

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

to establish certain legal and moral obligations from the husband to the wife, chiefly support, protection, love and co-habitation. In India the ablest Christian jurists have maintained the validity of such marriages, and the refusal to acknowledge it would be felt to be such a judicial outrage, that it might easily issue in evils far worse than polygamy, with such a sanguinary revolt of an outraged people as would cause men to forget the fearful days of 1857." Because this, or some such, result would follow from denying the validity of such marriages, the answer to the practical question which a polygamist convert in India has to face, namely, "Is he by the mere fact of his conversion to Christianity absolved from a contract of marriage, which, by general consent, has been binding upon him up to that date?" must be, "No, he is not absolved from it." If then one is satisfied that a man in such a relation may be a true Christian, which is admitted by those opposed to their baptism, by what right can he consistently be refused baptism?

The next point referred to by Dr. Kellogg is the principle admitted in the New Testament as well as the Old, that "when duty is uncertain, and especially when the moral evils resulting from the immediate and unconditional abolition of a wrong, will probably be greater than those attending its temporary toleration, it may be duty in the final interest of the highest righteousness to tolerate the wrong for a time." The toleration of slavery and the conduct of Paul with regard to it are referred to as cases in point, and justify the application of the principle now to polygamist converts.

The practical question arises, which marriage shall alone be considered valid? The prompt and ready answer will be, only the first. But even this is not so clear to those who are face to face with the facts, for the element of consent was wanting in this marriage from its having been contracted in infancy or childhood. But it may be answered that the Scripture nowhere even hints that the consent of the parties is necessary to the validity of marriage, and if the Church insists on recognizing only this first marriage, it then lends its moral support to the atrocious system of child marriage. Again, the reason for a second marriage in the great majority of cases among the Hindus is found in the childlessness of the first, so that, casting off all wives but the first would involve casting off also the children, and so inflicting the greatest possible amount of injustice and wrong upon the innocent, and exposing besides the cast off woman to the strongest temptation to live an immoral life. "If," says Dr. Kellogg "there is a law against polygamy, is there not also a law against these things even more explicit and indubitable?"

If it be proposed as a solution, "Let the convert support the wife put away," this will not meet the case, for according to British law in India, "a Hindu wife or wives can claim full restitution of all marital rights (including cohabitation, domicile and support) from the husband who has become a convert to Christianity." Then again how is a Christian parent, if he puts away his children, to discharge one of his first duties to them, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? If admission to the Church be denied to a polygamist convert for the good of the Church, lest his presence should cause one of Christ's little ones to stumble, it may be asked, will it not certainly cause him to be made weak and stumble to withhold from him the means of grace to be found in the sacraments? and does it not also introduce a new and dangerous condition of membership, one which might easily lead to intolerable tyranny, to keep out of the Church, for what is thought to be its good, one whose love and fidelity to Christ we cannot doubt? Seeing these and other difficulties arise from the refusal to baptize such converts, is not this a case in which the principle of temporary toleration of an admitted wrong, in order to avoid a greater wrong may apply? The Synod of India referred to already thought so, when it felt itself compelled to say in substance.

"However much we may regret the presence of polygamy in a transitional state of the Church, yet according to the law of our Church, which declares a credible profession of faith and love to Christ to be the sole Scriptural condition of Church membership, and much more according to the teaching of the New Testament as bearing upon duty in such a case, we think that, if we see good reason to believe that the Lord has received a polygamist convert, we ourselves also are bound, without insisting on aught beyond this credible profession of faith, to baptize him."

The presentation of the case from the New Testament point of view must be reserved till next week.

BEFORE another issue of THE CANADA-PRESBYTERIAN reaches our readers the General Assembly will have convened in this city. We bespeak on its behalf the prayers of our congregations and Christian people that the Great Head of the Church may so guide and direct the members, that the result of the meeting may be the furtherance of God's glory and the advancement of the Church's work in all its interests.

