

Presbyterian Witness
Halifax, N. S., Nov. 17, 1855.

To our Readers.

The Presbyterian Witness can now boast of the respectable age of eight years; and during that period we flatter ourselves that the general excellence of its selections, and the manner in which it has narrated, and the spirit in which it has commented upon, passing events, have rendered its weekly visits profitable as well as agreeable to its numerous readers.

Most of our readers no doubt are aware that the Witness was started originally in exclusive connexion with the Free Church. But it early became apparent that that body alone was unequal to the task of supporting a Weekly Religious Newspaper. We then solicited and obtained the generous support of other Presbyterian bodies, and aimed at making the Witness a Presbyterian paper—giving the intelligence of all the Presbyterian churches of these provinces. We expected thus to win the confidence, and gain the cordial support, of all. In this we have been but partially successful—an impression still prevailing that the paper was virtually a Free Church organ.

Arrangements have now been made which, at the beginning of another year will relieve us of all further Editorial responsibility; and we are most happy to announce that the Rev. William Murray, of the Free Church, and Charles Robson Esq., Elder of the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia, will thenceforward conduct the paper. From the well known talents and experience of these gentlemen we feel sanguine that the Witness will become a truly valuable organ for the diffusion of interesting intelligence as well as for instilling sound views religious and secular. We feel assured that their names are a sufficient guarantee for what the character of the paper will be under their management.

Having made the above announcement it now becomes us to tender our thanks to all who have in any way aided us in our labours. To those who have so generously given us gratuitous editorial assistance (without which our paper must long since have ceased to exist), and to our numerous Agents and Patrons (especially those whose promptitude in collecting and forwarding subscriptions, has enabled us to meet our weekly demands)—we shall ever feel deeply grateful.

The new series of the Witness will be considerably enlarged, and in effecting the contemplated changes our expenditure must be heavy. We have now forwarded to all our subscribers, through the Agents in the different townships, the Bills of the amount due by them till the 31st Dec. of the present year. The total amount of the Bills thus sent to the country district in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, P. E. Island, Cape Breton, and New Foundland, is upwards of Seven Hundred Pounds. The sums of which the above is the aggregate are small and comparatively trifling, and we earnestly trust that each individual will make an effort to pay at once either to the Agent nearest to him, or direct to our Office. By so doing we will be placed in a position to make our alterations and arrangements much more thorough and satisfactory than they otherwise can be; and thus our subscribers will be rewarded for merely performing their duty towards us.

JAMES BARNES.

Presbyterian Church of Canada.

The Presbytery of Montreal memorialized the Governor General on the subject of a day of Thanksgiving.

The Rev. A. C. GRIFFIN, formerly minister of the Congregational Church, has been admitted into the Presbyterian Church.

"Elmsley House," the residence of Lord Elgin while in Canada, has been purchased for Knox's College.

The following missionaries arrived in Canada from the parent churches last month; Rev. Mr. Middlemiss, Rev. Mr. Grant, and Rev. Messrs. Craigie, Hume, McKee, and Crawford, and Messrs. Cameron and Anderson, students.

We are requested to state that the collection for the Current Expenses of College will, by appointment of Synod, be made in all the congregations and preaching stations of the Free Church on the 1st Sabbath of December.

TUESDAY, the 16th of October last, was the three hundredth anniversary of the martyrdom of Ridley and Latimer. The day was commemorated with becoming enthusiasm in many parts of England.

Philosophy.

Above us, and around us, and within us, there are mysteries which eye of man may never pierce; dark abysses, and fields of ineffable light, which baffle the analysis of reason, and which imagination's eagle wing wearies to explore.—Many are naturally formed to struggle for uncommon knowledge and to yearn with greedy craving for the secrets that are to be found within the shadow of perennial glooms and solitudes of thought of whose very existence common minds have not the slightest consciousness.—The philosopher searches with sore travail for the TRUE, the REAL, and the ABSOLUTE; in contradistinction to the PHENOMENAL, the APPARENT, the MUTABLE, beyond which the vulgar never seeks to see. He dives deeper and sears higher than common men, tearing asunder the thin veil that seems so substantial, and feasting his eyes on the realities that lie, like forbidden fruit, far beyond. For, this earth, those skies, the glorious UNIVERSE, are but the covering, or rather the faint adumbration of something more permanent by far, and inexpressibly more beautiful and glorious that reposes in eternal calm beneath them.

