

THE
Canadian Independent.

VOL. XXIII.

TORONTO, MAY, 1877.

No. 11.

THOUGHTS ON SOME PHASES OF THEOLOGY AT THE PRESENT
TIME.

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It is our custom at the services connected with the opening and closing of the sessions of our College, to request an address from some one of our ministerial brethren, on such topic as he may select. At this closing exercise, I have been asked to perform this duty, and have chosen the subject announced. But I wish to guard you against the supposition that the choice has arisen from any local circumstances, and distinctly to say that my treatment of it will have no reference whatever to them. I am looking abroad rather than at home, my thoughts are turned towards the development of the theological thought throughout Anglo-Saxondom, and, therefore, I protest *in limine* against being considered in the slightest degree the critic of any teaching nearer home, whether on the one side or the other of conflicting schools. Moreover, my treatment of this subject must be rather in the form of hints than of exhaustive analysis, for that would require a volume instead of a mere address. Hence I have said "Thoughts."

Few intelligent men are disposed to deny that the subjects embraced in theology are of supreme moment, yet many of them complain that they cannot be treated in a scientific manner. They say, truly, that the age in which we live is dominated by the scientific method of thought; and then, with something of a scornful tone, they charge the students and expounders of theology with wrangling rather than teaching after any trustworthy fashion. "What are we to understand or believe?" they exclaim, "amid this war of words and opinions called orthodox or heresy, sound or unsound. We look for something clear, precise, definite, like the facts and theories in geology, botany, chemistry; or like the laws of the physical universe which astronomy has unfolded, and you give us dogmatic assertions in which you do not agree together; and you give us interpretations of the same sacred writings which differ widely one from the other."

Perhaps candour requires the recognition of some truth in this charge. It may be that prevalent discussions on theological questions are, in some measure at least, open to such unfavourable criticism. But let the sin be laid at the right door. It is not theology that is to blame, but rather its expounders and defenders. Theology is really a science, and may be treated scientifically; if they who speak and write about it do so in an unscientific manner, the blame is theirs. Yet must it be remembered, that science is only a *provisional* reading of the facts of nature; that the scientific interpretation of them differs in every age, changing with the changing time, taking new and larger forms as the years pass: that "even since the beginning of the present century it has had at least three shibboleths—Convulsion, Continuity, Evolution—and has stoutly declared—quite

as dogmatically as any theologian can speak—it “necessary to our scientific salvation that we should pronounce each of them in turn.” The facts of nature remain the same, but the interpretation of them changes; and, may we not hope, improves from age to age? In like manner we have to understand that theology is but a *provisional* reading of the facts of religion; only a human, imperfect and ever varying interpretation of the contents of Scripture, and changes its forms and terms at least as rapidly as science itself. The great facts of religion and revelation remain the same, indeed, through all ages and changes, as do the great facts of nature. But our interpretations of these facts, affected as it must be by ever advancing knowledge of related facts and truths—necessarily vary, and our theories about them change; and surely we may say that they grow larger and more complete as men grow wiser. “God does not change, nor does His relations to men: but our conceptions of Him, and of our relations to Him are very different from those of the early fathers of the Church, just as our conceptions of the universe are a great advance upon those which were held before Galileo arose, and Kepler and Newton.” There is, hence, a place, both in the science of nature and that of theology, for important things which may nevertheless be shaken and taken away, but also one for greater and more glorious things which cannot be shaken but ever remain; and do so the more firmly because of the shaking and the passing away of that which was destined thereto.

No one supposes that an Assembly of Divines, representative in character, as was the Assembly at Westminster, in 1643, if now gathered in London, Edinburgh, Dublin, or New York, would put forth the precise catechism with its proof texts which came from that able and learned body. What are called by some denominations “their standards” and which pertain to some such period as that, would now undoubtedly be modified. The great everlasting truths would remain unchangeable as the Throne of God, but the human conception, and hence exposition of them would indicate change and growth.

If the present inquiry is to have any practical bearing we must begin with man—*with ourselves*—for we are the perceiving, judging, moral and spiritual beings with whom theology concerns itself, in our relations to God and to one another. What are we? Certain facts about us are beyond dispute, but certain other facts and the theories concerning all of them do not abide. They change with the time. That we have an animal nature, that we are intellectual beings, and that we have also a something which links us to the spirit-world and to God are facts which abide unshaken. One theory is that we are simply *two-fold*, matter and mind, body and soul, and that the latter is a spirit which includes the thinking and reasoning principle, namely, all that we mean by the intellect, and also by the God-consciousness,—that which enables us to hold communion with Him. Another is that we are three-fold,—body, soul, and spirit,—according to what is thought to be the affirmed psychology of the Apostle Paul, and that the last-mentioned only is the God-consciousness; namely, the part of us which while we live in sin is comparatively dormant, but which, being awakened and quickened into action by the Holy Spirit, using in order thereto the Gospel of Christ, becomes the new man in Christ, the ennobled and purified being holding communion with God and serving Him. Then further, in a less scientific age there came forth expressions from good and earnest men which no thoughtful one would now adopt. The fact of man’s depravity, of the dissimilarity of his thought and will to that of the ever-blessed God, remains true in all its intrinsic dreariness and all its sad results, but he is not a devil. There are points in him which the grace of God can reach, and doing so lift him up. The mark of the crown is on his brow, though it has been cast into the mire and trampled upon. There are lineaments of beauty ofttimes, there are genial tempers, loving hearts, probity, honour, and uprightness in dealings with fellow-men, which are good and beautiful; and yet, alas, it has to be said to them as the Lord said to one such-like, “One thing thou lackest.”

Now in respect to the two theories concerning the two-fold or tripartite nature

of man, our present subject does not require any discussion, for they both maintain the unity of man, namely that he is one being, one moral agent, and that these several parts of him are ever acting together on all occasions, never one without the other; and they both recognise the spiritual in man, the capacity to receive and to judge of spiritual verities. Moreover they both maintain the distinction so clearly put by the Apostle between "the natural man," that is, *not* the unintellectual or unthoughtful merely, but the man of the world, the man who troubles himself only about this present scene of things, and neglects things divine and spiritual, "the great things of God's law;" that natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned; whereas the renewed soul, quickened into life by the Holy Spirit, "judges and discerns even the deep things of God." There is a deep significance in our Lord's instruction "not to throw pearls before swine." In the presence and in the hands of taste and beauty, the pearl is duly estimated; but the lower creature tramples it under foot,—in its eye there is neither beauty nor utility. The ablest and most estimable of men, who have not the spiritual sense awakened, do not see the beauty of these spiritual verities, and in fact fail to understand their meaning. Half a century ago an accomplished jurist frankly declared that, in a case arising in the course of his professional duties, he had spent hours in the endeavour to understand some points in the evangelical faith, as contained in the Epistle to the Romans, and had wholly failed. In the past experience of those who now through grace do discern, there was a time when they could not understand what now fills them with gladness and hope. We must not be charged with either mysticism or fanaticism, if we insist that there needs a spiritual eye to discern spiritual things.

It follows naturally that, in the teaching of our Lord and his apostles, appeal would be made to our own sense of right,—an appeal to the judgment and conscience and intuitions of men; and this sufficiently indicates that every truth which is to be of any practical benefit to us, must commend itself to our moral and spiritual nature. "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say;" "In understanding be men." And further, it is quite plain that a revelation of Himself and His will, made by God to man, was intended to be understood by him. He may be expected to use such figures of speech as will convey His meaning in the clearest manner. He may indeed employ as media for conveying the truths He wishes man to receive, symbols, types, biography, history, as well as simple didactic statement, but the purpose of all this is to make Himself understood by us. If He speaks of Himself as a father, and calls us His children, He intends that we shall apply to Him, devoid of all imperfection, our knowledge of fatherhood on earth. We can understand His declaration in no other way. Our thoughts must be of a perfect fatherhood, the ideal of which we can conceive as having its place and sphere among men on earth; and then, eliminating all imperfection and magnifying excellence to the utmost, we trust and worship God as thus. So when He reveals Himself as King, Governor, Judge, as the maintainer of law and righteousness, and as ruling the world in the exercise of His great power and wisdom and goodness, we have to conceive of the highest and best rulers ever known or imagined on earth, and employ the conception to reach some understanding of Him who is King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God.

There is a point in regard to theology in which it differs from other sciences, viz., that many of its facts and truths are to be derived from the inspired volume. They are found in a volume made up of a series of tracts, written by different persons in very diverse circumstances, and extending over a period of many centuries. I do not go into the question of that inspiration now, but assume that the sacred Scriptures are of Divine authority. What we wish to call attention to is, that the point now mentioned does not in the least affect the scientific character of the theology; for no matter whence facts and truths are derived, as facts and truths they are matters of scientific investigation. This has been seen and felt continually; hence the uniform tendency throughout the ages to construct

out of these facts and truths a systematic theology. It need hardly be said that God has not revealed truth after any logical or systematic order. He has spoken in divers manners. He has taught us by the voice and pen of His messengers in various modes; He has given us His truth in biography and history, by sermon and letter, in psalm and prayer, in visions, dreams, proverbs, and other didactic discourse; and from all these we have to draw forth what He teaches, and to classify those teachings after some logical order.

The same course has to be adopted in the study of physical phenomena. The facts of geology, botany, chemistry, and zoology are scattered through nature without order; we have to gather them and bring them under classification in order to any scientific use. And the scientist's classification is as liable to change as the theologian's. New facts or newly discovered relations of old ones must modify our generalizations. Nor are our scientific minds without their controversies and their schools of opposing views, as for example, the igneous and aqueous of former days. Sometimes, and perhaps of late rather frequently, there have been scornful utterances from pulpit and press as to systematizing the truths of theology, but we fail to discover any legitimate ground therefor. Undoubtedly *there is* a system in the Bible, which it is at once wise and legitimate to look for, but it does not follow that any church or school has perfectly discovered it.

And this leads to a remark now in place, viz., that the faith of the Gospel is not the belief in any creed or system of truth, but belief and trust in a person. The Gospel is glad tidings of the great joy unto all people, and is sent to deliver men from sin and misery. It is received by the illiterate as well as the learned, and it is received irrespective of systematic dogma, by a simple laying hold of the Lord Christ by a soul conscious of sin and needing salvation. The Jailer at Philippi had not set before him a string of abstract propositions, when he asked "Sirs, what must I do to be saved;" he was not told to study them that he and his household might be saved, but he was promptly instructed "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy household." The doctrines, the systematic teaching would come after and strengthen him in the Divine life, but the life itself was given by Christ, and in Christ through faith in Him. It had been just the same with Paul himself. He first received Christ as a Saviour, and then he was taken for three years into Arabia to learn the science of theology, that he might be built up in the faith himself and be a teacher of others. It follows that true life may exist, aye, and grow even with very imperfect apprehension of doctrines. We very often see this in the church: true, Christ-like, fervent Christians, whose systematic knowledge is defective in measure, and confused in its relations one part to another; and on the other hand it is quite possible for one to be great in doctrine and sadly defective in the Divine life; there may be a clear head and a subtle judgment combined with a cold heart—a very sad and dreary case!

