

People go to Church?" by different Unitarian conferences; "Progress of Thought and Originality in Literature," by the Universalists of Boston. If these topics are to be taken as indicating present tendencies in the denominations, the absence of theological discussions is noteworthy. The Congregationalists are drawing nearer to the practical work the age is calling for; the Episcopalians are falling into line; the Unitarians are manifesting a degree of religious earnestness which augurs well for the hopes of those who look to see closed up the long standing breach; the Universalists—well, they are apparently interested in the progress of thought and originality in literature.

THE folly of burdening the Church of the present with the symbols of the past is receiving fresh illustrations in a discussion now in progress between two Lutheran ministers on the Scott Act. The Rev. Mr. Schultz, editor of the denominational organ, argues against the Scott Act on this ground, among others, that the symbolical books of Lutheranism contain no such ideas. Rev. Mr. Fishburn answers that "in the sixteenth century, when these symbols were framed, the evils of intemperance and drunkenness were not what they are to-day." There have been other great changes since the sixteenth century. Would it not be enough for a church to justify its practice and belief by New Testament principles without its being required to apply sixteenth century standards to the needs of the nineteenth?

THE *Christian Union* urges labourers to unite for the securing of just and necessary legislation. It says they can obtain such acts of justice as a strict inspection of buildings under construction, responsibility of corporations for injuries done to one employe by the neglect of another, prohibition of children's labour, and the suppression of "pluck-me" stores, where "store orders" representing wages are exchanged for goods sold at from twenty to fifty per cent. above market price, if they will only determine to do it. One can not but acknowledge the beauty of the universal suffrage principle which makes the masses directly responsible for legislation injuriously affecting their interests. But who of them reads the *Christian Union*? The wise coun-

sels which appear in the better papers are lost for the want of readers, while the appetite of the labourer for literature is largely fed by rubbish.

THE bitter partisan contest over the Dominion Franchise Bill is another indication that Confederation is yet on its trial. It is a misfortune that party spirit runs too high in this country for any efficient aid to a judgment in this matter to be found in the party press. Only those who have independent means of estimating the tendencies of such a measure can form a decent opinion, and that is as a rule of use to themselves alone. A great task is before the independent press of this country to establish its claim to the confidence of those who have limited means of arriving at just conclusions on political subjects and who yet sincerely desire the truth. It will take a long time; but the paper that can fight it out on that line is the coming paper of Canada. There are indications that the love of truth is growing.

#### THE BIG DRUM.

A Methodist sister left her own Church and joined the Salvation Army. Her former pastor met her soon afterwards and the following conversation took place: "Well, sister, do you find the teaching in the Army more edifying than mine?"

"Oh no," was the reply.

"Do you find the society in the Army more agreeable than the society in the Church you left?"

"I cannot say that I do," answered the sister.

"Well then," said the minister, "what did you gain by leaving your Church and joining the Army?"

"Oh," said she, "I find the big drum such a comfort to me!"

That sister was a typical woman. She represents the large class of people who can find the most absurd excuses for doing the most absurd things. The big drum is considered an unmitigated nuisance by nearly everybody that is unfortunate enough to be compelled to hear it; but this good woman, when hard driven for an excuse, solemnly declared that the big drum was a great comfort to her. It is barely possible that the big drum did give her comfort, but it is far more likely that she drew on her imagination for an excuse. The imagination is a very lively faculty and can produce an excuse for every or not doing anything with the least possible effort. Hundreds of people do precisely what this sister did—they call upon their imagination for an answer and the imagination responds in lively style.