

Toronto. We are sometimes told that Toronto is one of the wickedest, most immoral cities on the continent. We don't believe that it is anything of the kind. That there is much wickedness, and consequently much misery in it, we at once admit, but that there is not a correspondingly large amount of the counteracting salt of devout, earnest Christianity, we most strongly deny. It is all well enough to point to our gaols, police courts, and brothels, as men have been doing very earnestly for some time past; but it is as well occasionally to look at the other side of the question, and to be both encouraged and stimulated by what has been accomplished, and what is day by day being done very quietly and very unostentatiously for the good both of the bodies and souls of those for whom, if we were to believe all that is said, no man cares. We, however, are inclined to go further, and say that the people of Toronto as a church-going population is not, in our estimation, one whit in advance of all the rest of the inhabitants of Ontario. There is no use in blowing the trumpet of mutual congratulation too loudly, or of giving things too much of the *coulour de rose*, but sometimes it is indispensable that the cheerful and encouraging facts of the situation should have prominence, and we are not sure but the present is one of those times. Some who profess to be specially wise and specially conversant with things as they stand tell us that Christianity is dying; that all really intelligent men have ceased to believe in its doctrines and have ceased to follow its precepts. They tell us further that scepticism has eaten into the very core of Christian life, and that the languid worship that is still maintained in most of the Churches is like the boulders on the high hills which tell that there was once seas there, but that there is none any longer; that men are worshipping they know not what, and would only be too glad to have some decent excuse for giving that worship up altogether. Now, do the actual facts point at all in this direction? We maintain that they do the very opposite. If people are so anxious to part company with Christianity, what is to prevent them? There are only too many who are doing so; why don't the rest follow suit? Because they don't want to. Because Christianity, instead of being nothing to them, is everything, though, to be sure, they may often not treat it as its importance fully deserves. Dying! There is nothing which gives such unmistakable tokens of being alive as the same maligned and misrepresented religion of the Cross. And though the efforts and contributions that are made for its support and propagation are nothing like what they ought to be, yet we very much doubt if ever there was a time when the professed followers of Christ did more and gave more than they are doing to-day, though some prophets of evil are crying out that the things that remain are ready to die. The things "that remain" are *not* ready to die. We question if ever there were so many genuine disciples of Christ alive on the earth at one time as there are to-day. We are sure there never was more given (if so much) for the support and propagation of His cause. Much, no doubt, still remains to be done. There are plenty of niggardly Christians, and too many languid and unenterprising congregations, but the prospect is far from being all dark. On the contrary, it is bright with promise, and is well calculated, in spite of all drawbacks, to make God's people the world over take heart of grace, and, strong in the strength which comes from Him in whom they trust, to go forth every new morning with renewed strength and ever-growing resolution to that work of faith and labour of love in which it is their privilege to be engaged, and in connection with which they have the highest of all possible assurances that it is impossible to fail. It has been always too much the way to say that the former times were better than these. But has it been true in the past? Is it true now? Let those who think so give their proofs. Before they have done with the evidence they may not have become optimists, but their pessimist ideas will have received a violent and fatal overthrow.

PHILOSOPHY AND THEOLOGY.

"The fact remains that philosophy and theology have uniformly sustained very close relations to each other, and the history of these relations will teach some important lessons. It will show that the philosophy of the college insensibly affects the theology of the seminary; that to shape the philosophy of a people is to shape its jurisprudence, its ethics, its theology, the ministrations of the pulpit, the teaching of the

Sabbath school, and even the fireside instruction of the home."

"At the bottom of all belief or disbelief there lies a theory of knowledge and belief. A philosophy of sensation will lead to Atheism, but only because it will lead to universal unbelief. . . . With such a philosophy (sensational) we have to deal. It tells us that our beliefs in cause, substance, and moral obligation are a generalized experience; and it is none the less objectionable because through the doctrine of evolution it seeks to mediate between the intuitional and associational theories of knowledge by telling us that the same idea may be both an intuition and an inference—an intuition for the individual and an inference for the race."

THESE extracts are taken from an article by Professor, Patton, of Princeton, in the January number of the "Princeton Review." The article is entitled "Philosophy in the Theological Curriculum," and is a plea for giving a place in theological studies to the discussion of philosophic questions from a Theistic and Christian point of view. "The chair for such discussions," he says, "may be called the Chair of the Relations of Science, Philosophy, and Religion; or simply the Chair of Religious Philosophy. To the incumbent of such a chair it would fall to exhibit, at least in outline, the historic relations of philosophy, science, and theology. The discussion of *fundamental ethics* should have a place in theological studies. The question in ethics is the possibility of ethics—the question whether there can be any guarantee for the purity of home or the stability of the social organism under a philosophy which makes man an automaton. Mr. Frederic Harrison indicates his appreciation of the religious problem when he speaks of 'the mighty assize of religions which this generation and the next are to try out.' He is right in supposing that the time has come for the trial of the issue. The time has come when men must face the question of the Possibility of Morals. They must decide between a metaphysic that leads to an absolute vacuum in knowledge, absolute irresponsibility in morals, absolute mechanism in life; and a metaphysic that will secure the separateness, the sovereignty, the morality, the immortality of the soul."

