

## STATIONARY NONCONFORMITY.

It appears from the reports and statistics of the various Nonconformist bodies, says the *British Weekly*, "that they are all either standing still or losing ground. In England the Wesleyan Methodists and the Primitive Methodists have owned to a slight decrease of members during the year. The Baptists have not increased in numbers, and in Scotland the increase of the Free Church and the United Presbyterian Church has scarcely kept pace with the population." This confession in a journal which aspires to represent cultured Nonconformity, must, we imagine, be accepted as an impartial witness to a truth, which, if it had been enunciated by a Church newspaper, would at once have been attributed to jealousy or party spirit, but which cannot under the circumstances of its publication be seriously called in question. If, then, Dissent is, as the writer states, at a standstill or losing ground, how is the fact to be explained? In England and Scotland, the *British Weekly* tells us, "the State churches are said to be increasing," and although it qualifies the sentence by affirming that there are no accurate statistics, it is obvious enough that it would never have chronicled the fact as a fact if it had not believed it to be capable of proof. But before we proceed to consider the situation which is thus almost officially placed before us, we may point out that the admission of the *British Weekly* really means very much more than it says, for if we take as proven the statement that all the Nonconformist bodies are either standing still or losing ground, it must be plain to every one who is conversant with the meaning of statistics that to be stationary in the face of the rapid growth of population which still marks the English nation, involves in effect a rapid retrogression. That the increase of strength in what it invidiously terms the State Church, is enough to account for the decadence of Dissent, the *British Weekly* declines to believe, and, strange to say, it prefers to ascribe it to the general decay of religion in which State churches are constantly losing members who fall back into the world. This attempt to escape from the horns of the dilemma is more ingenious than ingenuous, and we can afford to make the writer a present of his deduction with the simple remark that if it could be shown that there had been a falling off in the strength of the Church, we believe that the majority of Churchmen would prefer to attribute it to the growth of religious, as distinguished from political dissent, rather than to the falling back of the religiously minded to the world.

We hold that the *British Weekly's* evidence that Nonconformity is at a standstill ought to be accepted by Churchmen with satisfaction. If the Church believes in her divine mission; if she holds, as the *imprimatur* of her book of common prayer justifies her in holding, that she is the legitimate representative of "the Church" in England, and is not simply the Church of England—and it is by no means a distinction without a difference; if she attaches a real meaning to the promise made by her Bishops at the time of their consecration to "banish and drive away all strange doctrine," then it can only be a matter of thankfulness when the Church is drawing within her fold those who from various causes, have left it, or have grown up in a sort of hereditary alienation from her communion and obedience. To say this ought not to lay us open to a charge of any lack of Christian charity. We, at any rate, in forming what we

hold to be a conclusion more than justified by the premises so obligingly placed before us by the *British Weekly*, do not hesitate to express the conviction that the absorption of religious Dissenters in the Church is only a question of time, and that in proportion to the growth of spirituality and self-sacrificing work on the part of both clergy and laity, to the unflinching teaching of Church doctrine as Bible truth, and to the cultivation among churchfolk of that clannish feeling and sympathetic touch which are far more common among some sections of the Dissenters than they are among ourselves, will be the ratio of Nonconformist adhesions. In many cases the entire neglect of infant baptism and the growing disregard of adult baptisms by some of the most influential sects makes the act of coming over to the Church a very real admission to the Divine Kingdom and fellowship, and it would be an easy task to quote cases in which the yearning for sacramental union with Christ, and for the fulness of spiritual blessings which the Church has to offer, forms the actual motive which leads to the application for enrolment.

That the *British Weekly* should advocate a union of the Separatists as a means of staying the progress of their decay is in itself a significant proof of the depth of its conviction that Dissent, as a vitalising force, is on the wane, and of the consequent necessity of amalgamation: our hope and belief is that the movement towards union with the Church is not only, as we have suggested, the true explanation of the decadence which has suggested the remarks of our contemporary, but is the result of the revival of spiritual life in the Church and of earnest missionary effort among her members, and that it is therefore calculated to bring about many blessed results.—C. M. in *Church Bells*.

## Home &amp; Foreign Church News.

From our own Correspondents.

## DOMINION.

## MONTREAL.

The Bishop's Appointments.—For August and September, 1887, are:

