

MINISTERS AND CHURCHES.

ON the 17th ult., Rev. John Black, D.D., of Kil-donan, Manitoba, was presented with a handsome pulpit gown and a valuable beaver overcoat, accompanied by an address in the name of the people of his parish and the Sabbath School and Bible Class. These costly gifts show, what the address warmly expresses, that the faithful services and arduous toil of Dr. Black during the past twenty-six years are appreciated by the people among whom he labors.

THE annual social in commemoration of the opening of Chalmers' Church, Guelph, was held on the evening of Monday, the 17th inst. The audience filled the basement of the church. Rev. Mr. Wardrope, pastor of the congregation, presided, and delivered an appropriate introductory address. After him the speakers were Rev. Mr. Ballantyne, of Cobourg, Rev. Mr. Smythe, of Eramosa, and Rev. Dr. Barrie. The addresses were interesting and instructive; the choir supplied excellent music; and the large company present seemed well pleased.

AT the close of public worship on Thanksgiving Day, the Bible Class of Knox Church, Beckwith, presented their pastor, the Rev. J. M. Macalister, with a purse of \$51.50, wishing him (as they said in their address) to share with them in the bountiful harvest they had enjoyed. And on Monday, the 17th inst., the Bible Class of Ashton (the other part of the same pastoral charge, surprised Mr. Macalister at his residence, and presented him with an address, accompanied by a valuable racoon-skin coat as a token of their appreciation of his labors among them since his settlement in January last.—COM.

THE anniversary sermons of the Seaforth Presbyterian Church were preached on Sabbath, the 16th inst., morning and evening, by the Rev. Dr. Cochrane, of Brantford. Very large congregations were in attendance at both diets of worship, and liberal collections were taken up in aid of the funds of the Church. A successful tea-meeting was held on the Monday evening, when addresses were delivered by the chairman, Rev. Thomas Goldsmith, and other clergymen. As already announced, the Seaforth congregation is about to lose the services of Mr. Goldsmith, by his translation to St. John's, Hamilton. The Church has now reached that point, both in regard to numbers and influence, which makes it one of the finest fields for an active and faithful minister. In his evening sermon, Dr. Cochrane referred to its different appearance and capabilities now from what it was in 1867, when he preached at the opening of the lecture-room, and exhorted them to united and speedy action in the choice of a pastor.—COM.

THE basement of the new church now in course of building by the Presbyterian congregation of Strathroy, being so far completed as to admit of being used for public worship and for Sabbath school, it was formally opened for divine service on the 9th inst. The apartment was fitted up for seating comfortably 625 persons, and at the appointed hour on Sabbath morning every seat was occupied. Rev. G. M. Milligan, M.A., of Old St. Andrew's, Toronto, preached an able, eloquent, and instructive sermon from Luke xiii. 18, 19. In the afternoon the pulpit was occupied by Rev. R. Scobie, the pastor, and the church was again filled. The discourse was founded on Hebrews xii. 6: "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth," and was preached specially in memory of Mr. James Young, of Strathroy, who died on the 4th inst., in the seventy first year of his age. Rev. Mr. Milligan preached again in the evening. The collections during the day amounted to \$190. On the evening of Monday, the 10th, the ladies entertained over 600 guests, who after partaking of a substantial supper on the main floor of the church, adjourned to the basement to listen to Mr. Milligan's lecture on "What the Sunbeams Say." Rev. G. Cuthbertson presided, and the resident ministers of the town occupied the platform. The lecture was very highly appreciated. Short speeches were afterwards made by Rev. Messrs. Card, Smythe, McDiarmid and Beswick. The proceeds on this occasion amounted to \$286, which added to the Sabbath collections makes \$476. At an entertainment given to the Sabbath School children on Tuesday evening, Mr. James Manson announced his intention of making up the receipts of the opening services to \$1,000. Mr. Scobie is to be congratulated. The results of the opening meetings

are most encouraging. When the building is finished doubtless this spirit of praiseworthy liberality will be still further evoked, so that the congregation may take possession of their new place of worship nearly, if not wholly, free from debt.

"WHERE IS THE PROMISE OF HIS COMING?"

