

you must be resolved that as all you have shall be God's, so all that you are shall be God's." (Fors.) Was there ever such impiety!

It is quite true that, during a period commencing before 1867 (I have not the means by me to ascertain the dates), Ruskin's faith was disturbed, and full of sorrowful questionings. He had believed completely, and, trusting entirely in the final strength of the right, had through many years fought valiantly with unflinching hope. But disappointment followed disappointment, and, though his success was to most eyes extraordinary, he felt he had but stirred the surface of a small portion of English life. He was keenly alive to the faithlessness of the ordinary professedly religious person (especially in his own, the Anglican Church) and grew to despise the evangelical churches, which seemed to him to tolerate and even approve an entirely pagan spirit in commercial and social life. No wonder his faith yielded, and he was heard to cry out like Elijah, in the bitterness of his spirit. We cannot understand the sorrow and bitterness of the great man, disappointed in his trust, we, who have little faith to lose, and whose purposes are small. Yet even in those days he could write thus:

(1877, age 58).—Referring to the words, "He shall deliver thee from the noisome pestilence." "If of the two, I must choose between drains and prayer—why look you—whatever you may think of my wild whirling words, I will go pray . . . I am myself so nearly . . . faithless to less than the least grain of mustard, that I can take up no serpents and raise no dead. But I don't say, therefore, that the dead are not raised, nor that Christ is not risen, nor the head of the serpent bruised under the foot of the seed of the woman. I say only, if my faith is vain, it is because I am yet in my sins. And to others I say, what Christ bids me say. That simply, that literally, that positively, and no more, "If thou wilt believe, thou shalt see the Salvation of God. (Fors.)

One more "scoff": (1883, age 62).—"All the world is but as one orphanage, so long as its children know not God, their Father: and all wisdom and knowledge is only more bewildered darkness, so long as you have not taught them the fear of the Lord." (Fors.)

Evidently the lady referred to, though heroic in her devotion, was of an unusually narrow sect. It can hardly be said that, even, at his darkest period (which closed in 1877,) the man who always had Spurgeon for a warm admirer, and whose dearest friend and confidant was the saintly Dr. John Brown, would have been a mate unfit for a Christian woman.

I have not the book by me to quote during 1872-5, but I vouch that the extracts given are characteristic of Mr. Ruskin's most faithless years. The last recorded words of the now grey-bearded seer, I know of, were spoken a year or two ago to a gathering of children, and they are the commonest and simplest that fall from Christian lips. "What we need most of all," he said, with pathetic earnestness, thinking doubtless of his own many confessed mistakes and failures, "What we need most of all, children, is to have our sins forgiven; we cannot do without that." Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. Now, I trust that the PRESBYTERIAN is truly penitent.

[The PRESBYTERIAN is truly penitent and thanks "W. H. M."—ED.]

#### A WOMAN'S APPEAL.

A large part of the community in Toronto and Hamilton is represented as having been stirred to its depths by the earnest appeals of men of great power in the presenting of truth at the missionary convention just closed. What is to be the fruit of it all?—"By your fruits ye shall know them." Is it to be merely a little pleasurable excitement for a few days? or are the effects to be permanent and to have some results?

In your paper of this date, alongside of the report of these meetings, and the apparent enthusiasm of the audiences, are the letter of Dr. Cochrane on the state of the "Home Mission" finances, and Dr. Reid's statement of the general financial position of the missionary schemes of our beloved church in Canada. These and the accounts of the mission convention have only

to be placed in juxtaposition—was it done purposely—to tell their own tale and suggest the remedy, that is, if true sincerity has been the marked feature and the prevailing motive in the endorsing of the truth as presented to these packed audiences. Not all Presbyterians, of course, but, I trow, none of the Presbyterians present have been behind hand in their earnest enthusiasm while the conferences lasted.

Do you remember the story of the old gentleman, a member of the Society of Friends, present at a great and disastrous fire in a poor district of London? Finding himself one of the excited crowd, gazing at the destruction of property, he removed his hat, which he certainly would never have done as a mark of mere worldly courtesy, and dropping a bank note in it, passed it round among the crowd, with the significant hint to each, "Friend, how much sorry art thou? I am £5 sorry!"

