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THE THEOLOGUE.

VOL. 2.—FEBRUARY, 1891.—No. 3.

Presbyterian College, Halifax.

THE PATRICK OF LEGEND AND THE PATRICK OF HISTORY.

THE earliest and most reliable of the manuscripts of the Confession of Patrick closes with a note in the hand of the transcriber, which is as follows:—"Thus far the volume which Patrick wrote with his own hand: On the seventeenth of March Patrick was translated to heaven." The recent festival of the great apostle of the Irish church offers an opportunity for presenting a few things concerning him that may interest the readers of this magazine. When two centuries from the death of Patrick had passed, national, as well as religious feeling, had created a character in which a little history is mingled with much fable. In one life, which is supposed to reach as far back as the eighth century, Patrick, while yet a child, works miracles. Water bursts from the rock for his baptism; water is turned into fire to cook his food, and icicles become faggots to make a fire to warm him. During a voyage from France his stone altar becomes a float in which a leper sails with him to Ireland. When his paschal fire was seen from Tara, the Druids prophesied after the Babylonian fashion: "Oh king! Live for ever! This fire will never be extinguished, unless it be extinguished this night." One of the king's magicians was by Patrick's hand lifted up and made to fall so that his brains were dashed out. When the king was about to destroy the saint, a horror of darkness fell upon him, and he groped in the dark, like Elymas the sorcerer. When this king on another occasion tried to kill Patrick, the saint and his friends were

turned into stags, which the astonished king saw skipping away in safety. No legend is more popular and more interesting than that which represents Patrick as employing the shamrock to illustrate the mystery of the Trinity; though the story can be traced no farther back than the sixteenth century. The trefoil was sacred in pagan religions. He drove the snakes into the sea with his miraculous staff. A similar miracle, banished all frogs from Ireland. An angel predicted Patrick's death, and for a whole year the sun stood still over his grave. He was buried in Downpatrick, and when, long afterwards, workmen were, amid their labors, approaching too near his grave, they were warned by flames of fire to desist. Such legends might be multiplied indefinitely. Thus, if fiction be held to serve the purposes of devotion as well as truth, the inventive faculty will not be allowed to rest by reason of inactivity.

The effect of this abundance of legend in connection with one so venerable is, that Patrick has been regarded by many as altogether a myth. But it is the business of the historian to separate truth from fiction, and there are precious memorials that enable us to place this eminent Christian and missionary among the great historical characters of the church. The earliest and most authentic information which we possess is contained in two writings of his own; namely, his Confession and his Letter to Coroticus. The Confession is found in a collection, called the Book of Armagh, the age of one part of which is determined by a date inscribed on the book. This date is 807 A. D. The book contains writings much older and, among others, a copy of the Confession taken from one written in Patrick's own hand; as the Scribe attests in the note already quoted. The Scribe complains of the illegibility of the manuscript; for Patrick was not a professional writer and could produce nothing to be compared with the beautiful Celtic manuscripts of a later age. He had tended cattle in his youth and nearly all his life had lived among barbarians. Dr. Charles H. H. Wright, in the introduction to his edition of the original writings of Patrick, tells us that: "There are four other MSS. of the Confession known to be in existence, namely, the Cottonian MS. in the British Museum, and two MSS. in the Bodleian Library. There is another in the public library of Arras, France." The Epistle to Coroticus is

found in the Cottonian MS., the Bodleian MSS. and in a MS. found at Treves. Coroticus was a petty sovereign of Wales who in a predatory raid had carried away numbers of Patrick's flock and sold them into slavery. When a demand for their restoration was disregarded, then Patrick wrote this letter, in which the Welshman is excommunicated. These documents carry internal evidence of genuineness in addition to satisfactory external evidence and are undoubtedly authentic. There is also a hymn ascribed to Patrick. It is called by Dr. Todd: "The oldest undoubted monument of the Irish language remaining." Though of great antiquity, and having internal evidence in its favor, it cannot be ranked with the other two writings in point of authenticity. Thus far of purely Patrician documents.

We now advert to another class of writings. The earliest notice which we have of the Apostle of Ireland is found in a letter of Cummian, addressed to Segienus, Abbot of Iona, and written in 634, A.D., in which he speaks of Patrick as "Holy Patrick, our Pope." As the Book of Armagh is a collection of writings by different authors and from different sources, the date 807, A.D., appended to one of them—the Gospel of Matthew—does not fix the date of any of the rest. Some were later, and some were earlier. It contains a piece called: "Tirechan's Annotations on St. Patrick's life." Tirechan was a disciple of Ultan, who died in 657, A.D. Ultan appears to have written a life of Patrick upon which Tirechan makes annotations. As these annotations would be made after Ultan's death, the work of Tirechan's was written two hundred years after the death of Patrick—if we take the most common date for his death of 463—thirty years less, if we take the other date of 493, A.D. The next life in this Collection was written by Muirchu Maccumatherie at the dictation of Aedh, bishop of Sleibhte. Muirchu was the son of Cogitosus, who died A.D., 670. This life, then, belongs to the close of the 7th century, or two centuries from the later date of Patrick's death. These, with Patrick's own writings, are, says Dr. George T. Stokes, "the only documents on which a historical critic can rely." The two lives contain much that is legendary, and in this respect they lay the foundation for the mediaeval creations. The real matter in them is, however separable from the fictitious, and they give us all that we really

know of the general course of Patrick's missionary labors. Even after an interval of two hundred years, they have still preserved trustworthy materials. These, however, were so mingled with fable that the son of Cogitosus, imitating Luke, begins as follows :

"Forasmuch as many, my lord Aidus, have taken in hand to set forth a narration, according to what their fathers and they who from the beginning were ministers of the word, have delivered unto them ; but by reason of the very great difficulty of the narrative, and the diverse opinions and numerous doubts of many persons, have never arrived at any one certain truth of history. But, lest I should seem to make a small matter great, I will now attempt, with little skill, from uncertain authors, with frail memory, with obliterated meaning and barbarous language, but with a most pious intention, obeying the commands of thy belovedness and sanctity and authority, out of the many acts of Saint Patrick, to explain these, gathered here and there with great difficulty."

Thus it appears that many doubts and diverse opinions about Patrick's history were afloat about two centuries after his death, and on the scene of his labors, where innumerable monuments must have met the eyes of his followers. His biographer experienced no ordinary difficulty in interpreting his authorities, Muirchu's modesty and uprightness are much to be commended, and are worthy of imitation by all such as pretend to an accurate knowledge more than a thousand years after the son of Cogitosus was gathered to his fathers. From the Notes of Tirechan and the Life by Muirchu, when both have been subjected to careful criticism, has been encogitated a tolerably connected account of Patrick's mission, from his landing at Wicklow Head to his death at Saul, near Dounpatrick, where he had made his first convert. I shall not follow the narrative of Patrick's labors in Antrim, Meath, Connaught, and Donnegal, as given in the Lives, but rather at present exhibit his remarkable personality as seen in his own authentic writings.

