

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

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THE HIGHER LIFE.

A GREAT deal has been said and written of late years about the "Higher Life," "Christian Perfection," "Second Conversion," and so forth: much of which is true, and much of which is foolish and misleading. The fall and silencing of the most prominent advocate of the latest form of that doctrine, the author of "Holiness through Faith," has undoubtedly diminished the *talk* on the subject, and has, we hope, deepened and broadened the *thinking* of Christian people in regard to it. It was a sad thing that so eloquent an exponent of the theory should so suddenly betray the weakness of poor depraved human nature just when we were looking for the most sublime exemplification of it, but it has doubtless been working for good. To us, it appears as if it had been divinely permitted to direct our attention to the necessity of more of what, for want of a better phrase, we shall call by way of contrast, the "Lower Life" of practical religion. What the church and the world most need is evidence of a *first* conversion—a conversion that affects a man's whole nature and social relationships—that makes men honest, true, pure, gentle, unselfish, as well as devout, and liberal to religious objects. A mere conventional religion, lying only in the acceptance of a creed, and an experience which does nothing for the man who holds it—nothing, at least, to transform him, and make him a better man—maybe a passport into the church on earth, but will never be recognized by Him who has said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but *he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven.*" Let us have this practical religion—this "applied science" of theology—based upon repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ, and then "let us go on unto perfection." The "higher" the better after that!

We have no faith in the theory of sanctification that teaches us to look for sinless perfection by one great act of faith, any more than we have in the theory of atonement that would have us believe in the forgiveness of all sin, past, present, and future, by a similar act. Both are, in our judgment, very dangerous errors. A much safer and more Scriptural view of the Divine method of sanctifying human souls will be found in the recital of Paul's experience in 1 Cor. ix., 26, 27, and that we earnestly commend to the attention of every one who is sincerely desirous of greater attainments in the Christian life.

UP ON STILTS.

FAR-AWAY Sweden has had its ecclesiastical excitement. That land is divided

into parishes. Each parish forms a congregation. Every person born in the parish is a member of the church. The parish minister is appointed either by the king, or some lay patron, or the Ecclesiastical Consistory. During this year the Swedes have been trying to congregationalize this method somewhat. Quite an agitation has been going on to obtain for the congregations some share in the appointment of their ministers. But the clergy will have none of it. They evidently fear the change. A professor of the University of Lund has out-Heroded Herod by his claim. He plainly tells the people that "A minister is a Divine gift which a congregation ought to accept with humility and reverence; and any interference by the congregation would be unbiblical, unchristian, and ungodly." Our Lund Professor is certainly up on stilts. It would not surprise us to see even Conservative Sweden bring that man down yet to a safer and more common-sense footing than he has at present.

But we do not have to go across Atlantic surges to distant Sweden to find such stilted claims. Congregational rights are ignored nearer home than that. The Bishop of Toronto in his controversy with the people of Oshawa reminds us very much of our Professor at Lund. The Oshawa people want Fortin. The Bishop sends them Johnson. The people lock the doors against Johnson. Is the Bishop's claim common-sense—even though it may be ecclesiastical—when he says, "The people have no right to submit a name to me, but I have the right to submit a name to them?" Who are presumably the fittest judges of the man who is to cater for them in spiritual things? The people, who may be supposed to know their own wants the best; or a Bishop, a non-resident, and one who by his office is denied participation in congregational work? We are on the side of the former, on the side of popular freedom, and on the side of anti-clerical domination. The common-sense of the people desiring a minister may be safely trusted, we think, in a selection.

A Methodist brother recently told us that "the Conference was rather discouraging the invitation system." Yes; it may discourage it all it pleases, but the invitation system is not going to be shelved forever. The one great fact—to which the eyes of the Christian laity in all the communions are being opened—remains, that an assembly of men and women following Christ know better whom they want as a spiritual guide than a stationing committee or even a Bishop. And in these days, when men are growing into self-respect and self-importance as regards their life-political, we need not expect them to lay aside these ideas when they are planning for their life-spiritual. If the people's rights to select their pastor are conceded gracefully, the change in the order of things will come about without violence; but if they are not

thus conceded, they will be gauged by a movement something like a volcano. It is better, gentlemen, to get down off your stilts while you can do it without any loss of your dignity, rather than be thrown down by the popular hand. But down you must!

WE have received an interesting account of the Annual Meeting of the Victoria (Australia) Congregational Union—a summary of which we hope to give in our next issue.

WE hope our friends will send on news-items. Annual meetings of churches, bazaars, and S. S. entertainments, are the order of the day. Why not give brief reports of these, that others may see what is being done in the several churches. Let us not forget that we are members one of another, and that it greatly stimulates a healthy denominational regard to be kept informed of the general progress. We must have more perfect knowledge of each other for greater mutual provocation.

News of the Churches.

THE Rev. J. I. Hindley has accepted the call from Oro, Vespra, and Rugby.

A NEW Congregational church building is just being finished at Tilbury Station, Kent Co.

THE Rev. E. C. W. McColl, M.A., of Markham and Unionville, has received a call to the pastorate of the church in Quebec city.

WE learn that Rev. J. F. Stevenson, of Montreal, has declined a call from the North Avenue Church, Cambridge, Mass.

ST. CATHERINES Church has organized a temperance society, which bids fair to have a prosperous career. The annual reports show a steady advance along every line of Church work.

A VERY successful S. S. entertainment was held at South Caledon, on the 1st instant. The New Year's tree yielded many presents. Amongst these was a fine "Collins' Bible," for the pastor. Proceeds \$34.

THE course of monthly Sabbath evening lectures by R. W. Wallace, of London, is most interesting and well attended. Last Sabbath evening, January 9th, the lecture was on "Mahomet; Mecca; the Koran."

THE Douglas Church, Garafraxa, held its annual Soiree on New Year's day. A special feature in it was the presentation of an address, accompanied by a gift to the pastor, Mr. Griffiths, on his departure for Hamilton.

FROME had a Christmastide concert on December 23rd, which was largely attended, and in every way a gratifying success. Mrs. P. Horton, the Misses Payne, Spackman, Sharon, Silcox, Horton, and others took part. The pastor, Rev. W. J. Cuthbertson, has been on the sick list, but we are glad to learn, is now better.

THE Literary Society of the First Congregational church, Guelph, had a very largely attended and happy Christmastide entertainment, on December 27th. The pastor gave a lecture on "Christmas Carols and Christmas Customs." The lecture was illustrated by vocal and instrumental selections, all being of a Christmas character. "Father Christmas" attended on two large illuminated Christmas trees, and distributed presents to the young people.

NORFOLK St. Congregational S. S. Guelph, on the 29th ult., was the scene of a happy gathering. The pastor, who appeared for the first time in the school after a month's sickness, gave a brief address on the New Year's motto, "looking unto Jesus," and after seasonable greetings, presented the whole of the