

given are not destroyed or impaired by adverse evil influences, and to remember that sponsorship affords opportunities for such judicious counsels with reference to many special matters which probably can never be known to the parson, and so are undealt with by him. But if this duty has been imperfectly fulfilled under the most settled conditions of life, how much more difficulty will be in the case of a population so fluctuating as ours is to so great an extent in Canada. How then can this be remedied? Have we to throw the entire weight upon the clergyman of seeking out, preparing and bringing forward, all those of his flock who should be presented for the Apostolic Rite?

Considering the already heavy work of many of our clergy, we think that some assistance should be afforded them, and we believe that such help can be rendered in almost every parish. Let those who are desirous of seeing the Ordinances of the Church carried out, and the means of grace made to reach and bless others who are going out to fight the battle of life, seek out such for the reception of that divine grace without which the contest will be but a hopeless one. Recently in one of our parishes, the incumbent at a Lenten service urged upon those present the taking up of some special work as a Lenten duty, to be the commencement of a course of duties carried on and out through the Church's year and the Christian's life. A young lady who was present took up as her duty the case of a family of five unbaptized children, the eldest sixteen years of age. Owing to the neglect and hindrances of the parents no previous effort had been successful. The children were regular attendants at Sunday-school, and were attentive and well conducted—but unbaptized. On the week following the remarks as to taking up special work the whole family were presented for Holy Baptism, and the eldest girl is now preparing for Confirmation. Are there not others who can in some special way show their love for souls, thus strengthening the hands of those who are set over them in the Lord, and so labour to add to the Church daily of such as shall be saved?

A CANADIAN CHURCH CONGRESS.

WHY can we not have a Church "Congress" in Canada? Both in the mother Church in England, and in the sister Church in the United States, the Congress is now fully endorsed and annually looked forward to with increasing interest. From an experiment which many viewed at the outset with a good deal of distrust, it has grown to be an almost indispensable feature of the Church's life.

Though holding no place in the constitution of the Church, and therefore playing no official part in her working, it has been of incalculable service in moulding her life and advancing her best interests. Possibly the very absence of official recognition has been its most powerful ally. It has done its work untrammelled by the State (which is to-day only too loudly heard within the sacred precincts of the Church in England), and unfettered by the unfortunate party spirit which too often mars her councils in this country. Certainly its utility has been almost universally admitted, and its good results are amply attested by the growing interest which is being taken in its annual gatherings on both sides of the Atlantic.

The freest and fullest discussion of every subject upon the list, at a meeting where all shades of opinion within the Church are represented, cannot but enlarge men's spiritual vision. The bringing

of divines of widely divergent religious "views" into close and unsparing contact, cannot but round off sharp angles and smooth away ugly excrescences in theological tenets, as well as in Christian character. To the Church at large there is great gain in the copious draughts of pure air placed within reach of her lungs, only too long accustomed to inhale the continually returning currents of this or that school of State theology.

At the Church Congress in Albany in 1880 topics of a civil as well as religious character were fearlessly discussed. Questions bearing upon the best interests of the State as well as of the Church were ably handled, and by men—bishops, priests, and laymen—of all schools of thought. A significant smile rippled over the large audience when the Bishop of Ohio reminded the Bishop of Albany, who was in the chair, that every one knew him (the speaker) to be a good Churchman. A broad Church divine did not hesitate to designate his low Church brother as a "technical believer." A ritualistic priest (so-called), attired in cassock and girdle, received the same respect, and commanded as attentive a hearing as the rest. In fact when he assigned as one reason why the churches were so thinly attended, the systematic banishment of the Church's Lord from the Church's regular worship, because the daily Eucharist was not celebrated, he was greeted with a hearty burst of applause. No wonder that partyism has been virtually buried in the Church in the United States.

