

## Our Contributors.

### A NEW AND BURNING QUESTION.

BY KNOXIAN.

Our Methodist friends struck a question in one or two of their Conferences that will stand a little discussion outside of Methodist circles. It is not specially a Methodist question. The General Assembly may pass on it, though it is just as likely as not that the Supreme Court may pass by it with dignified and silent indifference. The question we allude to is that of

#### PRECEDENCE.

Soon after Confederation somebody drew up a Table of Precedence, which regulates the order in which distinguished Canadians must march past on great occasions, such as vice-regal receptions and other high affairs of that kind. According to this table the Governor-General heads the procession, and is followed by the Lieut.-Governors, Archbishops and bishops, the military, the judges of the Supreme Court, senators and members of the House of Commons and various other people more or less distinguished. As the Roman Catholic Church is the only one that has an archbishop, their man gets in near the head of the procession on state occasions, and the other denominations, with the exception of the Anglican, are left out in the cold, or have to straggle along in the rear. Dr. Douglas puts the matter in this way—

The Doctor expressed his indignation at the existence of this precedence, which emanated from Downing Street, on the basis of the union of Church and State, and was covertly manipulated so that the Roman Catholic clergy might have precedence, because there were in Canada archbishops in only one Church, and the consequence was that Romanism was first at the vice-regal residence, first at presentations in the city of Toronto, first in Halifax, and no Methodist or Presbyterian clergymen had any show unless they came as poor poodles in the train of the hierarchy. (Cheers.) If Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists or Baptists dared to go to any public reception they must discredit their manhood and dishonour the Church to which they belonged.

Dr. Douglas is of the opinion that the Table of Precedence emanated from Downing Street, and was drawn up on State Church principles. Is the venerable Doctor quite certain that the offensive table was not drawn up by Mowat? Be that as it may, the table is a standing insult to every Protestant in the Dominion not an Anglican, who does not treat such matters with contempt. If Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationalist and Baptist ministers cannot go to any public reception unless they march as "poor poodles in the train of the hierarchy," let them keep away from such shows and attend to their Master's business. How much does the real welfare of any Church depend on the place that its official head occupies in a state pageant at Ottawa? General Superintendent Carman describes Ottawa as a political Sodom. Would Abraham have contended for a prominent place among the Sodomites? Would Paul? Would Paul's Master? Lot pitched his tent toward Sodom, and after a time got a prominent place in the city, but he and his family paid dearly for all the honour they got by moving in Sodom society. How much would Methodism gain if Superintendent Carman walked side by side with the Archbishop of Quebec? Of what advantage would it be to Presbyterianism if Moderator Laing took the arm of Premier Mercier? Viewed from a practical standpoint, the whole thing is a screaming farce.

Theoretically our Methodist friends are right. The Table of Precedence is offensive. If noticed at all, it should be changed or abolished. There is no State Church in Canada and no denomination should have precedence. If the official heads of Protestant Churches cannot take part in state ceremonies without injuring their self-respect, they should maintain their self-respect by staying away. The Churches they represent would not lose anything if their official men took no part in such proceedings. Church prosperity does not depend on the order in which church officials march to salute a worldly dignitary who may perhaps have broken the Fourth Commandment by travelling on the preceding Sabbath. Still the Table of Precedence is offensive, and Protestants should not be annoyed by seeing a Catholic prelate thrust before them on every state occasion. The arrangement is all the more offensive if, as Dr. Douglas affirms, it was covertly made with a view to keeping the hierarchy in the foreground. These are not the times when it is politic or safe to assign representative Protestant ministers the place of "poodles" in any kind of a pageant, however unimportant the show may be.

Candidly, however, there is a little difficulty in arranging such matters to please everybody. Somebody must go first, and somebody must come last. There must be a front and a rear in every procession. How would it do to arrange the representatives of the different churches in a line and march them up abreast. General Middleton might take command. How would this plan work? Bring the Archbishops, General Superintendents, Moderators, Presidents and all the other clerical dignitaries to a starting point, give them a fair send-off, and let the dignitary who could make the best time get there first.

Perhaps these methods are not sufficiently intellectual. Supposing the official dignitaries be arranged in the order of their preaching power. Let the man who can preach the best sermon head the procession, and the poorest preacher bring up the rear. This arrangement would give the Presbyterians a good chance and keep the Anglicans and Catholics at the tail-end. How would it do to give first place to the best

speaker? Had that been the test last year the Presbyterian Church would have had precedence every time.

