

the various congregations of the Church's more systematic and better organized. This is not a matter for self-complacency, but for devout thankfulness that the grace of liberality is being developed.

An important decision rendered by the Committee will generally be regarded as worthy of adoption. Instead of a full meeting of the Committee every six months, it has been decided to meet once a year in the month of March and to appoint an executive committee. This will effect a large saving both in time and money, and there is not the slightest reason to fear that the business will be less efficiently transacted. The executive appointed includes Dr. Cochrane, Convener; Mr. Warden, Secretary; Drs. Laing and Campbell, and Messrs. Robertson, Moodie and Macdonnell. The business ability and missionary zeal of these brethren are recognized throughout the length and breadth of the Church.

### CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY.

ACTIVITY is one of the distinguishing characteristics of the Church at the present time. She has not to contend with special and threatening dangers from without. There is no present encroachment by the State to be apprehended. No violent controversy causes internal disturbance and alarm. She is free to act, and her activity is more marked and energetic than when foes menaced from without and dissensions raged within her pale. Scarcely ever in her history did the Church enjoy such favourable circumstances for the prosecution of the special work with which she is entrusted. That work is to evangelize the world. Christians cannot enjoy spiritual health and prosperity if they only desire for themselves a protracted season of receptivity. Giving and receiving are reciprocal.

As evidences of an increasing sense of responsibility, we see in vigorous operation under the fostering care and guidance of the Church, various agencies achieving large results, which in former times were scarcely thought of. The Sabbath school, the temperance reformation, missions, Home and Foreign, special efforts to meet the wants of outcast and neglected children, Christian work among soldiers and sailors, carrying the Gospel message to the inmates of prisons and hospitals and city slums, following armies to battle-fields, and numerous other forms of beneficent Christian activity have come into prominence within the memory of people now living. These are not new discoveries. The main principles underlying them, and the motives actuating the Church to engage in them are as old as Christianity. They owe their origin to the teaching of Christ and His Apostles. They are the necessary outcome of a living faith in the Redeemer of man.

The marvellous results flowing from these works of faith and labours of love, are a manifest token that they receive the seal of the Divine approval. They are in the strict line of Christian duty, and therefore blessings may be confidently expected. Gratifying as are these evidences of working for the Master, it would be a serious mistake to make them a ground for vainglorious boasting. That would only be an indication of unreality and insincerity. All genuine activity originating in Christian love is self-denying. Abnegation is an inseparable accompaniment, as well as a condition, of success. The best and greatest of Christian workers have been in general the least self-seeking.

Cheering as are the numerous instances of a living and working Christianity, it is not to be assumed that it has yet reached its full development. Viewed either in relation to the vast latent resources of the Church, or to the work to be done, it is only yet in its infancy. There has been sufficient to show that there is a work for each and for all who profess to follow Him who went about continually doing good. The good done at home and abroad invites to more zealous and sustained effort to obey the command: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Inviting spheres of Christian usefulness are expanding everywhere. These call not only for more labourers, but for more systematic husbanding and organizing the means at the Church's disposal. This does not necessarily imply the multiplication of congregational and other machinery, but the utilizing and perfecting of that already in existence. The more perfectly poised and adjusted it is, the more smooth and efficient is its working. Side by side with this

diligence in Christian activity, there must be the growth and maintenance of a true and healthy spirituality. The higher the tone of true piety in the soul, the more efficient and blessed will be the work to which the active Christian is devoted.

## Books and Magazines.

LITTELL'S LIVING AGE. (Boston: Littell & Co.)—The *Living Age* continues to supply its readers with all that is latest and best in current literature.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS AND THE NURSERY. (Boston: The Russell Publishing Co.)—This favourite magazine for the young is as bright, beautiful, instructive and amusing as ever.

MESSRS. GEORGE LESLIE & SON'S Descriptive Catalogue of trees, shrubs and flowers contains—in addition to a number of fine illustrations—much valuable information for all who are interested in arboriculture and gardening.

A FULL SURRENDER. By Anne S. Reed. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: James Bain & Son.)—This is a book for young people, being a good story well told. It is natural, yet interesting, and conveying an important lesson.

HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—The weekly advent of this admirable paper, which is both instructive and entertaining, is hailed with delight by its many thousands of readers. It richly deserves the reception with which it meets.

MIND IN NATURE. (Chicago: The Cosmic Publishing Co.)—This is a new philosophic and literary venture, claiming to be a popular journal of psychological, medical and scientific information. The first number presents a good appearance. The magazine marshals a brilliant array of talent among its regular contributors.

ST NICHOLAS. (New York: The Century Co.)—The number of *St Nicholas* for April completes the twelfth volume of this delightful magazine. In its contents there is variety sufficient to make weariness impossible. The papers are instructive, healthy, and elevating in tone, and the illustrations are both numerous and excellent.

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls.)—This most excellent and useful serial seems to grow in merit with each successive number. The issue for April is certainly the best that has yet appeared. The subjects treated are of great practical interest, and most of the contributors rank among the best known American divines of the time.

