

THE  
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, MARCH 25th, 1880.

EASTER.

SLOWLY, it may be, yet steadily and surely the antagonism between the opposite views held in the Church on the observance of Christian holy-days is passing away; on the one hand there is a less positive pressing of the obligation to keep those days, and on the other there has been an increasing willingness to tolerate, at any rate, such observances, while with all there is a readiness to meet on a platform that surrenders nothing and admits nothing, and to keep those old feasts and fasts as holidays. The spirit of the age, seeking as it does more frequent relaxation from the strain of business, accepts these in its calendar, and so two at least of these days in the year, Christmas day and Good Friday, have come to be days of general cessation from business, while others, as Easter and Whitsuntide are marked by a holiday spirit, and more or less of its practice. There is another circumstance also which has had some influence in bringing about the religious aspect of the result, and that is, the greater unity of the Churches in their work. No one can doubt who closely watches the Christian world, that there is more unity, there is a closer drawing together, and as a certain result the toleration of minor differences of opinion and practice. We are not sure that we are claiming too much for the International Sunday School Lesson scheme when we say that it has had a not insignificant share in this; it has created a unity of thought on many subjects that might otherwise have been delayed for a generation or more. In connection with the Lessons there has been called into existence quite a number of undenominational papers and periodicals, the business of these is to interpret the lessons in a way that shall be fairly acceptable to all denominations, and to accomplish this they must, of course, avoid the sharp points of controversy, keep out of the by-ways of discussion, and tread the broad, open path of generally accepted truths. It is easy to see how this may beget a spirit of toleration, and even a partial acceptance of some practices of which it can be said that if not taught and commanded, they are at any rate harmless.

And so the season of Easter, like its twin festival, Christmas, the subject of fierce contention as to the proper time of its observance in the earlier days of the Church, the point of sturdy attack by our Puritan forefathers as to its being kept at all, is now almost universally marked among us. We sing our Easter hymn:

"Christ the Lord is risen to-day. Hallelujah!"

We send Easter cards to our friends, and largely observe one day's holiday in connection. Shall we then object to this? No! for we are increasingly convinced that there is a power in the harmony of the Christian world even in such matters as these, and while some may sneer at it as mere sentiment, we think that the fact that on next Lord's day in thousands of churches the resurrection of Christ will be the theme of the preacher, and that by millions of voices hymns of rejoicing for the same glorious truth will be sung, is of itself an inspiration and a prophecy, an incentive to labour and an assurance that the Christ whose victory over the grave is celebrated in hymns that girdle the earth in its revolution—shall in like manner be victorious over all His enemies, that He shall be King over the whole earth. Let us then "keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

CHRISTIAN SERVICE.

BY Christian service we do not mean here that which a Christian owes to his Master, the Lord Christ, the consecration of his powers, his opportunities, his all, to that service; that, all will admit, is our highest duty equally with our dearest privilege. We

mean by this heading the service that men and women owe to each other by reason of the relative positions in which they are placed by the providence of God. Socialists, Communists, and their kin may prate as they will about the equality of man, but the fact remains that in all ages of the world, amongst every people, there has existed, as there does to-day, broadly speaking, two classes, employer and employed, master and servant, ranging from the lowest and most degrading form of slavery to the least exacting type of modern service. In common with others Christians have to fill both spheres, some to assume the duties of masters, others those of servants. How then shall the service be rendered? how shall the Christianity which if it is worth anything should be the moving power of every act of our lives be manifested? The New Testament which as a rule, is silent on many of the details of the, giving principles and leaving those principles to leaven the whole man, is not silent here. As we read apostolic teachings on this subject and call to mind that those to whom they were originally given were for the most part slaves, chattels, we cannot but feel that these same teachings come with greater power to us to-day, in our much altered circumstances. They were to "be obedient" etc., "as unto Christ," a very strong expression this, putting their masters, so far as regarded earthly service, as the representatives of their divine Master. It was not to be an "eye service, as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ." It was to be "from the heart, with good will, doing service as to the Lord and not to men." They were to "count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed," yet further they were "to please them well in all things, not answering again, not pilloining, but shewing all good fidelity."

From these Scriptures and others that might be quoted there are certain great duties evident with regard to Christian service. It is needless to dwell on the fact that it must be *honest* and *conscientious*; no one worthy of the name of Christian could for a moment act otherwise, there have been dishonest servants professing to be Christians, as there have been men guilty of almost every other crime who have for a time worn the religious garb, but we do not write for such as these.

