

THE WESLEYAN

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1879.

EXECUTIVE BOOK COMMITTEE.—The next Quarterly Meeting of the Executive Book Committee will be held (D. V.) at the WESLEYAN office, on TUESDAY, 25th inst., at 3 p. m.

JOHN McMURRAY.

Some allowance must, we suppose, be made for the introduction of royalty into our Dominion. We should expect a degree of extraordinary display with a Queen's daughter at the capital. But last week's despatches are a little more than we—an unpresuming people, in a nation of less than four millions—bargained for. True, the expense may not be all against Canada; but we do fear for the example. With all this dreadful monetary depression upon us those details of grandeur read more like a burlesque than a real representation of political life. Economy is the cry in the markets; should it not be listened to by the rulers? We desire to see Canada "protected" particularly in this;—that its people shall have imported amongst them only habits of simplicity, becoming a small and by no means wealthy nationality.

There is one good method for raising money in churches, which never fails. In this sadly depressed time, when deficiencies are staring every one in the face, there is that which excels bazaars, tea-meetings, donations and all else. It is a good revival of religion. Depend upon it, when people's hearts are really warmed by divine love, money becomes less precious in their estimation, and the value of gospel ordinances goes up rapidly. Not as a commercial venture, by any means, is the revival of God's work to be sought, but with a revival are sure to ensue commercial advantages. If each Annual Conference can report its thousands of souls brought to Christ, our returns of finance will be brighter than we now anticipate.

Are our hard times doing us good? Sorrow, surely, has its mission. To touch the heart, to humble the proud spirit, to make God more precious, His word more blessed for consolation—this is the mission of trouble. If this process be going forward in our experience, this is the day not of the world's adversity, but its prosperity. Every bankruptcy, every ship sunk in the sea, every hoarded fortune shattered, ought to result in true contrition, in searching of heart and profound humility before Him who controls all circumstances for good. In cloudy days, with the wind sweeping over the plain, flowers close up their petals and gather new fragrance for the hours of sunshine. When the leaves expand once more, passing travellers are regaled with a sweetened atmosphere. So may it be with us!

If that Zulu chief, with his ambitious officers, had possessed but a trifling knowledge of history, they would have hesitated before winning a little military glory at the expense of British soldiers. Bishop Colenso was conquered by infidelity by the Zulus; but they were under a sad delusion if they imagined that the army of England was as easy of conquest as its Episcopal dignitaries. They have awakened a dangerous enemy. Nothing more tremendous can be imagined than the British military smarting under a sense of disgrace. We expect to hear of fierce struggles, a sharp short, terrible revenge, when the soldiers now gathering shall march upon Zulu-land. May God restrain our brave men from undue vengeance!

An appreciative review of "Baptisma," by Rev. J. Lathern, from the practised pen of Rev. J. McMurray, will be found in the February number of the "Canadian Methodist Magazine." Our own estimation of this work was expressed at the time of its first publication, and we are glad to find that it has found such general acceptance. A correspondent from Ontario, within a few days, writes that having carefully read "Baptisma," he regards it, with the exception of Dr. Dale's elaborate and costly volumes, as the most valuable book yet published upon the subject of which it treats; and that it is just the book needed for their people in that part of the Conference. The first edition of "Baptisma," which was rapidly and widely circulated, was simply a sermon, with appended notes. The present edition of "Baptisma" is almost entirely a new book, of nearly 300 pages, closely printed, neatly bound, and costing only 75 cents. The mechanical execution of the book, in type, binding and attractiveness of form, has been considered very creditable to the Conference office. A liberal discount will be allowed to ministers and to Sunday School libraries.

SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY.

In addition to a list of "stipends," which we republished last week, our Presbyterian cotemporary gave last week an article from a correspondent, exhibiting the comparative statistics of eleven Presbyteries in Nova Scotia and Newfoundland. The record, though not in the majority of instances by any means too favourable for the ministers, is, on the whole, exceedingly creditable to the denomination. There are a few suggestions in those figures, and in the methods by which they are reached, which Methodists may ponder with profit.

