enjoy it; for patience lies at the root of all pleasures, as well as all powers. Hope herself dares to be happiness, when Patience accompanies her.—Ruskin.

No mocking in this world ever sounds to me so hollow as that of being told to cultivate happiness. What does such advice mean? Happiness is not a potato, to be planted in mould, and tilled with manure. Happiness is a glory shining far down upon us out of heaven. She is a divine dew which the soul, on certain of its summer evenings, feels dropping upon it from the amaranth bloom and golden fruitage of paradise.—Charlotte Bronte.

The first century Christian Church was an association of poor people. In some of our large cities they say the 19th century Christian Church has become an association of rich people. The charge is an exaggeration of the truth, but it is well enough for the Church of to-day to remind itself that the conclusive proof of the Divine work is the preaching of the Gospel to the poor.

Afflicted Christians, when you pass through your Gethisemane, do not think solely of its desolation, but also of its divine beauty since the Redeemer traversed it, and be sure it is this gloomy garden of Olives which is nearest to the goal. It is there that the narrow gate is opened through which the self-depleted and the self-crucified pass, kings and priests to the Lord, and have found in the tears of affliction borne with patience an amounting more holy than Aaron's.—Presens.

The infidel will not taste of the good things of God because he does not care for them. To get him to eat, his appetite must be started, and his natural and trained aversion to all that belongs to the gospel renders this well nigh hopeless. There are timid and shrinking Christians who are almost fasting through their lives, wishing they could get bread to eat, but feeling afraid to take it. The difference is, that one has nothing and the other only a little, but in the end, while the first will have infinitely less than nothing, the other shall have "all things."—United Presbyterian.