

THE ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL UNION.—At the May meeting, Dr. Mackennal was nominated for Secretary. After a debate, a Resolution was carried that a committee should define the duties of the Secretary; and that in the meantime the nomination should stand over. Dr. Herber Evans, of Wales, was elected Chairman for next year on the first ballot. Dr. John Brown is Chairman for this year. The autumnal meeting will be at Southport, second week of October. Concerning their publications, it is reported that 28,555 of "Mission Hymnal" were sold; 68,468 "Church Hymnals"; and 44,703 "Congregational Hymn Books." Dr. Mackennal has since intimated to his church that he will not leave them.

A NICE CALCULATION.—Mr. Black, the efficient Secretary-Treasurer of the Provident Fund, showed by a nice calculation that things are not always as bad as they seem. The Widows and Orphans' Fund lost \$13,000 in 1886, by the collapse of a Loan Society in which it held stock. "A clear loss of \$13,000," says somebody. Not quite. The large dividends the Society had been giving as long as the "times" were good—with interest on the same, for they were put out to interest—reduced that loss by \$8,000. That is, the "extra" interest, over and above what would have accrued from Government debentures and the like, amounted to \$8,000: making the *actual* loss from connection with this Loan Society, \$5,000.

A COMPLAINT.—Complaints were made on every hand, of the extraordinary proportion of ministers who deserted the Union, before the meetings were nearly over. We never saw such a scattering. It is unjust to the Union, to the *treasury* of the Union, and to the kind "hosts" at the place of meeting, who have put themselves to trouble to entertain members—and then they scatter away on Saturday, and some actually on Friday and Thursday. Making allowance for some three members going to England, but remembering several ecclesiastical bodies were sitting, who would gladly have supplied many pulpits—and remembering some well-known brethren who never seem to stay over Sunday—the Union needs a little more firmness in refusing to pay those who merely make a pleasant "call" on the Union for one or two days.

THE BOOK OF JOB.—The basis of the poem is a simple narrative; the body of the work is an argument, a debate; but it is a great deal more than that. The design of the book is not to explain God's providential government in the world, nor is the question as Prof. Delitzsch puts it, "Why does suffering on suffering befall the righteous?" Its artistic unity centres in the *person* rather than in a system of reasoning. It is Job himself, the man Job, who is the solution of the Job-problem. The problem as stated by Satan at the outset is, "Doth Job fear God for naught?" Is there such a thing as whole-souled, self-forgetting service of God, just for His sake and for righteousness' sake? The answer to this question is not so much put in words or made a didactic issue in the poem. It is *lived*. The affirmation is more than any word; it was a life. And the entire poem, therefore, is "the epic of the inner life." Such a life of utter loyalty to God and to duty, no matter what the suffering or the temptation, is possible. It is proved, because it was lived. Who wrote this book nobody knows. It accords best with the self-abnegation of its hero that the author himself should, as it were, have forgotten his own name.—*Advance*.

THIRD CHAPTER OF JONAH.—We note the repentance of God. Mark the recurrence of the word "turn," employed in verses 8, 9 and 10, in reference to men and to God. Mark the bold use of the word "repent," applied to God, which, though it be not applied to the Ninevites in the previous verses, is implied in every line of them. The same expression is found in Exodus xxxii. 14, which may be taken as the classical passage warranting its use. The great truth involved is one that is too often lost sight of in dealing with prophecy; namely, that all God's promises and threatenings are conditional. Jeremiah learned that lesson in the house of the potter, and we need to keep it well in mind. God threatens, precisely in order that He may not have to perform His threatenings. Jonah was sent to Nineveh to cry, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown," in order that it might not be destroyed. What would have been the use of proclaiming the decree, if it had been irreversible? There is an implied "if" in all God's words. "Except ye repent," underlies the most absolute threatenings of evil.—*Alex. McLaren, D.D.*