

## Our Contributors.

### CONCERNING CONGREGATIONAL COLDNESS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Nobody in this part of the world needs to be told that the year 1887 came in with a cold wave. Preachers who drive fifteen or twenty miles between stations are quite aware that the first Sabbath of the year was cold enough to freeze the enthusiasm out of almost anybody. Perhaps that cold Sabbath was sent early in the year to remind congregations that a minister who has to drive fifteen or twenty miles every Sabbath should have a fur coat. That may have been one reason why the day was so cold. Congregations whose pastors have to drive every Sabbath for a long distance, in all kinds of weather, will please take a hint. A splendid fur coat can be had for about \$60. A coat of that kind is both useful and ornamental. It is useful, because a perfect protection against cold, and ornamental, because a very ordinary-looking brother looks well in a long fur coat, when the collar is turned up. The principal reason why he looks so well is because you don't see much of him. No congregation need expect much prosperity if its minister has to drive between his stations all winter without a good fur coat. The cold chills him, enfeebles him, paralyzes him. The eloquence freezes up in him, and the people don't get it. Their minister becomes cold physically, and there is some danger lest the people become cold in a worse sense than physically.

There is such a thing as congregational coldness. It may be detected in various ways. One good way is to use the statistical report in the annual returns as a thermometer. By examining this thermometer, especially the columns which show the amounts contributed to missions, you may easily discover the amount of evangelical warmth in any congregation. In some the spiritual temperature is high, and the contributions are correspondingly liberal. In some the temperature is about zero, and the figures in the columns for missions are low. In a few congregations the mercury is thirty degrees below zero, and these generally give one or two dollars each to send the Gospel to the heathen.

A newspaper reporter was sent to the North-West to write up the first Riel rebellion. For some reason or other "copy" was not forthcoming for a considerable time. When asked for the reason, the pencil-driver is reported to have said that his lead pencil froze so hard out there that no marks could be made with it. Fact or fiction, that pencil illustrates the reason why some columns in the statistical report are blanks. The congregations are frozen so hard that they give nothing to fill in the columns with. The statistical report is a capital thermometer, and on the whole gives a fairly correct estimate of the amount of evangelical warmth in a congregation. In some cases apparent coldness may be the result of entire want of system in collecting. The trouble is want of organization rather than want of warmth; but while this may be true in a few cases, as a rule, where there is warmth it will show itself.

Congregational coldness may easily be detected without the use of the statistical thermometer. One good way is to attend the public service on Sabbath. Everybody knows—that is everybody who attends church—that churches have an atmosphere peculiarly their own. Go into some churches, and everything is cold, freezing cold. The usher at the door is cold, and gives you a chilling reception. You sit down in a pew beside somebody, perhaps a lady, who seems to be an animated iceberg. The choir gets up to prelude a little, and they seem like a collection of icebergs. Each one resembles a squeaking iceberg. Then the preacher comes in, and from his appearance suggests that he is a clerical iceberg. The moment he opens his mouth you see that his appearance did not belie him. He reads coldly, prays coldly, preaches coldly. The whole performance is cold. It may be faultless in other respects, but it is so intensely cold that it cannot do any good. There is no evangelical fervour—no Gospel warmth—no touch of nature that warms the heart. The whole service is of the ice icy. There is no soul in it. It has no heart power, and does little or no good. The preacher is a human iceberg, and you are glad when he gets through. You go home, feeling rather wicked, and wonder what churches are kept up for, any way.

You go into another church in which the atmosphere is entirely different. The usher gives you a warm welcome. Without being obsequious he shows you into a pew in a friendly manner. The occupants of the pew make room for you, or give you a book, or show you some other little civility which makes you feel you are welcome. The choir puts heart power into the singing. The preacher comes in, and you see at a glance that he is human. There is a peculiar something in his voice and manner which tells you he is a man, but a man who wishes to help his fellowmen. His reading of the opening hymn and the scriptures help to put you in a good frame of mind. The long prayer, instead of being wearisome, lifts you up and brings you near your heavenly Father and your elder Brother. The sermon comes, and the warm evangelistic truth goes right home to your heart. There was something there for you, though you were a stranger. As the service proceeds, your cares become lighter, your faith stronger, and you leave, feeling that it was a good thing to worship in that church.

What made the difference between these two churches? The difference was in the spiritual atmosphere. The one was cold, the other warm. What made the atmosphere of the one warm, and the atmosphere of the other so cold? The Gospel. A church in which the Gospel is fully, faithfully and earnestly preached always has a warm atmosphere. Any church that depends more on mere forms than on the power of Gospel truth must always be cold.

There are other tests by which the spiritual atmosphere of a congregation may be tried. The prayer meeting is a good one. It is one of the best. A congregation with a poorly-attended prayer meeting is generally cold. The attendance of the members at the sacrament of the Lord's supper is a good test. If the membership attach very little importance to this sacrament, and attend on communion Sabbath in small numbers, then rely upon it the spiritual atmosphere is below zero.

