

We referred last week to the change of place for the Bible Society meeting in consequence of the action of the Bishop of Toronto. Since then a special meeting of the Committee has been held at which it was decided to return to the original proposal and hold the meeting in St. James' Square Presbyterian Church. This is as it should be.

We have been deeply pained, in common with the members of all our churches in Toronto, by the publication of statements reflecting upon the character of the pastor of the Bond street church. We know nothing of these matters beyond what is public property, therefore we abstain from any comment. Three or four meetings of the church were held last week, at one of which a letter was read from Mr. Handford, tendering his resignation. Rightly, as we think, the church declined to accept it, but, instead, appointed a Committee to investigate any charges and report thereupon to the church. We would very earnestly press upon the Bond street brethren that every consideration of justice to Mr. Handford, and to themselves as a church, together with the respect they owe to the denomination to which they belong and to our common Christianity, demand that the investigation shall be thorough and complete; nothing less can or ought to satisfy, in fact, anything less will be interpreted adversely to Mr. Handford. We are sure that the religious public, ministerial and lay alike, will rejoice to find that the charges and rumours are false and unfounded.

THE centenary of the establishment of Sunday schools, by Robert Raikes, is to be celebrated in England this summer on a scale commensurate with the importance of the subject. Representation has been invited from all the Sunday School Associations in the world, and the secretaries write that already the response has been large, from the United States especially. We are glad to be told that there is promise of a good delegation from Canada, Hon. Vice-Chancellor Blake, with others, having signified their intention of being present. The first meeting—one of reception and recognition—will be held on Saturday, 26th June, to be followed by various meetings during the following week. A grand mass meeting at the Crystal Palace, a meeting at the Guildhall, unveiling of the Raikes statue on the Thames embankment, meeting of delegates in Exeter Hall, etc. The succeeding week's observances will be initiated by meetings at Gloucester, the birthplace of Raikes, followed by meetings at other places. Altogether the arrangements promise a worthy celebration of one of the most important movements of modern times. We can promise our readers a full report of the proceedings from the pen of a delegate who proposes to be present at all the meetings and will give his experiences thereat in the columns of the INDEPENDENT.

IN reply to our paragraph of a fortnight ago respecting the "little manual" as proposed by a speaker at the meeting of the "Presbyterian Church Extension Society," "The Canada Presbyterian" says:

"Our good friend and contemporary, the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT is concerned about us poor Presbyterians, our accredited standards, and a threatened 'little manual,' the appearance of which, it fears, will shew that our Presbyterianism as 'formulated' in our symbolical books is not in accord with that which is actually held by our members and taught from our pulpits. There is not the slightest ground for anxiety, good friend. All that is aimed at is a handy little manual on Presbyterian Church Government, about which some think we have not lately been saying enough, because we have thought that the argument in its favour was so unanswerable and so evident as to need but little either of exposition or enforcement. No fear. Presbyterianism is not at all dead, neither are Presbyterians at all anxious to shift their ground or apologize for their existence."

Well, concern, let it be; only, however in this that Presbyterianism actual (we must be allowed the "actual" as distinguished from the "formulated") is becoming so Congregational that we shall begin to inquire soon, What maketh us to differ? Our anxiety is only to know what an accredited manual of to day, candid and bold, would make of the Presbyterianism of A.D. 1880 and onward? Will our big brother and kind,

really affirm that it is what it was, and that he is doctrinally where he was, say twenty-five years ago?

THE REV. DR. STEVENSON.

In February last the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, B.A., LL.B., pastor of Emmanuel Congregational Church, Montreal, visited the city of Kingston, to deliver one of the lectures of the Queen's College literary and scientific course, at the request of the Principal, the Rev. Dr. Grant. His subject was "Milton," and it was handled in his own inimitable way, to the great appreciation and delight of the large audience. The Sunday following was spent in ministering to our churches which were thronged with attentive hearers.

On the 27th ult., accompanied by Mrs. Stevenson, he visited the city again, and in the evening lectured in the First Congregational Church, on "The Pilgrim Fathers." Again there was a large gathering, representing all classes and creeds, who listened with intense interest to the thrilling story and telling truths relating to the spiritual ancestry of the present Congregationalism. It would be well if this lecture and others like it could be given in all of our churches, for then, aided by the knowledge of the history of the past, we would understand better than we do now the great blessings that we enjoy in civil and religious freedom and the great price at which our fathers purchased them for us.