Patrick begins his Confession in these words: "I, Patrick, a sinner, the rudest and least of all the faithful, and most contemptible to very many, had for my father Calpornius, a deacon, a son of Potitus, a presbyter, who dwelt in the village of Bannavem Taberniae." In his letter to Coroticus he says: "I was a free-

man according to the flesh. I was born of a father who was a Decurio." Thus his father held both a civil and an ecclesiastical office. He was a local magistrate. The office disappeared soon after this, and this allusion to it is an incidental proof of the genuineness of the letter to Coroticus. After endless debate concerning the birthplace of Patrick, it is now generally agreed that he was one of the Romanized Britons, and born near Dumburton, at the western extremity of the Roman Wall that stretched from the Forth to the Clyde. As a native of Clydesdale he is a most interesting link of connection between Scotland and Ireland. Scotland gave Patrick to Ireland, Ireland gave back Columba to Scotland, and both united in giving Aidan and his noble band of Columban missionaries to England.

Patrick says that when he was nearly sixteen years of age, he was "taken to Ireland in captivity with so many thousand men." Just at that time the coasts of Scotland were desolated by the ravages of the Irish pirates. Against these the walls were no defence, as these marauders crossed from Antrim and entered by the gateway of the Clyde into the very heart of the district which lies between the Walls. During his captivity he was made to feed cattle in a place now identified as the valley of the Braid in Antrim. There, he says: "The Lord opened to me the sense of my unbelief, that, though late, I might remember my sins and that I might return with my whole heart to the Lord my God." After this he became stronger in faith. "I prayed frequently during the day; the love of God and the fear of Him increased more and more." One night in his sleep he heard a voice saying to him: "Thou shalt soon go to thy country." And again, after a short time he heard the same voice saying: "Thy ship is ready." After this he fled and came to France or Britain. This part of the Confession leaves the history a little obscure. Patrick speaks of a second captivity of two months duration. The Irish captivity lasted for six years. Thus he, by his own account, escaped when he was twenty-two years of age. "After a few years I was in Britain with my parents who received me as a son and earnestly besought me that, now at least, after the many hardships I had endured, I would never leave them again. And there I saw, indeed, in the bosom of the night a man coming as it were from Ireland, Victorius by name, with innumerable

letters, and he gave one of them to me. And I read the beginning of the letter containing: "The Voice of the Irish." It would appear from the manuscripts, which at this point exhibit some differences, that his proposal to obey the voice of conscience was opposed by some, whom he calls "my seniors," who came and urged my sins against my laborious episcopate," and that this was "after thirty years." Or perhaps it is more natural to suppose that Patrick here does not follow the order of time, but relates what took place long after he had exercised his "laborious episcopate" in Ireland. These seniors would then be those who depreciated him and his work because of some irregularity in himself or in its commencement. Though he cast out devils, he did not company with them. As he speaks again of offending his seniors in coming to Ireland, perhaps church authorities opposed his mission. "But I by no means consented or complied with them." Patrick goes on to speak of his labors in a general way and rather by results, because his confession was intended to be, not a narrative, but a defence, and he was addressing "his brethren and fellow-servants" who were well acquainted with his work. Hence he begins the few things that he does tell with the remarks:—"It would be long to relate all my labor in details or even in facts." His success was so remarkable that he could say that he had baptized thousands, and all without any pecuniary reward. If I asked any of them the price of my shoe, tell it against me and I will restore you more." All this was written by Patrick shortly before his death. "This is my confession before I die."

An important enquiry is: What was the occasion of the writing of this Confession? To this question the Confession furnishes no reply. But one can hardly fail to see that what Patrick in great humility calls a confession is really a defence of his history and his mission. In this respect Patrick's situation would seem to resemble remarkably that of Paul in his apologetic letters to the Corinthians. The credentials of both had been assailed and to these attacks both made the same reply. Both began with the call of God, and appealed to impulses which they were inwardly compelled to follow and both pointed to their work as an unanswerable vindication. In one respect they differ in their defence. Paul claims apostleship, but not so Patrick. The latter appeals solely

to his divine call, his history and his work. I am inclined to believe that Patrick had received ordination in Britain or France; but he says nothing about it. The idea running through Patrick's writings is that he was called of God and that his work proved his call. Would not the occasion of his letter to Coroticus have led to some declaration of his human commission, if he had any? But what does he say? "Was it indeed without God or according to the flesh I came to Ireland?" In a passage in the Confession he says, speaking of his yielding at first to the Spirit's call: "I knew not what to do about my position, because many were hindering this mission. It was not a wise thing in their opinion, as I myself also testify, on account of my defect in learning." This kind of acknowledgment and defence we meet with all through the Patrician documents. All this could have been saved by one statement that would have silenced all objections, viz., that he had been sent by some competent human authority; but that word Patrick never breathes. As is said in the very ancient hymn of Gecundinus, who followed the authority of the Confession: "cujusque episcopatum a deo sortitus est."

I have endeavoured, as far as practicable, to let Patrick speak for himself. But no extracts can give any adequate idea of the beauty and simplicity of these writings. They are filled with quotations from every part of Scripture—in one or two cases from the Apocrypha. Patrick was not only mighty in the Scriptures himself but those he addressed must also have known them well. There is not a vestige in his writings of what may be called mediævalism. Even in the hymn of Patrick God and Christ alone are invoked. The Confession is the simple, modest and artless statement of one who had a true spiritual experience and who had acquitted himself as a good soldier of Christ upon many a hard fought field.

ALLAN POLLOK.

LOT'S CHOICE.

 BY THE LATE REV. J. F. SMITH, M. A., B. D.

“And they separated themselves, the one from the other.”—GEN. xiii: 11.

Is it not surprising to find what little things influence the course of our life, and what surprising things often spring from trivial causes? We cannot tell what the ultimate issues of any act shall be, what influences may result; yet we are constantly weighing and considering, setting aside one course of action to adopt another, oftentimes in doubt, knowing that great influences either for weal or for woe depend upon the choice made. We do not know, we cannot tell, but must use the judgment God hath given us and act, leaving it to him to control issues. Life is after all largely a thing of faith, and it is more or less true for each that, “we walk by faith, not by sight.” We are left oftentimes in positions where to choose one course of action in preference to another seems to be of little or no moment, but it results in life or death, blessing or curse, affecting our interests for time and eternity.

