

# THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.  
OFFICE—No. 3 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

ADVERTISING TERMS.—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, \$1.50 per line; 1 year \$2.50. No advertisement charged at less than five lines. No other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 1893.

MR. C. B. ROBINSON, Proprietor and Publisher of THE PRESBYTERIAN, sails from New York to-morrow for a short visit to Britain and the Continent of Europe.

AN Edinburgh professor began a sermon the other day to a large congregation of working people by saying that he would not "assume a pulpit tone." Why should any preacher "assume a pulpit tone" in addressing working men or any other kind of men? Why should there be a pulpit tone? Why not speak in a natural tone in the pulpit as well as anywhere else? How does it come that a preacher who can address any kind of an audience in an easy, pleasing, and graceful style often becomes stiff, stilted, and artificial in his manner the moment he enters the pulpit? How is it that a voice which is kept without any effort at medium pitch in conversation flies up into the upper register the moment it begins to preach? One reason is that the owner of said voice thinks there *should* be one tone for the pulpit and another for other places. Why *should* there be? Another reason is that the sermon is written, and it is no easy problem to deliver written composition in an easy spoken style. A third reason is that the preacher is earnest and desires to be forcible, and has never mastered the problem of being forcible without being high and loud. The preacher who has got himself delivered from the "pulpit tone" and can be forcible without being loud, has accomplished a good deal.

THIS question is often asked by parents and Sabbath school teachers. "Should children be taught the 'Shorter Catechism, though too young to understand the doctrines of the catechism?" Most undoubtedly they should. To have their minds stored and strengthened with the truth contained in that magnificent compendium of theology—the best the world ever saw—is a great thing. In time the young folks will know the meaning if they know the letter. Than Doctor Ormiston there is no better authority on this subject. The Doctor is a living example of what the catechism does for a boy. Here is his own testimony:

But I cannot think otherwise than that a loss is sustained when a catechism is not accurately recited and taught, and passages from the Word of God, more extensive than one or two verses, are not committed to memory. I am glad that my memory in childhood was strengthened and filled with the "Mother's Catechism," the "Shorter Catechism," the Psalms of David, the Sermon on the Mount, the entire Gospel by John, and the Book of Proverbs, as also with many excellent hymns.

Sabbath school training that does not embrace the "Shorter Catechism" is apt to produce young people of the mollusc variety. They grow up "soft and inarticulate" in theology and character. A Presbyterian Sabbath school that has got too far "advanced" to use the catechism should be called upon to show why it should exist. In fact, it ought to make an apology for being found in existence.

It seems now to be generally admitted that there is a sad falling off in church attendance in the New England States. Even as brave and hopeful a journal as the "Christian at Work" says "that there is a manifold decline in church attendance throughout New England is assuredly true." Our contemporary also remarks that "what is wanted is to know the cause of the declension." That is what we want to know exactly. New England is very near Canada. We are affected by every great movement among our neighbours. The same causes that diminish church attendance in New England will be in operation here very soon if we do nothing to counteract them. The "Christian at Work" mentions two causes—"toy churches" and "essay-preaching." By "toy churches" are meant churches erected in towns and villages

where they are not needed. With all the Presbyterians and Methodists united into two great bodies we should not be much in danger from "toy churches" in Canada. And anyway it is not very easy to see how too many churches keep people from going to church. The second cause—"essay-preaching"—we commend to the consideration of our college authorities. We rather suspect that a more influential cause than either is lack of parental authority. The young New Englander was allowed to go to any church or meeting of any kind on the Sabbath, and when he grew up he elected not to go to church at all. The same cause is at work in too many places in Canada.

## HISTORY REPEATING ITSELF.

THERE is a degree of fascination in anticipating the future. Not in the indulgence of baseless dreams, nor in pretensions of prophetic science, but in calm, sober reflection on probabilities not by any means remote. Forecasting horoscopes is the trifling occupation of the charlatan; reading the signs of the times is a duty resting on all who seek to serve their generation in accordance with the Divine will. "Wisdom and knowledge are the stability of thy times." The future lies latent in the present. The ordinary observer of events cannot fail to notice a striking likeness of the closing years of the present century to the one that preceded it. Popular unrest prepared the way throughout France for the dreadful outburst that levelled the Bastille with the ground, blazed into fierceness in the Reign of Terror, and culminated in the military despotism of Napoleon I. It was a time of rampant scepticism. Rousseau and Voltaire paved the way for Diderot and D'Alembert, and the French aristocracy and the mass of the people were saturated with infidelity. They had lost faith in God, and the future seemed desperate. We hear much sentimental nonsense at present of reconstructed morality apart from religion. But, in the lives of many of the French philosophes of the eighteenth century, when religion went morality did not stay behind. More of them than Mirabeau "swallowed all the formulas."

We have in these days the same open disregard of religion that characterized the closing years of the eighteenth century. Those that assume to be specially wise and learned look down with lofty contempt on people who profess belief in revealed religion. To be religious now-a-days is considered by the superfine apostles of sweetness and light as an evidence of imbecility and want of culture. Much of our current literature is tinged with a cold and heartless scepticism. It is reflected in the newspapers and seeks vent for itself in varied spheres of public life. It would be the merest affectation to suppose that speculative infidelity was comparatively harmless. It inevitably leads to injurious results. It takes from life its grandest purpose and meaning. A materialistic creed degrades those who cherish it. An elevated morality does not spring from a "gospel of dirt."

