

following, "numerous disciples . . . without a tithe of their ability or attainments," are throwing their influence into the scale of error and even of atheism. Now a statement like this is too general to mean much. About all the effect it would have upon the ordinary reader would be to conjure up a host of every creatures with horns and hoofs, who are trying to do with the general public what Burns represents the devil as doing with the exciseman. It is very true that many of our leading scientific men are Theists and some of them Agnostics, but who and where are these terrible Atheists? Let us have some kind of definiteness and not be making loose statements, the general effect of which will be to taboo scientific men as a class, and make of them a horrible bugbear with which to terrify "timid souls."

We pass on. After being informed that "the tide is undoubtedly setting very strongly just now in that direction,"—the direction of error and even of atheism, I suppose—we are furnished with several thoughts intended to alleviate the pain caused to the "timid souls" by their "grave fears." For instance, we are told that "we have God on our side." It is certainly very comfortable for us to be told this, though it must be very uncomfortable for the "many savans" and their numerous disciples. It appears to me, however, that it would savour a little less of spiritual conceit if we didn't monopolize the Almighty so entirely. There are several other consoling considerations advanced which are quite convincing enough for anybody, unless, perchance, for an infidel.

Coming to the concluding paragraph, I find something to admire and something to do the other thing with. The writer is sound when he thinks that the best offset to scepticism is "a more earnest and fearless assertion and utterance of God's Word." The preacher who can so handle Christian truth that it appeals not so much to the traditional beliefs as to the living conscience and the living mind of his hearer, will ever be one of the strongest defenders of Christianity. So far so good. But what of this passage, "Keep your doubts, if you are ever tempted to have them, to yourself. You can never convert men by telling them of your doubts even after you have conquered them." What idea is it that the first sentence is calculated to convey? Is it not that "doubt" is a sinful thing, something that we are tempted to? And isn't such an idea as that a cruel and a mischievous one? Doubts may sometimes be of the devil, but in thousands of cases they are only the natural offshoots of a healthy mind beginning to look at matters from its own standpoint. To talk about doubt in such a way as to make the possessor of doubts, which he can't help possessing, feel that he has been tempted into evil is a most unwise and unkind thing to do. Then as to preachers saying nothing about their doubts, I do not believe in any men airing these doubts of theirs as evidences of their lofty intellectual position. But I do believe that they would do a great deal of good to a great many minds, if they would frankly unveil a little of their own inward conflict and tell those who are perplexed how doubt may be overcome. If the writer of the editorial has himself gone down into the abyss of doubt and has fought his way up to the clear sunlight of undoubting conviction, I, for one, will gladly give up my pulpit to him any Sunday he chooses to come and preach a sermon on "My doubts, and how I conquered them."

On the whole I felt a little sorry to see such an editorial in a Congregational paper. I do not think we ought to be perpetually fingering with scepticism, but I do think that when we touch it we should do so with a firm, fair, manly grasp. In London Tower the visitor sees here and there the suits of mail, the swords and the shields, which did stern duty in the old days when Norman and Saxon were hurled at each other in deadly conflict. Those symbols of war are out of date now. They would be of little use at a Sedan or a Plevna. What they are to the modern battle-field, articles like the one we have criticised are to the spiritual conflicts of the age. They may be suitable to a time that is dead and gone, but they are not adequate to the needs of the present hour. The "timid souls" must have a stronger defence if their "grave fears" are to be removed.

HUGH PEDLEY.

Cobourg, Nov. 24, 1879.

CANADA CONGREGATIONAL INDIAN MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—Congratulating the Board of Publication on the result of their late meeting, and yourself, also, on the relief it may afford you, I will now try to fulfil the promise I made some time since, of sending you a few lines concerning our Indian Mission, and of my success during another season, in advocating the claims of the Society. Before this may have reached the eye of your readers, I shall, I trust, for the second time, and partially for the fourth, have again completed my canvass of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec on its behalf; and I am happy and thankful to say that almost uniformly in every place I have visited I have been the partaker of marked Christian hospitality, from members of various sections of that Church, and especially from our Presbyterian brethren, as well as from our own; and as to pecuniary results, as indicated at our annual meeting in June, the receipts from the same area of country have been in excess of those received last year, now amounting to more than \$178, while some places are yet to be heard from, and from whence early remittances are hoped for and earnestly desired.

