

MODERN SCEPTICISM.

Science has made rapid and gigantic strides in these latter days, and may justly claim a large amount of admiration. But, because this is the case, it does not therefore follow that the one branch of it, physical science, which is most extensively cultivated in our time, is the only thing in the world deserving of attention, or that its worshippers should require more than the just praise of it. Why should they, great and small, professors and sciolists, be so anxious to exalt it at the expense of the only faith which really elevates their race? If, indeed, instead of shaking old beliefs, men of science, as they delight to call themselves, were able to present a new system, good, bad or indifferent, which they could prove to be true, then their proceedings would require no apology. But they have so far done nothing of the kind. They have only human faculties; and human faculties, although they may be continually acquiring new facts to work upon, and improved methods of dealing with those facts, are not a whit more able to pass the limits between the seen and the unseen than they were in the earliest days of science. They can display to us the operations of certain powers in a manner new and full of interest; but about the origin, intention and duration of these powers they can tell us practically nothing.

The irreligious philosophy of a century ago seemed to think that the world was a fair world, and would probably be managed well enough if it were not for priestcraft and superstition. The irreligious philosophy of to-day is of a different opinion; it troubles itself very little about worship, but denounces the universe, so far as we know it, as a piece of botch work; cannot quite make up its mind whether the Author of it is malignant, or only stupid or incapable; and shakes its head significantly at hearing a hint that we have anything belonging to us which is not material. It examines the processes by which this and other worlds are put together, and by which a human race has been arrived at; but it leaves us entirely in the dark as to our business here, and as to how we may make the best of the very wretched estate which they have found human life to be. Of all the unbelief that has been preached to the world, very little has come up to us of the end of the nineteenth century in its cruelly desolating tendency.

COMING EVENTS.

THE relation which exists between the earth and the other planets of the solar system is likely to be attentively considered during the next two years, when a phenomenon which has not occurred before, probably in the history of the world, will take place; namely, a conjunction of all the planets, which will be on the same meridian at the same time and thus bring all the attractive impulses to bear in the same direction at once. This extraordinary event will occur in 1881, and will be the herald of other equally startling phenomena. What the effect of this disturbance of planetary equilibrium will be there is no possibility of knowing, but it is well known that certain terrestrial phenomena of a serious kind are simultaneous with the proximity of the planet Jupiter to the sun. The sun spot periods, with all their attendant results to us, are dependent upon the great planet of our system. What a disturbance of the sun's condition the conjunction of all the planets will bring about we leave to astronomers to calculate, but we have a key to the situation in two chance observations. In 1862

an English astronomer, watching the sun's limb, observed an enormous tongue of flame shoot from it into space, bend as if swept by a hurricane, and exhibit other phenomena. Glancing at an electric needle beside him, he observed it swing round its dial followed by a tongue of flame. For some days afterward every indication of a tremendous electrical disturbance was noted down, and further observations distinctly indicated that the solar phenomena were related to the terrestrial. The occasion of the former was attributed to some comparatively slight planetary influence; the effect upon the solar mass by the combined planetary influences may therefore be guessed at. Another theory, not yet by any means established, is that of Professor Tice, who claims that the planetary equinoxes exert a reciprocal influence, which accounts for meteorological phenomena. That we may look for some agitations of nature, therefore, in 1881 cannot possibly be computed.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG MEN.