Probably your own lives will furnish examples to each of you, and your reading and meeting with your fellow men increase the number. Those with whom we meet in life by accident or otherwise may affect us for weal or woe through an endless eternity. Those from whom we separate may still throw influences around us for good, or separating ourselves from these influences, we may cut ourselves loose from all that is good and pure and true. Such a separation we are invited to consider to-day,—“They separated themselves, the one from the other.” There is a beginning of separation in existences before associated, and we pause to look back and follow out the threads of influences resulting therefrom. Let us look at the persons, ask the cause of the separation, and follow out the results on each.

Look for a brief moment at the persons. Abraham had just returned from Egypt, where he had sojourned in a time of famine. From Egypt, where he had escaped the famine, but had fallen into sin, where, though surrounded by a greater

amount of worldly good, he could not preserve himself and family from evil influences. So he returns from the rich land to the poor,—from the life of ease and vicious indolence to the life of toil and virtue,—to spend his days in a more barren land, but blessed by the smile of God. A noble soul, full of faith and trust in a guiding and controlling Providence, who obeyed the call of duty at every cost, deeming, as in later days one of his descendants did, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, preferring peace and purity of heart to worldly good and sinful pleasure.

But we have to do not so much with Abraham as with his nephew Lot, as the separation is the act of the latter. A good man also, who had a true love of virtue and right, but lacking the strength of principle found in his uncle. He had faith, but not sufficient to cope successfully with the shrewd instinct of money making or the desire of wealth, clear-headed in business, knowing as if by intuition the best side of a bargain, anxious to secure a present good if possible, and of sufficient elasticity of conscience to allow him to get along smoothly and well in scenes that tried the faith of Abraham. Lot was like many a man to-day, a Christian, but not of a very decided stamp,—a milk-and-water man so far as morals were concerned, but shrewd and grasping in things of this life. He could wish that all men were righteous, but would put forth little or no effort to make them so; in the Church, enjoying its services, its truths, and yet in the world more absorbed in things that pertain to the life that now is than of that which is to come; vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked, but willing to endure it to run the risk for the sake of the greater worldly advantage and easier life. The world to-day is full of the spiritual seed of Lot. They abound in our churches, throng our business marts, mix up in the surging life of our cities,—men good at heart, and desirous of being moral and true, but willing to dwell in Sodom for the sake of its good, making the terrible blunder of seeking first the things of this world, and giving the kingdom of God and his righteousness a second place.

The spiritual seed of Lot and Abraham are separating themselves one from another, as did their ancestors of old. Look for one moment at the scene presented. Abraham and Lot had re-

turned from Egypt, moving on by slow stages in their pastoral way till they reached the highlands of Judea, overlooking the valley of the Jordan. Pasturage is scarce, wells of water are not plentiful in that dry region, and the possession of a spring of water is highly valued. The shepherds quarrel over these things till the masters are almost estranged. But their good sense triumphs, and they go out one morning on one of the hills commanding a view of the surrounding country. On the West, in the distance, stretches the Great Sea, the Mediterranean, and near at hand the range of limestone hills, running down from the mountains of Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon on the North; while in between the hills lie rocky wadys or fertile valleys in which their herds may pasture. On the South lies the great wilderness of Paran stretching away toward the rocky peninsula of Sinai and the Great Arabian Desert. On the East the land slopes away to the valley of the Jordan, rich in trees, shrubs and grasses, a pastoral paradise, and at the mouth of the river the valley known as the Ghor, where now roll the heavy waters of the Dead Sea. This country is in splendid contrast to the dry hills on which they stand. It is clad in richest verdure, well watered, directly on the route of travel between Egypt and the surrounding nations; it has commercial advantages and offers a ready market for the produce of the herd. No wonder the writer uses strong figures to represent its riches and natural advantages; it seems to him a garden as the garden of the Lord. Listen to the noble offer made by Abraham as he says to Lot: "If we cannot live longer together in peace we had better separate. You can see the advantages and disadvantages of the country before us and I allow you to take your choice." So he who had the right of choice gives up his right to another. Is this the fruit of religion and of faith in God? Then religion must be a noble thing, for such fruit can never be the fruit of anything base or selfish. Lot makes his choice, his eye takes in the rich prospect, and he chooses the Ghor, the valley of the Jordan near Sodom.

In this Lot makes the great mistake of his life. True, he could not see the issues as we can, he could not tell what the results would be any more than we can tell what all the results of any of our actions will be. But there are principles of universal force to which both Lot and we should have regard in our choices.

It is no excuse for our wrong doing that we are unable to see all the results of our actions, for did we but heed them there are principles enough to guide us. We have a similar case in the young ruler who came to Jesus seeking eternal life, and what was true of him and Lot in their choice is true of us.

The choice of Lot was marked by these things—selfishness, greed, and disregard of spiritual things. He thought not of the superior claim of his uncle, of his increasing age, but seeing a chance to increase the good of Lot, he chose the plain of Sodom. Greed! he desired larger flocks and herds, indolent ease and pleasure, and the opportunity of gaining all the passing wealth he could. Then disregard of spiritual consequences, he knew of the promise given to Abraham, of the advantages of a religious life, knew, too, of the evil of Sodom, of the difficulty of escaping from the contamination and preserving purity amid so much corruption. Yet he chose these in order to gain the advantages of commerce and rich pastures and lands. So he turns his back on Abraham, who must henceforth live on dry uplands, nourishing his faith in God; and gathering all together, he goes to the easier life and greater wealth. The sun has risen, and touched with his golden beams the banks of mist that hang over the valley of the Jordan, turning them into the appearance of clouds of smoke, as if a pall sent in pity by nature to hide from the eye of an all-seeing God the sin and iniquity perpetrated there. He goes down toward the Ghor, the land itself seeming to be but a type of the moral path he was treading, sloping down from virtue—from God and Heaven—to the darkness of sin, and lust, and impurity, and loss of manhood and character, and life, down to eternal loss. Farewell Lot, and peace be with thee as thou goest, for, ah, we fear peace and thee will be strangers in Sodom; farewell, and God in mercy grant that it be not an eternal farewell. So he descends to his own ruin. As we look after Lot, we see many of his followers acting in the same way. The fast young man going away from a father's home, from independence, and hallowed memories, and virtuous associates, and honor, and religious privileges, and childhood's faith, to the fast life of the distant city to the profaned Sabbath, to the swine trough of sensuality, and to moral degradation, but follows in Lot's steps. And can we bid them farewell as they separate from us, the youth from

whose future we hoped so much, but lo, they turn to the world and pitch their tents Sodomward, to grow rich, to learn the pleasures of an easier life where God and His people are left behind.

They separate, and what is the cause? and what will be the effect? Let us first look at the *cause*. It was strife arising out of common interests, a cause which could and should have been suppressed. True, it was one way of avoiding strife, yet we can not but deplore the cause. Separations are bad enough when brought about by the demands of duty or the rulings of Providence. How much worse when they proceed from unnecessary causes? May we not learn to guard against the strife and contention that arises from the conflict of common aims and interests in our homes, in our community, and in our churches? "Better separation than strife." Yes, but both may be needless.

