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Contributors and Correspondents.

ENGLAND.

SERVICES IN THE AGRICULTURAL HALL, LONDON.

One of the things which must most readily strike the intelligent Christian visitor to this great city is the number and variety of the agencies employed for its evangelization. To the workings of one of these have lately given some attention, viz., the Sabbath afternoon services for working men, in the Agricultural Hall, under the care of Rev. J. Thain Davidson, English Presbyterian minister of Islington. Being a man of earnest spirit, he was not satisfied with the mere discharge of ordinary ministerial duties to a small congregation, in a district swarming with well-to-do artisans, smaller tradespeople, and young men and women from the city shops, who are habitually of such scenes of revelry as the Alhambra concert hall, and the bar of the famous "Angel" and other gin palaces of the neighborhood, but never enter an ordinary place of worship. In the hope of carrying the gospel to this mass of the careless and the Christless, these services were begun some years ago, and have been steadily maintained with unabated interest and profit. Their character will be readily understood by a specimen. Last Sabbath afternoon Mr. Davidson himself, as his practice is once a month, preached and conducted the services, though usually the latter is done by some Christian layman who presides. Reaching the hall at half-past three, I found it already filled by an audience who must have numbered over two thousand, which is about the usual attendance. These were very much of the class described, for the most part clean, well dressed, and attentive, though not markedly devout. The service, rigidly limited to one hour, is adapted to their capacity. The first half hour was spent in reading of Scripture, prayer, with singing of psalms or hymns from a penny collection prepared for the purpose, with which they seemed well provided. The use of a small organ helped to sustain and harmonize this part of the service. As the clock marked four Mr. D. began his address, for the discourses here lack the formality of "sermons," by reading a letter he had last week received from "A working man," presenting his religious difficulties. Anonymous letters he usually threw into the waste basket, but as this seemed honest as well as respectful, and from one of the class for whom these services were especially intended, though he would have thought more of the writer had he manfully put his own name to it, he wished to try to remove some of the difficulties the writer experienced. These were, briefly, how to reconcile with common sense the professed mission of Christ and the manner in which its benefits were obtained and exhibited by Christians. His conceptions of the latter were shown kindly but firmly to be erroneous, such as that "a cry from a dying bed" was all that was needed to save the criminal from the consequences of his crimes, and that, "as a rule, the more Christianity a man laid claim to the more proud and haughty did he become." He had chosen, as very much to the point, that text in the 2nd of Titus which tells how "Our Saviour Jesus Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works," and proceeded simply to expound it, as fully as time would permit, and earnestly to press its precious truths upon his hearers as matters of instant importance, to leave which for a dying hour, was to be guilty of fearful sin and outrageous folly, such as no sensible man would commit as regards earthly things—the case of the thief on the cross having really as much of warning in it as of encouragement. Another hymn was sung, and the congregation dismissed with the benediction, a collection being taken at the doors as they retired, and if fair one I learn generally is. Announcement was made that the preacher for next Sabbath would be the evangelist Ned Wright, the converted thief. Then would follow Dr. Barnardo, from the Juvenile Mission at Stepney, and after him Mr. Pierce, Wesleyan Minister of Islington. Last summer the Earl of Dalhousie was among the preachers and soon after him Bishop Haughton, and when I last visited the Hall it was an English Church Year from Kensington. So that true Catholicity marks the work, and no doubt aids its success. Still there is no false delicacy in dealing with Romish error, more than any other danger of the day. Thus Mr. Davidson, in showing that the religion of the Gospel commended itself to men of "a sound mind," or in other words good com-

mon sense, pointed out the absurdity of the recent pilgrimages to Paray-le-Monial, in commemoration of the so-called vision of a sickly nun, which would have very likely been prevented by a good dose of medicine, and for which Dr. Manning, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Westminster, had the audacity to claim the same credence as for the miracles of the New Testament. A false importance, he said, had been given to them by the reports of the daily papers. Of this I am disposed to differ with Mr. D., as, remembering their object to excite enthusiasm for the work of England's perversion to Rome, to which that church is now so boldly giving its special attention, and remembering how the thousand fanatics, lay and cleric, joined on that occasion in solemnly consecrating "Britain to the Sacred Heart," and vowing devotion to this object, it is surely easy to see the significance of such an act by men of singular zeal and many of them of position, wealth and influence, and all of them doubtless endorsing Lord Denbigh's famous utterance of last summer as Dr. Manning has already done—"First a Catholic and then an Englishman."

We need more of such rousing appeals to the Protestantism of the country, as I had the pleasure of hearing from Dr. Punshon at the great Methodist Missionary Meeting in Exeter Hall, last week, men of true hearts and trumpet tongues to muster the hosts of the Lord to defence against the mighty.

