

## Our Contributors.

### A STARTLING INNOVATION.

BY KNOXONIAN.

There was a startling innovation at the meeting of the Synod in Collingwood last week. What was it?

Let no orthodox man suppose for one moment that there was anything wrong with the doctrine of the Synod. The Synod of Toronto and Kingston is an orthodox body. Nor was there anything astray in the Synod's mode of doing business. No danger of that so long as Dr. Gray is clerk and Dr. Torrance convener of the Synod's business Committee. There esteemed officials have attained unto perfection in the business line.

Some of the discussions in the Synodical Conference were a trifle one-sided but nobody could say that there was any actual heresy in them. The one-sidedness arose mainly from the fact that the men who opened discussion had made proper preparation to discuss the question from their own point of view while the men who tried to say something from other view-points had to extemporize. The men who opened fire had twenty minutes; the other men had five. These conditions are likely to make any discussion seem a little one-sided.

Did the Synod elect a lay Moderator? No. The retiring Moderator's sermon came dangerously near being an innovation. It lifted the members right up, made them feel bright, happy and good natured. Its influence permeated the whole business of the Synod and was a potent factor in making the meeting an exceedingly enjoyable one. A Moderator's sermon that produces such results comes very near being an innovation.

We often hear about innovations creeping into the Church. This Collingwood innovation did not creep in. It rolled in at the rate of about fifteen miles an hour. It came in very much faster than the hymns and the organ came in. Well, what was this innovation? It was—now prepare for the worst—it was—it was

#### THE BICYCLE.

At least two members of Synod brought their wheels with them and actually rode up to the door of the Church in which the Synod held its meeting. One of the innovators is a well known D.D. who preaches to one of the largest congregations in the Dominion. The other is pastor of a large Toronto congregation. Both are good men, and strange to say both are rather conservative in their theology and in their modes of thinking and working. How two such men should have allowed themselves to ride on a bicycle to the door of a Synod while the Moderator was in the chair is one of those clerical mysteries that baffle the average intellect.

Somebody may say the innovation was not startling. Well, you just walk slowly along the street and allow one of those riders to run his wheel against your person and see if you are not startled. There may be no written law in the Presbyterian Church against the use of the bicycle at meetings of the Synod. We do not know what the Synod of Dort would have said about the bicycle. The Westminster Assembly, so far as we are aware, said nothing about the wheel. There is nothing on the subject in our own Basis of Union. One thing, however, is quite clear. Riding a bicycle at Synod is contrary to "use and wont." The innovators might be proceeded against on that head. Or they might be cited for following divisive courses. We are not quite certain that both could be indicted under the divisive course clause, but we are reasonably sure the D.D. could for we saw him ride. His course was very divisive at times.

Had these brethren introduced the wheel in a constitutional way nothing could be said. They might have proceeded by overture, or by petition, or by reference, or in any other proper way, but they did not do

so. They rode defiantly up to the Church and leaned their "bike" against the building in which the Synod was sitting. Indeed we are not quite certain that one of them did not take his wheel into the school-room in which the Synod's Committees were at work. If we are not careful wheels will soon be ridden into the Church courts and leaned against the Moderator's chair. Something must be done about this innovation before it goes too far.

If the bicycle cannot be stopped it might be regulated. Clergymen who ride might be enjoined to ride in good style. There are many ways of riding a wheel and some of them are not elegant. The D.D. who rode at Collingwood did not strike us as being a high class rider. His style on the wheel was not to be compared with his style as a speaker. The Toronto man rode well and in full clerical costume. Neither his silk hat nor his long-tailed coat seemed to trouble him in the least. The D.D. wobbled a little, though not as badly as some members of Parliament wobble on the Remedial Bill. The Toronto man rode as steadily as any wheelsman that ever faced the starter. He made good time, too. Perhaps the D.D. was not doing his best work when we saw him. Judging from the efficiency with which he can do other things we may fairly conclude that he can do high class work on the wheel too if he tries.

But, seriously, the bicycle may become an important factor in the church work. One pastor told us at the Synod that he can visit ten families a day in the country, on his wheel. Ten families a day is a good work. Most ministers are well satisfied if they can visit five. Much time is saved by the bicycle in doing town work. Walking is tiresome and tying up a horse half a dozen times when there is nothing to tie him to is troublesome. Were the roads in our home mission fields good, students might save themselves an immense amount of time and severe labour by having a wheel. We hate a bicycle but we can easily see that a wheel may be very useful to one who can use it.

#### THE BISHOPS' MANDEMENT.

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, B.D.

Reading over the mandement of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Quebec just issued led me to take down from my shelves the three tracts of Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone on "Rome and the Vatican Decrees." The first sentence of his Preface to the tracts as collected by himself in 1875, may be quoted as emphatically true now, though the score of eventful years which have passed have brought in many momentous changes: "If there has ever been, and if there still be, a question reaching far into the future, it is the question of church power, and of its monstrous exaggeration into Papal power, such as it has now for the first time been accepted by the Latin Church in its corporate capacity." We have entered upon a phase of our social life in its relation to that most potent element in our nature—the religious—which may well make us pause, reflect, and having reflected most firmly resolve; and that phase emphasizes the words just quoted that this monstrous exaggeration of church power is a far reaching question. For if we adopt Mr. Gladstone's words as our own do we assume any more than a defensive attitude as we say, "Rome is herein refurbishing and parading anew every rusty tool she was fondly thought to have disused when no one can become her convert without renouncing his moral and mental freedom, and placing his civil loyalty and duty at the mercy of another." For let us understand what it is that this mandement claims; and though comparisons may best be attained by drawing some in this connection.