A competition in Homiletics might do very well. Let the man who can make the best sermon-plan in ten minutes take the lead. Were Brother Potts the head of the Methodist Church, Methodism would stand a good chance for precedence in a competition of this kind. Brother Potts is a great sermon-builder, and would run any of our men hard. A homiletic test would put the archbishop at the tail-end, with the Anglican bishop next.

How would an examination in Hebrew do?

It is all very well to smile at these methods of determining who should have the precedence. Tell us how you would arrange the matter yourself. Somebody must go first.

The worst possible method is the one now in operation. The Catholics are put first simply because they are Catholics.

### "PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN GLASS HOUSES."

BY R. D.

Is it not a fact that in this advanced and cultured age, that more mistakes and greater ones are made in manner of conducting the policy of the church than at any former epoch of the Christian world. True, those easy going individuals, who believe in non-denominationalism, will affect to cavil at the sternness and austerity of our Puritan ancestors, but let us give them the praise that is due them. They willingly drew the sword for their belief and feared not death in defending it, and would any of their critics do the same; I think not. While steel flashed and glittered at their assemblies, these were not places where men were religiously white-washed and their evil deeds condoned in conference.

Of all the errors perpetrated to-day, that of the unbrotherly treatment of strangers is often productive of the most harm. How often do we see them used in a way that is most contemptible. Let anyone go to one of our city churches and unless clothed in scarlet and fine linen the chances of obtaining a decent seat are few. Those of us who may not possess the above requisites for entrance into the charmed circles are allowed a choice of contracting pneumonia near the widely open door, or of gently but successfully dislocating our necks in a front seat trying almost vainly to see the pastor. Surely mere clothes ought not to be the insignia of a churchgoer. In this connection have you ever noticed how acutely the usher can estimate the value and judge of the cut of your clothes and how very nicely he graduates your sitting accordingly. Have you ever been told—and for no other reason than that you had on a rough tweed suit, that the gallery was the place for you? I have, and that in the city of Toronto.

It is a most interesting scientific sight to watch the blue blood of one of these noble ushers slowly congeal in their veins when some poorly but neatly dressed person ignores that broad hint about the gallery and insists on sitting in the centre of the church.

Again, how often is the decorum and sense of solemnity of the audience been startled by the conduct of and in the choir. In one of our churches, not so very long ago, the occupants of the several pews in the front only caught fragmentary portions of the sermon but heard in full the episodes of the entire week discussed with a vivacity which can only be excelled by the talk of a Woman's Suffrage meeting. Is a choir given seats in a prominent place to show what they have on and to show their want of respect for the edifice they are supposed to adorn, or is it to aid in the services? What think you?

Is there a church to-day in all Canada whose fair record has not been stained and scarred by the operations of some little narrow-minded clique? These few who so often rule an entire church in a way that makes an honest man grow sick. These are those select people who discuss every new arrival and assign to them their social position. They note the number of your servants, what season your hat was made in, and doubtless issue a circular as to the probable cost of your furniture, the prices of which would make a second-hand dealer go wild with joy. Unsociability is their natural element. Manliness, honesty and every other good quality goes by the board when they approach. They will receive you with open arms if you have made a lot of money in soap or in a distillery, but otherwise you are outside their social pale.

There is abroad in the land one of the strangest delusions that has ever had the nerve to appeal to the public for sympathy. I refer to those misguided weaklings who ape the strange doctrines of Christian science. These are they who believe themselves to be sinless and stainless, but think it no crime to slander their more honest neighbours when and wherever a chance avails them. They undoubtedly work miracles among themselves but never give any benefit to the public at large. They can cure everything but their own biased and unbalanced minds. Truly the serpent which entered into Eden was a more desirable creature than one of these.

One more person deserves a place here. I refer to that immaculate creature known as Mrs. Falseface, from whose shoulders the mantle of piety (?) descends in such heavy folds. Her husband is of the crank species and she to cover his mental deficiencies and ill manners airs herself as a martyr. While she addresses you, you are made to believe that the world don't contain many like you, but if you are wise you won't fix that idea too strongly in your head, for the moment you turn your back, your character, nay, your everything gets a scouring that would do credit to a steam laundry; you are heralded all over the place as no Christian although you

would not treat a dog the way this delectable creature and her dear "in company only" husband treat their children. Why should I say more. You, my friend, have been there as well as I.

