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## THE STATE OF THE MISSION FUNDS.

WE call special attention to the state of the various funds of the Church, as given in another column. It will be seen that there is plenty of room for the liberally disposed coming in with additional benefactions, so that there may be enough and to spare for efficiently carrying on all the different departments of the work of the Church.

## THE "BYSTANDER" AND CREEDS

I would, of course, never do for the "Bystander" not to have its ukase issued on the subject of creeds, or to fall by a wave of the hand and a passing remark or two, to dispose of the whole difficulty and silence all gainsayers. A couple of pages in our omniscient cotemporary can settle the whole matter, and any one disposed to doubt and object even after such a finding must, we suppose, be dismissed as incurably "narrow" and hopelessly obtuse. With the imposition of creeds, confessions, or articles, by the instrumentality of pains and penalties, civil disabilities or physical force, we have nothing to do, and in defence of such proceedings, have not a single word to utter. Religious opinion is too subtle a thing to be regulated by civil authority, and the religion of Christ is by far too spiritual and too sacred to be becomingly either propagated or maintained by secular governments or physical violence. A religious test as a passport to civil office, or as indispensable to the enjoyment of any of the privileges which ought to be common to all citizens, of course involves persecution, is an evident temptation to hypocrisy, and the fruitful parent of many and grievous sins. Not a word can be said in defence of either the corporation or university tests by which for generations, the most serious and conscientious of Englishmen were kept out of civil office and deprived of the advantages of a university education. But all this, though it may grandly round off a sentence, has nothing whatever to do with the question which the "Bystander" proposes to discuss and settle in a few supercilious, but not very logical or enlightened, remarks. Even in the matter of university tests, the conscience was consulted, though, we acknowledge, in a way which no State had a right to adopt. Many paid the penalty of their conscientiousness by foregoing the objects of their laudable ambition, and by sacrificing all the possibilities of a liberal education. The careless, the scandalous, and the conscienceless, signed away their own honour and sacrificed their self-respect in many cases for a mess of pottage. It was a grievous wrong which the State did at once to the conscienceless who signed and to the conscientious who refused. We have fallen upon comparatively better times, but to say that the procedure involved in the corporation or university tests of England sets reasonably forth the rationale of creeds, confessions, or articles, is to make an assertion we should much rather not characterize as we think it deserves. To be unjustly tempted to do violence to conscience by the threat of social ostracism and civil disability, is one thing; to be required to adopt the views and conform to the regulations of a religious community which owes its very external existence to individual conviction, and is in its essence "not of this world," before being admitted to its fellowship and enjoying its privileges, is something very different. Nobody is forced to join this latter community or Church. Indeed, the idea of force is alien, shall we say, to its very "rationale," and so far, whenever attempted, strikes at its very existence. It is no hardship for any man to be outside of the Anglican Church or of the Presbyterian, or of any other which could be mentioned, so long as he is conscious that he does not possess the prerequisites of membership. Indeed he could not be comfortable in

any other position. When the monstrous theoretic figment of an established Church into the membership of which every one in a community is said to be as necessarily born as he is into civil citizenship, is given up, as it is now throughout almost the whole of the Protestant world, there is not the slightest ground for indulging in inflated and foundationless declamation about unreasoning authority or "pains and penalties." If any Church is foolish or even fatuous enough to make its terms of membership either unreasonably strict or indefensibly narrow, so much the worse for it. It will either die or change. Outriders who cannot conform to its terms have but to leave it severely alone. There is no use of any one being so absurdly Quixotic as to be willing to be untrue to his most cherished convictions merely to keep a dying anachronism alive or to rekindle into flame a heap of veritable ashes. The dead man and the dead Church will alike disappear, and have both the only thing possible for them in the circumstances—more or less decent interment. The "Bystander" of course settles the whole thing with a jaunty, pitying air of condescension when it asks, "Can it really be supposed that an English or Scotch student, by the time he is of age to be ordained, has himself found all the truth in the Thirty-nine Articles or the Westminster Confession? Surely not." Why not? Nobody forces him to be ordained at any age, and if he either cannot understand or cannot accept any of the propositions in the symbolical documents of this Church or that, he has his remedy always at hand, and he ought to be honest enough to use it. He need not join that Church. He need not enter that ministry. "But he may change his opinion afterwards." Well, and what then? Is it such an awful thing to be true to one's convictions, and to sacrifice ease, emolument and even life itself when these can no longer be held with a clear conscience and an unsullied honour, that provision must be made so that, come what may, the conscience shall be untempted to falsehood and the loaves and the fishes shall always be sure? This gives but an ignoble idea of life, of Christian principle, and of personal self-respect. It would turn the Church of Christ into a mere debating club, and make it, what we acknowledge an established Church must logically and in equity always be, so widely comprehensive as to embrace within its ample folds those who believe everything and those who believe nothing with all the intermediaries—for who can tell to what any of these in the lapse of years may "grow?"

