

LETTER FROM MINNESOTA.

BY S. T. L. H. COBB.

Dear brethren in Canada, greeting! My heart reaches over the "line" to shake hands, as my hand would gladly do if my arm were long enough! But this is a land of "magnificent distances." It is a long way to almost anywhere. And yet distances are nothing as compared with what they were when "Father Guignas" came to this land of the Dakotas in 1641. The "iron horse" makes daily or semi-daily trips now over some 3,000 miles of Minnesota. It was a long way from Minneapolis to Manitoba once. Now one can take a palace car at ten a.m. and at midnight be in Winnipeg, that rapidly growing city of the great North-west. It took the writer of this, only five years ago, two days to make a point he can now reach at twelve m. the same day. Christian work, too, was sparsely scattered. A short notice now will bring a good number from a comparatively small region for a fellowship meeting or conference. We are having a novelty in this line in the North Star State just now. A layman, whose only ordination to preach is that of John xv. 16, Brother K. A. Burnell, of Aurora, Ill., is making a State campaign for Christ. He began in October and goes on, with here and there a recess, to June, with meetings, two or three days in a place, covering a large part of the State. Some sixty places have been or are to be visited. Revivals have sprung up in several places thus visited by Brother Burnell. Surely Eldad and Medad do prophesy in the Congregational camp, and neither Moses of old nor the prophets of to day forbid them. If any man has a message from God, no man seems inclined to forbid, but will come and hear him deliver it. Nevertheless, there never was a firmer adherence to the orderly ways, in which our work has been done during our whole history. Our churches demand men of God—men thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Such men are shewing that it pays to be well fitted at the outset, and to study ever after, as long as they attempt to preach and teach. Intelligence is spreading. Education among the masses is raising the standard of work in the ministry.

The good brother whom the Lord has recently—within a year—sent to Manitoba is a fair sample, and the way the intelligent people of that rapidly growing town of Winnipeg receive him, shews the demand for men of culture in the best sense of that term.

On the very frontier of our work in the States men are to be found who have Greek Testaments in their pockets. They began study,—worked too hard,—broke down in health,—came here to regain it. Some will carry only one lung to the grave. But they have not lost their heads nor their hearts. Their taste for good preaching is as keen as ever. Third or fourth rate men go hard. Leaders in business demand leaders in thought for their religious teachers. A sifting process is going on. Men who keep abreast of the best thought of the day are wanted and retained. Men who are in a old rut, into which they fell in theological study, who are doing no thinking no study, drop behind.

So among the polities. That polity that is pliable, readily adapted to any need, not loose nor hidebound, like our good New Testament polity is winning. Men are growing to like it more and more the better it is known. I am glad to see the INDEPENDENT discussing it. That is what it wants—light let in on it. It is not a perfect system, but its few defects can be remedied. Our polity will win very much in proportion as we work it. I hope it will be in the power as I have no doubt it is in the heart of your Canadian Missionary Society to send more like Brother Ewing of Winnipeg to the great harvest fields of your Western Dominion. More aggression is needed. Satan is awake. We must go with the first settlers and forestall his work. My heart rejoices, and our work is strengthened, by the spread of the work over the line.

Minneapolis, Minn.

HONOUR TO A PROTESTANT CANADIAN.

Paul Vernier, formerly a pupil at Pointe Aux Trembles, after having studied theology at Geneva, was for

some time sub-director of the missionary school at Smyrna, in Asia, afterwards became sub-director of the important academic institution of Kronthat, of which his father-in-law, M. Pfeiderer, is the director, till the end of the year 1879.

A great lover of languages, dead and living, of idioms, of dialects, and even of patois, he passed, a few months ago, an examination which is said to have been splendid, and obtained the Diploma of Professor of Languages in Wurtemberg. At the same time, or soon after, the Faculty of Stuttgart offered him a professor's chair. It is a position which has scarcely ever been occupied by a foreigner, for it is for life, with a good salary, and provides a pension for the incumbent when old.

Paul Vernier accepted it, and thus a Protestant Canadian holds an honourable position in the capital of Wurtemberg.—From "L'Aurore," Feb. 19.

NOTE.—The father of Mr. Paul Vernier was a devoted missionary of the French Canadian Missionary Society in Lower Canada, and lost his life by shipwreck while returning from Europe, whither he had gone to obtain more labourers for the Canadian field.

EXEMPTIONS.

We are very thankful that our local Government has taken up the vexed question of exemptions from taxation, and has prepared a measure which will so far abate the anomaly, and lessen though not altogether put an end to the wrong. In such a country as ours every one is, in theory, expected to bear his share of the common expenses incurred in carrying on the affairs, both local and general, of the community, and none are understood to be exempted from doing this, except children, paupers and lunatics. But while this is theoretically the fair and right thing, and while it is said that every one who can shall pay his own way, unfortunately even in Canada this course has not, in practice, been uniformly adopted. Unjust and invidious privilege has found its way even into this new land, so that it has been thought the right and proper thing to exempt from their share of the general and local expenses some who certainly are not children, and who would perhaps be angry if they were to be classified either as paupers or lunatics.