What is to be the test of our sincerity at the present juncture of affairs? Are we going to make an effort? There only remains a very short portion of the financial year in which to retrieve our shattered fortune—nay, our honor, for are we not under obligations to implement our solemn undertakings upon which so much that is momentous hangs? Is it to be *laissez faire*—are we just going to let things slide along in their present crippled state, like a parcel of hopeless fatalists, without faith or hope? What of our faith? Do we remember that "faith without works is dead?"

Will not some of our good earnest, much moved Presbyterian people take the matter in hand "with a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull altogether," and set things right? An effort begun in the proper spirit for Christ's cause and in humble dependence on Divine aid may be looked upon as a thing accomplished. The not meeting of our obligations is our dishonor, even if these were gone into on too sanguine a scale, so long as a little extra effort or it may be even sacrifice on our part, can still compass them. The members of the Canada Presbyterian Church are not yet, surely, quite bankrupt! A. B.

Hamilton, Feb. 21st, 1894.

#### AGED MINISTERS.

Mr. Editor:—From the number of letters that have appeared in THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN lately, on the question of locating ministers, it is quite evident that there is a general feeling throughout the church that all is not right.

An elder of thirty-one years' standing, points out a number of evils which are seen from his standpoint, and have been overlooked by the ministers. Dr. J. M. Gibson, of London, England, says that the weak point in our system is the want of spiritual oversight and suggests the appointment of an official to do such work as is done by a bishop in the English Church. Are not all Presbyterian ministers bishops, and why do they not exercise as much spiritual oversight as bishops in the English Church? "Knoxonian" makes the same complaint, and suggests that if the present system were properly worked, it would meet all the requirements. He is quite right. He further suggests that more brains and conscience are required, but he does not tell us how or where those useful ingredients are to be found. It is remarkable that in all the letters that have been published, next to nothing has been suggested in the way of a remedy.

Neither the Methodist itinerancy nor any other revolutionary action is needed. The system is far too itinerant already. The main cause of all the trouble is, that the church has so largely departed from true Presbyterianism. All that is required is to return to the good old Presbyterian way. 1st.—The probationers' scheme should be ended. 2nd.—The distinction between vacant congregations and mission stations should be abolished, and both be brought under one system. The Home Mission Committee should be reconstructed, and instead of the members being appointed nominally by the General Assembly, but practically by the committee itself, as at present, should be appointed by Presbyteries for a term not exceeding three years. The time of one third should expire at the end of each year, and their places should be filled either

by electing new members or re-appointing the old. Instead of the powers of Presbyteries being limited as at present to nominating, they should be empowered to appoint ministers to stations for a term not exceeding one year, and to re-appoint as often as the interests of the work might require. It should be the duty of the Home Mission Committee to prepare a list of all the ministers within the bounds of the Western section of the church, who are able and willing to work with all other workers wishing employment, and appoint them to the different Presbyteries in proportion to the number of vacancies in each. The order of precedence in making appointments should be: 1st, Ordained ministers; 2nd, Probationers; 3rd, Theological students; 4th, Literary Students; 5th, Catechists. If a little judicious management were used in appointing the ministers who are somewhat aged and infirm, to easy appointments where they would have only two services in the day, not more than four or five miles apart, many ministers on the aged and infirm list could fill them and the A. and I. Ministers' Fund would be to some extent relieved. If this system were adopted and judiciously worked, the Presbyterian Church would be in the same position as the Methodist and English Churches. There would be neither vacant churches nor ministers without charges, and this pitiable spectacle of ministers, simply because they are upwards of fifty, turned out to dig, or beg, or starve, or live on the charity of friends, or go into some kind of employment for which the life of a clergyman has unfitted them. Congregations would have constant supply and would not get divided over the choice between different so-called candidates. Congregations would, however, have a larger choice than under the present system. They could, through their representative elder, who is a member of Presbytery, have as much of a choice in their supply as in the present system of calling, with this advantage that at the end of any year, if their supply should prove unacceptable, they would have only to say so and they could obtain relief without the painful necessity of starving him out.

This system should not apply to settled charges, but as soon as a pastorate was dissolved both minister and congregation would come under this regulation. A minister who had ample opportunity of judging gave it as his opinion that a majority of the ministers in settled charges would prefer a change if they could be transferred without trouble to other charges. An equal proportion of congregations would no doubt welcome a change if it could be effected without the disagreeable necessity of asking their minister to resign or of starving him out.

If the next General Assembly could spare a little time to make those few simple changes, it would be a great boon to both churches and ministers.

