

than ever as if written for this present day, and entered into the very heart of activities now dominant, with the energy of living things.

Dr. Parker holds that the Bible is God's inspired book and this is one of its most important sections, so he brooks no trifling with its authority, nor rationalistic minimizing of the fulness of its declaration. Yet because of his vigor of statement and fondness for paradox he is apt to be misunderstood if isolated passages are taken apart from the rest of the volume. Still, for this very reason, it is to be expected that no one will accept all his views as here expressed.

His pages are packed full of thoughts that stir the mind to lively exercise and start sermonic themes on every hand, e. g. : "The law-doors are hirelings for salvation."—p. 43. "He misses the element of love who misses the element of righteousness."—p. 70. "Conduct is translated belief."—p. 79. "Who betrayed the Lord? Everybody. . . . It was not the hand of Iscariot that did it, else Christ had fallen a prey to a plot; it was man that did it, therefore Christ submitted to a sacrifice."—p. 272.

No one can read one of these expository discourses through without being much helped in the practical understanding of Scripture in its application to every-day life.

Such discourses as that on Rom. x. entitled "Paul on the Heart," and that on "Brotherly Kindness," Rom. xv., are truly inspiring.

Then what riches of splendid illustration does the discourse on 1. Cor. ii. 14. contain! How the power of the resurrection is exhibited in the discourse on 1. Cor. xv. ! How clear and strong and steady the statement of the range and limits of speculation in that on "The Everlasting Yea"—2. Cor. i. 10 ! How wise the warning against religious fickleness in the opening of Galatians.

If anyone has prejudices against Dr. Parker, he will find that a consecutive reading of this volume will do much to remove them. For interest will deepen and appreciation will grow as he keeps the company of a man of powerful intellect and warm heart, earnestly seeking to make God's word instrumental in the moral and spiritual betterment of men.

A PLEA FOR THE CATECHISM.

BY R. O. S.

The great aim of the Sabbath School is to teach the children the Scriptures, and to prepare them to take their places in the ranks of those in full communion, i. e., to train them to be true disciples of Christ. Our Sabbath School Committee is laboring faithfully and successfully in their appointed task, yet we humbly think that one of the most efficient instruments in the moulding of true Christian character is neglected by them too much. We refer to the Shorter Catechism. As an exponent of Christian doctrine it is unsurpassed, and sound doctrine has more influence in making character, and its fruits that we sometimes give it credit for. The young person who is well trained in the Shorter Catechism, and its doctrines, has a most effective shield against all the darts of the sectaries, who are lurking in every hedge side, and ditch, waiting, seeking whom they may devour; he has also a safe-guard against the false and sickly Christianity which abounds at present, and above all he, who has a good knowledge of the Catechism, has a heart satisfying knowledge of the things of the kingdom, and the great mystery of reconciliation through the Life, and Death of the Lord Jesus which knowledge will be a well-spring to him continually.

It will be said in answer that the committee sets a question for each week, and that most of our scholars are taught that. True! but does this meet the need. Can we say our children are taught the catechism?

