

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

DEGREES OF AUTHORITY IN THE ELDERSHIP.

MR. EDITOR,—While grateful to "J. W." for the notice he vouchsafes to my humble request for proof of his assertion of the superior authority vested in elders who teach, as compared with those who only rule, I am sorry to have to say that the Scriptures adduced by him in support of his views fail to carry conviction to my mind that these views are correct. In the quotations from Romans xii. and 1 Cor. xii., the apostle enumerates the gifts bestowed upon the Church by Christ the Head, but instead of dealing with questions of degrees of authority, his drift is to shew the essential unity of these gifts, as being bestowed by the same Divine Spirit, and for a common end, namely, the glory of God in the perfecting of His Church, and by the exhibition thus given of the unity of the body of Christ, to correct the tendency to spiritual pride on account of certain gifts possessed, which finds its most natural outcome in the assumption of spiritual authority. Thus far the burden of proof seems to be against him.

The only text of the three quoted which may be construed to imply such a distinction is 1 Tim. v. 17, where elders who labour in word and doctrine are declared to be worthy of double honour; but it is clear from the same passage that whatever form that double honour may be, they have no monopoly of it, as elders who rule well, but who only rule, are equally entitled to the same honourable regard.

Passing now from the scriptural quotations furnished by "J. W." for my guidance into the principles and practice of the Church in regard to the matter under consideration, let us examine the line of thought he lays down, as a start in the right direction doubtless, before leaving me "to think out the matter for myself." He says: "Ruling elders are called and ordained to be the assessors of our ministers in the spiritual government of our congregations." Where, I ask, does he find authority for this statement? Not in apostolic practice certainly. When Paul had a parting charge to deliver to the elders of the Ephesian Church, he said: "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). The apostolic recognition of the Divine authority under which these elders acted, and the direct relationship existing between them and those to whom they ministered, is most complete, and forbids the interposition of any go-between of their number in the exercise of their functions, such as the term "assessor" suggests. The Presbyterian Church, so far as I am aware, has never had the hardihood to dispute this principle of equality, in theory at least, and accordingly points to the "parity of her eldership" as one of the distinguishing features of her government, which stamp it as scriptural. Principles and practice may diverge, however, and it is this divergence, penetrating every department of Church government, which leads many thoughtful elders at the present day to question whether their office as it exists has not degenerated into a merely human appointment, which not a few with larger powers invested would be only too glad to see cancelled.

"J. W.'s" closing statement is a notable one. He says: "A sessional action the minister presides, because he is from his office the chief presbyter." Is "J. W." a Presbyterian? I trust he is, but am persuaded he would never have suffered at the Grasmarket in defence of Presbytery, had he lived in days of our Covenanting forefathers, with the views he holds. If he can find elbow-room in the Presbyterian Church for "chief presbyters," he can offer but a feeble protest to the establishment among us of diocesan bishops and all the other paraphernalia of Episcopacy.

W. T.

RECENT OCCURRENCES AT UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

MR. EDITOR,—I have a very strong disinclination to engage in newspaper controversy or discussion, but this disinclination is overcome by my feeling of very deep regret on account of the articles which appeared in the last issue of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN with reference to recent doings at University

College. I shall very briefly state the grounds of my regret, remarking at this outset that I am as much opposed as you or any one can be to riotous, mischievous, or rude conduct on the part of students, whether against their fellow-students or any others.

1. I regret that the articles referred to appeared, because the writer ignores or discredits the account given by the President of the College in the "Globe" of the 29th ult., and assumes that the statement which was first published, which is now declared to be in various particulars greatly exaggerated, was a correct representation of what took place. I think a great injustice is thus done to Dr. Wilson.

2. The articles ignore the efforts which it is well known the excellent President of University College has been making, since his appointment, to correct any existing evils and to elevate the moral tone of the students. Dr. Wilson's character needs no recommendation from any one. Many rejoiced when his appointment took place; and in the faithful and zealous, and at the same time judicious, discharge of his duties, he is entitled to the support and encouragement of all who take an interest in the institution over which he presides.

3. I am not so sure as you are that the circumstance of a College or literary institution being connected with a Church is a guarantee that nothing objectionable will take place among the students. I think I could bring forward facts in abundance to prove that such connection has not been a preservative from occurrences as reprehensible as any that have taken place at University College. Proof might be drawn from institutions both in the old country and on this continent.

I admire the language and sentiments of Dr. Arnold as quoted by you, but I suspect that even at Rugby, in the days of Arnold, there existed the system of "fagging," which I should regard as more injurious in its effects than an occasional outbreak among the students of a College.

I shall be obliged by your insertion of these few sentences, which, I believe, express the sentiments of others as well as myself.

W. REID.

INFIDELITY AND THE NATURAL HEART.

Ingersoll thus speaks of the Gospel way of salvation: "To be saved by the goodness of another, to be a redeemed debtor forever, has in it something repugnant to manhood."

Multitudes of professing Christians, who would be very angry if they were called infidels, can truly say: "Ingersoll, thou sayest just what we believe." Yes; he expresses the feelings of every unrenowned heart. Man naturally desires to have at least a share in the glory of his salvation. The doctrine that, in the matter of his salvation, man, as regards merit, is nothing, is most distasteful to him. The thought of being able to obtain eternal life only as a gift through Jesus Christ, but not to earn it in the least, is in the highest degree galling to his pride. All religions, save the Gospel, teach that heaven can be gained by one's own merits. Hence they have such a mighty hold of those who believe them.

