

He says (Ch. xx. 31), "These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God." Whoever compares this passage with his first epistle (chap. v. 5, 6), where he asserts that Jesus was the Son of God, and that He was the Son of God, and that He was the Christ, not by water only, but by water and blood, will see that it was written, not to convince the world generally, but the Gnostics in particular. Who but the Gnostics will answer to the description of the antichrist given in Ch. ii. of this first epistle 15, 18-24. "He is antichrist that denieth that Jesus is Christ. He is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son."

Now the patrons of the Gnostic heresy denied that Jesus was "the Christ," and "the Son of God" in various ways. They denied His divinity, and consequently His true and proper Sonship. They denied His humanity, and consequently the reality of His sufferings, death and resurrection in His own person. They denied His atonement, and consequently refused to acknowledge the grand purpose for which He was "anointed and sent of God." They denied the divinity of the Old Testament Scriptures, and of course that of the prophecies "which went before concerning Him." They realize likewise the other feature of antichrist, for they denied "the Father" as well as "the Son." They denied the Father because they refused to acknowledge, as proofs of a divine energy, those evidences of wisdom and goodness which the visible universe presents. They denied "the Father" because by surrendering to inferior agents the rights of creation and of government, they virtually dethroned the Sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth. They denied "the Father" because by rejecting the Old Testament they set aside all those bright displays of grace and holiness and power which are visible in the successive dispensations of God to His people. They denied "the Father" because they refused to acknowledge the true and proper relations in which He stands to Christ, for saith the apostle, "whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father." But we must forbear proceeding further in our examination on this point. One important effect we have seen from this review, viz., that in the systems of the ancient Gnostics are to be found the main features of modern deism, and, as a learned living divine brings out clearly, deism is removed but a very little way from atheism, for the great majority of those who have rejected revealed religion have had little regard to what has been termed natural.

The speculations and errors of the Gnostics, intellectual, religious and moral, were all deeply rooted in the heart of man, and required but the force of circumstances to evolve them. They were introduced into Christianity in order to render it more congenial to him, and especially to gratify his fondness for disputation and pride of superior penetration and acuteness. The pride of heart which procured an entrance for Gnosticism, served also to establish and strengthen it. It contributed to further those dispositions which are not willing to content themselves with that which is simple, but are always anxious to have something which would raise them above others. It could not allow its subjects to let themselves down so far, as simply to receive and accept, together with the rest of mankind. Irenæus in the following passage points out to us how the pride of human nature is flattered by the phantasies of the Gnostics: "He who has given himself up to them," says he, "becomes instantly puffed up; he believes himself to be neither in heaven nor on earth; but to have entered into the pleroma, and carries himself most proudly."

Plotinus, a man of a very different character, says: "Irrational men are at once caught by such speeches as these: 'Thou shalt become better, not only than all men, but than all gods also,' for great is the pride of men. The man who was before humble and discreet, now hears with pleasure, 'Thou art a son of God, but the rest, whom thou lookest up to with admiration, are no sons of God; thou art also higher than heaven, without doing anything for that purpose.'" (Vide Neander, Vol. II. p. 48.)

To gratify their unsatisfied desire after a deeper "gnosis" they mixed up various heterogeneous elements with that Christianity which is complete and sufficient in itself. One corrupt system of boasted knowledge became thus opposed to another; jangling controversies were multiplied and perpetuated; the truth was obscured and overlooked and the wildest absurdities were substituted in its place. How necessary then the admonition of the apostle, "avoid profane and vain babblings and oppositions of science, falsely so called." Such were some of the sad effects of this system upon the state of matters in the early Church. But these effects, which extended to the opinions, moral sentiments and practices, were by no means confined to the early ages of Christianity, and though Gnosticism assumed many aspects during the course of several centuries, still its main principles were the same. After it presented itself in its ripened form of Manicheism, and thus as a malignant heresy at least, became a victim to its triumphant rival, still it continued to exert a powerful influence over the minds of men. "It is by no means improbable," says Milman, in his admirable and philosophical "History of Christianity," that tenets which had their origin in India have for many centuries predominated or materially affected the Christianity of the whole western world; and Isaac Taylor, in his "Ancient Christianity," says that "it is the unconfessed and yet extensive and permanent influence of Gnosticism upon ancient Christianity that resolves the enigmas of Church History, and indeed affords a key to the difficulties which at the present moment distract so many minds, for to speak the plain truth, it is nothing else than this invet-

