

its weapons from his weakest faculty, and the very inferiority of his intellect prevented him from seeing where his true strength lay. He would argue, he would try to convert me from scepticism, by, what seemed to him reasoning, the common figure of which was, what logicians I believe, call begging the question; and the common method, what they call *ignoratio elenchi*—shooting at pigeons, while crows are the game desired. He always started by demanding my assent to the very question which lay at the bottom of my doubts. He would wrangle and wrestle blindly up and down, with tears of earnestness in his eyes, till he had lost his temper, as far as was possible for one so angel-guarded as he seemed to be; and then when he found himself confused, contradicting his own words, making concessions at which he shuddered, for the sake of gaining from me assent to propositions which he found out the next moment I understood in quite a different sense from his, he would suddenly shift his ground, and try to knock me down authoritatively with a single text of Scripture; when all the while I wanted proof that Scripture had any authority at all. . . .

Besides, I never denied the existence of Jesus of Nazareth, or his apostles. I doubted the myths and doctrines which I believed to have been gradually built up round the true story. The fact was, he was like most of his class, attacking extinct Satans, fighting manfully against Voltaire, Volney and Tom Paine; while I was fighting for Strauss, Hennell and Emerson. And at last he gave me up for some weeks as a hopeless infidel, without ever having touched the points on which I disbelieved. He had never read Strauss—hardly ever heard of him; and till clergymen make up their minds to do that, and to answer Strauss also, they will, as he did, leave the heretic artisan just where they found him."

Our third illustration will, perhaps, surprise, but, we hope, will not offend. We are in some doubt whether the bearing of it will be readily discerned; but, we are persuaded it contains suggestions which could be turned to the most valuable account by a minister of mental vigour and alacrity, in dealing incidentally with a large and influential section of the population of this very Canada, in the nineteenth century. We shall leave it with our intelligent readers, to ponder the example of

SOCRATES AND HIS METHOD IN DEALING WITH THE MINDS OF MEN.

"Early in the morning he frequented the public walks, the gymnasia, for bodily training, and the schools where youths were receiving instruction; he was to be seen in the market-place at the hour when it was most crowded, among the booths and tables, where goods were exposed for sale; his whole day was usually spent in this public manner. He talked with any one, young or old, rich or poor, who sought to address him, and in the hearing of all who chose to stand by, not only he never either asked or received any reward, but he made no distinction of persons, never withheld his conversation from any one, and talked upon the same general topics to all."

"To him the precept, inscribed in the Delphian temple—*Know thyself*—was the holiest of all texts, which he constantly cited and strenuously enforced upon his hearers; interpreting it to mean, Know what sort of a man thou art, and what are thy capacities, in reference to human use. His manner of enforcing it was alike original and effective, and though he was dexterous in varying his topics and queries according to the individual person with whom he had to deal, it was his first object to bring the hearer to take just measure of his own real knowledge or real ignorance. To preach, to exhort, even to confute particular errors, appeared to Socrates useless, so long as the mind lay wrapped up in its

habitual mist, or illusion of wisdom, such mist must be dispelled before any new light could enter. Accordingly, the hearer being nearly forward in announcing positive declarations on those general doctrines, and explanations of those terms to which he was most attached, and in which he had the most implicit confidence, Socrates took them to pieces, and showed that they involved contradiction and inconsistency, protesting himself to be without any positive opinion, nor ever advancing any until the hearer's mind had undergone the proper purifying cross-examination.

It was this indirect and negative proceeding which, though only a part of the whole, stood out as his most original and most conspicuous characteristic. . . . His constant habit of never suffering a general term to remain undetermined, but applying it at once to particulars—the homely and effective instances of which he made choice—the string of interrogatories each advancing towards a result, yet a result not foreseen by any one—the indirect and circuitous manner whereby the subject was turned round, and at last approached and laid open by a totally different face—all this constituted a sort of prerogative in Socrates, which no one else seems to have approached. Its effect was enhanced by a voice and manner highly plausible and captivating—and to a certain extent, by the very eccentricity of his Silem physiognomy. What is termed his *irony*—or assumption of the character of an ignorant learner—asking information from one who knew better than himself—while it was essential as an excuse for his practice as a questioner, contributed also to add zest and novelty to his conversation; and totally banished from it both didactic pedantry and seeming bias as an advocate, which, to one who talked so much, was of no small advantage."

