

and all it means and implies, we see an increasing hinderance to the growth of the Church and the spread of the Gospel. A down-grade tendency and a visible sign of weakening influence of the church, and the faith it represents, is the growing influence of undenominationalism, as to worship, organization and education. This the parent of that indifference, which is so alarmingly prevalent, and how can there be enthusiasm for principles so vague that there is nothing left on which to form even a sect, or to be entitled to a name? In addition to this there is a love of pleasure, a disregard of the future, and a weakening sense of human responsibility which make men careless as to their conduct here, or as to their future state in the land beyond the grave. The world affects the Church and in the decay of faith, the Church's ministry is weakened, and the number is lessened of those who come to the help of the Lord, the help of the Lord against the mighty. And so to both the corporate life of the Church, and the life of the individual Christian there are many hinderances, and there are many enemies of the Cross of Christ who mind earthly things, and they are not increased whose citizenship is in heaven, from whence also they look for the Saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. We mention these things not to discourage, or to indulge a gloomy pessimism, but to reveal facts, and to stir up the Christian army to a more vigorous assertion of the faith, and the upholding of the lofty moral teaching of Jesus, which finds in it its base, and its authority. We want neither faint-heartedness nor yet a shallow complacency, but an onward movement of faith and work, realizing that hinderances will, if we are faithful, disappear, and under the leadership of the great Captain of our salvation, Jesus the Son of God, we shall prove more than conquerors over the powers of hell and darkness. Whatever betide our hope and confidence is in the great fact of salvation and history, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

#### FROM WEEK TO WEEK.

##### Spectator's Comments on Questions of Public Interest to Churchmen.

The Synod of the diocese of Montreal, which meets in mid-winter, has just closed its forty-fifth annual session. His Grace, Archbishop Bond, presided, carrying his eighty-eight years of strenuous activity with all the ease and vigour of a much younger man. His charge, as usual, was simple, direct and forceful. He reviewed the chief activities of his episcopate during the twelve months, and touched upon the outlook of his diocese with inspiring confidence and cheerfulness. Beside him on the platform was his old friend and lieutenant, the gifted Bishop Carmichael. He, too, had an interesting story to tell of episcopal duties performed, and a guiding word for clergy and laity in the broader field of national Church development. The old tale of a depleted treasury in Montreal has apparently been laid on the shelf, and for the first time in many years the sunshine of financial prosperity has been felt with invigorating warmth. An ever-increasing overdraft upon the Mission Fund has been met and wiped off the slate, and the diocese sets out now with the brightest possible prospect for doing its work most effectively.

The experience and attitude of the diocese of Montreal in financial matters is but a replica of almost every other diocese in Eastern Canada. Our ecclesiastical financiers have ever been prone to show symptoms of melancholia. Their utterances have always been pitched in a minor key. The rueful countenance and the doleful dirge have ever been prominent in our councils. When circumstances have warranted a more cheerful note, our representatives of wisdom have passed the word round, "tell it not in the streets, publish it not," lest the faithful slack their hands. Could the wit of man devise a method more at

variance with the demands of human nature? Does the man of affairs, or the statesman rally friends to his assistance by proclaiming his extremities and elaborating his chances of failure? Does the general arm his men with courage and enthusiasm by dwelling upon the possibility of defeat? Duty and responsibility are admirable themes to dwell upon at the proper time, and rebukes must sometimes be administered. But these are not the watchwords that stir men and carry them on to victory. Church leaders have to be imbued with confidence in their cause and optimism in their outlook if they hope to carry men with them. It is tenfold more easy to muster friends for a winning cause than for one whose issue is uncertain. If men have done well, then in the name of justice and common sense, let us tell them so. This policy is as sound as it is prudent.

At this latest meeting of the Montreal Synod, the General Missionary Society came in for a very considerable amount of attention. Certain features of that discussion would indicate that the utmost care in the administration of the missionary work of the Church is necessary, at this juncture, else a promising and important undertaking may be wrecked. The public may be too exacting in its demands for full information concerning a work which is still in its formative stage. But the Board of Management must bear in mind that it is responsible to the Church at large for its actions, and the Church demands a frank and full account of its stewardship from time to time. This is a necessity not merely to satisfy natural curiosity, but in the interests of the very work that the Board represents. It is impossible to imagine that the interest of the public should be sustained in a work that is not constantly brought before them by official information, as candid and complete as the circumstances warrant. This is the lesson of the Montreal discussion upon the subject, and it is the attitude that will be taken up by every other diocese in Canada unless it is anticipated by the information required.

