

OUR GREAT WEST.

Professor H. A. A. Kennedy of Knox College, has just returned from a trip to Vancouver, where he took part in a conference held under the auspices of the Synod of British Columbia. He spent several days at Winnipeg and other points. This was his first experience of western Canada, as he arrived from Scotland only in September last. He was greatly impressed by what he saw—the vast extent of country, the incoming tide of immigration, the variety of scenery, and the wonderful possibilities.

To a Globe reporter, Prof. Kennedy said: "But what impressed me most deeply, and what surprised me most of all, was not the prairies or the cities or the mountains, but the men who are doing the church's work, the missionaries from the lonely mountain stations and the ministers in the raw new towns. The strength of these men, their brain power, their intellectual alertness, the range of their interests and the breadth of their culture—it was that that surprised me most of all. The way these men grasped the subtlest points and showed themselves at home in philosophical and theological literature was really splendid. I heard a paper on the Church and the Labor Problem by a man from the interior of British Columbia that for knowledge of the facts, mastery of the principles and thorough grasp of the whole question was as good a bit of work as I have ever seen. The Canadian church has much to be proud of, and the country has much to be thankful for, thus in these pioneer settlements with their seeming life there are men of the temper and the training such as I met at Vancouver."

SIMPLE BIBLE LESSON.

In Britain the educational problem is still agitating the community, and the Liberal government is finding it a difficult question to settle, the Nonconformists on the one hand, and the Anglicans—Anglican and Roman—on the other, cannot come together. The former desire to retain the Bible in the schools; the latter will not be satisfied unless the Church has full control. The Belfast Witness has the following: "Let those who say a simple Bible lesson is useless—and some actually say it is harmful—read the following account of a school so taught. Here is the list of questions prepared by the teacher at an examination—1. Write out the rewards for those who are poor in spirit, pure in heart, and peace-makers. 2. Explain 'meek,' 'pure in heart,' and 'persecuted.' 3. Write from Isaiah the passage beginning, 'Behold my servant' down to 'consider.' To whom does it refer? 4. 'I hate him, for he doth not prophesy good concerning me.' On what occasion were these words used? 5. Write out the Commandment which forbids coveting. What King of Israel broke this Commandment, and how did he secure what he coveted? 6. What lessons have you learnt from Elijah? 7. Give briefly the substance of Christ's conversation with Nathaniel or with Nicodemus. 8. Write out any miracle worked on the Sabbath Day described by St. John. 9. On what occasions were the following words used—'It is I, be not afraid,' 'Go, wash in the pool of Siloam,' 'For the poor always ye have with you,' 'The servant is not greater than his master.' Yet this is the kind of religious instruction which High Anglicans call godless, or Nonconformist, or worse than none at all!"

AGITATORS, TAKE HEED.

Editor Dominion Presbyterian:—By the kindness of a friend I have just seen an able and temperate criticism of the proposed Union of the Churches, from the pen of Dr. Campbell, Clerk of the Assembly. His thoughtful words are commended for persal to those who are enamoured of the prospect of union. The design of the pamphlet is well summed up in the following excerpt:—"This criticism is submitted in the hope that it will arrest the attempts of the few enthusiasts in the Presbyterian church who are urging on the project. Now is the time to pause, before any one is irrevocably committed to the movement, and before it gets mixed with personal and party heats which blind the mind to pure right and truth. Once people have positively enlisted in a cause and taken a step in advance, it is not so easy going back."

This is sane caution to which it would be well for the agitators to take heed. At the forthcoming General Assembly can be led to resolve its union committee into one charged with seeking to bring about friendly co-operation on the part of all the Evangelical churches, then something of real practical good may be achieved, and much of the evil of heated discussion—not to say contention, averted; for depend upon it the last word (scarcely the first) has been spoken against this movement.

ALEX. HENDERSON, London.

PROHIBITION IN NORWAY AND SWEDEN.

