

Man (the Messiah), reveal the counsels of God for the salvation of man; that is, no one knoweth the counsels of God, but I who came down from Him."

As to the doctrine of the lecture being "a step backward into the darkness," my friendly critic implies that it is not the doctrine of the primitive Church. I acknowledge that the distinction between Paradise and Heaven, which he holds, is of ancient date among Christian writers. The earliest I know of is Papias, bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, who died, it is said, about A.D. 163. His idea of the hereafter of the saints was this: The most worthy went to Heaven, the less worthy to Paradise, and the less worthy to the new Jerusalem on earth; and it is thus we are to understand our Saviour's words, "In my Father's house are many mansions." But I can no more believe this doctrine than I can his alleged interpretation of Is. xi., in which he says: "The days will come when vines will grow, each having ten thousand branches, each branch ten thousand twigs, each twig ten thousand shoots, each shoot ten thousand clusters, in each cluster ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed will yield twenty-five metretres (or ferkins) of wine." I hope for the honour of the Christian episcopate that the writings ascribed to Papias may have been forgeries. Let us turn from such vagaries to more authentic and sober declarations of the faith in the primitive Church. In the anonymous and beautiful epistle to Diognetus, a pagan, written, say the critics, in the Apostles' age, or very little after, the following expressions occur: "God loved mankind * * * to whom He has promised a kingdom in Heaven, and will give it to those who have loved Him. Christians pass their days on earth, but they are citizens of Heaven. The immortal soul dwells in a mortal tabernacle, and Christians dwell as sojourners in corruptible (bodies?), looking for an incorruptible dwelling in the Heavens." Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, a disciple of the Apostle John, in his letter to the Philippians, written about A.D. 150, says: "The blessed Ignatius, Tosimus, Rufus, and others among yourselves, and Paul himself, and the rest of the Apostles * * * have not run in vain, but in faith and righteousness, and are (now) in their due place in the presence of the Lord, with whom they suffered." About the same time that Polycarp suffered martyrdom hundreds of others did; and what did they mean in those days by going into the presence of the Lord? Symphorinus, a young patrician, at Autun, in France, was condemned to be beheaded because he refused to worship the image of Cybele. His mother accompanied him to the place of execution, cheering him with these words: "My son, be firm, and fear not death which so surely leads to life. Look to Him who reigns in Heaven. To-day thy earthly life is not taken from thee, but transformed into the life of Heaven." That hope of going to heaven immediately after death, and of being thus present with the Lord, is expressed again and again in the writings of the uninspired penman who lived in the three or four first centuries of the Church, and who record not only their own personal faith, but also the general faith of the Church. Thus, Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, about the middle of the 3rd century, writes: "But the most joyful festival of all was celebrated by those perfect martyrs who are now feasting in the Heavens," (Euseb. Church History, B. VII., Ch. 22). This faith is also recorded in the earliest Christian tombs in the catacombs of Rome. Thus, about A.D. 188, "Alexander is not dead, but lives above the stars. * * * Christians 'at length sparkle in Heaven.'" When Justen, martyr, with other martyrs, was about to be beheaded (A.D. 165), the prefect asked him, "Do you suppose, then, that you will ascend into Heaven to receive some recompense?" Justen replied, "I do not suppose it, but I know and am fully persuaded of it." Such was the faith of the primitive Church; and that faith is mine until I find good cause to change it.

Yours very truly,
W. J. MACKENZIE.

EXTEMPORE PREACHING.

SIR,—I have stumbled over the two following extracts—because of their importance and interest I send them to you for a place in the DOMINION CHURCHMAN.

The writer in the *English Guardian* further discusses the question of the choice of subjects as follows: "In the choice of subjects it is well to follow some definite rule, in default of this our teaching is sure to become one-sided. Probably the best rule is to follow the services of the Church, &c."

