

Contributions.

Winter Birds—Chick-a-dee-dees.

PETER ANDERSON.

Where do you come from, chick-a-dee-dees,
Floating and drifting all day through
the trees;
Flying through treetops all over the
wood,
Carefully tracing their trunks for your
food,
Turning and tossing your heads with a
wise,
Questioning look in your bright little
eyes?
Your forest home in the light of day
Looks bright with the sun on the
branches gray,
But where will you pass the bitter
night,
When the world has rolled him away
from your sight,
When the owl fits out his noiseless
wing,
And the storm and the darkness their
dangers bring,
When the prowling owl with his evil eyes
Into the place of your resting pries,
And with horrid beak and cruel claws
Bids your heart in its beating pause?

Do you watch all night with a wary eye
On your perch in the rocking treetops
high,
Through the moonless nights in the
forest dim,
On the leeward side of a mossy limb?
O the bitter nights, when the winds that
blow
Through the branches, bending to and
fro
Are the very breath of the frozen snow
That has buried the northern world
away,
To the howling horrors of Hudson's
Bay,
That for days and days they have
drifted o'er
From the lashing ocean, off Labrador;
How do you live through them—Chick-
a-dees,
In the swaying tops of the storm-toss'd
trees?

That icy air with its iron grasp,
Would crush the life from the
strongest man,
While you sit all night in its cruel
clasp
And your blood runs warm—as it
ever ran;
That frail wee body retains its heat,
That fluff of feathers is breathing
still;
Though the bravest heart might cease
to beat,
And the blood in a giant's frame
congeal;
And at day's first dawning gray and
cold,
Your note comes ringing from far
and near,
The waking voice of the forest old,
Its morning song of faith and of
cheer.
Surely the one who cares for us all,
Cares for you, brave birdie, then;
The Eye that heedeth the sparrow's fall,
Still keepeth a watch o'er the ways
of men.

The snowbird is scouring the field for
the weeds,
That the deepening snow-drifts are
covering over;
The sparrows are searching the barns
for the seeds,
Of the Canada thistle, the cockle and
clover;
But my bright little friend you are
braver than these
In your home far away in the old
forest trees.
Hepworth, Ont.

"Feed My Lambs."

This is one of the commands our
Lord gave to St. Peter and it has come
ringing down to us through all these
ages. But, alas! how few shepherds
have given the lambs of their flocks the
food the Good Shepherd provided for
them—"the sincere milk of the word."
In our never-failing guide book He
shows them that when a lamb goes
astray He went out on the mountains
wild and bare through the rain and
sleet, peering into the gathering dark-
ness, ever and anon listening for the
cry of the lost one. After long and

wearisome search he finds it. And
how tenderly he lifts it out of the
thorn-bush and lovingly places its tired
head on his shoulder, then hastens
home rejoicing, for the lost one is found.
How different is the care of many of
our shepherds to day, who, when they
see a lamb has not come home, they
stand at the door of the sheepfold and
look out into the darkness and gloom
and say: "Well, I told them there
were briar hedges and crevices deep
enough to bury a dozen of them. Yes,
and I told them all about the wolves in
sheep's clothing, so if they are killed
or eaten up it is their own fault. Their
blood be on their own heads. How-
ever, if they do not come home I'll
teach them a lesson. I guess they
won't dare step out of my path again."
So he sits down and waits with dark
lowering brow. Presently along comes
two of the stray lambs, utterly uncon-
scious of the threatening storm.
Straightway the shepherd takes down
his long staff and with the crooked end
he punishes them to his heart's content.
The poor helpless animals are power-
less to resist. He is the shepherd.
Then his assistant comes and gives
them his share, telling them, "It was
a most un-lamb-like thing for them to
do. The idea of them straying away
without the dear, kind shepherd, who
had cared for them so long, and indeed
he never heard of anything so ungrac-
ious, and hoped in future they would
walk meekly along by his side like de-
cent lambs." (The shepherd ought to
have been with the lambs. He failed
in his duty.) *It was not a spirit of
disobedience that tempted the lambs to
stray. They were hungry. The shep-
herds had forgotten their Master's com-
mand, "Feed my lambs," but from
time to time had thrown them a few
husks. Of the bright young flock of a
few summers ago only a handful of
lean, forlorn sheep remains. Some
have died of hunger, some of cold, and
others were left to wander on the bleak
mountainside and are now forever lost.
And unless the shepherd wake up to
the true state of affairs and "give them
their meat in due season," "The Lord
of that servant shall come in a day
when he looketh not for him and in an
hour when he is not aware of, and shall
cut him asunder and appoint him his
portion with the hypocrites."
"If you love me feed my lambs."
God grant that hereafter we may all
prepare our hearts to do His will that
it may be said of us: "Blessed is that
man whom his Lord when he cometh
shall find so doing." M. C. F.*

For We Are Saved by Hope.

PETER ANDERSON.