At this rate it takes over two years to go through the book once, and all that is generally done, is simply to have the scholar repeat the question on the day it is set. This is better than nothing but not much. Anyone who every taught in a Public School knows of how little practical and permanent value such teaching in secular subjects would be, and the catechism is no easier. In former days things were somewhat better. Then we had it every day in school, and thus went through it several times a year, and then at the yearly catechizing by the parish minister we were supposed to be able to repeat any and every answer to the whole 107 questions. This way had its disadvantages. It was often too parrot-like. Anyhow it is out of the question for our day. But we might even do better. Why should not ten or fifteen minutes be given every Lord's Day for a thorough study of the catechism question. For ourselves we should not mind going farther. We are Churchmen enough to believe that it would be most beneficial to our Church to drop for a year the international lessons, and spend all the time and energy on the catechism to try to make up for lost time and opportunities. Society is really in a transition period, and unless great care is exercised the Church will lose, if she has not already lost much of great value, which may be very hard or impossible again to recover. One of these things is the influence of the catechism, and I can see no valid objection to the above being carried out, in order to try to regain our lost grounds as lessons could be selected from the word bearing on the catechism for the day. Some will doubtless say, this emanates from an old narrow-minded bigot who is always behind the times, for the world is past such exclusive views. Now, while we must plead to not being as young as we once were, and may be behind the times, —at least we hope we are behind the general run of times,—yet we will not plead guilty to bigotry or narrowness. A man need not be the worse Catholic because he is a good Presbyterian, but the better a Presbyterian he is, the better a Catholic will be. We need to remember this that every system is not of equal value, in spite of all some may say. Truth is one, and error of any sort is a weakness, and if we believe that our system is the nearest to the truth why should we not seek to have our young people trained in it. I suppose, however, we are asking too much for the present, governed as we are, but this much we could do, say and should do, and if we are to retain our Presbyterian character must do,—we should teach our catechism as systematically and thoroughly in the same spirit and with the same zeal as we teach the other lessons, and as much time should be given to the one as to the other. This is not making little of the Scripture, nor putting the catechism on a level with the Word but the catechism is founded on the Word, and the Catechism, rightly taught, is the Word rightly taught. It is because the catechism is so great an aid to an adequate understanding of the Word we so desire it taught. Our teachers—many of them—need a good training in the catechism themselves, and if they are to teach it rightly must have help. We are not asking too much when we ask that the helps published by our Church should contain an exposition of the catechism question fitted for teachers. The Church should see to this, lest she repent too late. If we might make a suggestion our Church papers might publish an exposition of the weekly question even if they had to drop the international lesson, valuable as that help is, but we can get helps in abundance for the lesson, but for the catechism, not one. This is a subject worth considering, and a matter worth giving a trial to. Such a systematic teaching of that book would, we are convinced, be of inestimable value to the teachers themselves, it would do great good to the Church for our Christian workers would be trained in sound doctrine, and would be thoroughly Presbyterian, and are young people would be built up in that sturdy Christianity which

is the pride of our Church in the past, and which our system can well give, if it is allowed its perfect work.

WANTED—REFORM.

MR. EDITOR,—In your issue of March 27th I noticed a letter from a "Minister without Charge," which, though at first sight it savors of egotism, yet contains much that strikes a responsive chord in the present writers make-up. It is only one of many such articles that have appeared of late in your interesting paper. Such letters clearly indicate that there is "Something rotten in the state of Denmark." What is the real germ of all this trouble that is causing such a feeling of unrest along these lines in our Church? I believe it is not a question merely of "sweet, boyish, innocent looking, inexperienced youth" *vs.* comparative age with the experience that should belong thereto. But in the system, under which we Presbyterians live, there is a wrong education of the people, so that, as "Minister without Charge" says, "there is a craze for young men, instead of older one, who, as they say, 'will likely die on our hands.'" Who are largely responsible for this education along wrong lines, if not those who are the leaders of the people in things religious? The trouble centres in the system of vacancies that obtains with us. The anomaly of a vacant church is one that we should strive to remove. How would this do? Instead of the popular vote now necessary for the choice of a pastor, which often result in strife, faction and general detriment to the work for months, could we not centralize the franchise in the representations of the people *viz.*; the elders or managers or both combined? If these good men would meet with a select committee from the Presbytery, who know the needs of the congregation and the best man for the situation, could not a good choice be made much more expeditiously and with more satisfaction than at present? Would this be too radical? Would it be un-Presbyterian? We think not. Within proper limits let our "Presbyteries exercise their authority;" and surely the rank and file of our Church will not object if the work of choosing pastors is well done, even if every member does not cast his vote. As a Presbyterian I have been heart-sick at the sight of some of our good men—not too old—who are knocked about until completely discouraged. Such treatment is unjust, unchristian, cruel. What we want is a reform in our system of settlement. Who can give us the best solution?

A YOUNG MINISTER WITH CHARGE.

There are now under the care of the Presbyterian Church of the United States and Mexico 93 churches with 4,462 communicants and 1,221 pupils in schools, a theological seminary and a mission press. The City of Mexico alone has seven Presbyterian Churches, all in charge of native preachers. Mr. Joseph Henderson, of this city, is at present in Mexico; and later on readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN may expect to hear from him on what he has seen in the country of the Montezumas.

