

people concerning the "unknown God whom they ignorantly worshipped," but that day has long passed.

I was glad to see the stand the "Globe" and "Mail" took in regard to Ingersoll's lecture, viz. treating it with silent contempt, and thereby serving the cause of truth better in my opinion than Mr. Clarke has done by his lecture. SEU.

THE PRAYER MEETING.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

SIR,—Many thanks for your editorial on the above subject this week—"tis true; pity 'tis, 'tis true." A response will come from many a heart to whom this institution is very dear. My constant attendance and observation at the prayer meeting impresses me that there are faults all round, people as well as pastor, the former blameable for meagre attendance, want of promptitude and brevity, in its exercises. Doubtless the common cause of decrepitude is the lack of spirituality. We cannot do without it, we would not have it "die out." Clustering around it are our holiest associations. It has been the half-way helping and refreshing place in the history of our churches. Who are they that attend the prayer meeting? Largely mothers, weary with the wearing cares and anxieties of home, the sons of toil, men of business harassed with responsibilities, and a proportion of young people. What do these need? The wise pastor will come prepared to feed such a flock. Entering the meeting place five minutes before the time, the leader selects the first hymn, the others afterwards. The first hymn—six or seven verses—with chorus is sung without organ or music book, to a tune *only three notes* below its key note. Other hymns are sung—long, short, or common metre—to tunes (grand to the covenanters) that have shorn them of all their poetry, and buried as in a grave their inspiring truths. A portion of Scripture is chosen at a venture, and then random talk. This is a faithful portraiture of some prayer meetings. Is it any wonder that such a meeting is in a "chronic state of languor?" It might all be changed. It only requires *preparation*, planning, and a fair amount of judgment in those in charge. Yonder is the organ and music book, and there are the singers. The only cure for this state of things is the remedy you give—"Common sense must guide men into the right conduct of this means of grace." And may I add as emphasis—a little respect for the common sense of those who make sacrifices to attend these meetings, and induce others to go with them.

April 9th, 1880.

CONGREGATIONALIST.

ORTHODOX CONGREGATIONALISM.

To the Editor of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT.

DEAR SIR,—There is a great deal in Congregationalism to commend it to Christians; but I trust there is not so much conceit among us as to make us speak of it as a perfect system of Church Government. What are its weak points? I speak my own experience in my own answer, and leave to wiser men the task of providing a remedy.

1. *The Sunday School.* I believe that were we to adopt some system of catechism, there could be less possibility than at present of error being taught. I remember a teacher having had a very large class in one of our Congregational churches, who publicly expressed his scepticism on the orthodox doctrines of the Trinity and eternal punishment. He is now in the penitentiary for defrauding his employers. I know a teacher in another of our churches who utterly repudiates the doctrine of the Trinity. I know others with sceptical notions. Now, will these people teach what we want—what they do not believe; or will they be consistent with their opinions and teach what we do not want—what they do believe? A catechism would be a check on theological eccentricities.

2. *The Pulpit.* A letter in a late number from an "Orthodox Congregationalist" complains of a man eating the bread of an orthodox Congregational church while boasting of his unorthodoxy. But where is Congregational orthodoxy but in what each separate church chooses itself, through the support it gives its pastor? The orthodoxy of a church in Toronto, as

represented by Rev. Mr. —, is widely different from the orthodoxy of a church in Montréal, as represented by Rev. Mr. —. Not only is Congregationalism a denomination distinct from other denominations, but much more than any other denomination it is made up of independent churches calling themselves Congregationalists, but having various doctrinal opinions—some boasting of having no orthodox opinions at all.

Two cases (facts) in point: A Wesleyan minister has a conflict with the Conference. He resigns because of his unorthodoxy. Now, there is nothing in Methodist doctrines that Congregationalists cannot adhere to. [Sic.] But this gentleman finds no resting place for his freedom of opinion but in Congregationalism, and starts a "Congregational" church, and is recognized by some Congregational ministers as one of us.

A few years ago a Universalist got into a Congregational pulpit in the Eastern Townships, and his kith, rallying around him, soon out-voted the orthodox Congregationalists who built the church. The latter appealed to Drs. Wilkes and Duff, who tried to mend matters, but having no authority, could do nothing. Dr. Wilkes then, I believe, wrote to the minister, asking him to appoint a day when he (Dr. W.) could meet him and talk over the case. The minister appointed the 35th day of some month. In course of time the tables were turned, and out went the Universalist.

How much more satisfactory it would have been had we some body where we could know what sort of belief a minister has who is called to preach; where a church could get some binding decision when a case such as that of the Universalist occurs; and which would be free from the personal animosities and acrimoniousness which in the best of churches, and among the best of men, the devil can set in motion.

CONGREGATIONAL.

News of the Churches.

MARGAREE, CAPE BRETON.—Excitement was created here on the morning of February 19th by the announcement of the death of Mr. Thomas Ethridge, of this place, which occurred suddenly about two o'clock a.m., in his forty-seventh year. Deceased went to bed about eleven o'clock apparently in good health. His wife was awakened, a few minutes before he expired, by his breathing somewhat heavily. He seemed to be without pain and did not speak. The cause is said to be heart disease. He will be much missed by his family, by his church—as he was a Christian worker—by all, for he was a live man among men.