There is no attribute of humanity,
no faculty of the human mind, to which
we are so much indebted in our life
journey, which does so much to light
up its dark places and make it tolera-
ble, as the faculty which we call hope.
Men have long recognized this and
from time immemorial have spoken and
sung its praises. The poet Campbell
has given us a long poem on the pleas-
ures of hope, in which he has said
many fine and true things regarding it;
but no other man ever has said, or ever
will say anything which so exalts and
glorifies it as this saying of Paul's: "For
we are saved by hope." Without the
assistance of hope no human being has
ever made a success of life even from a
mere worldly point of view, and never
will; and if we are saved from mak-
ing a failure of this life—saved from
utter shipwreck amidst its adverse cur-
rents and tossing tempests—we can
truly say we are saved by hope. And
with what an unlimited supply of hope
we nearly all commence our life journey!
Age and experience may warn us that

we will find the day of life a short and
troubled one, but to us it seems almost
interminable, a day upon which the
sun will hardly ever set. Others may
have found its morning brief and the
burden and heat of the day hard to be
borne; may have found that the journey
through middle life had to be made
over a dusty highway beneath a burn-
ing sun and with weary, aching feet,
and that losses and disappointments
were common to all. But hope whis-
pers to us that life's morning hours are
only too long; that not until we begin
the battle for ourselves will we truly
begin to live. If others found the
battle a hard and losing one, it was
chiefly their own fault, and we will show
to the world a more excellent way.
Others have married men and women
composed of the clay common to ordi-
nary mortals, but our husbands and
wives shall be of finer material, and the
tenor of our lives shall flow peacefully
and blissfully on without a sorrow or a
jar. Our business shall prosper. Our
lands shall be of the richest and our
crops the very best. Experience soon
begins to teach us the lesson which we
never fully learn, that we will find life
after all very much what humanity has
ever found it, and that there is no royal
road from the cradle to the grave.
Somehow our youthful hopes fall to
materialize, and as we near the meri-
dian of life we find that we too are far
out on the same old dusty highway
which our fathers trod, and bending be-
neath the same old burdens which
bowed them down. But let come
what will, hope still saves us, and the
unlimited supply with which we com-
menced life continues—generally—to
be sufficient for every draft made upon
it down to the very end. There are a
few exceptions to the rule. Once in a
while some poor souls find that they
have overdrawn their account, and these
cases serve to show us clearly how true
it is, even as regards this life, that we are
saved by hope. Let the mere world-
ling lose his hope for the future of the
present life and he is lost. Strip him
of every dollar and of all else upon
which he has set his heart, but leave
him a hope of retrieving his losses and
he will go to work with good will and
again take his place amongst men. De-
prive him of that and in all likelihood
he will commit suicide. You will un-
derstand that I am not including the
loss of earthly hope natural to extreme
old age.

Now I believe that a real analogy
exists between the effects of the loss of
temporal and of eternal hope, and that
just as the loss of temporal or natural
hope is followed by physical suicide, so
the loss of spiritual hope—of the hope
of a pure, sinless and eternal life beyond
the grave will surely lead to spiritual
suicide. It is quite true that many
who call themselves agnostics are men
who lead exemplary moral lives. But
these are men who have not lost all
hope of a life beyond death. On the
contrary most of them, and I believe all
who do lead good lives, long for and
partly expect it. But the man who defi-
nitely abandons all hope of eternal life is
nearly sure to make utter shipwreck of
his spiritual nature; while on the other
hand such a hope, if it is at all genuine,
must have an effect inconceivably great
in making us fit for such a life. "It
doth not yet appear what we shall be, but
we know that when He shall appear
we shall be like Him, for we shall see
Him as He is. And every one that
hath this hope in Him, purifieth him-
self, even as He is pure." But the
apostle is writing here more particu-
larly of the resurrection from the dead,
and the thought in his mind seems to
be that it is from death that hope saves
us. In the age and nation in which we
live immortality is so generally consid-

ered inherent in humanity—something
to which we are entitled and which,
indeed, we cannot escape, that salvation
from death does not at first perhaps
strike us as a very great salvation. But
to the people to whom Paul wrote both
at Rome and Corinth—people to whom
the idea of a life beyond death was new
and who had never dreamed of the res-
urrection of the body, the hope of sal-
vation from death would be the hope
of a very great salvation. And if we
but consider the universal reign of
death over all life that has ever existed
upon this earth—if we judge from all
history and all experience—death still
reigns supreme. The history of our
race is the history of dead men, dead
dynasties and dead civilizations. If
we go down through the crust of our
earth to the granite framework which it
overlies and turn over strata after strata
as we ascend to its surface as we
would turn the pages of a book, we
find that we are but exploring the burial
place of every form of life that has ever
existed. That not on the surface alone
are we treading over graves, but right
down to the solid framework, where
countless centuries ago the lowest form
of animal life appeared, we have always
beneath us one vast city of the dead,
"dead individuals, dead species, dead
creations, a universe of death," until
we ask in dismay, Is there to be no end
nor limit to the empire of death? Must
all life go down before him for ever?
I know not how it appears to others,
but to me it seems to be a great thing
—a grand and glorious thing to be
saved from the power—rescued out of
the dark dominion of the insatiable
monster that men call death. Scarcely
hath it appeared to me what the future
life may be, but if we are indeed sons
of God and joint heirs with Christ, may
we not hope for great things.

