

Pastor and People.

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.
EASTER.

Day of all joyous days most holy,
When, from the dark tomb's rocky portal,
He, once the toiler meek and lowly,
Came forth a Prince Immortal:
The triumph of Thy morn we sing;
Hail to our risen Lord and King!

Sad were the women's hearts that morning
That wished the heavy stone's unsealing.
To rest that dawn in sorrow scorning
They saw the Angel kneeling
Within that drear sepulchral prison
And heard the message, "He is risen."

Straight, in amazement, quick returning
To where His friends their watch were keeping,
Their spirits with deep fervour burning
Their joy all grief o'erleaping,
"The Lord hath conquered death," they said,
"He lives whom now ye mourn as dead."

Hope, the apostle's fear o'erriding,
Anon themselves the Master meeting,
With doubts dispelled, the Spirit guiding
They gave the world this greeting,
"He who Himself a ransom gave
Now lives omnipotent to save."

Inspired since then with power unceasing,
The Church of Christ has ever given
No word; whose steady light increasing
Shall guide men's sons to heaven,
More sure than this, that Jesus reigns
Who burst of sin and death the chains.

And so whilst Easter bells are ringing
Whilst birds their carols loud are chanting
Heaven's choirs and ours unite in singing
"Our songs shall not be wanting
To tell the triumphs of the King.
Sing! all ye ransomed hosts. Oh! Sing!"

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DEFICITS IN THE FUNDS: THE CAUSE.—I.

BY R. A. DIX.

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN has of late contained frequent references to the growing difficulty experienced in obtaining sufficient funds for the mission and other schemes of the Church. I say "growing" difficulty, because I believe that we have had a very perceptible growth in this direction. Times have been hard lately, I know; but that will not account for all of this growth of which I speak: nor has the period of growth been limited to the hard times.

Side by side with statements of the difficulty, we have had suggestions for its cure. The claims of these schemes are urged upon the people, and they are pressed to adopt better financial systems.

Not very long ago, I was present at a congregational meeting when some discussion of a pressing financial problem was in progress. One of the elders called attention to the general profession of belief that "the silver and the gold" are the property of the Head of the Church, and at His disposal. "Now," said he, "we are supposed to be doing His Work; and if we find that He does not give us money enough to do it with, it seems to me that the first thing we have to do is to find out why."

I am impressed with the idea that a good searching, cross-examination sort of an enquiry along that line might help—well, say, as much of the Church as was left after the enquiry was finished.

After all, you know, the matter comes down to the basis of the above-quoted statement. If the Church has not the money to carry on its work, the reason must be simply that the Church does not deserve to have it—is not fit to be intrusted with it.

The statement may sound harsh to some ears; but I am unable to see how it is to be materially modified if the Bible is to be retained.

What is wrong with the Church? you ask. Let us consider one or two points. I read the other day in these columns (in an article by Dr. Robertson, I believe) a statement like this: "The Church is a unit—a body—not a sand heap." It certainly ought to be. Now, who rules this body; who controls this unit? The General Assembly? "Not much!" as the rude boys say. Neither is it ruled by Synods, by Presbyteries, by Sessions.

Do these bodies, generally, approve of the things which are done in the Church every day? Do they approve of that wholesale, strait-out gambling (with human lives as counters) which I am told is coming into fashion lately, and which is known as the insurance plan of providing for the payment of Church debts? Do they approve of the creation of those debts for the building and furnishing of luxurious temples? Do they approve of the spirit which votes systematic beneficence "slow," and goes in for raising money by socials and bazaars, and worse devices yet?

These things are done continually—done openly, in the face of day. It follows that they are approved of by the real rulers of the Church.