Dr. Blair on the contrary, attributes much of the coldness and rigidity of the French pulpit in the days of Bossuet and Massillon, and of the English pulpit of his day to the same cause, and therefore would persuade us not to select our texts from the lessons, the epistle, or gospel; but to roam over the "volume of the Book" for such words as may suggest a subject suitable to our taste, and therefore the more likely to be handled in the pulpit with telling effect. I am

obliged to trust my memory for these views of the renowned author of "Lectures on Belles Lettres"—having in vain searched for them in his works.

It is much to be desired that our Bishops would open their eyes to the special opportuneness of attention to the cultivation of the art of extempore preaching. It would act just now as a special and enormous additional force for the propulsion of ministerial work; cannot some competent persuasion concentrate his powers on the subject.

J. ALEX. MORRIS.

PULPIT AND ELOQUENCE.

"It has certainly been a great disadvantage that the practice of reading sermons, instead of repeating them from memory, has prevailed in England. This may indeed, have introduced accuracy; but it has done great prejudice to eloquence, for a discourse read is far inferior to an oration spoken. It leads to a different sort of composition, as well as of delivery; and can never have an equal effect upon any audience."—Blair, modern eloquence lecture.

"The practice of reading sermons is one of the greatest obstacles to the eloquence of the pulpit in Great Britain, where alone this practise prevails. No discourse which is designed to be persuasive can have the same force when read as when spoken. The common people feel this, and their prejudice against this practise is not without foundation in nature; what is gained hereby in point of correctness, is not equal, I apprehend, to what is lost in point of persuasion and force. They whose memories are not able to retain the whole of a discourse, might aid themselves considerably by short notes lying before them which would allow them to preserve in a great measure the freedom and ease of one who speaks."—Blair, *Lecture on Eloquence of the Pulpit*.

"A very good plan for the preparation of our weekly sermons is to choose on the Sunday nights, after the day's work is over, the subjects for the ensuing week-day and Sunday sermons, and after carefully studying the context, and referring to books for such points as may require special elucidation, to let them rest in our minds (simmering them, as Scott described the preparation of his novels) without any other special reading for them. If our minds are well-stored we shall find the thoughts gradually clustering round them and arranging themselves, so as to be ready for production when required."—*London Guardian* for September 14th, '87, page 1376.

PROHIBITION.

SIR.—With all due deference to Uncle Philip, permit me to say, I do not think the attempt to drive the stern nail of prohibition into the head of this demon drink, either unwomanly or unchristian, and I am sure when the wives and mothers of our land have learned the full meaning of the sixth commandment, they will not hesitate to strike the blow in self-defence against the monster, who, by the law of heredity, is causing the slaughter of innocents in our land. We seek to do what our government has done at Niagara, put up the strong fence of prohibition, rather than provide the ambulance waggon for those who shall fall over its cruel cliffs.

JAEI.

[With all deference to our friend "Jael," we think her fence simile defective. If the government were to build up a fence closing up every road leading to Niagara, and were to prevent any person from visiting the Falls, because a few fall into its waters, that would be exactly like the policy of prohibition. We have no objection to fences such as "Jael" speaks of, but to the other policy we object.—Ed D. C.]

CAN GOOD RESULT FROM IT?

SIR,—From a paragraph in the *Canadian Champion*, published at Milton on the 9th inst., it appears that at the recent missionary meeting held at St. George's Church, Lowville, in this diocese, after an address by one of the missionaries there was a magic lantern exhibition and "a collection was taken up for the Algoma mission." Now I am quite sure that the worthy missionaries forming the deputation at that meeting could have had only the best intentions when they took the trouble necessary to carry out the exhibition referred to, and probably the announcement of the same added to the number at the meeting. But can good naturally result from "blessing what the Lord hath not blessed?" Ever since my arrival with my growing up family in this country some years since, the attractions of the different concerts, tea meetings, &c., at the neighbouring Methodist and other meeting-houses, have caused me much difficulty, when, with the dearth of amusement prevalent in our rural neighbourhood, my young people have expressed a wish to attend these entertainments in company with some of their young friends, and I

have had on more than one occasion to speak strongly as to the sin of using a building dedicated to the worship of God and as His "House of Prayer," for any other purpose, even with the best intentions, and now I shall probably in future be placed at the disadvantage of having the proceedings at the Lowville Church missionary meeting quoted against me, and a fresh stumbling-block will be in my way in my endeavour to bring up my children in the way they should go.