Just here is the source of much uncharitableness and of many a charge of heresy loudly uttered. The mediæval church and that of Rome now, and alas! Protestant churches too, not seldom, make religion to consist in believing a creed. Orthodoxy consists in receiving just what this creed contains. To touch it in the slightest degree is to be heterodox, heretical. Except the Church of Rome, the churches would all disclaim infallibility, and yet in this matter of confessions and creeds they practically maintain infallibility. It is part of the glory of the Congregational Churches that they refuse thus to be fettered, yet, even they, are not always consistent in maintaining the liberty wherewith Christ hath made His people free. We would not have them come under a yoke of bondage. We would have them never forget the famous words of Robinson, that more light will break forth from God's Holy Word. They are for the most part commendably tolerant of differences of sentiment on the part of brethren who hold the Head, even Christ. The Lord does not ask "What think ye of this or that confession or symbol?" but "What think ye of Christ?" Do you love and serve Him? He said, "Ye are my friends if ye do whatsoever I command you." "I

came to do the will of Him that sent me." "As the Father hath sent Me into the world, even so I send you into the world." If we do His will we shall know of the doctrine whether it be God. Do you then ask is doctrine of little importance? We have already insisted on its great value. Besides, even faith in a Divine person implies the reception of doctrine or teaching concerning Him. Our minds must receive conceptions, or form them as the result of instruction or doctrine, before intelligent faith can be exercised. Still a system of doctrines is not the root, that is life, but it is that which promotes the growth of the plant. It is not religion, but it is that which develops and strengthens religion and adorns and beautifies it as a life. The babe, through the truth, grows up to the full-aged man.

But it may be in fairness asked "Is there no standard of judgment as to what the Scriptures teach? We hear a confused babel of tongues, are they equally to be listened to? Is there nothing fundamental, nothing that cannot be shaken?" The reply is found in the *experience of every child of God*. The heart in its deep need was brought into contact with a living Saviour before it was in a condition to form right views of the dogmas. Not until the man was spiritual, not until the Pneuma was awakened, and enlightened to discern and judge, could he judge of the truths of revelation. Hence all truth that is needful to life, all of fact and doctrine entering into the experience of one who through Divine grace passes from death unto life—all this is fundamental, vital, it cannot be shaken, but forever remains.

The holy men who drew up the Confessions had a basis of their theology laid in vital personal experience of the restoration of fellowship between God and man, and on this basis they proceeded unfettered by any other consideration to discover the scientific relations of the various parts of this experience to one another, and to truths otherwise unknown. If this reception and enjoyment of the salvation in and by Christ be a real matter of spiritual experience, then our thoughts and conclusions on the subject are truly evangelical: they must be. We are kept from pitfalls and by-paths by the impossibility of contradicting the inward experience of the soul. There is no need of our inquiries being limited by particular articles or definitions; we may feel free from external trammels; we do His will and know of the doctrine. Is any doctrine consistent with the reality of the Christian life experienced in the soul of the true believer? If it be not inconsistent with this, *it may or may not be true*, but certainly *it is not a fundamental error*. On the other hand, the more nearly it approaches to an explanation of the whole experience of the Christian, the more of truth will it have in it.

Hence our safeguard in theology lies, not in making any doctrine or set of doctrines the touch-stone of soundness, but in its close connexion with the life of the Church. We have no right to look upon opinions with suspicion, or to condemn them as heretical, merely because they do not square with some external formula or standard,—to do so is to relapse into mediævalism, and to prevent free thought in theology.

In view of these observations, I ask your attention to *three* subjects which more or less agitate the theological world at the present time. The first relates to the ever blessed God. Christ came to reveal the Father. He speaks of Him as His Father and our Father. He taught us to pray to Him as our Father. In parable and discourse the Lord brings before us a Father of infinite tenderness of compassion, having a great heart of love, who delights in mercy, and would save the ruined and lost from their sin and misery. The Apostle declared that we are all His offspring. Now, amid the discussions on theological points, and the construction of creeds and symbols, this teaching was somewhat lost sight of, and God was set forth as an angry Lawgiver and Judge, an inflexible and inexorable Ruler; hard, cold, severe, terrible, one who exacted in the exercise of His justice, the uttermost farthing of penalty for sin. Sinners were described as in the hands of an angry God; and a most unlovable being was set before us, whom nevertheless we were bound to love with all our heart and mind, soul and strength. Against such an estimate of the Most High, however logically

placed in a creed, there came necessarily a revolt of the moral sense. Such a being could not possibly be loved, and yet it was felt that God ought to be loved.

There must be a mistake therefore in the estimate; the Divine Fatherhood had been lost sight of, and now with a rebound which is so apt to characterize human inquiries,—the opposite extreme is reached; the Fatherhood absorbs the entire conception of God, and there is no space left for a throne, a government, a judgment seat. The King the Lawgiver, the Maintainer of the Eternal law of righteousness, the Almighty and Allwise Governor of the Universe, is theoretically ignored, and the grand as well as vital aspect of the case which these titles suggest is forgotten. The consequences are, a one-sidedness in all the views presented of the dealings of God with men, and a very inadequate view of the nature and consequences of sin. The progress of theological thought should secure devout and loving recognition of both these sides of the Divine character and administration. The Bible is full of both, and true Christian experience is in precise harmony with that interpretation of the Scriptures which gives prominence to both. Through the lips of one of the prophets, God asks, "If I then be a Father, where is mine honour? If I be a Master, where is my fear?" We go to the earthly family and obtain our conception of a pure and blessed Fatherhood, but it is soon found that every conception thus derived leaves large space for other views of God. The Fatherhood does not afford an exhaustive estimate. The best father of whom you could form a conception, would certainly save his son from the consequences of his sins. If he could, he would shelter him from the bitter, yet well deserved penalty. The merely fatherly love cannot bear that he should suffer. But God does not shield men from the dire consequences of their crimes. He links misery with sin. He has placed laws in our very nature which send the triple-barbed arrow of remorse into the heart of the sinner. History, experience, observation, exhibit the workings of a Sovereign, a Judge, a Lawgiver, a Ruler who manifests Himself in forms of action that do not come into the idea of the father of a family. There are wide-spread interests to be conserved, which are beyond the range of a simple fatherhood, and we bow down and adore Him who ruleth in the armies of Heaven, and amid the inhabitants of the earth, whose land none can stay, and to whom it would be presumption to address the question "What doest Thou?"

There can be no doubt that this discussion of the Divine fatherhood has cleared away no little difficulty from the path of the inquirer—it has brought into rightful prominence a grand and blessed aspect of the Divine character—it has removed false estimates of God and His ways towards men—it has beneficially affected our theology, and having done this, I believe the faith of the Church will settle down in to a loving and reverential recognition of God as Father-King, and King-Father, who is to be loved and adored, who is to be trusted and obeyed, who is the ever blessed Head of His family, and the Almighty and infinitely wise Ruler of the Universe.

The atonement of Christ is a *second* matter, to be looked at for a little while in the light of what has been said already. It must be conceded that what is sometimes called the old theology did put this subject very objectionably. We have often heard of atonement whose whole purpose was limited to the number of the elect. Indeed election and eternal life was put first in the order alike of nature and of time, and then came the atonement, having exclusive reference to these chosen ones. To this day many suppose that this is the view of all those who hold the Calvinistic theology, even in its more modern form. We hear of an atonement which paid the entire debt due on account of sin by these elect ones, a species of commercial arrangement which, regarding sin literally as debt, and the sufferings and death of Christ as a full and complete payment of it, there is nothing more to be said. This is a view which manifestly took away all grace from the Father's forgiveness, that was simply on this hypothesis a matter of justice and legitimate claim. We have known of theories of an atonement which represents God as imperious, exacting, to be satisfied with nothing less than equivalent sufferings

endured by the sinner's substitute, and much more to the same effect. Again the higher nature of the thoughtful rose against such a view of things, and such an interpretation of Scripture as seemed to confirm it, and again was there a swinging over to the opposite extreme. Expiatory suffering is denied altogether. Christ's cross, the expression of infinite tenderness and love, has no reference to the claims of God's moral government, but is designed simply to exercise a moral influence upon the sinner. It teaches him the evil of sin, though how it does this upon the hypothesis is not clear,—it exhibits to him matchless love, it lures him to repentance, and the Father is always ready to forgive His repentant child. There is often much more really believed concerning the nature of the cross of Christ than our moral view of the risks suppose: they believe more than they themselves recognize. If I judge rightly, this was the case with the late Dr. Bushnell. He felt the need of what he called the "altar form of conception of Christ's work," though in his theory there was little place for it. Here again the faith, resting simply, humbly, adoringly in Christ the Lord, there is perfect consistency with the experience of the christian life, though in our judgment there is defect, great defect, in any view of the atonement which does not regard its relations to the moral government of God. Here, therefore, again our moral intuitions rise in objection, and are unsatisfied; our vital experience as Christians has implied that the holy law of God which we have broken should be honoured in our pardon, and then, going to the Scriptures, we find that forgiveness of sins is not associated with repentance, merely or mainly, but with a sufficient reason found in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That sacrifice had such relations to the Divine Government as to justify the pardon of sin. The ancient sacrifice, not the Jewish only, but the patriarchal also, seem to be ever placed in distinct connection between God's acceptance of them, and the forgiveness of those sins on account of which they were presented. The teaching of our Lord was, "This is My blood of the New Covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The apostles went forth and preached the forgiveness of sins through His sacrifice for sin. Their letters to the churches teach with reiteration the same truth. Quotations, as you know, might be multiplied. Accordingly, while we may be grateful for the removal of such part of the old as is harsh and hard, and inconsistent with the infinite compassion of God, yet we delight to retain that essential part of it which places God on the throne of holiness and righteousness, which regards Him as ever and wholly maintaining its eternal law, and as doing this in providing for the salvation of sinners, even the chief, by Himself. God in Christ bearing its penalty—not exacting it from another, and taking the innocent for the guilty, but becoming Himself the sin and curse-bearer, thus vindicating and magnifying the eternal law of righteousness by affording a sufficient reason and ground for the forgiveness of every penitent and believing sinner. And further, this atonement of Christ can and does exercise the moral influence upon the sinner which is needed to restore him to practical fellowship with God. This love, infinite, exhaustless, conquers. It wins his heart from sin unto holiness, and his life to the service of God. It is by bringing His love into inherent contact with the disciples of Christ, that the Holy Spirit renews and sanctifies them, and makes them meet for final blessedness.

Observe that we are not calling the men unsound or heretical, who, as we judge, exaggerate the Fatherhood at the expense of the kingship; for they, as we, have no other Saviour than the Lord Christ, and equally rely upon Him for eternal life, and these inquiries are fairly within the range of free thought in theology; but in our judgment their theory is defective, and there is a more excellent way. And even if, on any theory, there are difficulties which meet us, and mystery that we cannot solve, let us remember that it must be so on themes relating to the infinite Jehovah in His relations to His finite creatures, and let us be satisfied with the wise diction of Moses, "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God, the things that are revealed belong unto us and unto our children for ever, that they may do all the words of this law."

One other, a third subject, must close the series on this occasion ; though the principles would apply to many other subjects more or less in dispute. Our final one now is a subject involved in great mystery and difficulty, but one on which the Scriptures speak, and which no one can, without presumption, neglect,—I mean that of *future retribution*. It is the subject of doubt, difficulty, discussion, extensively, at the present. At the close of this address I can only advert to a view of it suggested by the principles already laid down. Men have, for the most part, too much sense to deny altogether future retribution. They know that sin is not adequately visited in the present life, and that according to any rational idea of God as Father, or King and Judge, or both, there are consequences to be either enjoyed or endured in the future. Hence, the doctrine of the Universalist proper, is felt to be inadmissible, that all men when they die go into a state of happiness, for this earth is the only scene of retribution, and this life its period. My impression is, that it would be unfair to charge the many who now call themselves Universalists, with the denial of future retribution, — they do not imagine, we may suppose, that the wicked and the righteous who die as they have lived, are equally blessed in the future. Common sense revolts against such a conception.

