

# The Canada Presbyterian

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 25TH, 1896.

Thou Lord, has made me glad through Thy work. 3 will triumph in the works of Thy hands.—Ps. xcii. 4.

Give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever.—Ps. cvii. 1.

WE are pleased to be able to announce to our many readers that Rev. Principal Caven, who for some days past has been confined to his house, was on Monday able to drive down to the College, although not yet allowed to resume his work.

IAN MACLAREN says that the only character in his last book drawn from life is the one the critics unite in describing as "impossible." Mark Twain once said that a critical audience applauded him all through his lecture until he came to the first truth and then they hissed him.

DR. ROBERTSON NICOLL of the *British Weekly*, the discoverer of Ian Maclaren, Barrie, Lyall and other brilliant writers, has just made a discovery that eclipses all his former efforts. Writing to his journal from this side of the water he says that "Americans are modest in their views about the future of their country!"

THE most discouraging feature in Canadian national life to-day is the rush that is made for every small office in the Dominion or in any of the Provinces, and often made by men who a few years ago would not have taken the position as a gift. Either Canadians are losing their self-reliance or Canada has come to the verge of commercial ruin.

DR. MARCUS DODS is rather severe on Ian Maclaren's last book. One of his criticisms is that the "raciness is constantly on the edge of farce" and sometimes goes over the edge. There is no hard and fast line between raciness and farce. That which seems very broad to the severe taste of Dr. Dods or of Principal Caven may be quite pleasant reading for some other fairly good men.

THE amazing hold that ecclesiastical and religious questions have on the Scotch mind may be learned from the fact that Ian Maclaren, Barrie and Crockett have got on the highest rung in literature by writing on such questions. May not Scotland's influence be accounted for in part by the training Scotchmen get in connection with the Church. The discussion of Church topics may not always be profitable, and certainly it is not always pleasant, but wrestling with Church problems seems to give men more brain power than dealing with problems of any other kind.

FOR years after confederation Sir John Macdonald was opposed to making any change in the arrangement by which the churches name a Thanksgiving Day. One reason he gave was that the Dominion is a large country with varied interests and while a day of thanksgiving might be the right thing in one place a day of humiliation might be the proper thing in another. Did the hon. gentleman see that a day appointed by the Government would soon lapse into a mere national holiday?

"DOLLAR WHEAT" would help greatly to wipe out the deficits in our church accounts. Increased consecration on the part of the membership would help still more. But with business as it now is, or soon will be, and the spiritual life of the Church as it now is, there would not be a dollar of debt on any scheme if all the people contributed to the support of the schemes. The Church courts meet and seem to be willing to do anything rather than grapple with the gaps in the financial columns of the Blue Book.

THE religious journals on the other side of the line are making pathetic appeals to their readers asking them, now that the election is over, to resume their church work and give some attention to the salvation of souls. It would seem as if all religious work had stopped during the excitement. We have a good deal of politics to the acre in Canada but beyond the priests in Quebec and the professional "workers" very few people allow an election to interfere with their church duties. Nobody could tell by the appearance of a congregation the Sabbath before polling that an election was going on.

WE read flaming reports of a great work that is said to be going on in some of the churches of Philadelphia and New York. The list of ministers, evangelists, professional singers and specialists of various kinds that have been asked to take part in Philadelphia almost fills a column. If the Presbyterian millionaires of New York and Philadelphia would put down a few hundred thousands to undo the "cut" that has been made in the salaries of the Home missionaries in the West, sensible people might conclude that the movement in these cities means something more than such movements often mean.

A LARGE deputation waited upon the Ontario Government last week and suggested some changes in the license law. Most of the changes if adopted may be useful, but they all proceed upon the assumption that the seller of liquor is wholly responsible for the evils of intemperance. A very ordinary knowledge of Canadian society should convince any fair man that no small part, and the very worst part of the evils is caused by men who lead young men and weak men into drinking places and induce them to drink. If Mr. Hardy in his new bill can strike a blow at these seducers, he will do much more effective work than by merely changing the hours during which liquor may be legally sold.

Oh that men would praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men.—Ps. cvii. 8.