### A LETTER OF THANKS.

MR. EDITOR,—On the eve of my departure for India, the many friends I have met since I returned to Canada in September last would like to know what success has attended my appeals for more workers in Ahmednagar. With your permission I will report briefly. I have visited churches east as far as Montreal and west to Chatham, with the main object of finding recruits. A secondary one has been the collecting of funds necessary to sustain them in the field and to carry on their work. I have delivered since December 1st over eighty addresses in different places, with, I regret to say, little result in the way of raising funds. In fact I believe the impression prevails in some quarters that the American Board pays my railway fares as some congregations neglected to offer anything for expenses even.

Individuals, however, have paid and promised a few scholarships for our school, and something has been done to help the work for women. As one gentleman wrote me last night, "As a result of your appeal we have subscribed in our congregation the salary of a missionary but 'Ireland for the Irish' rules here, and we must pay it to some one connected with our own church." I am thankful for increased liberality in Foreign Mission work, but of course regret that the "machine" controls in religion as well as in politics. To those who have given us practical proof of their interest in the work in Ahmednagar, I now desire to convey my best thanks, and would ask them and others who may intend to contribute to send what they may wish to give to Mr. D. J. McIntyre, Lindsay, who will forward to me.

A meeting was held in Boston on Friday, June 13th, to bid farewell to thirty-one missionaries of the American Board, all now leaving for their respective fields. Of these, twenty-two were recently appointed and are going out for the first time. This is the first party this year and will be followed by several others as many more are under appointment and are to sail later on in the season. With us there are to sail from Montreal, June 24th, Miss Belle Nugent, of Lindsay, and Miss Jean P. Gordon, of London, Ont. We are to be followed in a couple of months by Rev. Corliss W. Lay, B.A., and Mrs. Lay. The ladies of the party are to engage in work for women with Mrs. Smith who will be relieved from the work of the school and college by Mr. Lay. Mr. and Mrs. Lay are Americans from Chicago.

Fare you well, dear sir, and fare you well, kind friends all. Give us a hand now and again. Remember the world does not move so fast out in India as it does here in Canada, and we have more than we can do to keep up with you at the speed you put on. Don't forget us entirely and we shall try to quicken our gait.

JAMES SMITH.

Canmington, Ont., June 17, 1890.

### PROBATIONERS' COMMITTEE.

MR. EDITOR, One of our Synods has adopted and ordered for transmission to the Assembly, an overture to abolish the Committee on Distribution of Probationers, on the ground that the scheme is difficult to work. Now I would like to ask if we are to abolish every scheme which is difficult to work, how many schemes would we have left? Is the Augmentation, the Home Mission, Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund or any other scheme very easy to work? Have we all done our duty instinctively and cheerfully if not they ought to be abolished on the principles of the overture referred to above. My humble opinion is that the scheme under the direction of Dr. Laidlaw and his colleagues has served us well and is continually doing good in spite of the undeniable difficulties in the way and it would be almost a piece of sacrilege to touch the scheme which has done so much for probationers and vacancies. Let Presbyteries be loyal to the instructions of the Assembly which they could easily be and the difficulties would vanish. Two difficulties, however, would remain; first, the committee would still be unable to send every probationer to the best vacancy at once and to supply every vacancy with the best probationer the same day. My earnest wish and prayer is that the Assembly would be led to help the committee instead of discontinuing it. G. B.

May 23, 1890.

IN Constantinople, the city where Mohammedanism has so long held sway, there are now 145 Christian churches, fourteen of these being Protestant. In the very heart of the Turkish Empire Mohammedanism is thus being gradually undermined.

THE Rev. George Dana Boardman, early in his pastoral life, projected the plan of a weekly consecutive study of the whole Bible. In pursuance of this plan, he has gone through every part of it, from Genesis to Revelation. The lectures averaged in the delivery fifty minutes. Had a stenographer recorded each study *verbatim*, the lectures if printed would make sixty four duodecimo volumes of fresh exegetical matter. The title of these lectures have been printed as possible help to young pastors in their efforts to study the Bible systematically.