For the same reason, the doctrine of the annihilation of the wicked at death can find no rational support, inasmuch as a nonentity cannot be a subject of retribution. And this fatal objection stands apart from the consideration that of such a thing as annihilation, so far as we know or can ascertain, there is no instance or exhibition of it in the whole universe of God. Passing from these grosser errors, we come to teaching, which maintaining with most solemn and touching earnestness, the reality and terribleness of future punishment for sin, yet supposes that it will at some time in the future terminate, either in restoration to the favour of God, or in the utter destruction of the very being ; and the root ground of the theory is that *evil must be destroyed and finally conquered, that the time must come when there shall be no such thing as moral evil in the Universe*, and that the ultimate end and purpose of our Lord's mission was to destroy utterly the works of the devil ; in other words, to overcome and take away evil altogether. There is something grand in this conception : I would not denounce men who have formed it as heretics, sceptics, or unbelievers. Surely it may be held as a supposition or hope in connection with a living faith in the Lord Jesus. They suppose themselves to be magnifying Christ and His atoning sacrifice on the cross in both these theories. The ultimate restoration theory, supposes that the restoration to life of the lost and dead, after they have endured such just consequences of their sins as a future retribution implies, will be solely through the work of Christ. They will now embrace it. They will now be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and be made partakers of the Divine nature. The theory implies a sort of second chance, which, however, is to be successful in leading the sinner to Christ. You will understand that I am not endeavouring to make this view of things consistent with itself, or with other most certain truths, but merely am showing that the endeavour is to give to Christ the glory of the destruction of evil out of the Universe, and thus, so far as I can see the supposed sequel, securing the salvation of the devil and all his angels.

The ultimate destruction theory regards immortality of life as only in Christ, and as forming no part of present human condition out of Christ ; it sets forth in language most solemn, and in nowise exaggerated, the fearful evil of sin—would that we all felt it more—and declares that the rejection of Christ, and I suppose the consequences of personal sins where he is not known, issues in a future punishment of more or less severity, by which punishment at length the very being is consumed and no more exists. Now the whole matter is of such unutterable mysteriousness when we come to form conceptions, for we have no help from experience, that we hardly know what to say. This earth we know a good deal about, its form, its size, its relation to the sun and other planets ; and we know the depth or height, whichever you choose, of the atmosphere by which it is surrounded or encompassed, in which, in fact, it dwells. Well then, when this im-

mortal leaves the mortal, when soul and spirit, if you so regard the matter, quit the body, whither does it or do they go? We know about the body, but what of that which leaves it? Where is heaven? Where is hell? What are the conditions of existence in the spirit world? Of what kind is its experience? How is knowledge gained or employed there? What emotions are there? These questions at once suggest that all is cloud-land and mysterious. Our conceptions are almost vagueness itself. How can we dogmatize? What then shall we say? As it seems to me we cannot wisely say more or less than the Scriptures. They use figures which at least suggest to us that future retribution for sin unrepented of and unpardoned, will be mainly *self-inflicted*, just as the worst suffering here is—that it will be different in degree according to strictest rule of equity—that there cannot possibly be aught of ground for the charge of an infinite punishment for a finite offence, or of an eternal punishment for sins committed during a short span of life—inasmuch as punishment is not infinite, and the sinner being punished continues to sin; and they suggest further that there will be no deliverance. And certainly the considerations urged by the Rev. Joseph Cook, derived from a strictly scientific view of the matter, tend to confirm the view of no deliverance. It is a very solemn, awe, awful estimate of possible human existence, but I see not how its accuracy can be questioned: It is briefly thus: Under an irreversible natural ban, sin produces natural blindness. I do not see how we can escape this conclusion.

For 1. Truth possessed, but not obeyed, becomes unwelcome. We don't like it, for it reproaches us for non-obedience. 2. Because it gives pain it is shut out of the voluntary activities of memory and reflection. We won't think about it. 3. The passions it would check grow stronger. The check removed, they hasten on. 4. The moral emotions that truth should feed, in its absence become weaker. 5. Hence arises an ill-balanced state of the soul, which tends to become habitual. This is plain—and then lastly that ill-balanced state renders the soul blind to the truth most needed to rectify its condition. Here then we see through what processes this irreversible law works. This being a fact scientifically established, the next is the self-propagating power of sin, the same is true of goodness, and now comes the fact that character tends to a final permanence, good or bad: and that when bad, there is the loss of any predominant desire to be holy, and there may exist in the universe eternal sin, Mark iii, 29. The literal rendering of our Lord's word is "eternal sin" Bengel says, "Sin in this place denotes *guilt*, and *everlasting sin or guilt* is opposed with great propriety of language to *forgiveness*. It therefore carries with it the punishment consisting as well of (or in) the feeling as well also of (or in) the penalty itself." All this is in harmony with the entire tone of the New Testament. Our Lord speaks of "never forgiveness either in this world or in that which is to come." He says of many, "these shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal." In the parable of Dives and Lazarus he gives no hint of deliverance. The wretched one is excluded by a great gulf from Abraham's bosom, and simply asks that his brethren may be warned in time, lest they come into the same hopeless misery. And the declaration is only a specimen of apostolic teaching, however, given in the gospel of John, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." I know it may be said in reply to Mr. Cook's scientific argument that God is able to interpose by the action of another law, that of grace, and to turn a current whose tendency is ever onward; but where is the slightest hint that He will do so? There is none in analogy, there is none so far as we know in Scripture. Indeed, Mr. Baldwin Brown says that he has no theory, but simply supposes that something may be done in the loving ministries of the Divine Lord in the future, and a Presbyterian clergyman in Canada simply asks permission to *hope*, which is all that he feels entitled to do.

I think we must reverence the tender feelings which lead to such hopes and desires:—to denounce them in harsh and violent terms, seems to me to be out of harmony

with a subject which has deeply moved and sorely exercised some of the best men in the Church of Christ. Yet we must concur with Mr. Dale in the conviction that the faith of the Church will not settle down into any theory of restoration. It seems to me that it cannot do so, unless it can be established that the ultimate issue of the work of our blessed Lord will extirpate all moral evil from the universe. This certainly is not yet proved. On the contrary, there is, so far as we can judge, the testimony alike of science and of Scripture against it. As to the theory of what is called conditional immorality, and the utter destruction of the being of the criminal by the punishment he endures, existence and punishment ending together, it interprets Scripture in a way that will not carry with it the consent of the Church, and it is alien to the teachings of our own nature, at least as we read them.

Well, then, to conclude in a few words. While we have no right to condemn inquiry into these great mysteries of our being, and still less to denounce as heretical, such men as Baldwin Brown, R. W. Dale, Edward White, and others who are prominent in these discussions, or any other brother in Christ who clings to the great evangelical faith, to which these matters are accessories, but not essentials, yet, for ourselves, we cannot go away from the words of one whose heart was more tender than any of ours, who knew the entire aim and purpose and issues of His own most wonderful and blessed mission, and who knew all truth—"These shall go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal."

WAITING ON YOUR GIFTS.

The Pastor of Zion Church, Montreal,—Mr. Bray—is preaching a course of sermons on Romans xii. Yesterday his subject was the gifts of prophecy, ministry, teaching, and exhortation. After an effective analysis of these gifts, with some specially interesting remarks on the first mentioned, he applied the matter to his large congregation in the following paragraphs. They were deemed by some of us of a nature too generally applicable, and too solemnly earnest, to be confined to the hundreds who listened to them. Hence they have been extracted, with consent of the preacher, and sent for insertion in the pages of the "CANADIAN INDEPENDENT," that others may have the advantage of considering them.

H. W.

Montreal, 23rd April, 1877.

Now let us notice, for a minute or two, the attitude each man is enjoined to bear toward his own gift. I said, last Sunday, that it is the duty of each Christian to take the measure of himself to know what are his capacities, and what the work he ought to do. Having found that, the Apostle says, "let each man *wait* on his gift." That must involve two things: First, the earnest cultivation of it. Let every man *wait* on his gift, the translators put, catching the spirit of the passage. Let him seize every opportunity for its use: let him watch for the chance and the time, and be always ready to apply his powers for practical purposes. I don't know how much need there may have been for the urging of this upon the Roman Christians, but no man who has the interests of the Church and the salvation of men at heart, can fail to feel the necessity for urging it upon Christians to-day. The waste of power in our churches is simply appalling. There are multitudes of people with great gifts, magnificent powers, doing worse than nothing. There are men in our churches most splendidly endowed. They can speak with persuasiveness, with passion and convincing power, but the gift is lying unused, uncared for. Not a heart has been taken captive by them for truth and for Christ, not a fallen brother has been recovered from the dust by their encouraging words,—

not a fainting brother has been revived by their strong and hopeful speech. There are men who can teach. They might gather young converts together and lead them from height to height of Christian truth. They might, by the clear unfolding of truth, strengthen the weak faith, and confirm the wavering, and dispel the dark doubts that haunt and trouble in many a mind. But they will not. They think, or seem to think, that they have done all that is, or can be, required of them if they have attended a service or two on the Sabbath. Most of all it seems to me does this apply to the modern lady. I am sorry for her: her powers are running to waste. She attends some fashionable church, listens to some pretty preacher, sheds a few sentimental tears over the sufferings of the poor, talks a little sentiment about it in the week, and that is all. I am not talking of this church, for it is not a fashionable church, thank God. And I don't think we have much sentimentality about us. But I am sure we could do vastly more than we are doing if we would but *wait* upon our gifts. More of the men might teach and speak for the truth of Christ. Here is an open door before you,—work to your hand. Women might carry cleanliness and light into those homes which are so full of crime and misery. Let them feel the shine of your love upon their hearts; let them hear your tender, cheering words; let them know that as servants of Christ you care for them, and they will not remain in hardness and indifference long. Oh, believe me, these people are not dead, they are prodigal-full of sin and far from God. But the spark of life is still there: they have a heart to feel, a mind to think, a soul capable of great and strong life. Not by the Law, but by the Gospel, you can find that heart and give life to that soul. For their sakes, for the sake of Him who loved you and died for you, *wait* upon your gifts. Aye, and for your own sake also. They are given for *use*, not to be wasted. Do you want to be among the foolish, who in the dark night when the door is shut, clasp the gone-out lamp, and turn the pale face to the sky gasping out the awful "too late!" Do you want to be compelled at last to dig the unused talent from the damp earth and see it given to another! Oh, my brothers and sisters, there is a day of reckoning yet to come. God grant that we may not be put to bitter shame. "*Wait* on your gift."

The second thing involved in this injunction, I will state in just a word or two. "*Wait* on your *own* gift, not on that of another." In other words, do what you can do, and don't waste your time in trying to do what you can't do. "Let the Prophet attend to his office, and the Deacon attend to his, and the Teacher to his." That is the Apostle's meaning. Let no one meddle with another, or be covetous of another, but let each thankfully accept his gift, and use it in the cause of Christ. That is a wholesome rule for church members. Let every man attend to his own gift, not coveting that of another. For why should we covet or meddle? We are here, not to be brilliant, but to be useful, not to shine for our own sake and glory, but to lead men to God. Let us help and not hinder each other, for thereby are we helping the cause of Christ. In many things we are alike. We have one Faith, one Baptism, one Christ, and one Father, but in many things God has made us to differ. If the great Apostle could speak to the Church of this age, I think he would say to it,—"*Now*, as concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, and all other gifts of God, I would not have you to be ignorant. There are diversities of gifts, but all from the same Spirit, and His own peculiar manifestation of the Spirit is given to each for the profit of the whole. And as the human body is one, although it hath many members, and all the members make but one body, so also is it with the Church of Christ." Be satisfied that you serve the community, whether with the directing mind, the inspired utterance, or the working hand. All have not the same functions, but all may be members of the Body of Christ. Dread nothing that is humble in office or work, dread nothing except to have *no* place in the Body, to be cast out as a withered branch, or a dead limb; as a member, work with Him, and suffer with Him; as a branch, bear much fruit, and then, ye shall also with Him be glorified.

A DEACON ON PASTORS' SALARIES.

The poor pittance doled out to our country pastors, is a subject which often falls under one's notice, and how to deal with it is a difficult and delicate question.

