

## THE LATE DUNCAN M'COLL, B.A.

No tear for him, for his change is infinitely best, but for his bereaved relatives, who have suffered an irreparable loss, and for ourselves, who have rarely found such a noble acquaintance in a by no means narrow career in association with young men in half a dozen institutions of learning in three countries. Literally, not one in a thousand manifested so full-orbed character and disposition, so well rounded off in every Christian and gentlemanly trait, and so little wanting visibly. Morally, to our eye, not uncritical, he seemed faultless—free from even that taint so general among students, especially theological—envious jealousy of the success of their compeers. But nothing can be added to the fitting tribute to his lovely character and life in your paper (the editorial and the appropriate sermon). Yet, while we would inflame our zeal and fervour in the Master's service by his worthy example and his early call to higher service, we wish to emphasize two things in him so rare among theological students in our classes—the writer has since seen this matter as he did not in his student career—(1). Our late friend was thoroughly orthodox, or evangelical, in his views of doctrine, worship, and life (most all of us are or were that). (2). He was also deeply earnest and spiritual and active in every good work, e.g., preaching, Sabbath school teaching, visiting—pay or no pay—to a degree that few of us could appreciate, much less attain to. Attention is here drawn to these points, because there is an impression among students and some ministers in Ontario that those who help or sympathize with "revival" or evangelistic work, or, in other words, are live, spiritual, and dead-in-earnest in preaching or active duties, are supposed to be weak-minded, fanatical, or heretical. It has gained currency because some active workers have been deemed chargeable with one or all of these, and the lack of spirituality in the accusers magnified the real or imaginary grievance. Finally, let all Christian workers, and, above all, students, combine Calvin and Moody, without modifying the theology of the one or the practical fervour of the other, as we see so grandly illustrated in Jonathan Edwards, at once pre-eminently the theologian and revivalist. This whole reference to student life may seem uncalled for, but outsiders may not be aware that warm, practical piety is one of the rarest things in theological halls. Students, even Professors, are proverbially crisp and "dry," to use no more uncomplimentary terms. The greatest strain that was ever put on the writer's faith in God and belief in Christianity was while attending lectures in a theological hall at the very heart and head of Presbyterianism—in listening to dead, dry orthodoxy, coupled with cold, formal morality—little unction, juice or sweetness in the *cultus* life of students or professors (with happy exceptions), self the one power everywhere. Of course, did the writer have more life and spirituality himself, he would have discovered more of it in others.

April 19th, 1882.

## NOTES FROM ENGLAND.

## ENGLISH PRESBYTERIAN SYNOD.

The rapid growth, the increasing influence, and the missionary enterprise of the English Presbyterian Church, would at the present time be sufficient apology for bringing it before the minds of your readers. The history of Presbyterianism in England has been, as in Scotland, one of struggles and conflict; and in no other country has its vitality been more severely tested. Whether in her hour of triumph protected by the head of the State, and all-powerful in Parliament, or in her times of weakness and defeat, she has never ceased to exert a potent influence in the history and social life of the English people. The growth of Presbyterianism in England during the past thirty years has been incredible, having almost trebled ministers. The Presbytery of London has within its bounds no less than forty-eight congregations, and the Presbytery of Newcastle forty-four. No other dissenting body in England can show such an increase in the same time. There are several reasons to account for this. The fact that the Queen attends the Presbyterian Church during her stay in the Highlands, and that some of her most favoured preachers have been and are Presbyterians, among whom may be mentioned the late Norman McLeod and Principal Tulloch, and not least, the fact that it is the national religion of

Scotland, gives it a place in England, in the popular mind, far above that held by any of the other dissenting bodies.

The Synod meets in succession in the cities of London, Newcastle and Manchester. This year it met in London, in

## REGENT SQUARE CHURCH,

known also as the Scottish (Free) Church, which was built for Rev. Edward Irving, the friend of Thomas Carlyle. In this church it is said he first heard the *unknown tongues* in which he believed, and which caused his downfall. It is a massive stone building, with two square towers in front.

Entering, you are struck with the gloomy appearance, which is intensified by the smoke-coloured walls, and the plain, shabby character of all the furnishings.

The present pastor is Rev. J. Oswald Dykes, who for a time preached in Edinburgh as assistant to Dr. Candlish, and who spent several years in Australia before his call to London. Dr. Dykes is well known by his works, which, while they can give no idea of the fervour and intensity of the man, are yet characterized by a simplicity and beauty which must make them appreciated by all who may read them.

He devotes his energies, outside his own pulpit, principally to advancing the interests of the Presbyterian College in London, and we heard him move the adoption of the Report on Colleges, and advocate a scheme for the more efficient training of students for the ministry, and for the better endowment of the London Presbyterian College.

The extreme intensity of his nature manifests itself the moment he rises to speak. His utterance is nervous, rapid, and marked by its abruptness, and is only restrained by an occasional break, as if he could not keep pace with the rush of thoughts which bear him along. At the present time he may be said to be the leading preacher in the Presbyterian Church of England.

But I wish to allude briefly to several others who took a leading part in the business of the Synod, some of whom are known in Canada not only personally, but through their works.

