

Contributed.

SCRIPTURAL PERFECTION.

(Concluded from last week.)

From all which numerous quotations, calling to constant and indelible remembrance, together with the stated shortcomings of the most eminent saints and the conscious deficiencies of many others, we think that the inference is irresistible that there is no absolute perfection in holiness attainable by any Christian on this side eternity.

We are ready to pronounce on the man who claims to have arrived at a state of perfection, so to be able to live without sin, that he knows neither his own heart nor the extent and spirituality of God's law, and the requirements of the Gospel.

It is indeed said, "We speak wisdom among them that are perfect" (1 Cor. ii 6). Again, "Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (1 John ii 5). And, "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment" (iv. 18). There may be enthusiasts who imagine or who flatter themselves that they have attained to perfection, and they may be irreproachable in the eyes of their fellow Christians. But, when pressed on the subject, they seem constrained to admit that it is only so far as they have light that they are enabled to maintain their course. Or, making a distinction—An unwarranted one between what they call outer and what they call inner sanctification—they suppose that they have reached the one, though not the other. Now, what is this but comparative perfection, or perfection of sincerity, after all? which is to give up the contention. But we do not allow that there are two kinds of Christian life, but only an indefinite diversity of degrees of attainment. There may be progressively nearer approach to perfection. It is even written, "God . . . hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ" (Ephes. ii 6). And on this the noted Dr. Candlish remarks that there are five places in the Epistle to the Ephesians in which the same word, *exaltation*, (Ephes. i. 3 and ii. 6, iii. 10, and vi. 12) occurs. And if memory serves us, he delivers himself somewhat to the following effect: The word is indefinite, as it is an adjective without a noun—sometimes the word things or being attached to it in the Authorized Version—and might have been uniformly rendered "in the heavenly . . . a high phrase, certainly. But when we call to mind that the identical word is used by our Lord in his discourse with Nicodemus, saying to him, "How canst thou see heavenly things?" (John iii. 13) If things which pertain to this state be not received, all things are adequately comprehended in this perfectly do—the will of God. It is plain that the phrase is simply perfection. Advanced as the Ephesians are, "sitting in heavenly places," while on earth, among the things, or partaking of heavenly things. But absolute perfection is never reached on this side eternity. Until Death lays its hand on the principle of sin, and the work of grace in the soul is ripe for the purity of heaven, God in glory dwells. We submit to the doctrine of the Westminster Confession of Faith, as expressed in the Catechism drawn up and adopted along with it, viz., that "No man since the Fall is able in this life perfectly to keep the commandments of God, but doth daily break therein in thought, word and deed." And that "The souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory." It is unnecessary to contend that it is here implied that none are perfect before their death.

While none are perfect in this life at the same time incumbent on all Christians to aim at and strive after perfection. There is a rule or standard before us in the Word—even the law of God, in all its length and breadth—expounded by the light of the New Testament in general, and by our Lord's Sermon on the Mount in particular, according to which we are to walk. We have also a perfect example for our imitation in the life and life of the Lord Jesus, who being man as well as God, never sinned, but ever those things which were well pleasing to his Father, and in all things left us an example that we should follow his steps. We have the promised aid of God's Spirit, by whom we shall be able to do all things. Then let us bear in mind the words: "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 48) also exhortations throughout the Scriptures addressed to the people as, "Be ye holy, for I the Lord am holy." (Lev. xix. 2.) "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and of the spirit, perfecting holiness of the fear of God." (2 Cor. vii. 1.) "Every man that hath this love in him, he loveth himself as he loveth his Father." (1 John iii.) Or, "Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on

to perfection," etc. (Heb. vi. 1), teaching it and living it.

We should admit of no excuse for shortcomings in ourselves on the plea that sin is inevitable, or perfection is unattainable. Neither let there be any disposition to repress in others a holy ambition to advance further in the upward path than is generally aimed at among professing Christians. But rather exhort and encourage one another to the highest possible attainments, and ever strive to make nearer and nearer approaches, personally, to unattainable perfection. And as it is the privilege of the earnest Christian to arrive at a full assurance of his own acceptance of and interest in Christ, though still sensible of much imperfection, so it is no less his privilege to come to know through grace that he has the witness in himself, is born of the Spirit, and is a child of God, while conscious of the power of remaining, undwelling corruption.

