

CHURCH UNION.—II.

(By J. M. Harper, M.A., Ph. D.).

The two fundamental warrants, which I referred to in my last article, and which place the question of church union on a basis assuring to the intelligence of the three churches in Canada, proposing to be united organically, have been, or once were, recognized as being substantial by the Rev. John Mackay, at least that gentleman tells us that nine years ago he "was an ardent supporter of the union movement." The two warrants I have been emphasizing, were then as palpable to him, no doubt, as they are to all of us now. But he claims that certain disappointments have led him to make a closer study of the whole question, and to make up his present attitude on the proposed church union in Canada. That is, Dr. Mackay confesses to having forsaken the eternal or fixed aspects of a discovered evolution, and is now willing to go his own gait amid sundry "bugaboos" he has succeeded in mustering; to divert public attention, from the divinity in the evolution itself, to the mistakes which certain union advocates may possibly make while following in the trend of the evolution. When Dr. Mackay was a boy, it must have been somewhat unbalancing for other youngsters to be with him on a dark night—if his prophecy in calling up startling "shapes and fancies" was as fully developed then as it is now. An evolution is an evolution—no mishap but a verity—however men in their weakness may make mistakes in their endeavors to help it out or to retard it. As I pointed out, there is God's divinity as well as a human necessity in the main movement towards union; and, if Dr. Mackay was once an honest advocate of union, he is now only palavering with first principles, when he claims that he is not a unionist any longer. What he would have us, perhaps, understand from his present attitude is that he has made up his mind to vote against union, as no doubt many others in all three churches have. That is his own burden to bear. But surely no Presbyterian College Principal—one out of our six—is going to pose as a Mrs. Partington, as one who would turn an evolution out of its eternal course. If he be out on a canvass for votes, then I for one have no more to say about the matter. I have no sympathy with a polemic of that sort. I have had my say in your paper, sir, over the fundamentals of union, more than a year ago. The Joint Union Committee has had his say, as many others have had their say, on the first principles which lie as the basis of the question. And Dr. Mackay must surely see with the rest of us that his pleadings are somewhat out of order, sneaking as one would at a public meeting. Yet not to be discourteous, it may be worth our while to take note of some of the eccentricities of Dr. Mackay's polemic, which savours, I am afraid, more or less of the average politician looking for a triumph for his way of pleading. The Union Committee, as I take it, who have just been telling us that there is no "Case against Church Union," have been laboring for no triumph for union. Their task is done, and has been well done. An evolution that can boast of its warrant as coming from God, at least as it is plainly laid down in the Word of God, and its other warrant as coming from our own necessities and commercial common-sense, needs no canvassing for votes, as in an ordinary struggle in behalf of some secondary impulse or silly conventionality. And, hence, in referring to Dr. Mackay's line of contention, there is little of a purpose to serve, save to take note, as from a sample, how his wayward logic runs.

From his first article, as well as from his third, Dr. Mackay seems to stand in awe of any step that might be taken to be an imitation of the polity of the Roman Catholic church. Did he get this dread from his ancestry, or is he only anxious to arouse it in the breasts of those who are prone

to make more of their prejudices than of solid argument, while discussing with their neighbors any public question? In this dread, which he reveals in a rhetoric not devoid of something that looks just a little like cunning, he accuses the Union Committee, in their message to the people, of advocating one legislative head for the proposed united church—a legislative head which Dr. Mackay has no hesitation in presenting to his readers as a veritable Protestant Pope. As a matter of fact, the Union Committee have advocated nothing. They have merely told us that there is no insurmountable impediment to union on the part of the three churches in negotiation. Yet Dr. Mackay undertakes to tell those who are going to vote for or against union, that it is easy for a single legislative centre to persuade itself that it is controlled by the Spirit of Christ, while it may be only following its own ambitions or corrupt tendencies, and that the smaller the group the more easy the deception. Having the dazzling prestige and far-reaching power of such a position, a single man or group of men may enforce on the world a mere human whim as the mind and will of Christ! In other words, with the dread of Roman policy upon him, or with the desire to inoculate others with such a dread, Dr. Mackay places himself in the embarrassing position of saying that a divinely warranted evolution should be turned back, because there are always wicked men around to utilize it as a means of promoting their own personal aggrandizement. Have the denominations, proposing to unite, been brought up in the fear of a pope or in the light of a democratic religious freedom and intelligence?

