

of the way in which God deals with moral agents. He selected a very fruitful hill, fenced His vineyard, stoned it, planted it, provided tower and wae press. "What could have been done more to My vineyard, that I have not done in it?" The limit of the owner's power and skill has been reached, and the result is failure. That the will of God does set limits to His action is clear enough. Every promise that He makes to man binds the hands of His omnipotence, for thenceforth His truth is committed to its fulfilment. He limits Himself to the lines of a settled plan, as we have already shown, in the ordinary course of nature. "If My covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth," etc. (Jer. xxxiii. 25). That He deals with men as free agents, and not as mere sentient automata, is equally obvious. It is attested by all experience, and by all history of the past. Evidence of it is supplied by every command, invitation, promise, threat. So far as we can tell, things might have been otherwise. Men might have lived a life of conscious existence as mere lotus-eaters, without possessing any originaive power of choice or will. But God has willed that we be men, not oysters or ascidians. Over and above the obedience of mechanical necessity exhibited in the course of nature, He chooses to have a willing people in the day of His power. As in the natural world He refrains from destroying the special properties of each atom, so in the moral world He refrains from destroying the autonomy of will.

This power of personal decision stands, like a railway switch, at the partings of the ways, to good on one hand, to evil on the other.

And the view we take of it, in relation to the grace of God, stands also at the parting of the ways—the point of divergence—of the two great Evangelical theologies. Calvinist and Arminian agree that in regeneration no violence is offered to the will of man—or, as we have put it, that God refrains from crushing man's free personality. They also agree that intelligent hearers of the Gospel possess all the power to choose or to refuse that is necessary in order to establish responsibility. And they further agree that in regeneration divine grace is operative, and that if it were withheld the man would not choose but refuse—so that conversion is due in every case to the operation of the Spirit of God. When they come to measure grace by foot-pounds, and discuss how much is given to this man and how little to that other, they differ. But an unsophisticated Christian might be excused for thinking that the three principles on which they are agreed constitute a fair working theory of the subject; and that men who agree so far might agree to differ respecting more minute details. If the Evangelical Churches are to be re-united, as we hope they may, it will not be by Calvinists becoming pronounced Arminians, or Arminians becoming pronounced Calvinists; but by both parties recognizing the insufficiency of the metaphysico-theological points on which they differ as grounds for maintaining longer a separation between brethren.

EASTERN ONTARIO.

In writing to a paper published in Toronto, it is to be presumed that not a word is to be said against the big Federation, *alias* Consolidation, University Scheme. This much may be said, however: your correspondent is very glad that Queen's is not going to Toronto. He may be somewhat selfish in feeling so, and of course it is out of the question that a Toronto man could be actuated by selfishness. Everybody there has at heart the interests of Higher Education—that and nothing else. That being granted, we may pass on to another subject.

The congregation of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, has made out a unanimous call in favour of Rev. S. R. Jordan, of Halifax. The call will no doubt be sent forward this week, as a special meeting of Presbytery is summoned to consider it. It is now the larger part of two years since the pulpit became vacant by the removal of Dr. Smith, to St. John, N.B. Attempts were made at various times to fill the vacancy but without success so far. Whether the present effort will be successful remains to be seen. There will be more than the call from St. Andrew's, Kingston, to be considered by Mr. Jordan. The city of Montreal wants him, and his own people in Halifax are loath to let him go. Hence it would be premature to congratulate the friends of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, just yet. We hope to be able to congratulate them ere long.

What is to be done with our vacancies now? Are there no probationers? The present writer knows of a fair vacancy, and the prospect of getting a likely candidate is so far very meagre. It is a self-sustain-

ing charge, not far from the city of Kingston, and is composed of well-to-do farmers for the most part. Where one of the churches is, there is a pleasantly situated small village with post office and other conveniences. There is a considerable amount of work needed, but not more than is done in dozens of charges in Canada. Letters have been written to officials of the Home Mission Board, asking for information as to preachers available for settlement, and the replies have not been encouraging. Within the bounds of the Presbytery of Kingston alone, some eight or ten ordained ministers could be settled, together with a host of students. One ordained missionary was appointed to a district in the northern part of the county of Hastings at the beginning of the year, and it was hoped that another would have been appointed north of Kingston, on the Pembroke Railway, at the same time. The negotiations in the latter case fell through in the meantime, not through the fault of the Presbytery, for the Presbytery was most anxious to have a man placed there. Besides the Home Mission fields, there are at least seven vacant congregations in the Presbytery at the present moment.

The Rev. J. Fraser Campbell visited Kingston a short time ago. Some months since he was here and addressed a united meeting of the three congregations in Chalmers Church. In the late visit he addressed the prayer meeting of Cooke's Church on the Wednesday evening and preached in the Church on the following Sabbath morning. He also while in Kingston spoke to the Ladies Foreign Missionary Society. In all his utterances he was much appreciated. I believe he also had a conference with the students. There is quite an interest in missions among the students. It is understood that if the Foreign Mission Board wants men there are men ready to respond. The lack at present it appears is not that of men, but of means. Let the people show that they are ready to give support and the men can be had.

TAX EXEMPTIONS.