To the great struggling mass who have no time for philosophic scepticism, life presents only the sternest aspects. They see the great and powerful bent only on selfish aggrandizement, and luxuriating in lavish pleasure. They see gigantic monopolies rendering the pursuit of happiness increasingly difficult for the great army of toilers. If life is not sweetened by the realities of the Christian faith, if the divine hope and charity are banished from the bosoms of the common people, need we wonder if sullen resentments take their place. An anarchic spirit is abroad. It is not specially confined to any one nation just at present. In Russia Nihilism is rampant, destructive, and fiercely in earnest. Fenianism has its nursing ground in the United States, and seeks to terrorize Great Britain. Communism is muttering its maledictions in Paris, Lyons and Marseilles. Socialism is on the alert in Berlin and Vienna, and the Black Hand menaces Spain. Anarchists have a terrible weapon in dynamite. What is to be the outcome of all these ominous forces? Will they gradually disappear and leave no evil effects behind? Or are they the presage of impending revolutions destined to shake the nations? A reconstruction there certainly will be. The storm will pass away. Faith and freedom will emerge from the ordeal and sweep into the younger day. God will continue to speak to men and they will hear his voice. Amid all the changes of this restless epoch there is one truth we can yet hold fast, "The Word of the Lord endureth for ever."

## MINISTERS AND CHURCHES.

MR. JOHN MITCHELL, elder, Bradford, who is about to migrate to the North-West, has been presented with an address and various substantial tokens of esteem by his co-workers in the congregation and Sabbath school.

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Whitby, recently held in Bowmanville, the matter of erecting a new Church in the 7th concession of Pickering was taken up. Delegates from the congregation of St. John's were heard. After a short discussion it was decided to appoint a deputation, consisting of Rev. Messrs. Roger (Ashburn), Carmichael (Brooklin), Crozier (Port Perry), with Mr. McCulloch, elder, to visit the congregation at an early date, and confer with them regarding the site for the new building. The cost of the building is to be \$1,000—\$1,000 of which has been already raised.

A SACRED concert and organ recital were given last week in Erskine Church, Toronto, under the auspices of the congregational Young People's Association. The Rev. Mr. Smith presided. The proceedings were opened with praise and prayer. Miss Corlett gave the first number, "The Way to Paradise," which was followed by a duet, "Hope Beyond," pleasingly rendered by Miss Scott and Mr. Lye. Mrs. Beard sang "Come unto Me" with good effect. A solo by Mr. J. H. Dennison, a reading by Mr. J. K. Cameron, and a solo by Prof. Bohner brought the first part of the programme to a close. In the second Miss Scott gave an excellent and effective rendering of "The Better Land." Mrs. Beard, as her number in this part, gave "Sweet Spirit Hear My Prayer." In a melodious and pleasing manner, Mrs. Robins sang, "Consider the Lilies." Solos by Miss Rees and Mr. Lye, excellently rendered finished, a rich and varied programme. Several choruses were sung with fine effect. Mr. Fisher, by reason of sudden illness, was unable to be present, but Dr. Clarke, of Jarvis Street Baptist Church, contributed greatly to the enjoyment of the evening. He is a fit interpreter of high class music. Mr. Bayley is to be congratulated on the complete success that crowned his efforts in the production of an admirable entertainment. A large and appreciative audience were in attendance. The proceeds were for the Sabbath school.

PRESBYTERY OF WHITBY.—This Presbytery met at Bowmanville on the 17th April. There was a full attendance of ministerial members. The first session was occupied with the report of the Committee on the State of Religion, followed with a conference on that subject. The session records of Dunbarton, Newtonville, Kendall, Ashburn, and St. Andrew's, Pickering, were examined and attested as carefully and correctly kept. The treasurer gave in his report, also the Financial Committee, showing a balance on hand of \$100. Commissioners from St. John's congregation, Pickering, informed the Presbytery that they purpose building a new church this summer and would like to appropriate \$1,000 of the Endowment Farm Fund for this purpose. The Presbytery appointed a committee to meet with the congregation and confer with them as to the best place for building, and agree to refer to the Synod the question if it is competent for the Presbytery to grant leave to alienate that fund. Messrs. A. Leslie, S. H. Eastman, J. A. Carmichael, and W. M. Roger, ministers, and Messrs. Robt. McFarlane, F. Blakely, P. Nesbit, and J. Madill elders, were appointed commissioners to the General Assembly. The Rev. Dr. King, of Toronto, was nominated as Moderator of the General Assembly. The Sabbath school report was read and adopted and sent forward to the Synod's Committee. A conference on Sabbath schools will be held at the next quarterly meeting. Mr. Spenser's reasons for protest and appeal were read and ordered to be transmitted, and Messrs. Drummond and Little were appointed to prepare answers. Messrs. Eastman, Carmichael, and Steele were appointed to receive the returns on temperance and prepare a report for the Synod's Committee. Messrs. Leslie, Eastman, and Fraser were appointed to confer with the Rev. John Smith as to the canvass of this Presbytery in behalf of Knox College Endowment Fund. Other matters of less interest were disposed of, and the Presbytery adjourned to meet at Port Perry on the 3rd Tuesday in July.—A. A. Drummond, Pres. Clerk.