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The numbers for March and April are now before us, and wear a neat and attractive appearance, especially the April issue. A comparison of the two shows decided progress, the articles in the latter being shorter, plainer, and more readable for children than in the former. The paper is toned, and the printing and illustrations are well executed.—The Liberator, 6th April.

The paper is good, and supplies a great desideratum among the young. It should certainly meet with a wide circulation.—Rev. Wm. Ross, Kirkcaldy.

Specimen copies will be sent to any address. O. BLACKETT ROBINSON. P.O. Drawer 2184, Toronto, Ont.

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FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1876.

UNIVERSAL SALVATION.

IS GOD'S ULTIMATUM TO MEN OBSCURELY WORDED?

"God, who at sundry times and in diverse manners, spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son... therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard... for if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard Him?" In the opinion of the writer of these words (see Ep. Heb. i. ii.), the Christian dispensation in God's last inspired message to Jews and Gentiles—his ultimatum to the children of men. "The law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope did," which clearly means that in the Christian dispensation—the last of the dispensations—perfection is at last reached, and there is no room for any further dispensations here or hereafter. If a dispensation of grace, at the head of which stands God's own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, is neglected, despised, and rejected by men, then, in the eyes of Paul, nothing higher or better could be set on foot, either here or hereafter, to win these rebels to faith and repentance. In viewing the failure in any one case of a dispensation that was in every respect so fitted to draw men from sin to God, the thought to which God gives expression in Isaiah is in the Apostle's heart, and these words, in substance, on his lips. "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it?" In the spirit and tone, therefore, of a last appeal, of a sorrowful, but awful ultimatum to this rebel and ruined world, the sacred volume closes its last chapter: "His servants shall serve Him... and they shall reign for ever and ever... for the time is at hand; he that is unjust, let him be unjust still, and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy still... and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things that are written in this book."

If that is not the style of a last appeal, of a royal ultimatum, then we do not know where to find such a thing. It is truly God's ultimatum. Some will reply (and this seems to be the position taken by the Rev. Mr. MacDonnell in his sermon that has started the discussion), but the wording of the message is so dark and obscure that there may be found in it some hope of a final restoration, even for those whose part is taken away out of the book of life, and out of the holy city. With Tennyson, the preacher says, after reading God's ultimatum:

"Behold, we know not anything, I can but trust that good shall fall At last—far off—at last, to all."

The theologian, casting aside exegesis and logic, is carried by his fancy and his feelings to the region of poetry and sentiment, where (in the spirit of another of Tennyson's poetic figures) he questions about the final doom of the lost, and from the spirit land he hears a voice answering him, but in a language that no man can understand. So sings Tennyson, and so preaches Mr. MacDonnell. We would be very sorry, indeed, to include the Montreal Witness in the same category, although it has rendered itself liable to blame for starting in the public press this controversy, while it, a religious newspaper, refuses, in its own

proper person, to say a word in defense of a very fundamental truth of religion. It raises the ghost, and then stands aside, waiting for others to come and lay it. This is not worthy of a paper that is distinctively a religious paper, and which, as such, has rendered good service to the cause of evangelical truth in times past, of which system of truth the doctrine in question is a very essential part, as the Witness seems to acknowledge in a half-hearted kind of way. For is not this kind of way of speaking loss, somewhat, even than half-hearted?

"Every dogma must in turn be put to this test of public examination. Nothing can rest on the declarations of past ages alone, no matter how unanimous the fathers may have been. We have the law and the testimony, and unless we can find the truth there, the Church of to-day will not accept it."

But are vagueness, indefiniteness, and obscurity attributes of God's messages to men on this question of momentous and critical importance? In a royal despatch, and especially in the last despatch, on which hangs peace or war, it is a bad fault to fall into obscurity of intentions, or shilly-shally, as this way is commonly called. It was this feature in Lord Aberdeen's despatches to Russia that brought on Britain the Crimean war; and the total absence of it in Lord Palmerston's despatches that recently prevented a war with the United States. And the Bible is nowhere chargeable with darkening counsel with words— is clear as noon in all it says as to the destiny and demerit of sin, and the final doom of hardened and impenitent sinners.

