

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING THE BEST AND CHEAPEST.

BY KNOXIAN.

The other day the Finance Minister of the British Empire told Parliament that in appointing and paying officials he always acted on the principle that "the best is the cheapest." Except in the matter of paying curates John Bull has never been noted for doing things in a cheap way. The old fellow has any amount of money and he usually pays it out with a liberal hand. He is too proud to take the services of anybody for nothing and too dignified to haggle about six-penny pieces in national affairs. Of course it is easy to act on the principle that the "best is the cheapest" if you always have money enough to get the best, but whether you have the money or not it is a good thing to remember that the principle is a sound one. The difficulty comes to a poor man when he tries to apply the principle. A pastor on a minimum salary wants to buy a new suit in which to attend the General Assembly. With the principle "the best is the cheapest" firmly fixed in his mind he visits his clothier. He sees material for a good suit at thirty dollars. He cannot afford to pay more than twenty. The difficulty of applying the principle comes in here. A woman wishes to buy a new carpet to put down when the millennium of house cleaning time is over. She sees one at a dollar and a-half a yard that is "just perfectly lovely." The family finances forbid an expenditure of more than eighty or ninety cents a yard. She knows very well that the principle "the best is the cheapest" is a sound one, but the absence of twenty or thirty dollars makes it very difficult to work the principle on that high priced carpet. But then the application of principles has been a difficult matter ever since Paul's time.

In the early history of this country a good many people were compelled to reverse the motto of the British Financier and proceed on the principle that the cheapest is the best. Many of the early settlers were poor, money was scarce, times were hard, there was little farm produce and what little there was brought little or no cash. Whether the cheapest was or was not the best to many of the men who hewed the country out of the forest, the cheapest was the only thing possible. It was the cheapest or nothing, and the cheapest is sometimes, though not always, better than nothing.

But even in those early days there were shrewd, thrifty pioneers who prided themselves on never buying a mean thing, and we venture to say that as a rule they were the men who got on. If they bought a horse he was a good one, if they built a house it was the best house in the neighbourhood. Their school house and their church were always the best of their kind. Let nobody libel the old settlers by saying they were all cheap Johns. Many of them were nothing of the kind. Some of the churches they built, the public halls they erected, the roads and other improvements they made stand to this day as undoubted proof that in proportion to their means and opportunities many of them had more energy and ambition than their sons. They knew just as well as their successors that as a rule the best is the cheapest in the end and when they could afford it many of them applied the rule.

Long years ago we heard of an early settler who made a speech at a township meeting called to discuss some road improvements. The speech consisted of one sentence. "Men," said the orator "let us get the cheapest and best." That man laid down the policy on which the Province of Ontario, and probably all the Churches in the Province, have been treating their officials for the last fifty years. Individual business men, commercial firms, manufacturing establishments, Loan companies, Banking houses, business men of all kinds when they employ men proceed on the principle that the best is the cheapest. The Province and the Presbyterian Church always adopt our friend's motto and say "let us have the cheapest and best." One of these days both Church and State may find out to their cost that the cheapest is not the best.

When the Presbyterian Churches were being formed in this country long ago the salaries of professors and officials of all kinds had to be low. Starvation salaries were part of the situation. Unfortunately there were three Presbyterian Churches in Ontario and none of them were rich or strong. Everything had to be done on a small scale. But is that any reason why the small scale should be continued now that the Church has become rich and powerful? The situation is almost if not altogether comic. Were the subject not so serious one could hardly help laughing at the spectacle of a youth turned of twenty going out of the Divinity Hall and in a few months getting a larger salary than any of his professors, though the professors have spent a life time in the service of the Church.

In financial circles the services rendered by Dr. Reid would easily bring from seven to ten thousand a year. As manager of a Bank, Loan Company or good financial concern of any kind his income would have been at least double what the Church has paid him for a quarter of a century. The Church's motto in treating the veteran Doctor, as well as in its treatment of college professors, has always been "the cheapest and best."

Some years ago a movement was made to appoint a professor of Homiletics for Knox College. Judging from the amount of discussion one would have thought that the income

of the new chair was about equal to that enjoyed by the Archbishop of Canterbury. There was nobody in the Church good enough to fill that chair. Proposals were made to bring great men from the United States, Great Britain and nobody knows where. And what had this "great Church" to offer by way of remuneration? Tell it not in Gath.