There is much of this success due to what is termed "Meetings of Presbytery." Choosing a suitable season, when pastors, elders and congregations have plenty of leisure, a general convention is held at a given place. The business for the time is almost exclusively in regard to that place. Its contributions to church "schemes," its support of the minister, its spiritual state, all pass under review. A full report soon appears in the denominational paper, signed by the official clerk. No better means could be employed to stimulate a congregation to duty. Pastoral compacts are regarded there as they ought to be—as obligations on the part of a man to meet a certain line of duties, and of his people to pay him a promised salary in full. Both these responsibilities are investigated. And if there be delinquency on either side, we see no disinclination on the part of Presbyteries to report.

This is a contrast to our Methodist "usage." We have but two meetings of District in each year. They are both hurried. In neither instance is there an opportunity of investigating, by direct enquiry of officials, the affairs of a charge or circuit. We pride ourselves on our financial system. But the true evidence of a system is its fruits—its actual, annual results. With us there are annual reports. But they all come in at one time. There is scant opportunity for enquiry. Suggestions are next to useless, inasmuch as the year has then expired, and in many instances the pastor's term has expired also.

Without instituting comparisons—for we cannot rely too much on figures which may exhibit more or less than our own, according to the system which they represent—we may safely assume that ministerial support has attained to better proportions in the Presbyterian Church than in the Methodist. They have, manifestly, more system, and a better system. They give more time to the education of their people in that particular direction. As a natural consequence, while they have many stipends which fall very far below what reason and Scripture require, as "the hire" of which the labourer "is worthy," they have none so disgracefully low as in some instances which we could cite among ourselves.

It is quite time this subject obtained an earnest hearing. The consequences of continuance in decline are always disastrous, but in no instance are they so lamentable as where God's cause and God's servants are involved. Our ministers must not be allowed to fall too far in self-respect. Their office demands that they shall not be permitted to fall in the respect of their people. Even if poverty must press upon our ministerial ranks for a season, there comes a time surely when a determined effort shall be made to redeem the past by systematic, business-like use of means and language. If there be men in our ministry who do not deserve a respectable living, let them be advised to seek other employment. The gates to our communion are closely guarded, so that it may be presumed very few cases of that kind exist, if any. Then it may be reasonably demanded that those who have been called of God and ordained by the church, ought to be kept from a humiliation which shall crush their sense of independence and self-respect.

A still more effectual argument may be based upon what our church owes to minister's wives. In the majority of instances, they have been

reared in comfort; not a few of them have brought to this position refinement and education. Yet there are minister's wives in these Provinces who, during their single life, knew little discomfort, that are obliged, with families about them, to face the problem of eking out an existence upon four or five hundred dollars a year. There was a day when it was considered wrong to speak upon this subject. The day has arrived when silence becomes sinful. A little disposition to use good examples, such as we find in the plain talk and writing of the Presbyterian Church, would seem to be a necessity now. Our people have not seen this subject in all its bearings. It devolves upon their ministers to enlighten them. When they look upon religious obligations in the light of righteous contracts, and regard neglect to pay their ministers as at once improper and disgraceful, they will have a correct, though not extravagant, estimate of their responsibilities.

THE PROGRESS OF ARMINIANISM.

It is customary, where there is a disposition to admit the prevalence of doctrines which distinctively form a part of Arminianism, to attribute much of the contest which these doctrines have had to endure, to mere exaggeration. Too much was made of words, of phrases peculiar to certain schools of theology, which were never meant to convey the extravagant sense attached to them in the heat of controversy. This is the modern opinion. There may be some truth in it. But it must not be forgotten that there were, a century ago, several engagements between believers in those two great systems of theology, Calvinism and Arminianism,—that these encounters were between the first religious thinkers of that day; that doctrinal lines were very clearly drawn, and the grounds of dispute distinctly laid down in powerful letters, and treatises of different kinds, which have been transmitted to readers of the present time. It would be difficult to exaggerate the terms of definition employed on the Calvinistic side. No doubt there was much said in moments of excitement which would have been gladly recalled in calmer mood; but making all allowance for this, there is one conclusion which will be accepted by every reasonable reader of these discussions, pro and con;—religious opinion has changed very much since then—changed certainly for the better, and altogether in the direction of Arminianism.