The work of the Society upon the whole, has been encouraging. Although the change of agency in the mission field has been somewhat trying and disappointing. Mr. Lister, who was in charge of our missions in the north of the Georgian Bay, had made considerable progress in acquiring the Ojibawa language, from which large encouraging results had been anticipated. But as these did not become apparent or were not satisfactory to himself, at the commencement of this year he left the service of the Society, but we hope it may yet be found that he has not laboured in vain. His late post at Mississauga has been occupied during the past summer by our valued missionary, Miss E. Baylis, whose former field, for the previous eight summers, has been at Spanish River, but as on her arrival there last spring she found that a Government day school had been opened there and a teacher appointed, and as the saw mills were then closed through the death of Mr. John Chaffey, the former owner, and consequently fewer Indians congregated there, with the approbation of the Board she went and took charge of the same, after Mr. Lister and his family had left. She was able to secure the attendance of many of the children of the Indians at her day and Sunday schools, and some Bible readings among the adults, but not without much determined perseverance, as the agents of darkness and superstition tried to prevent any from attending, but, she was happy to report, with little success. At her earnest request, and at the desire of the Indians themselves, the Board have been able to secure the services of a young man who had laboured there with Mr. Lister for a short time last year, Mr. John Anderson, who will carry on the work through the coming winter. As Miss Baylis was returning to her home in Montreal at the beginning of October, she had the pleasure of meeting him on the Collingwood boat going up, and he has since reported on his arrival. He found that everything had been left very comfortable for his reception and had just commenced his labours.

The work at French Bay, under the care of our Indian brother, the Rev. W. Walker, is still progressing favourably. The writer had the pleasure of meeting him in Southampton, at the period of his visit there for the Society, at the end of September, and was pleased to learn that the church, the Sunday and day schools, with their temperance organization, were progressing favourably. Mr. Walker had been translating some of our Congregational hymns, nearly fifty in number, into the Ojibawa, the printing of which he was then seeking to secure.

The field in the north, from the scattered condition of the Indians, is wide, and from the native character and disposition very difficult to cultivate, but when, as at French Bay on the Saugeen River, they are kept from too direct contact with the irreligious whites (and no whites are allowed to squat on that reserve), the field is more hopeful (save where Roman Catholic influence obtains) and permanent fruit seems to be secured,

not only in the number of true conversions, but in temporal outward improvement. In order to such results elsewhere, we need more faithful qualified labourers, more persevering, believing prayer. In order to the former, more funds will be necessary that if found they may be employed. At the present time, I regret to say, we are, notwithstanding an apparent increase of funds, in debt to our missionaries as well as to the Treasurer. I hope therefore to secure enlarged aid in my renewed visits to our cities, towns and villages, and from the churches of Christ therein. That more persevering, believing prayer may be secured we need to feel more our personal responsibility to study the character of the work, and the claims the aborigines have upon us. Then we shall plead not only that the Lord will send forth more labourers into His harvest and incline His people to sustain them, but that He will fully qualify them and those in the field, more and more for His service, and abundantly bless the work of their hands. Longing for such results, I remain, dear Editor, yours etc.,

JAMES HOWELL, *Secretary and Agent.*
Box 48, Orangeville, Ont., Nov. 24, 1879.

News of the Churches.

REV. W. H. A. CLARIS, of Sarnia, is making a tour through the churches soliciting aid for their new building in course of erection. Lend a hand.

STONEYVILLE.—The church here has lately reduced the debt on their building from \$800 to \$400. This is good news for these times. Keep the ball a rolling.

LISTOWEL.—The Rev. R. Wallace, M.A., of London, lectured in the Congregational Church, Listowel, on Thursday, 27th ult. Subject: "Hunted o'er the Heather; or, the Story of the Scottish Covenanters." The lecture was an excellent one.

TORONTO.—The fortnightly meeting of the Fraternal Society in connection with the Bond street Congregational Church was held on November 28th. The esteemed pastor of the church, Rev. Thos. Handford, presided. Rev. W. H. A. Claris, of Sarnia, who was present, opened the meeting with prayer. Rev. J. B. Silcox delivered an exceedingly able and eloquent address on "Grip and Grit." The paper, although brimming over with humour, was suggestive of many excellent lessons, of which the crowd of hearers signified their approval by oft-repeated applause. The proceedings were interspersed with readings and music by the Misses Corlett, Mrs. Halliday, the pastor, and other friends of the church.—CON.

REV. WM. PEACOCK, pastor of the church at Margaree, Cape Breton, writes us concerning the work of the Lord in that place, as follows. *Dear Brother,*—The Congregational church of this place has been greatly blessed of late. During the month of September a few friends who had the prosperity of Zion at heart, met and agreed to hold a series of meetings to ask God for an outpouring of His Spirit on the Church. The meetings were commenced and in a short time the prayer hearing and prayer answering God sent us an answer. Souls became anxious to be saved. We soon saw that we would require help to carry on the work of God among us. We lifted up our eyes and looked about to see where our help could be found, but could see none. Meantime, He that guides His people in a way they know not was opening up the way before us. The Rev. C. Ross, late of the United States, was labouring with acceptance with the church at Lake Side, Richmond Co., Cape Breton. The Lord put it in his heart to visit Margaree. In his coming at such a time we see the wonderful providence of God. On the second Sabbath of October he preached from St. John xxi. 6, 7 verses, a sermon which was blessed to many souls. On the third Sabbath the Rev. J. Whitman, of Manchester, N.S., came to our help for two Sabbaths, whose labours the Lord was pleased to bless. Mr. Ross laboured with us six weeks. During that time the Lord has added to the church seventy-two members. We feel that we cannot express our gratitude to God for the blessing sent us. The good work is still going on.