

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

PECULIAR BROTHERLY LOVE.

BY KNOXIAN.

It is said that a certain Scotchman on being asked about the orthodoxy of his neighbours gave the following answer: "There's naeboddy soon'd hereaboot but Tonal Ross and mesel, and a'm nae vera sure aboot Tonal." That Scotchman was a model of modesty and Christian charity compared with some of the characters that figure but too prominently in connection with some religious services of a certain type. He was not very sure about his friend "Tonal," but they are absolutely certain that every one who does not attend their meetings and fall in with their methods of working is on the broad road to destruction. Let us assume that services of the kind to which we allude are being held in one of our towns or villages. We need not be too particular about how they originated. Probably one or two ministers, not in any way noted for being more spiritually minded or earnest than their ministerial neighbours, unite in an invitation to a professional Revivalist, and meetings are held. Probably an association of some kind invites the "professional." Not unfrequently the "lay brother" comes unasked, and begins work on his own responsibility, the only intimation of his advent being a Press notice to the effect that Mr. So-and-so, who has been a fellow-labourer with Mr. Moody or some other noted man, has gone to such and such a place to conduct evangelistic services. The meetings begin, and probably a considerable number of people become interested. Perhaps some of the local ministers take part. The "Rounders" are present in great force. The local newspapers probably notice the movement, and aspiring reporters give sensational columns about the "wave of glory" which has struck the locality. As the numbers increase and the interest grows into excitement, a certain class are sure to come to the front and begin to ask why such and such persons are not at the meetings. As the excitement increases this class becomes correspondingly insolent and bitter, and all the religious men in town who do not attend the meetings are declared "unconverted" and "opposed to revivals." After a time it is suspected that one of the town ministers does not support the movement very heartily, and forthwith the entire class pounce upon him. He may be an aged and venerable servant of Christ who has worked long and faithfully for his Master, but what about that as long as he does not attend the meetings. He may have ministered to his people when they were poor and scattered in this new country; he may have led many of them to the Saviour; he may have spent an honoured life in preaching the gospel, helping the poor, and comforting the sick and dying; but as long as he does not go to the "meetings" he must be denounced as opposing the work of the Spirit. The man may be quite conscientious in the course which he pursues, but what business has he to have a conscience? He might even venture to say that he has a right to exercise his own judgment in such matters, but that will not save him from the most bitter and insolent attacks. Of course his judgment is quite inferior to that of the small boy and soft man and gushing sister that are heaping on the abuse. Of course it is. It makes no difference that his record is clean and his name honoured, while the reverse may be true in regard to some of his assailants. A good character and long service count for nothing in this warfare. Probably the noisiest in the crowd have a record somewhat besmirched. Probably they could not say the Lord's Prayer or repeat the Ten Commandments if their lives depended on their doing so; but that is nothing. Perhaps they have never taken the slightest interest in anything of a religious nature before, and may return like the dog to his vomit the week after the meetings are over; but even that makes no difference. No minister however godly, however successful, however learned, however earnest, or however experienced, has a right to differ from them. He may say that he does not approve of their method of working, and he is at once met with the cry, "you're opposed to revivals." Let him hint that he does not like so much excitement, and he is gently reminded "that he is not converted." Should he say that he fears unsound doctrine has been taught, he is blandly informed that "all his life he has been sending souls to hell." If he declines to

meekly do the bidding of the "lay brother," probably that "brother" indulges in some sneers at the "laying on of hands" and puts him down among the "hireling clergy" who care for the fleece and not for the flock. If he ventures to make any inquiries about the past history of the "professional," then let him look out. The past history of some "professionals" is a matter that must not be inquired into, and the man that dares to attempt anything of that kind gets summarily consigned to a locality that need not be named. But consignment to this locality is not the only punishment that awaits him. He must be tortured while here, and the torture is usually of a very excruciating kind. Some of his parishioners have perhaps been attending the "meetings," and a dead set is at once made upon them. They are told that "their minister" is not converted—that he does not preach the gospel—that he is opposed to revivals—that there is no good done in his church—and that he busies himself in sending souls along the broad way. The conceited boys and weak men and gushing sisters in his congregation are waylaid and urged to leave the ministry of a man who cannot preach the gospel, and who sends souls to the bad place. In most cases they leave, but before leaving do all in their power to stir up strife in the congregation. The triumph is complete when the weak brother and gushing sister and small boy walk about among the crowd at the after-meeting exclaiming, "Why is our minister not here?"

