

tions:—Am I to be used as an example and a warning in God's universe? Am I to prove an "unprofitable servant," and to be flung into outer darkness? Will God cut me down in anger to show how He hates uselessness, laziness, fruitlessness, in His Kingdom? How much better is the congregation, the Sabbath School, the Prayer Meeting, for my being alive this day? How much better are the Home and Foreign operations of the Church? What souls have been saved through my efforts? What are my hopes, fears, plans, for the future? The axe is laid to the root of the tree. The fig-tree is to be examined for fruit. The fire is burning that shall devour the withered branches. There is no way of escaping the scrutiny of God's eye, or the grasp of His Almighty hand. The useless must be condemned and punished with the positively wicked. To be useless in the Church of God is to be on the side of sin and Satan.

Sodom and Gomorrah, Lot's wife, Pharaoh and his hosts, Ananias and Sapphira, Judas Iscariot, Doeg the Edomite, and many more that might be named, have their use. God has used them as examples to warn and alarm others, and to show His hatred of sin. Are you willing to be classed in the same dismal catalogue? There is but one way of escape. We must be for God or against Him; we must be his friends or foes, faithful followers or "unprofitable servants."

THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF IRELAND.

The late General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church was all that the best friends of Presbyterianism and Evangelical religion could have expected. A most noble example of self-sacrifice, unity, and public spirit, was presented to Ireland and to the world. The leading men—indeed, the whole Assembly, with rare exceptions—manifested a thorough appreciation of the action demanded by a great, an unprecedented emergency. There was no unmanly whining over the past; there was no weak folding of the arms in listless despair.—There was, on the contrary, a frank reali-

zation of the new position in which the church found herself, and a bold grappling with all its difficulties. Our readers know that when the Protestant Episcopal Church was dis-established and dis-endowed, the *Regium Donum* of the Presbyterian Church was withdrawn, saving the life interest of ministers now enjoying it. Now what the Assembly has resolved upon is this:—The ministers to commute or sell their life-interest in favour of the Church; in other words, that the aggregate amount of their life-interests shall be invested so as to produce a perpetual revenue in favour of the Church. The difference between the amount of the life-income and the interest on the invested capital is to be made up through a Sustentation Fund organized and carried out by the Church. The ministers lose nothing; the Church gains a great deal towards its permanent endowment.—The capital and interest of the amount received will, according to the terms of the Act, prove sufficient to satisfy in full all existing life-interests in the *Regium Donum*, and the Church takes care that every minister commuting shall have adequate security, through trustees appointed for the purpose, that he shall obtain the full amount to which he is legally entitled.

The money realized by the sale of the life-interest of ministers in the *Regium Donum* will be invested under the name of the Commutation Fund. It will amount to about £26,000. A Sustentation Fund has been organized, modelled on that of the Free Church, to supplement the sum receivable from the interest of the Commutation Fund. An attempt is made to raise £30,000 annually as a Sustentation Fund. This can be done by a penny a week from all the members. An equal dividend of £130 will be secured to all the ministers. What threatened to prove a great disaster will turn out a blessing. We rejoice to observe that the Episcopal Church is following the Presbyterian example in devising and doing liberal things.

The Irish Presbyterian Assembly has agreed to send a strong deputation to the General Assembly at Philadelphia in May, to congratulate American Presbyterians in their happy re-union.