ANNUAL REPORT OF KNOX'S CHURCH, TORONTO.—On March 7th the Annual Meeting of the congregation of Knox's Church was held, when a report of the temporalities was submitted, and trustees appointed for the year. Captain Thomas Dick was unanimously called to the chair. The preliminary religious services having been conducted by Dr. Burns, the statement of accounts was submitted by Mr. McMurich, Treasurer, and Mr. John Shaw, Secretary, when the pleasing fact was announced, that during the year more than one thousand pounds of debt on the building had been paid off, partly by the sale of June last, and partly by savings on the income above the expenditure. It appeared, also, that the sum of £266 had been contributed to religious objects, such as the College, Home and Foreign Missions, and the French Canadian Institute. In aid of this last object, the young ladies of the Bible Class had had a very successful Soiree, in January last, when, after paying all expenses, the clear sum of £30 was realized. The financial state of this large and growing congregation is, we are happy to say, in a more flourishing condition than in any year since it was organized. May its spiritual prosperity advance in due proportion.

QUESTIONS FOR BIBLE CLASSES.—A correspondent writes—"by all means continue the questions from the *Banner of the Covenant*." We regret our inability to do so—the *Banner* for the last month not having reached us.

The Rev. F. Andrews has been inducted into the pastoral charge of Ottumbee. We have received no report of the services.

CONGREGATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

In prosecuting the business of life those who would succeed have to manage with prudence, and regulate their affairs by system. Much of the confusion, and the ultimate failure that attends even the most noble enterprises would be prevented, if their projectors had a fixed plan of operations, in order to the attainment of their end.

If in the management of the secular affairs of men the utmost prudence be requisite, how much more necessary is it, that good men guide with discretion the affairs of the house of God. In stewards it is required that a man be faithful. Our Presbyterian polity founded upon and drawn from the Divine world is admirably fitted when faithfully carried out, for the regulation not only of the internal and more spiritual affairs of the Church, but also for the outward business of the house of God. All things pertaining to it internally and externally should be done decently and in order.

When we hear of a congregation becoming cold and lukewarm, the very natural inquiry is made "are the minister and elders right-hearted men? Is the word faithfully preached and discipline maintained?" So also when we hear of a congregation becoming involved in debt—falling into arrears with the ministers stipend—neglecting the stated contributions for the Schemes of the Church, the first inquiry that occurs to the mind is, "what means are used to guard against this state of things?" In such of our congregations as have a proper working organization we do not hear of delinquency in any department. Nor do we believe in many cases where a deficiency exists, that it is to be ascribed to the inability of the people, or always to the want of will. The latter is a libel upon the Presbyterian people of Canada and the former not in accordance with fact. What then is wanting to remedy the evils of which we hear so many complaints? How are arrears of stipend to be paid—even the scanty means of bare subsistence to be provided for ministers and their families? How is the missionary cause in our own and other lands to be sustained? We answer, under God, by systematic organization, by having in every congregation and at every station in its feeblest infancy, some association for carrying on the "outward business," as Dr. Chalmers has so appropriately designated the Secularities of the Church.

It is the duty of every Station applying to the Presbytery of the bounds for a missionary, to make an honest and strenuous effort to defray the expenses that must necessarily be incurred, they should not count upon supplies from other quarters. The very effort on their part not to be burdensome, will afford to the Presbytery the best argument for furnishing the desired missionary labour, and if necessary, asking out the contributions of the people. Although the duty of appointing the proper persons to attend to such business belongs of right to the people, and can only be legitimately exercised by them, yet Presbyteries ought nevertheless, by visitation or otherwise, to ascertain that such necessary organization has been formed. For this end we would respectfully suggest that in the absence of any general Superintendent of