Finally, it is without doubt wisely and graciously ordered that no absolute perfection can be reached in this life, for in this way it is that backsliding and apostasy are most effectually discouraged. Because, if one realizes what is implied in the verses (Heb. vi. 4, 6), "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance, seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put Him to an open shame," no more powerful argument can be used to urge them to press forward—to avoid sloth, self-satisfaction and spiritual pride, whereas, on the other hand, one is stirred up to activity, watchfulness, self-examination and prayer. And there is a constant call to strive after higher things, like the Apostle who declared, "This one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth to those which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling," etc. (Phil. iii. 13-15).

And for this end, as well as in all other matters, temporal and spiritual, appropriate means are provided and are to be used. It is our duty daily to read and meditate on the Word, and compare ourselves with its requirements—to endeavour to understand our own wants and deficiencies, and repair to the Throne of Grace to have them supplied, to seek constant communion with God, and exercise ourselves in special prayer, availing ourselves, at the same time, of all the ordinances of His appointment, both public and private; for it is written, "They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." (Is. xl. 31.)

Correspondence.

KNOX COLLEGE LIBRARY.

(To the Editor of the Presbyterian Review.)
SIR,—Will you allow me to remind the Alumni of Knox College of their engagement to raise \$2,000 for the Knox College Library Fund during this winter. A few have taken action and sent subscriptions. Most of those who undertake to collect, prefer to wait until after the annual collections for the Schemes were taken. Now the time for action has come, and, with a little effort on the part of all, the amount can easily be secured. Let there be no disappointment this time. Yours, etc.,
R. P. MACKAY,
Convener of Committee.

PARKDALE, Feb. 11th, 1889.

S. S. LIBRARY WANTED.

(To the Editor of the Presbyterian Review.)
SIR,—Allow me, through the columns of your paper, to state the present needs of this Sabbath-school. We are a Mission station, under the charge of Mr. F. J. C. Stinson, missionary. We have an interesting school, well attended and fairly well managed, with a full supply of lesson helps, etc., but we have no library, and I would be very glad to hear from the librarian of any school which has an old library to dispose of. We are not able to invest much money in one, hence we take this means of securing the above. Yours, etc.,
THOS. BANE,
Superintendent.

TIOGA P.O., Feb. 4th, 1889.

Answers to Inquiries.

(Under this heading questions suitable for our columns will be answered by the Editor. All questions to receive attention must be stated by the name of a subscriber to the Presbyterian Review, not for publication, but for our protection.)

QUESTION I.—A minister has two congregations under his charge. Three elders in one congregation resign and leave. Now, can the minister proceed to elect and ordain other elders, by asking one member from the other church to assist the one who did not resign, the two with himself becoming a quorum? Was it not necessary to ask the whole session whether they attended or not? What I want to know is this: Have these brethren been properly elected and ordained? and can they act as elders in the church?

ANSWER.—Our correspondent asks two questions, and we give our answer not orally, but by way of counsel. (1) The elders of the two congregations form one—a joint session. There were a few exceptions recognized at the Union

in 1875). The ordination of elders is a sessional act, and all the steps leading to it should be taken by the Session as such. Notice of meetings for the purpose should be given to all members of Session, although their presence is not necessary, if there is a quorum. The minister, in privately asking one member to meet with another and himself, does not call a meeting of Session, and no sessional act can be performed by these three, when thus summoned. (2) Thus there has been an irregularity in the election and ordination. But if the Session now is satisfied that what has been done is, on the whole, best for the congregation, the irregularity may be condoned. The ordination is valid enough, as a quorum of the Session was present when it took place, and it is to be presumed the edict for ordination had been duly served. But the Session should take notice of the irregularity and ask the Presbytery to give its sanction to the ordination, unless some manifest injury has been done to the interests of the congregation.