The Scriptures, in tones clearer and louder, as the canon draws near its close, represent under every variety of figure, the condition of the wicked in the future world as utterly hopeless. They are represented as thrown away, as things that are good for nothing, and which God makes no account of. Matt. xiii. 48. Men who will not reverence even His Son, who neglect the salvation "which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord," are in His eyes as salt that has lost its savour; as chaff which the wind carries one cares not whither; as tares that can never, in the nature of things, be expected to become wheat—Matt. iii. 12, xiii. 20; as barren trees that must be cut down, and cast into the fire; as a substance that is spued out of God's mouth; as the filth and obscuring of the holy city, which must be cast into the sink of fire—Rev. xxi. 8; as briars and thorns, whose end is to be burned—Heb. vi.; as dogs that are utterly unfit for the New Jerusalem—Rev. xxi. 8. Now such language and figures, loathsome at times in their horribleness, is altogether inconsistent with the idea that hell is only for a time, that it is only a place of fatherly chastisement, and that out of it the lost shall come at last as gold that is purified. After reading such words, a poet, even, is without excuse, who says, it may be, with some poetical license—

"Behold, we know not anything," but a theologian who stumbles where the words of the Divine Record is so emphatic, and its meaning so vivid, is led more by his feelings and sentiments than by his judgment, and owns greater allegiance to German speculations than to correct exegesis and sound theology. Having in our first article dealt with general principles, and in this article with phrases and figures, we are prepared in our next to deal with the words of Scripture (such as eternity) that measure duration.

Ministers and Churches.

The Rev. G. M. Milligan of Detroit, delivered a lecture on Monday evening, the 26th inst., to a large and delighted audience in the Presbyterian Church, Ailsa Craig, on "The Elements of Progress." The rev. gentleman also lectured in Parkhill and Luan, and preached on Sabbath, the 24th ult., to his former congregation in London township.

On Sabbath, the 17th inst., the pastorate of the Rev. W. D. Ballantyne, B.A., of the late C. P. Church, Whitby, was brought to a close. His connection with the congregation as minister has extended a little over five years, and has been throughout most happy and harmonious. At the morning service the Communion was observed, and although the day was somewhat unpropitious, there was a large attendance. In the evening a farewell sermon was preached from the words, "I beseech you brethren, suffer the word of exhortation." On the following Wednesday Mr. and Mrs. B. were called upon by the managers and a few ladies in the name of the congregation, who, after a few introductory salutations, read to them a very affectionate address, and made the presentation to Mrs. B. of a very elegant card receiver and vase. The half-year's salary had been voted at a meeting of the congregation, and its intention made known to the Presbytery when Mr. B.'s resignation was accepted, but the address, and the presentation to Mrs. Ballantyne were altogether unexpected and a complete surprise. The articles presented were of rich material and elegant in design. The whole circum-

stances and associations were trying to the feelings as well as gratifying. Mr. Ballantyne, who was deeply affected, replied in a few touching and appropriate words, and after many kind congratulations and warm good wishes their friends withdrew, and the proceedings closed. Mr. Ballantyne's ministry in Whitby has been a very successful one. Four years ago he found the congregation a mere handful, unable to maintain ordinances without considerable assistance from the mission fund. He leaves it vigorous and self-supporting, without debt, and without a seat in the Church to be let. He leaves it simply to allow the two congregations in the town to unite, and his many friends will hope that in the language of the congregational address presented to him before leaving Whitby, "he may speedily find a sphere of labour more extensive than the one he left, one giving more scope to his talents, power, and missionary spirit, and more able as well as willing to return him a more ample remuneration."

Book Reviews.

BLACKWOOD FOR OCTOBER is an especially good number. Almost every one of the articles is exceedingly interesting.

SCHUBNER begins a new volume with November, and promises to be even an improvement on the previous high degree of excellence.

ST. NICHOLAS is an established favorite with the young. The new volume, which begins with November, has some new features, which will render it still more attractive than ever.

