

have gained for him a weight and influence in deliberation that do not always fall to the lot of the most eminent debaters. Even when excitement runs high the tall spare figure, the somewhat precise and formal bearing, the modest demeanour and the pacific tones of the learned Principal, as he proceeds to address the Fathers and Brethren, have generally a soothing effect, and he is listened to with silent respect even by those who do not always accept his conclusions.

Dr. Caven is frequently called upon to fill prominent pulpits, and to preach sermons on special occasions. He is in great request for church openings, and his solid, clear and fervent evangelical discourses are much relished, especially by the more thoughtful of his hearers. When he preaches it is evident to every listener that he is deeply impressed with a sense of responsibility. He speaks as in the presence of the Great King, and is accountable to Him for the fidelity with which he delivers His message. As far as time and opportunity permit, he takes an active part in the promotion of philanthropic enterprises. While strongly attached to his own Church Dr. Caven is large-hearted and catholic in his sympathies.

By his clear apprehension of truth and his habits of faithful and patient investigation, Principal Caven has mastered the Theology of the Reformed Churches, and is its able and persuasive exponent. He is not a discoverer in the field of systematic divinity. He has added nothing specially new to theological speculation. For him speculation and theorizing have no charms. The higher criticism, so-called, meets with but chilling reception from him. He is conservatively orthodox as a theologian, and as such he renders important service. He feels the ground firm beneath his tread, and leaves to others the task of pursuing the phantasms which fascinate many of his contemporaries. He keeps steadfastly to the old landmarks; he contends earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints. In the discharge of his teaching functions, he is earnest, painstaking, faithful and courteous. In him his students not only find a preceptor but a friend. While he holds the principles to which he is attached with unflinching conviction, there is nothing whatever of the bigot in his composition. He cheerfully concedes to others the rights he claims for himself, and is withal one of the most genial and lovable of men. Though he himself might deprecate being classed among prominent Canadians, it is the rank cheerfully accorded him in virtue of the honoured position he occupies, and because of the many excellent qualifications he possesses. All Canadians who know him entertain a high respect for the Principal of Knox College. SIGMA.

EVANGELISTIC WORK AT OAKVILLE.

MR. EDITOR.—We have been greatly blessed in Oakville by a month's labour of the well known evangelists, Rev. Messrs. H. T. Crossley, and J. E. Hunter.

They commenced their esteemed services here on Sabbath, the 2nd of September, and continued with us a full month. On that morning, Mr. Crossley preached in the Presbyterian Church on "Search the Scriptures" and most favourably and deeply impressed the large audience that eagerly and devoutly listened to him. In an equally profitable and pleasant manner, Mr. Hunter preached in the Methodist Church, on the same morning. On the afternoon of that first Sabbath, in the Presbyterian Church, both evangelists addressed the young people in a very happy manner. A large assemblage filled the fine Methodist church at night. Mr. Hunter gave a brief, impressive and powerful Bible reading. Mr. Crossley preached on the first words of the first Psalm, portraying with great vividness the four characters: the ungodly, the sinful, the scornful, the good and happy man. The meetings were held during the first week in the Methodist church; in the Presbyterian through the second week, and so on to the close.

Mr. Crossley is an excellent singer; he used fully the choirs of the two Churches; he gave many solos and duets and quartettes, and made all his sermons more impressive by repeatedly singing with admirable effect several sacred songs.

Mr. Hunter is a born leader of men. His past experience is of great service to him, and he can use all his resources excellently well. He possesses great tact and power, and he can do anything he chooses, of a reasonable kind, with his audiences. His appeals

at the close were always solemn, and the better class of people must have wondered how any could resist him.

On each night of the meetings, parties were asked to stand up, and in this way indicate their desire to be prayed for; and usually, before the close of the meeting, forming indeed an after meeting, persons were invited to the front, were talked to, were urged to say something about their condition; and then guided in all the duties they should undertake.

Of inquirers, there have been 327. Numbers of these came from Bronte, from Munn's Corners, from Postville, from Sheridan, from Carmans, from intervening districts and from the country miles beyond. Some remarkable cases of reformation have occurred, and very genuine hopes of numerous conversions are cherished. Both Churches have been greatly revived and will be much strengthened.

In recalling in the briefest way these occurrences, two meetings were a little more prominent than others. On Sabbath evening the 23rd of September, the Presbyterian Church was crowded to its utmost capacity, filling every inch of space, the gallery, the aisles, the choir, the front and sides of the pulpit platform and stairs. There was a wonderful sea of upturned faces, the interest ever deepening through the earnest prayers, the thrilling songs, the solemn appeals, and all culminating as the admirable discourse became more and more powerful. The sermon delivered was one of Mr. Crossley's best, on the words "Great is the mystery of Godliness." There is the great mystery of the Divine existence, of the Saviour's incarnation, of the Spirit's whole work, of death, endless destruction, eternal life.

On the following Sabbath morning, in the Presbyterian Church, a union sacramental service was conducted, all available space was occupied, and a fair estimate is, 500 persons took the communion. Five ministers took part in the solemn engagements, directing the distribution of the elements, and sharing in the great joy of the people.

