

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, *Proprietor*
Office—No. 5 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 advertisements charged at less than 4 lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 16, 1884.

THE *Christian-at-Work* exercises itself in this way about the falling powers of the American physique. —

What now is the great American disease?—Nervous prostration! This is comprehensive of a multitude of ills,—such as insomnia, loss of appetite, weakened digestion, incapacity for continuity of thought, and often for cohesive thought at all, irritability of temper, susceptibility of any kind of excitement, depression of spirits, hopeless views of life, general sense of weariness, tendencies to suicide, to insanity, and to shocking forms of crime.

With the exception to the "shocking forms of crime," we fear the foregoing humble catalogue of ailments applies to Canada as well as to our neighbours. Most of the crimes committed here are committed we think by criminals whose nerves are strong. The other ailments are too common and are brought about by the same cause—an insane desire to get rich suddenly. What we call "push" is too often push toward the grave or the lunatic asylum. Would not a good supply of British muscle and British nerve power be better for Canada in the end than the progress we make at the expense of health, bodily and mental? Is it not possible to make progress as a nation without the nervous prostration?

THE four worst men in the United States just now are Blaine, Logan, Cleveland, and Hendricks. They were bad boys. They were bad young men. They are very bad now and they will grow worse every day until the beginning of November. Their fathers and mothers and grandfathers and grandmothers and uncles and cousins and aunts were bad. It will be a wonder if some of the party organs do not discover that Mrs. Cleveland is a very unworthy woman. The trifling fact that Cleveland is a confirmed bachelor is neither here nor there in the matter. "Party exigencies" may require that Mrs. Cleveland shall be described as not quite up to the standard that Cæsar set before his better half. These four men were fairly respectable citizens a few weeks ago, but they have been nominated for the highest and second highest positions in the great American Republic. Hence their fall. It is rather astonishing that one of the most enlightened and highly civilized as well as most Christianized nations should nominate four such characters for these high positions, but astonishing things happen in politics every day. The temptation to throw a few stones at our neighbours is very strong, but there is so much crystal in the structure of our Canadian House that we don't dare to shy even a pebble across the lake.

A HOLIDAY is a good thing. Give your minister a holiday. It pays a congregation to do so. If he is the right kind of a minister he will come back with fresh energy for his work, and begin the battle again with renewed vigour. There will be music in his voice and fervour and freshness in his sermons when he comes back with his nervous system toned up, and the whole man, moral, intellectual and spiritual, in good working order. Most earnestly do we urge our friends in the country to give their minister a good long vacation. City and town ministers generally have a holiday every year. Their congregations seldom think of asking their ministers to work more than eleven months out of twelve. Such congregations know that it pays to give the minister a rest, and they govern themselves accordingly. But we fear that many ministers who labour in rural districts are not so fortunate. Too many of them have to plod on wearily year after year without a vacation. If any man needs a rest it is the minister who preaches three times a day, and drives from ten to twenty miles every Sabbath, on all kinds of roads, and in all kinds of weather. Besides all this driving and preaching perhaps he leads the singing and superintends one of his

Sabbath schools. Give the good man a holiday, and give him fifty or a hundred dollars to pay expenses. A dollar a family is nothing to the family but it is a great thing to him. We hope to hear of scores of our ministers in rural congregations going down the St. Lawrence or to the Northern Lakes next month. THE PRESBYTERIAN wishes them all a good time.

IT is not reasonable to expect that a minister should preach much during his vacation. True. Nor is it reasonable to suppose that three or four hundred passengers should lounge away an entire Sabbath on a steamboat without any service while half a dozen ministers are on board. Nor is it reasonable or right that a hundred guests should spend the Sabbath day in a summer hotel without any service, while most of them are professing Christians, and a few of them are ministers. As a rule tourists welcome a service, and are grateful for it. Ministers should always be ready to preach the Word in such places. The best kind of a sermon for a summer resort is a short one, full of Gospel truth. We have heard of some sad mistakes made by ministers at these places. The audience is chiefly composed of judges, distinguished lawyers, prominent merchants, leading men in all walks of life. Knowing this, the preacher sometimes takes a sermon on the beauties of nature, or gives them an elaborate discussion on the "infinite," or the "absolute," or the "subjective" or "objective," or metaphysical jargon of some kind or other. He thinks he must be very learned because he has an audience of distinguished citizens. It is a huge mistake, and sometimes the distinguished men don't hesitate to say so. What the people want is a good, rich Gospel sermon that their souls can feed on. A minister who lectures such people on the evidences of Christianity, or rattles the dry bones of metaphysics in their intelligent faces, does not know his business. Brethren, give these sea-side visitors the Gospel. That is what they need.

THE COUNCIL AND THE CONSENSUS.

