

There will be public worship in St. Andrew's Church on Wednesday next, at 11 a.m., and 3 p.m., a day, by Her Majesty's Proclamation, to be observed as a day of Humiliation and Prayer.

In accordance with the resolution of Synod of 11th January last a collection will be taken up after each service in aid of the Patriotic Fund.

Dr. Mathieson is aware that the greater number of the members of St. Andrew's Church have already liberally contributed to that Fund. From them no more is to be expected than what their generous sympathies with the sufferers and their own patriotic feelings may dictate, as a supplemental contribution. Yet he hopes to be able to adopt in its spirit the language of Gideon to the chiding Ephraimites:—"Is not the gleanings of the grapes of Ephraim better than the vintage of Abi-ezer." He is persuaded that there are others who have not yet had an opportunity of contributing to that noble charity, and are disposed to "chide with him sharply," saying, "Why hast thou served us thus, that thou calledst us not," to discharge a sacred duty. They will have an opportunity of doing so on Wednesday after Divine service, and he would press the obligation on them to contribute to the Fund from a grateful sense of their own security, which, under God, arises to some extent from the generous sacrifices of the army,—by appealing to their loyalty, to their patriotism, and, above all, because it is a sacred duty, and a delightful one, thus to contribute to so noble a cause as the relief of the widows and orphans of our gallant soldiers.

THE PROVINCIAL FAST.

We are rejoiced to state that this day of humiliation and prayer, the 18th ultimo, was very generally observed in this city—places of business being closed, and services being conducted in all the Protestant Churches. In the Jewish Synagogue also, that people assembled. In the Roman Catholic Churches we learn also that High Mass was celebrated, so that the whole community with an unusual concord united in observance of the day. We understand that it has been likewise generally kept in a becoming manner throughout the Province. We are indebted to the columns of the Montreal Gazette for the ensuing condensed summary of a powerful discourse delivered by the Rev. Dr. Mathieson on that day.

ST. ANDREW'S CHURCH MONTREAL.

In this church the Rev. A. Mathieson, D. D., preached to a large assemblage a very powerful and eloquent discourse—as is his wont—from the text Isaiah 58 chap., 6 verse:—

"6.—Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?"

"7.—Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked that thou cover him: and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?"

The Reverend Doctor, in opening, alluded to their being that day assembled in the house of God in conformity with the Royal Proclamation to observe the day as a day of general fast and

humiliation—of prayer to Almighty God for the success of Her Majesty's arms in the great struggle in which she is engaged for the defence of the liberties of her people and of the civilized nations of Europe; and for prayer for the speedy attainment of an honourable and lasting peace. He referred to his people having voluntarily assembled for a similar purpose on a previous occasion, and expressed his earnest prayer that the Hearer and Answerer of supplications would graciously listen to their prayers, and with His free Spirit enlarge their hearts, and purify and cherish those holy and generous sentiments, and that active beneficence, in which He himself had declared that the acceptableness of the Fast consisted. The preacher then referred to the violations of good taste and the levity with which such appointments as that of that day had been ridiculed, and to the philosophic gravity with which such means had been recommending for averting human calamity as human wisdom would naturally select and human power apply. He specially alluded for the answer given by the then Home Secretary, Lord Palmerston, to the respectful application of the Presbytery of Edinburgh for the appointment of a day of prayer and humiliation in a time of national calamity. He also had not entirely out of view certain flippant imitators among those who conduct our public journals. It was painful to think that such sentiments should emanate from one holding so high a position among the counsellors of a Christian nation, but it was disgusting to peruse the feeble remarks of men who, desiring to be teachers of public morality, and guides of public opinion, understood "neither what they say nor whereof they affirm." There are many who laugh to scorn the idea that God exercises constant and immediate control over the affairs of men, and that every act, both in its operations and consequences, is determined by Him. They may, indeed, acknowledge that God is the Creator, and in a certain sense the Governor of the Universe; but, instead of regarding Him as continually upholding all things, and by constant and repeated acts bringing about whatever comes to pass, they look to Him through the medium of second causes, they put far from them Him in whom they live and move and have their being, and account for the various phenomena, both in the spiritual and material world, not as the result of His immediate agency, but as the necessary effects of the constitutional laws which He imposed on all the works of His hands when He formed them by the word of His power. This is the philosophy of men, but not that of the Bible, nor that of experience. Were the operations of Providence attended to, it would be seen that in innumerable instances the course of events was by a supreme invisible power so directed as to accomplish some great step in the progress of human affairs, with which they seemed to have no immediate connection. Besides, the ground which such philosophy assumes involved the philosophical absurdity that matter could act independently of intelligence, or that creatures could exist without the immediate and constant support of Divine power. Nor could it be conceived how the great ends of the Creator, in giving being to things animate or inanimate, could be served amidst the multiplicity of subordinate agencies employed unless the Almighty Himself guided and directed all things. If the Bible be received as the Word of God, not a doubt could be entertained that God ruleth in the kingdom of men. Its declarations were clear and explicit. He is the gracious Author of all blessings. Adversity cometh from Him alone. Severe dispensations are by God's command. When war or famine or pestilence break upon a nation, God sent them forth. When arrested, it is at the very time he appointed, and the cessation is not brought about by the counsels, or the decision, or the energies of men, but by the sovereign fiat of the Lord God of Hosts. The Divine Government being essentially beneficent, such visitations may prove the most significant tokens of mercy and love. It is only in the light which the Gospel sheds that we can thus contemplate them. Events may fall out

