

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

All communications for the Editorial, News of Churches, and Correspondence Columns should be addressed to the Managing Editor, Box 2648, P. O. Toronto

Pastors and church officers are particularly requested to forward items for "News of the Churches" column

TORONTO, THURSDAY, JULY 8th, 1880.

THE Rev. John Burton, B.A., will take charge of the INDEPENDENT until the editor returns from England. Communications for the editor to be addressed as indicated above.

ASSUMING, for a few weeks, an editorial chair, we feel a freedom in this proposed article which could scarcely be felt by any whose relation to the paper has been closer and more responsible. We are a kind of in-looker rather than in-dweller, therefore we use our liberty to speak. It may be assumed that our Congregational churches have a place in the great Church work of the Christian world, if not, we had better disband. But we don't disband, therefore our place and work remain. Having no central authority in the form of Synod or Conference, and being in Canada widely scattered, we need more than other denominations a denominational paper. Yet those other denominations find a paper necessary, much more than we. It is a serious question whether, should our paper cease, the denomination would not be in danger of thorough disintegration. Yet it cannot stand without money, even though, as is the fact, its editorial work is freely given. The printer must be paid—and the post office. Now we are not begging, neither are we whining, but we expect every man to do his duty, which every man is *not* doing. Mark that *not*, gentle reader, and let it ring throughout that church with which you are connected. There is no reason why a copy of this paper should not find its way into every family in our churches; don't *borrow* your Church paper, it will not pay—the printer—no, nor yourselves; remember no good work is done without sacrifice, and it is a good work to extend the influence of the only means of keeping you acquainted with what your brethren are doing. Let us press the following: (1) Subscribers in arrears, kindly remit at once; we need it. I make a mistake, *we* don't get any—but the mechanic needs it, you who labour daily know what that means. (2) Let every subscriber seek to obtain another at once, or let individuals or churches purchase say ten or more copies for gratuitous distribution. It will pay, and more, it will aid the churches' work. (3) Remember, if quality is worth considering, the paper *is* worth its dollar per annum, and its improvement rests with you, give it a hearty support, and the management can undertake greater things. Already it has been characterized in England as "a plucky little paper," give it something to live upon and it will yet do good work for you, your family, your Church and your Master; and what your hand findeth to do, do it *now*, for the night cometh. Finally, why should any well-wisher of his Church *stop* the paper. A few, our business manager informs us, are sending their dollar and the order "stop." May I remind such that no money is made by this publication, it is carried on simply in the interest of the Congregational Church, and surely individuals when they get a *quid pro quo* can afford the subscription price while others are spending time and money to make our paper powerful for good. Kindly recall that "stop," my brother.

A MATTER FOR THOUGHT.

THE General Assembly of the Presbyterian churches of the Republic has had under consideration one matter which it would not harm many Canadian churches to ponder well. It found that very many churches were pastorless, and it bravely set itself to discover the secret of these vacant pulpits. The conclusion to which it came was that the calamity might very largely be traced to the popular idea so prevalent that the minister is responsible for the prosperity of

the church. The position of the present average church is that it is to succeed or fail according to the ability of the minister alone. On the man of the pulpit the burden of success is placed, while the men of the pews refuse to share that burden with him, no matter how heavily he may be weighted.

The inevitable outcome of such a condition of affairs is something like the following. The candidate for the pulpit is confronted with such questions as these: "How smart are you?" "Can you make the rental of these pews pay the salary and all current expenses?" "Can you steer successfully between the Scylla of orthodoxy and the Charybdis of liberalism?" It is not godliness but smartness that is sought in the minister. Not the salvation of men, but big pew rents, that becomes the highest consideration. Not the truth as Christ taught it, but the truckling to all opinions, it is that must characterize the sermon. And if the minister cannot meet these inordinate demands, he is starved out. Or if the church cannot find a pastor who would fulfil its foolish conditions, it is content to let its pulpit remain vacant until its *smart* man shall turn up.

There is a terrible force in these statements. There has been introduced into churches of late a great deal of vulgar ambition for success as a church in a purely material way, and to imagine a congregation in any growing town which would be content to worship in a little rude stone church, would be to imagine and not to realize. Brick, mortar, dressed stone, black walnut and upholstery, a high steeple with bells, and a big debt are preferred. And then we must have a preacher who can preach

"To please graceless sinners,
And fill empty pews."

This is the *modus operandi* in too many cases, and it is a crying shame that such a state of things should appertain to any circle of men calling themselves by the name of the lowly Christ.