In Norway, in 1845, a Local Option law was passed by which it was made easy to prohibit the sale of spirits throughout a portion of her territory containing more than three-fourths of the entire population. The principles of this law are observed in more recent legislation. By the law of 1884, regulating the sale of beer and wine in large or small quantities, and the spirit law of 1894, the power to decide the number of licensed premises there shall be in a town, and the tax to be paid, is relegated to the managers of the corporations. By the law of 1871 the private licensed houses went over more and more to the spirit associations, and such associations were established in all Norwegian towns except two small ones. In 1894 a law was passed which gave all males and females over the age of twenty-five years power to decide whether or not there shall be a spirit association in the town, and by the vote of the people many of the associations were abolished. Thus there were now in Norway only twenty-eight towns with associations.

In Sweden a similar change was brought about by similar methods. It was, however, 1855 before a Local Option law was enacted. So successful did this law prove that out of a total of 2,400 liquor shops in existence when the law was passed, about 2,000 were entirely suppressed before the end of 1857, and the per head consumption of spirits was reduced to a trifle over two gallons per annum. In 1865 what is known as the Gothenburg System was instituted. Under this system the surplus profits of the trade are appropriated to the aid of local rates. The system, however, only operates within the towns, the country districts, comprising three-fourths of the population, being under Local Option.

The things that come to us are of God's appointment and are in some way intended to fashion some feature or develop some lack in our character. It is for us to make the best possible use of them, for in doing so we will be aiding God in his great purpose concerning us.

THE PASSING OF A FAD.

There is a great commotion these days in Zion City, and the followers of Alexander Dowie seem no longer to be his followers except as they follow him to inflict just punishment upon him and to depose him from his former official position. They have taken the most positive action possible. He has been put out of office, and out of the membership of the Church, and out of personal possession of the property, and in this his wife and son have joined with the authorities and other members of the organization.

The new leaders now promise a complete reorganization, with a modification and restatement of their faith. They will have to state, first of all, that they have been deceived in and by Dowie himself, and when they have said and done this it would seem like trying to reorganize Mohammedanism and leaving Mohammed out, or like the Mormons turning their backs on Brigham Young. All that has been really apparent to the world at large in Dowieism has been the personality of Dowie himself, and with the disappearance of this element it would seem that there exists no farther reason for the perpetuation of what has been one of the noisiest and glaring fads of the day.

It is the sad experience of our race to be drawn into such movements, one after another. Ambitious and blind leaders have drawn after them blind and deceived followers, and one delusion after another has absorbed the ill-balanced and emotional. Modern Spiritualism has had for its changing centre a few personalities, and a multitude of easily deceived have wandered out of the way in search of the key they knew not what. So around a few bold, unscrupulous and corrupt men Mormonism organized itself, and with specious errors has enslaved its bewildered adherents. So Mary Eddy, with her shallow and incoherent utterances, has led an amiable and sentimental flock into thinking that her rambling and meaningless vagaries have in them something really profound and religious. Of course the most of her followers do not actually comprehend and hold the unscientific and unchristian teachings of their mysterious leader, but a sort of crude and easy-going fallacy which they mistake for truth and for religion, and with which they are satisfied so long as the sun shines, and all goes well, but with these people there will some day come the passing of their cherished fad as in the case of the Apostle of Zion City.

Nothing is permanent which is not true. Nothing can take the place of the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ. Here is permanency for faith and for satisfaction. Our leader and head is God himself, and they who believe his words shall never be put to confusion. They who do his will shall abide forever. Founded on the rock, they shall stand fast and shall not be moved.—Herald and Presbyter.

The English Presbyterian Synod, this year, appears to have been peculiarly favored in its moderator, a gifted Irishman, Rev. J. B. McHarry, D.D., minister of Crouch Hill church, London. Our London contemporary writes of him in terms following: "May we without tinge of disrespect aver that this will long be remembered as 'McHarry's Synod'? The inspirations of an alert intellect and a tender spirit were ever in evidence, and the illuminations of genius flashed perpetually from the chair. Everything was happy and finished, but three utterances in particular will remain in the memory—the graceful and dignified acknowledgment of the Lord Mayor's and Lady Mayoress' beneficence, with the beautiful closing metaphor, born of the city and the river; the tenderly touching sentences of the charge to the unexampled band of choice men, who had responded to the call for this year's work as Synod evangelists; and the exquisitely moving references, with which the Synod was brought to a close."