It is not difficult to see that special warmth of feeling upon the matter of the administration of the Board has been occasioned by its attitude on a question recently before the public. Upon the wisdom of the action of the Board in taking the step that called forth such sharp criticism, it is not necessary to offer an opinion just now, but if the policy of silence, in the face of a very widespread demand for information, be adopted, then it requires no prophet to foretell that the relations between the Board and its masters will not be as cordial as they should be. The attitude of the oyster is an excellent policy when no defence can be offered, but wide, open frankness is by long odds the wiser course when men are doing their best.

Churchmen in Canada will unquestionably look for information regarding the results of the efforts put forth to meet the palpable demands for Church extension in this country. The Bishops west of the Great Lakes have been invited to sit down and estimate the amount of money they could usefully employ in extending and efficiently maintaining the Church in their various dioceses. No limit or conditions are imposed upon them in formulating these estimates. They then lay their needs before the Board and the Board proceeds to raise the necessary amount. For the year that has just closed, the estimates of the Bishops, amounting in round numbers to \$50,000, anticipated the opening of forty or fifty new missions and the installing of as many new men. Have these missions been opened and have the men been found to occupy them? What are the evidences of success in these new ventures, and what are the prospects and character of the fields still unprovided for? These are natural and reasonable questions for the men who supply the money to ask, and the answers we have, no doubt, will in due time be given. To meet just this situation the official organ of the Board might devote itself with

greater vigour, and more fully justify its usefulness. The public require facts rather than opinions, and the record of the things that have been done is a necessary complement of the prophecies of what may be done.

At last the sword has been drawn in the far East, and the world stands in subdued expectancy of what the issues may be. The quenchless thirst of Russia for greater territorial dominion is finding expression in military action, and the rising ambition of Japan for a place on the front bench of the powers of the world has stirred her to an unusual alertness in guarding her rights and forestalling a rival. It is one of the marvels of history how Japan should have shot forth out of obscurity into prominence and prestige in a single generation. Her commercial, intellectual, military, and naval strength have developed with marvellous rapidity, and along the lines of Western civilization. The results of the first encounters in this great struggle have all been to the advantage of Japan. But it is hardly safe to set too much store by these brilliant achievements. Japan has not yet been tried by the stress of adversity, and her staying qualities have not been put to the test. If she develops the Anglo-Saxon tenacity in conjunction with her vigour and dash, she will certainly be a tremendous force in international questions.

The recent installation of Rev. E. I. Rexford, M.A., L.L.D. as principal of the Montreal Diocesan College marks an important event in the history of theological education in Canada. The college itself is a splendid memorial to the virtues of one of the foremost laymen of the Church in this country, but recently gathered to his fathers. The beautiful and commodious buildings with practically their whole endowment are the gifts of the late Andrew Frederick Gault. They probably stand alone in their magnitude and splendor of the generosity and love that called them into being.

The significance of the appointment of the new principal lies in the fact that one of our chief seats of theological learning will be brought into much closer touch with the laymen's point of view. The result of this experiment will be watched with the greatest possible interest. While Dr. Rexford is a distinguished graduate of McGill University and also of the college over which he now presides, almost his entire career has been associated with work of a lay character. He has fairly won a very high position for himself as a pre-eminent successful principal of a public school, and the administration of an important department of provincial education, but at no time has he been absorbed in those abstract features of theological scholarship that are traditionally associated with a position he now fills.

While in no way questioning the theological lore of Dr. Rexford, which in the nature of things could not be so extensive as in one whose whole life has been devoted to that subject, we are inclined to believe that this defect, if defect there be, will be more than compensated by his exceptionally large experience with laymen in his lay capacity. His influence upon the young men trained under him for the ministry can scarcely fail to be fruitful in more sympathetic and direct contact between clergy and people. If the message of the gospel is to find its way to human hearts, it is plain that a knowledge of those hearts and aspirations is an important possession of him who declares it. The Church has lost many opportunities by neglect to view the truth as essentially applicable to life, life not as it ideally ought to be, but as it is.

In one other direction if we mistake not will Dr. Rexford's influence be felt, and felt to the entire advantage of the Church and that is the preparation of the young men of his college for effective and intelligent Sunday school work. One marvels that our theological colleges should so long have overlooked this fundamental department of clerical duty. Churchmen get together in convention and declaim about the overwhelming importance of the Sunday school, and yet the institu-