CANADIAN ABROAD.

September 12th, 1878.

Church Extension.

The Canada Presbyterian Church has a vast mission field, extending from the Bay of Chaleurs in the far East, to the Ottawa; from the Ottawa to the Georgian Bay, besides several settlements at the head of Lake Superior; Manitoba and British Columbia in the far West, and which are yet in their infancy. Men and means are greatly needed, and the question to some should be, Is not the Lord calling us to sacrifice our lives in His cause? and to the great body of the people, How much can we invest in the extension of the Redeemer's Kingdom?

PROGRESS ON THE HASTINGS ROAD.

The Presbytery of Kingston deputed Messrs. Barton, Scott, and myself to dispense the Lord's Supper in Carlow, Wicklow, Wollaston, and L'Amable. About five weeks ago Mr. Barton attended to his duty in Carlow, when he admitted to the Lord's table 20 new members, making in all about 60, and baptized 12, one of whom became also a member, and was married next day. This field ought to be erected into a charge at once.

Mr. Scott performed a similar duty in Wicklow at the same time, when 4 new members were received, making in all 24. This field is both a very difficult and a very important one. The headquarters are where the Peterson Road cuts the Hastings Road, and at the junction of four townships.

Three weeks later I attended to the part assigned to me. The attendance at L'Amable, Dungannon, was 80, new members, since the former celebration of the ordinance, 9; in all, 28. At the Ridge, Wollaston, the attendance was 60; members admitted for the first time, 7; in all, 44. In two or three years these might be erected into two distinct charges, and they are both important centres. The three students who were at work in these different fields during the summer have been doing excellent service to the Church.

PROSPECTS.

The Hastings Road is gradually improving. Its worst days are past. The deserted shanties have nearly all disappeared. The settlers are getting comforts around them, are satisfied, and a stream of emigration is steadily setting in. There are over 600 families in the back townships, 800 of whom have been located within the last seven years. In other words, 40 families are entering yearly. Schools have been erected at all the stations mentioned, and others are in process of erection in the intermediate spaces. There is more good land than is generally supposed. Disasters in this direction are being frequently made. The rocky districts will some day be admirable for grazing purposes. All is destined to be settled, and indications are not wanting that valuable minerals are laid up in its hills. Our Church has the strongest hold on the affections of the people, and if the work continues to be efficiently prosecuted, all other isms may speedily melt into non-existence.

OTHER FIELDS TO BE OCCUPIED.

1. Millbridge, Tudor, is 16 miles north of Madoc. It is the centre of a widening region. About 17 families belonging to our Church are scattered around it, and the number of members is 17. Five weeks ago I baptized 13 children. I trust we shall be able to occupy this as a station next year.

2. The townships of Rawdon and Mar-mora, to the south-west and west of us, have been settled for 50 years. No church has been settled for 50 years. No church belonging to any denomination may be said to be erected to supply the spiritual wants of the people. They have become almost indifferent to religion altogether. Yet by the last census I find that there are over

600 Presbyterians in the former and nearly 100 in the latter township. A devoted missionary could do a great work in this much-neglected field.

3. Several years ago the representatives of 25 families living on the borders of the townships of Elziver and Kaladar petitioned our Presbytery through me for ministerial supply, and it has never been granted. Indeed the whole Addington Road has yet to be explored, and the result might be large accessions to our Church.

OUR WANTS.

1. Five laborers have been employed around me this summer. I have shown that from eight to ten are needed to overtake all the field at present open to us for occupation. The Students' Missionary Societies in Toronto and Montreal will know something this winter from their representatives that they sent here. Will they try to send in not less than eight next summer?

2. The people in Carlow have been subscribing for the erection of a church, which they intend building next year. A second church ought to be got under way at the Ridge, Wollaston, and a third on the town line of Wicklow. A new church has also to be built in Madoc next year for the one that has been burnt. A church building fund is greatly needed to assist the people in new localities and weak congregations. What a blessing it would be did those who heartily helped themselves feel they had backing! Let this fund be inaugurated with the least possible delay.

3. Our city and town ministers need and generally get a month or six weeks' holidays yearly; our country ministers need and cannot afford to take them. Suppose the former, instead of rustivating by the sea side, or exhibiting themselves in city pulpits across the line, and the latter, instead of grieving over what was denied them, were to rest by change of work in destitute localities, they would embalm their memories in living souls, would greatly extend the Church's tabernacle, inflame their own zeal, increase the liberality of their people, secure more students, and the scattered sheep would be safely folded who are now going astray and run the risk of being lost; while the world beyond would have a better chance of becoming acquainted with the more acceptable worship, and the better way to heaven.

MADOC.

SCOTLAND.

REV. MR. KNIGHT'S CASE.