Church News.

FOREIGN MISSION COMMITTEE (W.D.)

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE.
PURSUANT to the Resolution of the Foreign Mission Committee, adopted at its meeting, December 27th last, the Executive met on the 5th inst., to carry out the instructions of the Committee. Letters were read from Revs. Dr. Mackay and Mr. Jamieson. After deliberation, the following Resolution was adopted:—
"That the Executive, having heard the letters of Mr. Jamieson and Dr. Mackay, agree, in view of the new aspect which the case has assumed, to delay action respecting the recall of Mr. Jamieson until a meeting of the General Committee has been called by the Secretary, and that the Secretary be requested to convene such a meeting on Tuesday, the 19th inst., at 11 o'clock a.m."

CITY CONGREGATIONS—ANNUAL MEETINGS.

ST JAMES SQUARE CHURCH.
THE annual meeting of St. James Square church, Rev. Dr. Kellogg, pastor, was held January 23rd, Mr. Principal Kirkland in the chair and Mr. W. E. Long, Secretary. The report of the Board of Managers showed total receipts, \$11,068.67. Expenditure, \$11,481.99, leaving balance due treasurer \$413.32. The slight falling off in the ordinary revenue of 1888, when compared with that of 1887, is probably due to the increased liberality which has found expression in other parts of the congregational work. The mortgage debt on the church property remained as before at \$15,000, bearing interest at the rate of five per cent. per annum. Referring to the death during the year of one of the managers the report stated, "In the removal by death of their late colleague, Mr. Archibald McDonald, the managers lose one whose devotion to the interest of the congregation was unflinching. The recollection of his simple and unaffected piety and unwearying efforts to do good will long be cherished as one of the important factors in the upbuilding of the congregation in its earlier years, reflecting as it did, in an eminent degree, the love of the Master who went about continually doing good. The tablet in course of being placed in the church is a fitting memorial of the esteem in which Mr. McDonald was held by the congregation." Dr. Kellogg presented a report of the moneys contributed to the Schemes of the Church. He said that he had hoped to make this report complete for the annual meeting, but his late illness had frustrated this plan. It was certain that considerable amounts are yet to be added to the following totals:—

The Missionary Association will report about	\$3,492 00
The Murray Mitchell Auxiliary	747 33
Boys' Missionary Society	100 00
Wayside Gatherers (cuba)	77 00
Sabbath school, St. James' square	386 00
Sabbath school, Wilton avenue	85 00
" " St. John's	100 00
For Knox College	235 00
For Mr. Freshman's Jewish mission, New York	53 20
Irish Presbyterian Church mission	27 65
Special for China mission	42 20
Paid for current year on Mr. McGillivray's stipend, Honan mission, North China	520 25

Total thus far reported . . . \$6,791 63
Neither had he been able to complete the annual revision of the roll, hence the totals given might be very slightly modified. Received during 1888, on profession of faith, 48; on certificate, 61; total, 109. Losses by removal and death, 48; number now on roll, 685, as compared with 624 last year. He stated that as a congregation they had agreed to raise \$750 annually for missionary McGillivray. This year they had already secured \$867, of which \$520 had been paid in cash. He assured the congregation that they need feel no uneasiness because of this surplus, as Mr. McGillivray could use the amount to great advantage in forwarding the interests of the mission in Honan. He congratulated the congregation on having increased their subscriptions to the Schemes of the Church by twenty-five per cent. this year, when they had at the same time given \$600 more than last year to the St. John's mission. Mr. John Douglas leader of the choir, was tendered a vote of thanks and the sum of \$300 for his services. Messrs. S. V. McKinnon and Wm. Douglas were appointed auditors for the year. The following were appointed to the vacancies on the Board of Management: Messrs. A. Jeffrey, R. Carrie, A. A. Allan, George Inglis, R. M. Gray and Jas. R. Peattie.

OAK STREET CHURCH.
The annual meeting of the Oak street church was also held January 23rd. Rev.