The argument on which the scoffers used the apostle's words is, that such an event as the second coming of Christ is at variance with what is observed in nature and in history. His second coming, it was said by Christ, would be sudden and overwhelming. The scoffers look around, and they see no signs of this; and they say, "Where is the promise of his coming?" On the one hand, they say, we are told to expect a sudden and violent catastrophe; on the other hand, Nature has been, and is, gradual, regular, and orderly in all her processes, without any convulsions and disturbances, without anything which is not the product of clearly ascertained causes. So again, they argue, is it with history. In history we see a natural growth from one condition to another, the rudest civilization melting gradually into the highest; so that the final result is connected with all that preceded it by a series of links, each of which leads on to another. Is it conceivable, then, they ask, that all this order is to be broken up, that the natural world is to be disturbed, that the marvellous mass of human lives welded together by the labours of centuries into one great whole will be one day ended, without discussion or parley, by the mere fiat of the Judge, uttered in a moment, resistless and irreversible?

In answering these questions, let us place ourselves under St. Peter's guidance. In the verse following the text he first raises the question of fact. The objector says there have been no such catastrophes in the past, and therefore none can be expected. St. Peter points at once to the Deluge. That was a catastrophe, whatever else it was, both for nature and for man. Thus St. Peter says, "They willingly are ignorant that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water; and yet, by the agencies which he had made, 'the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished.' And then he proceeds to draw the conclusion that what has been may be again: 'The heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto use against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.' There may be a difference in the agency employed—then it was water, hereafter it shall be fire; but eventually there is the same general characteristic—destruction; the same general purpose—judicial; while the power and the effect are the same—omnipotent.

St. Peter points to the Deluge; but it does not stand alone. All through the ages in the history of the planet on which we live there has been a succession of tragic occurrences in the face of nature and in the realm of human history. Holy Scripture calls these occurrences "judgments;" and such indeed they are. The effect on an individual, on a family, on a nation, is what the universal judgment will be to the whole race. Sometimes such occurrences are the work of nature, or, as the Christian would say, the work of God in nature. Such was the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, such in later days was the destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum. In the last century our great-grandfathers were accustomed to look upon the earthquake of Lisbon as an event of this character; and that mighty wave along the seaboard of Bengal which the other day swept 200,000 souls into eternity, was but an illustration of what nature will do hereafter in winding up the account of the vast number of reasonable creatures with the God who made them. It is only a question of area and extent. The principle is the same, whether it is seen in the Deluge or in Christ's second coming.

But sometimes such occurrences are the work of man himself. Such, for instance, was the destruction of Jerusalem; and such too was the fall of the Roman Empire. It seemed then as if all were settled, as if all were guaranteed for the ownership of property and for public security; but in a moment all the safeguards which protected society from barbarism were swept away. Such, again, was the French Revolution. It was a convulsion the like of which had not been seen for a thousand years. It closed one period in history and opened another. And yet, when it first burst forth, many good people thought that the end of the world had come.

And so St. Peter says that what has been may be. It matters not that all is quiet; the ocean is often calmer on the eve of a storm. The Roman Empire had stood for ages, and men believed it would stand for ever. They even spoke of it as "the Eternal City." But its hour came, and it fell. Our Indian fellow-subjects, who had watched the sea for many years, would have smiled if they had been told that it would rise twenty feet above its ordinary level; and yet the cyclone came, and all was over.

But, secondly, St. Peter grappled with the complaint that the Second Advent had been so long delayed. It seems intolerable to man to wait, and he cries, "Oh rend the heavens;" and he cries without avail. God, man thinks in his folly, must be waiting too, upon the issue of events and operations which he cannot wholly control. He too shares the lassitude of disappointed expectations and disappointed hopes and fears. But the apostle says No; God is not as man, and man never makes a more serious mistake than when he argues from the conditions of his own finite nature to the awful and illimitable being of God. As God is not circumscribed by space, so also as to time; for him there is no past, no present, no future. He lives in the eternal present, and the sequences of events which men measure as the sum of their being are present all at once by one single act to the Infinite Mind. To him all the events of individual lives, all the epochs in the history of our country, all the turning-points in the history of the world, are spread out. He does not remember, he contemplates them.

In like manner as to the future. All the men who are

yet to live, all the events which are to surprise the world, all the rising and falling of nations,—these are all before him, and he does not anticipate, he contemplates them. So with the Flood; the event as a whole is spread out before the eye of God. And so it is with the second coming of Christ; no matter how distant it may be, to him it is already present—all its indescribable bliss, all its unutterable woe, are before him. Thus with God there is no room for expectation or for weariness. The intellect which had to wait for an event would be less than omnipotent. So St. Peter says, "One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." For the Infinite Mind time means nothing; there is no such thing as delay for him. All that will be is; the only question is, when it shall be unrolled. We may have to wait, for centuries do not exist for the Eternal, and it is in looking at things as they appear in his eyes that we see how foolish it is to import our rules and measures into such matters. The uniformity of nature, the regular course of history, the ages that have passed and may pass,—what are these against the promise of Him who works by rule, and yet who works also by catastrophe, who tells us what he sees when he tells us of the future, but who knows of no such thing as delay?

