

drum was to be seen in an antechamber, must have cost a vast amount of time and some money. I shall not occupy space delineating the debate. The arguments were such as we are very familiar with and were not presented in any better form than we have heard in our own Assembly.

Principal Rainy is the acknowledged leader of the House. He has a reputation for subtlety and is often styled the "astute Rainy." I am not sure how far he deserves the epithet. His influence is perhaps due as much to his attractive personal character as to any intellectual capacity as a leader of men. Dr. Begg, the champion on the other side, is an old war-horse in debate. He is a man of lionine appearance, great self-possession, ready wit, and not slow to take advantage of any slip or mistake, or weak argument of which his opponent may be guilty. The whole country has been agitated with this question so far as Free Church circles are concerned. When the decision was announced on Thursday night it was received by the house and by the galleries with an uproariousness that would seem very indecorous to our staid Canadian Assemblies. Every one felt greatly relieved on Friday and there was a desire to get back to the delightful Christian tone which pervaded the Assembly during the previous discussions on the State of Religion and kindred subjects. How much evil has been done to the cause of Christ by this organ question! On Friday it comes up in a very awkward form in the Irish Assembly. It will there be debated not on its merits, but in connection with a case of discipline, and that in an almost evenly divided house. The Apostle Paul would, I think, have settled the matter speedily. Neither an organ nor a valuethe anything nor the lack of an organ, but a personal worship. Some matters in the Assembly of the Church of Scotland interested me, and I may give you more notes on these hereafter.

Edinburgh, June, 1883. W. D. ARMSTRONG.

A CURIOUS CASE.

MR. EDITOR.—A case lately came before the Superior Court in Quebec, to which the title of this article can very properly be applied. The following is an outline of it. In 1861 a person named Burgess living in the suburbs of that city, stood as godfather to a child of a neighbour named Gagnon. Some time after, both Mrs. Burgess and Gagnon died. In 1870, Burgess married Gagnon's widow. For twelve years they lived together as husband and wife. At length the parish priest learned that Burgess was the godfather of his own step-child. He, therefore, declared the marriage null and void on the ground of "spiritual affinity" which according to the Council of Trent is an impediment to marriage. Burgess and his wife were ordered to live apart till they should get a dispensation, and by it be married again. Burgess, however, says that if he be not now married, he will take to himself a younger wife than the mother of his god-child. He is trying to have the marriage set aside on the ground of "spiritual affinity." The case was argued before the Superior Court, and Mr. Justice Stuart is now thinking over it.

According to the Church of Rome—as referred to above—there are three kinds of relationships which are impediments to marriage, namely, consanguinity, affinity, commonly so called, and "spiritual affinity," such as that between god-parents and god-children. To prove that the latter is an impediment, according to the Word of God, is an utter impossibility. No marvel then that she is so strongly opposed to her members reading that Book.

If a man may not marry the mother of his step-child, neither may he marry other relations of it, as, for example, its sister or aunt.

Burgess, however could be married again to his present wife if he only had a dispensation. "Mother Church" would of course have to get a few dollars for it. A dispensation enables one to do what she says would otherwise be a great sin. For money, one can get a dispensation for almost anything. Henry VIII. of England was enabled by a dispensation to marry his brother's widow. One of the royal family of Spain was enabled by a dispensation to marry his aunt. I once married a French Canadian couple who were uncle and niece by affinity. I did not know at the time their relationship. They were excommunicated with great parade and separated. The man, however, afterwards paid Bishop Langevin twenty dollars for a dispensation by which they were married again.

All is right with them now in the eyes of their Church. The twenty dollars did it. Great is the power of money in the Romish Church. "Infernal" is a term not at all too strong to apply to the system of dispensations.

Bishop Langevin says that no power can set aside a law of God. According to the Church of Rome, the impediment to marriage arising from so called "spiritual affinity" is a divine law. But the bishop can set aside that law by granting a dispensation. Therefore—according to the Church of Rome—he can set aside a Divine law, and, therefore, he is greater than God Himself.

Let us suppose that the Superior Court set aside the marriage of Burgess on the ground of "spiritual affinity." Well, their are god-parents also in the Church of England. Now suppose that one belonging to that Church marries in circumstances of the same kind as those in which Burgess married. Hearing of the decision referred to, he applies to have his own marriage set aside. Why should his application be refused? It would be most unjust to refuse it on the ground of his not being a Roman Catholic. The law of the land ought not to make any difference between one citizen and another on the ground of religious belief.

I do not see how the court need have any difficulty in the case of Burgess. The Church of Rome—on whose teaching the application to have his marriage set aside is founded—says that the relationship between a god-parent and a god-child is an impediment to marriage, because one's god-child is in effect the same to him as his own child, but a person cannot marry his own child. But Burgess did not marry his god-child; he married only its mother. Now, there is no law, either human or divine, which forbids a man to marry his own child's mother, provided there be no impediment arising from consanguinity or affinity. Therefore—even according to the Church of Rome—the marriage of Burgess is quite valid.

It is to be hoped that the Queen's crown will not be humbled by that of the Pope. T. F.

Melville, Quebec.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

MESSRS. MOODY AND SANKEY.—LAST DAYS AT MANCHESTER.

