

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Vol. 23.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 16th, 1894.

No. 20.

Notes of the Week.

Write to the Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Co., 5 Jordan Street, Toronto, enclosing \$1 and receive THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN till 31st December, 1894. For the family circle a better investment could not be made.

Dr. McCosh, late principal of Princeton College, has in the press his last word to the public. He has now attained the ripe age of eighty-three. For half-a-century Dr. McCosh has been a prolific writer, mostly on Scriptural and metaphysical subjects. In turn he has attacked the arguments of Locke, Mill, Tyndall, Huxley, and Hume.

A determined attempt has been for some time carried on, and at last has been so far successful to make the board, or what we would call our common schools, a means of sectarian teaching. It now appears that the teachers under the London School Board are likely to rise in open revolt against the circular of the board imposing a religious test. It will be impossible to enforce that circular if only a majority of the teachers ask to be relieved from giving religious instruction till the circular is withdrawn. To take such a stand is rank mutiny, but mutiny is lawful against oppression.

We understand that the membership of the English Presbyterian Church for the past year will show an increase of 611, being 67,582, as compared with 66,971 in 1892. The membership at the date of the Union in 1870 was 51,013. The value of the church's property (now upwards of £1,600,000) has increased at a still greater ratio, whilst on the other hand the debt has diminished to such an extent that its ratio to the value of property is little more than one-fourth of what it was in 1876. It reports also the receipt in 1893, for the Synod funds, of £45,643 0s. 10d., of which £19,858 19s. 7d. was for Foreign Missions, £5,659 15s. 11d. for Widows and Orphans, and £4,133 5s. 5d. for the college.

The thirteenth World's Conference of Young Men's Christian Associations and the jubilee celebration of the foundation of these institutions is arranged to take place in London in June. Upward of 2,000 delegates from different countries will attend, and for their convenience the proceedings will be conducted in English, French, German, and other European languages. An effort is being made to secure an inaugural service in Westminster Abbey. The Archbishop of Canterbury and the presidents of the Wesleyan and Congregational denominations have signified their approval of the scheme. America and the societies of Christian endeavorers are to be largely represented.

In the course of his speech at St. James's Hall, London, the Prime Minister, enumerating the good deeds of the London County Council, said: "There is one other point on which the London County Council has perhaps done, in the opinion of many, and in the opinion of most, as much for the health and comfort of the people as even in the cases that I have cited. It has refused to continue seventeen liquor licenses which it has obtained in the course of the acquisition of property for improvements, although those seventeen licenses represented a large sum of money, and therefore a great responsibility for the London County Council. The Council never shrank from what it thought right, and its action has been entirely approved."

The conferences on religious subjects at this Synod of Toronto and Kingston were opened by the reading of papers prepared by ministers appointed beforehand. As laymen very properly were appointed to preside at these conferences, would it not be now in order that a part, if not all the papers read at the opening of the conference should be assigned to laymen, if, as was remarked by someone, elders are laymen. It would be a good thing for ministers, who compose five-sixths, if not

more of those present, to have the subjects discussed brought before them from the point of view of a layman or of the pew, rather than that of the pulpit, with which they are all so familiar, and laymen also could, we are sure, be consulted to good purpose as to subjects suitable for discussion with profit both to ministers and people on such occasions.

Meetings of Synod have been very much to the front during last week, those of Toronto and Kingston and Montreal and Ottawa both meeting at the same time, the former in Toronto and the latter in Carleton Place. In the case of the former it has become the custom, one which might with profit be imitated by all the Synods, to spend from the evening of Monday until that of Tuesday in conference on topics directly connected with Christian life and work. On this occasion the new departure was inaugurated of having these conferences presided over by elders well known as taking an active interest in the church's work. The three elders who presided on this instance were, Messrs. John A. Patterson, R. S. Gourlay and Hamilton Cassels, chairman of the Foreign Mission Committee.

The papers or addresses with which the subjects for consideration in the Synodical conference were introduced were all excellent and gave evidence of being the result of much care and thought. Though we doubt not the committee which had the matter in charge gave it due consideration and did what they considered the best thing, we would yet submit that, if it lies in their power to make a slight change next year, it would be of advantage for them to suggest that it would be well if the opening addresses were shortened somewhat. It is worthy of consideration whether, instead of being so long and exhaustive in a sense of a subject, the opening addresses on such an occasion should not be briefer, and rather suggest thoughts or ideas which might be subjects of conference, and taken up by other speakers, than attempt fully and minutely to go over the whole ground of any particular subject of conference.

