

to be deemed the wisest) the right of the youngest beneficiary to receive his \$200 per annum, so long as there is a dollar of capital to draw upon, is legally as well assured as that of the oldest commuter to receive his \$450, or that of the so-called privileged beneficiary to receive his \$400.

When I consider that the amount which the commuters added to the capital, by agreeing to accept £112 10 instead of £150 per annum, has been lost over and over again, together with the sum contributed by the Church to form an adequate and permanent Sustentation Fund; and that too by the unwise investments of a board appointed principally by themselves, and on which they exercised ever a controlling influence; and when I consider further that many of these same commuters, even at \$450 per annum, came into receipt of as large an income from the clergy reserves as the average income for the years of their ministry had been, from that source, prior to the commutation, and much larger than the future average was likely to be in some cases in the absence of such commutation, I am not so greatly impressed with the oft-told tale of the generous sacrifices they made for posterity.

I am willing, however, to give them as a class credit for unselfishness, and admit that, acting disinterestedly, they perhaps bargained more wisely than they wot; and agree that they should receive the full benefit of the astute business arrangement they entered into—giving them four and a half per cent. on their investment instead of six per cent., and guaranteeing them against all possibility of loss. Surely, however, the difference between a claim on the fund for \$400 per annum and one of \$200, which has been made during the last thirty years between those who entered the ministry of the Church subsequent to the passage of the Provincial Act providing for commutation, and prior to its receiving the royal assent, and all those who have since entered (who have, say, as in the case of some of the so-called non-privileged, laboured since 1857 instead of since 1855) is reward enough for having been a year or two earlier in the field.

My own opinion, and I believe I express that which is the opinion of many others, is that the wisest course to pursue would be the following:

1. To purchase annuities of \$450 per annum for the surviving commuters (except those in Queen's College), and hand over to them the said annuities.
2. Give to Queen's College so much of the capital of the fund as would represent an annuity in perpetuity of \$2,000, and make it a first charge upon said sum to pay annually during their lives to any commuting ministers or other beneficiaries of the Temporalities Fund now in connection with the college as professors or retired professors the amount of their present annual claim upon the Board.
3. After paying all arrears in full which have accrued against the fund since the union of the Churches and the discontinuance of the old Sustentation Fund, calculate the amount needed to pay during the remainder of their respective lives to all other beneficiaries an annuity equal to their present annual claims of \$400 or \$200 upon the fund, and distribute *pro rata* the capital remaining in the hands of the Board.
4. Having obtained the necessary legislation to enable them to do this, and having wound up the business as speedily as possible, let the members of the Board meet the surviving beneficiaries at the festive board, and present to the painstaking secretary a suitable testimonial in appreciation of his long-continued and faithful labours. Let all join hands and sing a verse of "Auld Lang Syne," and let the Board dissolve, each member and every beneficiary going home to render privately his thanksgiving to God that the corporation has come to a peaceful end.

If the Board will not have the grace to do this, and close a page of Church history that does anything but reflect credit upon the financial ability of the present members of the Board or their predecessors, I shall certainly throw no obstacle in the way of their carrying out what they propose in the circular they have just issued, as it is a measure that approaches nearer the line of equity than any they have suggested for some time, and at least holds out the hope of their occupation finally coming to an end by death—the death of all the beneficiaries of course, for the Board will live in the history of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. I am yours fraternally,

WILLIAM THOMAS WILKINS.

The Manse, Trenton, Ont., April 20, 1888.

Pastor and People.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

HOW LONG, O LORD?

BY G. INGLIS, TORONTO.

Why tarriest thy Chariot of Victory, O Lord,
Why hidest in its scabbard thus the vengeance of Thy sword,
Why silent long seem'st slumbering the thunders of thy wrath,
Why flameth not the lightning o'er the terrors of Thy path.
As from Thy throne descending,
To earth thy footsteps bending,
With hosts on hosts attending.
Thou comest in thy kingdom to the awful Judgment Day.

"Where the promise of His coming, and the signs of His appearing?"
The old and weary world asks, half sighing and half sneering,
As with finger philosophic, scientific nomenclature,
She points in cynic sadness to unchanging Laws of Nature,
(saying coldly):
Since the fathers have been sleeping,
Sleepless vigils these are keeping,
Blind to pain and deaf to weeping,
Through the Ages' anguish silent, pitiless and dumb are they.

What is man to such as these are, what his agonies and sorrow,
What his prayers, and tears and sighing for some shadowless to-morrow,
Some ideal Land of Canaan, some ideal dawn of peace,
Where his sorrow may find solace, and his suffering surcease,
Some soul-haven, safe, enduring,
Some heart-pillow rest assuring,
Some life-fountain sorrow-curing,
Something to appease his hunger and his deadly thirst allay.

Still the Sphinx, with stony staring, stands unseeing and uncaring,
Deaf and blind to mortal anguish, silent still, and still unsparing,
Gazing onward, ever onward, never down in sad compassion,
Never up in supplication, never round in kindly fashion,
Stony-eyed and stony-hearted,
From all love and pity parted,
Never yielding, never thwarted,
Still unchanged and ever changeless holds inexorable sway.