But the HUMAN MIND has been from time immemorial the great study, the home-enigma, so to speak, of philosophers. PSYCHOLOGY, the science of the soul, is to man of more importance than any other speculative science whatever (excepting Theology;) and accordingly much attention, much learned leisure, as well as vigorous earnest thought, have been devoted to it from Aristotle downwards. Metaphysical speculation was indeed a few years ago seriously eclipsed, if not in danger of being driven out of the field, by the startling and all-absorbing results of physical science. Matter and the material sciences, engrossed far too much of human thought and human study; and the mind, that spark of Heaven's kindling, was almost altogether ignored. Pseudo-sciences sprang up making matter all in all,—making thought and life in all their manifestations but modifications and results of matter! Many indeed were kept by the strength of their religious faith from the grasp of this degrading heresy, and many had souls imately too ethereal to bow the knee before so contemptible an idol.—Mind is now again (at least in the higher regions of literature) claiming its due superiority over matter. The metaphysical sciences now attract at least as much devoted attention and self-sacrificing discipleship as the physical sciences do. The tangible results of both classes of study are exceedingly disproportionate—but let us remember that "there is in a single moral thought what is intrinsically more valuable than all nature put together, with all its laws and phenomena!"

This year and the last have been signally prolific in philosophical publications. Some of the most remarkable have been historic-critical, as, for example, Henry Rogers' Essay on LOCKE, and Sir W. Hamilton's REID, and STEWART. Others have boldly struck out a path for themselves, and wielded the tempered steel upon the arena of original speculation. Prominent among these latter we find the author of "INTELLECT, THE EMOTIONS AND THE MORAL NATURE."

Beginning with MIND when it may be looked upon as a tabula rasa the learned Professor traces up the gradual development of all our ideas, simple and compound—with a precision and delicacy of analysis, and fulness of illustration which we have never seen equalled. We would claim special attention to the manner he has treated the idea of Power.—It is in this disquisition that he has shown himself a master and, though by no means an Ishmaelite towards his philosophic brethren, a powerful controversialist as well as an acute logician. We conceive that he has disposed satisfactorily and completely of Dr. Brown's famous theory of Cause and Effect. This theory was examined and confuted by our author in a pamphlet published in 1842,—before Sir William Hamilton had written on the subject. The pamphlet is appended to the present volume, and we unhesitatingly pronounce it to be one of the best specimens of philosophical criticism that we have ever read. It is interesting to note that Sir William Hamilton's views coincide in the main with

* THE INTELLECT, THE EMOTIONS, AND THE MORAL NATURE. By Rev. WILIAM LYALL, Free College, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Edinburgh: Thomas Constable & Co. London: Hamilton, Adams & Co. Halifax: A. & W. Mackintosh.

those of Professor Lyall on this difficult subject.

Having traced the origin and development of ideas, our author proceeds to discuss the state of mind called Sensation and its antithesis, Intellection. Sensation is the combined action of matter and mind; Intellection is the action of pure mind. These are regarded as the two grand phenomenal departments of the soul. The old classification into "faculties" or "powers" is, for good and sufficient reasons, discarded; and the mind is viewed as operating in its entirety and individuality in accordance with certain laws and principles impressed upon it by the Creator. Our space forbids us to dwell on the matter and eloquent manner in which the various properties, laws, and principles of mind are discussed; but we would specify the sections on Memory, Imagination, Personal Identity, and Contrast. The Philosophy of the Intellect occupies the first 270 pages of the volume. The Philosophy of the Emotions comes next, occupying nearly 200 pages.

Here our author performs a truly valuable service in lighting the dark recesses of philosophy by the heavenly torch of Revelation. The "malevolent affections" have been a stumbling stone to moralists in all ages. This arose from the fact of their viewing man as if he had never fallen from pristine innocence. To explain the phenomena of our emotional nature we must take into account that we are fallen, straying, sinful beings—and that evil has a permanent seat in our hearts. It is in drawing attention to this that Professor Lyall has done important service for moral science.

This is the part of the volume that the general reader could peruse with the greatest delight. To ourselves it has been fresh and charming as a poem, and edifying as a sermon. Indeed few poems contain half as much poetry, and few sermons contain half as much thought. We would direct particular attention to the portions that treat of Cheerfulness, Joy, Sorrow, Wonder, Love, and the Beautiful and Sublime. Eloquent utterances welling from a great heart surprise us at every step; and enchain, as with a magic spell, our attention to the page.