Let me give an incident. It happens to be the only one of the kind in my own experience, but I do not suppose it is unique. I went into one of our churches to hear an address from one of our foreign missionaries, home on furlough. He made a direct and earnest appeal for a comparatively small contribution, annually, for the support of a native teacher in his field. He put the matter plainly and forcibly; yet in no way as dictating duty to the people. Everyone there, who believed in the preaching of the gospel at all, must have been convinced that the money was really needed and would be a means of great good. So far as I could learn, and I had an excellent opportunity to find out, no one even proposed to try to get a response to that appeal. Yet at that time, in that congregation, some of the "earnest workers" were engaged on a scheme having for its object the tickling of congregational vanity and the gratification of the sensuous side of congregational nature. I had reason to believe that the solid people of the congregation, the "old guard," looked with disfavor on the project; but the "workers" succeeded. The annual cost of the said scheme has totalled just about six times the amount the missionary asked for. No one need be surprised at the sequel. The cry in that congregation to day is: Why send money away for missions, augmentation, and so forth, when we cannot pay our own debts?

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

HOW TO USE THE HOME STUDY LEAFLET.

BY REV. T. F. FOTHERINGHAM.

The aim of the *Home Study Leaflet* is, as its name implies, to promote the home study of the lesson. It cannot do this unless both teachers and parents take a little trouble to use it effectively. Numerous testimonies come to us of the marked improvement in knowledge of the lesson before coming to the class, which has resulted from its faithful use, and in almost every case in which the expected results have not been attained the teachers have failed to use the means which it has placed in their hands. We assume that all earnest superintendents and teachers are willing to persist patiently in a method of work if they are hopeful of achieving by it more effectively the end of Sunday-school instruction, namely, a better knowledge of the Word of God.

Any teacher may use the *Leaflet* with the best results, even if no other in the school has adopted it. He must, however, show the scholars that he esteems it very highly and attaches great importance to receiving the answers regularly and neatly written. He should conscientiously take or send it to absent scholars, and always insist upon receiving "excuses" from absentees. He should take the answer home, mark their respective values very carefully, note them in this class register, and comment upon them in an encouraging way next Sabbath. He should speak of them when calling upon the parents of his scholars, refer to the answers given by their children, and awaken their interest and sympathy. At the end of the quarter some small recognition, such as a bright card with a note on the back of it

stating why it was given, should be presented to all who obtained fifty per cent. of the total marks for the three months. He should also urge those who have shown interest and ability to enter for the Quarterly Examination of the scheme of Higher Religious Instruction (See Syllabus under Department 1).

The best results, however, will be attained when the school as a whole adopts the *Leaflet* as part of its organized work. The superintendent or some one specially appointed, should oversee the distribution of the *Leaflets*, their collection, the record of names, announcement of these to the school and award of "Merit cards" to those who have shown diligence. A "Home study" secretary would fill a very important post in a well appointed school. Frequent reference should be made from the desk to questions and answers, so as to keep up the enthusiasm and induce the less enterprising to take part.

The following plan has been adopted with excellent results. A committee of two was appointed (changed quarterly) to read and value the answers from the whole school. Each teacher was furnished with a large and strong envelope, marked with his name and the number of his class, into which he put all the *Leaflets* handed in by his scholars. These class envelopes were handed to the examining committee who reported next Sabbath, and the results were read out from the desk. At first only the brightest scholars and the most active teachers will take part, but gradually the whole school will be drawn into the plan if a few are wise and persistent in their efforts.

When the *Home Study Leaflet* was first issued three years ago, very few lesson helps contained questions for written answers, now no good series is without them. But we claim for this "Home Study" series a superiority over all others in cheapness—the *Westminster Lesson Leaf* costs five cents and the *Westminster Question Leaf* twenty cents, making twenty-five cents for what we give for five; in omission of the Bible lesson, thus compelling scholars to bring their Bibles to school, in the "excuse for absence," which is a constant reminder of duty and helpful to the teacher in his "pastoral work," in clearness and accuracy of exposition, in aptness of the Scripture references, and in the use of outline maps, a most useful feature, entirely original and peculiar to the "Home Study" series.

Samples of the *Home Study Leaflet*, *Quarterly* and *Teachers' Monthly*, in quantities sufficient to supply the whole school, will be sent free on application to the Convener.

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GOD'S HIDDEN ONES.