Now look at the *effects*, and first, on Lot. He grew rich in Sodom. His keen judgment had not deceived him. There were ample opportunities to amass wealth, and these were well employed. Food was plentiful, and his flocks and herds multiplied, and commerce brought its gains. Happy Lot, says the worldling, rich, prosperous, a fine family, society, what more could heart desire? Softly, let us weigh more carefully. Does a man's life consist in the abundance of the things that he possesseth? Does home society, wealth, constitute blessedness? What about his mind? Peter tells us, he vexed his righteous soul from day to day in living among them. Then, he gained also worry, anxiety, mental trouble, and how much was that worth? How much wealth does it take to compensate a man for loss of peace of mind and conscience? Then we must note two other elements, *losses, and continuity of possession*. He lost the company of the godly, with the moral influences that were drawing him upward. True, you may not think these worth much when weighed against worldly good, and think you can easily spare them from your life. Perhaps so, an open Bible and a mother's prayer may be of little value; a pious father's counsel and strictness, a nuisance; the words of a faithful friend and of a preacher that speaks to you plain, homely truths about sin and God may be a weariness and something to be avoided just now, because you have set your heart

on going to the far country, but pause a moment before you go, and tell me how much they are worth in view of eternity. Again, he lost the Divine blessing that maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith, the Divine protection that, if called to tread paths of difficulty, would keep him in safety and peace. But you argue that Lot grew rich, and therefore must have had the blessing. It is not, my friend, the mere fact of growing rich that marks the blessing, but that no sorrow was added; and was that the case with Lot? As he got nearer Sodom, did he not get nearer sorrows in abundance, and far off from God and his blessings. "Better," said one in later days, "is a little that the righteous hath than the abundance of many wicked." Better is a little with the blessing of Heaven than abundance beneath its curse. Again: he lost upright character. This was the sum of the series. It was the outcome of the others, and marks the deepest depths of his loss. A man may lose worldly position, wealth, health, happiness, and yet be rich in a noble character. But if he himself is debased, degraded in soul, all is lost. We turn to the last days of Lot, to find him sunk in shame and dying in dishonor. "'Tis only noble to be good," and he who loses goodness loses all, and is worthy only of the scorn of man, the hissing of demons.

Then as to *continuity*, how long do these things last? Lot gained riches, may he not say to his soul, "Soul thou hast much goods laid up for many years." Look yonder, the morning sun shines down on the glittering spears of serried hosts spread abroad in the valley. War's dark banner waves over the land; many perish from hostile spears; Sodom is taken and plundered; the goods saved in many years become the property of the marauders; Lot leaves his home a captive; by the bravery and skill of his uncle he is rescued from slavery and restored to prosperity. But does it continue? See these men at the gate of Sodom; they lead Lot from the city without his wealth, his wife and two daughters with him. Now listen to their words, "escape for thy life." See the four flying across the plain as if running a race for life; a rain of fire falls from heaven; the bitumen in the soil blazes to the skies. Three of the fugitives reach the mountain in safety and look back on a sea of death where all the wealth of

Sodom perished with its wickedness. Does his wealth continue? Has he made a great gain by choosing Sodom? Even if no such disasters had befallen him, would not death have separated him from his possessions? Is there anything gained by following Lot in neglecting the eternal principles of right in his choice? What a comment his case is on the words "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" Oh ye who are following his example looking toward Sodom and living to enjoy its pleasures, look whither the course leads. They who follow Lot in loss of divine blessing and protection, of moral influences, of true character, of the very good he sought to gain, often go further even to the loss of eternal life. How true it is, "He that saveth his life shall lose it." And now my fellow-traveller on life's journey, stop a moment ere you separate from us to go toward Sodom, and think how far it is from the bread of a Father's home to the husks of the swine's trough? How far is it from the position of a son of God to that of a lost soul?

But let us look at the results of Abraham's choice, and I can merely mention them and leave you to think over them for yourselves, and to contrast his gains with those of Lot. He gained a monotonous life on the barren uplands, with toil and care for many a year. He gained a home preserved from the contaminating influences of sin; a purer faith, divine guidance blessing, protection; rich promises for himself, his posterity, and mankind; a nobler and more unselfish character; all the good of this life he could enjoy, becoming a man rich and influential; above all, he gained the approval of his conscience, and eternal good. All that Lot seemed to gain when he separated from Abraham, he lost; all that Abraham seemed to lose, he gained.

Such separations are not uncommon to-day. There are many such along the dusty highways of life. The Lord Jesus Christ comes to men calling them to himself. Many obey the call, as did Abraham of old, and turning, follow Him. They are then sent into the world to invite others. Those accepting the call are banded together in the house of God on earth, and go on to Zion. Others are joined to them in families and as friends, but there comes a point where a choice is necessary, and they separate one from the other, drifting further apart forever. There is a time

of choice to us all, to cast our lot in with the people of God, or with the world, to choose the Father's home, or the strange land. A moment may decide it, and seal eternal destiny as surely as when the final sentence passes the lips of the Judge. For in each life—

There is a point by us unseen
That crosses every human path,
The hidden boundary between
God's mercy and His wrath.

and when separating from the people of God, they separate forever. Oh the sorrow contained in the words when spoken concerning eternal things. "They separated themselves one from the other." We separate now, but God grant it may be to meet again in doing good in time, and in glory in eternity. Amen.

THE PERSONAL FACTOR IN EXEGESIS.

WHERE is but one Bible, why so many creeds? The question meets us on the threshold of our pastoral experience. It is a part of the regular stock in trade of the man who delights "to try the spirits" in the case of the new minister. It is a genuine perplexity in the experience of many honest enquirers. It is the familiar refuge in which many, who do not wish to decide the personal question in religion, spiritually hibernate. It turned up crisp and smiling in our study the other day, and in good faith presented itself as a novel difficulty, demanding immediate solution. What could we with it?

Various methods of dealing with the question are familiar enough. Our friends who look to Rome for direction, seem rather happy over the problem, and use it as a cogent argument against the sufficiency of the Scriptures as the rule of faith. The Bible settles nothing. The Word of God must be interpreted by an infallible church, guided by an infallible head. Admitting the infallibility of the church, and its organ, the Bishop of Rome, we are saved further trouble. Unfortunately, as a matter of fact, infallibility has not settled everything either within or without the Church of Rome, so that the

earnest enquirer is left at sea. About equally satisfactory is the solution of teachers nearer home, who say in substance,— We are right, and all others who differ from us are wrong. We have studied the Word with learning, fair-mindedness and prayer. We have found this our creed in the Bible. You who differ from us may be good sort of people enough; but your minds have been clouded with ignorance, or warped with prejudice. The dogmatic, who seems so happy in this view of the case, betrays close kinship with Rome. We are not altogether forgetful of a time-honored illustration which regards the various doctrinal statements of the several churches as so many different views of the one temple of truth. But being well worn, indeed a little threadbare, the texture of this analogy does not fully satisfy. For when we call our neighbor round from the gable end, on which he is gazing, and ask him to look at the front elevation, where of course we are standing, the building remains unchanged to him—it is gable end still. The change in the point of view has not reconciled divergent tendencies. The illustration, however, may not be without its value if it leads to the suggestion that the difference lies very largely in the eye of the observer.