The third and last part of the volume treats of the PHILOSOPHY OF THE MORAL NATURE. Here, too, Professor Lyall has thrown open the doors of philosophy to gleams of that radiant light which has come down from heaven. And he reaps a rich reward.—The doctrines of Revelation have been in his hand a golden key to unlock the willing gates that have refused entrance to many a sturdy giant that knocked long and loud at them before. A few years ago philosophy would scarcely deign to stoop from her transcendental altitudes to bestow even a passing smile upon the religion of the cross. But that day is happily past; and we find a glorious golden harvest of truth gathered by the man that ventured, with conscious originality, to swerve from the beaten track.

The strictly MORAL portion of our souls (in the philosophical sense) and the emotions indissolubly connected with it, are the rudimentary, and by far the most important, part of our being. It is this that constitutes our moral agents, makes us cognizant of good and evil, and subject to LAW in the widest sense. This is the region of CONSCIENCE and of WILL. It is here that moral evil found a home; and it is hence that it must be dislodged by the renovating agency of the Spirit of God. Gladly would we follow the footsteps of our author through the whole region of MORALS—and especially when he treats of LAW and WILL and the introduction of EVIL; but so fascinating has been our theme that we have already far outleapt the space assigned us.

We feel assured that this is a book that men will not willingly let die. Its philosophy appeals to the understanding; its poetry touches the finest cords of the heart. The learned and unlearned will alike drink delight out of the stream, and thirst with so much the greater longing for the cloudless land where philosophy, poetry, and truth are in perennial fruition and glorious union—where eternal love is paramount to eternal law, and sin enters not to disturb the "perfect diapason."

The ninth annual conference of the British section of the Evangelical Alliance was to be held on Thursday, the 1st November. It was looked forward to with much interest, inasmuch as some of the ablest ministers of all the evangelical churches were to take part in the proceedings.

SIR WILLIAM MOLESWORTH is much mourned for, and will be greatly missed among the statesmen who take an adequate view of the wants of our Empire. A notice of him, that was left out of our last issue, will be found on the 4th page.

Opening of the Provincial Normal School.

The Normal School, at Truro, was opened under the most favourable auspices on Wednesday last, the 14th inst. The day was beautiful, and there was a very large and respectable gathering of those interested in the success of education from all parts of the country. Numbers were present from a great distance notwithstanding the torrents of rain that had fallen on Tuesday. Among those present from a distance were the Hon. Attorney General, the Hon. Provincial Secretary, the Hon. Financial Secretary, the Hon. Hugh Bell, Rev. E. Ross, Rev. David Honeyman, Rev. James Waddell, J. G. McLellan M. P. P., Andrew McKinlay Esq., and Robert Romans Esq. &c. The clergy and school commissioners &c. resident in and about Truro were also present.

Rev. A. Forrester, the Superintendent of Education and Principal of the Normal School, delivered an Inaugural Address which, we are told, was replete with information, sound sense, and manly eloquence. From what we have heard said of it we hope the Rev. author may be prevailed upon to place it before the public as soon as possible. Speeches were delivered also by the Hon's. Attorney General, Provincial Secretary, and others. All these gentlemen expressed their utmost confidence in the success of the Normal School; and pledged their firm support.

The most important item as indicative of the probable prosperity and usefulness of the institution remains to be told: SIXTY-FOUR pupils were enrolled on the spot. These had come from all parts of the country—from Yarmouth on the one hand to Cape Breton on the other. There is scarcely a county or township in the Province that was not represented among these pupils—while Colchester and Pictou had probably the largest number. The inhabitants of Truro evinced the greatest imaginable interest in the Institution which they are honored to have in their midst; and there is no doubt but they will continue to do all in their power to ensure its efficiency and success.

To all appearance the Normal School has before it a splendid career of success. The Rev. Principal will be seconded in his labours by two gentlemen of much experience and undoubted talent for teaching—Messrs. Randall and Mulholland; and we feel confident that by the help of God their combined efforts will result in making the Normal School a blessing to many generations.

Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick.

The Colonial Presbyterian states that congregations have made a liberal response to the call of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick for a collection on behalf of the proposed Foreign Mission.

In the same No. of the Colonial Presbyterian "X" has a communication sparkling with wit and full of his usual sound sense and shrewd observation. But why such irreverent liberties with our phiz? We can assure "X" that, though we looked "as pleased as Punch" at his flattering notice of us, our own modesty was so seriously shocked that we shall never again be persuaded to submit ourselves to the tender mercies of Daguerreotype-men!