MR. EDITOR,—The article on "Tax Exemptions," in a recent issue, must have been read with no little amazement. Anything so jejune and logically lame it has not been mine to peruse since the early days of what was called the Voluntary Controversy, when certain professors of religion that fed at the stall of the State propounded the same, or similar, puerilities by way of apology for Church establishments that have done dishonour to the Saviour, 'amage to His Church, and inflicted wrong on society. For the last thirty or forty years, intelligent men, though belonging to State-supported Churches, have from self-respect, if from no higher motive, abstained from casting dust in the eyes of the community by advancing such baseless arguments as abound in the article you have printed on "Tax Exemptions." The subject is far-reaching and of vital importance. The writer succeeds in confounding things that differ as markedly as mind and matter. He commingles civil and sacred things, and gets woefully befogged in consequence. Under the indefinite and hackneyed phrase, "co-ordinate powers," he jumbles up Church and State so as to lose sight of the plain and prominent landmarks which Scripture and reason have erected to indicate their boundaries. Your correspondent would do well to rid the marches ere he again writes on Tax Exemptions. Surely, he does not need to be told that civil government has only to do with man's relations to his fellow man, but not with man's relations to God. Religion is entirely between man and his Maker, with which no earthly power may righteously intermeddle. The pages of history are blurred by tales of wrong and bloodshed, the result of interference on the part of civil governments with man's relations to his God. God's associated people, called the Church, constitute a Kingdom that is not of this world, though in the world. Of this Kingdom Jesus is sole Ruler. Neither He nor His inspired Apostles gave the remotest hint that civil governments should interfere with or contribute to the support of the Church. On the contrary, both uttered words which, if rightly interpreted, forbid all dalliance of earthly governments with the Christian Church. Jesus says: "Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's." Paul says: "Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel." No intelligent Christian needs to be told that God is not honoured by any service that is the result of compulsion. All acceptable service must be rendered "willingly, with the heart." But the behests of civil governments are backed by

the baton and the sword; hence, all moneys pertaining to them are raised by compulsion; and being thus tainted they are utterly unfit to be laid on God's altar. And, moreover, moneys raised by civil governments are solely for civil purposes, and if given to the Church (a purely sacred institution), are unquestionably moneys *misappropriated*. Can God be honoured thereby? No, verily! Yet some Christian men in their blindness have, times untold, insulted and provoked Him by such offerings. Civil governments favour the Church most when they let her alone. She has suffered more from their smiles and pretended favours than from their darkest and deadliest frowns. In view of the history of the Church, I ask if it be not a fact that her spirituality and Christly character diminish in proportion to the favours conferred on her and the control exercised over her by the civil power? Has not the Church in sundry lands become a loathsome corpse in the merciless embrace of the civil government? And yet there are Christian men that seek for her such deadly embrace! Exempting from taxation churches, mansees, glebes, etc., is equivalent to paying the churches and their ministers so much money—money misappropriated, because collected for other purposes, and collected by means which the laws of Zion's King will not permit in raising the revenue of His kingdom. To accept of exemption from taxation for churches and mansees is to sanction a principle and a practice which, if carried to their logical result, would leave the Church entirely dependent on the State for support. If it be right and safe to accept a small favour, can it be wrong to accept a greater? The Church of Christ has far more cause to dread the favours of earthly powers than the Trojans had to dread the gifts of the Grecians.

It is very pitiable to hear Christian men say that the civil Government cannot honour or own God except by doling out largesses to the Church. If civil rulers are real Christians, they will own and honour God by enacting laws in perfect accord with the principles of eternal justice as gathered by them from God's written Word; and also by administering these laws with absolute impartiality, neither favouring men on account of their religion, nor injuring them because they have no religion. Christian rulers own and honour God as just stewards do, viz., by seeing to it that the goods and the gold committed to their charge are faithfully cared for and applied to none but legitimate objects. They will not give gifts either to God or to men of what does not belong to them. But these same Christian rulers will, as Christians and members of Christ's Church, give of their own willingly, yea, gladly and liberally, "as the Lord hath prospered them," for the maintenance and extension of the cause of their dear Redeemer. Their gifts are not extorted by earthly power, but are given joyfully in obedience to the delightful promptings of love and gratitude to Him that bought them at the cost of His blood. Such, and none else, are the gifts that God the Saviour accepts. SENEX.

THOSE SOCIALS.

MR. EDITOR,—In your issue of the 18th February, a communication appears from "Equity," on church socials, plays, etc. I trust we shall hear from "Equity" again on the same subject. I can assure him that the professing Christian people of Amherstburg are by no means singular in the introduction of dancing, but as they have been noticed in the columns of THE PRESBYTERIAN, let us hope they will be noticed by their own Presbytery, and by the General Assembly as well.

I notice in the *Free Grant Gazette* of February 20, that a neck-tie social, under the auspices of the ladies of the Presbyterian church, Bracebridge, will be held on the 3rd of March. Very likely, a quiet set and the Lancers will finish up the evening, as has been the case before; but even if they do not dance, a neck-tie social is a greater abomination even than a dance, to bring money into a church treasury. For twenty-five cents, a man moving in respectable circles, but of questionable morality, by picking a neck-tie of a certain colour, can match himself with your daughter, or even your wife, for that evening. What shall be said of such introductions as these? What can be expected of them? and yet such things are done by professedly Christian people, nominally, to help the church funds; really, that the pious sinners may have a real nice time in worldly pleasure and amusement, thinly disguised under the name of religious activity.

Our Church must soon speak with authority on such practices, or Ichabod will be written on our Church Courts as well as on individual churches. Let our rules prevail for the great sinners, as well as for the small sinners, in this matter. H. K. *Magawawan, Feb. 25, 1885.*