On the following day, at the annual Convocation of Queen's College, the Vice-Principal, the Rev. Dr. Williamson, announced Mr. Stevenson's name, and introduced him to the Principal, as follows:

"Mr. Vice-Chancellor, I present to you the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, of Emmanuel Church, Montreal, as one worthy to receive the degree of Doctor of Divinity. Mr. Stevenson studied at University College, London, and took the degrees of B.A. and LL.B. from London University. Before coming to Canada he bore a high reputation in the Congregational Church in England—a Church which includes in its ministry a large proportion of thoughtful and highly cultivated men. Mr. Stevenson has well sustained in Canada his reputation as a preacher, lecturer, and writer, able to deal with the root questions of thought and life, and to adapt the Gospel to the actual necessities of the present day. His theology rests on the double basis of historic facts that mirror universal history, and of a sound philosophy whose principles are the laws of universal reason and conscience. He believes that science and scholarship are the best friends of religion; that truth is wider than any of our systems, and so mighty that it demands as the condition of its victory nothing but freedom. In token of their appreciation of his character, ability and services, his brethren have elected him chairman of the Board of their College and President of their Union, so that in honouring him we desire to honour the whole Congregational Church in the Dominion."

The Vice-Chancellor conferred the honorary degree amidst the enthusiastic applause of students and spectators and then requested the rev. doctor to make an address. This he did with exceedingly great felicity, figuratively "bringing down the house," for no one could receive a heartier ovation. I am sure that I will echo the sentiments of all your readers when I say Long live the doctor! and may his new *alma mater* flourish more and more. S. N. J.

Kingston, May 1st, 1880.

Literary Notices.

Farrar's Life of St. Paul.

Any elaborate life of the great apostle invites instant comparison with the standard work of Conybeare and Howson, which does seem to cover all necessary ground. Indeed, in its day, "Conybeare and Howson" seemed exhaustive; has our present work advanced upon its great predecessor? Canon Farrar owning his obligation to the older work, expressly disavows competition therewith. His purpose is confessedly different, though both aim at giving a "living picture of St. Paul himself, and of the circumstances by which he was surrounded." Indeed their object

is one, and the materials used the same, viz., the history in the "Acts," and the epistles of the apostle, with such side lights as history and geography afford. Jewish literature, e.g., the Talmud and Mishna, is becoming every year better known, and in this Canon Farrar has decidedly the advantage; yet, with this advantage, and excellently as all aids have been used, it is questionable whether the present work will prove as permanent as the earlier. Broadly, it may be stated that Conybeare and Howson have performed the work of commentators, and by a patient unfolding and illustrating of New Testament materials given us as far as possible not Conybeare and Howson's ideal Paul, but Paul as he appears in the authentic records. Hence, so long as these records hold sway over the Christian world, that work will have a permanent value. Canon Farrar has stood, as it were, apart and taken a perspective from his point of view, which is decidedly broad. With the same materials, from another point of observation, Spurgeon could draw another portrait as probably true. At the same time, let us confess that Farrar's Life of St. Paul is written more in accord with the spirit of the times, which demands vivid colouring rather than sober shading. Read the second paragraph of chapter x., for example—the product of a vivid and cultured imagination, which may strike the truth, yet in reality is only the author's colouring to a very imperfect outline. The Canon's attitude to "inspiration," though apparently equivocal, is really unmistakable. He characterizes the Acts as a genuine and trustworthy history in its main outlines, and in chapter viii. eighth paragraph, declares what inspiration is not. What it is or indicates is nowhere implied or stated unless as in Stephen's case, a "conviction—an inspiration from on high." That a scholar like Canon Farrar should play with learning as a toy, finding common-place where general readers are lost, is to be expected; yet in a work intended to interest general Bible readers, we do wonder at finding, e.g., this comment (?) on Paul's simple voyage to Samothrace: "Did Paul, as he gazed by starlight or at early dawn, talk to his companions about the Cabiri, or question any of the sailors about the strange names of Axeocherus, Axeochersos, and Axeochersa. We would gladly know, but we have no data to help us," etc. It is to be doubted whether our knowledge of Paul would be enlarged by any reading of the mysteries of the Cabiri. Similar exhibitions of extensive reading really add nothing to the general reader's knowledge, and can only please a spirit such as that which demanded Latin quotations in sermons, upon the principle "we pay you for the best even though we may not understand." We are disposed to think that the difference between Paul and the Jerusalem church is somewhat overdrawn, and have the same feeling regarding the presentation of Paul's arraying Pharisee against Sadducee, towards the close of chapter xi. Nevertheless, there are overpowering excellencies in the work. The familiarizing of the epistles is well conceived and well carried out, and the obtruding of fresh renderings into our familiar readings and traditional modes of thought are admirably fitted to awaken slumbering interest and break the monotony of words which oft repeated "do ossify the very organs of intelligence." It is a real gain to see the great apostle as beheld by one of deep sympathetic heart and decided culture, to have our memories quickened and our curiosity excited by being led along unfrequented ways and antiquarian paths, and to be thus companioned with deep reverence joined with manifest sincerity. Our old Conybeare and Howson will be fingered none the less by having Farrar on our shelves; but we have made a real gain to our reference corner by placing therein the Life and Work of St. Paul as portrayed by the widely known Canon of Westminster. When in the standard series of I. K. Funk & Co. the text can be secured for 50 cents, no Bible student should remain without the work, if only to supply reading for a leisure hour.

It is said that there are only some 650,000 Protestants in France. Judging from their power in the country, one would say that there were three times the number.