We hold strongly that the whole system of exemptions is only evil and that continually—bad, illogical, and indefensible in theory, and as unjust as it is injurious in practice. To exempt church property and church officials from their fair share of the common burdens is especially invidious and has always, wherever tried, been followed by the most injurious results. It has put religion at a disadvantage; has created prejudices against its doctrines; provoked hostility to its preachers, and hardened hearts against obedience to its commands. It can only be excused on the plea which justifies the endowment by the State of one or more forms of religious worship, and even on that plea can only be excused, not logically defended.

In Ontario, however, the battle of Church establishments is not now to be fought, though in some of the exemptions from taxation we have still the fragments of the system which, as such, has by common consent been set aside. The sooner these are got quit of, the better, we are persuaded, it will be for all concerned.

It is possible that the country may not yet be prepared for the entire abolition of all exemptions, though why, we fail to see. Surely, however, it is not saying too much to affirm that clergymen in general have no desire to appear in the unpleasant position of sitting tax free at the expense of the general community among whom their lot is cast. The grocer is not expected to let the minister have his goods for nothing. As little would it be thought reasonable to force the baker and butcher to supply him with the articles in which they deal. Why then should the community, as such, be forced to supply him with gas, or streets, or protection, without his paying his share?

We can think of no reason and we do not believe that there is a single clergyman in the Province that respects himself and his office who wishes to have any such invidious privilege. It is only too true that most of Canadian clergymen are paid but inadequately—in

many cases shamefully so. The community, as such, however, has nothing to do with that. It is a matter to be settled exclusively between the individual himself and those to whom he ministers. Let the different congregations pay their pastors better and this will enable these gentlemen to pay their own way like other people. The whole system of exemptions is, in short, a paltry, contemptible one, based on the false and offensive idea that ministers of religion are so poor and ill-paid that as a matter of charity it is indispensable to help them to make ends meet, by letting them sit tax free, allowing them to ride on railways at half-fare, and giving them other poor little immunities which every self-respecting man ought to repudiate and resent.

A tax on income is, at best, invidious and inequitable. But so long as it is levied, the clergymen of our Province will, in general, prefer to pay it along with their neighbours. And Mr. Mowat need not fear for his Bill if he put clerical incomes on exactly the same footing with those of the rest of the community. The time has passed for clergyman to sue, whether directly or indirectly, *in forma pauperis* for accommodation which they are not ashamed to use, though disinclined to pay for. Rather than have their names bandied about, as they have been for years past, sensitive, high-minded men, as the clergy of all denominations in Ontario are, would pay the tax twice over, and congregations that respect themselves and their ministers will, we doubt not, henceforth take good care that as far as they are concerned any ground for discussion or complaint on this subject shall be finally and for ever at an end.

We have heard it said that though church property is now in certain cases to be taxed, there is no provision made for enforcing the rate against recusant trustees who do not form corporations. If this be so, and the wording of the Bill is rather ambiguous though we think it makes the trustees personally responsible, we have no doubt the omission has been merely the result of oversight, and will be rectified before the measure become law. Mr. Mowat and his colleagues are perfectly incapable of resorting to what could only be characterized as a dodge by which they might seem to tax church property while providing no machinery for the collection of any rate imposed.—*Canada Presbyterian*.

SATAN'S SOCINIANISM.

Did Satan really believe that it was possible to overcome Jesus by temptation? (See Matt. iv. 1-10). If he did, on what ground did he think so? If he did not, why then tempt at all? Some may say Satan tempted just because he loves to do wrong; and where he knows he must fail, yet he plies his temptations, partly because where he cannot destroy he loves to annoy, and partly because wrong-doing affords him, for the nonce a sort of horrid pleasure. Well, there may be some truth in that.

Then, surely God's hand was in this temptation, in this profound sense, that to Christ Himself it was indispensable, in order to qualify Him fully to sympathize with us and succour us in our day of trial. Tempted Himself and tried in all points as we are, He is fitted experimentally to understand precisely our position and what help is needed. As an example, too, to his people in every age how to bear themselves under trial, and how to fight the enemy and win, Christ's case became "a need be." But besides all this,—may not Satan's extraordinary rashness and hardihood be accounted for largely on this ground? For the time being he fell into the mistake of the Socinian and fancied that Jesus was not divine at all, but only a creature like himself—sinless meantime as Satan himself once was, and Adam once was, yet capable of falling from His integrity?

If for the moment Satan fancied that Jesus was human and nothing more, it is not surprising that he should measure swords with Him and hope to win. But if he remembered all the time that Jesus was God, "very God of very God," as well as man, it is perfectly astounding that he should rush to certain defeat as he did on this occasion.

"*Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat,*" saith