These are weighty words of golden worth, and it becomes the Canadian Church to weigh them well. What are the metaphysic, the philosophy, the method, the ethics which our youth are being taught in college? Is it Kantianism, or Hegelianism, or common-sense Intuitionism? Is it hostile to an objective revelation, or does it favour Christianity as supernatural? What theory of ethics is being taught? Is it Mill's Utilitarianism, Spencer's Altruism with variations? or is it the doctrine of obligation founded on Theism and authoritative revelation? The philosophy of the College will affect the theology of the Hall, and it has become the duty of the Church to look closely and make sure that the faith of our young men and women does not suffer for want of their being instructed "in a Theistic theory of the universe, and a belief in a Being whose personality is set over against our personality—a Being upon whom we are dependent and to whom we are responsible." This doctrine is the only hypothesis that can satisfy all the requirements of reason. To hold it back is virtually to set the mind on the track that must, with the iron certainty of logic, lead to the agnostic position. And "it makes no difference how my personality is obliterated, whether by Pantheism or Materialism, the effect is just the same. When it comes to the question whether Christian life shall be strangled by the python of Hegelianism or the python of Positive Philosophy, there is but little to choose." It becomes the Church not to allow error to be sown which will bear its baneful fruit in the next generation, and to see that our ministers in training at least are taught Christian metaphysics, philosophy, and ethics.

AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS' FUND.

MR. EDITOR,—At the last meeting of the Presbytery of Huron, the report of the Committee to consider the remit of the General Assembly anent the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, was in the form of an overture to the next Assembly setting forth a new plan. The report was adopted. The following is a copy of the overture:

Whereas considerable dissatisfaction with the working of the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund obtains throughout the Church: and whereas much difficulty is experienced in the administration of the fund, on the principles at present in operation: and

whereas the remit of the General Assembly in the matter is deemed inadequate to meet and remove the above-mentioned dissatisfaction and difficulties: it is therefore humbly overtured to the venerable the General Assembly, that the present system be superseded by the following:—

1. There shall be two funds, kept separate and distinct, and known by the names respectively of "The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Benevolent Fund," and "The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Equitable Fund."
2. The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Benevolent Fund shall consist solely of congregational contributions to that object, and shall be administered on the basis of benevolence, each application being dealt with in accordance with the requirements of the case and the state of the Fund.
3. The Aged and Infirm Ministers' Equitable Fund shall consist solely of the ministerial rate of one-half per cent on professional income.
4. All ministers contributing to this Fund, and they only, shall be entitled to the benefits thereof.
5. When a minister who has been a regular contributor to the Fund has been allowed by the General Assembly to retire from active duty, after ten years' service, he shall receive an annuity of eighty dollars. The amount may be increased in proportion to additional length of service, at the rate of five dollars for each additional year, if the state of the Fund permit.
6. A minister who falls into arrears shall forfeit his claim upon the Fund, unless within three years he shall pay all arrears, and one dollar per annum additional for the time those arrears were due.
7. A minister who has received the amount falling due to him upon the equitable basis above provided, and whose resources are still insufficient, may apply for further assistance to the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Benevolent Fund.
8. Both these Funds shall be administered by the same Committee.

This schedule is to be submitted to the Synod of Hamilton and London for consideration at its next meeting; and it is desirable that Presbyteries should have it before them for consideration before they commit themselves to any other.

A MEMBER OF PRESBYTERY.

KNOX COLLEGE METAPHYSICAL AND LITERARY SOCIETY.

Last Friday evening the members of Knox College Metaphysical and Literary Society held their forty-fifth public meeting in Convocation Hall. Mr. R. G. Sinclair gave an interesting essay on "Our Last Presbyterian Outpost and its Surroundings." Fort Edmonton and the Saskatchewan Valley were described by the essayist in a clear and attractive manner. "Is a revision of the Westminster Confession of Faith desirable?" was the subject of debate. The discussion was conducted with great spirit and ability by Messrs. Builder and Craig for the affirmative, and the negative was vigorously sustained by Messrs. Mutch and Robertson. The dialectic contest evinced an intelligent acquaintance with the bearings of the question and logical power in its treatment. The chairman decided in favour of the negative. The Glee Club contributed much to the enjoyment of the meeting in their admirable renderings of "Spring's Delights," "The Huntsman's Song," and an *encore* to the latter, the "Soldiers' Chorus." Mr. Angus McKay, with impressive effect, gave Macaulay's "Battle of Naseby." A highly delighted and appreciative audience filled every available place in Convocation Hall. The chair was ably filled by Mr. Mortimer Clark, and his remarks at the close of the debate were well chosen. In passing the usual vote of thanks, mention was made of the great interest taken by the chairman in the work of the Society, as shown by his valuable contributions to the literature in the College reading-room. The chairman of the Society closed the proceedings with a few well-timed and appropriate remarks.

THE Rev. P. S. Livingston, B. A., of Russeltown, was released from his charge at a special meeting of Montreal Presbytery, held on the 24th of January. He leaves for Mission work in Manitoba immediately. The Rev. J. Patterson, Hemingford, is appointed Moderator of Russeltown Session during the vacancy. The people at Russeltown and Covey Hill presented well-filled purses to Mr. and Mrs. Livingston before leaving.—COM.