

THE
Montreal Diocesan Theological College
MAGAZINE.

VOL. I.

MONTREAL, APRIL, 1893.

No. 3.

FASTING.

“Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.”—*Matt. vi, 16.*

There is a proneness in human nature to extremes in everything, and in religion, perhaps, more than in any thing else. On the one hand, man is prone to glory in his shame as living without God in the world; on the other, to make a parade of his religion and expose himself to the charge of hypocrisy. Comparatively few are satisfied to worship God in spirit and in truth for example, to appear not so much unto men to fast and pray and do alms, as unto their Father who is in secret, leaving unto their Father which seeth in secret to reward them openly. This is too much the case in the matter of fasting. Is it not the truth (putting aside the question of parade) that the wholesome exercise has fallen into much neglect, with many professing Christians? Why is this? Surely my text distinctly stamps, with the seal of inspiration, a season for fasting; and surely the example of our blessed Lord, and the precepts of the Word of God, clearly indicate that it is a most useful auxiliary in our conflict with the world, the flesh, and the devil. And does not our church provide an admirably selected time for the practice of the duty? Why, then, is fasting to any extent discarded?

I do not believe that the reason is the fear of countenancing superstition: nor do I believe that the reason is, the idea that it is a mere form devoid of the hope of spiritual benefit: nor yet the belief that it is destitute of Scriptural foundation and authority. On the contrary, it is generally admitted that “fasting” has Divine authority.

We know that, when rightly used, it greatly aids the spiritual worshipper; and we know that, thus commended, no abuse can warrant its rejection