One marked blot upon the past history of the Canadian Church has been her narrowness of "view." Happily, a more tolerant spirit is now being manifested in many quarters. A Church Congress would do much to develop it. It would help to enlarge the heart and widen the sympathies of the Church, and impart to her that catholicity of tone and temper by which she should be characterized as a branch of the Body of Christ. We are certainly not deficient in intellect, or culture, or piety. In the several dioceses of the Dominion we have clergy and laity who are eminently capable of grappling with the living issues of the day. A Congress would bring these together. They would meet, not for the manufacture of ecclesiastical ordinance of doubtful calibre and questionable quality, as is too generally the case in our diocesan Synods, but for mutual intercourse and free discussion. The contact could not be otherwise than healthful. The result would be great gain to the Church. Who will move in the matter?

PAN-ISLAMISM.

THE prevalence of the heathen belief that each nationality or city has gods of its own, has, to a large extent, prevented any attempts being made to spread the immense number of religions to be found in various parts of the habitable globe. Even the Jewish religion, as a system of external observances, though bearing on its front the impress of heaven, was evidently designed to be of an extremely limited character. When Christianity came its application was designed for universal man. Its mercies were intended for every nation, and people, and tongue, for every man, woman, and child on the face of the earth, from the date of its appearance till the period when time shall be no more and further on through the ceaseless ages of eternity. And, therefore, the first disciples of Christ did not seek to keep to themselves the inestimable blessings He came to bestow upon man. They at once prepared themselves to obey their Master's injunction to disciple all nations, baptiz-

ing them into the name of the ever-blessed Trinity, and the first Christian missionaries were "the Twelve" who had received their commission for the purpose. But Christianity is not the only system, nor was it the first that has sought to spread its influence, its teaching, and its organization over the world. Five or six hundred years before the appearance of Jesus Christ among the mountains of Judea, Buddhism was launched upon the world. Its emissaries made unwearied efforts to extend its principles over the eastern world, and now it may be said to be the prevailing religion of mankind, for it numbers more than one-third of the human race. When Muhammed appeared, some twelve hundred years afterwards, his system was in great part forced upon men by the sword; but the sword has not always been the means by which it has sought to extend itself, for it too has had, and still has its peaceful missionaries, who leave the land of their birth, and go to unknown and savage lands to teach pagan nations that "There is one God and Muhammed is His Prophet." A new feature of the system has recently appeared, which is an attempt on the part of the present Sultan of Turkey to consolidate the various branches of the Muhammedan faith into one large confederation, and to revive the ancient zeal of his co-religionists to resist the attacks of the infidel, before which he sees his empire is melting away. When the Arabs carried their victorious arms East and West and North and South from the deserts of their land, they founded a religious empire, not confined to their own race, which ceased to be anything more than the dominant race in it. The Caliphate first split into three great divisions, acknowledging the supremacy of Bagdad, Cairo, and Granada, respectively; and after a time all three were overwhelmed by fresh tides of invasion, until the Empire founded by Semitic Arabs had to accept the sway of a Turanian Turk. And so the Sultan of Constantinople is the Padishah, the commander of "the Faithful" everywhere. But there is a wide gap between theory and practice among Muhammedans as well as elsewhere. The Muhammedan world covers as large a surface and is broken into as many separate interests as the Christian. Egypt has achieved a real, though limited independence; the North African provinces of Tripoli and Tunis have long ceased to receive orders from Constantinople; Morocco has an Emperor of its own; Persia nourishes an heretical population bitterly hostile to orthodox pretensions; the Khans of Bokhara, Khiva, and Samarkand acknowledge indeed the titular supremacy of the Sultan, but can hardly be said to be prepared to move at his command; Afghans are dangerous and unstable members of any confederacy; and the fragments of the old Mogul empire scattered over the vast area of our Indian possessions would not easily be brought to coalesce in any new obedience. So that the task Abdul Hamid has set himself to accomplish is not an easy one. There are, however, some favourable circumstances. There were three principal obstacles—the withdrawal of Egypt, the practical independence of Tunis and Tripoli, and the prior claim of one of the descendants of the Prophet. This last danger—the most serious one of all—was removed by the assassination of the Shereef of Mecca, the able representative of the Prophet's family, the deposition of Ismael Pasha gave a semblance of reality to Ottoman authority, and the French invasion of Tunis has converted the tranquil population of the North African provinces into a mob of furious fanatics eager to embrace any scheme which promises a religious

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