J. M. Cameron, pastor, in the chair. The auditors' report was submitted and adopted without discussion. The report of the session stated that the year just past was one to be remembered, being a year of removal and transition, a year of parting from the old and building up of the new, a year of trial, faith and patience and yet a year of rich blessing. During the year 27 children were baptized and there were removed by death, those in full communion, 5. Last year the church membership was 575. Last year 59 were added by certificate and 10 on profession of faith, making a total of 644, but 66 were removed by certificate and 5 by death, 71 in all, leaving a membership of 574. Two elders were added to the session last year making a staff of 10, far too small a number for the work needed to be done. The collections for the poor fund amounted to \$110.99 and there have been expended \$84, leaving a balance in hand of \$26.99. Never before were the prospects of the congregation so bright, humanly speaking as they are to-day. The treasurer's annual report showed the year's annual receipts to be \$38,927.31. The Sabbath collections for fifty-three Sundays amounted to \$2,527.53. Proceeds of old church, \$8,873. Subscriptions to the Building Fund, \$588. The expenditure was—Minister's stipend, \$1,800; parsonage salary, \$200, and several small items, making a total of \$3,800. The Board of Managers' report was very satisfactory, referring principally to the progress on the new church building, the sale of the old property and the cheerful prospects for the present year. When completed the new property will cost \$45,000, on which there will probably be a mortgage of \$33,000. The mission report showed \$617.53 received during the year, which was allocated to different Schemes of the Church. The Men's Missionary Society and Sunday school reports were read. The Sunday school report stated that there was an average attendance every Sunday of 475, an increase of 95 during the year. What was wanted was more teachers, but the school was never in a more flourishing condition than at present. The report of the Association of Christian Workers showed membership of 75. The report of the Mission Sabbath school showed an average attendance each Sabbath of 25.

FLOOR STREET CHURCH.
THE adjourned annual meeting of the Floor street church was held January 23rd, after the induction of ex-Ald. Harvie into the office of dean of the church. The Rev. W. G. Wallace, pastor, presided. The report of the Missionary Committee for 1888 was read and showed the amount of contributions to have been \$1,015 for missions of all kinds. The reports of the Sabbath school, the Women's Foreign Mission Society, the Young Peoples Christian Association, and the Women's Association were read and showed a very encouraging state of affairs in this the youngest of the city churches. Messrs. A. Milne, Jas. Frazer, A. Elliott, Darcy Fenton, Jas. McMaster and Dr. Gordon were appointed the Missionary Committee for the ensuing year. Mr. Barr was appointed organist at a salary of \$125 per annum, subject to control of Session.

PARKDALE CHURCH.
THE annual meeting of Parkdale church was held January 23rd, the pastor, Rev. R. P. McKay, M.A., presiding, and Mr. A. G. Gowanlock acting as secretary. The Treasurer, W. C. Hewish, and Mr. Joseph Norwich, Chairman of the Board of Managers, submitted the annual statement, showing the receipts for the year to have been \$5,640, and the expenditure \$5,036. The estimated expenditure for 1889 was placed at about \$7,600. The pastor reported 377 names on the communion roll, seventy-five having been added during the year. Mr. Swartout gave the number of children on the Sabbath school roll as 373, with forty teachers and forty-eight in the Bible class. The collections for the year amounted to \$313. The Ruth street mission is in a flourishing condition. Mr. J. Jolly being in charge of the Sabbath school, and evening services being conducted by Knox College students. The debt remaining on the new church, which was opened about a year ago at a cost of \$34,067, is \$20,000. An effort will be made next year to reduce considerably this indebtedness. The new managers elected were Messrs. John Wanless, Jun., J. B. Perry, A. Laidlaw, Jas. Stewart, James Crichton, and Jas. Hunter. The Mayor, Mr. Geo. S. Booth, received the same number of ballots as Mr. Hunter, but retired in his favour.

At the communion services Central church, city, last Sabbath morning, there was a very large attendance, and numerous additions to the membership were reported.

MR. W. R. TUDHOPE, Superintendent of Gravenhurst Sabbath School, was recently visited on by the teachers of the School and presented with a beautifully bound copy of Chambers' Encyclopedia in recognition of his services to the School.