Ministers are mainly to blame if official salaries are not near what they ought to be. Individual congregations have gone on steadily increasing pastors' salaries. To say that the people are not willing to pay honest salaries to those who do the work of the Church is a severe condemnation of those who have been teaching them for fifty years. As a matter of fact, however, every step forward is opposed by ministers. We doubt very much if an elder ever rose in the General Assembly and opposed a well deserved increase. That duty has been left to the clergy and we venture to say that those who have discharged it have as a rule been treated by their own congregations just as they treated others. The man who fights for the "cheapest" in the Church courts almost invariably gets the "cheapest" at home. The people soon learn to apply his own principles to himself.

To his honour be it said, Mr. Macdonnell has always struck the right chord on this question as well as on many others. His motto has always been, pay the man what he is honestly worth to the Church and the honest men of the Church will find the money. To say that the Church wants good men to do its work for half wages or nothing is to pay the Church a poor compliment. If that is really true we had better disband and unite with some other body.

Turning from the Church to the State we find the demand for the "cheapest and best" rampant. There is only one colony in the British Empire that pays its judges a lower salary than Ontario. We demand the very highest qualifications for our judges. Even the suspicion of partiality or wrong doing on the Bench raises a howl from one end of the Province to the other. We want the "cheapest and best" on the Bench.

Fifty years ago the struggling settlers paid the Hon. Robert Baldwin a higher salary as Attorney General of Upper Canada than Ontario has paid an Attorney General since Confederation. Our fathers paid Baldwin more than their sons ever paid Sandfield Macdonald or Mr. Mowat. We want the "cheapest and best Premier."

"Men can be got for less" is the argument used in every Committee, Church court, Council and school section in the Province. Yes, men such as they are can be got for nothing. But that is not the point. The point is that both Church and State should honestly pay for services rendered. That is the point.

We have no grievance to ventilate and no axe to grind. The writer of this column never asked or received a personal favour from either Church or State. We are firmly persuaded, however, that if the Church would give up its cheese-paring economy and honestly pay its servants something like the value of their work the higher interests of the Church would be greatly advanced. Abolish "billeting," "half-fares," "clerical exemptions," "clerical discounts," and all the other abominations that help to degrade the ministerial profession; pay the servants of the Church their due; do Church business on the principle that a Church dollar has just a hundred cents in it like any other dollar, appeal to the honest men of the Church for the money and the money will come. The people who always want something for nothing, or something for half its value, are the only ones that will object. These people should not be allowed to rule the Church.

THE JERUSALEM PRESBYTERIAN MISSION.

Easter-tide is the height of the travellers' season in Jerusalem. It is the best time of the year to visit Palestine, now covered over with a variegated carpet of beautiful flowers, and less liable to storms of torrential showers or stifling dust clouds. The gorgeous ceremonial of the Latin and Greek Churches at this time is attractive to some, and the sacred associations of the season with the marvellous work of redemption move all devout hearts with the desire to tread this hallowed soil at this particular time. Accordingly the Holy City has been, and is likely to be for some weeks more, crammed and crowded with Christian travellers from all lands, and the last fortnight mainly from the United States of America and a few from Canada—the Rev. J. Mowat, of Manitoba, Rev. and Mrs. Jordan, of Montreal, etc., while England and Scotland contribute a large quota all along.

Representing as I do in my humble person the Presbyterian and Evangelical English-speaking Churches of Christendom, I am very pleased to find that by far the largest number, perhaps two-thirds, of these Christian travellers come by rights under my pastoral care. Many of them call on us, and when other pressing duties permit, we return their friendly visits. It is at once a Christian and a pleasurable duty—a great privilege—to hold fellowship with these children of God from distant lands and the isles afar off. We devote Monday and Friday evenings to their reception, but they are welcome at all times.

But though this is the busiest season, so far at least as English work is concerned, I would like to narrate to your readers, even by curtailing natural rest—"nature's sweet restorer, balmy sleep"—a few incidents illustrative of the great need and incalculable spiritual benefits of this Canadian Mission to Jews and others in the City of the Great King. Everything relating to this Holy City and land must surely

be peculiarly interesting to all earnest Christians and lovers of the Bible, and much more whatever refers to religious progress and the spread of Gospel light and truth.

We have been having, and shall, D.V., continue to have, probably, till about the end of May, morning and evening services, and frequently the Lord's Supper at the close of the latter; and if your readers could listen to the expressions of hearty gratitude for the existence of this mission and its "upper room," where non-Episcopalians can worship God in the simpler and more spiritual and scriptural forms they prefer and are accustomed to, and whosoever of God of all Evangelical Churches can witness for the Lord Jesus, uttered after the services and in the sermons too by the worshippers and preachers, they would assuredly rejoice and thank God that this mission is practically the Lord's response to their prayers and longings and those of their brethren in the Southern States, and would make sure that it is adequately supported meanwhile, and that the forthcoming General Assemblies set their seals to what the Head of the Church has ordained and markedly sanctioned by tokens of His blessing present and prospective.