erate Gnostic feeling, that is now rising to the surface in Oxford divinity." It was well adapted for captivating meditative, excursive and pensive minds. Disdaining to be trammelled by reason, it permitted its votaries to hold converse with the upper world by a kind of spiritual intuition. There was in it an instinctive tendency to penetrate the mysteries of the invisible world—a tendency which arose not merely from curiosity, but from the indefinite feelings which the contemplation of the actual condition of man in this world is fitted to produce. It sought to quiet the painful emotions thus excited, by such a refinement of the natural as wholly compromised the moral attributes of the Deity. It has been remarked that "Gnosticism reaches its end when it has fashioned a Deity allied to the imagination, not to the conscience."

SUPPLY OF VACANCIES.

MR. EDITOR,—In reply to the letter of the "Member of a Vacant Congregation" in a recent issue of your paper I have to say that all that he asks for in the way of provision for the supply of vacant pulpits has already been granted by the Assembly at its late meeting in June last. The employment of students in vacancies is now forbidden unless in case of great emergency. It has also been enacted that a probationer appointed to a vacant field should remain among the people if possible for four weeks and perform all the duties of a pastor during that time and then at the close of his term send in a written report of his work to the Presbytery in whose bounds the vacant congregation lies. The member of the vacant congregation can apply to his Presbytery for the carrying out of these provisions. If the writer of the letter will correspond with the writer of this communication he will promise to aid him in getting the sort of supply he desires as already provided for.

He can find out the name of the present writer by applying to the office of this paper.

Yours,

A SETTLED PASTOR.

KINGSTON.

FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

Many people in Kingston, and indeed throughout Canada, were greatly outraged at utterances made by the newly created Archbishop (Roman Catholic) of Kingston a few weeks ago. The same person when bishop made a length of time ago a shameful attack on the girls educated in the public schools. In some cases when a dignitary is promoted to a higher office the sense of responsibility moderates somewhat the tendency to be rash, not to say intemperate and insulting. Evidently such has not been the result in the prelate above-named. If the bishop was intolerant, rude, and even brutal in his allusions to fellow-citizens, the archbishop is in no way an improvement. He shows himself as much a Tartar as ever. The Irish Celt used to be famed for his courteous bearing, if he was not polite he was nothing. We sometimes had doubts as to his sincerity, especially when he put on the blarney very thick, but he was a gentleman in manners. The degeneration in this respect in Dr. Cleary is deplorable. He blurts out his opinions in a bluff way, he is outspoken to a fault. He signalizes his appointment to the archepiscopal distinction by declaring that five-sixths of the people of Ontario are not Christians, only one in six in our province is worthy of the name, that was first used in Antioch. Some of his friends indeed say that Christian was not the word he used but Catholic. Supposing that were granted the matter is not mended in any way. We refuse to allow him a monopoly of the term Catholic, as we refuse him the exclusive use of the word Christian. We believe in the Holy Catholic Church, we are Catholics. But he did not stop there, he referred in boorish terms to the Protestant ministers of the city. What stirred up his bile here we do not know. When he accuses us, we, if we could reach his august ear, would like to demand proof of the charge made against us. We do not care to rush into the streets, or even into our pulpits, and declare that we are not scoundrels. Besides we cannot descend to the arena in which the newly promoted prelate exercises himself. If he loves to disport in such an element, we respectfully decline engaging in the work of slinging mire and dirt.

The ebullitions of Archbishop Cleary cannot be pleasing to the politicians. They tell us often that Romanism has changed, that it is not what it was in the days of our ancestors. They would have it that the fangs have been extracted and consequently Rome is to be regarded as decent and tolerant, as even somewhat liberal. It is too bad that such a nice theory as that gets rudely upset at times. Thoughtful people know that every word which the archbishop has at any time uttered is completely in keeping with the doctrines of the Church of Rome. If Protestants are intolerant it is in spite of true Protestant doctrine, if Romanists are intolerant it is in harmony with the doctrines taught in that so-called Church.

In Kingston, Protestants are at one disadvantage, that is in the aid received from the press. The archbishop has a newspaper of his own to enunciate his views, to defend him when attacked, and even to smooth over his mistakes in a not very veracious manner. The papers of the purely secular kind are too political to admit what may tend to hurt the party. A Protestant (?) may write rhodomontade in the organ of the palace, but if a Catholic replies the daily press will not print his letters. The defence of the so-called Protestant is very characteristic, refreshingly so. It is as follows: "If the Toronto papers did not rebuke Dr. Fulton and his protégé, Mr.