BY REV. JOSEPH HAMILTON.

This is an age of Christian movement, and action, and show; yet even in this age God has his hidden ones. Some time ago a gardener was showing me his rich and rare and beautiful flowers. Then he said he had one bloomer that he specially prized which he wanted me to see. So he took me to an obscure corner of the garden, where he stooped down, and began to scratch up the surface of the soil. I noticed a little white stick, stuck in the ground there; that was to mark the spot where the flower was to be found. So the gardener removed a little of the soil, and exposed a gnarled and twisted and dirty looking root. That was the flower which he prized so highly. It had no attraction for me; I saw in it no beauty, or promise of beauty whatever. But the gardener knew that in that unattractive root there was a germ of beauty, and he prized it not so much for what it was then as for what he knew it would become by and bye. So he covered up the root carefully again, and marked the spot where it lay concealed; to him it was full of interest and promise, though all others might pass it heedlessly by. And so God has His hidden ones. He prizes them

highly. The world may pass them by; even discerning and discriminating Christians may pass them by. Men look on the outward appearance, but He looks on the heart. He knows the possibilities that slumber in every one of His own; He sees their undeveloped beauty. So He hides them safely, knowing that the showers of His grace will nourish them, and the sunshine of His love will call them forth from their obscurity in due time.

Toronto.

MR. GLADSTONE ON CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE.

In a lengthy article which Mr. Gladstone has contributed to the "People's Pictorial Bible," speaking of the spread and adaptability of Christianity to the human race, he says:—

"The religion of Christ is for mankind the greatest of all phenomena, the greatest of all facts. It is the dominant religion of the inhabitants of this planet in at least two important respects. It commands the largest number of professing adherents. If we estimate the population of the globe at 1,400,000,000 (and some would state a higher figure), 400,000,000 or 500,000,000 of these, or one-third of the whole, are professing Christians; and at every point of the circuit the question is not one of losing ground, but of gaining it. The fallacy which accepted the vast population of China as Buddhists in the mass has been exploded, and it is plain that no other religion approaches the numerical strength of Christianity; doubtful, indeed, whether there be any which reaches one-half of it. The second of the particulars now under view is perhaps even more important. Christianity is the religion in the command of whose professors is lodged a proportion of power far exceeding its superiority of numbers, and this power is both moral and material. In the area of controversy it can hardly be said to have a serious antagonist. Force, secular or physical, is accumulated in the hands of Christians in a proportion absolutely overwhelming; and the accumulation of influence is not less remarkable than that of force. This is not surprising, for all the elements of influence have their home within the Christian precinct. The art, the literature, the systematised industry, invention, and commerce—in one word, the power of the world are almost wholly Christian. In Christendom alone there seems to lie an inexhaustible energy of world-wide expansion. The nations of Christendom are everywhere arbiters of the fate of non-Christian nations."

In speaking of modern criticism, after paying respect to the modern critics, the ex-Premier adds:—"We may still ask whether their tone and temper, speaking generally, has been such, say for example in Germany, as the Christian community was entitled to desire and even to demand. Have they proceeded under the influence of sentiment such as would govern one who was endeavouring either to wipe away external impurities or to efface spurious manipulations from some great work of a famous artist? Not the mind only, but the finger also, of such a man is guided by tenderness and reverence throughout. Has this been the prevailing and dominating spirit of the critical negations of the last half-century? Sweeping judgments, in answer to such a question, are not to be delivered without breach of propriety and of charity, except by students both widely and accurately versed in the subject-matter."

The Australasian Methodist Missionary Society has fallen fortunate heir to the English Wesleyan work in Fiji and Samoa, and besides has carried the Gospel to New Guinea, New Britain, and to the Chinese in Victoria and New South Wales. The last report tells of 974 churches (buildings) and 568 other preaching places; 26 missionaries; 76 native ministers; 80 catechists; 10,095 local preachers, teachers, class leaders, etc.; 33,376 native members and 6,205 on trial; 2,018 schools, with 40,875 pupils; and 118,817 attendants on public worship.