The principle which we wish to enforce may be simply illustrated by the different impressions left on different observers by the same spectacle. Take for instance the Lord Mayor's procession in London, the opening of the Scottish Assembly by the Queen's Commissioner, or some shewy political demonstration in New York or Washington. One class of spectators see in the demonstration a vast multitude of people, a glittering array of decorations, a long procession, and their ears are filled with the loud huzzahs. To another class the character of the decorations forms the chief element of interest, numbers, glitter and noise drop into the back ground; but these symbols represent the history of civic institutions, ecclesiastical struggles, or popular governments. Another still with little taste for antiquarian research pierces beneath the crowd, the glitter and the symbolism, and sees in the demonstration certain well defined principles; and in recalling the event speaks of the same simply as it illustrates his favourite doctrines. We see the same divergence in the different impressions left of an evening spent

in a crowded lecture-room. One remembers the multitude, the glare of light, and the glitter of dress; another has a vivid impression of the art of the speaker—his rich voice, his flowing periods and faultless manner; another still remembers the principles he discussed and the points he made. We have little difficulty in accounting for the different impressions,—in part through difference in natural temperament, perhaps even more by reason of special education. Onlookers, though in the presence of the same spectacle, receive a different picture. One has no ear for music, a second is colour blind, a third, knows little or nothing of history. In the presence of the same demonstration a very dissimilar impression remains.

Very familiar facts in connection with the New Testament writing seem most readily understood and appreciated on the same principle. We have four biographies of our Lord, each intensely individual in its character. Matthew stands midway between the old and the new, eagerly linking every word and act of Jesus on some Old Testament oracle. Mark has little care for such connection, but masses the facts and words of Christ's life in terse simplicity, as if he felt that to hold up a faithful picture of the Saviour was the best apologetic. Entering the domain of Luke's Gospel we meet a circle of teaching, such as John Baptist's dealing with the anxious enquirers, the woman that was a sinner, the Prodigal Son, and the Penitent Thief, which a modern Evangelist would certainly expect to find in every Gospel, but which has a place here alone.

All the disciples may have heard the words of Jesus, "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son," &c. It is scarcely possible for us to suppose that they had not heard of it, yet none of the evangelists has it on record save John. All the disciples were present when Jesus said, "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another." Yet these words find a place only in the fourth Gospel. It would be easy to go through the other writings of the New Testament and point out similar peculiarities. The distinctive characteristics of the epistles of James and Peter, of Paul and John are unmistakable. It is idle to attempt to account for these peculiarities either on the ground of the different audiences to which the books were originally addressed, or by

any mechanical theory of inspiration. Each writer records what he saw or believed. And the spirit of inspiration employs the measure of vision and the capacity of thought, possessed by each writer, according to his supreme wisdom, for the delivery of the perfectly rounded whole which we possess.

But if Matthew had a peculiarly sharp eye for prophetic fulfilment, while Luke eagerly seized on narratives encouraging to the penitent sinner, and the beloved disciple dwells with fond recollection on the statements of God's love and develops them fully in his first epistle, can it be regarded as wonderful that the modern student of God's word finds the personal element enter very largely though very unconsciously into his reading of the record. He reads and by natural affinity his mind lays hold of certain truths. He has the eye to see them, he has the sharp appetite to feed upon them. There is within the same writings a wide circle of truth that he has no special quickness to see and no spiritual appetite to devour. By and by he begins to systematize. The truths seen and assimilated become his body of divinity—his theology. Another investigator with a different mental age, and different spiritual appetite goes through the same process. He reads, systematizes and harmonizes. The Bible facts are the same but philosophies diverge according to the vision and the logic of the writers. The Bible statements have not changed, but the personal factor has changed the tinge of the philosophy which skirts around the borders of the theological statements.

Is there not something in this view of the case which may explain divergent lines of interpretation? Is there not such a thing as a defective view of theological truth suggestive of colour blindness? A careful examination of exegetical works issued by writers of different schools will disclose facts suggestive in that direction. Take for instance Alford's notes on the New Testament, and compare his treatment of John X, 27-29 with Heb. VI, 4-6. In the one case there is simple silence, and in the other full and dogmatic treatment. And yet Alford is a transparently honest exegete. A good deal of attention has been attracted of late to the utterances of the Professor of Biblical Theology in Union Seminary. Dr. Briggs is an

enthusiastic advocate of the inductive and historical methods in dealing with doctrine. He runs rapidly through this or that book, gathering up the passages bearing on the subject under consideration, and groups them with great skill and power. But no person can listen to his lectures or read his public utterances without being struck with his utter unconsciousness of other facts and other principles which bear adversely on the question. His students often remark that he does not seem to see their difficulties, or feel the force of the objections, which, after the manner of American colleges, are freely interjected during the lecture,—and this without detracting from the singularly ingenuous and truth-loving character of the man.

If there is anything in these suggestions the practical outcome is not doubtful. The Bible is Catholic, but the theologian has not yet risen to the full measure of its truth; his induction is too narrow, so his results are sectarian. The cure lies in the direction, not of conferences and the discussion of differences, not in the discussion hot or cool of this or that harmony or philosophy, but in a calmer, wider, deeper study of the perfect law. This indeed is not a new remedy, but we may apply ourselves to the method with fresh faith, if we see from a new point of view its necessity. Teachers of music are fond of telling their pupils that even the dullest ear can be trained to discriminate sounds, and a colour blind man may be taught to distinguish some of the more distinct shades; so the least catholic mind will be gradually broadened and rounded out by gazing steadily at statements of divine truths which he is the least capable of understanding and assimilating.

KOUCHIBOUGUAC.

TOWARDS the end of last April I received a note intimating I had been appointed to Kouchibouguac for the summer. The name was at first a jawbreaker, but I soon learned to roll off the old Indian name with its sweet musical rhythm. The village of Kouchibouguac is situated on the river of that name in the County of Kent, New Brunswick, forming the centre of an impor-

tant lumbering district. Along the river on both sides for about three miles there is a colony of sixty-three families belonging to our church. It is completely hemmed in by French Roman Catholics. Roman Catholicism has a firm hold on this part of N. B., and yet mixed marriages are fewer than one would suppose, out of the sixty-three families not more than four or five.