The Rev. Hector McKay was inducted to the pastoral charge of the Salmon River congregation within the bounds of the Presbytery of York. There were present on the occasion Rev Messrs Glass, Smith, Johnston, and McKay.

Rev. T. G. Johnston received a call from Richmond which was sustained by the Presbytery, and accepted by Mr. Johnston; and he accordingly was to be inducted on the 25th Oct.

Rev. Mr. Alves, of the Free Church; and the Rev. William Bennet of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland had recently arrived.

The LONGMANS have advertised two new volumes of Macaulay's History to be delivered on the 4th December. The subscription list has already reached 40,000. Mudie takes 3,000 copies for his circulating Library. These 40,000 copies will cost to the public £70,000. It is said that these vols. contain only the history of William and Mary—i. e. 4 years.

GENERAL CODRINGTON, it appears, takes General Simpson's place in the Crimean army. He is not a young man—we know not that he is a man of much energy or decision of character. The probability is that his appointment will not give satisfaction to the British public.

Synod of the Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick.

We learn that at the special meeting of this Synod, held last week in St. John, a number of important matters was taken up and disposed of. The most important was, perhaps, that of Education. The general Synod having adopted the overture of the Presbytery of St. Stephen on that subject, a committee was appointed to carry it out. At the late special meeting the report of committee was presented by Mr Glass, its Convener, by whom the overture had been brought before the Presbytery of St. Stephen. It was a deeply interesting and very able document. The action taken by the Synod pledges it to attempt raising a central fund of some £4000 or £5000 towards the erection of several Academies or institutions of learning of a superior class. One of these is to be immediately proceeded with at Woodstock, under the immediate care of the Presbytery of York. A donation of \$1000, and also a yearly grant of \$50, have been already promised by Charles Connell, Esq. M.P.P., should an Academy at Woodstock be erected.—This generous proposal has had a most stimulating effect on that Presbytery, and no doubt it will call forth others throughout each of the three remaining Presbyteries of the Synod—more especially as Mr Connell is not, we believe, a Presbyterian, but a Wesleyan Methodist.

We are also enabled to note the following matters of general interest:

1. The Synod agreed upon the draft of a general charter, which it is thought will meet the views of all reasonable parties, and be passed into a law.

2. Provision was made for the better direction of missionaries, and for the better advancement of the interests of the Home Mission Fund through their labors. The Synod had the pleasure to receive the commissions of Mr Alves from the Free Church of Scotland, and of Mr Bennet from the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

3. Schedules requiring certain statistical returns were adopted, and will be issued.

4. Report of delegation to Free Synod of Nova Scotia on the subject of Union was received. The fuller discussion of this subject on the merits is reserved for June meeting of Synod.

All these measures will, it is believed, tend much towards the consolidation and advancement of the interests of the Presbyterian Church of New Brunswick. It now numbers 14 ministers ordained and settled, and 3 missionaries—one or more of whom are likely to be immediately settled. Additional missionaries are expected from Scotland and Ireland. The great want of candidates for the ministry led to the adoption by the Synod of a resolution expressing regret at the small number of candidates from New Brunswick who had taken a Theological Education at the Free Church College in this city, and requiring ministers to look out for and encourage suitable candidates in preparing for a course of Theological study with this view. We shall probably be able to supply some further details.

SPIRIT RAPPING and TABLE TURNING

are almost, if not quite, gone the way of all superstitions. A few ignorant fanatics may believe that the ghosts of their friends or some poor wandering denizen of Hades can declare to them through the medium of tables or chairs or brushes, bells or hats the secrets of another world. A few scheming Yankees and a very few odd fish in Nova Scotia, still profess to believe in the supernaturalness of the thing. And sad to tell a "religious" sect has sprung up among our republican neighbors whose whole religion consists in holding converse by means of tables with stray imps from purgatory or some such region, where they are ill at ease. It is a matter of deep regret that sensible men should give any sort of encouragement, or lend the prestige of their names to such silly delusions. Professor Faraday, one of the first men of science in England, has explained table-turning most thoroughly. He has, in the language of Sir David Brewster, sent the spirits under the table. They are now powerless over board, and there is no doubt at all that the rappings are caused by the repeated displacement of the tendon of the peroneus longus muscle in the sheath in which it slides behind the external malleolus. All the marvels about which we once heard so much are the result of slight of hand, slight of foot, or slight of tongue. Some months ago a Mr. Hume created quite a sensation in the English metropolis with tricks of this nature. Sir D. Brewster was present on one of the occa-