The Assembly has done good by calling attention to this matter. It needed a bold stroke of the sword, and it got it by the finding of the Assembly. It is degrading to the ministers of the Gospel to make them responsible for "drawing" crowds as if they were theatre actors. And yet this is altogether too common. And it often happens that preachers who are necessitated to do some work or suffer starvation are forced to become sensational or half-sceptical in their pulpit methods and efforts in order to draw. The piety of the pulpit cannot be sustained where there is the opinion prevalent in the pews that he must by his smartness make the church a financial and social success. In apostolic days the matter stood thus, "You (the people) must serve tables, that is, you must attend to the secular in the assembly, while we will give ourselves to the ministry of the Word and to prayer." And that should be the arrangement yet. For a minister has his hands full, who studies and preaches the Word. And the least any church can do is to relieve him from any financial consideration.

The curse of this day is its worship of smartness. Before that idol thousands bow the supple knee. It is more taking than goodness with many. But smartness lives very near to trickiness and shame. And in the same neighbourhood live worldliness and pride. What wonder when such a premium is placed on smart men just because they are smart, that many of them get intoxicated by the fulsome worship accorded them, and go down to ruin and drag their train of admirers with them into the slough. What the age wants is a downright respect for goodness and Christ-likeness and simplicity. These alone are the Church's ornament and strength.

CHEERY CHURCHES.

BEAUTY becometh God's house. But what kind of beauty is it which is to form a temple ornament? Is it, as some maintain, moral beauty alone, the symmetry of devout and righteous worshippers? Or does it also include material beauty, whatever from art or nature that can render the house of prayer attractive?

The sublimity of moral excellence is very becoming

to the place of worship. In fact, nothing can be a substitute for this. All the material decking in the world cannot take the place of righteousness. As the smothering of a man's coffin with rarest flowers cannot stand in lieu of the personal worth to be remembered, so most artistic arrangements of the house of God cannot stand for godliness. Flowers, kalsomining, stained glass, are a mockery in a church building without the grace of devout worship.

But provided that there is this character, beauty investing the worshippers, may there not be the addition of material loveliness? We do not ask for this in such profusion as to make it the prominent matter while worship is to sink into the subordinate place. But in a wisely arranged manner, may not flowers, for instance, help to render attractive the house of God during their season? After a calm consideration of the whole matter, we cannot see any force in the objections which many urge to the presence of flowers in the sanctuary. On the contrary we think that pleasant surroundings may help to fit the mind for a reverent worship and an attentive regard for the teaching.

It is amazing how long prejudices live, how tenacious they are of existence. The Lutheran Reformation drove out material beauty from the Christian sanctuaries because it had been so largely used by the Church of Rome. And barrenness and cheerlessness were the prevailing features of the church edifices of the Reformers. That prejudice—which is really no more than a prejudice—has come down to our own day, and still flourishes in many quarters. It would almost seem as if many place a premium on material dulness about the temple of prayer. Go to many of these places, especially in the country, and see the absolute lack of all adornment. Note the docks and thistles in the yard, the broken door-steps, the dilapidated fences, and then within, the severity in the appearance of seats and pulpit. Does not the aesthetic tastes of such persons as are comfortable under such things stand in sad need of cultivation?

God has made a beautiful world; the landscapes are glorious; the skies are usually in radiant dress; the flowers wave their censers in the sanctuary of the woods and ravines; why should there be so much enjoyment of the grandeur in nature, and then such an adherence to the cold, passionless, and unlovable in the Christian sanctuary?

Think over this, and don't, dear iconoclast, exclude the lovely lily and the fragrant rose from the house of God. Whatever can make that house attractive to the little children, and make them think it is the most delightful spot in this world, do not be afraid to bring in there. And the God who welcomes our worship will not forget our appreciation of all the beautiful things with which it is allied.

Literary Notices.

Knight's Popular History of England.

The eighth and last volume of Knight's Popular History of England, reprinted for the Standard Series by I. K. Funk & Co., New York, has been received. That what "The Times" characterized as "the history for English youth" should be placed within the reach of every home is no small boon to the public that should be a reading public. As the reprint is now complete, a few words upon the author and the book. Charles Knight was an Englishman, son of a bookseller, and himself a publisher whose whole energies have been devoted throughout an honourable and long career to the establishment of reliable and popular literature. He worked in a cause identical with that in which the Messrs. Chambers, of Edinburgh, spent their days and established their fame. The "Penny Cyclopædia," and the larger English one, the "Penny Magazine" and a "Pictorial Shakespeare" are among the works he edited or published. The "History of England" is the work of seven years, taken from the later and most mature part of his life. It is written in a clear, calm, bold style, and with a wonderful freedom from bias. We may differ, and think, e.g., he scarcely does justice to the fourth George, whose character he seems to sum up, in the estimate of