AT the meeting of the Presbyterian Council in Philadelphia, the question of formulating a consensus of doctrine held by the Reformed Presbyterian Churches throughout the world was considered. The debate resulted in the appointment of a general committee, divided into three sections, one embracing the American, another the Continental, and a third the British Churches. These subdivisions were to meet and decide on an answer to the question: "Do you think it desirable that a consensus of the Reformed Confessions is required by the constitution of the Alliance to be defined, and in what sense, and to what extent?" The American section of the Committee, after careful consideration, answered that they favoured the formulating a consensus of the Reformed confessions. The British section also devoted their attention to the subject, but they reached a different conclusion. They agreed that it would not be possible to frame such a formula as could be applied practically to the objects of the Alliance. They could not use it as a test to determine the reception or rejection of churches seeking to be received by the Alliance, but they were of opinion that if a general creed could be framed to which the various churches would agree, important ends might be served. The Continental branch of the Committee had been unable to meet, but those of its members who had been communicated with favoured the proposal to formulate a creed.

The conclusions submitted to the Council by the committee were as follows. (1) It is not indispensable to the Alliance as an organization that the consensus should at present be further defined. (2) The Committee fully grants that there are advantages which the defining of the consensus would secure as working out the ends for which the organization exists. (3) The advantages which might arise from a satisfactory definition of the consensus seem to the Committee for the present outweighed by its risks and difficulties. The report was presented by Principal Cairns, who concluded with a feeling tribute to the memory and worth of the late Dr. J. J. van Oosterzee, of Utrecht, a member of the Committee.

After considerable discussion a motion by Principal Caven to the effect that the Council, without committing itself to all the reasons by which the committee reaches its conclusions, adopts them, but considers it inexpedient at present to attempt a definition of their doctrines as a consensus of the Reformed Churches,

was with formal additions carried unanimously. Professor Calderwood in an able speech proposed that the Council declare that it does not desire to have a consensus of the Reformed creeds either for the purpose of affording a test for the admission of churches into the General Presbyterian Alliance or for framing a creed for the Alliance, but the Council agrees to declare its conviction that a formal statement of a consensus of the Reformed creeds would render great service to the cause of Christian truth, and would tend to unite under still closer relations all the Reformed Churches organized under the Presbyterian order.

On this motion there was an interesting discussion in which several of the representative men in the Presbyterian Church took part. All of them seemed to feel the responsibility resting on them in relation to so delicate and difficult a subject. Dr. Hodge did not favour Dr. Calderwood's proposal. Dr. Schaff, though not a member of the Council, but being a member of the Committee, was invited to speak during the debate. He made a powerful historical appeal on behalf of the proposal to formulate a consensus. The last speech of importance in this discussion was by Dr. Herbert Storey, of Rosemeath. Being the ablest representative of the Broad Church party in the Church of Scotland, he spoke on their behalf. He said that such a consensus would be either equivalent to those by which they were already bound, or it would not be equivalent to it. If equivalent to it, then they did not require it, and if not equivalent to it it would not be legitimate for them to adopt it. His fear, however, that the adoption of a consensus would be subsequently used as an engine of theological oppression by some future Council, was the principal reason why he opposed it. It might be used for the repression of theological independence and theological liberty. Professor Calderwood's proposal was rejected by a large majority.

We hear a great amount of fault-finding and not a little severe denunciation, of creeds just now, but it is no easy task to overturn them, neither is it an easy matter to construct one. This attempt of the Presbyterian Council might at first sight appear to be a very simple matter. Here were a number of churches holding substantially the same doctrines, governed by a discipline common to them all, and agreeing as to Church polity. The formulation of a general creed to which all could subscribe, if necessary, might be easily accomplished. Still more so might this appear when it is remembered that the Council neither possesses nor exercises any legislative powers or authority. Its conclusions have no binding force. A creed emanating from such a body would simply be speculative. Whatever value such a consensus would have had as exhibiting the substantial doctrinal agreement of the various churches comprehended in the alliance, it could be accepted or repudiated at will by any or all of them. So that the decision come to by the Council will generally be regarded as the wisest that could be reached in present circumstances. The discussion and the decision arrived at show plainly that it is easier to object to a creed than to make one.

NEEDED REFORMS.

ONE of the functions of Grand Juries is to visit the various institutions where those convicted of criminal offences are undergoing punishment. These periodical inspections are valuable. So long as they continue and so long as the government inspectors faithfully discharge their duties, neither great abuses nor negligence in prison management can long remain unknown. The dreadful disclosures recently made in connection with some of the prisons and charitable institutions in the United States show too plainly that the ghastly state of things existing in European prisons revealed by John Howard might easily reappear were it not for the enlightened vigilance exercised by inspectors and grand juries. The same dreadful apathy does not now exist. Christian influences have made men more merciful. The claims of humanity are more fully realized than they were a century ago, but absorption in business so occupies people's attention, that unqualified and selfish prison officials could easily exercise a cruel despotism over the unhappy beings committed to their charge were it not for the periodic visits of grand juries and inspectors.

In Canadian prisons and penitentiaries no really grave scandals have for many years emerged, but there are abuses that from time to time have been pointed out, and which in spite of the remonstrances of phil-