And, as if that were not enough for him to allege, he further tells us that the Roman Catholic church is in no true sense a national church, as if the Union Committee had been holding before their eyes the Roman Catholic system as a model all the time they were preparing their verdict as to whether there were impediments to union or not. And who will tell us what this means if it be not palpable nonsense? No church controlled by ecclesiastics, says this anti-unionist, "can be a national church, and no church as heterogeneous, as the new union church would be, could be anything else but controlled by ecclesiastics in a very short time." All of which means, if it means anything, that since the new union church cannot be a national church or may become a national church through the wire-pulling of its ecclesiastics under whom there can be no national church, the idea of church union should not be entertained. Indeed such pleading is so provocative to drollery that one had better drop it just here, even if there be a probability of others looking for more of it, in some of the other paragraphs of Dr. Mackay's articles.

The question as to how the vote is going to go is troubling no one, as it seems to be troubling Principal Mackay. There is no canvass of any kind on foot in favour of union, as far as I have heard, among the churches. What troubles us more, than any final issue should not be entertained. The Union Committee, is that one of our six Presbyterian College principals should so far forget himself as to mystify the *raison d'être* of the movement which is as surely of divine warrant as that the sun shines, if the members of the Union Committee are to be looked upon as being sane.

Quebec, Que.

Current Literature for December has a most varied as well as a most attractive table of contents. Among the leading articles are: "Is Mrs. Eddy's Leadership in Danger?" Mark Twain's Idea of Heaven. "What Think Ye of Christ?"—some twentieth century views. Scientific Press on the Polar Expedition of Doctor Cook. In "Recent Poetry" will be found verse of considerable merit. \$3.00 per year. Current Literature Publishing Co., 41-43 25th Street, New York.

BRITISH MAGAZINES.

At this season of the year many of our subscribers will be selecting their periodical literature for the ensuing year, and we desire again to bring to their notice the sterling monthlies which come to us from Britain. They are: The Contemporary Review, The Nineteenth Century and After, The Fortnightly, and Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine. The first three are \$4.50 each, and Blackwood's \$3.00. They are all exact reprints of the original publications, and by addressing The Leonard Scott Publication Company, 7 and 9 Warren Street, New York City, the clubbing prices of two or more may be ascertained. The November copies of all the above have been on our table for several weeks, and are replete with best thoughts of the best writers in the mother land.

The November Studio contains much that will interest all lovers of Art. All the illustrations are well executed, and there are several pages devoted to the reproduction of oil paintings, colored etchings, mezzotints, etc. The Art of Edward John Gregory, R.A., by A. Lys Baldry, is illustrated by numerous engravings; and in "Table Talk" correspondents in the leading cities of Europe in able letters give their impressions of current Art in continental Art circles. As we have often said before, The Studio is, so far as we know, the best periodical of its kind published anywhere. Address—4 Leicester Square, London, W.C.

A TRIP TO ALASKA.

A trip to Alaska is one seldom undertaken by people in the British Isles, and of the many bookings undertaken by the Grand Trunk Railway officials in London, few tickets show the destination to be that part far north of Canada, where coal and gold, together with meteorological observations, are often supposed to be the chief reason for the existence of that land. That such a trip can be made with little out of the ordinary fatigue of travelling is well proved by a recent communication sent to Mr. Fred C. Salter, European Traffic Manager of the Grand Trunk Railway, from Mr. Bromley Challoner, F.R.G.S., who has just returned from the north-western limit of the North American Continent. The letter has an added interest by reason of the fact that on the day of the official opening of the Grand Trunk Railway's new offices at 17-19 Cockspur street, S.W., Mr. Challoner was the first person to book a passage with the company for Canada. On Dominion provision made for the journey, and, provision made for the journey, and, in the first week in October, back in England again, the well-known geographer has been pleased to write to the Grand Trunk offices expressing his entire satisfaction with the easy way in which the journey was accomplished. After thanking the railway officials for making his means of transportation pleasant and comfortable, he says: "I was very pleased, indeed, with both the road and rolling stock of your company, and in my opinion it is second to none on the Continent of America. The arrangements you made for me very much added to my comfort and enabled me to reach my destination in the quickest possible time, and I must say I experienced the greatest civility from the company's staff during my passage on your road. The route you worked out for me was a most interesting one, and coming back as I did, over the Rockies and the Great Lakes, I did not travel over a single mile a second time except the short run between Sarnia and Toronto. Will you be good enough to send me particulars of your 'Round the World Tours.' I am thinking that next spring I may have another run out to the west, and if I do, I should like to return home via the east." Thus the whole of Great Britain is quickly put in touch by this great railway system, with what frequently is said to be the uttermost parts of the earth.—Dublin (Ireland) Daily Express, Oct. 19, 1909.