

flames. Incidentally it may be mentioned, that Sunday night is the most productive of large fires, of any in the week. In factories and shops this may result from the elements of destruction lying undisturbed through the day of rest: in this instance the cause is traced to the overheating of a flue running from the stove, and used for heating the boys' school, on the eastern side of the chapel, level with the galleries. Before discovery, the flames had reached the roof, and were extending round the building, making a noise like the rushing of water. Before information could be given to the nearest fire-engine station, only a few hundred yards distant, the fire broke through the roof, mounting high in air, and illuminating the neighbourhood for miles round. With that promptitude and energy for which our fire brigade is so celebrated, speedy assistance was rendered. By introducing hose into the building, and pouring copious streams of water, the fire was at length subdued; but not before the roof had fallen in with a tremendous crash like a salvo of artillery. This for a few moments arrested the flames; but soon they burst forth with increased vigour, scattering burning embers into the galleries and aisles, and doing considerable damage to the pews and free sittings. Had it not been for the unceasing and well-directed exertions of the fireman, nothing would have been saved: as it was, the fire completely demolished the roof from end to end, gutted the bellry, and injured many of the mural tablets which perpetuated the memory of deceased worthies.

The chapel was insured in the General Fire Office. But of the amount of damage, the funds for insurance, and the plans for rebuilding, I cannot at present speak. Of course it must, in any case, be a considerable time before service can be resumed; and, unfortunate as fires are in every sense, in this instance we have to regret destruction of the original structure which was so venerated for its connection with the "silver-tongued Whitfield." A debt, too, existed on the building, which may now hamper further proceedings.

ILLNESS OF MR. SPURGEON.

While upon the subject of Chapels and Ministers, I may mention the severe illness of Mr. Spurgeon. And if, (as I believe that gentleman has stated) George Whitfield's character, mission, and addresses, form the model which Mr. Spurgeon adopts as his own—this is in its right place, as following a mention of the Apostle to the Poor. Although not one of the Reverend gentleman's devotees, yet he cannot surely be offended at my placing him in such excellent company. And here let me say, in fairness, that some with whom I have lately conversed assure me that Mr. Spurgeon is losing some of those eccentricities which raised very severe criticism against him. Never having heard the reverend orator, I dare only say what I have heard, with this addition—That though Whitfield found it necessary sometimes to adopt *outré* similes, unrefined language, and terms suited to an illiterate and degraded audience, such is now only necessary to exhort the *sans culottes* of rabid Chartism, and tap-room beery politicians. As many will go to hear Mr. Spurgeon, and far more real good be done, if the rev. gentleman continue in the path he has been reported to follow. It is not necessary to resort to even exceptional familiarity, to enchain an audience's sympathy, if the preacher possesses those powers which all agree Mr. Spurgeon has. You, Mr. Editor, and some of your readers, may disagree with me: but having opinions of my own on most matters, I do not shrink from their avowal, and of course you are not called on to endorse them. Well, to proceed:—

Last Sunday, as usual, crowds assembled to hear Mr. Spurgeon. Monthly tickets are now sold, admitting the bearer to a series of discourses. At half-past ten, a rush to the area, platform, and galleries of the Surrey Music Hall took place; and in a quarter of an hour there was hardly standing room, much less sittings: 9,000 or 10,000 persons were present.

At a quarter to eleven, Mr. Spurgeon ascended to his position, wrapped in a great-coat, his countenance and manner evincing great weakness and illness. After opening the service by a brief prayer, he stated that his medical advisers had strongly counselled him not to preach; but, finding him resolved, exhorted him as he valued his life and the ability to preach again, to lose the service directly he should find illness gaining upon him. This, added to his manifest indisposition, served at once to excite the sympathies and rivet the attention of his audience. The text selected was Hebrews ix. 22—"And without shedding of blood is no remission." The line of argument followed, and exhortations added may be conceived: Christ's sacrifice being necessary, that a righteous God should pardon sin. For a time the preacher proceeded with comparative freedom; but soon afterwards his voice became harsh and rugged—he was obliged to draw a swift conclusion, and was led down stairs in a state of complete mental and physical exhaustion.

It is uncertain when Mr. Spurgeon will be able to resume preaching. Doubtless, the powerful excitement and deep sorrow caused by the late accident, added to unceasing exertions in ministerial study and duty, have overtaxed brain and nerve. It will be a great deprivation to the numbers who steadily attend his preaching.

MR. SPURGEON'S CONTEMPORARIES.