Calvinism, as a social body, was a recoil from Romanism. It was the form into which those particles crystallized which from time to time were thrown off by that ponderous organization, as incapable any longer of assimilating to it. Ultimately, as a compact, positive antagonist, Calvinism confronted Romanism in England and Scotland, as well as in a few centres upon the European continent, and compelled it to withdraw from the field, at least as a dominant power. It was this same Calvinism which crossed to America, and gained a firm foothold as the first dictator of law and order. It was a Cromwell while in arms against its Romish foe, and when it gained conquest, like Cromwell, it was a rugged and irresistible ruler. From two particular sources it drew its strength. It was specially suited to the Anglo-Saxon character. Indomitable, impatient of outside control, having a genius and temper which ordained it for independence, this great people, the combination of two formidable races, met Calvinism and struck hands with it as naturally as two elements in the chemists' crucible fly toward each other. There was another reason—its faith, its awful faith, as we may be permitted to call it, which none but a strong mind could accept, and which a strong mind on accepting must inevitably be influenced by in all the relations of life.

The faith of original Calvinism was all that a modern religious mind, having a correct knowledge of history, can reasonably imagine of it. As with all systems which grew out of the Reformation, it retained several fea-

tures of Romanism. There was a measure of truth in the mass of Romish error; that truth Calvinism retained. In addition, it retained the old habits of thought in respect to doctrinal belief. It was prepared to defend its opinions in all their logical outline, and had no hesitation in pronouncing all opposing doctrines as heretical. Indeed—though on this point we need not emphasize—there was a spice of the old persecuting spirit remaining. Modern Calvinists need not say too much on the "Servetus" affair. Whether Calvinism had anything to do with his persecution or not, it is certain that there was no little intolerance in the spirit of that age. The period separating the youthful Reformed faith from the fierce Romish economy, was not as yet sufficient to eradicate all the bad growth of centuries.

It will be sufficient to quote an historian accepted by a principal champion of Calvinism in our midst, as authoritative, though never by ourselves ranking very high in self-consistency. There can be no doubt, however, that, on questions of historic accuracy, he had access to valuable authentic documents. Froude, writing upon the unhappy Mary Stuart, says:—

"John Knox and his fellow-minister, Craig, agreed in advocating her execution." "The fierce rhetoric of Knox, with the bloody annals of the chosen people for his text, tore to shreds the feeble considerations of her friends." "John Knox did continue his severe exhortations against her, threatening the great plagues of God to the whole country if she was spared from condign punishment."

Alluding to Calvinism itself, Froude says:—

"The guidance of the great movement (the Reformation) was snatched from the control of reason to be made over to Calvinism; and Calvinism, could it have had the whole world under its feet, would have been as merciless as the Inquisition itself. Fury encountered fury, fanaticism fanaticism—and wherever Calvin's spirit penetrated, the Christian world was divided into two armies, who abhorred each other with a bitterness exceeding the utmost malignity of mere human hatred."

Passages of this kind are frequent in the writings of this historian. Where the "Visitor" appeals to Froude, we are anxious that our readers should understand what his actual opinions were in respect to the "Visitor's" favourite creed. How much of this strength of persecuting purpose sprang from the spirit of the age, and how much from the creed itself, we will not attempt to define.

There have been three distinct epochs in the existence of Calvinism. The first was its formative period, when as yet it had only a national, heretical foe. The second was its dominant period. The third was its period of self-defence. This latter period extended through most of half a century. During that half century Calvinism passed through great changes. Thomas Chalmers, Thomas Guthrie, and Norman McLeod—three men who will always stand out in history as the leaders of thought in the principal Calvinistic Church of the world—were certainly as remarkable an improvement upon Jonathan Edwards, as Jonathan Edwards was upon John Knox. Not that they were not all masters. Gigantic, indeed, in all moral proportions, were those famous divines. The same may be said of their spiritual and pastoral faithfulness and success. And yet the contrast between the doctrinal teachings of those veterans is so marked that only a prejudiced mind will refuse to admit it.

When a demand is made for some standard by which to judge the question—Whether Calvinism dominates modern thought?—naturally enough we turn to the pulpits of Christian lands. It will never do to cite the opinions of men living or dead, especially of the latter. We cannot even accept a reference to text-books. These are compiled by individuals, and rather reflect the standards of churches than the prevailing opinions of men. Nor will it suffice to declaim against those who say that Calvinism is losing its hold upon the popular mind, and is not preached in the modern pulpit, by declaring that they accuse preachers of unfaithfulness to their obligations. The pulpit, and the pulpit alone, is the standard by which to judge. Means for ascertaining what the pulpits of this day really do say, happily are not wanting. Almost every great

preacher of this time is reported. Each city has its prominent publications from time to time of what it is taught on the Sabbath day. Let any man who has opportunities of reading these reports, say candidly what proportion of Calvinism they contain. That proportion is not equal to one of the hundred expressions which are uttered. It is simply ridiculous to maintain that Calvinism dominates modern religious thought, while all the time its cardinal doctrines are kept concealed from the public eye, and but rarely whispered in the public ear.