The reports to be submitted will, generally, be of an encouraging nature, showing marked progress during the year. The membership of the Church has considerably increased, and the contributions for mission work are a good deal in advance of the preceding year, and that notwithstanding the long continued period of commercial depression. The Home Mission Committee, Western Section, ends the year with a good balance on the right side, so also do the Augmentation Committee and the French Evangelization Board. The only mission fund behind is that of the Foreign Mission Committee, and it is gratifying to know that this is not because of a falling off in the contributions of the Church, for these are in excess of the preceding year. It is hoped that the deficit in this fund may be made good before the Assembly closes.

The reports of the several Colleges will indicate continued prosperity, and the contributions of the Church for their maintenance will be found to be in advance of last year. In some of these, as well as in connection with other schemes, dependent to a certain extent on income from endowments, there has been a diminution in revenue. It is known that during the last two or three years a number of mortgages held in connection with the Toronto agency of the Church have been foreclosed, and that several properties, on which loans were made, have fallen into the hands of the Church. In some instances, we believe, the property is vacant land or is without tenants, so that instead of being a source of revenue these properties are a loss to the Church, as taxes, repairs, etc., require to be paid on them. The Church, however, is not alone in this respect, as nearly all companies and individuals loaning money in Toronto during the past few years have suffered loss, owing to the great shrinkage in value of real estate, and to the inability of borrowers to meet their engagements because of the unexampled period of depression. In addition to this, the rate of interest on investments has greatly fallen off in recent years, materially impairing the revenue of some of the schemes of the Church. It is hoped, however, that with returning business prosperity and with judicious management the losses may be less serious than now appears likely.

One of the most discouraging features in connection with the work of the Church is the large number of congregations that fail to contribute to one or more of the schemes every year. On ministers and sessions the responsibility of this largely rests. It would be well if every Presbytery, at its first meeting after the Assembly, enquired into this with a view to having the matter remedied. In congregations where money for the schemes is raised by means of an annual Sabbath collection for each, one or more of these is crowded out often because the first three months of the church year are allowed to pass by without one being taken. During the remaining part of the year were a collection for every scheme taken they would come with too great frequency, and as a consequence one or more is omitted. This means the loss of many thousands of dollars to the work of the Church. We have just entered upon a new church year. Let every minister and session see to it that their congregation has the opportunity given to it of contributing to every scheme of the Church this year. Let the collections be systematically arranged and the claims of the respective schemes presented from the pulpit on the Sabbath immediately preceding the collection. We are convinced that by a little forethought and trouble the income of the schemes of the Church could be increased by tens of thousands of dollars without any of our people being perceptibly poorer. We trust that at the approaching meeting of the General Assembly a great impetus will be given to every department of the Church's work.

The man who will not improve his chance is bound to lose it, no matter whether it has to do with seeking salvation or making a fortune.

## Books and Magazines.

"Some of Canada's Troubles and a Way Out: the Panacea in a Nut Shell," by Robert Douglass, Wroxeter, discusses in a very brief compass, "The Land Question," largely from a Scriptural point of view; "The Money Question," and "The Taxation Question," all of which are of the most importance. It will well repay reading and can be had from all booksellers. Price 10 cents.

"The Literary Digest" contains the departments, "Topics of the Day," "Letters and Art," "Science," "The Religious World," "From Foreign Lands," "Miscellaneous," and in every one of them is to be found much of present and importance which every intelligent man would like to know about. It contains a good bird's-eye view of recent thought as reflected in current literature. [Funk and Wagnall's Company, 30 Lafayette Place, New York, U.S.]

"Littell's Living Age" for May 23rd contains a series of most interesting articles from *Blackwood's Magazine*, *Temple Bar*, *the Contemporary Review*, *Macmillan's Magazine*, *Nineteenth Century*, *Gentleman's Magazine* and *La Revue Scientifique*. Some of the topics treated are "A Heroine of the Renaissance" by Helen Zimmern, "The Irish Priesthood," "The Forty Days," "Sir Robert Peel." A lighter sketch is "A Dullish Angel." [Littell & Co., Bedford St., Boston, Mass., U. S.]

