

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

DEGREES IN DIVINITY. NO. I.

A committee was appointed by last Assembly with instructions to mature a scheme as to the granting of Degrees in Divinity. The report of this Committee will doubtless be laid before the Assembly at its meeting in June next. Meantime a scheme has been propounded by the "Halifax Presbyterian Witness" in an editorial in a recent issue, which deserves more than a passing notice, for though the editorial referred to treats the whole subject in a jocular, bantering spirit, yet the scheme submitted is one worthy of consideration, and will, doubtless, find favour in the eyes of very many of those who are interested in the cause of theological education. It is as follows: "Let the General Assembly ask the Dominion Parliament for a charter to establish a great Presbyterian University which shall embrace all the colleges except Queen's (and embrace Queen's too, if she will only come in.) Keep this University under strict control of the Assembly. Let its seat be wherever the Assembly sits. Let its examiners be appointed by the Assembly, and its degrees be virtually and in effect conferred by the Assembly, and under most stringent regulations."

No sooner has the editor of the "Witness" propounded this grand scheme than he proceeds to set it aside because of two objections. What are these? First, it is altogether without precedent. Here, however, the "Witness" is evidently at fault. The establishment of a University by the Church or for the purposes of the Church without precedent! What is Queen's College, Kingston? or Trinity College, Toronto? or Victoria College, Cobourg? or Laval College, Quebec? were not all these Universities established by Churches or for the purposes of the Church? So too with many, if not most, of the Universities of the United States; and so too, originally with all the Universities of the Old World. Originally a University was an *ecclesiastical* institution, and thus Divinity is the highest of all the faculties. The objection, therefore, as to the lack of precedent falls to the ground the moment it is investigated.

Again, no one will question the right or competency of any body of learned men possessing colleges, whose standard of teaching is such as to warrant the *impri-matur* of a degree, to apply for power to confer such degree. Now the body which possesses the colleges in Toronto, Montreal, Halifax, and in a certain sense those of Kingston and Quebec, is the Church. If then, these colleges are individually or collectively to possess the power of granting degrees, application for such power must be made either by the Assembly itself, or with its sanction, by the governing bodies which it has appointed. In those of the colleges which are in full relation to the Assembly, the Professors, Boards of Management, etc., are appointed by it, so that if affiliated for University purposes they must be affiliated by the Assembly.

It may, perhaps, be objected by some that the name *University* is one that should embrace all the faculties and not simply that of Divinity. This is not the original meaning of the word. Brande in his *Cyclopædia* says that "the Latin term *Universitas* signified the whole body of students or of students and teachers assembled in a place of education, with corporate right and by-laws of their own." Apart from this however, we find that existing Universities are most of them Universities of one faculty, that namely of Arts, the schools of Law and Medicine holding but a *quasi* relation to them. Besides this, the secularizing of such institutions as the University of Toronto, the University of McGill College, Montreal, and the University of Halifax, cuts off the faculty of Theology and makes it imperative—if Theology is not to lose its place as a faculty and the highest of all—that some provision shall be made for its acknowledgment. If the University of Toronto is at liberty to call itself a University, notwithstanding its rejection of Theology, and the fact that it has no teaching faculties of Law and Medicine, surely the rejected faculty of Divinity has some redress, and may without seeking to build up competing colleges for teaching Arts call itself a University for the purposes of its own department of education.

In a subsequent paper notice will be taken of the second objection urged by the "Halifax Witness" and the advice the editor tenders the Church in the matter of Degrees in Divinity. *

NOTES FROM NEW YORK.

I do not believe the adage, "It never rains but it pours." Once in a while however, the rain does come a little heavier than usual. To make another application, this latter was the way it happened with us the other day in reference to the missionary question. We were favoured with two addresses of nearly an hour each. One was on Home Missions, by Dr. Sheldon Jackson, the agent of the Home Mission Board of the U.S. He is doing a splendid work in the organization of work in those Western States and Territories and Alaska. The other was on Foreign Missions by Dr. Clarke of Boston, the Secretary of the American Board of Foreign Missions.

Taking all things into consideration, we have had considerable opportunity in the city to cultivate the missionary spirit. Dr. Tucker, the pastor of Madison Square Presbyterian Church, has been giving a series of Sabbath afternoon lectures on missions. They have been very instructive and popular. In the Theological Seminary we had Dr. Jessup the veteran missionary to Syria, to address us on the work in that part of the world. About three weeks ago Dr. Bushnell of Africa addressed us on the mission work in the Dark Continent. He told us of the influence Christianity had on the sable sons of Africa, even the wildest tamed, whole tribes civilized, and communities settling into the ways of the cultured West. Such advances are principally along the coast. But he also spoke of the openings towards the interior brought about by the discoveries of Livingstone, Cameron and Stanley, and the vast number of people to whom the Gospel may be sent. Dr. Bushnell and his colleagues with other missions are working from the western coast towards the interior. The missions on the eastern coast—the companions of Livingstone—are working westward toward the interior. The missionaries have promised each other that, by the grace of God, they will push the work till they clasp hands in the centre of Africa and declare the Dark Continent reclaimed and illuminated from sea to sea by the light of the gospel of Christ.