It is no new thing for the clergy to take an active part in politics. Even corporate church action is sometimes taken in the form

of resolutions, petitions, recommendations. Such actions are undoubtedly intended to influence the electorate; and may be furthered by caucus meetings which are in great measure private. But the resolutions are made and discussed under the public eye, and for the most part pretty widely made known through an active press. In our Church Courts these things are not done in a corner. Moreover, no spiritual thunderbolts are launched against those who may be in the minority, nor espionage exercised over supposed transgressors.

The Bishop's Mandement was drawn up in secret conclave, has behind it the spiritual thunders of the Church, and the remorseless searchings of the confessional. It claims to be not the advice of men whose wisdom and character ensure respect, but the exercise of an "authority which springs from God himself." In other words, in this Dominion where we fondly dreamed we had secured representative government, there are eleven ecclesiastics, irresponsible to any British law, who meet in secret conclave, and in a matter clearly within legislative powers issue a mandement to at least one third of the electorate *sic volo, sic jubeo*. And we have politicians who for the sake of securing votes are ready to enter into a compact that thus virtually would bind Canada hand and foot to an hierarchical conclave. To the Roman Catholic as a Christian brother I freely extend my hand; I have no desire to coerce his faith; but I must protest against our legislation as that of a free people, being at the mercy of eleven clerics who claim authority to command without even condescending to a reason. My last thought would be to raise the standard of the bigot, or even of the denominationalist, but the heretors of Covenanting and Puritan traditions cannot afford to let slip the liberties and rights handed down to them from their fathers.

Gravenhurst.

#### PROGRESS IN SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE.\*

BY W. M.

This volume is very neatly got up as a memorial of the late Rev. O. Giles, a prominent preacher among the Swedenborgians. It contains a sketch of his life, and a number of his sermons. From the sketch it appears that Mr. Giles, after having spent part of his life as a teacher, adopted the views of the Swedenborgians, and became a preacher among them. He was very successful as a pastor, and was looked up to as a prominent leader and representative of the body to which he belonged. He is the author of the articles on "Swedenborg" and on "The New Jerusalem Church," in the Schaff-Herzog Cyclopaedia, and published also several volumes setting forth the views peculiar to the New Church.

The sermons in this volume are written in a lucid and flowing style, and contain a good deal which will be interesting and attractive to the general reader. The writer, however, makes it plain that the ordinary evangelical views of sin and atonement are not accepted by his Church, "We shall never be punished in the Spiritual world for what we do in this world." "The Lord did not come to suffer in our stead,—to pay a penalty for us. He came to help us to resist evil, and thereby escape its penalties." In other points, also, the New Church claims the right to reject such portions of evangelical teaching as may seem to be distasteful. The revelations of Swedenborg are, on the other hand, accepted without question; as if he had been caught up into paradise as surely as Paul was, and had returned with a permission to reveal things which it was not possible or lawful for the Apostle to utter. The Bible manifests its superhuman origin

\* "Progress in Spiritual Knowledge," by Rev. Chauncey Giles. New Church Publication Society, Philadelphia.

by its very silence on matters which men are curious to know, and the knowledge of which would do no practical good. When Lazarus came back from the dead, he, like Paul, was "forbid to tell the secrets" of the unseen world.

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?  
There lives no record of reply,  
Which, telling what it is to die,  
Had surely added praise to praise.

"Behold a man raised up by Christ!  
The rest remaineth unrevealed,  
He told it not; or something sealed  
The lips of the Evangelist."

Few will believe that what was denied to those so beloved of Christ as Lazarus and Paul, was granted to Emmanuel Swedenborg.

One valuable feature of Swedenborg's teaching is his insisting on the immanence of God in nature. His followers are ever alive to the fact that spiritual realities underlie things seen and temporal. To them

"Earth is crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God."  
Many passages in these sermons are full of spiritual beauty and truth, because their author had learned that the material world was intended to teach us of the spiritual, and that the things in this lower world, like the furniture of the tabernacle, were made after "patterns showed in the Mount."

#### BRITISH COLUMBIA: ITS YOUNGEST MISSION STATION.—II.

BY JOHN EWING WALLACE.

I have three stations outside of Rossland, but it is impossible to attend to them all during winter; in such new camps, where small log cabins are the only buildings, it is usually impossible to find a place in which to hold service. A large saw mill two miles further up in the mountains from Rossland, with a population of one hundred and twenty people, caused me a good deal of trouble. At first, no place could be obtained for service, but after a great deal of coaxing, I was allowed the use of a small dining room in a bunk house, capable of holding twenty people at a pinch, for the space of one hour, two to three o'clock on Sunday afternoon.

At first the people did not want services, but now they are growing more enthusiastic. Every Sunday, now, as soon as they see me coming up the mountain path, a man brings out a big triangle (used as a dinner bell) and rings it to announce my approach, calling out at the same time, "Come along, boys, here's the minister." Even this fails to bring them out, for after I arrive, I have to go into all the "bunk houses" and order the boys out of bed, to attend my services. At Trail Creek, seven miles away, I have even had greater difficulty. It lies at the foot of the lofty mountain, on the summit of which Rossland is built, two thousand feet of an almost sheer descent. Here I have been steadily refused an opening ever since I came. An Opera House or hall was built. I at once applied for the use of it for one evening in the week, offering to pay for the privilege, if necessary. The Lessee very generously acceded to my request, by placing the oper house at my disposal, at the trifling rate of fifteen dollars a night, which, no doubt, seemed to him to be a very polite way of saying, "You won't come here, if I can help it." And yet many a tiresome and weary walk down and up these two thousand feet in seven miles they gave me to visit their sick and bury their head.

Wansta, the third station, twenty miles away, I have not yet been able to visit, owing to the difficulties of travelling here in winter. Indeed, Rossland itself could keep two ministers in one church busily employed from morning to night. I have three prayer meetings every week in the different log cabins of non church-goers, with a view