THIS is a matter which ought to be more considered and more inculcated than it is. A day will come when the places of the fathers will be vacant; they will have gone to their long homes, and the places that now know them will know them no more—and when that occurs, when the older men have passed into eternity, by whom are their places to be filled? Why, by those whom we now call "our young men." In the ceaseless whirl of time they will be thrown upon the surface—they will be dragged out from the obscurity of boyhood, and placed in the front ranks of the battle of life; and as one by one their seniors fall, they will be compelled to supply the places of those who have gone. Necessarily, then, there must be a fearful responsibility resting upon our young men. Our future prosperity and happiness are dependent upon their principles—the morals which are to govern our daily life, and the religion which is to support us in the hour of affliction and death, must be the product of those ideas, tastes and principles which they are now cultivating. Why—if the hearts of our people were as one man striving for the blessings of social happiness or religious prosperity, could there be such a thing as tyranny, vice or irreligion? Nay, they would vanish as the darkness vanishes when the sun rises in his strength. If our moral faculties had been educated to detest fraud and corruption—if we fully appreciated the meaning of that law, "Thou shalt not steal"—could there be tolerated, nay, could there ever occur, such awful moral obliquity as that which now disgraces our age and race? No! being honest ourselves, we should demand honesty in others; and they being as honest as we, would need no demand to do their duty. And so in regard to the Church of Christ. If our young people become impressed with the fact that the Church of the future will have for its leaders and governors men who are now budding into existence, or passing from one stage of youth to another, surely nothing more would be needed to cause them to feel the immense responsibility resting upon all young people, inasmuch as it will in the future times depend upon them to bear the Church onward to future generations.

TORONTO MISSION FUND.

LAST Wednesday evening the Messrs. Henderson were waited upon with a subscription list to the amount of \$8,057, which they, in the meanwhile accepted, and are ready now to pay over their \$1,000, in proportion as the

amount subscribed is paid in to the Secretary Treasurer. At the same time it is felt to be a matter of regret that, in the first place, their offer did not, notwithstanding the hard times, awaken a more full response, and result in a wider margin; (the amount now stands at \$3,083;) and that the sum subscribed was not entirely made up in the Diocese; \$500 of it coming from England. They yet cherish the hope, that those who had purposed giving, but have not done so, may still forward their names, so that the *Diocese itself* may find the \$3,000 asked for. We certainly trust that this will be the case, for it is extremely desirable that so munificent, and we may add opportune an offer, should be practically appreciated; and be so heartily responded to, that others, stimulated by the good example, may on future occasions "devise liberal things," and with the confidence that they will be met with corresponding liberality. Those willing to aid in the realization of the full amount, and we know that there are yet some who intended giving, will please forward their names as soon as possible to W. P. Atkinson, Esq., Secretary Treasurer, Synod Office. Those who have already subscribed will render important service by remitting at their earliest convenience, as above.

BOOK NOTICE.

SERMON PREACHED BY THE LORD BISHOP OF ONTARIO, at the Consecration of the Bishop of Montreal, Jan. 25th, 1879. Ottawa: J. Durie and Son. Sold by Rowsell and Hutchinson, Toronto. Price 5s. We are glad to see this admirable sermon reproduced in pamphlet by the Ottawa Clerical Union. It brings out into full relief the doctrine contained in our 20th Article, that "The Church is the witness and keeper of Holy Writ," deprecating a reversal of this order, which would make Holy Writ the witness and keeper of the Church.

Diocesan Intelligence.

NEWFOUNDLAND.

The Lord Bishop held an ordination in his cathedral on the second Sunday in Lent, when Messrs. W. How and D. V. Gwilym were admitted to the order of Deacons. The sermon was preached by the Rev. E. Colley, Incumbent of Topsail. The Gospel was read by Mr. How. The Diocesan Synod which meets biennially, will assemble in the latter part of June; and the Bishop will afterwards commence the second voyage in the Church Ship *Lavrock*, visiting the missions on the South and West coasts of the Island.

NOVA SCOTIA.

(FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.)

HOME MISSIONS.—There is but one tone to all the reports of the progress of the new agent Rev. Richard Wainright from Pictou, River John, Tatanagonche, Wallace, and Pugwash—all are greatly taken with the eloquence of Mr. Wainright. And additional offertories prove that the congregations not only admire, but respond practically and pecuniarily, while the magnificence of the future annual subscriptions to the Board can hardly be doubted.

AMHERST.—An operatic cantata was successfully performed here, by amateurs, for the good of the church. The *Gazette* says:—"Few persons would have undertaken the task of producing this work in a place like Amherst, and Miss Townsend the Rector's niece, is entitled to the whole credit for the energy with which she devoted herself to it, while the performers are to be credited with great persistency and application." Pecuniary results, \$90. To be repeated shortly.