

sembly, therefore, to entertain the appeal was a sufficient indication of the final outcome, which is the suspension of Dr. Briggs indefinitely from the ministry of the Presbyterian Church.

The General Assembly's decision reverses the finding of the New York Presbytery, which, while not approving all the utterances of Dr. Briggs, but giving due weight to his explanations and to his affirmations of loyalty to the Standards of the Church and to the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, declared that he had not "transgressed the limits of liberty allowed under our constitution to scholarship and opinion." The General Assembly, upon the same evidence and after hearing substantially the same pleadings, arrests his liberty as a minister and forbids him to exercise his ministerial privileges in its churches or in its name until he has exhibited repentance for his errors. This is contrary, as we have more than once pointed out, to the course of procedure in our civil courts. When a man has been placed on trial on an indictment and acquitted thereon, that judgment cannot be reversed in any of our civil tribunals. It is contrary to the Constitution of the United States to put a man twice in jeopardy of his life or liberty. But in proceeding as it did the General Assembly was acting entirely within the limits of the Presbyterian Constitution, and, however repellent it may be to the common sense of justice to have Professor Briggs now condemned upon the same charges upon which the lower court pronounced him innocent, still it must be conceded that it is perfectly good Presbyterian law.

The vote by which the appeal was sustained was large—more than three to one, and there is no reason to doubt that this vote fairly represents the mind of the Presbyterian Church. It would be simple folly to charge that the General Assembly was a packed Assembly, as some of the more ardent partisans charged respecting the Assembly of last year and of the year before. Unquestionably, the great majority of Presbyterian ministers and elders will receive the action of the Assembly at Washington with satisfaction. Nor can it be truthfully said that the Assembly was actuated by a feeling of bitterness or relentless hostility to Professor Briggs in its proceedings in his case. The editor of *The Evangelist*, who has proved himself an able champion of the cause of the accused, speaks of the Assembly as an able, imposing and representative body of men, "for the most part, plain, simple, sober-minded, strong in their conviction and earnest in their purpose, but not so sanguinary as I had been led to suppose." He watched them closely for six days, and during all that time he did not hear "one ugly word, a single epithet that might be interpreted as a fling at the accused." He also speaks of the fairness of the Moderator in the highest terms. We quote these expressions because of the attempt on the part of the daily press to make it appear otherwise. Those who have watched the course of the secular press carefully, know that in religious matters it can be very intolerant.

The General Assembly has not left the Church in doubt as to the precise utterances it means to condemn. In the first place it declares that the doctrine of the errancy of the Scriptures is in conflict with the statement of the Scripture itself, and also with the statements of the Standards of the Church concerning it. Secondly, it declares that the human reason and the Church cannot be regarded as fountains of divine authority. So to hold is "most dangerous and contrary to the Word of God and our Standards." Thirdly, it condemns Dr. Briggs' speculations as to sanctification of the soul after death as a dangerous hypothesis and in conflict with the Word of God.

These are the views which the General Assembly declares to be contrary both to the Scriptures and the Standards, and therefore not allowable in the Presbyterian Church. The most important declaration, of course, is that in reference to errancy. The Assembly is not willing to allow its ministers to teach that the Bible is a mixture of inspired truth and

uninspired error. By a separate resolution it has declared its belief that "the Bible as we now have it in its various translations and versions, when freed from all errors and mistakes of translators, copyists and printers, is the very Word of God, and consequently without error." This, of course, implies that the original manuscripts came from God. The minority are quite willing to accept this with a modification to the effect that "in so far as the original manuscripts came from God, undoubtedly it was without error." There is no question between the two parties that whatever has come from God is without error. To hold to the contrary would be to impeach either his knowledge or character. But the liberals say that there are errors in the Bible, as we have it, and that while these errors are trifling they are, nevertheless, errors of discrepancies, and nothing is gained by denying that they are such, or that they were in the original autographs. The conservatives would not claim that verbal inconsistencies do not appear in the Bible; but they hold that God could not give us a revelation containing positive error. It is evident that not a few of those arrayed on opposite sides of this question are contending more about terms than truth. They are not so far apart as they seem. Dr. Briggs has gone further than most of his defenders would go, and made it appear to many that the errors of the Bible are formidable in number and extent, if not in character.