The pulpit of this "upper room"—"that holy thing where stands the messenger of truth—I say the pulpit"—but no; there is no pulpit, properly speaking, but only a table with a Bible on a cushion, adorned with the precious remains of the communion table velvet cover, showing in golden thread a dove amid rays, emblematic of the descent of the Holy Spirit, that belonged to the Tytherley, Hants, Church, of which a faithful, earnest servant of the Most High, who was known as the Methodist clergyman—the Rev. Edward Phillips—Mrs. Ben Olie's grandfather—was vicar during fifty years, embracing parts of the last and present centuries, and which a loving daughter treasured up, and sent me as a present when I was preaching to crowds of Jews and Spaniards in the French Protestant temple at Oran, Algeria, in 1876. Mrs. Ben Olie's two brothers, the Rev. E. and H. Seeley, were not yet following in the footsteps of their sainted sire as earnest evangelicals, or I might not have come by this treasured relic.

This table-pulpit, then, has been occupied recently by the Rev. Messrs. I. Jeffray, Free Church, Glasgow; T. H. Stacy, Baptist, Auburn, Mass.; Alexander Andrew, Free Church, Glasgow; Alexander Baird, Free Church, Newark; James Davidson, U. P., Greenock; James Wells, Free Church, Convener of Jewish Committee; E. K. Mitchell, Brooklyn; J. T. King, Columbus, Ohio; C. B. Sumner, Pomona, Cal.; A. A. Williams, Lynn, Mass.; Dr. W. H. Murkland, Baltimore; other ministers sharing with me the devotional parts of the services. I fear I despoil some of their D.D.'s, which they are too modest to write down.

Dr. Murkland's sermon last Sabbath morning was an eloquent, powerful discourse, which the fifty or more worshippers which heard it can never forget. But I had to pay a heavy penalty for the thrilling pleasure I experienced by hearing it, for in the evening I had to preach before him and the Rev. Williams! It reminded me of my first sermon in Scotland, at Kirkliston, when all of a sudden I realized that a great part of the Church of Scotland's Edinburgh Presbytery were listening! And so now frequently when I conduct services alone I find at the close that several brother ministers were present. It is no easy thing, in their traveller's garb, to detect them in time! But yet the printed notices of these services in the hotels say: "To be conducted by ministers of all evangelical denominations present in the Holy City, who are requested to communicate with Mr. Ben Olie soon after arrival."

Need I add that we have had, and hope to have still, blessed times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, and more so when His presence is realized in the memorial of His death on the Cross, the broken body and the blood shed for our redemption. Collections fairly good.

On Thursday, the 26th ult., after partaking of the Lord's Supper at eight a.m., we started about nine and went to the first level spot near the highest part of the Mount of Olives—the spot where, most probably, the Lord Jesus stood and wept over Jerusalem, and held a meeting of song and prayer. The Rev. Williams, of Lynn; Rev. and Mrs. Jordan, of Montreal; Mr. Pierce, of Boston, U. S.; Miss Cort, missionary from Siam, and Mr. Morgan, proprietor of the *Christian*, of London, were with us. All the brethren offered heart melting prayers. Oh! it was such a happy time! The moon shone brightly over Jerusalem; and it was nearly eleven p.m. ere we could detach ourselves from that holy spot.

Some time ago I pleaded in your *confreres*, the *Presbyterian Review* of Toronto, and the *Witness* of Halifax, for a communion service. There has been no response, and so I bought one of olive wood. It cost £2 2s. 3½d. Who will claim the privilege of paying for it? On Sabbath evening, the 22nd, twenty-seven partook of the sacred elements, of whom four ministers—Rev. Messrs. King, Sumner and Mitchell—two lady missionaries from the United States preparing for work in this city, who now worship with us regularly, besides Mrs. Ben Olie and the two eldest Misses Ben Olie, who were received into Church membership by our beloved pastor in Rome, Rev. James Gordon Gray, D.D. There was also one native Protestant. All feel it to be a high privilege "to show the Lord's death till He come" in the very city where "He endured the Cross, despising the shame," and in sight of which He ascended on high, "and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God."

How highly this privilege is esteemed will appear from the following incident that has come to my knowledge: A party