Hughes, for the shameful utterances alleged to have been made when the former was in that city a few days ago, how can they have the effrontery to find fault with Archbishop Cleary now?" Simple-minded people, whether Protestants or Romanists, will ask a question or two respecting such an analogy. They will in the first place ask, If it was a vile thing for Dr. Fulton to speak of the alleged crimes of Romish ecclesiastical people, male and female, does it follow that it is a decent thing for Dr. Cleary to defame Protestant ministers? If my neighbour so far forgets himself as to call me a liar, can I be a gentleman, not to say a Christian, if I simply say to him "You're another." They will also ask in the second place whether Dr. Fulton and J. L. Hughes are representatives of any body in the same sense as Archbishop Cleary is of the followers of the Pope in the eastern part of Ontario? Everybody knows what answer is to be given to such questions. The men above-named speak for no body of Christians, they do not pretend to do so, they are in no way authorized to act in a representative capacity. We submit that for either of these reasons the argument of the so-called Protestant is utterly void. The archbishop is helped in no way by it. He may well say, "Save me from such defenders."

THE BURNING JESUIT QUESTION.

MR. EDITOR,—I know that you are anxious to give every one an opportunity of stating his views in a becoming manner on current matters of public interest, whether these be acceptable to the great majority of your readers or the reverse. On this account may I ask you to allow me space in your columns to say "a few things" on the burning Jesuit question? You may not think me very sound on the point, nevertheless suffer me, and I will speak with all the moderation and brevity of which I am capable. I dare not dogmatize on the subject, I want information on certain points; but I am quite sure that not a few rather important considerations have very generally been lost sight of in the course of much excited declamations and of much very fevered eloquence.

In the first place, then, I ask, Is there any doubt about the original and rightful ownership of those much talked of estates according to the way in which "ownership" is considered in all civilized countries—was the Jesuit title clear? Was it exactly on the same footing as any or all of the Seigneurial titles? of those of other religious bodies? of the Catholic Church? of the peasant with his farm? of the householder with his lot? Notoriously these estates were acquired in three different ways. Some of them were grants from the king of France for the time being. Were these made in regular form? If so, could their validity be called in question without staking the credit of every title deed in Canada? I would not for a moment have thought of saying anything on this subject had I not heard a learned divine state that the grants of Louis XIV. were of no value because the French people whom that monarch claimed to represent had really no say in the matter! How much "say" had the people of England about the gifts to the barons, or the people of Scotland about the gifts to the Church of that "sair sanct for the croon," King David the First? If the titles issued by King Louis must be regarded as valid by every sane man, as I think they must, what about the second sources of these estates, namely, the gifts of private individuals? Surely if a friend made even the Jesuits a present of a piece of land or a bag of money these Fathers have a legal right to what that friend had a right to hold or a right to give. If not, why not? Then thirdly, these Fathers with some of their ready surplus cash bought other pieces of real estate. If the titles of these were good had not the Fathers according to the law both of the country and of sound reason a right to hold them as their own? I want to know all this very particularly, for some wildly foolish things have been said on this subject which are to be reckoned with. If the Jesuits were not the rightful legal owners of the property in question at the time of the English victory I should like any of your readers to say why they were not. Let us have argument, not declamation. If they were, a good many very important consequences will follow, quite germane to the present controversy.

Your space however is precious and long letters are not inviting. I say that the Jesuits at the time referred to were the legal owners of the properties in question. I pause then to see whether any of your readers will put in a demurrer with reasons in support of the same.

A PRESBYTERIAN LOVER OF FAIR PLAY.

HOW TO RAISE MISSIONARIES.

Let a community cultivate the martial spirit, and of it there will come soldiers; cultivate the commercial spirit, and of it will come merchants; so, by cultivating the missionary spirit in our families, Sabbath schools, congregations, colleges, seminaries and Presbyteries, we shall raise up those who will become missionaries and will sustain many enterprises. It was not by accident that David Livingstone became a missionary—he had been reared in a missionary atmosphere. By the circulation of missionary literature; by sermons, lectures and songs; by organizing missionary bands and societies; by holding conventions; by conference and correspondence with missionaries, must we seek to enlighten, quicken, arouse and stimulate our people, and cultivate in them the missionary spirit; then will flow, like waters from the smitten rock, prayers, sympathy and money, and labourers will not be lacking.