Pastors themselves are morbidly sensitive about meddling with money matters: they have so little to do with the handling of it, that they not unnaturally come to think it "the root of all evil." Unfortunately, it does too often produce evil; for the Pastor, kept out of his stipend and compelled to run into debt, and subjected oftentimes to the exacting prices which credit involves, must feel that injustice is done him. No mechanic would submit to such treatment, but a minister's mouth is shut from fear of offending his deacons, and he goes on from month to month, and not unfrequently from year to year, suffering anxiety of mind, but saying nothing for fear of making matters worse. It is easy to see how the spirit of a man is in this way crushed. Almost the whole of this trouble arises from want of business habits on the part of church officials, and system and plan in the collecting and disbursing of the finances of a church.

Deacons also are too thin-skinned about asking the people to give—either they ask not, or they ask amiss—and consequently many a bearer of the gospel, thinking that "where ignorance is bliss 'tis folly to be wise," never troubles himself to enquire into what is needed for "sustaining the ministry, and the services of the House of God." They do not realize the obligation which is laid upon all, to give "as God hath prospered them," and content themselves with contributing their five or ten cent piece when the plate comes round,—if they do not even allow it to pass by with nothing but a polite nod, or turn their "blind eye" to it unwilling to see it.

It is evident that there must be something wrong in such a state of things. No business man would act so in his own affairs, and why should it be tolerated in church matters? What should be every church member's business is left in the hands of a few, who, not liking to be constantly begging, fail to place before their fellow-members the state of the finances, and thus throw upon each the responsibility of doing his fair share of the work.

It is not only a duty, but a great privilege to contribute to the support of Divine worship, and where this is fully realized, the heart is enlarged, and the spirit of niggardliness is scotched, if not killed.

Why should any body of Christian men ask another Christian to come and labour among them, visit them in their sicknesses, counsel them in their difficulties, and comfort and encourage them in their times of sorrow, and of sore distress, and not recognise his claim to comfortable support? A minister to be acceptable must be educated; must possess capacities which in any ordinary calling would secure him a competency; and yet he is asked to sacrifice all such opportunities for the sake of preaching the gospel to those who, by their conduct seem to ignore the fact, that they owe him in return a comfortable and respectable support.

I am led to those reflections by having received a letter from a good and worthy brother, who has laboured in the gospel ministry for more than 30 years. He is the pastor of no small Village Church or Mission Station, but of a church in a fairly prosperous town in ——. I know him to be zealous, energetic, ready for every good work, and of no mean mental acquirements; and yet with a large family growing up, and to be educated, he is allowed to vegetate (might we not rather say stagnate) upon a stipend of \$700 per annum, with, it is true, a parsonage!—say, equal to \$800 a year—or \$15 a week! Upon this amount he has to clothe himself (of course, clerically,) and family, educate his children, and be ready to show hospitality and contribute to all religious and benevolent objects, as an example to his flock.

Surely, surely, common honesty, not to say loving appreciation of the services of a minister of the gospel, demands something different, something better than this. A minister, to respect himself and respect his people, should feel that as he minis-

ters to them in spiritual things, they are ready to supply his temporal wants. He is entitled to their kindest consideration in regard to everything pertaining to his personal and domestic comfort.

The brother in question says with more truth than poetry, "My salary last year did not cover, by \$200, my expenses." What does this mean, but that either he has had to encroach on the savings of former years, when the claims on him were less numerous and urgent than at present, or that he has this incubus of debt weighing upon him, and destroying all elasticity of mind, all joyousness and freshness of spirit. What must be the "fulness of the heart" out of which his mouth has to speak, sabbath by sabbath?

Truly does my friend say, "It is to a minister exceedingly damaging to seem poor, or to complain; or to fail in coming forward to contribute to the varied objects where money is wanted, and he is expected first to endorse them."

But, to sum up and secure, if possible, some good as the result of this communication, let me close with a few questions to those in office, in the various churches throughout Canada.

1. Why should not deacons, amongst themselves, consult whether the Pastor is adequately provided for? They know what it costs *them* to live, and can, therefore, pretty accurately estimate whether the Pastor has enough.

2. Why should they not regularly bring before the Churches—say quarterly—the state of the finances? It would interest the members and secure their co-operation. It would enable them to put the question to each and all,—are we doing what we can—what we ought—for the furtherance of the Gospel?

3. Do church officers and church members ever ask themselves—Am I, to the best of my ability, using the talent which God has bestowed upon me? Shall I be able to render up my account with joy?

4. And lastly. It is by individual effort that any improvement is likely to be secured. A. must not wait for B. to act. Each member of a church in joining it avows his readiness to seek, by all means in its power, its welfare. This obligation can never be discharged by selfish inaction. B.

UTTER FAILURE OF THE CRIMEAN WAR.

It is just twenty-one years since the Russian War was brought to a close. That war, according to the estimate of its historian, caused the sacrifice of a million of human lives. Its cost, in money, in destruction and waste of property, and in the interruption and derangement of commerce and industry, was such as to defy all calculation. The suffering of every kind that it inflicted on the nations was appalling and indescribable. According to the present Chancellor of the Exchequer "it stirred up in Europe a spirit of restlessness, which set all the world to seek for the means of improving the instruments of attack and defence, and to add enormously, and without stint or measure, to the most unprofitable and unsatisfactory of all possible forms of expenditure." The Peace party in this country opposed that war, and denounced it as unnecessary and unjust. They denied that the objects sought to be attained were such as to justify the enormous mischiefs which the war occasioned, and they more than doubted whether those objects could be attained by the means that were employed. For taking this course they were assailed with unmeasured obloquy. But surely all men will now acknowledge that the event has amply vindicated their conduct. All the objects avowed by the statesmen of Europe for undertaking the war have failed miserably. The material guarantees which were taken to shield Turkey from Russian aggression have long ago been given up, with the common consent of all the signatory powers, who alleged those guarantees as the justification of the war. The influence of Russia in the East of Europe, so far from being dimin-

ished, is enormously increased by being regarded as the protector and champion of the oppressed Christian races in the dominions of the Turk. For the integral regeneration of Turkey, which was confidently predicted as one result of the war, we have seen that country rapidly descend into an abyss of physical and moral corruption, of political disorganisation and financial bankruptcy, from which its most sanguine friends see no hope of escape. The solemn promises given by the Porte, as to the future rights and liberties of the Christian population, which led many good men to do some violence to their feelings, in lending their sanction to the war, have been openly and contemptuously violated in all parts of the empire, until that oppression which maketh the wise man mad, is driving province after province into open revolt. The independence of Turkey, which was alleged to be an indispensable element to the safety and civilization of Europe, is illustrated by the diplomatic action of the great Powers, who have been lecturing, dictating, snubbing the Sultan and his ministers in such a way as was never done before to any Government on the face of the earth. What then have we to show for all the sacrifices of the Crimean War—for the rivers of human blood that were shed, for the countless treasures that were wasted in the worst of all possible ways—for the black roll of misery carried to so many myriad homes throughout Europe, written within and without with mourning, lamentation and woe—for the evil passions which were let loose to deluge the world with the waters of bitterness, for the immense impulse given to the military spirit, which is still committing havoc on the peace and happiness of nations? What have we to show? Nothing, nothing, absolutely nothing of good. These events deserve to be noted, as teaching an impressive and memorable lesson, which is this, that it is well for those who are convinced that they are called to take a certain course, by loyalty to the cause of truth, justice and humanity, not to shrink from it, however few they may be in number, and however great the contumely and reproach they may thereby incur. For in every case they will have the testimony of a good conscience, and in most cases the time will come, as in the instance before us, when their righteousness will come forth as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day.

THE FINAL CONFLAGRATION.

The prophetic picture in Scripture of a day when "the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat; the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up," has recently received a striking illustration, possibly verification. A brilliant star of the third magnitude made its appearance suddenly in the constellation of the Swan. Previous surveys of the heavens have been so thorough and accurate as entirely to preclude the idea that this star could have previously existed in its then apparent size, and escaped observation. Examinations with the spectroscope have led astronomers to the hypothesis that it was a sun like our own, which, for some unexplained reason suddenly blazed up with several hundred times its former lustre, and with a degree of heat which must have consumed its own planetary system, if it were the centre of one. We speak of this as a recent phenomenon; but, though only recently seen, it probably occurred some centuries ago, the light of its conflagration having taken that length of time to travel from the burning system to our own. Of course this does not prove that a similar catastrophe will bring the world's drama to a tragic end; indeed, thus far, these blazing suns have not been discovered in our region of the heavens; but it at least illustrates the possibility of a very literal interpretation of the Biblical prophecies concerning the world's future destruction.—*Ech.*

Editorial.

The Canadian Independent.

TORONTO, MAY, 1877.

FROM HOUSE TO HOUSE.

One of the secrets of Mr. Moody's success, and one of the most gratifying features of his work, is the extent to which he secures the active co-operation of the Christian people of the places he visits. Everywhere he goes he insists on a thorough and systematic canvass of the city, for the purpose of reaching the non-church-going population, and thus carrying the gospel message to those who will not come out to hear it.

At the present moment this plan is being adopted in Boston, and *eighteen hundred visitors* are just now canvassing the one hundred and ten districts into which that city has been divided, with this object in view. The number of districts corresponds with the number of evangelical churches in the city, and as far as possible each church is assigned the work lying at and around its own doors. Ninety of the churches have responded to the appeal made to them, and are prosecuting the work with earnestness and success, and by this time it is probable that there is hardly one of the 70,000 families of that city that has not been reached in that way. The result is seen, it is said, in many conversions, and in largely increased congregations at the Tabernacle, and in all the churches.

We suspect Mr. Moody has another

object in view in this arrangement, besides the one we have named, about which he perhaps says less, but which is really the more practically important of the two, viz. : *setting Christians to work*, interesting them in the souls of their neighbours, *with a view to benefitting their own!* To accomplish that is to ensure success, anywhere. That is not merely a means to a revival: that is revival! The very effort to do good to others gives us an interest in the Lord's work which we can never feel without it, and we venture to say that most of those eighteen hundred visitors are feeling the throbbing of a new spiritual life within them, and are learning the preciousness of their hope in Christ, and of their freedom of access to Him in prayer, as they never learnt it before. Like the Alpine traveller who, in the endeavour to arouse and save his fellow-traveller from the fatal slumber that was already benumbing him, saved *himself* from death, so these Christian workers will find a large and present reward for the good they *do*, in the good they *get*.

But now, with two most important and desirable results flowing from Mr. Moody's plan, why may not such a systematic house-to-house visitation, be organized in all our cities and towns? Is not this the very thing all churches need—to *be set to work*? Is not this also just what the world needs—to be convinced that Christians *believe* what they profess? It is not enough that we build churches, and throw open our doors, and

signify to the public that they will be welcomed if they choose to come to them. There are multitudes of people who will never be reached by any such method of preaching the Gospel. We need not inquire, just now, *why* it is so. The *fact* is all that we are concerned with at present. And because our blessed Lord foresaw that it would be so, he bade us "go out into the streets and lanes of the city," and compel them to come in to the feast he had spread for us. He would have us follow His own bright example, which was—not to open an office in Jerusalem, that all who chose might come, and inquire of Him, as Nicodemus did, but "to *seek* and to save that which was lost." The command is, "Go!"—and we but very imperfectly fulfil that command, when we set a man to preach to us, and wait for him to draw men, perhaps to himself and not to Christ.

"Ah, but nobody but Moody, or some such man, can unite the churches sufficiently to organize such an effort as that!" And why not? Are we so sectarian that we cannot work together, with even such an object in view. We should be sorry to think so of any of our brethren.

