

## Our Contributors.

### CHARGES AGAINST DR. PAUL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The Presbytery of Jerusalem met within the Temple to investigate certain charges that had been preferred against Dr. Paul by members of the different congregations and mission stations to which he had ministered. There was a large attendance of members and of the general public, and much interest was manifested in the proceedings. The court having been duly constituted and the minutes of the previous meeting read, the Moderator requested the parties who had made the charges to proceed.

Mr. Advanced Thought first addressed the Court. He said he had no personal feeling in the matter, and believed Dr. Paul to be an earnest and good man according to his light. His teaching, however, was entirely behind the age and not at all adapted to the tastes of modern society. His notions were accordingly antiquated, and his doctrine utterly repulsive to people of refined taste. He instanced such doctrines as Total Depravity, Foreordination, Divine Sovereignty, and Future Punishment doctrines on which Dr. Paul often wrote and spoke. Such teaching, he alleged, was in antagonism to the æsthetic taste of the age, was not suited to the genius of modern institutions, and was detrimental to the interests of our congregations and mission stations. These doctrines might suit Scotchmen or Irish Covenanters, but they could never be popular in this free country. Teaching of this kind would never evoke the liberality of the people. How could they expect men to pay liberally if constantly reminded that they were totally depraved and on the way to Hell? The thing was absurd. What they wanted was men of liberal ideas who would preach popular doctrine and please the people. He had another serious objection to Dr. Paul—his teaching on practical duty was as antiquated and unpopular as his doctrinal points. In a letter to some parties in Ephesus, a copy of which he now produced, Dr. Paul had said, "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands." Such teaching was not in accordance with the trend of modern ideas, and was repulsive to a growing class of our young ladies. It was all the more unfortunate, because the Methodists have just struck the word *obey* out of their marriage ritual, thus making their Church more popular with people of advanced ideas. In the same letter, Dr. Paul had said, "Children, obey your parents." Such teaching repelled the young people. It was too old-fashioned for the rising generation. They wanted a style of teaching that would give liberty to the young people, or they might join the Salvation Army. He would give one more instance—one that he considered an utter outrage on modern ideas. Near the close of a long letter to the Hebrews, Dr. Paul actually went so far as to tell his fellow countrymen to obey ecclesiastical rule. He would quote the exact words: "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account." Such teaching was simply monstrous. It might have done for the Dark Ages, but it did not suit modern civilization, especially in America. He confidently hoped the Presbytery would remove Dr. Paul.

Mr. Worldly-Wise-Man next addressed the Court in support of the charges. He said his chief objection to Dr. Paul was that he did not display tact in dealing with the higher classes. He had no faculty for bringing in the genteel families. He would give an instance of what he meant. On a recent occasion, Dr. Paul had been called upon to speak before Felix and Drusilla and several of the first families of Cesarea. Instead of conciliating these distinguished people as a prudent man would have done, Dr. Paul selected the very topics on which he knew Felix and Drusilla and several of the first families were most sensitive. He pursued the same course before Agrippa and Festus. He confidently believed no member of Presbytery would have pursued such an insane course. A great opportunity had been lost. Had these distinguished people been dealt with in a conciliatory way they might have been induced to endow a chair in the Temple for one of the High Priests. He could give many other instances of Dr. Paul's want of tact, but he thought enough had been shown to prove that the Doctor should be removed. His influence with the higher classes was gone.

Mr. Skinflint said his objection to Dr. Paul was that he had introduced the envelope system. In a letter to the Church at Corinth he told the members to lay by a certain amount of money on the first day of the week. That was the introduction of the envelope system—the thin end of the wedge, so to speak. The system was bad. It destroyed the moral effect of paying in a lump sum. It gave carnally-minded managers an opportunity to divide one's subscription by fifty-two and say how much it amounts to per Sabbath. Prudent, conservative people were opposed to these carnal innovations. By introducing this system Dr. Paul had lost his influence, and he hoped the Presbytery would remove him or ask him to resign.

Mr. Fault-finder said he had many things to urge against Dr. Paul, but he would try to be brief. One serious fault was that he did not divide his time fairly among the stations. He had stayed three years in Ephesus, and only a few months or days in some of the other stations. Then he was more familiar with the elders of the Ephesian Church than with the office-bearers in some of the other congregations. This was wrong. He was partial to the Gaius family and stayed whole days with them, and did not visit some of the others. He associated with Dr. Luke and Aristarchus and Apollos and several other favourites, and slighted Diotrophes and Demas. He had several other very serious objections to urge against Dr. Paul. He did not visit and make himself as sociable as he should have done. He spent whole weeks in writing letters to people in Ephesus, Colosse, Philippi, Corinth, and other places when he should have been visiting round among the people. Had he spent less time on these letters and given more attention to tea-meetings and socials and the sewing circle, the Church would be in a different position to-day. Many of the sewing circles had gone down for want of somebody to read to the members. There were many other things he might urge but he thought he had made it sufficiently clear that the Doctor's influence was gone.

