

THE
CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

TORONTO, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 2nd, 1879.

THE MONEY QUESTION.

IT will be seen at once that the subject we now bring before our readers is intensely practical. It deals with the sinews of war. It has to do with the passing of our Supply Bill for another year.

It is, or ought to be, a well known fact to all Canadian Congregationalists that within the next six months two important collections are to be taken up among the churches, and the sooner one of them is taken the better, so as to keep it from indecently crowding on the heels of the other. These collections are for the College and the Missionary Society. There are other institutions of a general character to be supported, but the two just named are beyond all comparison the most important. Upon their efficiency depend very largely our ranking and our success as a section of Christ's Church. If we keep them sound and prosperous, then there is good hope for us. If we allow them to languish, it will be to our own most grievous loss.

Our poverty of means arises not so much from lack of resources, as from lack of energy in developing the resources that we have. We are in the case, not of the man who has no water on his farm, but of the man who having abundance won't dig deep enough to get it. There is no doubt whatever that the Congregationalists of Canada are wealthy enough to keep all their institutions not merely above water, but in good sailing trim. The trouble is to get at the money. Especially is this so with the College. A glance at the statistics for Ontario and Quebec as contained in the Year Book for 1878-79, gives the following results: churches, 93; churches contributing, to the College, 47; total amount contributed, \$2,360.98. A further glance reveals that of this amount \$1,752.67 comes out of six churches, leaving \$508.31 to represent the contributions of forty-one churches. This is certainly a startling position of affairs, forty-one Congregational churches giving among them only \$508.31, and forty-six giving nothing at all towards securing that which has even been the darling heritage of Congregationalism—an educated ministry. Does it not almost seem as if the Ichabod of departed glory were written in shameful letters above the gates of our Zion?

It is not our intention however to speak despondingly, but rather to sound the bugle for a grander rally this coming winter. This much is certain, that unless the pastors of our churches take up the signal and pass it on, it will not stir the hearts of the people as it might. Every minister should with all the emphasis and eloquence he can command instruct his congregation in this matter, and we can only hope that if he neglects his duty he

will be pushed aside by some energetic deacon or treasurer more plentifully endowed with an almost forgotten Christian grace, viz., public spirit. We are well aware that raising money is not a pleasant task for a minister. Stingy people growl. Silly people sneer. Stupid people think of themselves as a patient in a dentist's chair, and complacently congratulate themselves that they are so meek under the hands of the operator—the minister. All this is unpleasant, and all this must be encountered. But he is a pigmy-spirited man who can't face a little unpleasantness. A true soldier thinks not of pleasure, but of duty. A true minister asks, not what do I like best, but "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" In the name of Him who is our Lord, we call upon ministers and churches to make this year of giving head and shoulders above all the years preceding. If this be done, we need not be surprised if, as in some churches, the benediction come right after the collection.

Correspondence.

THE REV. MR. HAWES AND WESLEY CHURCH, MONTREAL.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

In the issue of the INDEPENDENT for September 18th appears a letter from Rev. J. B. Hawes, on "The Fellowship of the Churches." With the general tenor of the letter, I am in hearty sympathy. There is a belief which distinguishes Christianity from every other form of religion. This belief can be expressed, and should have due influence in determining the fellowship of the churches, provided always that it is the belief, not of a party, but of all truly Christian souls, whose common piety must arise from common convictions. No church has "the right to believe what she pleases," but only what facts warrant. No church has a right to receive or reject members solely on the ground of their being "agreeable" or disagreeable "to herself;" and no church has any right "to ordain or install as her pastor whoever she likes, irrespective of his moral and Christian character." I am not aware of any church in Canada that claims such rights. Churches submit, in such matters, to what at least appears to them to be the principles of the Head of the Church.

With Mr. Hawes, I am disposed to place more importance on the body of Christians than some do. A rope of sand is not the true symbol of Christ's Church. There is a body, having rights as imperative as those of the individual; but it is one body, not many bodies. It is true, there is apostolic warrant for regarding some circumstances as binding men and churches not to confer "with flesh and blood," but to go straight to the Master's work; yet no wise man or wise church would allow any but the most extraordinary circumstances to lead him or it into voluntary isolation from the other members of the universal body. To this extent, if I understand Mr. Hawes, we agree.