But even if it be so, and we cannot organize an effort upon so grand a scale, there will always be some churches prepared to co-operate in such a work. We have seen it done once, and we know it can be done again. In one instance that we are acquainted with, two ministers, a Methodist and a Congregationalist, devoted every Monday afternoon for some weeks, to visiting together the neglected portions of one of our Western towns—calling at every house, and speaking and praying with the people wherever pos-

sible, or leaving a good religious or temperance tract, where it was not convenient to do so,—inquiring if their children were going to Sunday School, or if they themselves were attending any place of worship, and we cannot doubt that much good resulted from the effort. The ministers at any rate, were benefitted if no one else was; and we are convinced that what did these ministers good, would do laymen good also. We have even a stronger conviction that Christian laymen, going forth, as our Saviour sent the seventy, "two and two," can do more good than ministers in such a work as that we speak of, from the fact that, in their case, there is nothing *professional* about it, and their motives are less liable to be misunderstood. By all means let this systematic canvass be made at least once a year. Mr. Moody can visit only the great centres of population, but this work can be done everywhere.

UNDER THE YOKE.

The struggle for freedom in the Church of England is becoming interesting. The imprisonment of Mr. Tooth, in Horsemonger Lane, "for contempt," and his discharge therefrom, as some one wittily puts it, "in contempt," seems to be opening the eyes of some who are apparently not very willing to see, to the crisis that is impending in regard to the Establishment. Willing to enjoy its benefices and emoluments, but unwilling to pay the price which the State demands for them, and which every such establishment not only must pay, but *ought to pay*,—for no government can be expected to support a clergy, without

retaining, to some extent, control of its teaching,—some of the leaders of the High Church party have recently presented an address to the Archbishops and Bishops of the Church of England, which the *Pall Mall Gazette* characterizes as nothing less than an “insurrection of the clergy.” After expressing their anxiety “to retain the relations of Church and State” now existing, they curiously enough, go on to tell their “Spiritual Fathers” that they are utterly dissatisfied with them, and want them radically changed.

“On the one side we see coercive measures resorted to for enforcing uniformity, such as have been happily unknown in this country for centuries, and on the other, a determination to endure any suffering rather than submit to a jurisdiction which, rightly or wrongly, is regarded as purely secular.

“Moreover, we are much impressed by the unsatisfactory character of the authority and arguments to which appeal is made in the controversies now distracting the Church. For while the Church of England to-day has the same right to decree rites or ceremonies, and possesses the same authority in controversies of faith, as the same Church had at any previous period in her history, appeal is now made not to the living voice of the Church, but to events and documents which have themselves always been matters of controversy.”

These troubles, they affirm, are of so serious a nature, that existing relations with the State cannot be much longer continued, unless laws for the regulation of Divine Service and for other spiritual matters of primary importance, are made by an authority which both clergy and laity would feel to be binding upon conscience; and they are equally satisfied that no authority will be considered thus binding which does not

proceed from the Synods of the Church as well as from Parliament.

For, as matters now stand, the church is “paralysed by the apprehension that when her Synodical Acts are submitted to Parliament in the constitutional manner, material alterations may be made in them, and that the final result may be seriously at variance with the intentions of the Synods.”

In other words, Convocation, and not the British Parliament, must tell them what they are to believe, and practise, as members of the Church of England.

Very reasonable ground, indeed, to take, from the churchman’s point of view! For one can hardly conceive of a greater anomaly than that of a Christian church whose bishops are appointed by the Prime minister of the hour, and whose creed, and ritual, and internal regulations are all absolutely dependent upon a Parliament composed of Protestants and Catholics, Jews and Infidels. We wonder not, therefore, that men who are not mere hirelings, should fret and chafe under a yoke which our Non-conformist forefathers were unable to bear. But we must say we do wonder that any one should hope for anything better while consenting to receive the pay of the State. They surely know very little of the history of church Establishments.

“If they think,” says the *English Independent*, “that it is better the Church should be stripped of all the distinctions which the State has conferred upon it; that its bishops and clergy should be content with such honour and authority as their spiritual character secures them from those who admit its claims; that it should lose any endowments which the nation has given, and, if necessary, accept a condition of Apostolic poverty rather than submit to the control of Par-

liament, and the Courts it may please to set up; and if, therefore, they are ready to peril the Establishment to save the Church—they are taking a wise and consistent course. For that is certainly the true meaning of their action. What are the precise functions they would give to Convocation in the matter of legislation, it would not be easy to say; and, indeed, it seems doubtful whether they have defined them to their own minds. But nothing is more sure than that Parliament will never tolerate a co-ordinate, to say nothing of a superior, power. If the conditions they indicate in their document are the only ones on which the peace of the Establishment can be preserved, or indeed, its existence maintained, it needs no prophet, nor even the son of a prophet, to foretell its certain and speedy fate."

The reply of the Archbishop of Canterbury to the address is not very encouraging. He says he doesn't quite understand what they mean by it! but that his brethren of the Episcopal Bench will give it "the most attentive consideration." The *Times*, however, evidently understands it, if the Archbishop does not, and declares it to be a demand for "nothing less than a complete revolution in the existing ecclesiastical order," which, it says, the Synods of the church may some day acquire, but, it adds, with a snarl,—“only on one condition—that the clergy abandon the privileges and the benefices which they possess under the existing constitution of Church and State.”

FOR THE DEACON ONLY.

Just now, when spring is about to put a new face upon everything, and all reputable people take the hint, and begin a general cleaning and clearing up about their houses and premises,—

“Up stairs and downstairs, and in my lady's chamber”—we hope, Deacon, you will not forget the church! That mat-

ting needs to be taken up and shaken; the floor and the wood-work washed; the cushions switched and aired; the windows cleaned; the cobwebs removed, and those globes relieved of the smoke and dust that obscure them. Ugh! how dirty everything is! And is this the place you teach your children to think of as “the HOUSE OF GOD, and the GATE OF HEAVEN?” What kind of idea of Heaven, and of its unsullied purity and and glory will they be likely to gather from such a sanctuary?

The outside, too, needs looking after. Everything looks neglected. The front doors require a coat of varnish, the steps and approaches need renewing, and the window frames repainting. Now is the time, too, to plant a few trees, and do the sodding. Get up a “bee” before the people become too busy, and have it done at once. It will please them all to have a hand in it. And then, everybody who can draw an inference at all, when they see the improvements you are making, and observe the neatness and attractiveness of the building and grounds will infer three things: 1, That your people are people of taste and refinement: 2, That they are interested in the church, and cause of God; and 3, That they must have a minister who is worth hearing, and working for. And so they will be very likely to cast in their lot with you, if not already connected elsewhere. Now, Deacon, up and at it!

A NEW DEPARTURE AMONG THE BAPTISTS.

The Semi-annual meeting of the Baptist Missionary Convention of Ontario,

has just been held in Woodstock. The attendance is said to have been large, and the proceedings harmonious and interesting. The most important matter before the Convention was the appointment of a permanent Missionary Secretary, who should devote his whole energies to the furtherance of their Home Mission work. With this in view, the Rev. Dr. Davidson, of Guelph, had been asked if he would relinquish his pastoral charge in that place, and accept an engagement as Secretary for six months, with a view to a permanent appointment. This proposal, Dr. Davidson declined, as any sensible man would do, "To ask me," he says, "or any man in my circumstances, at my age, and with my family, to dissolve his pastoral relation for a six months' engagement merely, is scarcely a fair and reasonable thing; unless he has some good prospect, or guarantee that the engagement would be continued *after that period had passed*. I know the report adopted said that six months engagement was, 'with a view to a more permanent arrangement': but what assurance have I, or can I have, of the arrangement being *made more permanent*?"

The convention could not but feel the force of Dr. Davidson's objection, and accordingly passed a resolution unanimsly requesting him "to enter at once upon the whole duties assigned to him by the resolution of Convention appointing him as its Secretary"; and they add, "in justice to him, we pledge ourselves, as a Board, and as individuals, that at next meeting of Convention we will support a resolution affirming his permanent appointment; subject, of course, to the rule of the constitution regarding the choice of officers."

The salary promised is \$1,200, and travelling expenses.

The Treasurer of the Baptist Missionary Convention reported a balance of only \$224 in the treasury, while there is

still due the Missionaries' \$1,088 on the January quarter, and the whole amount (\$1,869) pledged them for the April quarter, or a debt of \$2,733. The total receipts for the past six months were only \$2,126. An appeal was made to wipe out this debt by special collections in all the churches, on the 29th ult. We would be glad to hear of its success.

The attention of ministers and churches about to appoint delegates to the Annual Meeting of the Congregational Union, in Guelph, is respectfully called to the notice in our official columns from the pastor of the church in that place.

We are sure no apology need be offered for the amount of space devoted to Dr. Wilkes' very able and interesting address on "Some phases of Theology," at the closing of the College, in Montreal, on the 11th ult. The questions discussed are among the most vitally important of our christian faith, and they are treated so popularly as to be within the reach of all ordinary readers, and we hope no one will fail to peruse and study the address.

The *Christian Guardian* seems to think Restorationism the logical outcome of Calvinism. We cannot see, he says, how the Calvinist can give a good answer to the objection: "If God in this life regenerates thousands by His sovereign power, without the choice of their wills, why may He not in the future world work a similar work for the finally impenitent?" But, in the first place, the *Guardian* surely must know that he

only travesties Calvinism when he speaks of men being saved "without the choice of their wills." Secondly, a perfectly good and sufficient answer to the objection may be found in the fact that the Bible says nothing about the restoration of those dying impenitent. And, thirdly, we think it will be found, upon investigation, that nearly all Restorationists are, *in fact*, Arminians!

About two hundred delegates are expected to attend the Pan-Presbyterian Council at Edinburgh which meets July 2-9. At a meeting in that city last week, to complete arrangements, it was resolved to raise \$7,500 for expenses. Representatives are expected from the Canadian, Australian and South African colonies, and a large and influential body from the Continent of Europe. America, no doubt, will send her full proportion.

From present appearances, our Presbyterian brethren will have their hands so full for some time to come, with heresies within their own fold, that they will be altogether incapable of looking after the orthodoxy of their brethren without. What with the case of the Rev. Mr. Macdonell, of Toronto, the Rev. Mr. McCune, of Cincinnati, Professor Smith, of Aberdeen, and now Principal Tulloch, who backs him up (we don't know but we ought to include one of their Canadian Principals), it looks as if they will have either to construe the Confession somewhat *elastically*, or their scheme of a Pan-Presbyterian Union will perish at the birth.

Dr. Tulloch, in a late article in *The Contemporary Review*, speaks of the "obvious errors and exaggerations of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, specifying among them 'its disproved theory of creation,' 'its doctrine of the non-salvability of the heathen,' and 'its extreme Calvinism.'"

If such language is to be permitted from not only a standard-signer, but a standard-bearer among them, dependence on subscription of such standards for harmony and orthodoxy, is not very encouraging. We think we can do as well as that with nothing but our Bibles.

The trial of the Rev. Mr. McCune, before the Cincinnati Presbytery, on a charge of "disloyalty to the Presbyterian Church"—whatever that may mean—seems to have been peculiarly rancorous and protracted. The charge, with its specifications, filled thirty-two pages, and fourteen days of heated discussion were spent on the case. Dr. Skinner read a speech eight hours long, just to open it up, in which he described it as one whose "gravity outweighs that of all other cases put together, throughout the whole period of the history of the Presbyterian Church." Tremendous! What was it all about? our readers will ask. The doctrine of the Trinity, or the Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, or the Atonement? Not at all. But something about "Christian unity," which Mr. McCune is said to have made a "hobby," and organizing an "undenominational church!" The *New York Independent* says Mr. McCune's views "by no means transcend Paul's ex-

pressions on the importance and duty of Christian unity, and come very far short of the tender importunateness of Christ's prayer in John xvii. It is true that, if Christ's prayer were generally accepted and acted upon, there would be no room for the Presbyterian Church, unless it is to be the only church of the future; but we submit that this is not a valid ground on which to bring a charge of heresy against the author of that prayer."

