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Manager and Editor

OTTAWA, WEDNESDAY, MAR. 31, 1909

Out of ninety-eight deaths in Ottawa during the month of February seventeen were due to consumption. Such startling fact gives emphasis to the need of the sanitarium which the anti-tuberculosis society is trying to provide. The sooner it is provided the better.

One of the favorite children's hymns is that beginning "There's a Friend for Little Children." Albert Midlane, its author, recently died, in the Isle of Wight, at the age of eighty-four. The hymn was written one night in 1850, after a busy day, and the author was found about 2 o'clock in the morning insensible from physical and mental exhaustion. Mr. Midlane is the author of about 1,000 hymns, but he never accepted payment for any of them.

A Need Fund was started at Ottawa for the benefit of the poor, and a considerable sum raised by subscription and by the proceeds of concerts. But it has advertised the capital in a way not intended. The existence of the fund induced members of unemployed in other places to flock thither in the hope of finding relief. This is more than the philanthropic people of the capital bargained for.

These be wise words from the Belfast Witness: There is apparently a fear that we may be compelled to employ paid teachers in Sunday Schools. Inefficiency in the voluntary system is advanced as a reason. We sincerely deprecate any such idea. The chief value of the Sunday-school is the spiritual influence of a good man or woman in kindly contact with growing boys and girls. If the object was to grind for passing an examination the paid teacher would be best. The object is far other than that. At the same time efficiency in teaching is so necessary nowadays, teachers of classes in Sunday-schools should be specially trained somehow. There is no better task the minister can set himself than this special training of teachers.

**THE BIBLE AND THE CHURCH.**

Theologians sometimes express their gratitude in view of the fact that the church has never attempted to define precisely what is meant by the great word "inspiration"; theories have been formulated, but they have not been admitted into any of the great creeds of Christendom. We believe that this is substantially true, and that it is a matter for congratulation. Of course in these days of bold thinking there would have arisen a clear demand for revision and expansion in the case of any such definition; but it is just as well that we can look back and say that by the good sense of pious men, and by the guidance of a wise Providence, the Church was saved from placing fetters upon free investigation.

The Bible is a wonderful book. It has ministered to all sorts and conditions of men through long ages, and in many countries; and the Book itself has always been greater than any system of interpretation that men have fastened upon it. There was a time when an allegorical interpretation prevailed which to us seems wild and fanciful in the extreme; but even in that system of interpretation great truths were enshrined, and through it men were able to hold fast their faith in the Bible, in spite of the difficulties of their day. Now, the historical method is applied by scholars, and it has the result of making the Book living and fresh to our generation. But in the application of any new method, there will always be some friction; and while we hear godly scholarly men say that the historical method is the gift of the Holy Spirit to this generation there are not wanting some who hint that judging from some fruits of the method, it appears to come from a different direction. The Presbyterian Church in Canada may be thankful that it was not drawn into any great controversy such as that which centred round Robertson Smith, in Scotland, and Briggs and H. P. Smith, in the United States. There are, of course, varied shades of opinion among us and that must be the case in connection with a great subject in a large, living, healthy community. Progress has been gradual, and there are many intelligent men in our church who have not strong feeling on either side, but who feel that on many of these questions there must be large liberty among men who believe in God and trust in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Just now there is a controversy raging in Toronto which some regard as "a storm in a tea-pot," and others think of as a really significant event. Into the merits of this discussion we can not now enter; but one or two remarks may be made which though commonplace are not without solemn significance. A great subject that has engaged the thoughts of scholarly men for centuries is not likely to be settled in a few days in Toronto or elsewhere. That is evident, but it does not follow that the present discussion is unimportant. The world watches keenly the conduct of representative churchmen and is influenced by the temper

displayed. If Christians do not carry on their discussions in a large, noble spirit much harm may be done, apart altogether from the intellectual questions involved. Even where there is radical difference of opinion it is possible to preserve kindness and courtesy.

Then again, it would be very unfortunate if any of our great Canadian churches should be driven into a narrow sectarian position — by that we mean a position dominated by one type of mind. One man has gifts of teaching, another of administration, another of evangelization; the church needs all the gifts. One man is bold and wishes to move on to new realms of thought; another is anxious about the good traditions from the past. We need courage as well as conservatism. A church that has had on the floor of its Assembly, at the same time, such different types as Caven, Grant, MacVicar and Robertson is not likely to cherish any narrow ideal. In the Protestant church freedom is the very breath of life. The truth makes men free; and the truth becomes larger in the atmosphere of freedom. "If the Son shall make you free ye shall be free indeed."

**RESTRICTIVE MEASURES JUSTIFIABLE.**

The systematic efforts now being put forth to fight the great white plague are giving rise to a system of paternalism in government which the boldest would not have dared to predict a decade or two ago and which to a democratic people may seem at first sight somewhat arbitrary. The regulation of marriage among the tubercular, the segregation of infected children in schools of their own, conducted as far as possible in the open air, the supplying of patients with milk and eggs when unable to procure them for themselves and the strict sanitary supervision of tubercular persons are urged as means by which the ravages of the plague may be arrested. The campaign of education is being successfully prosecuted and the public mind is becoming accustomed to the idea of restrictive measures, so that some of the radical propositions suggested for the extermination of the plague may be put into operation. Society has a right to protect itself, and people are coming to realize that restriction of personal liberty, and the subordination of individual interests for the public good, are things that must be submitted to, even if at times they may be irksome. Certainly in the matter referred to the end sought will justify a large measure of restriction.

The Rev. Ernest S. Scott, Professor of Church History in Queen's University, is to receive the degree of D.D. from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland. Professor Scott is a man of wide scholarship and keen insight, who has been doing good work in his new position. His two published works have brought him great credit for their thoroughness and honesty; and in addition to his professorial work he will, no doubt, continue to send forth important literary contributions.