The field is not a new one. Early in the *forties*, a number of families from Annandale, Dumfrieshire, settled here. Among the first things they did was to build a church, and for many years they supported a minister. Like all lumbering districts the fluctuations of trade affected the place. Twenty years ago Kouchibouguac was a thriving little hive of industry, and between saw mills and shipbuilding yards, seemed likely to increase. To-day the only relics of the shipbuilding yards are the fast decaying houses, where in more prosperous times the workmen lived in peace and plenty. The old church was burned down. Trade left the place, until now it has only half of its former population. There are plenty of old folks but few young people, most of the young men and women going to the States. Lumbering is still carried on to some extent, also farming and fishing. Between the three, while it cannot be said the people flourish, they manage to get along.

A few years ago they built a beautiful little church which cost nearly \$2000. The people are kind and intelligent, most of them Presbyterians to the backbone. Within 14 miles the people are either Catholics or Presbyterians. The church and the chapel are the only places where religious services are conducted. When I entered upon my duties in May I found everything in working order. For the last three years an ordained missionary had superintended the work. My predecessor, Rev. W. J. Fowler, on account of ill health had left in the early part of the winter, and for four months there had been no service in the church. It was fortunate there was a man in the field early in the summer, as there was quite an epidemic of sickness in the congregation. Before the month of June was over I had stood four times at the mouth of the open grave and had buried three members of our church.

In one sense the place was dull. Of society, as the term is commonly understood, there was little or none. Fortunately

there was plenty of work to be overtaken and so I did not miss the roar and bustle of city life. There being no other protestant congregations I had the field all to myself, and consequently found it desirable to have services in the church as frequently as possible. You will agree with me in thinking that I had not much time to myself on Sunday, as I had service in the church in the morning at 11 a. m., Sunday School at 2 p. m.; then in the afternoon I held service in a school-house four miles up the river, and in the evening at 7 had a second service in the church. I also conducted a Bible class for the young people on Wednesday evenings and held a cottage prayer-meeting on Thursday evenings. All these services were well attended, and though the work was wearing, yet in many respects it was an easy field. The people were not divided into different denominations, and so I was left to work the field after my own fashion. In a place such as this we are urgently called upon to maintain the public ordinance of the word all the year around. I often think of these sixty-three families putting over the whole winter without, perhaps, having one public service. I understand the Miramichi Presbytery have done something this winter to supply this want. The people could easily support a minister were it not for the prevalence of an antiquated custom which still obtains in this part of the province. Here it is the habit of employers of labour to pay in *kind*. Due bills and not dollars are the order of the day. Food is plenty but cash is scarce. Under the circumstances the people give liberally, and they say if only they were paid in cash they could easily give twice the sum they contribute at present.

The people were quiet and undemonstrative, and during the whole of my six months' stay not one of them took part in a service. Still there were not wanting indications of that inobtrusive yet deep piety which is often met with in our Presbyterian churches. This was made apparent at the communion season in September when nine persons joined the church for the first time. Altogether the field is most interesting and well worth the care and attention of our church.

The statistics are as follows:—

1 Church with 200 sittings; 63 families; 62 communicants; 9 additions in the year; 3 members died; 5 baptisms; 2 Sunday schools attended by about 60 scholars. Total amount received from congregation for all purposes from May to October, \$340.00.

6th March, 1891.

J. AITKEN GREENLEES.

OUR MISSIONARY OBLIGATION.

THE more we study the missionary problem before our church, the more we are struck with the contrast between the possibilities lying before us, and the work we are really accomplishing. Though three-fourths of the human race is yet without the knowledge of the gospel, yet what might not 30,000,000 Protestant church members accomplish if they would but consecrate themselves to the work? We have sent to foreign fields only one out of 5,000 of our church membership. The Presbyterian church with all its extent, intelligence, and ability sends only 500 male and female workers to represent it in the foreign field. In the Protestant churches of America alone there are some 12,000,000 professing Christians to whom the "marching orders" of the Saviour have been given. Were the church advancing to-day as it did in the early centuries the world would speedily be evangelized. And why should we not thus advance?

Now, as never before, haste is needed. With the rapid movement of intellectual, commercial and political enterprises, there must be a corresponding activity in missionary work, or the emissaries of evil will outstrip us. In India as railways and manufactures are breaking down caste, the old religion is waning. Something must immediately take its place. If Japan is not Christianized now, a false civilization will plunge the country into a degradation baser than before. As Africa is being opened up for commerce, Christianity must enter or there will be a loss that centuries cannot repair. Thousands of heathen are to-day looking westward for something to take the place of their waning superstition. Among the intellectual classes of heathendom the writings of Huxley, Darwin and Spencer are more widely read than with us. If we do not soon give them the gospel, falsehood will forestall us. But how are we to overtake this work?

It can only be done by increasing among our churches at home their interest in foreign mission work.

More information is needed regarding the condition of the world. Comparatively few have any adequate idea of the parts of the world yet unevangelized, of the wretchedness existing there, or of the horrible cruelties still practised. Set before our people the degradation, misery, immorality, and cruelty of heathenism, and interest is at once aroused. Tell them that the people of Central Africa still buy slaves, which they fatten, kill, and eat. Tell them of the gross darkness which "The Light of Asia" is powerless to dispel. Get them familiar with the customs, morals, religions of the different races of the earth. Tell them, too, of what the gospel has already accomplished, and then they will arouse themselves to their best efforts. Thus only can natural indifference be overcome, and adverse criticism be made of no avail.

In this work the pastor must take the lead. Every pastor should feel with John Wesley that the world is his parish. He should get every Christian to recognize his or her duty to do something toward evangelizing the heathen. Those who cannot go with the message themselves must see it a duty to help in sending others. The pastor should dwell on missionary topics, and by frequent repetition his people will unconsciously become filled with his spirit.

More prayer for missions is required of our churches. Every successful effort to evangelize has been attended with much prayer. The church at Antioch initiated foreign missions with prayer and fasting. John Welch, the son-in-law of John Knox, used to say "he wondered how anyone could stay in bed all night without getting up to pour out his heart in prayer." "Oh God, wilt thou not give me all Scotland" was his oft repeated petition. It was granted. Our own Dr. Geddie was a man mighty in prayer. The great work accomplished in China by the Rev. Hudson Taylor is the result of prayer. By prayer the movement was inaugurated, in answer to prayer the missionaries were obtained, and by prayer they are supported.

Might not all our churches set apart an evening in each month for prayer for foreign missions? That would not be demanding too much in behalf of the greatest work that is before the church. If this were done could we not expect great things from God?