Of course, as a layman, I write with all diffidence when making suggestions for the consideration of the clergy; but to me it seems the matter referred to should not be lightly regarded, for was not one of the very few occasions which have been recorded on which the meek and gentle Saviour showed His indignation by strong, visible action, that on which He drove the desecrators even from the outer court of the temple, and that although the money changers and sellers of doves were conducive to the convenience of these worshippers who came from a distance to provide them with offerings and to change their foreign money into the sacred shekel? Should convenience or seeming expediency be allowed to have any weight in the face of such plain and direct teaching by our Lord Himself? Having regard to the lack of reverent conduct evinced by too many of the members of our congregations while in church, does it not behove us all, clergy and laity, to be very careful to do nothing to add fuel to the unholy fire?

Yours Faithfully,

Feb. 11, 1888. LAY DELEGATE NIAGARA SYNOD.

SUNDAY SCHOOL HYMN BOOKS.

SIR,—It may interest "A Country Parson," who, in the last number of the DOMINION CHURCHMAN, asks for "a good Sunday School hymn book, not expensive, and of a good Church tone," to know that in June, 1884, a committee of the Toronto Church S. S. Association, of which the Rev. J. W. Cayley was chairman, examined several different S. S. hymn books, and came to the conclusion that "The Children's Hymn Book," edited by Mrs. Carey Brock, and revised by Bishop Walsham How, Bishop Oxenden, and the Rev. John Ellerton, fulfilled, more nearly than any other, the requirements indicated by your correspondent. It contains 420 hymns, and is published (in paper covers) at 8 or 4 cents a copy. Another very good one is "The Church Sunday School Hymn Book" (Ch. of Eng. S. S. Institute), which contains 364 hymns and costs 4 cents a copy.

Yours truly,

Toronto, Feb. 9th, 1888. C. R. W. BIGGAR.

SKETCH OF LESSON.

2ND SUNDAY IN LENT.

FEB. 26TH, 1888.

Joshua's Parting Counsels.

Passage to be read.—Joshua xxiv. 1-18.

We have seen in former lessons how Joshua, the victorious soldier, by closely following the commands of the real Leader of Israel (chap. xi. 15) had, after five or more years' hard campaigning, conquered the Canaanites. We find him, now after about twenty years of happy home life in his own lands, yearning to give his beloved people some parting words of advice.

I. *The Aged Chief*.—See him, with representatives of each tribe drawn up "before the Lord" (verse 1), ready to address them for the last time. What a venerable old man! How much respected and beloved (compare ch. xvi. 31). It was peculiarly suitable that the meeting should take place at Shechem, Joshua's home, with its many sacred associations (Gen. xii. 6; xxiii. 18, 19; xxxvii. 12, 28; Deut. xi. 29, 30). How solemnly and earnestly he looks upon them! Memory brings up the past. He longs to remind them of what God had done for them; he wishes them not to forget God; he wants to warn them; he remembers how often they had fallen away.

II. *The Chief's Address*.—He talks to them of the past, not boasting of what he or they had done, but telling what God had done for them. Their victories had not been "by their sword or their bow" (v. 12). Compare Psalm xlv. 8. Like a beautiful word-painting, as if he said, "Look on this, and find, in God's dealings with you, strong reasons for remaining true to Him." See his advice (v. 14). But he does more than advise: he warns (v. 19, 20). The service of the lip, or of the knee, might do, if they worshipped idols; but not for the Lord Jehovah. He must be served "in sincerity and truth," i.e., with an undivided heart, in sincerity and truth. Then he re-dedicates himself to God (v. 15).

III. *The People's Resolve*.—The enthusiasm of Joshua is caught by the people. Read their determination (v. 21-24). Joshua would not have been a true minister of God if he had not sounded the note of danger (v. 19). He reminds them of the covenant between them and God! and that it depended on their performance of their side of the agreement. The