- August 14.—Hull, Rev. F. R. Smith.  
 " 14.—Chelsea, Rev. George Johnson.  
 " 12.—North Wakefield, Rev. C. Boyd, B.A.  
 " 17.—Alwyn, Rev. W. P. Chambers, M.A.  
 " 19.—Wright, Rev. W. P. Chambers, M.A.  
 " 20.—River Desert, Rev. H. Plaisted, M.A.  
 " 22.—Alwyn, Rev. W. P. Chambers, M.A.  
 " 23.—Alleyne, Rev. W. P. Chambers, M.A.  
 " 24.—Cawwood, Rev. W. P. Chambers, M.A.  
 " 25.—Thorne Centre, Rev. N. A. F. Bourne, B.A.  
 " 26.—Leslie, Rev. N. A. F. Bourne, B.A.  
 " 27.—Thorne West, Rev. N. A. F. Bourne, B.A.  
 " 28.—Bryson, Rev. A. A. Allen, M.A.  
 " 28.—Clarke's, Rev. A. A. Allen, M.A.  
 " 29.—Portage du Fort, Rev. A. A. Allen, M.A.  
 " 30.—Clarendon, (Shawville), Rev. W. A. Naylor, M.A.  
 " 31.—Fort Coulonge, Rev. W. A. Naylor, M.A.  
 September 1.—North Clarendon, Rev. W. A. Naylor, M.A.  
 " 2.—Bristol, Mr. Beattie, Catechist.  
 " 3.—Onslow, Rev. A. B. Given.  
 " 5.—Gardley, Rev. G. Smith.  
 " 6.—Shawville, Deanery Meeting.  
 " 7.—St. Augustines, Eardley, Rev. G. Smith.  
 " 7.—Aylmer, Rev. T. G. Cunningham, B.C.

## ONTARIO.

BARRIEFIELD.—The thanksgiving service for the Queen's Jubilee was held in the church, Sunday. Special psalms, lessons, and collect were read. The jubilee hymn, composed by the Bishop of Ossory, was sung, and also the national anthem. There was a large congregation in the morning, when the sermon was preached by the Rev. Professor Jones, on Proverbs xxv. 5, "His Throne shall be established in righteousness." As the parishioners of St. Mark's are for the most part farmers living some distance from the church, the evening Sunday congregation is always small. On last Sunday evening, however, it was materially increased by a detachment of soldiers from the camp. The hymns of the morning were repeated, and the sermon was preached by the Rev. R. T. Burns, on Isaiah lx. 3, "The Gentiles shall come to Thy light and kings to the brightness of Thy rising."

St. Mark's has been lately much improved. The wood-work, with the exception of the pews, has been painted in the style of decorative art which has the effect of brightening the whole interior. The next thing will be to kalsomine the walls. Money has been presented by a member of the congregation to buy ornamental iron standards and a new communion rail. By the confirmations held in the last two years, the number of communicants has been much increased, and now stands at 95, of whom 51 received on the 12th June, the Sunday following the last confirmation. There is a larger Sunday school than has ever been known in the history of the parish.

The bishop's commissary, Ven. Archdeacon Lander, informs us that owing to the satisfactory condition of the mission fund four new missions have been formed, and that there are nine missions now requiring active young clergymen.

OTTAWA.—To the Clergy.—Dear Brethren,—The bishop desires me to let you know that he will be prepared to hold confirmations in the months of September and October. Will you kindly inform me if you require him for a confirmation in your parish.  
 J. S. LAUDER.

## TORONTO.

The nineteenth annual concert and distribution of prizes took place at the Bishop Strachan School for young ladies on Tuesday evening, when a large gathering of ladies and gentlemen, the friends of the school and of the pupils, were assembled. Of the clergy there were present the Right Rev. the Bishop of Toronto, President of the School Corporation; the Very Rev. Dean Geddes, the Ven. Archdeacon Lander, the Rev. Dr. Wilson, of New York, the Rev. Messrs. Broughall, Davies, Cayley, Crompton, Middleton, Pearson, Williams, C. E. Thompson, Ford, Sweeney, Lewis, Hobson, Taylor, Nattress and others. The customary programme of music, song and recitation was performed with skill and spirit, and gave much pleasure to the audience. Although several rooms were thrown into one by the removal of the folding doors and partitions, it was with difficulty that the guests were seated. The school possesses a very fine property on the College avenue, while its continued success and the good-will which it has conciliated under the able management of the Lady Principal and her assistants, should induce the school council to increase their accommodation. The reputation of the school is now made, and with some larger rooms added, the building would be perfect for its purpose. During the last term there were on the rolls 112 pupils. The prizes were presented to the fortunate ones by the Bishop of Toronto and several of the clergy and laity who were called upon to assist him in the pleasant task, and the opportunity was used not only of congratulating the recipients, but also of bearing strong testimony to the valuable and thorough work that is being done. The examiners who decided the results are University men, and with few exceptions were not members of the school staff. Several of the young ladies are now about to pass the University and other examinations for which they have been undergoing training, and in which their predecessors have been so successful, as shown by the honour list.

EXAMINERS.—In Addition to the Resident Staff—Revs. J. Pearson, C. H. Mockridge, D.D., A. Boys, M. A., J. C. Roper, R. L. Montizambert, G. Nattress, C. E. Kendrick; W. H. Van der Smitten, M.A., J. C. Dunlop, W. N. Ponton, M.A., D. R. Keys, B.A., G. N. Beaumont, B.A., Miss H. E. Acres.

PRIZE LIST.—Elementary Class.—General Proficiency, Agnes Macnally.  
 Junior Class.—General Proficiency, Amy Wright; English Subjects, Fanny Hedley; Scripture History, Amy Wright; Church Catechism, Fanny Hedley;