MONTREAL—INSPECTOR STREET CHURCH.—The Rev. R. Mackay has been assisting the Rev. A. L. Macfadyen for three weeks, in special evangelistic meetings. Notwithstanding the general movement under Rev. E. P. Hammond's labours, the attendance has been good and the interest deep. Over one hundred anxious inquirers have been spoken with in the inquiry meetings. From forty to fifty of these profess to have decided for Christ. The others, who are still anxious, are being carefully and prayerfully looked after. Some have attended these services who have not been in a place of worship for five and six years. There are cases of very special interest. In addition to preaching several times each Sabbath, and every evening except Saturday, Mr. Mackay has rendered some assistance in Mr. Hammond's meetings. Inspector street Church is a grand centre for evangelistic work, and God is blessing Mr. Macfadyen in the difficult field. He is supported by some noble men who are connected with the American Presbyterian Church. It is intended to continue the services, though the evangelist returns to Kingston on the 5th.

INVERNESS, QUE.—The Rev. R. Mackay writes from Montréal under date of 2nd April: "After sending you the second notice of the movement in Inverness, the interest continued to deepen every evening until the chapel was almost too small to hold the people, and whole families were brought to Christ. When we were casting our eyes about to try to find some

one to carry on the work in the interval between my leaving and the arrival of a student, the Rev. Mr. Marsh, a Baptist minister, who laboured in the field ten years ago, put in an appearance. He knew nothing of the work going on, and had come only on a visit to some of his old friends. It was evident that he had come just at the time when he was much needed. Mr. Marsh consented to stay and carry on the work until the arrival of a student, and as the Baptists and Congregationalists unite in supporting a student during the summer season, this arrangement was acceptable to both parties. The meetings have been continued, since I left till the present time, every second evening. Mr. Bolton, the student who is there now, in writing to one of his professors said, 'I thought that Mr. Mackay and you would like to know how things are getting on here. I was very well pleased with the state of affairs. There have been several conversions since he left and some still anxious. I have met a large number of the converts and have found them happy in the Lord. The Word has been effectual. I meet with many who are *thirsting for the Word*, and who seem to be filled with love to the Lord Jesus.' One of the older Christians, in writing to Rev. A. L. Macfadyen, with whom I am labouring now, said, 'We used to remark how serious some of the young men were last summer, in the chapel, but now *every one of them has been converted*. About twenty of those whose parents belong to our own Church have given themselves to the Lord, besides a large number of others belonging to different Churches.' One of the young converts (a lady), in writing to a friend in Montréal, said, 'I need scarcely tell you I thank you for the note I received from you yesterday, for you must know how much any sympathy or word of encouragement is appreciated by a young Christian, more particularly coming from one who has long been a follower of Christ and is strong in the faith. We young people of Inverness have so much to be thankful for, not only for having been shown the way, but also for the loving help and sympathy which we have received from many of the older Christians in our midst. I suppose you know the names of all whom Mr. Mackay has been instrumental in bringing to Christ. My sister is so happy, to use her own words, she says, "It is just *splendid* at school now; at recess and dinner-hour, instead of talking of and criticising others, they unite in speaking of the meetings, and of *what Jesus has done for them*." In fact the change is everywhere apparent, even if it were nothing more than seeing so many faces looking brighter and happier. I found it (at first) very hard to come. I am by nature so independent and self-reliant that it was difficult for me just to believe only, to know that I could do nothing to help myself in any way, but now I find it so easy; my only trouble is that I have not that love and gratitude I would like to be able to shew towards the One who has done so much for me.' The religion of Jesus Christ is not a gloomy thing to the young people of Inverness, who have embraced the Saviour, as all the young readers of the CANADIAN INDEPENDENT will see from the above. May we not hope that many of the young in our Sunday schools and families may be led to the same blessed experience.

INTELLIGENCE is received that Théebaw, King of Burmah, died of small-pox at Mandalay. There are fears of civil war in Burmah.

It is rumoured at St. Petersburg that 15,000 Chinese have crossed the eastern Russian frontier at Ussuri, south of the Amoor, and that 30,000 are concentrated on the western frontier.

The dispute about Bishop Colenso's deposition being legal is again arising. Bishop Jones having asserted that Bishop Colenso was cited to appear before the Synod of the Bishops of South Africa, and, failing to answer, was tried and deposed, Bishop Colenso declares that he never was so cited, and never was given the opportunity to be heard in his own defence.

A PARIS correspondent says the unauthorized religious communities in France number 389 for men, with 7,444 members; 602 for women, with 14,003 members. But the bulk are not Jesuit, and will be summoned to submit their statutes to the Government for authorization if their statutes are unobjectionable. Paris and its suburbs contain 123 Jesuit communities; and Jesuit colleges throughout France number 27.