Arrangements have been made in connection with Chicago University for a summer quarter of twelve weeks of study and lectures during which the regulations of the University will be carried out. The life of the University with its libraries and laboratories will be enjoyed. In speaking of it, President Coulter said the provision for this quarter of the year's work has been made full and complete. During the twelve weeks, two hundred distinct courses of instruction will be offered in thirty departments. The number of instructors during the summer quarter will be over eighty. The salaries of the quarter will be more than \$60,000. The experiment is undertaken in no half-hearted way. It remains to be seen whether that great constituency upon which the future of our country is so dependent, the constituency of teachers, will find it possible and think it desirable to avail themselves of the privileges thus proffered.

One of the recommendations in the report of the Committee on Temperance became the occasion of a somewhat lengthy and very important debate, in an educative point of view, being raised owing to an objection to it made by the Rev. D. J. Macdonnell. It was to the effect that the ministers of the Synod recommend their people in looking for members of parliament, laying aside all party feelings, to look out and vote only for men who would support prohibition. This was at once, and wisely, we think, objected to by Mr. Macdonnell along with many others. The false position into which this might lead many in their individual capacity, who are strong prohibitionists even, was clearly and forcibly pointed out, as well as the wrong position it would lead the church into, and the recommendation was amended for one that was practically unanimous. We know of no body of men who would more promptly and more indignantly resent being told how to vote than the ministers of our church, and apart from all other and

more serious considerations, it appears not a little surprising that a committee should recommend ministers to do that towards others which they would not submit to have done towards themselves.

The annual report of the Edinburgh Free Breakfast Mission is interesting reading. The object of the mission, as is well known, is to provide a free breakfast on Sabbath mornings to the poorest and most degraded classes in the city of Edinburgh, while at the same time bringing them under the influence of the gospel. It is now twenty years since this mission was started, and during all that time not a single Sabbath has passed without a free breakfast being provided to a weekly average of over 900 poor men, women, and children. A gospel meeting is held at the same time, and much good and lasting work has been done by this means. Other branches of evangelical work are simultaneously carried on, such as mothers' meetings, temperance meetings, lodging-house visitation, Bible classes, and sewing classes. The children also are not overlooked, and there is a strong and thriving Sunday school and girls' club in connection with the mission. There is also a flourishing Band of Hope and a well-stocked library. The mission send out no collectors, but leave it to the goodwill of their numerous friends in Edinburgh and elsewhere to remit the needed funds.

It is interesting to observe in a Synod or Assembly the different kinds of subjects that interest and bring to the front different men, and there are only a few who appear equally interested and ready for all kinds of subjects. With some, indeed with many, it is the "State of Religion," others it is Temperance, with yet others it is Sunday Schools and so on all around the circle. But it is to be noted, and what is that principle or feeling in man that calls it into notice? that whenever anything arises that awakens combative feeling, or by which men are ranged one against another the interest awakened is apparently both most general as well as most keen. This was seen in the Synod in the case of the appeal in the Keady case against the action of the Presbytery of Owen Sound. Instantly upon this case being called new voices were heard in the court and new men rose to their feet upon points of order, and questions of church law, and contending for fair play now on the one side and now on the other. As it was long ago, so is it still, and so will it be, offences must come, but it is impossible not to regret that so much in human nature that is painful to see and hear nearly always in such circumstances comes to light.

Mr. J. K. Macdonald, in his address to the Synod on the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund, said some very plain things to his clerical brethren as to why that particular scheme of our church has not made more rapid progress. Its importance no one can deny and yet it is found to be most difficult and slow work to raise the amount of \$200,000 authorized by the Assembly. Mr. Macdonald plainly told his ministerial brethren that the blame lay chiefly with themselves, and especially with the younger portion of them, who, having been born and brought up under more fortunate circumstances for doing their work, do not know the hardships under which their fathers of a generation ago served the church and did not now in their age, feebleness and pecuniary straits sympathize with them as they might and ought to do, and accordingly did not lend that amount of assistance to it to which it is entitled. No one knows better than Mr. Macdonald the true facts of this case, and we hope that his honest words will be laid to heart by all who heard them. Loyalty to the church as a whole, as represented in its chief court, should lay it upon all as a duty to promote the interests of this fund, and a proper regard and brotherly sympathy for those who have borne so well the burden and heat of the day and have largely made our church what it is, should be especially felt by the younger ministers of the church to constitute a strong claim upon them for the utmost that they can do for the support of this fund.