How many of our best divines would rejoice to have but a title of Mr. Spurgeon's audiences! There is Mr. Lynch (who apart from his 'rivalry' controversy, is one of the most intellectual and refined of pulpit orators) preaching to a mere handful. John Howard Hinton, too, the Hon and lamb combined—a lion in his masculine declamation and sternly-uttered doctrine; but a gentle weeping Magdalene in his sweet pathos—ministers to a comparatively small congregation,

in an out-of-the-way locality at Shoreditch, with the noise of a busy market outside distracting himself and hearers. But all who do hear these preachers thoroughly appreciate them, and, in the latter case, go to a locality and endure inconveniences that mere velvet-wrapped souls shrink from. On the other hand, Mr. Binney—massive as a rock; sometimes sterile, but oftener like the rock in Horeb, gushing with unrestrained streams of living water: combining strength, forcible logic and every-day common sense—taking a strange text, and educing from it reflections, and correspondences, and applications, that no one else ever found there, but all true. Selecting a character (say Saul the son of Kish), and pursuing it through all its mental phenomena; dissecting it, nerve and marrow, till the hidden springs of life are all open to the gaze, and then, applying it so that every man, woman and child who hears shall ever after be able to take counsel from David's foe, and shape life's course accordingly, this Mr. Binney, with two handkerchiefs busy in nervous hands during the pauses of his subjects—sensitive alive to a cough or restless movement—everywhere the same, and everywhere revered—has one of the finest and most refined audiences of any preacher.

Dr. Cumming, too, the High Priest of Protestantism: smelling out and worrying Romanism with as true a scent and unflinching instinct as ever grimalkin tormented *parvus mus*: tall, dark, the very impersonation of a priest: with graceful elocution, a sweetly-modified, harmonious Scotchism in accent, and a tongue whose eloquence would, to use a very plain simile, "Coax a bird off a tree;" who ever stayed long in London without forming one of an eager crowd outside his chapel? who, with a poetic longing, ever heard him read those rare old paraphrases of the Psalms, with the lines ending in prepositions, and all melting into the soul, as wedded to harmony rich and full as themselves, they reverberated through the chapel—without feeling himself carried back to the hill sides and deep glens of bonnie Scotland, where Covenanters held a Bible in one hand and a sword in the other, ready alike to receive the word of God, or beat back Claverhouse's blood-thirsty dragoons! Perhaps it is from this ancient memory—this tenacious, John-Knox-spirit of Protestantism, which Scotchmen seem to imbibe with their mothers' milk—that the Doctor rarely preaches a sermon without introducing the "Grand Apostacy," and quoting musty bulls, canons, diets, and edicts, as familiarly as a school boy runs over the multiplication table. I almost think he could preach from the 'Generations from David to Abraham,' in the first chapter of Matthew, and thence deduce a homily against Rome, without his hearers feeling that he had wandered far from the text. Well, it is a glorious thing to have such men, alive to every device and "refuge of lies" which would seek to shroud the Gospel within mumming superstitions and priestly fables, leaving the poor to pine and hunger vainly for the Bread of Life. Long may the good, unapproachable, undaunted Scotch Doctor hold his lofty place; and long may similar crowds receive pure Protestantism from his lips!

These crowds are so great, that it is found necessary to issue tickets, without which strangers are not admitted. This is only just to seat-holders, who before could not get to their seats; and it also prevents that confusion and disturbance which is alike opposed to calm worship, and the decent observance of such order as should ever be associated with it.

From this hasty sketch of ministers, into which I have found myself drawn, I must now say a little on politics, and the proceedings of Parliament. Perhaps, Mr. Editor, your readers will find more pleasure in the subjects already considered, than in listening to debates on our late Budget, and the efforts of Messrs. Disraeli, and Spooner to dislodge Lord Palmerston from the Treasury, and walk into office over his defeat. I will therefore be very brief.

PARLIAMENT.

My predictions in last letter have proved true. The extra "war ninetence" on the Income tax, is taken off, and great is the rejoicing thereat. There was a long battle on it, because Disraeli, joined by Gladstone, strove to substitute an arrangement by which the expenditure of 3 years forward should be equalized, and the Income tax taken off altogether. But that was rejected.

Then there was another spar, about a secret treaty which Disraeli contended had been signed between France and Austria, engaging the latter's neutrality in the Eastern war, on consideration of France's guaranteeing the continuance of Austrian domination in Italy. Palmerston denied that such was in existence; Disraeli repeated the charge, whose animus lay in this—that while our government were professing such friendship for Italy, they had actually allowed a treaty to be signed, continuing Austria's tyranny; and did so, fully aware of the treaty's existence. It turned out, both were right, both wrong: there was no treaty, but a private "convention," which however had not been acted upon and is now set aside. But this served for a grand field-day between parties, and was looked on with great interest on account of the stake played for—office and power.

