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THE SALVATION ARMY.

UNDER the above heading the *Contemporary Review* for August has three articles—one each by "General" Booth, Frances Power Cobbe, and Rev. Randall T. Davison respectively. From these several articles we learn of the principles, modes and success of the Salvation Army, and also of the dangers that threaten to destroy its usefulness and permanence. "General" Booth, its founder, states that it is by a plain preaching of an "old-fashioned Gospel" that they seek to bring the masses to a sense of their sinfulness and their need of a Saviour. "We have not," he says, "a particle of sympathy with those who would seek to tone down or in any way to adapt the Gospel of Christ to suit the fancy of the nineteenth century." What the "General" means by an "old-fashioned Gospel" the following sentence from his article will show. "We believe the three creeds of the Church with all our heart. We believe every word of the Communion Service, and we go about denouncing the wrath of God against sinners just as people must who really believe that all these things are true. We have often been reproached, in fact, because we dwell so much upon what are often called "dark" truths, instead of joining in the popular chorus of excuse for iniquity, and sweetness and love for everybody; but we believe the greatest possible kindness to a man who is doing wrong and going to hell is to tell him so in the plainest and most urgent language that can be used."

Before entering the army a public 'confession' is made, and then when received as a soldier an S is placed on the soldier's coat collar, and he is immediately set to work in selling 'the War Cry,' in visiting, or some other form of service; he is also required to abstain from the use of alcohol and tobacco.

The government of the army is absolutely military, and the "General" is invested with supreme and arbitrary powers, and it is also proposed that he shall appoint his own successor. This is stoutly defended by the "General," who speaks eloquently on the failure "of committees large and small after the models of the surrounding churches. But we found in all this no advantage and endless difficulty and trouble."

With evident delight "General" Booth dwells on the success of the Salvation Army "with its 320

corps, its 760 officers entirely employed in the work, its 6200 services every week, its audiences of thousands and tens of thousands, generally the largest gathered in any town it enters, and in most cases overtaking the capacity of the largest buildings that can be secured."

In answering the question "What will it grow to?" it is somewhat amusing to read the answer, "Never, I hope, into a sect," while "General" Booth is doing all he can to perfect a sectarian organization. The General is kind enough to leave to the churches "all who wish mere church life," and his conviction that the methods of the Army are all any Christian can need is shown when he says, "Instead of insisting upon attendance on any church, even for the Sacrament, we teach our people to spend all their leisure time with the Army."

None can doubt the earnestness and sincerity of "General" and Mrs. Booth and their intense desire to reclaim and save the wretched inhabitants of the back slums of cities and that large class which all efforts have hitherto been ineffectual to any large extent to reach.

Frances Power Cobbe and Rev. R. T. Davidson both dwell on the extreme irreverence of the movement, and also regard the despotic power of the General as a source of weakness. The former says, "General Booth's authority more nearly resembles, I believe, that of a general of the Jesuits or the Franciscans than that of Sir Garnet Wolseley or Sir Evelyn Wood." And on this point the latter remarks, "It is understood, if not yet definitely enacted, that 'General' Booth is to be succeeded by his eldest son, already a prominent officer on his father's staff. If the system of arbitrary generalship is, judging by the experience of history, a dangerous one for the common good, the danger in the case of a religious organization is certainly not diminished by introducing the notion of hereditary rule. Unless it be in some of the smaller and more benighted Eastern Churches, where the Patriarch is necessarily succeeded by his nephew, I doubt whether an analogous system can be found in any religious community in the world."

The shocking irreverence of the Army as expressed in their hymns and in the addresses of their officers is pointed out by both these writers, and by them both condemned, as however it may seem to take at first it will need, as the novelty wears off, newer novelties and greater irreverence to sustain the interest. The permission of such irreverence can only be harmful, and as virtue can scarcely be said to exist where modesty is wanting, so religion cannot be deep or lasting where reverence is not insisted on as an important part of it.

To a well educated Churchman, however large his charity, a body which denies the existence of and necessity for a ministry instituted by Christ which has a mission to all men whether members of the Salvation Army or not, and which makes the chief sacrament of the Gospel a matter of indifference, or allows it to be paraded by being celebrated by women as it can be proved has been done on more than one occasion—is one with which he can have but little sympathy.

The Church of England has been slow to condemn a movement which has accomplished some good among the neglected classes, and also remembering the mistake made in her treatment of John Wesley and the Methodists does not wish, with the wisdom gained by experience, to repeat it in our day. Still the cases of the Methodists and the Salvation Army are not analogous. John Wesley was a clergyman of the Church of England and sought with profound reverence for the minis-

try and sacraments of Christ to found a society within the Church, and was only hindered from doing so by the want of sympathy and aid from the rulers of the Church at that time; but "General" Booth's army has been formed not only outside of the Church, but in many important respects in opposition to what we must regard as vital and fundamental principles. The subject is engaging the earnest attention of the Bishops and other leaders of the Church in England, and we may expect the adoption of a wise line of action from their patient deliberations.

Whatever room there may be among the uneducated masses of the great cities of England, there is, we think, but little room for them in Canada. An attempt has already been made in Toronto and elsewhere, but with but small results. This may be traced to two causes—first, our people are too generally educated to appreciate the addresses of the peculiar style of men who claim to represent the Salvation Army, and too reverent, let us hope, to join in singing hymns, of which this verse is a specimen.

"Elijah was a jolly old man,
And was carried up to heaven in a fiery van;
Let us every one be a jolly old man,
And be carried up to heaven in a fiery van."

And secondly, with our small population, and entire absence of anything like large or overcrowded cities, we have no class of people likely to be influenced by the Salvation Army, or none who are not reached by some existing organization.

We would commend the articles above named to any one who wishes for further information as to this last religious movement of the nineteenth century.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

No. IV.

FROM the Ruri-decanal Sunday Schools to the Central Associations in connection with the Synod, the step is reasonable and necessary. Ordinarily, the reverse proceeding would be adopted. But the Synods of the Church are conservative and caution, and take up no new methods until forced to do so by the advance of public opinion in the Church. Perhaps this is as it should be, but it is very slow work.

In some Dioceses, there has been formed a Committee of Synod, having in charge the work of Sunday Schools, and having the power to take such steps as they may deem it advisable to forward it. Supposing then, that there is such a Committee or Central Board, what steps can it adopt?

1. It can provide and authorize a uniform scheme of Lessons. This may be either compiled by the Committee, or adapted from some other source. Of these lessons a stock should be on hand in some central place from whence the leaflets could easily be obtained. With the leaflet for children's use, there should also be a Teacher's help of some kind. This is, as was hinted in a former paper, essential. Teachers must have it in some shape or form. If it is not given by the clergyman, it must be by the printed book or sheet.

2. It can authorize a Sunday School Hymnal, and keep copies on hand for sale. If the hymnal can be sold at a reduced rate, so much the better. In some Sunday Schools, probably in most, the teachers would buy one for themselves, and so would some of the scholars. The selection of a Sunday School Hymnal is of considerable importance. The words must be sound and Church-like,