To the credit of the Presbytery, it must be said that they refused to condemn Mr. McCune, though the case is likely, in some form, to be carried to the Synod, and probably to the General Assembly. Mr. McCune, however, having been acquitted, has sought a larger liberty by uniting with the Congregational ministry.

The Rev. Dr. John Hall's Church has just wiped out a little debt of \$175,000, which remained on their new and elegant place of worship, on the Fifth Avenue, New York. It was all raised and paid in less than a month. And yet they say they have "hard times" there!

The Congregationalists of New England have lost by death two of their best representatives—Dr. W. H. Lord, of Montpelier, Vt., and Dr. S. B. Treat, secretary of the American Board. Dr. Lord was the son of President Nathan Lord, and a man whose ability and whose character united to make him the most influential leader among the churches of the state. He was conservative in his opinions, but a man of noble impulses, and his loss will not easily be repaired. He was editor of that admirable religious journal *The Vermont Chronicle*. Dr.

Treat will be long remembered as the sagacious director of the foreign missions of the oldest and most successful of our foreign mission boards. In that position he commanded the absolute confidence of the best friends of the cause, and that is praise enough.

The International Convention of Young Men's Christian Association will meet at Louisville, Ky., June 6th, and remain in session five days. On Saturday, June 2nd, the general secretaries, of whom there are about 100, will meet. About 500 delegates are expected to be present.

The many friends of the Rev. C. Chapman, lately of Zion Church, Montreal, and now Principal of the Western College, Plymouth, England, will be pleased to learn, as a correspondent informs us, that he "has quite won the hearts of the students there," who "set a very high value on his theological lectures, which he makes to bear directly on modern science."

War has been actually commenced between Russia and Turkey, and who can tell where the end may be! An American diplomatist lately stationed in Russia, thinks the forces of the Czar will be near Constantinople in a couple of months, as the Turks have no commander of ability, and their levies are undisciplined and badly equipped. The Turks, however, are animated by intense religious fanaticism, and will be fighting for their homes, and Russia may find the task she has undertaken a much harder one than she had

expected. But if she succeeds, will England allow her to occupy Constantinople—the key to the East? And will the Papal Governments permit the Greek Church to possess the sacred places? We can hardly think so, and if not, what then! Ah, well! “the Lord reigneth!”

We are sorry to see that “Suttee,” or widow-burning, in India, is not quite extinct, the three principal Ranees, wives of Sir Jung Bahadoor, recently deceased, having immolated themselves on his funeral pyre, March 1st, at Nepaul. The scene is thus described in a native newspaper:—

“The funeral pyre was prepared with sandal-wood, resin, and a large quantity of ghee. When the arrangements had been made, the ladies bathed, performed poojah, and made presents to Brahmins. The next step was to take measures for the government of the country and to maintain peace; then general directions were given to the brother-in-law. Their last act was to relieve some prisoners. They then entered the funeral pyre quite unconcernedly, muttering prayers. The corpse was then laid on its back, and the eldest Ranee took its head in her lap, and the two others took the feet. They were then surrounded by odorous combustibles, and the Ranees gazed upon the features of their husband, as if forgetful of every other consideration. The fire was then applied by his son, and all was over in a few minutes.”

Surely the British Government will interfere to prevent a repetition of such a horrid rite.

We fear the complaint that Congregationalists do not value and sustain their own periodical literature, is true of other places besides England and—Canada. The proprietors of the *Victorian Inde-*

pendent held their annual meeting in Melbourne lately, when it appeared that the expenses for the year had exceeded the income by over £48, although the editor receives no salary.

There is a monthly loss of about £3, which the report says “is not due to the low or failing merits of the *Independent*, but is entirely owing to an apathy which unhappily exists throughout the denomination in reference to this paper.” The number printed rarely exceeds 750. The consequence is that the proprietors have had again to make good the deficit.

Can we not raise the subscription list of the *CANADIAN INDEPENDENT*, for the next volume, to 2,000? We know that if our brethren will only make an effort, the thing may be done. Hundreds of our people have never been asked to subscribe for it. Many of them don't know we have such a magazine! Think of churches of 100 to 150 members with only two to five subscribers! And deacons, and even ministers, who never see their own denominational magazine!

The Grand Trunk Railway now issues half-fare cards to pastors living on its line of road, on application to W. Wainwright, Esq., the general passenger Superintendent, Montreal. Those interested should apply at once.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We cannot insert anonymous communications. We must have the name of the writer, not necessarily for publication, but, as a guarantee of good faith.

Correspondence.

UNFULFILLED PROPHECY RESPECTING EASTERN NATIONS.

Affairs in the East are occupying the attention of Christian minds very much at the present time. The writer having by accident come across a volume with the above heading, from the pen of the Rev. A. Macleod, of Glasgow, published in 1842, by Jno. Snow, of Paternoster Row, London, which has excited much interest in his mind, wishes to call attention to the work, as the conclusions of the author seem likely from present appearances to prove very correct. The work refers especially to the Turks, the Russians, and the Jews.

OBSERVER.

"THE SCALE OF OUR MISSIONARY CONTRIBUTIONS."

DEAR EDITOR,—The communication in the March number on this subject is important as touching upon a matter in which we all are interested, the pecuniary help given by our churches to the missionary cause. But one fails to see the wisdom of the line of remark in the letter largely quoted from, or the article commending it to the churches.

Although the letter was written after some investigation and much reflection, yet, it is seriously defective, as it does not state the whole case, and many thinking men will join your correspondent in the April Magazine, in doubting the correctness of the position taken in it. Are not two things essentially different confounded the one with the other: the amount contributed to the Missionary Society by our churches, and the measure of liberality exercised by the churches in giving that amount? The measure of liberality cannot be gauged without a certain knowledge of the ability of the donors, and it does seem hardly possible that the friend, competent in finances as he undoubtedly is, can be possessed of so exact and extensive information as to be able to pronounce a correct judgment in the premises, was the examination not after all

confined to a particular class rather than to the whole membership of the churches. On this supposition it is to be regretted that the remarks were of so general a nature. During a few years past, at least in discussions on this subject, it has been claimed by brethren from all parts of the country, that the churches did their parts very well in giving, regard being had to their ability, but it was also more than hinted that the well-to-do and really prosperous brethren were remiss in their duty. If the conclusions stated may be accepted with this application of them, then the verdict must be modified accordingly.

But our friend ought to have gone further and have ascertained all the facts concerning the methods by which so large an amount is raised by a large denomination, then he could have answered his own question, a large question no doubt, as the doctor says, but why is it not now to be discussed? Comparisons are distasteful, let us say, and it is worse than useless to make them if we do not try and find a remedy for any short comings they may be supposed to bring out to view. With all kindness and respect let it be said, that the spirit of "self-depreciation" which marks the whole of the communication referred to, is most discouraging, and it is not hazardous much to add that a like spirit indulged in most persistently in the past has probably not a little to do with the want of interest and of a willingness to work and give, so far as these *do* exist amongst us.

If we are to have the successes of our neighbours presented in a vivid manner for our imitation, by all means let us know how they do it. In this case, we have not far to go for the information. The Methodist Church has had for years past one of their most efficient and popular men engaged as Missionary Secretary, who has travelled through the length and breadth of their bounds, preaching on this subject, collecting for it, organizing local committees to bring it before every family, almost every individual in the connexion. His enthusiasm has un-

doubtedly been shared in by the ruling officials; everywhere the people have been educated as to their duty, and the result is most creditable to the body, notwithstanding the want of breadth in the liberality in which they have been trained. Now all this has been known to our leading men, and the plan much thought of, and we all know that a year or two ago a movement was made to set a somewhat similar machinery in operation amongst ourselves. It was cordially adopted, and much good has already resulted from it; more would have been accomplished had our highly esteemed "Missionary Superintendent" not been charged at the same time with onerous editorial duties. Perhaps it is unavoidable that the two functions should devolve upon one for some time to come. But a beginning having been made, it is manifestly the wisdom of the churches to sustain with much earnestness, the brother who with marked unanimity of feeling was set apart to this very work.

There is need of increased liberality; it is very properly urged that much depends on the scale of contribution adopted. True, but we cannot improve on the one furnished in the unerring Word. It applies to every individual member, and does not permit of the burdening of some that others may be eased: "every one of you," "as God has prospered him." If one can give a thousand dollars he should do it, and not fear the consequences. "The Lord loveth a cheerful giver."

T. C. A.

GOING TO MANITOBA.

DEAR BROTHER WOOD,—Brother John and I fully intend (D. V.) to take a trip

to Manitoba in June next, after our Union Meetings. Our objects are various: relaxation, a little private business, and a desire to see the country. But in all things I trust we will be able to keep an eye open to the interests of Christ's Kingdom. And if we can serve our own denomination in any way, we will be happy to do so, as far as our time and means will allow.

Yours, &c.,

R. BROWN.

Middleville, April 12th, 1877.

THE LABRADOR MISSION.

The Secretary of the Labrador Mission would again lay before the readers of the *INDEPENDENT* the pressing claims of this interesting Mission. The annual donations from Sunday Schools have hitherto been sent in February, but, with three exceptions, these have not yet reached us. The Mission is to a large extent dependent on such contributions, and especially so, this spring. Last year was one of much additional expense, and in it, a large debt was cleared off. We are thus in more urgent need of help than ever, and that, immediately if possible, as in May, the summer supplies for our Missionaries must be purchased and sent down.

The certificates supplied by the Society on receipt of \$10, have given much satisfaction, and we are most anxious to dispose of them all. These can be had, and any desired information supplied on application to the President, Mrs. Dr. Wilkes, Montreal, or to Mrs. Toller, Recording Secretary Labrador Mission, 182 Mountain Street Montreal, Que.

News of the Churches.

LONDON.—The annual meeting of the Congregational Church was held last Thursday. The pastor, Rev. R. W. Wallace, M.A., in the chair, and the congregation largely represented.

The yearly report of the pastor testified to the friendly relations existing between the pastor and his flock. Mr. H. Mathewson submitted the reports of the Deacons and Treasurer, the former

showing an increase in the church membership, and the latter a surplus on hand. The report of the Sabbath School was submitted by the Secretary, Mr. Bundy, showing that there have been 228 scholars attending the school, classified as follows:—Bible class, 20; junior boys, 69; junior girls, 91; infants, 45. The report of the Building Committee was handed in by Mr. W. D. Riddell. The total cost of this handsome church will not fall short of \$25,000. The report of the Ladies' Aid Society, presented by Mrs. Newcombe, showed that during the year the Society had collected \$350 towards the reduction of the church debt. The Women's Board of Missions, through Mrs. Randell, reported that they are still paying for the education of a little girl in Turkey, where Rev. Mr. Brooks, a brother-in-law of the pastor, is engaged in missionary labour. The meeting, on the whole, was very satisfactory, and closed with the usual votes of thanks.—*Advertiser*.

At the regular monthly church meeting of this Church, held March 29th, the following resolution was carried unanimously by a standing vote:—

“Resolved, That whereas the question of Temperance *versus* Intemperance is every day becoming more prominent; the traffic in intoxicating liquors is responsible for a large proportion of crime and poverty; it stands directly in the way of Church enterprise and Christian work; and whereas the time has come when it behoves churches as well as individuals to declare for one side or the other; therefore resolved, that this Church desires to declare itself on the side of total abstinence from all that can intoxicate, believing that for the sake of their example on others, if not for their own sakes, the members of Christian Churches should become total abstainers.”

SOUTHWOLD.—The ordination of the recently invited pastor, Mr. W. J. Cuthbertson took place here on April 12th. Previous to the public service, a council was held. An address on “Principles” was given by the Rev. R. W.

Wallace, M. A., of London; the charge to the pastor, by the Rev. W. H. A. Claris, of Sarnia; and that to the church, by the Rev. J. B. Silcox of Toronto. The questions were asked by the Rev. E. D. Silcox, to which satisfactory replies were given. The Rev. Mr. Sutherland (Presb.) also assisted in the service.