### THE DUTY OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH TOWARD THE JEWS.

BY THE REV. JAMES C. QUINN, M.A., EMERSON, MANITOBA.

(Concluded.)

We profess to be the children of God, and therefore we are bound to love what God loves. I ask, Should we not give to the Jews the same place in our affections that God gives them?

Should we not imitate God in making special effort for the conversion of the Jews?

But, it may be asked, did God make special efforts to save the Jews? I answer, Yes. To whom did God send His Son first? To the Jews. "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

Did not all His gracious words and ways, when He came unto His own, prove that His first object in coming into the world was to save Israel? Why did Jesus say to the earnest supplicant of Tyre and Sidon, who sought Him that He might save her daughter, "I am not sent, but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel?" Evidently, because His first business was to save His own people. When Jesus had accomplished His people's redemption, and had departed unto heaven, He very abundantly blessed the ministry of the apostles. How was this? Because they followed closely His parting counsel, as well as His own example, in preaching the Gospel to the Jews first.

If we would have success (a larger success than we have had yet), let us go and do likewise; let us seek, by special efforts, to bring the Gospel to the Jew first, and we shall be abundantly blessed. "They shall prosper that love Thee."

MEANS TO BE EMPLOYED TO THE CONVERSION OF THE JEWS.

1. Supply the Jews with the Word of God in their own language. It is a fact that the Jews are, as a whole, a very intellectual people; yet, until lately, they were very little acquainted with the Word of God. As in the time of our Lord, they placed traditions of men above the written Word, so they do at the present time. When the Jewish Propagation Society began its operations, the Old Testament was very rare, and the New Testament entirely unknown to them. What is the best means for dispelling ignor-

ance, error and superstition, if not the circulation of the Holy Scriptures?

2. The next instrument is the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to them. Jews, we are told, have a great prejudice against the missionary, and would not wish, in the first instance, to appear as hearers in a Christian congregation. Nevertheless, preaching is not to be neglected. It was the great instrument used by the apostles, Peter and Paul. There exists a very striking contrast between the salvation by grace, and the cold, self-righteous system of modern Judaism of the Talmud. In the hands of the Holy Spirit the Gospel of Jesus Christ has bowed down the proudest of earth's sons, witness the case of "Saul" of Tarsus. McCheyne tells us (1839) there is peculiar access to the Jews. "In almost all the countries we have visited, the fact is quite remarkable; indeed, it seems in many places as if the only door open to the Christian missionary is the door of preaching to the Jews. . . . No man cares for their souls, and therefore you may carry the Gospel to them freely." Since these memorable words were written, access to the Jews has become more general. Let us enter in, and take the Jews for Jesus. May the Lord help us for His own name's sake. McCheyne writes (1839): "I feel convinced that if we pray that the world may be converted (to God) in God's way, we will seek the good of the Jews, and the more we do so, the happier will we be in our own souls." McCheyne believed in preaching to the Jews first. Is not this the Bible method?

3. Oral and written discussions.

The Jews are a reading, acute and intelligent people. Their entire difference with Christians turns on the interpretation of Scripture. Many works against Christianity have been written by Jews. The method of controversy, when rightly pursued, will be blessed to them.

This was the case in the early Church, the method pursued by its ablest minister, the Apostle Paul. We read (Acts xix. 8) that Paul "went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God." Discussion leads to inquiry, and helps the circulation of the Scriptures.

4. Prayer, the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous, for the Holy Spirit to enlighten and regenerate the Jews.

Prayer is the special means by which we obtain blessings from God. Ezekiel was called upon to pray for the breath of Jehovah to reanimate the dead bones in the valley. All past deliverances of the Jews, whether under Moses, Judges or Kings, were in answer to prayer. The success of all means of grace is largely dependent on prayer. "In everything by prayer and supplication let your requests be made known unto God."

If the Jews are designed particularly to show forth the glory of God, as I believe they are, we may conclude that prayer is intended to occupy an important place in the means of their conversion. If the difficulties which lie in the way of the salvation of the Jews be unspeakably great—if the bigotry of the Jews to their own errors and hatred to the truth of Christ be far stronger than that of any other people—if their prejudices be proverbially unconquerable—is that not a reason for the warmer and more persevering prayer on their behalf? May not all these difficulties be to draw out our prayers, and prove our devotion to Jesus, our Lord and Saviour? True prayer has a reflex effect on those who engage in it. Prayer for the Jews must produce kindness on our part toward the Jews.

In conclusion I mention the last duty of the Church to the Jews.

5. Take up all stumbling-blocks out of the way of the Jews. Let Christians see to it that they do nothing that will give the Jews a distaste for the religion of Jesus.

Thus we find Isaiah telling us (lvii. 14): "Take up the stumbling-blocks out of the way of God's people." And well might the prophet thus exhort us. No one can look around in the Church to-day without seeing abundant cause for the command of the prophet. Look at the glaring neglect of the means of grace throughout the land on the part of many. There is no fear of God before the eyes of many professors of religion.

Look at the unblushing idolatry of the Church of Rome. Look at the widespread habit of Sabbath-