I like to dream sometimes, to go out
on a clear starlit night and look up
at

"All those isles of light
So wildly, so spiritually bright."

I remember that nearly all of these are
suns around which other systems of
worlds are circling. But the most pow-
erful telescope which man can construct
but reveals deeper depths out of which
the rays of remoter suns are streaming,
and that around these too still other
worlds are revolving; that the space oc-
cupied by these blazing suns and
whirling worlds is infinite, a sea without
a shore, and that our Father owns them
all. I think I begin to understand at
such times the meaning of the words of
Christ: "In my Father's house are
many mansions." I have even dared
to dream sometimes that I, who have
so longed for time and opportunity to
travel over this fair world in which we
dwell, to visit all its beauties and sub-
limities, may some time in the eternal
years, when I shall have grown strong
and true and pure, be given the free-
dom of my Father's house—liberty to
go where I will amongst the many
mansions and to see all the in-
conceivable glory and grandeur and
beauty of the universe of God; when
"Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight and prayer to praise."

Selections.

Congregational Club.

THE RECENT TALK OF PRESBYTERIAN
UNION COMMENTED UPON.

At a meeting of the Montreal Con-
gregational Club last night the action
of the ten Congregational ministers
who signed a memorial seeking union
with the Presbyterians was discussed.

The chairman, the Rev. Prof. War-
riner, explained the action and what
they had so far done, showing that the
Rev. Mr. Burton had read a paper be-

fore the Toronto Congregational Min-
isterial Association, and that the sug-
gestions of this paper were not adopted
by the Association. This was substan-
tially the same paper presented to the
Synod. The committee appointed by
the Synod asked Mr. Burton and those
with him what propositions he had to
make, but having none, after some
talk the meeting dispersed without
doing anything. Two Congregational
brethren, who had been appointed by
the self-constituted committee of min-
isters to act with them, declined, as they
had no authority from the churches.

When the situation had been thus
explained, Mr. C. T. Williams stated
that he had always been a Congrega-
tionalist, and union or non-union he
would continue the same. The Rev.
Thomas Hall stated that the ultra-inde-
pendency of the churches in England
was hardly suited for Canada. We
should have the form modified by
councils that prevails in the United
States. In the present state of Con-
gregationalism in Canada something
had to be done, and although he believed
it should be a union, it was not union
with Presbyterianism; that would be
absorption. England, that had helped
our home mission cause so long, had
ceased to do so, turning her attention
to the continent and the rich churches
of Australia. He therefore favored
closer connection with the large Con-
gregational constituency to the south.
There our polity prevailed and thither-
ward our best men drifted; could they
not reciprocate and send us a mis-
sionary superintendent and means to
carry on successfully our home mission
work.

Mr. Cushing spoke at length of the
advances Congregationalism was mak-
ing and how it had made more ad-
vancement than any of the smaller de-
nominations except the Jews, and they
were largely swelled by immigrants
from Russia. He, too, favored mak-
ing overtures to the Congregationalists
of the United States.

Mr. R. W. McLachlan spoke of the
three great obstacles standing in the
way of union of the Congregationalists
and Presbyterians—Church courts, the
confession, and an unconverted mem-
bership. If we go into the history of
the church from which our Canadian
Presbyterian church has sprung we find
that in all its divisions and sub-divisions,
no matter what the tyranny of the pres-
bytery, there has been no resentment
at the Presbyterian form. It has been
retained with all its powers by the new
church, and, although the powers of
these courts has been somewhat relaxed
of late, still the machinery is there,
which can be made as tyrannical as
ever with one or two turns of the screw.
Then the Confession was, in the eyes of
many, assacred as the Bible; all attempts
at revision have been looked upon as
vandalism. Thus, although the wording
was conceded to be antiquated and the
statements too rigid and cast iron, there
was no chance for change there. Then
the third, although most likely to be
changed, was an old custom, and in-
stilled into all the usages of the
church. Anyone who had reached the
years of discretion and could get
through the Shorter Catechism was a
fit and proper candidate for membership.
Thus, having to give up all these points,
all the freedom and truth which we
have so long enjoyed would have to be
given up. The closer union with
United States Congregationalism would
help us in many ways, and an effort
should be made to bring it about.

Mr. S. P. Leet said too much was
being made of this affair; as these men
had no influence or authority they
could only speak for themselves; even
their own churches were opposed to
their action. He thought the real diffi-