Yours truly,  
D. McNAUGHTON.

Rev. A. B. Simpson of the *Christian Alliance*, New York, under the heading "Wanted," asks for volunteers for the foreign field. He says: "We have many candidates on our lists, but we want God to put it into the hearts of His chosen ones to offer themselves for the fields which at present so much need reinforcements. We want several for Thibet, men and women who can 'endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ.' We want half a dozen for Southern China. We have two accepted workers, but we want four more young men of the strongest type, and better who have some experience in Christian work. We specially want men 'who count not their lives dear unto themselves, that they may finish their course and the ministry which they shall receive of the Lord Jesus Christ.' We want two or three brave, wise, consecrated volunteers in Anam; men who can speak French preferred; and in any case, they will have to learn this language. We want a party for Malaysia and the islands and shores of South-Eastern Asia. For all these fields, we have a nucleus already, but we want to make up small parties, and we ask our readers to make it a subject of special prayer that God will choose the workers and that we shall make no mistake."

REV. ALEX. GILRAY, 91 Bellevue avenue, Toronto, has used Acetocura for eighteen years and recommends it for colds, sore throat and indigestion.

## Christian Endeavor.

### OUR BIRTHRIGHTS AND HOW THEY ARE LOST.

REV. W. S. McTAVISH, D.D., ST. GEORGE.

March 4.—Rom. viii, 12-17; 31-39.

Under the Law of Moses certain birthright blessings belonged to the eldest son in the family. It is not certain that he was regarded as a priest in the family, though some of the Rabbis taught that he was. It is certain, however, that he was highly honoured; that he had considerable authority and that he inherited a double portion of his father's property. But though these privileges came by right of birth they might be lost. Reuben lost his by unfilial conduct; Esau lost his by gratifying a fleshly appetite—he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage (Gen. 35, 24; Heb. 12; 16).

In this country, the first-born in an ordinary family enjoys no special privileges. Why, then, should the topic make mention of birthrights? There are at least two birthrights to which special attention may be directed.

First, Presbyterians believe that the child of Christian parents is born with certain privileges. He is regarded as a child of the church, and from the time of his baptism he is looked upon as a member of the church, though not yet in full communion. This is undoubtedly a great and precious privilege.

But this blessing may be lost. It may be lost through the carelessness of the parents. When parents present a child for baptism they are admonished thus:—"You are to teach him that he is a member of the church, under its care and subject to its discipline. And that when he comes to years of discretion, if he be free from scandal and has sufficient knowledge to discern the Lord's body, and so witness a creditable profession of personal faith, it will be his duty and privilege to come to the Lord's Supper." (Dr. Hodge's Manual of Forms, p. 13). If, then parents neglect this duty, the probability is that the blessings which should have been entailed to their child will be lost. Or if the child himself fails to realize the blessings, fails to recognize his rights, neglects to take advantage of them or declines to be profited by them, they may be lost. If he lives to the flesh he dies to his rights. If he turns his back upon the church he cannot enjoy its privileges.

Second, by the new birth believers come into possession of certain rights which never can be lost. Those rights are theirs forever. They become the sons of God, and the whole arguments of the apostle in this text is calculated to show that the rights and privileges of God's children are secure. When they become sons of God, they also become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ and just as His inheritance is secure, so is theirs. The Holy Spirit bears witness with their spirits that they are the sons of God, and as the Holy Spirit cannot bear witness to what is untrue, their salvation and all its accompanying blessings are guaranteed to them. Moreover, the fact that God has given His Son for their salvation is a pledge and proof that He will give all else that they require. Still further, His love does not change and nothing shall separate them from it. The love which secured their justification will make ample provision for all their needs. They shall be more than conquerors over all their foes, their obstacles and their difficulties. This birthright is as secure as the love of God can make it; moreover the merit, the power and the intercession of Christ are engaged to make it certain.

To the Chinaman the parabolic mould of a great part of the Bible is a puzzle. A Heph Chinaman who had through hearing the missionary's teaching, been led to destroy all his idols and become a diligent student of the Bible, was in a strait about the words "taking up the Cross." He seemed to have thought a great deal about it, and, holding out his arms, he said to the missionary, "Would that size do?" He was thinking he actually required to carry a cross. It was quite a relief to him when he heard that "bearing persecution" was bearing the Cross, for he had been doing that for a long time and was accustomed to it.