When, however, he drags me and my church forward as examples of the very opposite principles, I must ask by what authority he does so. I assume that he would not willingly misrepresent any one; yet I cannot but ask, who constituted him the public exponent of the aims and position of Wesley Church and its pastor?

Least silence on my part should be construed into acceptance of the position he assigns us, may I call attention to some facts which will define our true position?

Wesley Church derives its legal existence, and its pastor his legal recognition, from the law of 1834 introduced into Parliament by Rev. Dr. Wilkes, for the founding of orthodox Congregational churches; and we are bound by the responsibilities which that law

imposes. When I can find no standing in an orthodox and evangelical church, I shall abandon the ministry for ever. "Wesley Congregational Church" is no mere a separatist name than "Calvary Congregational," or "Zion Congregational," or "Emmanuel Congregational," or any other name which an individual congregation may assume. Such being the case, the remarks of Mr. Hawes are unjustifiable, and demand retraction.

On what authority does he represent my church as claiming "the right to decide its own articles of faith and polity, whether orthodox or unorthodox, congregational or uncongregational?" Is not the position we have assumed before the law a refutation of that? What right has he to include Wesley Church amongst those which "have no denominational connection and are therefore subject to no denominational restrictions relative to faith or polity?" We have been publicly welcomed into the fellowship of Congregational churches, and stand on the same ground as other congregations of that order. When Mr. Hawes says that Wesley Church "may believe in the Trinity or reject it. They may hold to a scriptural eschatology, restoration or annihilationism," if he means that members of the Church are not excommunicated for untrue opinions, so long as their piety is satisfactory, is the remark not applicable to Methodist and Presbyterian churches also, without any disgrace attaching to them from it? If he means that the Trinity may be denied in the pulpit, and unscriptural views on other points be therein proclaimed, what Trinity does he mean? Is it the Athanasian Trinity? I am not aware that Congregationalism necessitates the adoption of the Athanasian creed. Is it the Trinity of the so-called "Orthodox Greek Church," the third member of which has a different procession from that of the Athanasian Trinity? I did not know that Congregational orthodoxy and Greek orthodoxy were identical. Is it the Trinity of the Scriptures, which is nowhere stated philosophically, which awaits further knowledge of the mysteries of life and being before it can be philosophically stated, but which is apparent to Christian spiritual experience? Then, did Mr. Hawes, before penning his gratuitous representation of a church with which he has no connection, read in the published rules of Wesley Church that one ground on which the pastor may be deposed is, not merely the "contradiction," but "the habitual ignoring of the doctrines" of the Scriptures? When any church ceases to deny the Trinity, and when it rather asserts it as Scriptural, that church ceases to be Unitarian in any sense in which the term may not designate all Christians, since all hold to one God and one only. Such a church maintains the fundamental fact, even if its attempt to state that fact intelligently may not harmonize with tradition, or if its conceptions of that fact may be far short of the reality. If, then, the very law by which the pastor of Wesley Church holds his authority, and must ever hold his authority, to perform marriages and keep civil registers binds him to orthodox Congregationalism, and if his rules bind him to avoid even the ignoring of any Scriptural doctrines, by what right does a stranger spread through the press statements that act like "firebrands, arrows and death," without even the extenuating plea: "Am not I in sport?"

Churches are kept true in doctrine, not so much by ecclesiastical connexionalism and dogmatic pledges, as by piety, regard for long-enduring public Christian thought, loyalty to Christ, and not least by the deference which grateful hearts ever pay to the opinions of those who treat them justly and kindly. Churches are driven into false doctrine by reaction from unsympathetic injustice far more than by independency.

Many more than Mr. Hawes need to be reminded of these facts; and he will bear with my strictures, I dare say, when I assure him I write not for him alone. Thanking you, Mr. Editor, for your insertion of this letter, I am, etc.,

JAMES ROY.

Montreal, Sept. 20th, 1879.

MANY will hail with great pleasure the announcement of a life of the late Dr. Horace Bushnell, which is to appear soon. It has been written by a daughter of Dr. Bushnell.