As the present campaign of the Evangelists in this country draws near its close, the public interest seems to increase in a corresponding ratio. I sometimes hear it asserted that the present mission of Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey is not causing such a stir among the English people as did the campaign of eight years ago. What the premises are from which this wonderful conclusion is drawn I know not. My own experience so flatly contradicts the statement that I cannot help assuming either the ignorance, culpable under the circumstances, or the wanton prejudice, more culpable still, of those who say such things.

What is the test of waning interest in any public movement? Surely it is to be found in a diminished attendance at the meetings. The element of "novelty" that may be said to have belonged to the mission of 1873-75 of course has ceased to be; there might, therefore, be as much of genuine interest now with a smaller attendance than before. But what do we find? I need not recapitulate the history of the past weeks spent by the evangelists in such places as Dublin, Birmingham, Belfast, etc., all of which they had visited before; the facts must be fresh in the mind of every reader. But what was the case at Manchester on these last days of the two weeks' mission? Briefly it was this: the capacious buildings at the disposal of the committee were utterly inadequate to receive the crowds that would fain have pressed into them to hear the preaching and the singing evangelists twice or thrice on a working day.

Coming to details, let me speak briefly of Tuesday, March 13, the penultimate day of the mission. Having by special favour gained entrance to the Free Trade hall half-an-hour before the advertised time of the evening meeting, I found the great building crammed from end to end with men—not a spare foot of seating space even on the spacious platform. What a magnificent audience! They tell us that in Popish countries the male section of the community are seldom, if ever, seen within the walls of a building devoted to religious uses. Yet here, in one of the busiest cities in the world, where time is money, and where commercial com-

petition is one of the fine arts, the most popular place of concourse is packed with sharp shrewd, calculating, wideawake gentlemen, who were apparently well content to spend a long period of waiting in order to be present at a Gospel service. Where is the philosophical and impartial critic who can square that simple fact with any theory of popular indifference to evangelical truth, or of its unsuitness to meet the truest and deepest aspirations of our common humanity?

While Mr. Moody held this vast company spell-bound by his homely, graphic, and searching speech, the great Circus in Chepstow street was the scene of an almost similar spectacle on a somewhat smaller scale. Having sung out the sweet music of the Gospel invitation to the men in the Free Trade hall, Mr. Sankey picks his way through the swarming streets to the Circus, and assumed the command of the crowd that covered that big building with a sea of eager faces literally "from floor to ceiling." Here he repeated, in grandest and most expressive tones, that old favourite song that never seems to grow stale, "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." I observed lately that a Unitarian gentleman in Birmingham was sovereign in his censure of the sentiment of the last verse of this hymn. According to him, it is a monstrous reflection on the unchanging pity and compassion of our Lord to say that a time could ever come when He will spurn the sinner's "bitter prayer for pardon." But until we have some solid proof of that "probation after death," which Mr. Joseph Cook so logically and scripturally controverts, orthodoxy must continue to defend and re-assert the teaching of this verse, however tragically solemn and fearful it may be.

The after proceedings at the Circus on this Friday evening were most singularly touching. I can remember few occasions when the conduct of the audience showed more conclusively that God was at work in the midst of them, and moving them towards an open avowal of spiritual concern. Mr. Sankey's talk that followed the sermon was well-nigh severe in its artless simplicity, but that was only an additional proof that the plainest key is the one that most readily unlocks the human heart, when that heart has been prepared by God for the reception of His truth.

From all parts of the Circus the responses came freely to Mr. Sankey's invitation that those who were anxious should signify the same by rising, or lifting the hand. After the three figures had been reached he ceased to count, and, indeed, many hands were held up that evidently escaped the vigilant eye of the evangelist. When the general meeting was being dismissed that the Gospel net might be drawn up in the afternoon, a fresh crowd of those who had been excluded pressed into the building, and personal dealing had to be relinquished for further appeals from the platform.

Several of the incidents related by Mr. Sankey were unusually pathetic and striking. He told of a young lady who on her death-bed felt much solicitude for the salvation of her circle of associates. She asked that a wedding-cake should be specially prepared for her. This she cut up into small portions, and sent one to each of her unsaved companions, with a little note written by herself, saying she had accepted an invitation to be at the marriage supper of the Lamb, and asking them to meet her there. After a few days she passed away. That little group of friends gathered around her coffin, and a number of them then and there gave their hearts to Jesus. Another touching anecdote was of a little girl in Glasgow who had learned to sing, "Safe in the arms of Jesus," and who, as she was dying of scarlet fever, expressed a strong desire that the hymn-book, opened at that hymn, should be laid on her bosom and buried with her. In his earnest appeal to the people to "come clear into the harbour" or safety that night, Mr. Sankey found an apt and powerful illustration in the loss of the *City of Brussels*, whose deck he had often trod when crossing the Atlantic, but which now lies at the bottom of the sea, sunk just on the eve of gaining port.

Simultaneously with this meeting in the Circus, the after-meeting was going on in the hall of the Y.M.C.A., composed of inquirers from Mr. Moody's meeting in Free Trade hall. An experienced friend informed me next day that this was the most wonderful sight he ever saw: the hall was full of those who were anxious to enter into assured rest of soul, and though workers were present in abundance, many had to speak to groups of six and eight at once.—*The Christian*.