DEAR SIR.—There is perhaps no country in the world that exhibits such a uniform type of religious belief as Scotland. This seems a very trite remark to make, but one who has lived all his life among the diversities of faith and practices which Canada exhibits is struck most forcibly by the rigid uniformity enforced, not by civil or ecclesiastical law, but by the almost unanimous voice of the people. Yet notwithstanding this, Scotland is sharing somewhat in that modification of doctrines which all Christendom is at present undergoing, and here and there minds more vigorous, or more erratic, than others are scandalizing their clerical brethren. While in the Church of England such men would probably be made bishops, it is rather pleasing to see how promptly, (whether wisely or not I do not undertake to say), our Presbyterian courts can deal with what they deem incipient heresy. Mr. Knight, of Dundee, whose case will be known to most of your readers, has just been presenting reasons to his presbytery to show why they should not label him for gross heresy, found in an article contributed by the reverend gentleman to the *Contemporary Review*. Mr. Knight was charged with "publishing false and unsound doctrine at variance with the Holy Scriptures, with the doctrines of the Free Church of Scotland, and with the Confession of Faith." At the very outset Mr. K. objects to the relevancy of this indictment, for while no one on his trial for heresy (e.g. Ed. Irving and McLeod Campbell), had ever been permitted to appeal to the Scriptures from the authorized interpretation of it in the Confession of Faith, it would be absurd and tyrannical to censure him because he did not happen to agree with a chance majority, or mere floating opinion regarding points not defined in the Confession. Again what is the doctrine of the Free Church of Scotland apart from its symbolical documents? Who has a right to determine it? Mr. K. therefore appeals to the Confession and takes his stand upon it alone.

Three separate charges were brought against him in the indictment—the first relating to the range and efficacy of prayer; the second, to the miraculous; and the third, to the connection between physical and moral law, or to catastrophes and special providence. All the heresies alleged are flatly denied, and the fairness of the quotations on which they are based, challenged. "They are a travesty of my real opinions." It is true that Mr. K. denies that one dispensation is more for instruction than another, but, "the relation in which individual catastrophes stand to the general course of Providence is a point

on which our symbolical books are silent." What is blessing to me, is necessarily oftenbane to another, and what is injurious in its more potent aspects, may be really most salutary could we see the wider, or even another law involved. As to the second charge he has never taught that the destination of a physical force cannot be arrested, but simply, that in every case the antecedent force must spend itself, and give rise to a new consequent, which is a very different thing, and guiltless of heresy. The question of the miraculous is not entered into at all, because the article dealt only with "our present terrestrial experience, in which assuredly all physical forces spread themselves, though every one is met and modified by every other, for they are all convertible and ceaselessly passing and re-passing into each other." As to the charge that he holds "the unlawfulness of prayer, in the sense of petition with reference to physical events over which man has no control," Mr. K. denies that he has maintained any such thing. That prayer has its limits few will deny. We do not ask for what is contrary to the Eternal Righteousness, why then present petitions which it is against the nature of the Eternal Wisdom to grant? An attitude of profound acquiescence in what the Divine will ordains is the grand undertone of prayer, and to request the suspension of one of His immutable laws would be irreverent. As a matter of fact we don't do it where these laws are manifest. As for the Scripture texts by which the charge of heresy is supported, Mr. K. says, "They are all of them either irrelevant to the issue raised, because I accept them in their entirety as a rule and directory in prayer, or they refer to a peculiar and abnormal time, which does not afford the rule for our petitions now." Elias would never have presumed to ask for three years drought had he not been authorized to do so. "It is true that I object to any creature petitioning the Creator to undo His own laws, or miraculously to re-adjust the plans which inscrutable wisdom has pre-arranged. But that is absolutely all that I have opposed." "I believe the very reverse; I teach the very reverse" of the heresy here charged. His concluding words give the tone of his whole speech. "I remind the Presbytery of the sole reason of my desire to lessen the amount of irrational petitioning, and to disengage men from the egotism that underlies it—it is simply to induce them to have more faith in God and a more absolute trust in the Divine pre-adjustment of events. I wish not to limit prayer, but to minimize the restlessness, and doubt, and crude suggestions of men, in order that they may pray always in the faith that God is hearing them, and will fulfil every true desire, and only disappoint those that are foolish, or capricious, or mistrustful. I wish to turn all human life into one unbroken prayer, before which our irregular and foolish desires will fade away and be ashamed, will sink out of sight and perish. I have affirmed, and re-affirmed, that there is not one thought or wish of these hearts of ours that ought not to be laid on the altar of the Lord; but that is in order that the fire may consume the unworthy and the foolish ones, while those that are in accordance with God's will may go up before Him as an acceptable sacrifice."

