

were advanced to the Priesthood. Two churches in that interval have been consecrated.

Some decrease in the number of candidates for Confirmation during the past twelve months, as compared with former announcements, is a necessary consequence of the separation from us of the six populous counties which now compose the Diocese of Niagara. As these supplied, at the latest average, 650 candidates per annum, our relative progress in this respect will be found to have been fairly maintained. Confirmations have been held at eighty places; and there have been admitted to that rite, since the last meeting of Synod, 516 males, and 727 females—in all, 1,243

BIENNIAL MEETING OF SYNOD.

The project I suggested in my address to the Synod last year, which could not then be constitutionally acted upon, namely that they should be held once in two years, instead of annually as at present, is, I am glad to perceive, now to be taken up. Having, on that occasion, stated what I believed to be the advantages of the arrangement proposed, I need not repeat them now. Without imperiling, by its adoption, the fiscal interests of the Diocese, but rather improving them, it is of importance to have the opportunity of discussing as a body what may conduce to the spiritual growth of the Church, and to the increase and spread of personal religion. It would help us, I trust, to work with more efficacy in the attempt to arrest the terrible and revolting

INCREASE OF CRIME AND MORAL DEGRADATION

which we are daily pained to hear, and read of. The license of opinion upon vital truths, into which so many, professing themselves Christian believers, are drifting, has without doubt, largely conduced to this lowering of the moral sense, and loosening of restraints upon the selfish passions and evil inclinations of men. The effects that were meant to follow such statements as these, "By the terrors of the Lord we persuade men;" "After death the judgment," are being most seriously weakened by the discussions in the secular papers and otherwise that have recently been pursued, in reference to man's future destiny, and what is to be the condition and the duration of it.

Nothing can be more distinct and decided than our Lord's own words upon a future recompense to the righteous, and retribution to the wicked; and that this should in each case be everlasting. We are not furnished except in a brief and figurative manner with any statement of the character of that future punishment or reward. Similitudes are drawn from what ourselves know and comprehend of the happiness of the saved and the sufferings of the lost. The revelation from the Lord himself, followed by his apostles, can scarcely be misunderstood—that man obtains his final and enduring happiness by his recovery through Christ of the lost image of God in which he was first created and that he is doomed as a necessary consequence to eternal remorse and misery through his neglect or refusal to employ the means by which that holiness is recovered that fits him for heaven.

The revelations of Christ are, in fact, repetitions of what have been the instincts of mankind in every age; instincts, we must believe, implanted by Him who made afterwards positive announcements of the truth to which they point. We can not, for instance, read in ancient poets pictures of the life that exists after death, without feeling that the idea was not simply a poetic fancy but an implanted conviction, running on from the date of man's fall,

and obtaining confirmation from the Saviour of the world in the fulness of time. It appears to be as old as the idea of propitiatory sacrifices, so universally entertained and acted upon throughout the world. Either of these would be a most unlikely human invention; their introduction would be unaccountable, unless as having come by revelation from God.

From the earliest period in the world's history there was, no doubt, a cause for this general and deeply implanted persuasion. It could not fail to prove the most effectual restraint upon licentious living and criminal acts; it would be the surest preventive of the fall of man into the lowest depths of moral degradation. The brute creation are moved to violence and cruelty, through hunger and other natural incentives; in man there is a power to continue wickedness, and devise cruelties which brutes do not possess. In man, then, there must be implanted motives of restraint proportionate to his power of doing evil. This would be necessary for the protection of his fellow men and for maintaining a due sense of the moral government of God.

It would be easy to adduce evidence from the history of the world, both ancient and modern, that morality has been lowered and crime increased, wherever the belief has prevailed that there is no future, much less eternal punishment. When heathen philosophers, a little anterior to the Christian era, gave currency to the opinion that the apprehension of future punishment from their gods was a groundless one and infused doubts as to the existence of any god at all, it is stated by Roman writers and confirmed by St. Paul in his Epistle addressed to that people that the most disastrous consequences followed. Truth and faith were discarded, perjury practised without shame, and every excess of licentiousness, wantonness and cruelty was recklessly indulged.

