

Praying for the Dead.

A CONFERENCE of ministers high in the affairs of the Established Church of Scotland produced some startling views the other day at Glasgow. According to the report a paper was read by an esteemed brother on "Devotional Life" upon which a courageous discussion took place. It began by Rev. Dr. Hamilton, of Hamilton, urging the necessity of praying for the blessed dead. He believed that the state of the blessed dead was one of gradual advancement, seeing more and more into the light and glory of the blessed Lord, and surely they could pray that their blessed dead might grow in that state, and pray that the Lord might have mercy upon them in the Great Day of Judgment. Since we might hope to pray for the dead, he thought we might also hope that the dead were praying for them. Rev. Dr. Cooper, Aberdeen, said he was grateful to Dr. Hamilton for the courage he had shown in saying a word for the long-neglected practice of prayer for the blessed dead. Rev. Dr. John Macleod, Govan, also thanked Rev. Dr. Hamilton for having courageously touched a subject so liable to be misunderstood. They were not only entitled, but they were compelled by the necessities of the case to pray for the dead. Every Christian prayed for the resurrection of the dead, and when they prayed for the resurrection, what were they doing but praying for the dead? Their belief in this matter was as separate as the poles from the doctrine of intercession of the saints, or the doctrine of purgatory, both of which, as Protestants, they repudiated. Yet he was quite prepared to see themselves misrepresented. He was quite prepared to find that the devil would get up an anonymous correspondence in the newspapers representing that the policy of the Scottish Church Society was "Down with the pulpit and up with the mass." The conference was held under the auspices of the Church Service society which is becoming strong and influential in the church.

Propagation of the Gospel CANON SCOTT ROBERTSON'S twenty-second annual summary of British contributions for the propagation of the Gospel in foreign parts shows that for the financial year 1892 the total sum voluntarily contributed to the numerous missionary societies in the British Isles was £1,363,153. The channels selected by the donors are thus classified: Church of England societies, £584,615; joint societies of Churchmen and Nonconformists, £204,655; Nonconformist societies in England and Wales, £354,396; Presbyterian societies in Scotland and Ireland, £307,327; Roman Catholics societies, £12,160. Total voluntary contributions for the year 1892, £1,363,153.

Higher Religious Instruction. REV. T. F. FOTHERINGHAM writes: "I have mailed to every minister and S. S. superintendent a parcel containing sample copies of the Home Study and Teacher's Preparation Leaflets; the Syllabus of Higher Religious Instruction for the current year; the blank form for annual statistical returns, and another for use in applying for question papers. If any have not received the parcel I shall be happy to supply more if notified. Samples of the leaflets and the syllabus will be sent in any quantity to those who wish to examine them. The date of the annual examination (Jan. 27th) is approaching, and I shall be greatly obliged if those intending to apply for question papers would do so promptly, after New Year at the latest. It adds greatly to the work of the central office when such requests come in on the eve of the examinations. Permit me to remind those

Sabbath schools which allocate their funds at this season that we require two thousand four hundred dollars this year. This is but a small sum to spend on such a work and not a large amount for 2,000 schools to raise."

No Crowd, no Sermon. A STORY is told that Bishop Grafton, of Fort du Lac, Wis., went to church recently to deliver a sermon. The audience was disappointingly small, there being indeed, but six or seven devoted members present. His lordship was angry. He told the two or three who were gathered together that he had spent full four days on his sermon and he did not propose to waste it on a handful of people. It is added that he upbraided the parish for its lack of interest, and ended by stepping down from the pulpit in high dudgeon without delivering the sermon. Differently did Rev. C. H. Spurgeon act when a young and unknown man. The morning was wet and the congregation small, but he selected his best discourse, prayed more fervently than ever before and preached with all his might. His success spread among the villagers and the rain at night did not prevent the church from being crowded. He had not the dignity of a bishop to maintain, but he had the wisdom, though a youth, to adopt the right method of filling the church.

THE MODERATORS

Of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, 1875-1893.

REV. JOHN COOKE, D.D., LL.D.

THIS eminent Canadian divine was born in Sanquhar, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in the year 1805. He studied at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. He was ordained a clergyman of the Church of Scotland in 1835 and came to Canada in 1836. In the famous controversy culminating in the Disruption of 1843, he held that the Church in Canada should not take sides, and in the negotiations for union he took an active part, even in 1861 having proposed a resolution for the union of all the Presbyterian Churches here. He was the first Moderator of the United Church in Canada as now constituted, and right worthily he deserved the high honour. He was one of the delegates who obtained a Royal Charter for Queen's College, Kingston, of which he was one time a trustee and principal in 1857 and 1858. In Quebec he was distinguished for the educational services he rendered to the community and to the Church. He was mainly instrumental in establishing the High School, one of the best institutions of the kind in the country. He became principal of Morin College in 1861. He received the degree of LL.D. from Queen's and that of D.D. from Glasgow University. In 1893 he retired from the duties of the active ministry (St. Andrew's church) but up to the time of his death he manifested great and active interest in the work of the Church at large and departing full of years he left a name behind him which will live long in the annals of the Church he loved so well and so faithfully served.

REV. ALEXANDER TOPP, D.D.

REV. ALEXANDER TOPP, A.M., D.D., was born in 1815 at Sheriff mill, near Elgin, Scotland. He was educated at Elgin Academy and the University of Aberdeen. He distinguished himself at both institutions and obtained a scholarship and his degree of A.M. at the University of King's College. This University afterwards conferred on him the degree of D.D. The large church at Elgin was one of those known as a collegiate charge, and in 1838 at the early age of twenty-three years, Dr. Topp was appointed junior minister and very soon after, on the removal of his coadjutor, was appointed by Her Majesty on the petition of the Town Council and congregation to be the senior minister. It was about this time that the evangelical movement was beginning in Scotland and the young minister, in full sympathy with this revival, addressed himself to the work of his great charge. One of his first acts, which was opposed by the "Moderates," was the establishment of a Sabbath School, and he continued through life to manifest deep interest in the training of the young. The five years of his ministry which preceded the Disruption in 1843, was a time of laborious and arduous work. From the first he was an ardent supporter of the Free Church party, and when the crisis came, unhesitatingly surrendered his beautiful manse and handsome stipend. Almost the whole congregation left the establishment with him and a large church was immediately erected for their accommodation. He continued to minister to the Free Church with marked success till 1852, when he was called to Roxburgh Free Church, at Edinburgh. This congregation rapidly increased under his pastorate till 1858, when he was called to Knox church, Toronto, of which he continued to be the indefatigable and successful minister till 8th Oct., 1879, when he

(Continued on page 422.)