## THANKSGIVING.

THANKSGIVING DAY is a glad season for all and should therefore be a welcome one. It is again upon us with its many happy associations, and memories of joy and gladness and its call for devout feeling and gratitude to the Giver of all good. Thanksgiving Day does not by any means signify that this exercise is to be confined or all compressed into this one day. It ought to be, and in every right constituted mind thanksgiving is the permanent note, one of the fundamental and all-pervading laws of life. The appointment and observance of a national day only furnishes an occasion for a definite and visible expression of national thanksgiving, provides a culminating point for the thanksgiving of the whole people to rise to.

The sense of dependence is universal, and so also is the consciousness of support and providential care, from some quarter external to ourselves, and there is thus provided in the heart of every rational being a ground for the grateful acknowledgment of and thanksgiving for kindnesses bestowed upon us. While even the lowest in the scale of human beings are capable of and do exercise the feeling of gratitude and thankfulness, it partakes of a higher and nobler character according as any people rise in the scale of being, in intelligence or right and especially of Christian feeling. In the Christian heart thanksgiving rises up spontaneously and rejoicingly, and assumes its highest form, corresponding indeed closely to that of those lofty intelligences who stand always in the Divine presence, and all whose service is one long and glad service of thanksgiving.

What a mighty advance it marks in a people when, from blind groping after some being whom to make the object of their thanksgiving, they have risen to the clear and joyful recognition of one living, pure, personal Being who is felt and known as Creator, Provider, and above all Father, not of one people, race or nation only, but of the whole human family. The feeling of thankfulness is greatly deepened when this great Being is regarded not simply as Creator and Provider in a general sense, but also as deeply and minutely interested in men as His children, and in guiding and watching over them with wise and tender care. This is the Christian doctrine and gives a special character to the thanksgiving of a Christian people. It is not by blind chance or according to the action of some unreasoning law that we are provided for, that our life proceeds as it does from day to day, but because we are the children of God, and are the objects of His continual care and wisdom and love. And the thought that this care and love extend beyond our present physical wants, and this brief life, and in Christ reach to that higher life which the Christian lives, and to the future which he hopes and expects to spend with God, makes his thanksgiving service one of the highest of all acts of worship, like to that of those who are even now in the presence of God, and praise, and serve Him day and night without ceasing.

If, however, for the present we confine our attention to national thanksgiving for national mercies, they are great and abundant. Without looking abroad and comparing or contrasting our circumstances with those of other people or nations, as the key to and the condition of the enjoying of so many other blessings, the freedom of our people from any prevailing epidemic, the enjoyment by so large a proportion of them of health, is a plain and manifest cause for thanksgiving. It is commonplace, we know, to say this, but is it not true and a thing to be thankful for, that our best mercies are commonplace in that they are within the reach of and enjoyed by all? The salubrity of our climate and our growing knowledge of the laws of health afford ground for hope that the fact we have mentioned will long and often furnish cause for thanksgiving as the day annually comes round.

Again, as in so many former years, our land has yielded an abundance of food for man and beast, so that anything like a large class of our people suffering from want needs not be feared. And the fact of this abundance not only of food, but all the good things of life, being so generally and uniformly distributed amongst us, so that there is as little almost as we can hope to have of social discontent and inequality, is indeed a ground for thankfulness. We are in this way spared and we may long desire to be from a cause of national danger now so rife in many lands. The dawning, according to general opinion, of what we call "better times," and the prospect opening so fast of new and all but exhaustless sources of wealth in our mines, are of their kind just causes for thankfulness to Him who has in all the respects alluded to given us such a goodly heritage.

Next to favourable physical conditions as matters for sincere and devout thanksgiving, we are placed in equally favorable circumstances for social, civil and political well-being. These touch a higher part of our nature and give ground for still greater thankfulness. Very much depends upon these for the enjoyment of life in its nobler forms, and for making a people who shall take a worthy place among the nations. Considering the difficulties which beset our young nation, some of which, of a racial and religious kind, are formidable enough, the comparatively small amount of friction, the smooth and harmonious working upon the whole