There is also needed greater consecration of money to God's

service. Men need to be taught that they are only stewards of all that they possess, and that it is their duty to devote not only intellect and influence but means of every kind to the service of their God. Many laborers are now ready for the foreign field who cannot go for want of means. The need of giving at least a tenth of our income regularly to God's work, should be more diligently impressed. At present only one dollar out of every 5,000,000 dollars aggregate income of protestant disciples is devoted to the foreign field. The Presbyterian Church in Canada gives less than sixty cents per communicant for the work. If even evangelical churches had but the zeal and self-denial of the early church, the earth would speedily be encircled with missions, and the message of peace be spoken in every home of our race. Let our church but arise in her strength and devote all her resources to the work, and soon we shall have the glad prophecies of old fulfilled. The heathen shall be given to Christ for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession.

EDITORIAL DEPARTMENT.

OUR editorial on the action of the Pictou Presbytery, with regard to the students, has been the subject of some comment. It was recently reproduced in the "Witness," accompanied by a note from a resident of Pictou County. The next issue of the "Witness" had a communication from a member of the Presbytery, giving the reasons for its action. Though we thought the matter at rest, we are not sorry for the discussion. The two letters prove all that we contended for. The layman shows that the people had no fault to find with us, and the presbyter, that the resolution was passed in the interests of our studies and our health. We were hurt because the resolution was understood by many as a reflection on the students. Our reputation is now vindicated, and there is no longer room for misunderstanding.

IN a late number of the "Presbyterian College Journal" there is a complete classification and enumeration of the students connected with the institution in Montreal. On the list given 24 men are put down as Students in Theology, the others, to the number of 50, are either Undergraduates in Arts or Students in the Literary Department. This list is interesting, because it throws light on the composition of the returns made yearly to the General Assembly of our Church.

Last year, for example, Knox College, Toronto, reported, "the entire number of students in attendance during last session was 101; of these 73 were in Theology, and 28 in the Preparatory Classes." The Presbyterian College, Montreal, reports that "the whole number of students on the roll of the past session was 95, of whom 83 were in attendance on lectures, the others being temporarily engaged in teaching and other vocations." Of these we find 27 were Students in Theology. Queen's College reports 78 students as "looking forward to the ministry in connection with the Church." The number of Students in Theology

is 31. The Presbyterian College, Halifax, reports, "28 regular students, with three general students, were in attendance during the session," making 31 students in Theology.

Evidently the returns are made up on a different basis. Knox College and the one in Montreal, have, we understand, a special course of instruction provided for those who are not undergraduates. They also provide accommodation for a number of students who have not finished their preparatory studies. From the Montreal report we gather that the greater number of their students are in this preparatory stage. Queen's gets over the difficulty by reporting the total number as "looking forward to the ministry." In Halifax, only students taking classes in Theology are counted, though, like Knox and Montreal, we have students boarding in our hall who have not completed their preparatory work, and counting like Queens, we can say we have at least 60 "looking forward."

We fail to see why those "looking forward" but not yet taking classes in Theology should be counted. An undergraduate of the first year in Arts, a student in the Literary Department, and men "temporarily engaged in teaching and other vocations" may all have the best intentions, but it is rather misleading to have them on the roll of a Presbyterian College, and reported to the General Assembly of our Church.

IN this practical age when everything is judged so largely by its results, the church cannot expect to escape this test. Sorrow, degradation and sin prevail throughout the world and humanity calls loudly for salvation from their sway. The church of Christ claims to hold a faith which if accepted will lessen and at length remove these evils. But mere assertion is insufficient. Eloquent panegyrics on the blessings Christianity has brought and will bring to the human race will have little influence, unless we can also point to practical benefits it confers to-day. If Christianity is to make good its right to exist and to become the religion of our race, if it is not to be relegated to the limbo of worn-out faiths and superstitions, it must show that it is able to uplift the fallen, strengthen the weak and save the lost at this present time—that it can destroy the power, and remedy the

effects of sin in this world, as well as promise freedom from all evil in the life to come. This is the demand made by the spirit of our age; and so far as this demand is a legitimate one, it should be the aim of all Christians to satisfy it. The churches should rouse themselves to renewed activity, and make known on a larger scale and in a clearer manner the transforming and quickening influence of that faith they teach; and in this effort attention should ever be given to improving in every possible way the methods of work, in order to adapt them to the needs and requirements of the times.

There are many problems which come before the churches for solution, and certainly not the least important of these is the question of evangelizing the crowded population of towns and cities. This question does not perhaps concern us so very nearly as it does our neighbors over the border; but even with us it is fast becoming a matter of the greatest importance. It is well known that in our own towns and cities there is a comparatively large population who seldom, if ever, enter a church. How they are to be reached, and how their number is to be kept from increasing, are questions we cannot afford to ignore. It is not wise, it is not safe, it is not Christian to do so. We cannot, we dare not, shut our eyes to the misery and sin around us, and attempt to wash our hands of all responsibility.

If we do not check and conquer the ungodliness and indifference, the shallow skepticism and practical atheism, which exist to a considerable extent in our towns and cities, we must be conquered by them. If we would transmit to those who come after us the faith and religious privileges we enjoy, we must not only guard them jealously but also seek to gain a wider sphere for their influence. And yet, as things are now, it is in many cases as much as our churches can do to hold their own. It is often found extremely difficult to retain within the church those born and brought up in it, and though the spirit and the desire for aggressive work may exist they do not seem to accomplish much.

What is the cause of this? One cause would seem to be the inadequacy of the means employed for the accomplishment of the ends aimed at, and particularly the fact that the greater part of the work is left to be done by one man. More is expected

of the minister than he can accomplish. Many different kinds of work devolve upon him, any one of which would in other walks in life be considered sufficient to occupy his entire attention. Besides conducting the devotional exercises at both morning and evening service, he has to preach two different sermons, each of which must of course be a model of eloquence of expression, elegance of style, and originality of thought. And yet the preparation and delivery of these discourses is but one part of a minister's work. He has also, probably, to conduct a Bible class on Sabbath afternoon, and to prepare short addresses for one or more prayer-meetings through the week. Surely the proper preparation for these services entails sufficient work for one man. But the preacher is also a pastor, and so he must visit the different families of his flock; he must attend at the bedside of the sick and dying, must seek to comfort the mourners, cheer the disconsolate, and guide and watch over the weak, the tempted, and the straying. The varied burdens of all his people he must bear, becoming, like his Master, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. In addition to these different branches of pastoral work, the minister has to attend the various church courts, take an interest in schemes and organizations of a general philanthropic nature, and keep himself in his studies and reading abreast of the best thought of the times. Otherwise, his whole duty to himself, his people, and the church, is not done.