This being so, how are we to account for the change? Simply thus:—controversy has done its work. Arminianism has gradually gained upon the public mind. Sixty years have sufficed to commend a system of truth consistent in itself, and beautifully consistent with all the promises and conditions of the word of God. Free agency, a free Gospel, a free salvation for the world, contingent only upon the world's repentance and faith—these doctrines have distinguished the Arminian system from the beginning. If Calvinists say these are also their views, we meet them cheerfully, not as men whose opinions our forefathers misrepresented, but rather as men who, through the discussions of our forefathers, have been convinced.

TO ALL WHOM IT MAY CONCERN.

It is gratifying to learn that the spirit of revival is abroad amongst us, and not a few localities are rejoicing as with the joy of harvest, over an ingathering of souls. The word preached, being mixed with faith in many that bear it, is attended by "the demonstration of the Spirit and of power." Amidst the conflict of doctrinal controversy more or less severe; and the forebodings of embarrassment arising from the financial stringency of these times, which tend to darken the immediate future, it is certainly reassuring to know that the work of saving souls is steadily progressing. Would that this work were manifold mightier than it is! However, the new-born souls that are being won to Christ awaken some anxiety as to their future welfare. Inheriting, as they do, the hope of their calling, will they hold fast the beginning of their confidence steadfast unto the end? Or will they fall, like spring blossoms, prematurely, and never ripen into perfect fruit? Have these regenerated souls any ideal and any ambition? Then what is it? Is it a stunted manhood, or a stilted spiritual pride? Are they content to settle down to the dull monotony of a common-place religious experience, or are they determined to maintain the ardent fire of their first love, and to attain an eminent piety, and distinguished usefulness? Now, so long as Christian character is as much a growth as it is a creation; while the full development of the regenerated nature is gradual and progressive, from the moment when the great change passes upon it; it becomes the duty of every one to "go on unto perfection." Like "the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day," brightening from the dim, gray dawn of morning, into the climacteric splendour of the meridian, so the new-born soul should shine with the borrowed light of God. On and up from the foot of frowning Sinai, to the crimson summit of Calvary; nay, higher yet, to the city of the living God whose turrets blaze with glory, and whose temple waits to resound with the music of a triumphant church! Growth in grace is a growth in personal holiness. We are required to advance towards the entire eradication of evil from the soul and in the cultivation of every Christian virtue. What Solinus, an old Latin author, says of Spain, viz., that in his day, it contained nothing sterile and useless, is the true ideal of a Christian soul. No part of it is barren of good, but rather every faculty and affection yields its appropriate fruit. Like the mystic tree of life, it bears perennial fruit, and all the reachings of its influences possess a healing virtue. Christian growth is a growth of soul in girth of sympathy and in grandeur of character. Unlike the pro-

gress of the planet, round and round, and over again orbits, the Christian, the divine communion up into Christ, contains "the measure of the fullness of Christ cut out of a more larger, swelling every revolutionary pierced the heart of the world, and only it stopped going, born soul, as lo with activity, the Lord, it was Going and growing new nature. It is noiseless—fr of superiority, outbursts of spirit the swiftest and the most silent catch the footstep as they travel blue? Has the a voice to herald has ever heard as it beats upon ance, or falls upon er? It is for us forces by cultivated virtue and the the silent dew, world we live flower, we are sweeten the air. Pattern stole the stillness of from it amidst filling up the h with unostentat exercise of our of our individ for the promot it becomes a t mility." He of every new claim it. We a Quaker cong sitting in silen a little boy bet of age stood up winsome than "My friends, make us all gooder, till the that is the am of every quick be made better until there shing, and Holin written upon it

George Sigg formed by letter or a short illness home in Somers for many years of our Church some weeks in His son has been WESLEYAN office Granville Street of the deceased was a good man church, and a c

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MINISTERIAL Village, we r from work with Rev. E. Brettl assisted occasion W. H. Hearts a ed revival at G after night, th and a number