REV. DR. ROBERTSON, of Winnipeg, Superintendent of Missions, Manitoba and the North West occupied the pulpit of St. Andrew's last Sabbath morning and of the Central church, city, in the evening. He dwelt upon the exceeding aggressiveness of Roman Catholicism throughout the Dominion and drew from this a powerful argument for the larger development of our Home Mission forces.

The attention of church Boards of Management and business men generally is directed to the advertisement of Messrs. Guggenberger Bros., of Preston, Ont. Visitors to the Industrial Exhibition Toronto and other fairs will remember the display of handsome and serviceable articles made by this firm. Those who have the furnishing of church buildings in hand will find it to their interest to correspond with this firm.

THE annual meeting of Knox Church, Harrison, was held Wednesday evening. After a tea, provided by the ladies of the congregation, Mr. Campbell B.A., LL.B., was called to the chair. After devotional exercises by the pastor, the session reported that forty-two names had been added during the year. The managers reported that \$4,106.16 had been raised for all purposes. The debt will soon be a thing of the past as it is all provided for. Mr. J. C. McLeod was appointed to the Board of Managers.

THE annual meeting of the Cheltenham and Mount Pleasant Branch of the W.F. M.S. was held at Mount Pleasant, on Wednesday, January 27th. The treasurer reported that the sum of \$112.64 had been received during the year. The following officers were elected for the coming year—President, Mrs. J. L. Campbell, 1st vice President, Mrs. Cayton, and 2nd vice President, Miss Clark, Secretary, Mrs. A. B. Henderson, Treasurer, Miss Janet I. Dobson.

THE annual meeting of the Mount Forest Church, was held January 23rd. After devotional exercises by the pastor, Rev. D. Hickell, Mr. Thos. Rogers was called to the chair. Thirty-two new members were received during the year, while by death, certificates, and revision of the roll, sixty-four were removed, making the present membership, 372. The Sunday School has over 200 names on the roll. The total income of the congregation for the year was \$2,621.83, and the amount given to the Schemes of the Church was \$478.

THE annual meeting of Aylmer (Que.) Auxiliary of the W. F. M. S. was held in Aylmer, on Wednesday, 6th inst. Mrs. Thorburn, President of the Ottawa Presbyterian Society, presided. The annual reports which were submitted by the Secretary and Treasurer, were very satisfactory. During the year, a box of clothing had been prepared and sent to the Indians at File Hill. By collection and work done by members, \$40 had been realized. A Mission Band has been organized and is in a prosperous condition, members having already raised about \$10. The office bearers were re-elected as follows:—President, Mrs. Millar, Vice-President, Miss Prentiss, Sec. ary, Miss Parker; Treasurer, Miss Klock. Mrs. Thorburn being officially present, expressed her satisfaction at the progress of this Auxiliary.

A CORRESPONDENT writes to the REVIEW:—A new church was dedicated for divine service, at Port Elmsley, February 3rd. The dedicatory services were conducted by the Rev. D. McDonald, of Carleton Place, who preached morning and evening, and the Rev. Thomas Nixon, of Smith's Falls, in the afternoon. The services were most enjoyable and very appropriate for the occasion. The church was crowded at all the services and all seemed delighted at the cosy and comfortable way in which the church had been completed. The building is veneered with white brick, costing \$1,100, and will seat comfortably 175 people. This congregation has done admirable work during the past year, under the faithful labors of the Rev. N. Campbell. There are only about forty-five families in the whole field, and not only have they undertaken the building of a church, but also a large and comfortable brick manse, at a cost of nearly \$2,000. Both buildings, comparatively speaking, are free of debt, there being only about \$300 unprovided for. The friends outside of the congregation, seeing the good work done, sent liberal donations to aid in the good work. A concert was held on Monday evening in the town hall, when appropriate addresses were given by the pastor and the Rev. D. McDonald. The home choir rendered good music and all present were delighted with the programme of the evening. After all the furnishing of the church had been paid off, we understand that a handsome balance remains in the hands of the treasurer.

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