There are no signs of schism as a result of the action of the General Assembly. For this the Christian world cannot be too thankful. The controversy itself is bad enough, but divisions would be tenfold worse. The ardent supporters of Dr. Briggs have announced their intention to remain in the Church, unless they are driven out. Until they challenge the Church in some such positive way as Dr. Briggs challenged it in his inaugural address, there is no fear that they will be driven out. The Church has not taken a step backward, as some writers intimate. It allows just as much liberty to its ministers as it ever did. It does not mean to put the ban on scholarship, as certain excited newspapers have declared. Any scholar will find himself perfectly free to exercise in the Church any reasonable liberty. We do not think that the Church is at all enamoured of heresy trials, and it will not seek to find heretics in ministers and theological professors who do not step forth into the arena and invite its ecclesiastical processes. If there are those, however, who want to enlarge upon the alleged errors of the Bible, and to put its most earnest defenders in the same category with the unbelievers who have attacked its divine authority, they had better not do so as ministers or members of the Presbyterian Church.

This is the way we interpret the decisions and deliverances at Washington.—N. Y. Independent.

#### TORONTO PRESBYTERY.

The Presbytery of Toronto met on Tuesday, the 6th inst., the Moderator, Rev. James A. Grant, presiding. The Rev. J. Melvor, a licentiate of Kinross Presbytery of the U. P. Church, Scotland, presented papers, and asked to be received as a minister of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It was agreed, after consideration, to apply to the General Assembly for permission to receive him. Mr. Jamieson, a licentiate of Barrie Presbytery, asked that his name be placed on the roll of Toronto Presbytery, and on presenting a presbyterial certificate, the request was granted. Dr. Caven reported a call from St. James Square congregation, Toronto, given in favour of the Rev. C. H. C. McGregor, M.A., of Aberdeen, Scotland. Mr. McGregor was one of the three whom the Keswick Brethren sent out to visit Canada in response to the invitation from a number of Canadian brethren. The call was sustained, and Dr. Caven was appointed to appear in its support before the Presbytery of Aberdeen. The congregations of Oakville and East Toronto were given permission to mortgage their church property to the amounts requested. Permission was granted to the Georgetown and Limehouse congregations to moderate in a call, when prepared to do so. Dr. Ghosen Howie appeared before Presbytery and addressed the members in reference to his intention to return to his native land and work there. The Presbytery thereupon passed the following resolution: "That the Presbytery express its interest in Mr. Howie's purpose to devote himself

to the work of preaching the Gospel in his native land, its hope that a suitable opening may be found, and that Mr. Howie's labours may be crowned with success." Mr. Hammon tendered his resignation of the charge of Eglington and Bethesda. Petitions were presented expressing regret that he had done so, and the Presbytery after hearing commissioners from both congregations, and very fully considering the case, refused to accept the resignation tendered. The following students appeared before the Presbytery to be taken on trial for license, viz., Messrs. J. Bell, B.A., J. H. Courtenay, W. S. Heron, W. D. Kerswill, B.A., Geo. Logie, B.A., James R. Mackay, R. W. Ross, M.A., H. F. Thomas, B.A., and A. E. Vert. After careful examination their trials were sustained, and these gentlemen were duly licensed to preach the Gospel wherever God in His providence may lead them. The remittance from General Assembly, anent the proposal to allow Synod to issue all complaints and appeals not involving doctrine or polity, was brought forward, when it was agreed that owing to the fact that this remittance had been so long overlooked, and the careful consideration it demands is not now possible, the Presbytery take no action and express no opinion upon it. Mr. Gilray presented the annual Home Mission statement, which shows that in addition to the ordinary contributions to the Home Mission Funds of the Church, the City of Toronto gave over \$8,000 to various Home Mission enterprises. Messrs. Gilray, Dr. Reid, Neil, Macdonnell, Grant, Gibson, Kilgour, and the Moderators of mission stations were appointed the Home Mission Committee for the current year. The Rev. Thos. Sedgwick, D.D., of Tatamagouche, was nominated as Moderator of the next General Assembly.—R. C. Tibb, Presbytery Clerk.

#### MR. DAWSON ON SCOTTISH PREACHERS.

Rev. W. J. Dawson, in a characteristic sketch of Dr. Marcus Dods, in the *Young Man for June*, gives his impressions of Scottish character. Theological disputes, he says, which divide Scotland into hostile camps, as likely as not awaken only the faintest echoes in England, and names which are battle cries across the Tweed, are received on this side the Border with indifference and neglect. The reason is not far to seek. Scotland is the land of theology, and for centuries its greatest movements have arisen out of the interpretation of religion. The English mind is denser and more practical. It has been nourished on truth that is the reverse of speculative, and is only in a low degree analytic, and only in matters of politics keenly disputative. But in Scotland politics themselves are subordinated to theology. The peasant farmer of the loneliest glen has his views of religion and church government, and is strong in dialectics. At the scent of heresy every true-born Scot strains the leash. He has small respect for any authority when his theological fervour is roused. England has become far too sunk in the affairs of material and practical progress to give more than a desultory attention to theology; but in Scotland a new Reformation could be arranged at any moment. There are plenty of Scotsmen still ready to burn other people or be burned themselves for a dogma. The stamp of John Knox is upon the entire national life; religion still holds the first place in the common thought, and is to thousands who are no whit behind the chief of merchants in the ability to win wealth, the really engrossing and commanding interest of life.