On Tuesday, the 2nd of October, the last meeting was held. The large Methodist Church was crowded. The united choirs sang with great spirit and in excellent taste. Rev. Mr. Kettlewell gave expression to his feelings in subdued and earnest tones. He declared that he had been greatly, personally, benefited, and spoke of the members of his family who had been blessed, and now he would present his thank-offering, which he hoped others would imitate.

The Rev. Mr. Meikle was then called. He spoke very affectionately of the esteemed evangelists, the importance of their labours, the fine Christian spirit they had displayed, the excellent fraternal feelings they had helped to produce, pervading these two Churches, and the abundant prayers that would ever follow them in their subsequent course. He then read a brief address, which had been submitted to the business committee, and by them was presented to these two brethren:

Rev. H. T. Crossley, and Rev. J. E. Hunter. Beloved Brethren,—the hour has now come, in the holy providence of God, when we must say farewell! We cannot do so without a few words of kindly expression and fervent good wishes. We have truly enjoyed your excellent services, and your whole mode of conducting them. We have always been cheered and animated by your sweet service of song. We have been instructed, guided, blessed by all your sermons, your Bible readings, your earnest exhortations, your ardent appeals, your solemn remonstrances, and shall ever bless God for all your labours in this community during the full month you have been with us. We are well assured that some thousands have been benefited by you.

Our Churches have been refreshed, and have been fitted to go forward with more energy than ever in the worship and service of the great Master. We cannot number all who have been converted by the Spirit of God, through your instrumentality, but we feel confident it will prove a goodly company from the 327 inquirers who have been forward, and have indicated their determination to accept Christ.

We bid you Godspeed in the Divine name and strength. We shall expect to hear of still greater triumphs in your future engagements; we shall follow you with our ardent prayers, while we are on the footstool, and hope to welcome you to the mansions of bliss, when all work has been completed here below.

Signed in the name and on behalf of the Methodist Church of Canada, W. Kettlewell; and of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, W. Meikle.

Oakville, October 2, 1888.

Pastor and People.

GOD KNOWS.

O weary heart by care bowed down,
God knows!
The Christ who wore the thorny crown,
God knows.
Immanuel, in Thee we trust
Through joys, through woes;
Content to feel that Thou art just—
To say "God knows!"

In hours of sad soul-loneliness
There comes the Comforter to bless—
God knows.
"My peace I leave with you"—My peace—
The love that lives when all loves cease—
God knows.

O love of God! O peace divine!
Heaven begun in Thee doth shine
Deep down this earth-dark soul of mine,
To feel God knows.
By sorrow taught
I bless the thought
With comfort fraught:—
God knows.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

CONCERNING HYMN STORIES.

BY JOHN DUNBAR.

It is somewhat noteworthy that while many of our great hymns, like many of our great men, have circumstances associated with them, and stories told regarding them, yet many of these are merely fostered fictions, having no foundation in fact. From long use and wont, however, their authenticity is seldom questioned, and thus they become veritable appendages to their respective hymns. The design in view in continuing to circulate and perpetuate these unauthenticated stories is, doubtless, to give additional interest to the hymns and produce an increased emotional or sentimental effect. But a hymn gains nothing by such fictitious adornments, and the relating of them will not add to the intelligent accuracy or historical trustworthiness of those who relate them. Permit me now to present but a few specimens and *ex uno disce omnes*.

Going no further back than the Reformation, it is supposed that the soul-stirring events connected with Luther's appearance at the Diet of Worms gave origin to the popular assumption that these called into existence his celebrated hymn, "A mighty fortress is our God." But history shows that, while the Diet of Worms was held in 1521, Luther's first hymn-book did not appear until three years afterwards, and even then, of the five pieces contributed by him, this hymn was not one. One authority ascribes it to 1529, in which year the Diet of Spire was held, while another assigns it to the year following, in which year the Augsburg Diet met. Be this as it may, it is well known that Luther frequently sung this hymn during its session, and that it was only after this that it became so popular among the people. Such being the case, it is highly improbable that this hymn, when known, should have had such a rapid and far-reaching popularity, and yet have remained nine years in existence unappreciated and unemployed.

Gerhard's notable hymn, too, "Commit thou all thy griefs," etc., is not without its story, which is this: Being banished from Berlin, he and his wife, while travelling on foot towards the frontier, stopped for refreshment at a wayside inn. She, well-nigh heart-broken, gave way to tears, and her sorrow sank deep into the sympathetic soul of her husband. He sought to comfort her by repeating some of God's gracious promises, such as "Commit thy way unto the Lord," etc., but all seemed unavailing, as the weeping wife still remained disconsolate. He then retired to an adjoining arbour for prayer, and there, with the glorious heaven above and the bounteous earth beneath, he wrote this hymn. But unfortunately for the truthfulness of the story, the hymn appeared in 1666, while the banishment did not take place till the following year.

If we have no story connected with Toplady's celebrated hymn, "Rock of Ages," we have one connected with himself and his conversion which preceded, if it did not produce that notable hymn. It is said that the singing of the hymn "Come, ye sinners, poor and needy," in connection with the ser-