James Sadlier, brother of the late suicide, and mixed up with him in frauds on the Tipperary Bank, has been expelled the House. Some time since he fled; and, not answering a summons requiring him to be in his place on a certain day, and meet charges against him, was expelled. But whisper says, there is at least one other member who is nearly as much implicated in "downright dishonesty" as James Sadlier.

Mr. Spooner moved his annual resolution for the cessation of endowment to Maynooth Roman Catholic College. The debate, however, was very short, and the proposal negatived.

Mr. Miall has, given notice of a motion which will touch the question of State Religion in Ireland—the greatest injustice, in an unjust system.

The "Resolute," presented to H. M. by the American government, had been much talked of, because, it was said she was dismantled and put away in dock. On the question being asked, however, Government denied that any other course had been taken than was usual with all ships not intended for active or immediate service.

Here, Mr. Editor, I must close. Only one bit of Court gossip should be added, which says, that the beautiful Eugenie is in a condition which promises still further security in the succession to Louis Napoleon's throne.

YOUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT.

For the Christian Messenger.

Donation Visits, Cornwallis.

MESSRS. EDITORS,

It is not quite two years since I became pastor of the Baptist Church in this place, and yet they have paid me a number of donation visits, and all under very unfavourable circumstances, both as to roads and weather. The first came off last winter. The day was cold and stormy, which prevented many from attending. The amount received at that time was about £17, a notice of which I should have acknowledged in the C. M. soon after, but that I understood one of the company intended to do so.

On the 11th of Feb'y., the people came to my house to make me the second visit. The day was most unfavourable, being one of the coldest of the season. However, about forty-five persons came together, and the evening was passing off most agreeably, when, about 8 o'clock, we were all thrown into confusion, with the cry of "Fire! the house is on fire!" One of the upper rooms was all in a blaze. Fortunately it was soon extinguished through the exertions of the young men and the aid of water, but not until it had done mischief to the value of about fifteen pounds. Some of the ladies present had their bonnets, cloaks, shawls, and furs burnt. We think the fire was caused by a candle being placed near the window, the blind of which ignited and then communicated to a bed which stood near. Had we been two minutes later in discovering the fire I think it would have been impossible to have saved the house from being consumed. Here I wish publicly to acknowledge the goodness and mercy of my Heavenly Father in sparing to me and my family our humble dwelling.

The excitement having passed off the donations were presented, amounting to £10 6s. 7d. The next day about twenty-five persons more drove to my house and spent a very agreeable evening, and left £7 10s. with us. The people not being satisfied with this, resolved to make their third appointment, and accordingly Feb'y. 18th, was named as the day, hoping that wind, weather, and roads would all favour their object, as it was believed that there were many that wished to give a tangible expression of their attachment to their minister.

The day came and with it any quantity of mud that could be desired. The rain had rendered it very difficult to travel, but notwithstanding the friends flocked to my dwelling, to the number of about one hundred, fifty-five of whom had not been there on the previous days. The amount left with me at this time was £12 19s. 5d. The whole amount received in these three donations, together with some presents made me in a more private way, about the same time, amounts to £35, over £20 of which was in cash.

I have said nothing about the good things prepared by the ladies, as it is well known that they always act their part on such occasions. I deem it quite useless to inform the reader that an abundance of good things were prepared and ample justice done to them.

My people have thrown additional cords around me to bind me to them by their munificent gifts. A man must be a minister in order to know how a minister feels when his people congregate under his roof and give such unmistakable tokens of their attachment. To express his feelings is impossible, words cannot convey the emotions of his soul.

Yours truly,
JAMES PARKER.

Bill Town, Feb. 28th, 1857.

Provincial Parliament.

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

TUESDAY, March 11.

Hon. Mr. Bell presented a petition from the Trustees of the Wesleyan Academy at Sackville, praying a continuance of the grant to that institution.

Various papers were laid on the table of the House from which we extract the following items of information.

Penitentiary.—The number of persons in this establishment is 27. The Board has employed a number of the prisoners to work the stone quarries belonging to the province, on the west side of the N. W. Arm. The expenditure last year was £1967 9s. 4d.

Sable Island.—Two wrecks occurred there last year. Twenty horses were brought here last year, which were sold at higher rates than the former shipments. A per centage of 2½ per cent. on property saved from wrecks is given to the superintendent as a stimulus to his exertions.

Light Houses.—A light house was erected during the past year on Flint Island, and has been in operation since November last. One will be built early in the ensuing season on Scatarie. A number of respectable merchants have requested that a light house should be erected on George's Island, and their memorial to that effect has been submitted to the legislature.

