

The Canadian Independent.

"ONE IS YOUR MASTER, EVEN CHRIST, AND ALL YE ARE BRETHREN."

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Topics of the Week.

THE terrible affliction which has overtaken Hull calls for speedy and effective help. While the destitute and homeless everywhere have claims upon the benevolent, our own countrymen ought to have the first attention in their time of sore trial. We have no doubt the people of Ontario will respond to the call very liberally and very promptly.

VARIOUS statements, more or less erroneous, have been current recently respecting the Pope's health. The truth is that, though no notable malady exists, the Holy Father's medical advisers are not satisfied with his condition. Every cause of mortal trouble that arises throws him into a state of nervous prostration. Overwork and want of the exercise and salubrious air to which he has been accustomed, are telling upon him disastrously, and those who are around him assert that his health is failing visibly. His medical advisers are very anxious that he should have change of air this summer, but it seems that the threats and pressure brought to bear upon him by those who would fain chain him to the stake, have hitherto availed to prevent him from taking any such decision.

THE extent to which simony is practised in the Church of England is said to be very great. And this, in spite of the oath which every minister is required to take before installation by the bishop, as follows: "I do swear that I have made no simoniacal payment, contract, or promise, directly or indirectly, by myself or by any other, to my knowledge or with my consent, to any person or persons whatsoever, for or concerning the procuring or obtaining of this ecclesiastical place, preferment, office, or living, nor will at any time hereafter perform or satisfy any such kind of payment, contract, or promise made by any other, without my knowledge or consent. So help me God, through Jesus Christ." A clerical agent, Mr. Stark, has testified before the Royal Commission on sale or exchange of benefices that, notwithstanding this solemn oath, "Clergymen of high standing freely and unhesitatingly sell and purchase advowsons, with the understanding that immediate possession is to be given." Secrecy, he said, is insisted on in these transactions, because they are illegal and involve severe penalties.

WE are pleased to see that Professor McLaren is not going to have it all his own way about the Rule of Faith, and that Archbishop Lynch once more makes his appeal to private judgment and thinks that his readers will understand what *he* means, though they would be all at sea about comprehending what the Bible may teach. Now we shall perhaps come to understand how a humble peasant in a back township of Canada is able without the aid of private judgment to find out the infallible Church, and afterwards to understand what that infallible Church teaches. Of course the archbishop has not meddled with arguments as yet. He has rather fought shy of that sort of work in his public appearances hitherto. But no doubt a good time is coming. We are all attention. The lists are set. The combatants have their lances in rest. The spectators are eager. Now for it. We shall at last learn how the humble Irish labourer comes to know what has been believed "always, everywhere and by all," and what good there is in an "infallible living speaker" unless there be an equally "infallible living listener." Ordinary folks might fancy that they had as fair a chance of understanding a letter written by the apostle Paul as one fathered by Archbishop Lynch or even by Leo XIII. But we shall, we hope, know all about it some of these days.

WHAT Scotland has gained by the "preaching of the Word" may be learned very clearly and in very few words from the following portion of the famous letter of Duncan Forbes of Culloden, within a short time after the Revolution of 1688, respecting the proper mode of governing the country: "The kingdom of Scotland did anciently stand in the power of superiors over vassals, and chiefs over clans. It was always burdensome to king and kingdom in time of peace. These chiefs and superiors were proud, were their own law administrators, and were very hurtful in war. Strifes among the nobles caused the troubles at Flodden, at Pinkey, at Solway, and other occasions. These nobles and chiefs ruined the King's affairs, and those of the country; and they made the Scotch armies a prey to their enemies. Efforts were made by several kings to break up the feudal power of the baron and chief, but they were unable to do so until the Reformation, when by the preaching of the Gospel it was done. Since the Reformation the nation stands upon another foundation, for the Gospel brought light upon the consciences of the people, and they would neither follow superior nor chief except so far as they were convinced the undertaking was consonant to the laws of God and the kingdom. When King Charles I. came to the crown he found the country in one entire peace; theft and robbery extinguished, vassalage and clanship broken, and exact obedience to the law, with the Gospel preached all over the kingdom; an orderly discipline exercised in a well-governed Presbyterian Church without schism, contradiction, or division. Never was prince better started than he, for he governed easily a people who had nothing to crave, but to have his commands, and obey. But the designs of the Charleses and King James were the establishment of Popery and Prelacy, which the Scotch people disliked, and the overthrow of Presbytery which they loved."

