

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

THE OPPORTUNITIES OF OLD AGE.

There is a dignity in age which should command respect. The inspired Book says, "The hoary head is a crown of glory," and yet old age is often spoken of slightly, and treated disrespectfully. This is greatly to be deplored, both because the younger folk lose so much of the benefit which they might receive from the varied experiences of those who have preceded them in the painful and dangerous journey of life, and because the elder ones are deprived of the sweet companionship of those who could, if they would, do so much to brighten their waning years.

There is no more harmonious, helpful friendship, than when the old and young walk together in loving confidence. True, the younger must be patient with the infirmities and conservatism of age, as it, in turn, needs to be tolerant with the impetuosity and enthusiasm of youth.

We cannot help thinking that in many instances, elderly people are themselves to blame for much of the indifference which is shown to them, and to which they are naturally so sensitive; inasmuch as they often withdraw into themselves, and do not accord to those who are coming on after them, and who are undergoing experiences like their own, that generous sympathy and consideration which would draw them closer together. Who should be so sympathizing in times of sorrow as those who have known trouble and suffered grief? Who so fitted to understand the peculiarities of childhood, to have patience with the waywardness and stormy sports of youth, to listen kindly and wisely to the confidences of shy lovers, or to advise with, and assist in mapping out the future of the young couple just starting in their new life, as those who having gone before them, step by step, know by experience the conditions and needs of each and every period?

Removed as it were from the more active duties of life, they have time and opportunities to cultivate friendships with the younger ones, which may be even warm and abiding, and, having gained their loving respect, to drop words of counsel which shall be of infinite service to them in the future. We often hear elderly persons say with a weary sigh, "I seem to be of no use to any one. Nobody appears to care about me." This, we are sure, need not be. Love begets love, and there is no reason why grandpa and grandma may not be the centre of a faithful, loving circle, consulted in every difficulty, entrusted with all the little secrets, and shares in all the pleasures of the family group. But they must make the advances, and be always the same true, disinterested friends. Though young blood be hot, and impatient words may sometimes be spoken, yet in time they will be regretted, forgiveness sought, and peace restored.

We have known the most beautiful friendships of this sort. We recall especially, the love of one dear boy—who has now passed away in all his youth and promise—for his grandmother. It was a warm and enduring attachment. When discouraged, or sick, no place was so attractive as "grandmother's room," or so comfortable as "grandmother's bed." Many a confidential talk they had together, and she had opportunity to give him many a word of caution as well as of cheer. And now that his chair is vacant, one of her pleasantest recollections is the memory of his devoted affection for her.

PAYING SUBSCRIPTIONS TO CHURCHES.

In the lax morality of the times there is occasionally a want of conscientiousness even in church members, especially in the matter of "paying subscriptions." A man hears a rousing sermon, which makes him "feel good," and in the ardour of the moment puts down a generous subscription. So far all is right. But is there not sometimes hidden away in his inner consciousness a secret feeling, which he does not dare to confess even to himself, that if for any cause he regrets his impulsive act, he can "take it back," pleading that he is "dissatisfied," or has changed his mind? This is a species of dishonesty which is condemned alike by the Bible and by the law of the land. No man is under compulsion to give or to subscribe. But when he does subscribe, he is under a solemn pledge which he cannot violate. "Better that thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay." It is time that the consciences of men were

pricked up on this subject. A subscription to a church is just as binding as a note in the bank, and a man who has once given it has no moral nor legal right to violate his obligation.

We are glad to see that the courts have come to the help of the churches in this matter, and that the law is a schoolmaster to bring delinquent members to a sense of common honesty.

Away in the centre of New York, nestled among the hills, is the town of Knoxboro, so named from the late General John Jay Knox, one of its first settlers. Here was planted, some fifty years ago, a Presbyterian church, which, like a vine in the cleft of the rock, struck its roots into the earth, and put forth its branches, and yielded its goodly fruit. After the lapse of a generation, it set about erecting a new church, and among those who subscribed to the undertaking was a Methodist brother, who put himself down as a contributor to the Building Fund. But after a time, according to the Methodist doctrine of falling from grace, he fell away, and refused to "pay what he had vowed;" whereupon the Presbyterians undertook to illustrate their doctrine of the perseverance of the saints, by "putting him through." Their attorney was a young lawyer of New York, Mr. John H. Knox, a grandson of General Knox, one of the venerable founders of the church as well as of the town. To the claim of the church the delinquent subscriber offered certain technical objections, founded on an alleged lack of organization, proper appointment of treasurer, and defective wording in the subscription paper—objections which were at first sustained in the lower courts, but on being taken to the Court of Appeals, the judgment was reversed, and a verdict found for the church, for the whole amount, with interest and costs.

The case is an important one, as showing that our highest courts are disposed to uphold the rights of churches against refractory subscribers, who make large promises, and then refuse to keep them, hiding under some petty technicality to escape their just obligations.—*N. Y. Observer.*

"I AM THE DOOR."

"I am the Door." O wanderer, come in!
Art thou not weary of a world of sin?
Stay not outside, where all is dark and cold;
Come to the warmth, the brightness of the fold.

"I am the Door" to life, to peace, to light:
Without, the storm, the starless, cheerless night;
Within, a scene of blessedness untold,
The "many mansions" of the heavenly fold.

"I am the Door," the true, the only way:
All other paths will lead thee far astray:
The wayward ones, who will not be controlled,
Shall never find the entrance to the fold.