Lunatic Asylum.—The brick-yard on the premises is in successful operation, 945,000 bricks having been manufactured there, 65,000 of which are pressed bricks. The expenditure during the past year was £7082, 5s. 6d.; and the whole expenditure since the commencement of the work £12,510 18s. 2d.; which includes the cost of the site, the construction of the brick-yard, etc.

Halifax Poors' Asylum.—The expenses of the institution for the past year were £3840 2s. 9d. Towards meeting this there was received from the provincial chest £2072 10s. 3d.; from the treasury of the city and county of Halifax £1000; and from the sale of hats, oakum, mats, etc., made by the paupers £576 6s. 27,732 lbs. of beef were consumed there in 1856. Cleanliness is not neglected in the institution, 11½ tons of soap, or about 74 lbs. a day having been used the last year.

The number of persons admitted during the past year was 883, of whom 448 were men, 268 women, and 177 children—229 were from Halifax, the remainder transient. The average number in the establishment during the year is 326, who cost 7½d. each, per diem.

Hon. Dr. Grigor—I should like to ask the hon. Chairman of the Board of Works whether preparations have been made for the opening of the Lunatic Asylum. I should like to know what qualifications are expected from the medical Superintendent, and when it is likely the institution will be opened, as time ought to be afforded to the person appointed to enable him to visit the best institutions for the insane. I ask the question without reference to any individual, as I have not thought of any person whom I would be inclined to recommend for the situation of medical superintendent.

Hon. Mr. Bell—I think it probable that the institution will be ready to receive patients by the end of the ensuing season. There are 60 insane persons now in the Poors' Asylum, and about 800 persons similarly afflicted throughout the province. It will therefore be necessary that two sections now in progress of erection should be completed before the institution is opened. The Asylum in Toronto is calculated to receive only 250 patients, and it has already cost £56,000, and is not yet finished.

DEBATE ON "AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF NOVA SCOTIA."

Hon. Mr. Fairbanks—It is not usual with me to take a very deep interest in newspaper remarks, but occasionally articles appear which require more than a passing notice. In the *Morning Chronicle* of the 7th inst. an article appeared, entitled, "An Address to the people of Nova Scotia." After giving various party views all of which, I think, may be very easily answered, it concludes with this clause:

"A committee drawn from both branches of the Legislature, animated by no narrow or sectional feeling,—the friends of religious liberty, abhorring the dominancy of any one sect or creed, warmly attached to our common Protestantism, and distrusting the insidious and rapid advance of the Catholic power,—have prepared this appeal, and recommend it to the sympathies, to the inmost convictions, and to the thoughtful care of all denominations of Protestants."

As this states that the committee was drawn from both branches of the Legislature, it of course includes this branch, and I should like to know from you sir, as President of this Council, whether you know anything of any such committee having been formed from this Council.

Hon. President—The only information I have relative to such a committee is gathered from the public prints.

Hon. Mr. Fairbanks—Then, as a member of this Council, I protest against any editor sinking such a statement as this without just cause. The whole object of this article is a most wicked design to stir up the Protestants of this country, by exciting them, as a body, against a particular class of our fellow subjects—the Catholics. I think we have had strife enough. Our party feelings have destroyed that unity which should exist, and I hoped that those feelings had begun to subside, and that many individuals who had been excited by them had begun to take a cooler and more dispassionate view of matters of public policy, which would have a good effect on the advancement of the province, both commercially and politically. I feel extremely surprised that at this period, the fact of persons going over from one side to the other should induce the parties left in the minority to denounce the whole as proceeding from a power unknown to the constitution. Sir, I have long sat in what is called the dark shades of opposition; but desirous as I might be of a change of government, if I believed that the party in power could succeed only by the dictation, control, or indulgence of the Roman Catholics, I should again go into opposition, and not give such a party my sanction. It is not only unconstitutional, but improper, to endeavor to establish such a feeling in this country. In every part of the British Empire, the free exercise of civil and religious rights is conceded. I have lived many years among the class alluded to in this paper in peace and quietness. I cannot see how we can get on in this country without the harmony and good-will heretofore existing between us. We are equally dependant on each other; we are united together in commercial and in all other affairs. How the country is to prosper or improve if this kind of dissension is to be excited, I cannot understand. If one class of our people are to be set against another, there is an end to all prospect of happiness; there is an end to the inviting of persons from abroad, to work our mines and minerals, or to engage in any other public work. Why, sir, should a man leave a country in which he lives in peace and quietness, to come to one distracted by civil and religious strife?