HARPER'S MAGAZINE. (New York: Harper & Brothers.)—The April number of *Harper's Magazine* is correctly described as brilliant. In addition to a variety of interesting papers it contains no less than sixty-eight illustrations. A fine portrait of Abraham Lincoln forms the frontispiece. Poetry and story are well represented, while the Editor's Easy Chair and Drawer are interesting and curious as ever.

IN GENEVA, ENGLAND AND FRANCE. By Mary C. Miller. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: James Bain & Son.)—The story of the Reformation in Geneva, England and France is briefly and interestingly told in this attractive little book, specially designed for young readers. It is embellished with a view of Geneva. The book forms the second of the Reformation Series recently published.

GRAND OTHER MORRIS'S BUNDLE. By Mary C. Miller. (Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication; Toronto: James Bain & Son.)—This handsome and instructive little volume belongs to the Reformation Series of which Mr. Arnold's stories were contained in the first volume. This gives, in lively narrative form, the leading facts of the Reformation in Denmark, Scotland, and Spain. It is a book that will delight and instruct young people. A good portrait of Gustavus Vasa appears as a frontispiece.

THE CENTURY. (New York: The Century Co.)—One of the special features of the current volume of the *Century* is the able and interesting series of papers on the War, by those who took an active part in the conflict between the North and South. This month Admiral Porter has a striking paper on the "Opening of the Lower Mississippi." The portraits and illustrations greatly enhance the value of the article. The April number of the *Century* is an excellent specimen of this now famous magazine.

THE CANADIAN METHODIST MAGAZINE.—Edited by Rev. W. H. Witherow, D.D. (Toronto: William Briggs.)—In the April issue of this magazine there is much excellence and much variety in the contents. The editor tells interestingly the oft-repeated stories of the Rhine, accompanied with graphic descriptions of its scenery, and recounts "A Visit to the Grave of Barbara Heck." Mr. Blackstock continues the interesting narrative of his "Wanderings in Spain." The illustrations of the number are both numerous and good. The present is a specially good number of this magazine.

THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.—Philosophy, criticism, fiction and poetry of a high order enrich the April number of the *Atlantic*, as will be seen by a brief reference to the following among the other contents: "Political Economy and the Civil War," by J. Lawrence Laughlin; "Time in Shakespeare's Plays," by Henry A. Clay; "Professional Poetry," etc. Among the most attractive papers of the number may be mentioned the fourth of the series, "Madame Mohl, her Salon and her Friends," "George Frederick Handel, 1685-1885," "The New Portfolio," by Oliver Wendell Holmes; and the two serial fictions, "The Prophet of the Great Smoky Mountains" and "A Marsh Island." As usual, the other features of the *Atlantic* are very attractive.

THE CANADA EDUCATIONAL MONTHLY. (Toronto: Canada Educational Monthly Publishing Co.)—The March number of this magazine, devoted to educational interests, is a decidedly good one. Its contents are compact, and afford a good illustration that compression has a value of its own. The opening paper, forcibly written, is "Extracts from an Address to Public School Teachers," by Rev. Septimus Jones, M.A. The "Notes on Popular English" afford pleasant and instructive reading. Mr. A. H. Morrison contributes the first of a series of papers, "Echoes from the Class Room," and a Public School Head Master an excellent practical article on "The Bible in Schools." There is a good rhythmical German translation of Cowper's hymn, "Lovest thou Me?" The usual departments of *The Monthly* maintain its well-earned reputation.

MORE BITS FROM BLINKBONNY. By John Strathesk. (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier; Toronto: Hart & Co.)—The success of the former work by this genial author has encouraged him to venture on another volume, in which he confines his attention to personages and events in a Scottish village between 1831 and 1841. The sketches are photographic in their accuracy. These descriptions of Scottish people with their every day life and modes of thought recall a vanished time. Since the introduction of gas to Blinkbonny, a typical Scottish village, stupendous changes have taken place. These reminiscences of earlier times are most interesting, and are gracefully recorded. Mechanically the volume is a fine specimen of the book-maker's art, the beauty of the typography is striking. It is embellished with six lithographic engravings, which may be described as very good of their kind.

WORKING FOR THE CHILDREN. By Rev. James A. R. Dickson, B.D. (Toronto: John Young & S. R. Briggs.)—This admirable little work is another gratifying instance that among the ministers of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, there is a promise of indigenous literature, consecrated to the promotion of Christian truth. Mr. Dickson has been a frequent and acceptable contributor to religious periodicals. His special field is Sabbath school work, though he has not confined his efforts exclusively to this department. The present neat and tastefully printed little book comprises twenty-four short chapters, which—having appeared in the principal Sabbath school periodicals—have, after careful revision, been presented in permanent form. The subjects, all bearing upon the home and Sabbath school training of the young, are of vital importance and great practical value. Their treatment is skilful, and the style attractive, fresh and interesting. Parents and Sabbath school teachers into whose hands this little work may come will find it most useful, and will feel grateful to its author for having written it.

DR. REID has received the following anonymous contributions for the Schemes of the Church: Member of St. Andrew's Church, Paisley, for Home and Foreign Missions, \$5; Friend, Uxbridge, for Foreign Missions, \$10.