WIDE AWAKE FOR NOVEMBER comes, as usual, brimful of illustrations, and with appropriate letter press as well.

Correspondence.

Alteration of the Confession.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—The Rev. Mr. McPherson, of Lancaster, is reported in your columns last week as having stated at a public meeting in Glengarry the other day, that, at the late union, the Confession of Faith was altered in deference to the wishes of Irish Presbyterians. One hardly knows whether to laugh or to be angry at such an astounding statement. It is evident enough that the Rev. gentleman, poor simple man, is still quite unfit to discuss intelligently the subject of union.

There is not a portion of the United Church less deserving of the imputation than the Irish element in it. They never asked for any change in the Confession of Faith, and with all the energy possible to them would they resist any attempt to effect a change in it. If proof were needed, it would be found in the fact that when on a recent notable occasion it was assailed, the men, who nobly stood forward in its defence, were both Irish Presbyterians. All honour to them! May they long be spared the decus et tutamen of the grand old faith their fathers loved so well. The truth is, Irish Presbyterians know by sad experience how dangerous it is to depart in any measure from the "Faithful Word" as they have been taught in their ecclesiastical symbol, and how important it is to suffer no latitudinarian pretences of Christian liberty to absolve those who seek to exercise the ministry in our happily united Church from declaring their concurrence in her recognized standards. In the early part of the last century, some within the pale of the Church to which they still love to look with all the veneration due by children to an affectionate mother, began to call in question the propriety of subscriptions to man-made creeds. They felt the Confession of Faith to be a fetter to them, and they wished to cast it off. Unfortunately the evil was not, as it should have been, crushed in the bud. The consequence was that it continued to spread until in many quarters subscription to the Confession was entirely set aside; and what was worse by far, deadly heresy crept in, threatening the very existence of the Church. But better days were in store for her. In 1821, the late illustrious Henry Cooke, whose memory will ever be very dear to the hearts of Irish Presbyterians, began his famous battle with error. That battle he carried on with unflinching patience, unflinching purpose, and unshaken courage, till heresy was driven from her pale, and the Church restored to her ancient purity. From that hour she has resolutely insisted on subscription to the Confession of Faith; and from that hour she started upon a career of efficiency and usefulness to which no previous period in her history offers a parallel. Her Home, Foreign, and Jewish Mission schemes, and her ministry second in soundness in the faith, talent and scholarship to the ministry of no other Church in the world, as well as the tens of thousands of her intelligent and devout laity, attest how great and gratifying is the change that God hath wrought within her. Sometimes people wonder why Irish Presbyterians cling so tenaciously to the Confession of Faith. Our answer is that few know as we know the danger of regarding it with indifference, and the importance of suffering no departure from it. There was a time when unhappily we sat loose to it, and the result was that our beloved Church was brought well nigh to destruction, her life was paralytically crushed, and her very existence seriously endangered. We have looked to England, too, and we have seen a disregard to the Confession ending in the annihilation almost of Presbyterianism in that land.

We are persuaded that the same cause would in time produce the same unhappy effect in this land. Is it any wonder then, that we rally around the grand old symbol that enshrines our grand old faith, determined to allow no sacrilegious hands to

be laid upon it, and resolved to transmit it in its entirety to the generations that are to come after us. We are true patriots and true churchmen. We love our country and we love our Church. And because we seek the good of the one, and the peace, and efficiency, and progress, and prosperity of the other, we will stand by the old Westminster Confession, and if need be, battle on its behalf, against all deadly foes. Others may feel it to be an irksome burden that they would gladly throw off, but we glory in it as one of the most precious legacies our fathers have bequeathed to us. We know that it is human in its origin, and not for a moment to be placed on a level with the Bible. But we firmly believe, and are fully assured, that it contains the truth as it is in Jesus, and that the maintenance of its verities, and the diffusion and prevalence of its principles will lead lustre to our Church and glory to our land.

Yours, AN IRISH TRUE BLUE.

"By Faith."