Now why in the name of everything that is just and reasonable may a minister not be allowed to exercise his own judgment as well as any other man? Why should his character be maligned and his motives misrepresented because he declines to do the bidding of those who are manifestly his inferiors in piety, prudence, knowledge, and everything else that is good? To abuse a man who has spent his life in preaching the gospel—who has been the honoured instrument in bringing many souls to the Saviour—who has spent perhaps well nigh half a century in helping the weak and the tempted—who has stood by the bedside of the dying, and prayed with hundreds when the spirit was about to depart—to abuse a man who has faithfully and lovingly done all this and a great deal more, simply because he declines to do the bidding of every "ecclesiastical tramp" who may be associated with a few local admirers, is a thing so shameful that one wonders how any one can be found so wicked as to be guilty of such conduct. To do it in the name of religion, yes in the name of "revived" religion, makes the matter worse, as it gives conduct in itself sufficiently vile the additional shade of hypocrisy. Special services when properly conducted may do a great amount of good. Any legitimate movement, though somewhat unusual, that will arouse people to greater interest in their spiritual concerns should be cordially supported. But it should be remembered that while this may be our opinion and the opinion of many of our readers, others may hold different opinions and have an equal right so to do. The man who says, "I am in favour of evangelistic services," has no right to question the motives of his brother who prefers the more usual methods; nor has the minister who engages a professional Revivalist any right to say aught to his brother minister who declines such assistance. The man who goes into a neighbouring congregation and tells the people that their minister is unconverted, or at least not "evangelical" and earnest, because he will not join in any particular movement, is an ecclesiastical foot-pad, and should be treated as such by all respectable people. Really earnest Christian people who wish to advance the cause of Christ, and who believe in using special means occasionally to accomplish that purpose, will always be the first to acknowledge the right of others to differ from them in regard to methods of working. Workers in a genuine revival are warm-hearted, genial and loving; not bitter, fault-finding, conceited and abusive.

THEOLOGICAL DEGREES.

MR. EDITOR,—In my last communication, I endeavoured to answer the question, Is the present movement in regard to Theological Degrees necessary? and having answered that question in the affirmative, it is now in place to consider the second question, Is the plan proposed the wisest course to take to accomplish the end in view?

Various modes of accomplishing the object are possible, and it may be well to look at some of them.

1. The Church might by its own authority, and without any application to the Legislature at all, confer Degrees in Divinity. This it might do by empowering the Senators of the different Colleges respectively, to grant such distinctions, subject to certain restrictions and limitations; or the Assembly might appoint an Examining Board for the whole Church, having power to make such distinctions, on the ground of certain attainments. It does not seem to me that this would be *ultra vires* of mere Church authority. There is this radical distinction between Degrees in Arts and Degrees in Divinity, that the former, when conferred by approved Universities in Canada or Great Britain, have a certain legal value. The possession of a Degree in Arts is necessary in some cases to entitle a man to hold a certain position in the educational system of our country, but Degrees in Divinity, whether academic or honorary, are of no legal value whatever, no matter by what authority they may be conferred. This distinction is a very proper one. Government has a perfect right to demand a guarantee of literary attainments, as a pre-requisite for certain positions; but what has Government to do with Theological attainments? I apprehend, therefore, that if the Church should choose to confer any mark of distinction upon her students, or any mark of honour upon her ministers, it would be nobody's business but her own. Such distinctions in any case, can only be of value in the Church itself. Such an exercise of Church authority would, however, be unexampled, not only in our Church, but in every other branch of the Christian Church; and although that in itself is no sufficient reason for setting it aside, yet to establish such a precedent would not be a very wise thing to do. And, besides, a mere Examining Board appointed by the Church, not being a corporate body, could receive no bequests, and hold no property.

2. Each College might for itself, through the General Assembly, apply to the Legislature for such a modification of its Charter, as to enable it to confer Degrees in Divinity.

It would be quite competent, and quite in place for some of them at least, by permission of the General Assembly, to make such application. This was the position taken by Knox College Board in 1877, and had the authorities of Knox pressed the matter in the Assembly at the time, it would no doubt have been accomplished. There are serious objections, however, to this mode of meeting the case. While it would be quite in place for one or more of our larger institutions to make such application, it would manifestly be quite out of place for all to do so; and for one or two of our larger colleges to have privileges denied to the smaller, would be to place these latter under all the disabilities of which we now complain. The Church cannot fail to appreciate the unselfishness of the authorities of Knox, in abandoning their position of 1877, in order to go in with a scheme more equitable and fair to the other institutions of the Church. Besides, if there were several colleges having the power of conferring Degrees, it would be impossible to secure a uniform standard; for though the same course of study should be prescribed, the Examining Board would be different, and the value of the Degree would differ accordingly. Moreover, it would be impossible to prevent abuses in conferring Honorary Degrees, if several colleges were endowed with such a power. It would be to lodge in the hands of kindred institutions a power of dispersing patronage which would require more than human wisdom to regulate and restrain.

3. The Charter of Queen's College might be so modified, as to allow students from all other Colleges of the Church to obtain Degrees from it. I believe this was spoken of in committee, and it was suggested at last Assembly, as a mode of meeting the case. I do not know in what way, or to what extent, it is proposed to modify the Charter of Queen's, and perhaps nothing definite is yet proposed or decided upon. I suppose the utmost extent to which it could be modified would be, that the Examining Board, or Senate, for the conferring of Degrees in Divinity, might be appointed, in whole or in part, by the Assembly; or that the other Colleges should in some way be represented thereon. Anything farther than that would seem to me, not to be a modification, but a surrendering of the Charter. Well, supposing this accomplished, it would certainly bring Queen's—so far as its Degree-conferring power is concerned—