Lord Salisbury thinks the soundest system of education to be that which enables each man to pay his rates for the teaching of his own religion. His lordship, however, admits the enormous practical difficulties that at present prevent the adoption of such a plan. It is foreign, he says, to religious liberty for the State to compel a child to be educated in a religious belief not acknowledged by the parent.

Prof. Marcus Dods, speaking in Edinburgh in support of disestablishment, said the ideal method would be for the Established churchmen themselves to come forward with a frank confession that the time for that measure had come. The only loss to the church he could conceive of was one of prestige.

China's Millions says:—"Letters from Yokohama inform us that Misses Batty, Hancock and Fuller arrived there on January 2nd, the steamer having been delayed several days on account of rough weather.

Christian Endeavor.

COMMUNION WITH CHRIST.

(Suggestion—A meeting for prayer alone.)

BY REV. W. S. McFAVISH, B.D., ST. GEORGE.

April 28th.—John xiv. 18-23.

For several years there existed a very close and intimate fellowship between Queen Anne of England and Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough. Probably no two persons were ever more closely associated than they were. In order that there might be less restraint in their correspondence, on account of the disparity in their respective stations, the one assumed the name of Mrs. Freeman, and the other that of Mrs. Morely. It is said that letters sometimes passed between them at the rate of four per day. People thought it very strange that the Queen of England should be on such intimate terms with one of her subjects. So it was. But is it not a far greater wonder that the pure and holy Son of God should enter into communion with the sinful sons of men? Surely there must have been great condescension on His part, or else He must have put forth great power to raise men up to that plane where they can hold fellowship with him!

I. What is involved in fellowship or communion? There must be knowledge before there can be fellowship. We are not inclined to unbosom ourselves to a stranger. We have joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, hopes and fears which we do not reveal to a transient guest. But we can hold fellowship with Jesus because we know Him and are known of Him. He has revealed Himself unto us as he has not unto the world. There must also be friendly regard if there would be true fellowship. When Queen Anne and her friend, the Duchess, quarrelled, it could still be said that they knew each other very well—perhaps they knew each other better then, than they ever did before the coolness arose—yet there was no longer any real fellowship between them. Friendship's mystic link was severed; therefore, the communion was at an end. Where there is fellowship, there must also be implicit trust or confidence. There can be no real knitting of soul to soul unless confidence be cherished.

II. How do we come into the enjoyment of this privilege? We certainly did not deserve it. With Jacob we might each confess: "I am not worthy of the least of all Thy mercies." We have no claims to recognition so far as Christ is concerned. Our minds were naturally alienated from Him by reason of wicked works. If we did not deserve this favor, neither did we struggle upward until we reached that plane where we were in a condition to enjoy fellowship with the Saviour. We were called into it through the mercy of God. "God is faithful, by whom we were called into the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord" (1. Cor. i. 9). He sent from above, He took us. He drew us out of many waters. We did not agonize until we reached a certain point of exaltation where we could enjoy fellowship with Christ, but He, in His pity, came down to us. He said: "I will come to you," and it was because He came in accordance with His promise that we enjoy the privilege which is ours.

III. Since we enjoy such exalted communion, what should be the effect upon us? Certainly we should be gradually growing into the likeness of Christ our Master. Our wills should gradually be moulded into conformity with Christ's will, and our lives should be patterned after the example of His beautiful life. Professor Henry Drummond tells of two students who enjoyed such intimate fellowship that they became much alike in habits and in tastes. So, if we are much in the company of Christ, we shall, insensibly, perhaps, but yet, surely, grow more and more like Him. The face of Moses was radiant after he had been forty days on the mount with God, and, if we are much with Jesus, we shall reflect something of His beauty and glory. We should, besides, be very happy Christians, and we should live in the enjoyment of great peace and comfort.

"A little talk with Jesus
Alone in secret prayer,
It gives me strength and courage,
Lifts many ills to bear."