The Presbytery have postponed consideration of the case for a week, to allow Mr. Wilson, the prosecutor, to prepare his reply. While this work of prosecution is just one that Mr. W. would be the last man to shrink from, however painful it might be to him personally, yet it is a little unfortunate that the duty should have devolved upon a fellow-townsmen, involving thereby many hurtful private animosities. Mr. K.'s congregation are resolved to stand by him in any case, and still retain the title deeds of their new church in case of the worst. It will, indeed, as Mr. Knight says, "have a disastrous effect on the general community, which the Church is seeking to teach and to leaven, if an effort sincerely made by any of her clergy to arrest the progress of materialistic thought be met on the part of the Church, not only by discouragement and suspicion, but by rebuke, and even penalty." If Mr. Knight holds views which are inconsistent with the doctrines of his Church, he is bound in honor to say so; but he doubtless remembers that there is a higher thing than mere conformity to orthodoxy—fidelity to truth and to himself.

Yours, &c.,
CANADIAN STUDENT ABROAD.
EDINBURGH, Sept. 17, 1878.

We are pleased to learn that the Canada Presbyterian Congregation, Dundas, has unanimously called the Rev. John Laing, late of Cobourg.

Political Corruption.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Though some may find fault with you for not following the course of most of the "religious" journals of Canada, and ignoring all secular views and all secular doings, many will thank you for now and then speaking out the truth about our Canadian politics and politicians. When the whole social atmosphere is heavy with charges and counter-charges of corruption and venality, it is surely absurd enough for religious men to stand aside and ignore the whole thing as having no existence, or as being of no importance, and quite out of their sphere. It is of the utmost importance. Our country's whole future is bound up with it, for if the corruption, that for a good many years has been rife, go on as it has been doing with ever increasing force, then "Ishabod" may be written over Canada, for the glory will have departed. And it is quite true what you say, that the iniquity is not confined to one political party. In almost every constituency there are a good many electors who are known as "loose fish"—always for sale, always prepared to sell themselves to either party, or both. Instead of contemptuously ignoring them, the zeal for party triumph has led rival politicians to meet them on their own terms and to bid against one another for their support. The consequence of this has been that the number of the purchasable has always gone on increasing when people found that five, ten, or twenty dollars were to be had for a vote, and that their neighbours were actually getting such sums, it was more than their virtue could resist. Thus a good many of what used to be looked upon as respectable people have sunk into what is really a criminal class,—the base and disgrace of any community. The evil was very great in '67 and still greater in '72. When leading politicians on both sides betook themselves, without a blush, to such nefarious means for securing their party or personal ends it was not surprising that the rank and file should follow suit, and as the result, whole constituencies became utterly demoralized. That such is the case now, is matter of notoriety. Every one in any little measure connected with politics knows it. So much was this the case that I very much doubt if there was a single contested election last year that was not so far determined by the use of corrupt means. One party no doubt said that if left to its own choice it would rather not have spent money, but so said the other. Both of them, in short, according to their own account, were forced into it. However that might be, there is the fact—the country demoralized, and the mouths of all who claim purity and honor as the peculiar possessions of their particular party absolutely and utterly stopped. It is a piece of transparent fooling for Reformers to talk of purity with the South Ontario election staring them in the face, and for high minded Conservatives to claim that their hands are clean after the revelations of the past weeks would be to say that honour is a delusion, and God and conscience a dream. Yet with all these things intruding themselves upon public gaze, professedly religious people shelter themselves behind their spirituality as an excuse for not calling black black, or a spade a spade, because forsooth the iniquities are connected with politics, and with politics they are too exalted and too holy to meddle in the slightest degree. The whole thing is rotten and the sooner all decent men set about in earnest to clear away the rotten wood, and substitute in its place something like decency and truth, and honor, so much the better. There is no use in saying that we are not politicians. Every man in a free country must be a politician else he is not a good citizen! and if there is not so much virtue left in the country as to make electoral corruption infamous, we are in a bad way. In this respect matters look very disheartening at present. Electors and elected make themselves vile, and the general public, religious and irreligious, seem to love to have it so. Perhaps you, Sir, may be blamed for saying a single word on such subjects, as if it were entirely tabooed to religious newspapers, but they need to be spoken about and in such a way that those who practice them will be ashamed, if not of doing them, at least of their being known to have done them.

A POLITICAL PRESBYTERIAN.

Thanksgiving-Day.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The religious denominations having resolved upon the 16th of October, as a Day of Thanksgiving for the bountiful harvest, would it not be well for the Government of Ontario to appoint the same day?

Fergus, Ont.

There is nothing in this world so fiendish as the conduct of a mean man when he has the power to revenge himself upon a noble one in adversity. It takes a man to make one a devil; and the fittest man for such a purpose is a snarling, waspish, red-hot, fiery creditor.—Becker.