In England manner counts for a great deal in preaching; in all oratory manner is one of the most important elements, but in Scotland matter counts for everything. I do not mean to say that a Scotch audience differs from any other in keen appreciation of the arts that make an orator, or that Scotch preachers are as a class deficient in these arts. Chalmers, Guthrie and Edward Irving were supreme orators; so to-day is Principal Caird, of Glasgow; and in preachers like these the manner of delivery counts for as much as the matter. But where in England a really profound thinker who has no grace of delivery would be left to address a beggary array of empty benches, while a glib-tongued rafter would get his crowd, in Scotland the thinker would be pretty sure of reward, and the deficiency of his manner would be readily forgiven for the sake of his matter. The reason probably is that the dominant fibre of the Scotch mind is more serious than the English. Men go to church for instruction in truth, and the pulpit is a prime force in the education of thought. No sermon is too long for a Scotch audience, if it be a really able treatment of a great theme; and it is impossible to put too much solid thought into a sermon which is to be addressed to a Scotch audience.

## Books and Magazines

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE. Discourses from Holy Scripture. By Joseph Parker, D.D., London, Mark-Luke. Octavo, 460 pp., cloth, \$1.50. New York and Toronto: Funk and Wagnalls Company.

In this volume, as in the numbers which preceded it, the author carries on his expository and homiletic work with force and perspicuity. Important passages and sometimes difficult points are opened up and made clear and luminous. Parker's People's Bible is a sort of everybody's commentary, and is of special help and value to pastors, preachers, lay-workers and private readers. It contains bright supplies for all who read the English Bible. There are more than fifty chapters, expository of the text according to Mark and Luke in the present volume. The following from the subject-titles will serve to indicate originality of treatment by the author: "The Three-fold Beginning of the Gospel;" "Spiritual Reparation;" "Christ's Relation to Great Multitudes;" "The Unknown Quantity in Christ;" "The Spiritual Value of the Near and the Invisible;" "The Silent Looks of Christ;" "Exciting Sermons;" "Pious at the Wrong Places;" "Personal Pronouns;" "Inquiry Into Meanings;" "The Claims of the City;" "How to Treat Commotion," etc. A good, practical index is given at the close of the volume.

The Missionary Review of the World for June, comes to hand with its 96 pages crowded with encouraging news, inspiring discussions, and altogether interesting and instructive articles on a great variety of topics from the pens of more than a score of leading writers and thinkers, in all parts of the world. Its six well-edited departments, under the management of such giants as Rev. A. T. Pierson, D.D., Rev. J. T. Gracey, D.D., Rev. A. J. Gordon, D.D., Rev. D. L. Leonard, Prof. Amos R. Wells, and crowded with valuable articles from all over the world, bring together each month in one vast symposium, the current missionary thought of the Christian Church of all denominations. Published monthly, at \$2.00 per year, by Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York.

The Treasury of Religious Thought for June is not a whit behind any of the religious magazines, in style, matter and variety. The preacher or Christian worker who fails to read this excellent monthly cannot be abreast of the times, and is not thoroughly furnished unto all good works. Dr. C. H. Parkhurst's sermon on Conscience should be read by everyone. Leading Thoughts of Sermons comprise *The Everlasting Heritage*, *The Love of Jesus*, *How the Devil Helped a Saint*, *Finding God*, and *The Sepulchre of Jesus*. Pulpit Prayer is excellently treated by Dr. A. H. Moment, and Christ the Soul's Well-Spring by Dr. T. L. Cuyler. The Oriental Churches are described by Dr. Jessup; S. S. Lessons are explained by Dr. Moment. Editorials treat of Doctrinal and Practical Preaching, First Principles, Right Thinking, Keep Imitating the Original Copy, The Church Vow. All departments are overflowing with good things. E. B. Treat, Publisher, New York.

The June Cosmo-politan is a specially interesting number of this valuable magazine. The leading articles are as follows: "The City of Brooklyn," by Murat Halstead; "The Rise and Decline of the Hawaiian Monarchy," by H. H. Gowen; "The Merrimac and the Cumberland," by T. O. Selfridge, Jr., U. S. N.; "The Deserted Homes of New England," by Clifton Johnson; and "Notes of the Brussels Monetary Conference," by E. B. Andrews. "June," a poem, by Archibald Lampman, will attract attention. The illustrations in this issue are numerous and well executed.

An exchange makes the following true remark: "The halting, tricky fashion in which the World's Fair managers are dealing with the Sunday question raises a suspicion that they may be rather small men for so big an enterprise."