The same results were apparent in England, in the latter part of the seventeenth century in the reign of Charles the Second. Amongst the efforts of the sceptical writers of that day there was the attempt to emancipate the minds of men from the apprehension of divine punishment in a future world. Along with contempt of religion, the grossest licentiousness prevailed, affecting even the highest ranks. The same was observable in France during the Revolution in the latter part of the eighteenth century. The frenzy of excitement which drove so many of the people into the most terrible excesses of crime, was studiously fostered by the denial in high and influential quarters, of the existence of God, and contempt of the idea that any future retribution was to be apprehended from such a Being. We seem to have fallen upon such evil days ourselves; and nothing will prove an effectual check to the spreading calamity but a firm, honest maintenance, and promulgation of the revealed truth that the punishment of the wicked, as well as the reward of the righteous, shall be everlasting.

To assert any other belief would be to strike at the root, and destroy the foundation and purpose, of Christianity itself. The great fact that the Son of God came into the world to make atonement for the sins of its people by the sacrifice of himself, would be shorn of its significance, if the opinion we are protesting against could be allowed a place beside it. We could not permit ourselves to think that a sacrifice, so vast, so tremendous, would have been made unless, to avert from man a calamity in some degree commensurate with the cost at which it was to be removed. To imagine that an atonement so inconceivably great and precious should

have been made, merely to heighten the well-being or lessen the ills of man during his sojourn upon earth,—this would be an unworthy, a fatal conception. We could not conceive the need of such an atonement if this was to be the limitation of its purpose; if it were to have no bearing upon man's immortal life. It is not for us to speculate with a dangerous and irreverent freedom upon the heavenly revelations touching this momentous subject. Here, we are reminded, we see through a glass darkly: it were vain as well as presumptuous to aim at perfectness of vision as respects the mysteries of the world after death: we are not, it is certain, to possess it while on earth. "Clouds and darkness are round about" the Almighty: It is not meant that we should penetrate those shadows: neither the full glory nor the gloom of the eternal world shall ever be unveiled to us in this our transition state. We have the fact of both conditions revealed to us: let us be content with this, and not attempt solutions of which we are incapable.

Having felt myself called upon to offer a few thoughts on this momentous topic, in consequence of the unhappy discussions it has recently awakened, and the disturbance perhaps in many cases, of old and settled convictions, I proceed to some remarks on a subject of great local interest and importance, the due and suitable

SUSTENTATION OF THE CLERGY.

In viewing the state of our mission fund, as compared with its condition twelve months ago, we are not without grounds of satisfaction and hope. In many instances there has been an improvement in the amount of contributions; there has been a more general effort to come up to the amount of assessment for this object submitted to the several parishes of the diocese. We must confess, nevertheless, that the work which is dependent upon the existence and growth of that fund, is being seriously crippled. Some special, vigorous effort must therefore be made to raise it to such a condition that, not only should all deficiencies be made up, but a surplus be at our disposal for the extension of our missionary work. An appeal on this ground to the sympathies and obligations of churchmen at large—I mean a special appeal, independent of the ordinary annual claims—could scarcely fail to obtain a general and liberal response. If a fitting machinery for this purpose were put in motion, with energetic and assiduous workers, why should we not, say within three years, raise the amount of ten thousand dollars? At the same time, faithful and generous churchmen are led more and more to lament and deprecate the existence of any rival movement or organization for the sustentation of the clergy, as weakening the ability to meet the increasing demand for the ministrations of the church, and keeping in more injurious prominence the spirit of party, division, and strife. With tenderness to every conscience, and respect for the varieties of religious thought and persuasion which prevail, we can not but feel that, with the most charitable concession to such differing sentiments, a way might be found for the judicious and useful expenditure on missionary work, of any separate funds obtained for that object, in harmony—and certainly not in conflict—with the established organizations of the diocese. It would be sad and painful to observe that, from such separate accumulations, no strength or expansion is being given to our missionary efforts; that while there is a withdrawal from the means of the one side, there is no apparent employment of them for their intended purpose on the other side.