When we take a mere glance at these various branches of work, we must allow that a minister who in any degree faithfully performs his duty is a hard worked man; and when we think of the tremendous consequences that depend so largely upon his words and work, we may well exclaim:—"Who is sufficient for these things!" No one who has all this work expected of him can, unless he be an exceptionally able man, expect to overtake it. His sermons will be sometimes dry and pointless. It is little to be wondered at if some one is apt to think he is not visited frequently enough. The proper performance of the duties which are supposed to devolve upon the pastor of a large city congregation is an impossibility. Some part of the work must suffer, or the minister soon dies of overwork. And when congregational work thus makes more demands than he can well satisfy, there is of course no time or

power left for active aggressive work in the regions around. If such work is engaged in at all, it can only receive a slight supervision, and must be left almost entirely to the lay members of the congregation for planning, direction and performance. But these members have their own special duties to perform in ordinary life. Those of them best suited for aggressive Christian work can often give but little time to it, for their business demands their close attention. Thus, the aggressive work is either poorly or spasmodically done or not done at all. And yet it is one of the great objects for which the Church exists; for each congregation should surely endeavor to save those who, within sight of its spire and within hearing, it may be, of its anthems of praise, are living in misery and sin, and dying in despair. And yet, as things are now, it is folly to expect that much of such work should be done.

One reason of this we have shown. The remedy for the trouble so far as it is due to this cause would lie in having fewer city congregations, if need be, and more ministers attached to each. The pastor should have at least one assistant and, where possible, more than one. Thus the various services could always be adequately prepared for; visiting could be regularly and properly conducted, and time would be afforded for aggressive work. By division of labor, more and better work could be done without imposing an unbearable load upon any worker. Unless in exceptional cases, the change of preachers would be far from unwelcome to the audience; and, should the chief minister fall sick or be called suddenly away from his charge, there would always be some one to carry on the work in his absence.

This plan of having assistants in city charges is far from new. In Scotland it is quite common, and in the Episcopal churches it prevails in all lands. Its advantages both to minister and congregation are at once apparent, especially in a church which like ours favours prolonged pastorates. But it would also be of advantage to the young men who would occupy the position of assistants. They would become acquainted with the best methods of working, and thus be better fitted for taking the pastoral oversight of congregations of their own. Experience too has shown the beneficial results of this plan in helping the church

to extend her influence and gather larger numbers within her walls. It is said that in New York city the Episcopalians have of late years increased in numbers more rapidly than any other protestant denomination. In commenting upon this fact a recent number of the *New York Independent* attributes it in great measure to the more business-like methods employed by the Episcopal church. While the other protestant churches assign only one minister to a congregation, each of the leading Episcopal congregations has several clergymen attached to it. In this way they have men enough to look after the old members of the flock and to engage in efforts to reach those outside the fold.

It seems to us that we may learn a lesson from our Episcopal friends. We are suffering, it is true, from a lack of men, and it may seem unnecessary and unwise to employ two men in one city congregation, when there are so many places in the country that are urgently in need of ministers. But the Church must keep firm hold of the cities, which are the great centres of wealth, influence, and culture, as well as of population, if she is to influence and mould our national life and character as she should. And that this end may be gained, the best methods of work must be employed and adequate means must be supplied.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Revs. J. M. Fisher, T. C. Jack, G. A. Leck, E. D. Millar, Prof. Seth, F. S. Coffin, \$1.00 each; A. J. McDonald, Geo. Millar, A. C. Millar, R. Mellish, J. P. Falconer, Miss Ethel Muir, Dr. Chisholm, Miss Maggie Bauld, Dr. N. E. McKay, Robert Frew, A. E. Chapman, John Macnab, Revds. F. W. Murray, T. Sedgwick, D. McD. Clark, Geo. McMillan, John McMillan, S. Rosborough, A. Simpson, T. Cumming, A. B. Dickie, A. W. Lewis, Malcolm Campbell, G. M. Johnson, R. C. Quinn, 50 cts. each.

Address business communications to MCLEOD HARVEY, Presbyterian College, Halifax.

COLLEGE NOTES.

At a meeting of the Missionary Society on March 17th, Mr. F. W. Thompson was reappointed to the work in Labrador for the coming summer. Mr. Thompson returns to the field with the experience of his last year's work to help him. In order to be back at the opening of the session, the missionary in Labrador needs to return early in the autumn, and is thus unemployed for some time before the opening of the fall. Taking these circumstances into consideration the Society voted Mr. Thompson \$8.00 a week, with expenses of boarding, instead of \$7.00 a week as before.

As a result of the visit of Mr. Cossum, who represented the Students' Volunteer Movement, the Missionary Society decided to devote every fourth meeting to Foreign Missions. At the first of these meetings, Mr. MacLeod Harvey read an introductory paper on "Biblical Arguments for Foreign Missions." Mr. Robert Grierson and Mr. W. C. Morrison read papers giving reasons why they volunteer for the Foreign Mission field. These papers were valuable, and awakened much interest. At the second Foreign Mission meeting, papers were read by Mr. W. W. Rainnie on MacKay of Uganda, and by Mr. George Millar on Dr. Geddie. The leading events in the lives of these missionaries and the outlines of their work were sketched in a vivid and forcible way.

We have interesting reports from a graduate of last year, Rev. Frank Coffin, Bay of Islands, Newfoundland. He is enjoying good health during the long Newfoundland winter, and is among an appreciative people.

During this session we have at different times been favored with the presence of Dr. Pollok and Dr. Currie at our prayer-meetings. Last Tuesday evening, Dr. Currie gave us an insight into the experiences of his fifteen years' pastorate. His address was greatly enjoyed and the advice given invaluable, and specially opportune now, as we look forward to the practical work of the summer.

We were all sorry to learn of the illness of Dr. Burns, chairman of the board of management. We trust he may soon be restored to his wonted vigor. By the interest he has manifested in the students personally, as well as in our College, he has earned the esteem of us all.

We are glad to learn that Rev. Gavin Hamilton is improving in health, and that he may be able to resume work at Brookfield in a few weeks. The last accounts from Rev. George Johnston are not so favorable, though we trust he will recover strength as spring advances.

We have to chronicle with deep regret the death of J. Scott Hutton, late Principal of the Deaf and Dumb Institution in this city, and a member of the Board of Management of this College. In the congregation to which he belonged, as well as in the Church at large, his removal will be deeply felt, while the loss sustained by the institution of which he was the founder as well as head, will be well nigh irreparable.

Though we are not in the habit of specially noticing our exchanges, yet we are unwilling to dismiss the "Olla Podrida" without remark. This new exchange comes to us from the Halifax Ladies' College. It presents a neat and attractive appearance, the contents are well arranged, and all the subjects are treated in an entertaining and unconventional style. The first issue gives excellent promise.

We have a new system for turning poor writers into good ones—"Rapid Writing"—quickly learned. Will give three short lessons by mail, enough for a taste, free. Enclose stamp.

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