The June *Homiletic Review* resumes in its first article, "Natural Facts Illustrative of the Biblical Account of the Deluge," by Sir William Dawson. Rev. Dr. Burr, author of "Ecce Coelum," discusses the interesting subject, "How far are Men Responsible for Errors of Opinion?" "A Symposium on the Christian Endeavor Movement" is begun by the Rev. F. E. Clarke, D.D. Professor McCurdy writes on "Light on Scriptural Texts from Recent Science and History." In the Sermonic Section three sermons are given in full. Among other sections, the Illustrative, the School of Bible Study, the Social, and School for Social Study are valuable and helpful. [Funk and Wagnall's Company, 30 Lafayette Place, New York, U. S.]

In the *Century* for June there are continued the now well-known and monthly expected portions of "Sir George Trevelyan," and Sloane's "Life of Napoleon Bonaparte." There is also a second paper by that acute observer James Bryce, M.P., giving his "Impressions of South Africa" and Part II. of "The Harshaw Bride." Articles specially interesting from an artistic point of view are, "Sargent and his Painting" and "Lights and Shadows of the Alhambra," both profusely illustrated. "Mr. Keegans Elopement" and "Sayings and Doings of the Todds" are in lighter vein, and "Notes on City Government in St. Louis" is a valuable article. "The Humour and Pathos of Presidential Conventions" is timely and so also is the first article in Topics of the Time on "Gold the Money of Civilization." [The Century Co., New York, U. S.]

The June *Arena* contains as frontispiece a likeness of the poet Whittier, and also an article upon him by the editor under the title of "A Prophet of Freedom." Whittier is a noble subject. The first article is by Rev. Dr. Barrows, "Celsus, the First Pagan Critic of Christianity, and His Anticipation of Modern Thought." Important articles on current, political or commercial subjects are: "The Direct Legislation Movement and its Leaders," "A National Platform for the American Independents of 1896," "The Telegraph Monopoly," Part VI., "Bimetallism," "Monopoly and the Mines of Minnesota," "The Land of the Noonday Sun," "Mexico in Mid-Winter" is continued with illustrations. "The Valley Path," and "Between Two Worlds," the latter to go on throughout this volume, are continued. In Notes by the Editor and the closing pages are to be found much interesting matter. [The Arena Publishing Company, Boston, Mass., U. S.]

*Harper's Magazine* for June contains the concluding part, with five illustrations and a map, of "The German Struggle for Liberty." Another special feature, with illustrations, is "A Visit to Athens," by Bishop William Creswell Donne, D.D. Fully illustrated articles are "Queen Lokeria, of Grolwka," "The Greatest Painter of Modern Germany," "Adolf Menzel," "Through Island Waters," "The Ouananiche and its Canadian Environment," in which is enthusiastically described the home of the fresh-water salmon. "The Battle of the Cells" is a popular discussion of the germ theory of disease by Dr. Andrew Wilson. The fiction of the number includes the first part of "A Rebellious Heroine," "Evelina's Garden," "A Wall-Street Wooing," a New York love story, and "The Thanks of the Municipality." The poems of the number include "The Sea," "Præterita," "Lip Service." Charles Dudley Warner in the Editor's Study is fresh as usual, and the Editor's Drawer is introduced with a short story by Laurence Hutton called "The Lost Label." [Harper Brothers, New York, U. S.]

An article of surpassing interest by a most competent observer, Mr. Henry Norman, who lately visited the region. "In the Balkans—the Chessboard of Europe," appears in the current number of *Scribner's Magazine*. Mr. Norman's article is a clear presentation of the exact situation of the whole Eastern question as it appears at the present moment to a trained observer. Abundant illustrations of the picturesque countries visited are made from Mr. Norman's own photographs. The second and concluding paper by Mrs. Isobel Strong gives reminiscences of Robert Louis Stevenson in his Home Life. Hamilton Busbey concludes his account of "The Evolution of the Trotting Horse" with illustrations which for the first time show all the arts of modern photography. Lieutenant Harry O. Hale, of the regular Army, has a most spirited account of hunting in the Rocky Mountains. The narrative is full of color and adventure. In fiction this issue has many novel features. A story in a new field by a new name is "The Captor of Old Pontomoc," by Mary T. Earle. It is a dramatic tale of life on a Southern bayou. Poems by Emily Dickinson, Edith Thomas, and others, with the departments, fully illustrated, conclude the issue. [Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, U.S.]