With what we must be permitted to call surprising innocency, and even more than usual elevation, the "Bystander" remarks: "The more honest a man is, the less difficulty he will have in being faithful to a contract, even though he may have ceased to think it advantageous to him; but the more difficulty he will have in continuing to profess a creed when he has ceased to find it true." We should just think so. An "honest man" won't continue to "profess a creed after he has ceased to find it true," and no man and no Church would wish him to do so. We beg the "Bystander's" pardon, for it seems to think that either the man ought to sacrifice his conscience for the good of the Church, or the Church ought to sacrifice its principles, which its other members have not found untrue—in order to retain the man! And yet after all this, our mentor kindly recommends the retention of creeds, though for what conceivable purpose it would be difficult to imagine, for if a coach and six can be driven through the average Act of Parliament, a coach and sixty on our "Bystander's" principles could easily be driven through any creed that was ever framed, or even ever dreamed of! Hear the conclusion of the whole matter—the latest revelation of superior wisdom—the last suggestion of the "honest" and the free, to the "reverend crypto-sceptics" and the "bond-thralls" who fret and fidget under ecclesiastical fetters, and long for a test which will test nothing, and a common bond which will not bind any man to any opinion, but will only guarantee in perpetuity his social position and official income, though he should become a creedless Agnostic or a furious unbeliever: "As to doctrine, the time will soon come, so far as Protestantism is concerned, for a new ordination test, binding the minister at all times to teach what he believes to be the truth." Will it indeed? Does it not do this in the only honest sense at present? If not, what a cave of Adullam every Christian Church will become in the good time near at hand! Indeed, it will not require that it should be "Christian" at all. Teach what you like, only be

"honest" to your convictions and go ahead! Nay, ... that case the Church will not require to exist as a separate organization at all. The "honest" Atheists and the "honest" Calvinists have at last found a common meeting place, and the one dear mother, that used to be called Church, embraces all. Only to be sure, it is possible that in this coming millennium, ... may be voted, that as the "enlightened" cannot see how any man can "honestly" be a Calvinist or a Presbyterian, all such shall be put beyond the pale of toleration till they learn not to sin against "honesty" and till they cease to be enemies of "common sense" and "advanced culture."

Is this a noble idea of the ultimate development and final condition of that "Church of Christ," which that ardent, and not altogether either stupid or "dishonest" man, Paul, represented as purchased "with His [Christ's] own blood?" Is this, the supposedly final and full rationale, not of all creeds, but of that which is supposed to lie behind all such, worth the trouble of taking up, after it has been thus most solemnly, not to say pompously, made known? At the risk of being pityingly regarded as at once "narrow" and "shallow," we frankly acknowledge that we cannot see that it is. Paul, in that case, was a double-distilled fool for bethering himself about having persecuted the Church of God, or having been a "blasphemer," when he knew that he had done it all in unbelief, and had been all the while as honest, truthful and earnest a man as ever walked the footstool. "The chief end of man," in that case is, simply, not to be a hypocrite, and the greatest saint and the greatest sinner are on a moral level if they be equally honest and equally outspoken. Paul was, according to this, a foolish, short sighted man, when he advised people to "go without the camp bearing Christ's reproach," when he ought to have agitated for the "camp" being made so large that there would have been no "without" to go to.

We had intended to notice another statement of the "Bystander" about "practical Christianity" being the "one strong bond" in all Churches, but must reserve what we have to say on that point for another issue.

## MORE ANGLICAN EXCLUSIVENESS.

It seems that the friends of temperance in the city of Quebec and vicinity have been lately moving for the establishment of a union formed of persons of all denominations, with the view of "promoting temperance, reforming the intemperate, and removing the causes which lead to intemperance." It was thought that all might coöperate in such a work. Not so, however. The Anglican clergy, strong in the idea of apostolic succession, would consent to take part in such a movement only on condition that all the officers should be laymen, and that all devotional exercises should be conducted exclusively by the said officials of the Society. Their reason for this course of action is, they say, simply that they might, if they became members of a Society which "would publicly and formally accept the ministrations of all ministers, be thought to be recognizing as "duly commissioned" and "rightly ordained" those whom the Church of England does not recognize as such. The very possibility of such a result fills them with horror, and therefore they propose that all clergymen of whatever name shall enter the Society simply as private individuals, and never dare to pray at any of its meetings for the blessing of God upon their labours. This surely is sacerdotalism run mad, and yet it is not a matter at all to be wondered at, though it is surprising that it is not perceived by those very precise gentlemen that in consenting to associate with the "Dissenters, on any terms, for any purpose, they give up the whole matter, unless those "dissenting" ministers themselves agree to such an amount of self-degradation as to be known and treated as simply "laymen" in all the work of the proposed union. We shall suppose that this Society has been formed on the terms proposed with a "lay" chairman, a "lay" secretary, and a "lay" committee. The minutes of last meeting are to be read, and the names of those present mentioned. "Reverend," of course, must not be spoken in connection with the name of any dissenting "layman" "that preaches." Consequently the "Reverend" W. B. Clark must appear as W. B. Clark, Esq., and the "Rev." Dr. Mathews must become G. D. Mathews, Esq. If otherwise, there would be the "recognition" by Anglicans present, of ministers whom the Church of England does not recognize as anything but "laymen."