Thanks to the energetic action of the Rev. E. D. Silcox (lately on a visit here), a \$225 cabinet organ has just been ordered from the Dominion Organ Co., for which he has succeeded in securing cash and promises that will about meet the cost. The friends are also about to purchase a new chandelier for the church.

Special services were commenced here by the brethren Silcox and H. Pedley, during a recent visit, which promise to have the Divine blessing.—*Com*.

ST. CATHARINES.—A correspondent says, “Our church work is going on nicely. We have been receiving new members nearly every month, and at present there seems, in all the churches throughout the city, a deep religious fervour pervading, which, I feel assured, will still deepen until it breaks out in a great revival. We have with us now in the city, Mr. Rine, the great temperance lecturer, and he, through the blessing of God, is doing much good. Three nights the City Hall has been literally packed with anxious listeners, and the first two evenings over 500 signed the pledge. I have not heard the result of Saturday's lecture yet. God speed our brother in this great work. . . . Our Sunday-school work is prospering, and we have now a splendid staff of workers. . . . We have written for specifications of the new building, and shall commence it as soon as possible.”

ST. CATHARINES.—**PRESENTATION.**—At the close of the Tabernacle Sabbath School yesterday, the Superintendent, Mr. Orchard, was made the recipient of a handsome silver butter cooler. The above was presented by the scholars as a mark of love and esteem. Mr. Orchard, in responding to an appropriate address, expressed his gratitude for this

unexpected token of their love, deeming himself unworthy of such a gift, as he had done but his duty. He said that he was very thankful that he had such a faithful, earnest band of teachers, with whom it was a pleasure to work. The Tabernacle Sabbath School was organized two years ago with eight scholars. The average attendance is now about 100.—*News.*

YORKVILLE.—On Monday, April 2nd, a social gathering of the membership of this Church took place in the school-room, on the occasion of the departure from Toronto of Mr. Geo. Hague and family, and their consequent retirement from active fellowship with the church. Refreshments were provided by the ladies, after which Mr. Geo. Scott conducted the proceedings of the evening. The principal event was the presentation of an address and testimonials to Mr. and Mrs. Hague, expressive of the loving esteem of the church for them. Mr. Hague, in the course of his reply, stated that he should always cherish the memory of his connection with Yorkville, and take a warm interest in the future welfare of the church. Miss Geldard, who, with Miss Mudie, was present by special invitation, delivered an earnest and interesting address. The remainder of the evening was spent in general conversation and leave-taking. Mr. H. W. Warriner, B.A., who this year completes his fourth year of study at the Congregational College, Montreal, has engaged to supply the pulpit during the summer vacation, and will commence his ministry on the first Sabbath in May.—*Com.*

"HOME DEDICATION."—In connection with the settlement of Mr. T. W. Handford, as pastor of the Bond Street Church, Toronto, a gathering of an unusually interesting character took place on the evening of Tuesday, April 10th, at the Pastor's residence. Cards indicative of the procedure of the evening were freely distributed. "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel," "I will be as the dew unto Israel," and "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord," were the "golden texts" upon the cards referred

to. By half-past eight the house was filled, and the pastor, out of the fullness of his heart, extended a welcome to his guests. Selections of Scripture were then read, and the dedication prayer offered. The solemn joy, and evident manifestation of the true oneness that should always exist between pastor and people will never fade from the memories of those who were witnesses of the scene. The subsequent singing of the verse :

"The hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets,"

was the real interpretation of the feelings of all present. Prayer was offered by Messrs. Geo. Scott, Lane, and H. G. Grist. Mr. T. Elgar, of the Yorkville Church, spoke a few words of congratulation, and encouraged the adoption of Phil. iii. 13, 14, as the motto of all who would re-dedicate themselves to the service of the Lord. After singing the verse—

"Blest be the tie that binds,"

the house was made free to the numerous visitors by the pastor and Mrs. Handford. **THOMAS ELGAR.**

TORONTO—NORTHERN CHURCH.—At a recent meeting of the Church and congregation it was resolved to enlarge the present building by the addition of 26 feet to the rear, and so increasing the accommodation by 200 sittings,—upholstering and repainting the building throughout, and putting in furnaces, &c., the whole cost of the improvements being estimated at about \$5,000.

VANKLEEK HILL.—The Rev. R. Mackay sends us the following interesting account of the good work going on in Vankleek Hill, under date of April 17th:—"Mr. Foote, the Secretary of the church, has asked me to send you a brief account of the blessed work of grace going on here at present.

"On Lord's day, the 4th of March last, Mr. Henry D. Grieve, the devoted young brother whom you have sent here to labour, asked all those who were in any way concerned about their souls,

and Christians who wished to see the work of the Lord making progress, to meet the following evening in the chapel. From seventy to eighty persons did so, and from that night till now (the seventh week) the meetings have been continued, with increasing interest and blessed results. The Rev. Mr. Anderson (Bapt.) and Rev. Mr. Jolliffe (Meth.) have assisted from the beginning, the one object being the glory of God in the salvation of souls. For several weeks the meetings were conducted in the Congregational chapel, which became too small to accommodate those desiring to attend.

At the request of the Presbyterian friends, the meetings were then transferred to *their* place of worship, where they are now held.

Rev. Mr. Grant, pastor of the church is from home for the benefit of his health, but many of his people have been blessed, and some assistance has been given by those supplying his pulpit.

The Lord has given a gracious outpouring of His Spirit, and many have been awakened and brought to "a saving knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus."

It is not known how many have been influenced by the blessed Spirit, but the number must be very large indeed.

In visiting, at nearly every house there are those who are anxious, or who have found peace. In some families there are two, three, and even four, who have found the Saviour. There is great joy in these homes, parents rejoicing over children, and friends over friends. The work is still going on, and the meetings are increasing in interest. Conversions are taking place every evening. The greatest possible harmony has prevailed all along, and the different churches have shared in the blessing. The only outside help given was a week by Rev. Mr. Macallum of Athol, and the writer, who has been here for nearly a fortnight.

Mr. Grieve and I have held several services at Hawkesbury, which have been well attended, with apparent deep interest. A few profess to have been brought to Jesus. Last night there were eight or nine anxious. If special meetings could be carried on at Hawkesbury,

there would doubtless be much blessing. Mr. Grieve is very anxious about this end of the field, and will have special services probably next week.

From present appearances there is every prospect if proper attention is given, of a vigorous church being built up here. The people are evidently hungering for the word of life.

This evening was the most crowded of all the services, from sixty to seventy young converts were present. I gave a "Bible reading" on the subject of the "Blood of Jesus;" a brief address to Christians on "Work," and preached from Isa. i. 18.

This afternoon a meeting of the church was held, James P. Wells, Esq., one of the deacons presiding. It was unanimously resolved to invite Mr. Henry D. Grieve, to become pastor of the church here, and at Hawkesbury.

CONGREGATIONAL COLLEGE OF B.N.A.,
CLOSE OF THE SESSION.—The usual public services in connection with the closing of the current session of the Congregational College, took place Wednesday evening, April 11th, in Emmanuel Church, in the presence of a large and interested audience, the Rev. J. F. Stevenson, LL. B., chairman of the Board of Directors, presiding. After the preliminary exercises, conducted by the chairman, and the Rev. R. K. Black, of Granby.

The Rev. Professor Fenwick gave a *résumé* of the work done during the session just closed. He said they had great reason to be thankful to God that all the young men had been enabled to prosecute their studies during the entire session uninterruptedly. There had also been nothing to interfere with the harmony of their work—no want of union and brotherly accord between themselves. He stated that there were in the College during the latter part of the session nine young men, besides three in McGill University, making 12 students altogether preparing for the work of the Christian ministry. Dr. Wilkes had given a course of lectures on the Gospel, giving forth no uncertain sound; also, a course of historical lectures, covering a large field, a course on homiletics, and one on pastoral duties. The chairman had undertaken

the course, until this session conducted by Dr. Cornish, and the students had derived much help from his instructions. His own work had consisted of ninety-eight lectures on Church history, covering one of the most interesting, and to us, in Canada, most important periods of the history of Popery, from the time of Hildebrand. The examinations had been successful and satisfactory. There had been no second or third-class students among their number. In conclusion, he spoke of two of the young brethren leaving them to engage in active work, and addressing them, said: "We hope to hear from you good and noble things, young men; don't disappoint us."

The Rev. Mr. Stevenson followed in an interesting address to the students, highly congratulating them on their achievements, but warning them that their work had only just begun. He also gave them some advice: first, they should believe in their own calling, in themselves, and not feel small because some cantankerous men they met would try to make them feel small. Referring to what they would have to contend with in the world as ministers of the Gospel, he said they would not require so much to combat scepticism among men as to endeavour to raise them up from sin to holiness—to deal with their every-day life. He had a good deal of respect for some of the ways of the Church of Rome, especially of the Jesuits in their mode of teaching. They selected their best men to do their best work, sending them away to obscure places, among the humblest classes. He urged the students to do their very best in everything. If they began in a little village with a little church and did their best there, one of two things would follow: either they would be called to a bigger church, or their church would become bigger.

The reverend gentleman, at the close of his address, presented to the three graduates, Messrs. Hugh Pedley, J. W. Cox, and J. F. Malcolm, the certificates of their completion of the College course.

The choir sang the hymn commencing

"Ye servants of the Lord,
Each in his office wait,"

and Rev. Dr. Wilkes entering the pul-

pit, proceeded to give an address on, "Thoughts on some phases of Theology," which will be found elsewhere.

Rev. Dr. Cornish made some remarks with regard to the financial affairs of the College, after which the collection was taken in aid of the library, and Rev. Dr. Wilkes closed the exercises with the benediction.

The names of the students of the past year are as follows:—H. Pedley, J. W. Cox, J. F. Malcolm, graduates; and H. W. Warriner, who spends the vacation at Yorkville; A. F. McGregor, who goes to Cowansville, Que., to relieve Mr. Day; J. C. Wright, going to Manilla; G. Willett, to Eaton, Que.; C. Pedley, to Franklin, Que.; W. Ewing, who remains to supply Montreal, East; McFadyen, who goes to Inverness, Que.; R. Eadie, H. McIntyre, and C. H. Black, who, being Juniors, do not go out the present vacation.

COWANSVILLE, QUE.—A very successful series of union meetings have been held at Cowansville, our own people and the Methodists uniting. Commencing with the "week of prayer," they were kept up every night for seven weeks. The Lord's presence was manifestly displayed, believers were drawn together, and many precious souls were born again. As a result of these services, twenty-five have been added to the Congregational Church, with, we hope, "more to follow." At Brigham, also, special services were held for more than two weeks, with like precious results. There are several applications for membership before the Church; while others are anxiously asking, "What must I do to be saved?" This has been brought about, not by the special services alone, but as the result of earnest efforts put forth by many dear Christian brethren and sisters in the Sunday school, and prayer meeting, and by personal conversation. We are thus encouraged to look for still greater blessings, and believe the Lord will not disappoint us.

The Rev. Mr. DAY, of Cowansville, Que., has asked and obtained leave of absence from his charge, for four

months, on account of impaired health, and will go, with Mrs. Day, about the 1st May, to Dansville (N.Y.) *Water-cure Establishment*. Mr. A. F. McGregor, of the Congregational College, will supply the pulpit during his absence. We hope our brother will return again in the autumn, "strong to labour."

The Rev. J. G. SANDERSON, of Ottawa, has been invited back to his former charge in Oro, by the three churches there united under one pastorate. We have just learned that he declines the call.

The Rev. MARTIN LOWRY has returned from Nova Scotia, and is open to engagement with any church requiring his services. His address is Tyrone, Ont.

