

At present the pastor is advocating a second congregation in the west end of the city. There is a commodious manse in connection with the church, and the various other appointments are of the most satisfactory kind. There are about 300 communicants, a good Sabbath School, and the contributions for all purposes amounted to over \$8,000 last year. A small debt on the church is being reduced by weekly contributions, and, with the proceeds of a bazaar which the ladies have on hand, it is expected that the greater part of the debt will soon be extinguished. In speaking of church debt, I am tempted to quote a few sentences from the Rev. Mr. Macneill, the pastor. He says: "Debts are bad things, and church debts are the worst of bad things. They cripple generosity. They aim deadly blows at missionary work. They paralyze the preacher. I never like to see a man living in a grand house who won't pay his butcher's bill, and a magnificent church which has a big debt for a cupola, is, if it cannot remove it, a magnificent fraud; for it should never have been built; if it can, and won't remove it, it should be crushed to death under it. Scripture says, 'owe no man anything.' That does not mean pay your debts, but never have any debts to pay."

Mr. Macneill, an eloquent, vigorous preacher, is a native of P. E. I., and was educated in Scotland and Princeton. He preaches to one of the wealthiest and most intelligent congregations in the Church, and is highly esteemed, not only by the members of his own congregation, but by the citizens generally.

Although for picturesqueness of situation Saint John's has no superior on this continent, it is antiquated and backward, and whilst the town may be said to be over two hundred years old, and possessing great wealth, there is not a hotel worthy of the name; indeed, throughout the whole place there is only one which hangs out a shingle claiming the distinction.

A good deal has been talked and written about Newfoundland fogs and dogs, but I fortunately escaped the first, and the latter seem very scarce and dear.

December 20, 1882.

K.

#### UNIFORM EXAMINATION OF STUDENTS.

MR. EDITOR,—On page 43 of the Assembly's Minutes of 1882 it will be noticed that there is sent down as a remit to Presbyteries certain important propositions with regard to Theological Education.

As one deeply interested in this subject, I desire to press upon Presbyteries the necessity of giving this question a full, patient, and impartial consideration. Without entering into details, I may be permitted to adduce a reason in favour of the changes contemplated in the Remit. It will be observed that the proposed measure provides for a uniform test examination of students entering the ministry, and also a test of their literary attainments upon entering the study of Theology. Those familiar with the working of the present system recognize its defects in this respect, and will, I believe, welcome the proposed measure as a vast improvement.

In Presbyterian examinations for licences there is an inequality which is not desirable or fair. Some Presbyteries are severer than others, and the examinations by the same Presbyteries are by no means uniform in the case of all candidates, whilst it is not too much to say that many of the examinations are formal rather than testing. The measure proposed in the Remit does not in the least degree interfere with the Presbyterian examination, or infringe upon any Presbyterian rights, but provides that the candidate shall before being taken on trial for license, take before the Presbytery a certificate of having passed the Assembly's Examining Board. With the examinations and modes of instruction pursued in our various colleges we should not interfere, so long as they are conducted according to the principles of our Church, but that the Assembly should assure itself that a student entering upon the study of theology has satisfactory literary attainments and when entering the ministry, in addition to these, sufficient theological attainments, is not asking too much. In doing this the Assembly is discharging one of its most important duties.

The system proposed is that practically adopted by the British Churches, notably the Free Church of Scotland, the English Presbyterian Church and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. That which has been found wise and safe in these Churches will be found *mutatis mutandis* wise and safe for us. The following are part of the Free Church regulations with regard to students entering Theology. (1.) "Every student

about to enter the Divinity Hall for the first time shall be examined on his previous course of study by a Board of Examination appointed by the General Assembly, and shall produce a certificate of his having passed that examination satisfactorily to any Presbytery to which he may apply, with a view to his being allowed to begin the study of Theology."

The measure proposed in the Remit requires a certificate similar to the above, except where the applicant is a graduate of an approved University.

With regard to trials for licensure the Free Church enjoins the following: (1.) "If the Synod shall allow the student to be taken on trials, the Presbytery shall proceed therein with all convenient speed, and the Assembly appoints the following trials to be taken of the student, and in order herein mentioned, provided always that no part of the examination of a student shall be commenced by a Presbytery until the last session of his theological course shall have been concluded, and until he shall produce to the Presbytery a certificate of his having passed satisfactorily an examination upon his previous studies, by the Board of Examination appointed by the General Assembly."

Time and circumstances will not permit me to deal with this subject as I should like to have done, but I trust there will be a full discussion of the question, not only in your columns, but also in our Presbyteries. For myself I am strongly convinced that the adoption of the regulations proposed in the Remit, will greatly tend to elevate and render uniform the standard of Theological Education in our Church.

WM. D. ARMSTRONG.

Ottawa, December 26th, 1882.

#### GOSPEL WORK.

##### OXFORD AND CAMBRIDGE.

These great centres of intellectual culture have been stirred by the visits of Moody and Sankey to an extent which has surprised many. Thousands of the students have attended the meetings and many professed conversion.

