

Our Contributors.

SOME SELF-EXAMINATION PAPERS.

BY KNOXONIAN.

The time for examining theological students is at hand. Of course there will be the usual amount of talk about the training given in our theological colleges, the attainments of the young men, the value of degrees, college and university honors, full courses, medals and other college matters that never fail to crop up about the first of April. That is right, provided the men who do the talking made a reasonable contribution to the colleges in money before they began the criticism.

June will bring great opportunities for discussing the qualifications of theological professors. The election of two good men for Knox College will afford scope and occasion for criticism more ample than may ever come again to this generation of Presbyterians. The occasion will be improved, or at all events used.

Before examining students and professors might it not be well for the examiners to have a brief diet of self-examination. A short preliminary canter for warming-up purposes might be a good thing. It is so much easier to criticise others than do good work ourselves, so much easier to ask questions than to answer them that a warming-up exercise is always in order. How would this examination paper do for some of the brethren who are absolutely certain they know the right kind of material for a first-class professor:—

1. Give the full title of the book popularly known as Butler's analogy. (Now don't go to the shelf and look at the book.)
2. Write brief notes on the words *apt*, *liable* and *likely*, and state the idea you wish to express by the use of each of them.
3. Explain the difference between *bring* and *fetch*.
4. Give a rough estimate of the number of times you have misplaced the word *only* during the last ten years.
5. Do you ever allow the much over-worked little word *it* to become lonesome for want of an antecedent.
6. When you use pronouns that refer to some person or thing are you always ready to make an affidavit that there is a person or thing there for them to refer to.
7. When the reporter tells you that an unfortunate man has been *executed* do you always consider his English quite correct. May it not have been that the sentence was executed?
8. Do you ever in an outburst of eloquence speak about a congregation or mission station *growing* smaller. Of course you would never speak in cold blood about anything *growing* smaller.
9. Write brief notes on "*In our midst*," and give an approximate estimate of the number of times you have used that expression during the last five years.
9. Do you ever use "*at least*," "*at all events*," and similar qualifying phrases in a free and easy sort of way without asking whether they work backward or forward?
10. Pronounce the words *Beaconsfield* and *Sebastopol*. Would you laugh at anybody who said *Be-a-consfield*—not *Bek*—and who put the accent on the second last syllable of *Sebastopol*.

Any clerical member of the class who cannot make seventy-five per cent. on the fore-going paper in one hour without rising from his desk or consulting books should not be allowed to make long speeches about the qualifications of a theological professor. Those who fail may have a *post mortem* examination the week before the Assembly meets. Those who pass on this paper may write for honors at an early date.

Orders have been sent to London for 5,000 Bibles, 5,000 hymn books, and 5,000 catechisms, to be sold in the Fiji Islands. The Fiji Islanders gave nearly £5,000 to foreign missions last year.

BROAD EVANGELICALISM.*

BY REV. JOHN BURTON, B.D.

The reformers in their interpretation of Scripture indulged in a freedom that would be characterized now as rationalism—e.g., on Matthew ii. 23, Calvin writes, *Tantum est allusio*—"a play upon words." Luther taught "that which does not teach Christ is not apostolic even if a Peter or a Paul taught it"; and so far from confining revelations to the Scriptures he said "God does not speak grammatical vocables, but true essential things. Thus, sun and moon, Peter and Paul, thou and I, are nothing but words of God." Many such instances could readily be given were any doubt existing on that point. Nevertheless the Word of God was held by these men as contained in the Scripture, by which Word they were led to the Head, even Christ. Their intense realization of the Holy Spirit working through the Scriptures, and in themselves raised them above all mere literalism, and led them to toss aside rabbinical methods, from which even modern exegetes are not free, with the single word *nugae*—"trifles." These memories have been vividly recalled by reading Dr. Stinson's "Questions of Modern Inquiry," which is the reproduction of Sunday evening lectures in the Broadway Tabernacle, New York, to his congregation.

Dr. Stinson's views on the authority of Scripture, if we read him aright, may be expressed in the lines of Robert Browning:

"It were to be wished the flaws were fewer
In the earthen vessels holding treasure,
Which lies as safe as in a golden ewer,
—The main thing is—Does it hold good measure?
Heaven soon sets right all other matter."