contrary to our expectation, darkness might in human sight invest the Divine procedure, yet there is the most perfect harmony in the operations of Providence and Grace. It may be with some gracious intention that God hath permitted the sad disasters; which have befallen. The lives of so many brave men may be the immense price paid, but, if the result should prove the extension of Christ's kingdom over the World, and the spread of Christian light and liberty to all mankind, how noble the sacrifice by which it was achieved. If the views of Divine Government he had enunciated were correct, if God alone is the Ruler of the nations, then the national calamities are loud and importunate calls to national humiliation and prayer—to return to the allegiance of Him whose authority they had denied. There cannot be two opinions among those, who receive the Scriptures as the Word of God, as to the beneficial results of every act of recognition of the Divine supremacy; and, when life's drama had drawn to a close, it would be found that the prayers of the righteous had been of incalculable magnitude as subordinate agencies. There had been much idle talk about the appointment of Fasts. "Why," say the the wise men of the world, "sanctify a Fast, and call the inhabitants of the land together to cry unto the Lord, when you ought to be up and doing, to put forth your own energies, and depend on your own exertions." This may be plausible, but is founded on an assumption inconsistent with the true nature of religious solemnities. Fasting in the Scripture term is an act of deep humiliation before God, a solemn acknowledgement of His supremacy, and our dependence on Him, accompanied with confession of sin and prayer for pardon. Under the Jewish economy it was accompanied with rigid abstinence from food, and many external indications of profound sorrow. Under the Christian economy it ought not to be burdened with ceremonial austerities; the worship the Lord requires is in spirit and in truth. Christian fasting is more of a spiritual than a bodily exercise; its effects the practical exercise of the holy feelings it cherishes. The prophet in the text beautifully portrays it. Taking, then, the Scriptural view of the matter in the trying circumstances in which the empire is placed, is it not a duty to come before the Lord and ask His gracious aid, because that He, and He alone, can give success to the fleets and armies of our sovereign. In times of national calamity humiliation is a duty. It is not patriotic or Christian to shift the responsibility to others; all are to blame, all enough to be humbled. Public acknowledgement of God's sovereignty is a national duty. What was the spirit and temper of the national mind? The fleets went forth in nobler array and higher equipment than any that ever before swept the seas. Men of courage and tried naval skill commanded them, and the nation looked proudly on. It thought of Nelson and former glories, and felt confident in the security of the wooden walls, and that a good account would be given of their work when the enemy dared to meet them. Did the nation then think of God? The fleet went forth. The enemy refused to meet them in open sea—a summer spent inactively, and they returned. The nation is humbled, and reluctantly the cry is extorted from her—"The hand of the Lord hath done this."

But her armies went forth to battle in noble array. In the conviction that all had been done that could be done to preserve peace, and that the nation was forced into the struggle for the defence of her oppressed ally, and of the liberties of the nation, they went forth resolved to do their duty whatever perils or sufferings might befall. Well might Britain repose her confidence in her warriors, who, to their hereditary valor and high aspirations, added the consciousness of a righteous cause. Proudly did she look on, as troop after troop defiled and high and bright rose her hopes as she dreamt that her sons would add new laurels to her brow. If one commingling feeling of distrust was there it was that the master spirit—the noble patriot, was not there to marshal them. But under the leadership of one who had been the companion of