Spurgeon very justly says that one reason why a religion of ceremonies is so pleasing to ungodly persons is because "it is so complimentary. When the Romanist beats his back and flogs his flesh, why is it that he likes that better than the simple Gospel, 'Believe and live'?" Why, because it just flatters his pride. "Poor human nature always likes that (the doctrine that one can carry himself to heaven by his own merits)." "Hindooism has its great hold upon the people, because they can get a great stock of merit by walking with spikes in their shoes, or rolling themselves many thousands of miles, or drinking the filthy waters of the Ganges, or offering themselves to die. All these things please human nature. 'Believe and live' is too humbling; to trust alone in Christ casts down man's high looks; therefore, man says 'Away with it' and he turns to anything rather than to Christ."

A Roman Catholic woman to whom I had stated the Gospel way of salvation said in reply: "According to that, it is a very easy thing to merit heaven." She could not rid herself of the idea that we have to merit eternal life. A Romish priest, from whom I once received a letter of friendship, asked of me to present his kind regards to a very near relation of mine who had lately been in great bodily suffering, adding: "The good God desires, by afflicting her, to

increase her merits." In my reply, after thanking him for his courtesy to her, I shewed from God's Word that we cannot, even in the very least degree, merit eternal life either by our labours or our sufferings. I related to him the anecdote of the Romish priest who said on his death-bed, "Thy sufferings, O Jesus, are my merits, not my own doings."

Owing a debt of gratitude which one can never fully pay is not in the least degree debasing to manhood. Are children in a degraded position because they can never pay their parents for their kindness to them in their tender years? Ingersoll fought in the civil war in the United States. Well, one of the mottoes displayed at the grand review of the Union troops at Washington, at the close of the war, was to the following effect: "Our brave soldiers; we owe them a debt of gratitude which we never can pay." Are the people of the United States, therefore, in a degraded position? Ingersoll professes to believe in a personal God from whom he receives all the blessings which he enjoys. It is impossible for him to fully "render to the Lord for all His benefits toward him?" Is his manhood, therefore, debased?

Meliss, Que.

T. F.

RESULTS OF EVANGELISTIC WORK.

MR. EDITOR,—Among the happy fruits of the work in St. Paul's Church, Bowmanville, last spring, was the interest among the young. Many of them were brought to hope in Christ, and some began to ask what they might do for Him and for those who had not learned to know and love Him. The importance of maturing these impulses, and giving them an abiding channel in which to flow, was felt, and the formation of a Mission Band in addition to their juvenile prayer-meeting was suggested and heartily undertaken. At first they were timid about the somewhat formidable, and we venture to think unwise, condition which the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society imposes on affiliated children's Bands, viz.: a minimum contribution of \$20 a year, and preferred independence. But as they soon reached that figure with an ease they had not dreamed of, they sought and gained affiliation with the parent society; and now, after an existence of only some six or seven months, they are delighted to find themselves in possession of about \$40 of mission money! One of them writes: "Since God has blessed us so much in our humble efforts to serve Him, our prayer is that our mite may be of some service to the Great Master." Every reader will say, "God bless these dear children in their work;" and I trust the young elsewhere, and those who are working among them, will be encouraged by these pleasing results.

W. M. R.

TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS FOR "OXFORD COLLEGE, IN FORMOSA."

Woodstock, \$924.43; Embro, \$412.27; Ingersoll, \$408.17; Harrington, \$244.13; Thamesford, \$234.69; Kintore, \$133.25; Burns Church, East Zorra, \$102.25; Chesterfield, \$155; Innerkip, \$125.20; Ratho, \$28; Princeton and Drumbo, \$166; East Oxford and Blenheim, \$116.74; Tilsonburg, \$36.40; Tavistock, \$10.63; Small sums received by Dr. McKay from persons in Oxford County, \$19; Ayr, \$519.98; Paris, \$487.08; St. George, \$141.74; St. Catharines, \$300; Georgetown, \$135.38; Blythe, \$96; Knox Church, Harriston, \$57.21; Clifford, \$65; McKillop, \$45; Rogerville, \$80; Boston Church, Esquesing, \$36; Milton Church, \$18.27; Friends at Agincourt, \$19.50; A Friend, East Williams, \$50; do., Grand Bend, \$5; do., Osnabrock, \$10; do., Cold Springs, \$5; do., Kentucky, \$5; do., Burgessville, \$2; do., Lachine, \$5; do., Auburn, \$5; do., per Rev. J. Leiper, \$5; do., per Rev. W. T. McMullen, \$10; do., per Rev. F. A. McLennan, \$5. Total, \$5,224.30.

Of the above there was paid me, and from time to time acknowledged in THE PRESBYTERIAN, the sum of \$3,677.46. This I have remitted to Rev. Dr. Reid. The balance was paid partly to Dr. McKay on the occasion of his first visit to the congregations in Oxford, and partly remitted to Dr. Reid by the congregations. From other individuals and congregations throughout the Church Dr. Reid has received contributions, increasing the above total to about \$6,500. This, then, is the whole amount now on hand, after paying some little expenses, for "Oxford College in Formosa"—six thousand five hundred dollars.

From the above it will also be seen that the County of Oxford, assisted by the congregations of Ayr, which