It were better, however, to let our author himself speak: "But were not the original writings absolutely correct?" If so, God seems to have set small value upon that fact as He suffered them so soon to be lost. What, then, is the Bible to us? It is God's own book, because it has been God's voice to man through all these centuries; and it is infinitely better to us than any other voice we can listen to." Bold words, but not more bold than the Evangelical messages given. "Jesus alone has access to the throne of grace; He alone has the right to secure redemption to those who are under the bondage of sin; and that not without blood, for His own blood was offered freely—and with this as a witness to His right to be the redeemer, he draws near to God—and this is the authentic record. 'As many as received Him to them gave He power to become the sons of God!'"

Very many ask how one who recognizes very decidedly a human element in the Scriptures can hold fast evangelical doctrines and the resurrection from the dead. They who read these lectures may not have the "How?" answered; it is not answered in the most common facts of life, but they will find the fact evidences even as in the case of the reformers of whom we have spoken. The truth is, that the logic of the schools is cold. Mediæval Europe corrupted and languished under scholasticism; and thoughtful scepticism to-day has grown under the dry dogmatism of unsympathetic systematizing of religious truths. No success has attended attempts to work out into a system the teaching of Jesus. They scorn our logic as they launch winged thunderbolts against all pride and shams and touch tenderly, as with a fond mother's hand and heart, the woes of humanity. There is such a thing as a glorious inconsistency. The fulness of life is not to be contained within mathematical lines or controlled by the syllogism. Criticism—even the Higher—can find in these pages—on every one—work even unto weariness; but there is an honest, and, in large measure, a successful endeavor to meet the difficulties that perplex the multitude on gospel themes and to speak to the heart by an awakened

* "Questions of Modern Inquiry." By Henry A. Stinson, D.D. Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Co.

conscience and through quickened intelligence. The themes discussed are such as—God; The Bible; Miracles; The Manliness of Being Persuaded; Prayer; A Saviour from Sin; After Death—What?; The Judgement.

We have noticed this work somewhat at length, because, like the recent work by Dr. Harper on Deuteronomy, it makes manifest how an evangelical faith may live and grow, not only along with, but by a bold free acceptance of what is sober in the researches of honest criticism; and this notice cannot be better concluded than by Dr. Stinson's closing paragraph on "What is faith?"

"If any man to-day asks, What must I do to be saved? the answer of the Church to him, the answer every Christian soul out of the fulness and gladness of its own personal experience is not, First try to make yourself better; not, Search for Christian evidences; but simply, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Lift up your heart and your hands to Him. Cry out to Him for pardon, and for peace and grace and strength, and it is given; and then go on your way to live for Him. And none that ever so came to Him was cast out."

Gravenhurst.

QUEEN'S COLLEGE ALUMNI CONFERENCE.*

The Conference began Tuesday evening, the 11th ult., and was a great success. About forty visitors were in attendance, and the place of meeting nearly always well filled. The papers read were of unusual merit, and the discussions were most brilliant, and always keen and to the point.

The Rev. Principal Grant opened the Conference with a paper on "Present Day Problems of Canadian Preaching." He dwelt with great force and eloquence on the necessity of ministers applying the principles of Christ to the life of the people in their social and political relations. Every man was a member of a community and a citizen of a State, and the Principal was of the opinion that the Christian at present does not deeply realize that his Christian life must manifest itself largely in those relations. The individual soul in its relation to God is, of course, the first and main consideration of the ministry; but seeing that we are a self-governing people, and the work of each individual has its due effect on social and political conditions, the man having a new life in Christ, must go out into the world with his new power and new light, and there work as a servant of Jesus Christ. It is the minister's duty to lead and guide such efforts, so far as he can.

An interesting feature of the Conference was a series of lectures by Rev. Dr. Begg, of Nova Scotia, on "The New Life in Christ." Dr. Begg dealt with the subject in a fresh, vivid, and scholarly manner. The lectures were an attempt to restate in modern terms, and with reference to modern theological thought, the old formulated doctrine respecting justification and sanctification.