The Rev. J. B. FAWCETT, of Mayo Congregational Church (Bronson, P. O.), desires to acknowledge, with thanks,

the receipt of \$10 from Mr. Alexander Hamilton, Yorkville.

The Rev. Dr. CARRUTHERS, formerly of Montreal (Gosford Street), is reported ill, and rapidly sinking at his home in Portland, Me., where for thirty years he has been the loved and honoured pastor of the Payson Church.

The Rev. H. LANCASHIRE and the Rev. G. A. RAWSON, both of them formerly of Canada, have recently removed, the former from Malta, N. Y., to New Preston, Conn., and the latter from Churchville to Hamilton, N. Y.

We regret to learn that the Rev. H. SANDERS, of Hamilton, has been seriously ill for some weeks. Though slowly recovering, he was, at last accounts, altogether incapacitated for his work. We hope this beautiful spring weather may soon restore him to health and strength.

Official.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ONTARIO AND QUEBEC.—The Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec will meet (D. V.), in Guelph, on Wednesday, the 6th of June, 1877, at 7.30 P.M., when the Chairman, the Rev. D. Macallum, will deliver his retiring address.

It is almost certain that the several Railways, and the Navigation Company, will make the usual arrangement. Ministers and delegates intending to avail themselves of the reduced fare, will please send *their names* to the undersigned as early as possible, so that the necessary certificates may be forwarded. Distinctly state whether steamboat or railway is preferred; and if the latter, by what line or lines.

The *annual collection* for the Union will be due on the 3rd June. *All* the churches should contribute to this ob-

ject; a moderate increase on the part of each would secure the payment in full of the travelling expenses.

The *Statistical blank forms* have been issued. Should any church not have received them, the Secretary will regard it as a favour to be so informed. May all who have received them promptly return them after the 8th May, and thus save unnecessary work and anxiety.

K. M. FENWICK,
Secretary Treasurer.

P.S.—The Committee of the Union will please meet at the church, on Wednesday afternoon, June 6th, at 3 o'clock.

UNION MEETING ACCOMMODATION.—All members and delegates who propose attending the forthcoming Union meeting, at Guelph, are earnestly requested to forward their names and addresses to

John Crowe, Esq., Guelph, before the 20th of May, at latest, and if possible, immediately after the next church meeting, according to the request made in a circular note addressed to each pastor. As the Methodist Conference will be held in Guelph, at the same time as the Union Meetings, a great strain will be put upon the accommodation of the local churches. It is therefore imperative that the brethren should comply with the foregoing request.

WILLIAM MANCHEE,
Pastor.

Liverpool (N.S.) Cong. Ch. S. S.	\$5 20
South End Mission S. S. New-	
burgh, Mass.....	10 00
Geo. E. Burnham, Monroe City,	
Missouri.....	4 77
Con. Ch. (Quebec) Sewing Society.	10 00
Unionists from St. Andrew's Ch.	
S. S. (Montreal)	20 00
Emmanuel Church S. S. (do.)....	20 00

JOHN HEATH,
Treasurer.

Montreal, 18th April, 1877.

LABRADOR MISSION.—The following sums have been received by the Labrador Mission, since those acknowledged in the March number of this magazine: Frome Congregational S. S. \$6 50

CONGREGATIONAL PROVIDENT FUND.
—Amounts received since last announce-
ment:—

Frome Ch. per John Silcox, Esq.	\$13 00
John Silcox, Esq., balance	8 00
Montreal, April, 1877.	

Obituary.

MISS LIZZIE H. NAY.

One of the first, and most active members of the recently organized church in St. Catharines, was taken to her rest and everlasting reward, on Wednesday morning, March 28th. Her death was most sudden and unexpected, and has cast a deep shadow over the circle of friends and relatives among whom she moved. On the Sunday after her death—Easter Sunday—the Rev. J. R. Black, her pastor, made the following reference to her in a discourse in Luke xxiv. 6:—
“He is not here, He is risen.”

Alluding to the certainty of death as a prelude to the opening of a higher and better life, and of the necessity of being at all times ready to meet the summons to lay aside the body of flesh and corruption and assume the body of purity and righteousness, he went on to show how beautiful were those who die in the Lord. Of such was the late Miss Nay, who in all walks of life exhibited that exquisite Christian spirit that elevates and brings closer to Christ those who cultivate it. Into the Master's work she threw all her energies, and

although for some months back her physical condition had not enabled her to be as active in work as formerly, yet up to her latest breath the Church had felt the benefit of her energy. The deceased was an every-day Christian, one who was not loud in proclaiming her belief in the certainty of salvation, but whose constant aim and purpose was to qualify for the better life above. She had a loathing horror of everything pertaining to hypocrisy and cant—and the rev. gentleman spoke with sorrow of the prevalence of hypocrisy within the Church—and assumed no virtues while not possessing the same. He then alluded to her home life and the void created by the summons that had called her to join the innumerable caravan—to the grief of the aged mother and the brothers and sisters, to the loss the Church sustained, to the sorrow of her numerous friends and acquaintances—and closed by saying that God could bestow no greater blessing on this Church than by letting the mantle she had dropped fall on the shoulders of some one possessing the same Christian virtues and graces. Dur-

ing the sermon many persons were moved to tears.

—The vacant place in the household throng,
And the silent voice in the prayer and song,
God, who art good, Thou wilt keep thy child
In Thy loving care,
Till one by one in that home of bliss,
We meet her there.

MRS. E. C. CRANTON.

Eliza C., wife of Mr. Henry Cranton, of Margaree, C. B., on Wednesday morning, 11th of April, 1877, fell asleep in Jesus, in her thirty-ninth year. She has left behind her a family of eight to

mourn her departure. Her loss will be deeply felt, and her memory will long be cherished by the community of which she was for many years a most affectionate member. Her death is loss to us, but it is gain to her, since her hope and trust was in the Saviour. Her strong desire before death was, that the children whom God had given her might be brought to a knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. She, with her husband, became a member of the Congregational Church here, Oct., 12th, 1867, having been for years previous a member of the Methodist Class-meeting in this place.

W. P.

Home and School.

THE UNEXPECTED SON.

One summer afternoon, Mr. Malcom Anderson arrived with his family at his native town. Putting up at the little inn, he proceeded to dress himself in a suit of sailor-clothes, and then walked out alone. By a by-path he well knew, and then through a shady lane, dear to his young, hazel-nutting days, all strangely unchanged, he approached his mother's cottage. He stopped for a few moments on the lawn outside, to curb down the heart that was bounding to meet that mother, and to clear his eyes of a sudden mist of happy tears. Through the open window he caught a glimpse of her, sitting alone at her spinning-wheel, as in the old time. But alas, how changed! Bowed was the dear form, once so erect, and silvered the locks once so brown, and dimmed the eyes, once so full of tender brightness, like dew stained violets. But the voice, with which she was crooning softly to herself, was still sweet, and there was on her cheek the same lovely peach-bloom of twenty years ago.

At length he knocked, and the dear remembered voice called to him in the simple, old-fashioned way—"Coom ben!" (come in.) The widow rose at sight of a stranger, and courteously offered him a chair. Thanking her in an assumed

voice, somewhat gruff, he sank down, as though wearied, saying that he was a wayfarer, strange to the country, and asking the way to the next town. The twilight favoured him in his little ruse; he saw that she did not recognize him, even as one she had ever seen. But after giving him the information he desired, she asked him if he was a Scotchman by birth. "Yes, madam," he replied; "but I have been away in foreign parts many years. I doubt if my own mother would know me now, though she was very fond of me before I went to sea."

"Ah, mon! it's little ye ken about mither's, gin ye think sae. I can tell ye there is na mortal memory like theirs," the widow somewhat warmly replied; then added—"And where hae ye been for sae lang a time, that ye hae lost a' the Scotch fra your speech?"

"In India—in Calcutta, madam."

"Ah, then, it's likely ye ken something o' my son, Mr. Malcom Anderson."

"Anderson?" repeated the visitor, as though striving to remember. "There be many of that name in Calcutta; but is your son a rich merchant, and a man about my age and size, with something such a figure-head?"

"My son is a rich merchant," replied the widow, proudly, "but he is younger than you by mony a long year, and begging your pardon, sir, far comier. He

is tall and straight, wi' hands and feet like a lassie's; he had brown, curling hair, sae thick and glossy! and cheeks like the rose, and a brow like the snaw, and the blue een, wi' a glint in them, like the light of the evening star!—Na na, ye are no like my Malcom, though ye are a guid enough body, I dinna doubt, and a decent woman's son."

Here the masquerading merchant, considerably taken down, made a movement as though to leave, but the hospitable dame stayed him, saying: "Gin ye hae travelled a' the way fra India, ye maun be tired and hungry. Bide a bit, and eat and drink wi' us. Margery! come down, and let us set on the supper!"

The two women soon provided quite a tempting repast and they all three sat down to it—Mrs. Anderson reverently asking a blessing. But the merchant could not eat. He was only hungry for his mother's kisses—only thirsty for her joyful recognition; yet he could not bring himself to say to her—"I am your son." He asked himself, half grieved, half amused—"Where are the unerring, natural instincts I have read about in poetry and novels?"

His hostess, seeing he did not eat, kindly asked if he could suggest anything he would be likely to relish. "I thank you, madam," he answered, "it does seem to me that I should like some oatmeal porridge, such as my mother used to make, if so be ye have any."

"Porridge?" repeated the widow. "Ah, ye mean *parritch*. Yes, we hae a little left frae our dinner. Get it to him, Margery. But, mon, it is cauld."

"Never mind, I know I shall like it," he rejoined, taking the bowl, and beginning to stir the porridge with the spoon. As he did so Mrs. Anderson gave a slight start, and bent eagerly toward him. Then she sank back in her chair with a sigh, saying, in answer to his questioning look—

"Ye minded me o' my Malcom then—just in that way he used to stir his *parritch*—gieing it a whirl and a flirt. Ah! gin ye *were* my Malcom, my poor laddie!"

"Weel, then, gin I *were* your Malcom," said the merchant, speaking for the first time in the Scottish dialect, and in his own voice, "or gin your braw

young Malcom were as brown and bald and gray, and bent, and old as I am, could ye welcome him to your arms, and love him as in the dear auld lang syne. Could you, mither?"

All through this touching little speech, the widow's eyes had been glistening, and her breath came fast; but at that word, "*mither*," she sprang up with a glad cry, and tottering to her son, fell almost fainting on his breast. He kissed her again and again—kissed her brow, her lips, and her hands, while the big tears slid down his bronzed cheeks; while she clung about his neck and called him by all the dear old pet names, and *tried* to see in him all the dear old young looks. By-and-bye they came back—or the *ghost* of them came back. The form in her embrace grew comelier; love and joy gave to it a second youth, stately and gracious; the *first* she then and there buried deep in heart—a sweet, beautiful, peculiar memory. It was a moment of solemn renunciation, in which she gave up the fond maternal illusion she had cherished so long. Then, looking up steadily into the face of the middle-aged man, who had taken its place, she asked, "Where hae ye left the wife and bairns?"

"At the inn, mother. Have you room for us all at the cottage?"

"Indeed I have—twa good spare-rooms, wi' large closets, weel stocked wi' linen I hae been spinning or weaving a' these lang years for ye baith, and the weans."

"Well, mother dear, now you must rest," rejoined the merchant, tenderly.

"Na, na, I dinna care to rest till ye lay me down to tak' my lang rest. There'll be time enough between that day and the resurrection, to fauld my hands in idleness. Now 'twould be unco irksome. But go my son, and bring me the wife—I hope I shall like her; and the bairns—I hope they will like me."

I have only to say, that both the good woman's hopes were realized. A very happy family knelt down in prayer that night, and many nights after, in the widow's cottage, whose climbing roses and woodbines were but outward signs and types of the sweetness and blessedness of the love and peace within.—*Little Pilgrim.*