Mr. Legal Remedy said Dr. Paul was not sound on Prohibition. He does not support the Scott Act as he should do. Other ministers had gone on the platform and wrestled manfully with King Dodds for \$5 a night, while Dodds got perhaps \$50; but Dr. Paul refused to meet Dodds at any figure. Other ministers spoke at Scott Act meetings on Sunday, but Dr. Paul refused to do so. His notions about the Sabbath were Puritanical. He went so far as to tell Timothy to use wine as a medicine, and any man who could do that is not fit for the pulpit in this country. In all his writings he had not said one word against the use of tobacco and snuff, evils that must be put down immediately by law. The very fact that Dr. Paul went around preaching and holding prayer meetings when he should have been canvassing for the Scott Act showed what kind of a man he was. The speaker wound up by declaring with great vehemence that if Dr. Paul was not at once removed he and all his relations would leave the Church.

Mr. Frigid Propriety next spoke. His chief objection to Dr. Paul was that he was too enthusiastic, indeed, he might say fanatical. On one occasion he conducted himself in such a manner as to make Festus say he was mad. He preached so long at Troas that a young man who went asleep, fell out of the window and broke his neck. He displayed too much feeling at Athens. He should have been calm and dignified before these learned Athenian people. Repose was the proper attitude before philosophers. On many occasions the Doctor had been moved to tears and had displayed an amount of emotion that was undignified. He quoted from Phelps on the "Art of Preaching" to show that such displays of feeling were unprofessional and undignified. He might give many more instances of Dr. Paul's fanaticism; but, as the dinner hour was near and these proceedings should not be allowed to interfere with the comfort of members of the Court in dining, he would forbear. He hoped the Presbytery would remove Dr. Paul and allow them to call a minister that had no fanaticism. The Presbytery then adjourned.

Moral. Complaints can be made against any minister—even against an Apostle.

THE closing exercises of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, take place in Convocation Hall on Wednesday evening, at eight o'clock. The address to the graduates will be given by Rev. J. Barclay, M.A.

THE regular quarterly meeting of the Presbytery of Montreal will be held on Tuesday next, 31st inst., in the David Morrice Hall, when the Commissioners to the General Assembly will be appointed.

## LIMITS OF THE DIVINE OMNIPOTENCE.

BY REV. PRINCIPAL M'KNIGHT, D.D.

Our theme is not an idle paradox. What is unlimited in one direction may be limited in another. No limit, in space or time, can be assigned to the creative power of God, and the power which can create can change or destroy. Yet there may be realms from which omnipotence is excluded, partly by the nature of God himself. Limits of the one class may be designated physical; those of the other, moral.

I. Limits arising from the nature of the things proposed to be done. 1. The sphere of power is in the worldly entities, not in that of abstractions, or of truth. It is not for omnipotence to make two and two equal to five, or to make the sum of the angles of a rectilinear triangle more or less than two right angles. If it is true that Brutus killed Cæsar, omnipotence cannot make it otherwise than true. In short, the attribute that has to do with truth or falsehood on all subjects and in all forms is not omnipotence but omniscience. 2. Even within the field of entities we cannot help recognizing certain limits, arising from the unapproachable perfections of the divine nature. Thus God cannot annihilate Himself. He cannot divest Himself of His essential attributes. The Infinite cannot make His own nature finite; nor can He make a finite being infinite. Such inability does no dishonour to His omnipotence.

II. Limitations arising from the perfection of His moral character. He cannot be tempted with evil. He cannot look on iniquity. He cannot deny Himself. Such limitations raise no question about mere physical power. To him is as easy as to speak the truth. But God is true. The exercise of His power is limited by the moral perfection of His nature.

III. Limitations self-imposed by the will of God. The continuous existence of the material world implies continuous self-limitation. Every experiment in physical science, molar, molecular, or atomic, affords verification of the hypothesis that the ultimate particles of matter undergo no change in their essential properties, or to express the same thing in theological language—that the preserving power of God acts with perfect uniformity in maintaining the exact forces with which he has endowed each atom of matter. A stone which weighed a pound yesterday is not found to weigh ten pounds to-day. What is oxygen to-day will not be found changed into hydrogen or carbon to-morrow. So far as mere power is concerned, transmutation or annihilation is as easy as creation. But in the inorganic world we find no trace of either. Every law in nature is practical self-limitation in the Author of Nature. Organic nature has additional laws, giving evidence of further self-limitation. Thus the egg of a fowl is never found to produce a snake or a quadruped. But the region of self-limitation in which we have the deepest interest is where the divine power comes into contact with human freedom and responsibility. God deals with men as moral beings; He respects their autonomy as free agents; His government of them is a moral government; He may influence them in a thousand ways. He is not limited to the presentation of motives through speech or other channels of communication between man and man with which we are familiar. He may act on the grey matter of the brain, its cells and filaments so as to excite certain thoughts and feelings, and deaden others. He may act directly on the spirit without using the nervous system as an instrument. We cannot define or describe the modes of influencing the heart and will of man that are open to Him. But there must be a limit beyond which He could not go without overbearing and crushing man's free personality, so that the resulting choice or volition, if it deserved the name, would not be man's free act. The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the river of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will. The gardener closes one rill with his foot, and opens the channel for another; he makes the irrigating streamlet flow wherever he pleases, but he does not reverse the properties of water or the law of gravitation. He does not make the water in his open trench run uphill. So God influences the king's heart, but without destroying his freedom as a moral agent. It is the prerogative of a free agent to be the "first cause," so to speak of his own actions—their proper originator. Reasons may be presented to him for acting in this way or in that, and round these reasons an attractive fascination may be thrown; but the decision must be strictly and properly his own. Isaiah's vineyard song presents an instructive picture