"I am the Door." O child of sorrow, come!
Pause not upon the threshold of thy home;
Soon shall thy sad and tear-dimmed eyes behold
The wondrous radiance of that blissful fold.

"I am the Door." Pass through, and thou shalt see
The glories of the place prepared for thee;
The walls of jasper and the streets of gold,
The sapphire pavements of the upper fold.

"I am the Door." O weary one, come in!
A glad and eager welcome thou shalt win;
Thy name among the ransomed is enrolled,
The Shepherd gives thee entrance to the fold.

—B. M. S.

How time flies! Dr. Chalmers' fame and influence are so fresh and green that he seems to have belonged to a generation but just passed away, yet we read that at the March meeting of the Free Church Presbytery of Edinburgh, Sir Henry Moncrieff moved: "Whereas the late Dr. Chalmers was born on the 17th of March in the year 1780, and whereas it will be due to his memory that the next Free Church General Assembly should adopt adequate measures for having the centenary of his birth attended to with that manifestation of thankfulness to God which the raising up of such an advocate of Christian truth is fitted to call forth, it is humbly overtured by the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh to the ensuing General Assembly that they take this subject into consideration, and follow such action regarding it as in their wisdom may seem meet." The resolution was adopted.

A RELIGION that never suffices to govern a man will never suffice to save him. That which does not distinguish him from a sinful world, will never distinguish him from a perishing world.—*John Howe.*

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

CANADIAN PRESBYTERIAN HISTORY. No. VIII.

BY W. S. McCOLLUM, OF ST. CATHARINES.

"THE PRESBYTERY" AND "THE SYNOD OF THE CANADIAN."

On the fourth day of March, 1817, William Bell was ordained by the Associate Presbytery of Edinburgh "to the work of the Gospel ministry, and as pastor of the Scotch settlers on the Rideau river, Upper Canada." On the 5th of April following, with his family, he sailed from Leith in company with Rev. William Taylor, then late minister of Stonehouse, who was also coming out as a missionary of the Associate Synod of Scotland. After a stormy and otherwise unpleasant passage, they arrived at Quebec at evening on the first day of June, and at eight o'clock the next morning, for the first time, set foot on Canadian soil. Mr. Taylor left Quebec Tuesday evening, June 3rd, but Mr. Bell remained until the last of the week, preaching for Rev. Mr. Spratt, at St. John's chapel, Wednesday evening, being the evening of the King's birthday.

On Saturday, June 20th, Mr. Bell reached Brockville, in company with Rev. Robert Easton, of Montreal, who had overtaken him on the road. That night he lodged at the residence of his former London friend, Rev. William Smart, where he was introduced to Rev. Robert McDowall, a minister of the Reformed Dutch Church, located at Earnesttown, on the Bay of Quinte. The next day "Mr. Smart's new church at Brockville was dedicated to the service of God." Of the dedicatory service Mr. Bell wrote in his journal, as follows:

"At eleven o'clock Mr. Smart began the public service with a short account of the object of our meeting, and spoke of the gratitude due to God that so many difficulties had been overcome, and that a convenient church was now built. A hymn was sung by the congregation, and Mr. Smart prayed; after which Mr. Easton, of Montreal, preached a suitable sermon. During the interval we dined at the house of R. Easton, Esq. In the afternoon, I preached from Luke xv. 7. The singing was very fine, but I was sorry to see that instrumental music was introduced. In the morning, too, there was a Masonic procession, which I did not like. The congregation was numerous and respectable."

Before separating Messrs. Bell, Smart and Easton, thus providentially thrown together, drew up and signed a petition to the Associate Synod of Scotland "praying that they might be erected into a Presbytery in connection with the Synod." This was left with Mr. Smart to procure the signature of Mr. Taylor, "who obtained a settlement at Osnaburgh as minister of the united congregations of Osnaburgh and Williamsburgh." Mr. McDowall does not appear to have taken part in the services of the Sabbath, and the time had not come for him to unite in the formation of a Presbytery. His connection was with another branch of the Presbyterian family, and he was then arranging for the organization of a *classis* of his church in Upper Canada.

On the 10th of July, at his home in Perth, Mr. Bell received from Mr. Smart the petition with Mr. Taylor's signature attached, and on the 21st of the same month forwarded it, with explanatory letters, to Dr. Hall, of Edinburgh, for presentation to the Synod. At a meeting of Synod the following April (1818) the prayer of the petition was granted, but in the meantime, other action had been taken in Canada. On the 15th of October, 1817, Mr. Bell was at the residence of Mr. Smart, preparatory to assisting him at his communion at Brockville the next day. The following is from Mr. Bell's journal:

"Saturday, 25th October. The day was spent in pleasant intercourse with Mr. Smart and his family. Many a plan we had under consideration for the advancement of religion in Canada. But that which chiefly engaged our attention was a proposal for uniting all Presbyterian congregations under the name of the "Presbyterian Church of Canada." Mr. Smart was desired to write to all the ministers, and have their opinion."

On the same subject Mr. Smart's statement is preserved, as follows:

"Before an answer was received [from the petition] a new suggestion was presented. It was to see if the different bodies of Presbyterian ministers could not be united and form a Canadian Presbytery. Such an institution it was believed would be more fitting to the country than any distant connection."

In later parlance, the idea would be expressed "Canada for the Canadians," or a Canadian Presbytery for Canadian Presbyterians. Mr. Smart faith-