The first lecture was introductory. The second dealt with the pre-suppositions of the new life, which are sin, redemption, and union with Christ. In Dr. Begg's view the necessity for regeneration existed apart from the fact of sin; that is to say, it existed in the fact that the natural man is of the earth, and is incapable of knowing God. Therefore Adam in his innocence, if he was to be a son in the Johannine sense was under the necessity of being born again. The incarnation and regeneration are necessary, not only for atonement and salvation, but for the completion of manhood.

The third lecture, "Union with Christ," insisted on the reality and vital nature of the union which is much more than a union of thought and sympathy, however close.

The fourth lecture on "The Nature of the New Life" was the most original and subtle. Though admitting that there is in

* These notes have been unavoidably delayed.—ED-1702.

all men the potentiality of sonship, Dr. Begg contends in opposition to some modern teaching that the relation of sonship exists only between the regenerate and God. The rest of mankind are not God's sons in the Johannine sense, nor is God their Father, and further, the "Life Eternal" was a new thing brought into the world by the Son of God.

Prof. McNaughton's brilliant lectures on "The Teaching of Jesus" were listened to with the greatest interest. Much interest also was manifested in Prof. Watson's review of Mr. Balfour's notable work, "The Foundations of Belief." Prof. Watson, though he acknowledges the brilliancy and dialectic skill exhibited in this work, does not consider it a contribution to philosophic thought. It is indeed impossible, the Professor said, at the outset, for one man to be at once a philosopher and a king.

Rev. Mr. Bennett, in connection with the subject "Present Day, Problems of Canadian Preaching," in two papers reviewed Dr. Sanday's well-known Bampton lectures on "Inspiration." The papers were expository, and the book is too well-known to require further remark.

Perhaps the most interesting (and certainly the most enlivening) part of the programme, were the discussions on social problems, which occupied the evenings of Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Thoughtful papers were read by Rev. Salem Bland, B.A., "The Modern Industrial System," (Toynbee); by Rev. J. J. Wright, B.D., "Problems of Poverty" (Hobson); by Rev. John Hay, B.D., "General View of Socialistic Schemes" (Rae); and Rev. M. MacGillivray, M.A., on "Problems of Today" (R. T. Ely). These papers formed the basis for much discussion in which Prof. Shortt took a prominent part. His masterly treatment of all the questions involved have made these evenings most profitable to the conference, while the lively and often humorous discussions have been, not only profitable, but highly entertaining.

Socialism pure and simple does not find much favour, and single tax has so much weight of authority against it, that few dare to speak on its behalf. Rev. Mr. Bland, however, advocated it on Wednesday, with Prof. Shortt as his opponent.

Much dispute has arisen over the definition of socialism. Mr. Bland claims the name for all those who are in favor of the extension of State interference and control.

The Rev. Principal Grant, with his customary clearness and force, has contributed much to the debates. He won't hear of being called a Socialist thought he sees the necessity from time to time, as occasions come, and as circumstances render wise, of the extension of governmental oversight and control. Each proposal in that direction, he contends, must be judged on its own merits, after full consideration of all the circumstances.

Rev. Dr. Milligan's two lectures on "The Old Testament Conception of God" occasioned a great deal of discussion. It is needless to say that the lectures were full of good thoughts and very suggestive. Dr. Milligan deals with the Old Testament in the modern spirit and finds it a rich storehouse of religious teaching, and the basis of the New. Prof. Goldwin Smith's recent article, "Christianity's Millstone," was declared to be "the poorest thing seen for a long time."

A notable feature of the conference was a series of lectures on Browning by Prof. Cappon. These lectures were largely attended. The Principal continued on Wednesday afternoon his talk on "Present Day Problems of Canadian Preaching." He dealt mainly with the effect on preaching for good and evil of the critical views regarding the literary structure of the Bible. He considers that, on the whole, they help the preacher very much, and that ministers ought to treat Old Testament subjects in the historical spirit. Great prudence was required, however, and the ministers should avoid anything that would cause division or misunderstanding. He urged ministers to study