The service must be *respectful*—not cringing, unmanly, or sycophantish, but respectful. The Apostle Paul recognized in his day the danger of this being forgotten, and that Christian slaves should despise their Christian masters because they were brethren, and he strongly cautions against it. The Christian man or woman will "count their own masters worthy of all honour."

The service rendered will be *hearty*—not grudging, but whole-souled; not sullen, but cheerful. The Christian servant will not seek to do as little as possible, to get away from work at the earliest moment, to take advantage of his employer's or her mistress' absence to neglect work, but at all times, whether they are present or absent, to fulfil faithfully all duties. Let us illustrate this. Workmen are paid mostly by the hour or day, so much for so long work; plainly then it is their duty to work during that time; every moment wasted is a theft of so much from the employer, as truly a theft as if the hand was put into his cash-box and money abstracted; and yet, who that has mixed with workmen of almost any trade but knows how constantly this is done. Here the Christian man should be an irreproachable example, shewing in this all good fidelity, and shaming, if possible, into like faithfulness.

Yet further, this service should be an *interested* one, performed as it would be were it for the interest of him who serves instead of for another; there is all the difference in the world between such a service as this and one from which that spirit is absent. The one will consider, think, plan what he can do to forward the interests of his employer, the other will perform his duty, and rest there. The one will study how to avoid all that may tend to waste or loss, the other will not consider that to be his business. And so the contrast holds good, right through the various

duties and daily life of those who in these ways render service.

It may be thought and said that all this is so true as to be unnecessary thus to dwell upon! But is it practised? From a pretty long experience, and close observation, we are compelled to say that while there are exceptions, marked and praiseworthy, the bulk of professing Christian servants—and in this we include all who render service in any shape—do not in that service shew any great difference from those who do not make such profession, and that if the character of service given were made the sole test of Christianity, many in warehouses, stores, offices, factories, and elsewhere, who now pass for believers, would be marked as weighed and "found wanting."

That there are unreasonable and exacting employers, masters and mistresses, we know full well, but two wrongs never yet made a right, and if one side is inconsistent the other should all the more be true and loyal to Christ, remembering that it is to Him as supreme all service is rendered, that when He returns His blessed voice may be heard saying: "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

A COUNCIL, called by the Alton Church, to advise in its present position was held Wednesday, 17th inst. We expected to receive the minutes for publication this week, but they have not yet come to hand.

WE would commend very earnestly to the churches the appeal made by Dr. Jackson in our last, asking aid for the Winnipeg Church in their building projects. As a rule we object to these outside appeals for individual churches, but there are special circumstances at times that justify an exception to the rule, and we think this one. We want to plant a strong, vigorous church in Winnipeg, to be a centre of influence and power for the body throughout the Province of Manitoba, and to be that, one essential is that they should have a good building, free from debt. Let our churches heartily respond to the appeal on the first Sunday in April; let every one of the 2,500 envelopes sent out be used, and our Winnipeg brethren shewn that we have a practical sympathy with them in their pioneer work.

To satisfy all our readers as to their ideas of what we should insert we should require a paper a good many times larger than the present issue of the INDEPENDENT, and perhaps even then we should be as far off from the satisfaction part as ever. One reader very strongly urges us to give a sermon, "a good one you know," each week; another wishes instalments of a sacred tale (also good, of course); a third wants more children's matter; a fourth more general information, as this is the only paper they receive; and now here is A. W., who says: "I am disappointed that you do not give more Sunday school teaching. The lesson is well enough, but I should like you to supply more helps for a teacher, such as illustrations, critical explanations and such like. Could you not leave out some of the things you put in and give us more Sunday school," and more to the same tenor. We could, of course, and sometimes feel that we should like to do so; but A. W. must remember that the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT is for families generally, and that when it has fulfilled its first duty as a denominational organ, it must give the balance of its space to items most likely to interest the greatest number of its readers. If the churches would support a paper double the size, at double the price, something more might be done for Sunday school teachers, and other special interests.

IT is something new to us to have a Congregational minister coming forward as a candidate for Parliamentary honours. Dr. Joseph Parker, of the City Temple, London, however aspires to this, and publishes his address to the electors and non electors in his paper, "The Fountain." He takes the ground that as soldiers are elected to the House because it deals with military questions, bankers because financial matters are leg-