## The Moderator-elect is

## REV. WILLIAM M'CAW,

of Trinity Church, Manchester, who has for several years been Synod Clerk. He is a man of great executive ability, and although still comparatively young, has rendered great service to the Church in England. He is an Irishman by birth, as he shows by his accent, and this fact reveals that even within sight of Westminster, where Ireland has been the bone of contention, and where her sons have prided themselves on obstructing the legislation of an empire, yet the true merits of a son of Erin will be readily acknowledged by his compatriots, who, by unanimous consent, give him the place of highest honour and responsibility.

He is a man who must produce an impression by his large physical proportions, his broad genial countenance, and his deep sonorous voice, which swells forth in finely-rounded sentences. I know not which to admire more, the stirring address of Dr. Fleming Stevenson, the Moderator of the Presbyterian General Assembly of the Church in Ireland, and leader of the deputation from that Church, or the reply of the Moderator of the English Synod to the deputation.

The next name I would refer to is that of Dr. Edmond, best known beyond the British islands by his volume of Sermons to Children. He was formerly a minister in the United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, from which he was called to Park Church, Highbury. He was educated in Glasgow University, entering in 1832. He is a strong advocate for disestablishment, having attempted last year, in the Synod at Newcastle, to educe a testimony in behalf of the spirituality of Christ's kingdom. He failed not only in this instance to do so, but also in the London Presbytery. Although nearly seventy, he is still fresh and vigorous. He is one of the oldest members of the English Synod, more conservative than the younger men who have grown up around him, and in his loyalty to principle he often stands with the minority upon his side; but, as he expresses it himself, he does not feel extremely discomfited, knowing as he does that he is right. When he makes an occasional visit to the North, he always receives a warm welcome from his U. P. brethren. His voice is still strong, and as a debater he possesses considerable ability, while as a preacher he has ever stood in the first rank. It would be impossible to speak of many others well worthy of

mention—men such as Principal Chalmers and Professor Graham, and last, but not least, our own

## DR. DONALD FRASER,

who is so well known that it is hardly necessary to refer to him. He has surprised and disappointed his friends of the Free Church in Scotland by the letter he wrote some months ago against the disestablishment movement which is going on. It is difficult to understand what motive should prompt Dr. Fraser to take the stand he has done on the question of disestablishment, or why a dissenter in England should deliberately strengthen the shackles which bind him, and limit his own freedom, just in the same sense as they hinder the progress of his dissenting brethren in Scotland. May it not be explained on this wise, that Dr. Fraser has had a glance behind the scenes, and that his intimate relations with the Free Church for some years has not increased his respect for that body, nor his love for its leaders? Let us not condemn him unheard.

JAS. REID.

## PROBATIONERS' SCHEME.

MR. EDITOR,—It is refreshing to find that you comprehend so clearly what a prodigious failure the Probationers' Scheme has proved to be.

I have long thought that if the framers and workers of the scheme had ever tested it by actual experience, and known its pernicious effects in degrading the office of the ministry, and educating the congregations in fault-finding, they would long ere now have laid it aside.

The question is asked if any one can be found who can devise a scheme tending to bring about the happy state of things to be found in the Methodist and Episcopalian Churches, viz.: a congregation for every minister, and a minister for every congregation. If it were not thought derogatory to a Church like the Canada Presbyterian to borrow a leaf from either of those Churches, an eclectic system might be framed which would combine the principal advantages of all three systems.

Presbyteries should be required to see to it that all the congregations within their bounds are under pastoral care. Every vacant congregation should be required to choose between finding its own supply and receiving it from the Presbytery by the year. The former would simply enjoy the privilege exercised by wealthy congregations in cities and towns, despite the regulations of the Probationers' Scheme; for though those churches are required to receive probationers half the time, in many cases they pay them and keep them on their hands idle, and continue to find their own supply. This is irritating to congregations and degrading to the probationers, and can never be productive of any good results.

Those congregations choosing to receive their supply from their Presbyteries by the year would be in the same position as Methodist congregations, with the additional privilege of calling a minister and having him inducted over them at any time. In one year, out of 11,000 ministers in the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States, not one minister refused to accept his appointment, and not one congregation refused to receive the minister assigned to it. In the Canada Methodist Church few ordained ministers remain on a circuit less than three years, though they are appointed for only one year at a time. Such a thing as a congregation refusing to receive a minister assigned to it by Conference is almost unknown. In the Episcopalian Church, refusals to abide by the appointments made by the bishop, on the part of either ministers or congregations, are equally rare. In the Church of Scotland, when a congregation has been more than six months without being able to agree on calling a minister, the Presbytery takes the case into its own hands, chooses a minister for them, and inducts him over them. This is much more arbitrary than anything proposed in this scheme, yet many happy settlements have been effected in this way both in Scotland and in this country.

In the Canada Presbyterian Church, students who have not yet completed their literary course, and have not studied theology at all, are sent to congregations for six months at a time, and they are almost invariably well received.

If it be true, as is contended by advocates of the Probationers' Scheme, that men who have completed their theological course and sustained their ordination trials cannot be trusted to supply congregations for more than two or three Sabbaths at a time, it surely