"The Outlook," the organ of the English Presbyterian Church, of which Donald Fraser is editor, in an article entitled "A Good Time," descants on the revived spirit of Christian effort that is everywhere apparent in the land. We append the closing paragraph:

How significant is the reception which Mr. Moody, the American preacher, has had from graduates and undergraduates at Cambridge and Oxford! It stirs one's heart to think of those young hopes of England in thousands assembling to listen to an evangelist who never passed through any University, and has no claim to intellectual culture, but knows how to open the Scriptures, and how to speak straight to the consciences and hearts of his fellow-men. There is a religious movement at Cambridge which is full of promise. What a blessing it may prove for England if Oxford, which has been a mother of Ritualism, and then of Scepticism, should become a mother of Evangelical life and missionary ardour!

The following in "The Christian" gives a graphic sketch of scenes at Oxford, but as to numbers and results it is said to be very far below the mark:—

Everyone said it would be a failure: everyone, that is, who passes for being wise and experienced in University ways. "Oxford men," said the Don, critically, "are only touched by the presentation of clear ideas, or by the force of personal character." But the well-informed critic did not consider that some very clear ideas might be presented by an American evangelist who has not had a university education, and that even in such an earthy vessel the most perfect of all characters might be most forcibly brought home to the sympathies of young and ardent minds. The truth was, the Don was thinking of Mr. Moody, but Mr. Moody was thinking of Christ.

Now we will make our way on Monday evening, November 12th, at half past eight, to the Clarendon Rooms. Mr. Sankey is singing to a somewhat quizzical audience. There is the man well known in the High street, and in worse places, whose manners are not equal to the task of keeping his face from a contemptuous smile. There is the intellectual scholar, who is inclined to Agnosticism. There are, too, let us thank God, not a few earnest spirits as you would find in any age or any society. The room is half full, there are about 200 of the University men present. Mr. Moody has to speak amidst the constant titterings and whisperings of the *bons esprits*. It is a hard struggle, and even his brave spirit seems a little cowed.

That night little more is done than to bring out a considerable number of Christian men who will help in the singing to-morrow.

On Tuesday it is different. At the close of the meeting the speaker asks those who wish to be Christians to express their willingness. There is a pause, then a faint "I will;" then another, then another, and another. These men are very much in earnest; they know that the sneer of "mood-ing" will probably be muttered against them in Hall next night, and that possibly the "men of light and leading" in the college will "cut" them. But the simple presentation of the clear idea, "will you or will you not take Christ?" and the dawning sense of the presence of that perfect Saviour—the two have broken down even Oxford reserve.

On Wednesday we seem worse off than ever. After speaking to a larger but more impatient audience, Mr. Moody finds in the inquiry-room itself some deliberate disturbers, men well known in the sports of the University, who include in their sports the sport of all things divine. He bears down upon them personally. He carries one famous cricketer into a corner, and there makes him for once in his life realise that "God is not mocked: whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."

But now, what can Mr. Moody have been doing to the men? On Thursday the room rapidly fills with undergraduates; the disturbers of last night come in and take a foremost place in the room, quietly, and even reverently. The sea of intelligent faces is turned towards the speaker, and he preaches to them on "making excuses." There is no attempt at critical or philosophical argument; but plain, straightforward, shrewd, and sometimes very humorous common sense. But that is not all. Again and again the audience is electrified and solemnized as the bare, clear truth flashes upon them. No spun-out manuscript sermon from decorous surpliced preacher in a distant pulpit, but here a man, a very honest and earnest man, face to face with them, searching them with his glance, pointing at them personally, unveiling their hearts to them in a way that is strange, because it is new. At the end, Mr. Moody says: "I'm much obliged to you men for giving me a hearing; there's thirty or forty of you here who promised me you'd come to-night and listen fair, and you've done it. I'm much obliged." There is a dead silence. Several heads are hung down in shame. But then forty or fifty follow Mr. Moody to the inquiry-room, and of these a large proportion do very boldly and simply give themselves to Christ.

But now, Friday night, the Clarendon Rooms are too small; and the Town-hall is nearly filled with a University audience. Rev. R. B. Girdlestone presides, as he has done each night. Several well-known "Dons" are on the platform. Mr. Moody urges on the men the duty of confession, and at the close nearly forty men publicly come forward and kneel at the forms in front, and many of them rise from their knees feeling that this is the beginning of a new life to them.

And so what "every one" said didn't come true at all. The scheme was not a failure. And why? because God has said that He "hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise."

These great things have been done not in the "college fanes" by

"The noise their high-built organs make,  
Which with thunder-rolling music shake  
The prophets blazoned on the pances,"

but in the most secular of rooms, with an American harmonium and the simplest of hymns. The preacher was not a Dean nor a Provost, a Warden or a Master, but a simple, earnest man who is showing to a half-sceptical and half-astonished world, what wonders can be wrought by "one life wholly consecrated to God." This has been a memorable week for Oxford.

WHEN the pastor has performed the (funeral) service of Christian comfort, and uttered words of admonition at the home or in the church, there should be nothing further needed or expected, either to honour the dead or admonish the living.

PEACE is better than joy. Joy is a very uneasy guest, and is always on tiptoe to depart. It tires and wears us out, and yet keeps us ever fearing that the next moment it will be gone. Peace is not so. It comes more quietly, it stays more contentedly, and it never exhausts our strength, nor gives us one anxious, forecasting thought. Therefore, let us have peace.