But, Dr. Clark told us something of the missionary conference recently held in London. There were representatives of many denominations and many nationalities, veteran missionaries from the advance line, and young recruits just on their way to help close up the ranks. And as one and another told of the advance here, the openings made there, and wonderful success everywhere, all were impressed with the fact that the time was past for the Church to pray that the world might be opened for missions; but, the way being open, the duty of Christians now was to enter and take possession for Christ. Even China, long thought to be past redemption, has thrown her doors wide open and is calling loudly for missionaries. Dr. Clark remarked that were the materials at hand five hundred men might be sent to China immediately and then the demand would not be supplied. Dr. Porter, just returned from China, brought along with him the head of one of a large number of heathen gods which the natives had swept from the temple, smashed to pieces, and buried. The natives renovated the temple and deeded it with the property around it to the mission, and the missionaries dedicated it to the worship of the Lord. And one of the dignitaries of the former heathen temple is now a doorkeeper in the house of God.

The missionaries are rejoicing in the British protectorate for Turkey and appeals are strongly made for that country. And then comes the cry from the land of the Afghan, to follow the British flag into the heart of Afghanistan and unfurl the banner of the cross.

But what is the reason that the supply falls so much short of the demand? And not only that, but why is the demand so often met by that ominous word "*retrench*." That word which chills the missionary's heart, and denies the gospel to many a poor heathen? Would that the churches of this continent might be aroused in the missionary cause! Here are a few words which, though written thirty years ago, seem very appropriate to the present time. "Again the world, in a nobler sense, is at our feet; asking us, if not in anguish of soul, at least with marks of visible concern; what must it do to be saved." Providence is urging us to answer the question. Christ is saying, "Go and proclaim the cross to every creature;" and we ourselves professing to believe that we hold in our hands the means of success—professing to exult that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation—can

yet hardly bring ourselves to tell more than *one in a thousand*, that there is any salvation; and professing to believe that Christ has an absolute claim on all we have, can hardly bring ourselves to surrender sufficiently to tell that one in a thousand. Oh, if our Lord had forbade self-denial—if he were now to repeal the law self-consecration, and to enact a law of self-indulgence—would not the great majority of His people be found in a state of perfect obedience? If living to themselves would convert the world, how long since would the world have been saved." N.

New York, Feb. 5, 1879.

OUR MINISTERS' WIDOWS' AND ORPHANS' FUND.

BY ATHANASIAS.

There are two of the regulations for the maintenance and management of our Ministers' Widows' and Orphan's Fund, which seem to me liable to objections. These are the third regulation and the eighth.

According to the third regulation, "the Fund is to be maintained by an annual contribution from each minister and congregation." Would it not be better to dispense with congregational contributions? If congregations support their ministers as they ought they do very well. Let ministers, out of what their congregations give them, make provision for the maintenance of their wives and children. The Widows' and Orphans' Fund of the late Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces has been efficiently maintained without congregational collections. Each minister in connection with it has been paying a yearly rate of twenty dollars. In this way our winter fund, which will start with an invested capital of \$211,000, I have no doubt, could be supported. It is not wise to have too many schemes. Then I am not sure that we have any right to ask our people to give an annual contribution for the support of Widows' and Orphans' Fund. Let each minister upon the Fund pay twenty dollars a year to it, and there will be no need of collections.

The eighth regulation is as follows: "On behalf of Professors, Foreign Missionaries, Missionaries under the French Evangelization Committee, Ministers on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, and the agents of the Church, the sum of eight dollars shall, in addition to the personal rate, be paid to this Fund by the Boards or Committees with which they are respectively connected, ministers who have retired from active duty with permission of the Church and for whom no aid is sought from the Fund for Aged and Infirm Ministers, shall pay the sum of eight dollars annually in addition to the rates previously paid by them."

I object to the first part of this regulation for several reasons. (1.) It increases indirectly the salaries of our professors and Church agents. If the salaries of our professors and agents are too small let them be directly increased. (2.) It is easier for our professors and Church agents to pay sixteen or twenty dollars a year into the Widows' and Orphans' Fund than it is for our country ministers to pay eight or twelve dollars a year. (3.) The Church has no right to divert money from the purpose for which it was given. If money is given to support our professors as teachers in our colleges, what right has the Church to take a portion of that money and give it to the Widows' and Orphans' Fund. (4.) Our Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund is not in a position to pay money into the Widows' and Orphans' Fund. All the money in it is too little for its own purposes.

I object to the latter part of this regulation, because, whilst it asks only a personal rate of eight or twelve dollars of professors and Church agents, men having a salary of at least \$2,000 a year, it asks a personal rate of sixteen or twenty dollars of retired ministers whose whole income will not be over \$500 a year. If an aged minister can support himself and his wife on a retiring allowance of \$500 a year, and also pay into the Widows' Fund twenty dollars a year, surely our professors and Church agents can support themselves and their families and pay a similar sum to the Widows' Fund.

I should like to see this regulation amended so as to run somewhat as follows: Professors, Foreign Missionaries, Church agents, and Missionaries under the French Evangelization Committee, shall pay into the Fund in addition to the personal rate, the sum of eight dollars annually. Ministers on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund and ministers who have retired