WORDS OF THE WISE.

DIFFICULTY excites the mind to the dignity which sustains and finally conquers misfortune, and the ordeal refines while it chastens.

HUMANITY ONE.—There is one heart for the whole mighty mass of humanity, and every particular vessel strives to beat in concert with it. . . . That man's soul is not dear to himself to whom the souls of his brethren are not dear. As far as they can be influenced by him they are parts and properties of his own soul, their faith his faith, their errors his burthen, their righteousness and bliss his righteousness and his reward; and of their guilt and misery his own will be the echo.—Cicero.

HE that, while He lived, was "a man of sorrows acquainted with grief;" whom the world despised, hated, persecuted, and at last crucified; yet being for His obedience beloved of God, "was raised by Him the third day from the dead;" and then that body which had so lately been torn and mangled by all the ways that malice or cruelty could invent, is now no longer subject to want or misery. The scourges that had ploughed His back but three days before, the crown of thorns that had pierced His temples, and the nails and spears that had wounded Him so wonderfully, did not in the least hinder that body from being raised to glory. And this, the Spirit of God assures us, shall be the reward of every faithful member of JESUS CHRIST. "This corruptible body shall put on incorruption, and this mortal body shall put on immortality." "May the GOD of peace, that brought again from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, make us perfect in every good work to do His will, through JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD."—Bishop Williams.

BELIEVING ON THE NAME OF CHRIST.—The word "name," in the Scripture, is often put for person. The receivers of Christ are said to believe on His name, because the direct object of their faith is the person of Christ. It is not the believing that Christ died for all, or for me, or for the elect, or any such proposition, that saveth. It is believing on Christ. The person, or name of Christ, is the object of faith. The expression, "believe on His name," ought not to be overlooked. Arrowsmith remarks that there is a known distinction among divines, between believing God, that there is such a Being,—believing God, that what He says is true,—and believing on God in the way of faith and confidence as our God. And he observes, most truly, that precisely the same distinction exists between faith that there is such a Saviour as Christ,—faith that what Christ says is true,—and faith of reliance on Christ as our Saviour. Believing on Christ's name is exactly this faith of reliance, and is the faith that saves and justifies.

THERE is an infinite fulness in Jesus Christ. As St. Paul says, "It pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell."—"In Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. (Coloss. i. 19; ii. 3.) There is laid up in Him, as in a treasury, a boundless supply of all that any sinner can need, either in time or eternity. The Spirit of Life is His special gift to the Church, and conveyed from Him, as from a great root, sap and vigour to all the believing branches. He is rich in mercy, grace, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. Out of Christ's fulness, all believers in every age of the world have been supplied. They did not clearly understand the fountain from which their supplies flowed, in Old Testament times. The Old Testament saints only saw Christ afar off, and not face to face. But from Abel downwards, all saved souls have received all they have had from Jesus Christ alone. Every saint in glory will at last acknowledge that he is Christ's debtor for all he is. Jesus will prove to have been all in all.—Ryle.

HEARTLESSNESS OF LADIES WHO ARE FOND OF DRESS.—Many ladies have to learn a little patience, a little clarity, a little consideration for the feelings of those who occupy stations humbler than theirs. That lady mentioned in the Report of the "Children's Employment Commissioners" who ordered a zouave jacket, elaborately trimmed—ordered it late at night, and insisted that it should be ready at two o'clock the next day, because she had at that hour to attend a meeting of the Early Closing Association—may have been quite unaware of the fact, but she was, to all intents and purposes, a worse than Carolinian slave-driver, a worse than Egyptian task-mistress. The silly vanity, the overweening love of luxury and display, the impatience, the thoughtlessness, and sometimes the utter heartlessness of those who sacrifice to the cruel idol of Fashion, are the elements which cause the cup of sorrow of the milliners and dressmakers to overflow. If ladies would wear fewer dresses, would order them in time, and pay for them on delivery instead of running long bills, we should hear no more of white slavery at the West End.—The Daily Telegraph.