AN "Alphabetical Guide to the Protestant Churches in Italy" has just been published in Naples, containing a full list of the towns where any Protestant church is to be found, and of all the churches existing in the same city, together with the names of the pastors or evangelists. The first interesting fact to notice is that now there is almost no town, even of secondary importance, without a Protestant church. Let it be remembered that Italy has been freely open to evangelization only within these last twenty years. Nowadays there are evangelical churches at Alexandria, Ancona, Aosta, Aquila, Arezzo, Bergamo, Bologna, Brescia, Cagliari, Civita Vecchia, Como, Cremona, Ferrara, Genoa, Leghorn, Lucca, Messina, Milan, Modena, Naples, etc. It is observed, in the next place, that some of the Protestant churches in Italy are composed of born Protestant people, who use in their worship a foreign language (such as the English, Scotch, and American churches), and some are, properly speaking, the Italian churches—viz., they use the Italian language in their worship, and are composed of Italians converted from Popery during these last twenty years. These latter churches are the result of evangelistic efforts. The former (speaking foreign languages) amount to fifty; that is, twenty-three English-speaking, twenty French-speaking, and seven German-speaking. The Italian churches are more numerous. There are already *one hundred and thirty-eight* of these organized Italian churches. These belong to five different denominations, and here are the statistics up to the 1st of January of the present year: Methodist churches, 44; Vaudois churches, 39; Free Church churches, 21; Baptist churches, 19; the "Brethren" churches, 15. Each of the largest cities has more than one Protestant Italian church. Florence, for instance, has one Methodist church, two Vaudois

churches, one Free church, and one congregation of "The Brethren." Naples has three Methodist churches, one Vaudois church, one Free church, and three Baptist churches. Rome has two Methodist churches, one Vaudois church, one Free church, three Baptist churches, and one congregation of "The Brethren."

CONGREGATIONALISM IN QUEEN'S COUNTY, N.S.

When we cast our eyes over our churches in Queen's County, and see their present condition, we must confess to a sympathy with them in their sadness, and feel somewhat as the Divine Master felt when it was said of him "He was moved with compassion because they were as sheep having no shepherd," for the pastoral oversight has entirely departed, at any rate for the present, from her six Congregational churches, reckoning the connected one in an adjoining county. Here, Congregationalism, if we mistake not, had its first firm foothold in what is now called the Dominion of Canada. At Liverpool, nearly 120 years ago, was founded the first church, a Congregational, but parent of all the other evangelical churches since formed in the county. This parent Church and its offspring holding the same distinctive faith, have been blessed with some pastors of great intellect and eminent piety. Six church edifices and four parsonages are owned by them, and yet now, some denominational opponents think they read the word *Ichabod* (The glory is departed,) inscribed upon each of them. The united membership of all these churches is perhaps as large, or larger than ever before, the last statistics in the "Year Book" give the number as 469, or an average of seventy-eight for each church. Of course, in addition to these numbers, there are many firm adherents and strong supporters. Yet from some causes the pastors have all left one by one, and are busily and usefully engaged in other portions of the Master's vineyard. Some of these pastorless churches, however, are suffering much and continually growing weaker in spirit and effort, from lack of oversight and attendance on the means of grace; and unless some men full of love for souls, and willing to work hard for the Master, soon go to help them, resuscitation in some parts of this field will become, humanly speaking, very difficult to accomplish. But not one of these churches now believes itself able to support a pastor, not even Liverpool, with its Gorham endowment, while it is said that the funds of the Missionary Society are far too inadequate to help each of the four pastorates to the extent needed. Combinations, therefore, are now under consideration by some churches in order that one minister may to some extent occupy the positions hitherto enjoying the labours of two. Some think this plan should have been adopted before now, and an effort made to retain the services of brethren now removed; but many of us have to learn by experience.

The probable cause of this lack of ministers in this most Congregational county of Nova Scotia is the feeling of inability on the part of the churches to sufficiently sustain them on account of the sadly impoverished condition of the county, commenced by the failure of the Liverpool banks a few years ago, and followed by the very severe depression of trade in the Province generally. However, we trust that with men strong in the Lord, and in their physical condition, and ready, if need be, to make a sacrifice for a time, the hearts of this naturally kind and hospitable people in Queen's county, would be revived in a manner which would surprise even themselves as to their ability to "call the labourers and give them their hire."

J. S.