What is man but the resultant of fierce forces blindly striving,
Evermore the weak crushed downward, evermore the strong surviving,
Necessary laws constraining—Change, Heredity, Selection,
Life mere struggle for existence, Death the end, no Resurrection,
Bubbles of a shoreless sea,
The fading leaves of an eternal tree,
Tossed by the winds of destiny are we;
Pain or pleasure then, what boots it;—even this shall pass away.

Where is this God of yours, and where this prophesied upheaval
Of nature's uniformity, of force and law primeval,
This promised reign of righteousness, this triumph of the good,
This judgment of injustice, full-orbed beatitude?
Nay! but Law is the eternal,
All pervading, true supernal,
Guiding suns and breezes vernal,
Thus it has been, is and shall be—evermore, alway.

So speak they in their unbelief with bitter, joyless smiling,
With curling lip and aching heart to fancied peace beguiling,
Sad eyes to callous Force and Law in hopeless hope still turning,
And from His own Creation, God, the great Creator, spurning,
Such their boastful pride of science,
Such their impious self-reliance,
That to Him they bid defiance,
And deem their puny brain the measure of true wisdom's yea and nay.

But Thou, O God, wilt scatter them like shadows of the morning,
Upon their unbelief pour wrath, and shame upon their scorning,
Wilt show their wisdom foolishness, their science vain pretending,
And Thou Thyself both Judge and Law omnipotently blending,
They shall see with awe and wonder,
This time-veil quick rent asunder,
At the trumpet's echoing thunder,
Which ushers in the dawning of the dread Appointed Day.

THINGS THAT TROUBLE.

They that study the Bible are often perplexed with difficulties that, be they as careful as they may, they cannot wholly avoid. They come up in spite of them. As, also, they study it deeply, thoughtfully, wishing to know its whole teaching, the bother increases, and they count many an hour a lost one because it failed to give them the undisturbed instruction they were looking for. The old questions of which we used to read so much, though they may be less discussed in

public, still force themselves up in private minds and carry on their debates upon the forum of private judgments. Along with them come many new ones. The origin of sin, the trinity, election, reprobation, the condemnation of the heathen, future retribution, etc., appear in the minds, even of the most devout believers. They do not wish them; they seek to drive them off; but, impertinent and intrusive, they come and stay where they are not wanted. It is due, perhaps, to human weakness, or probably it is one of Satan's ways of giving trouble. Whatever the cause, the fact is that good people, not speculative, but disposed to submissive confidence, are sometimes confounded by the mysteries that rise before them.

If they think about it properly, they will conclude that in a book like the Bible they must inevitably encounter things too deep for their understanding. Even doing their best, this must be the case. Since also temptations are sure to come, they are as likely to appear in unprofitable questions as in any other way. But the purpose of all earnest people is to avoid criticisms of the divine word, or even hesitation in believing it, and to deepen and carry out this purpose should be regarded as part of their training. After close communion and walk with God, which is a first duty with all, the best thing to do is to cling to the things about which there appears to be no misgiving, putting into practical use also whatever measure of truth is given as an unassailable possession. God is love, and Jesus is his Son the Saviour; the blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin; the Holy Ghost sanctifies; righteousness is good and sin is always evil. Honour, too, and honesty, purity, faithfulness, with kindred virtues, are beyond controversy, and these can be accepted and practised with a certainty of blessing. The defences of faith, of which there are so many these days, have their uses. Many of them are remarkable. But if a Christian wish to strengthen his faith, he is more likely to do so by a confident devotion to unmistakable truth than by reasonings about those he is tempted to question. There is always power in believing and doing.

A GLORIOUS CHURCH.

Now this Church glories in her history, glories in her brotherhood, glories in her conquering march over the world, glories as the custodian of her great ideas, glories in having furnished us at the same time a complete account of the moral economy—explaining sin, interpreting conscience, manifesting God and paving the way for man's return to the Almighty. And its realization of the divine image is still more wonderful in the claim that it furnishes us of His perfect ability. For this idea is closely united with the last, with this distinction—it was not necessary for Christianity to come into the world to teach us that we were imperfect. The world is full to repletion of knowledge on that subject. Nor was it necessary for Christianity to come into the world in order to furnish man with a desire after perfection. Human philosophy, from beginning to end, is in a large measure an account of the abortive efforts that men have made to realize moral perfection.

One peculiarity about Christianity is that it has succeeded where others failed; that it has not only set out to do, but that it has accomplished what it set out to do. Men, I say, have been filled with these ideas—have had dreams of human perfection, just as men usually do in our own day; just as Mr. Spencer has dreamed of the social millennium, when happiness will have reached its acme; just as Fourier, the founder of French socialism, formerly believed that the time would come when happiness would be universally distributed, and when there would be on this earth 150,000,000 of poets, each of them equal to Dante in perfection. The scheme, of course, in its absurdity is measured only by the impossibility and inadequacy of the means for its realization.

Now Christianity comes to tell us that this idea of perfection is a perfectly legitimate one, and to tell us at the same time that it is perfectly feasible, and that it can be realized. The secret of the success that Christianity has achieved lies in two things: first, in the strong emphasis that it lays upon character, and in the second place, upon the answer to the question how character can be changed. It tells man that his happiness consists not in the abundance of the things that he possesses; that you cannot change your life by changing your environment; that you cannot impose on yourself conditions of happiness by increasing wealth; that the secret of happiness consists in consecration, and the man that has it comes heaven with him.—President Patton.