sions, and the following is his report of the matter:—

"The spirits were here very active, prolific in raps of various intonations, making long tables heavy or light at command; tickling knees, male or female, but always on the side next the medium; tying knots in handkerchiefs drawn from the table, and afterwards tossed upon it; and prompting Mr Hume, when he had thrown himself into a trance, to a miserable paraphrase on the Lord's Prayer. During these experiments I made some observations worthy of notice. On one occasion the spirit gave a strong affirmative answer to a question by three raps, unusually loud. They proceeded from a part of the table exactly within the reach of Mr Hume's foot, and I distinctly saw three movements in his loins, simultaneous with the three raps. In these experiments all hands are supposed to be upon the table. One of the earliest experiments was with an accordion, held below the table, in Mr Hume's right hand. It played, very imperfectly, two tunes asked for by the company. During the succeeding experiment Mr Hume continued to hold the accordion, as we thought, but he might have placed it on the ground, and had his right hand free for any sub-tubular purpose. A handkerchief had been previously taken down to be knotted, and the fact had been forgotten, amid the interest of other experiments; a knot could not be tied by feet, nor, we think, by the one hand of Mr Hume, below the table. The handkerchief, however, was, to our great surprise, after half-an-hour's absence, tossed upon the table with five knots, dexterously executed. How were those knots tied, unless by spirits? During the half-hour's absence of the handkerchief, Mr Hume, three or four times, gave a start, and looked wildly at the company, saying, 'Dear me, how the spirits are troubling me, and at the same time putting down his left hand as if to push away his tonometers, or soothe the limb round which they had been clustering. He had, therefore, both his hands beneath the table for a sufficient time to tie the five marvellous knots.

One great consolation to the lover of truth and soberness is that error and false science will sooner or later be exposed, and scorned even by its ancient votaries. Mesmerism has lost caste long ago; phrenology is fast following suit. None but madmen, and "Fowlers and Wells" and Combe's will accept as truth those noxious moral exhalations that go under the varying nomenclature of Electro-biology, phreno-mesmerism, "human-electricity" clairvoyance, necromancy, second sight, and such other "mysterious" agencies.

It is remarkable how wise and learned men are sometimes made the dupes of the silliest scientific heresies. Dr. Hitchcock, for example, believes in what is called the odyle principle, a principle which (like attraction) is supposed to pervade all bodies terrestrial and celestial. This "force" was "discovered" by Baron Reichenbach (a noble German, of course), and he confirmed his discovery by experiments on females under thirty years of age subject to "catalepsy, palsy and other nervous and spasmodic affections"—persons that could see a stream of light issuing from magnets, crystals, pieces of iron, as well as balls of fire in old church yards. The Baron has several disciples both in Great Britain and the United States. The most prominent are Dr. Gregory, of the University of Edinburgh, and Dr. Hitchcock of Amherst College. His odyle theory has been characterized by the foremost savant of Scotland as "a nebulous dream overhanging the bright region of physical truth."—Most of the heresies we have mentioned above being now virtually defunct we are curious to know what sort of sceptre will be wielded by their next successor; for if we may judge the future by the past a new popular mania may be expected shortly.

Boston Correspondence.

To the Editor of the Presbyterian Witness. I need scarcely describe the appearance of Boston, its narrow and winding streets, its courts and places and avenues, which require Ariadne's thread to enable the stranger to penetrate, or after he has found his way in, to retrace his way out; its dingy brick buildings, its contracted and crowded side-walks. The appearance of Boston must be familiar to all the readers of the Witness; and therefore, I will dismiss this subject with the expression of my opinion that after all it is a handsome city. Many unfounded prejudices are prevalent in the Colonies about those who are sneeringly called "Yankees," and many exaggerated statements made which are mere caricatures. Swindling, lynchings, rioting, bragging, swearing, bolting their food without chewing, are some items of the black catalogue. Now this is just as true concerning yankee Boston as it is concerning impeccable Halifax. There is just as much religion and morality and propriety here as in towns in the British possessions. I will go further. I believe even, comparatively speaking, there is more vital godliness here than in many other places which I could name. There is certainly more activity and interest in the cause of religion, and more open and fearless profession. Men of wealth and standing are not ashamed of their religion, or afraid to exert themselves to advance it.

While on this subject, I cannot pass over a remarkable circumstance. I have seen at a public hotel here—an hotel crowded with boarders—social worship punctually observed morning and evening, in the parlours, and the rooms filled with decorous and apparently devout listeners. A blessing is also invoked before every meal. These are standing rules of the house. I doubt whether anything similar