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir—Why are the marvellous answers to prayer which occasionally occur not more common—the rule instead of the exception? When we think what our church life and work are compared with what they might be were this wonderful and mysterious power in full exercise among us, it is certainly worth enquiring regarding the faith which of old "obtained promises."

IS IT A LOST ART?

There is no doubt Satan has been laboring to impress this upon the Church, and that with much success. He would have us believe that the command "Have faith in God," for the removal of mountains, etc., applied only to the disciples, but there is nothing in God's word to encourage this view, and there is much in the history of the modern to stamp it a device of the father of lies to cheat the church of vast and priceless resources. Who that has read of the Lord's dealings with such men as George Muller, Dr. Barnardo, Pastor Harnes, Whyhorn, Dr. Cullis, Moody, Spurgeon, etc., can have an intelligent doubt about the matter?

GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY

is another difficulty which the enemy would press upon us, but God's word makes it abundantly plain that, while faith is his gift, yet it is freely bestowed upon all who will receive it, and that the only hindrances to the possession and exercise of these gifts and graces are in ourselves. Yes, it is not in Him that we are strengthened. The most plausible refuge would probably be

INSUPERABLE HUMAN INFIRMITY.

With what subtlety would the enemy erase the line between innocent infirmity and the sinful mistrust which "limits the Holy One of Israel" in his working in and by us. The true explanation is, "He did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief." The mistake lies in the word "insuperable." I am convinced that the great sin of the present day in the Church is making too much of natural gifts, and too little of spiritual, and limiting God to working only through the former, or at least in the ratio of their presence. As with the Church, so with the individual. How many knees are feeble and hands listless, because of the presence of such infirmity and little natural ability. Now what saith the Scripture? Does it not teach us that the worthiness of the covenant of Hebrews were "men of like passions" with ourselves naturally. That it was in spite of these infirmities that Elijah and Abraham achieved what they did "by faith." Yes, that it was when the great apostle, who studied their lives to good purpose, realized his own infirmities most that the sufficiency of God's power was most signally manifested in him. To many there is a mystery about his paradox. "When I am weak, then am I strong," which nothing but an experience of the fruits of self-abasement and self-render to the use of a trusted Jehovah will dispel. The world prizes self-confidence in great abilities—and the Church has gone too much to its school. The successful Christian worker has to unlearn that lesson, and to find out how to seek self and allow Christ to be magnified in him, ere God will use him to "thrash the mountains"—to know what it is to be "a worm" in the hand of omnipotence. Isa. xli. 14, 16. W. M. R. Oct. 25, 1875.

Arroars of Congregations.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—We have for some years started the civil authorities in assessing our congregations to meet the expenses of the Assembly. Might we not go a step further and collect what we assess? I observe that several of the Presbyteries have not paid their full share for last year. The greatest delinquent is the Presbytery of London, which has fallen far short of its obligations—several prominent congregations, according to minutes of Assembly, not having contributed even one dollar! The result is that Presbyteries that paid in full have again been assessed for monies for which they were assessed last year.

Is this just? Have these Sessions in the London Presbytery no sense of honor? Is there no authority in the London Presbytery to see that justice is done? Objections may very fairly be taken to the principle of assessment. If it is a correct one why not raise all our funds by it? If it is not, why raise any of them? I believe it to be unjust in its operation, at the same time it is impossible to justify the conduct of the London Presbytery in the humiliating position in which the minutes of Assembly, and the recent circular absent Assembly Fund place it. Yours etc., H. October 28rd, 1875.

THE GERMAN ESTIMATES for 1876 are said to exhibit a deficit of five millions of dollars, showing that warlike operations are somewhat strained.

French Evangelization.

To the Ministers, Members, and Adherents of the Presbyterian Church in Canada.

The First General Assembly having appointed a Board of French Evangelization, its Secretary, the Rev. Chas. A. Tanner, is now presenting its claims to congregations, and soliciting contributions to its funds. Your attention is therefore respectfully requested to the following:

I. The Object. The Assembly proposes to have the gospel preached to our countrymen speaking the French language, and to establish among them Mission Stations wherever practicable; while at the same time the Missionaries of the Board supply ordinances to many neglected English-speaking Protestants.

II. The means employed.—The Board has under its care eight French ministers, three licentiates, three missionary teachers, sixteen French students for the ministry, five French congregations, several in which French and English are preached, and six mission schools.

III. The Fields occupied.—These are distributed throughout the Dominion from Windsor, Ontario, to Pictou, Nova Scotia. There are thirty-one fields to which the labors of the missionaries of the Board have been extended, with encouraging success, and others can be readily entered so soon as the church supplies the means of doing so.

IV. Results.—Through the labors of Rev. Chas. Chiniquy, aided by Rev. Chas. A. Tanner, and Mr. Amaron, in Montreal, a very large number have already renounced the errors of the Romish Church, and formed themselves into a Presbyterian congregation. The St. John's Church, Montreal, formerly in connection with the Church of Scotland, being too small for the increased attendance, the large building known as Russell Hall was purchased at a cost of \$20,000, and is occupied every Lord's Day, and during the week also, by large and attentive audiences.

The Presbytery of Pictou, Nova Scotia, reports to the Board that as one of the results of the labors of Mr. E. D. Pelletier, student, during the last six months, 125 persons have publicly renounced Romanism, and petitioned the Presbytery for the continuance of the services of the missionary. Reports of a similar nature come from other fields, showing the large measure in which the Lord is pleased to prosper the work. The Board, however, is greatly embarrassed for lack of means, and earnestly appeals to you for aid in spreading the truth among this people.

V. Finance.—The estimated annual expense of prosecuting the work efficiently is about \$10,000 for which no other provision exists except the free will offerings of the members and adherents of the church at large. This is exclusive of the price of the Russell Hall, on which payments must be made during the year. The necessity of liberal contributions in support of this work of the Assembly, and what is in many respects the great work of the Church in Canada, is therefore apparent.

Montreal Presbyterian College Missionary Society.

Owing to many important and pressing duties, Mr. Tanner cannot visit all the congregations of the church, and as funds are so urgently required, that unless speedily furnished, the work must be diminished by abandoning certain parts of it, the Board, before resorting to such measures, presents the matter specially to ministers, elders, managers, deacons, and Sabbath School superintendents, in the hope that prompt action may be taken. All contributions should be forwarded to A. B. Stewart, Official Assignee, Montreal. By authority of the Executive Board, D. H. MACVICAR, Chairman, R. CAMPBELL, Vice Chairman, CHAS. A. TANNER, Secretary, A. B. STEWART, Treasurer.

The seventh annual meeting of this Society was held on Friday evening, the 22nd inst. The meeting was largely attended. The Society's missionaries for the past summer presented their reports. Five reports out of the seven were of a very encouraging nature, and showed evidences of success, both by the liberality of the people in the various fields, and the number who, under the preaching of the Word, were led to profess their faith in Christ. Nearly all these uncareful-for-fields earnestly entreat the Society not to forget them next summer. Our missionary at the Ridge, North Hastings, suggests that the Society should help the struggling, but earnest little congregation there to build their church—a work which they have projected, but have not the means to accomplish. The Treasurer's report shows our finances to be so low, that great liberality will have to be shown by the Society's friends if we are to enlarge or even sustain our present Christian work of Gospel preaching and good deeds. Having the will to work for the Lord, we trust He will provide us with all the necessary means. The following gentlemen were elected as officers of the Society for the coming year:—President, T. Bennett; First Vice-President, W. Gray; Second Vice-President, W. D. Russell; Recording Secretary, M. H. Scott; Corresponding Secretary, D. L. McCrae; Treasurer, J. A. Anderson; Committee, Messrs. J. T. Donald, O. E. Amaron, R. McKibbin, G. F. Walker, N. McPhee. Rev. R. Campbell, St. Gabriel street Church, was present by appointment to communicate information regarding mission work for the session. All entered heartily into his project. Four or five stations are to be worked regularly during the winter. W. H. SCOTT, Secretary.

THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT Arsenal, at Brest, has been considerably damaged by fire.