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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1884.

WE have pleasure in presenting to our readers this week THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN printed entirely from new type, which has been supplied by the Canadian agency of Messrs. Miller & Richard, type founders, Edinburgh. The aim has been to make it neat and attractive. Effort has not alone been confined to its improvement mechanically. Arrangements, to be announced in due time, are now nearly completed by which the usefulness, efficiency and value of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN will be greatly enhanced. It will be our endeavour from time to time to make such improvements as will enable us to retain a first place in the ranks of religious journalism. Fidelity to the Church whose best interests it seeks to promote, will characterize it in the future as it has done in the past. We can, with increasing confidence, bespeak the hearty aid of our numerous readers and friends generally, throughout the Church, to obtain for it the increased circulation its merits deserve.

THE issue of the Sabbath-school Hymnal has been unavoidably delayed beyond the time announced, but we learn that it is already printed, and will be forthcoming in a few weeks.

WHAT course of reading have you marked out for this winter? This question concerns every young man and young woman in the country. Amidst the thousands of books that are within the reach of the majority of our young people, it would be nonsense to tell them what to read. Each one must select for himself but he should read something—something good. "No time to read," reply a thousand voices. You have all the time there is. There are no doubt a few people in official positions in every community, who have a large number of engagements particularly in the evenings, and also in consequence find it very difficult to engage in systematic reading. The vast majority of young people, however, could read systematically if they would. It is a good thing at the beginning of a winter to lay down certain rules in regard to the use of one's time. One evening should of course be given to the prayer meeting. Perhaps another to church work of some kind, but there should be a firm resolution to devote a certain number of hours each week to mental improvement. Piety of any kind is good but intelligent piety is usually the best. If our young people could get hold of the idea that the society of good books is better than that of middling men, it would be a great thing for themselves and for the Presbyterian Church.

"MONDAY evening I went to a Scott Act meeting. Tuesday evening I dropped in to see the Salvation Army. Wednesday evening I should have gone to our own prayer meeting but went to the special services in a neighbouring church. Thursday evening I went to a lecture, and Friday evening to a concert. This evening there is no place to go to. Next week I have an engagement for every evening." That is about the kind of soliloquy in which a good many people in towns and villages might engage on almost any Saturday evening in winter. People who live in large cities and in the country are mercifully exempt from the scourge of going to something every evening. You can't go to everything in a large city, and no one tries; in the country there is often nothing to go to. Going to some kind of a meeting every evening is a habit that brings a certain class of people in towns and villages to the verge of idiocy. They devour every-

thing in the shape of a meeting during winter, and come out in spring as lean as Pharaoh's lean kine. There is no class of people in this country half so lean intellectually and spiritually as this class who run to some meeting every night. They cannot read; they cannot think; they have no power to reflect or meditate; they are in misery except when on the jump. They are of no use to the Church and are of very little service to their own families.

IN his parting address at the meeting of the alumni of Knox College, Mr. Wilson struck the right key for a Foreign Missionary or any other Christian worker. Referring to his mission to India, Mr. Wilson said he did not feel that in going to his distant field of labour he was making any sacrifice. The word sacrifice he thought should not be used in any such connection. It was a privilege to go to India and preach the Gospel there. That is the right spirit. The man who starts to India or China, or the North-west or anywhere, whining about the sacrifice he is making in going, had much better remain at home. He is not the stuff out of which a missionary or good preacher of any kind can be made. If other people see proper to enlarge on the sacrifices our missionaries make, good and well. Let them try to lessen the sacrifice by their prayers and contributions. There is another word often used in connection with Christ's work which we think should be abolished. The odious word *burden*. How often do we hear it said at congregational and other ecclesiastical meetings "the whole burden" falls on the Session, or on the Board of Trustees, or on the Sabbath schools or on some Committee or other. Christ's work a burden? If any man really feels that his Master's work is a burden he should either lay the burden down or pray for enough grace to enable him to feel that in working for the Saviour who died for him he is enjoying a privilege. Christ's work is no burden to any man that has a large measure of love to Christ in his heart.

PRAYERS FOR THE DEAD.

It is becoming manifest that within the Church of England there are widely divergent views. Evangelicals and ritualists are further apart than are several of the different denominations from each other. It is no violation of charity to say that the logical termination of the sacerdotal movement is Romanism. It is the way by which many have reached that resting place, and by which many more will follow. One by one the dogmas discarded as unscriptural by the churches of the Reformation have been looked at first with longing eyes and then finally adopted.

One of the latest evidences of the Romeward tendency of the ritualistic movement does not come from St. Albans, Holborn, but from New Westminster, B.C. The *Churchman's Gazette* is about as full-blown an exponent of extreme ritualism as is to be found outside the regular organs of the Church of Rome. A late number contains an article on "Prayers for the Dead." Outspoken as this ritualistic publication usually is it approaches the subject of intercession for the dead in a cautious and tentative manner. The article is a reprint from the London *Standard*, founded on an expression in one of the late Princess Alice's letters in which she mentions that after the loss of her little boy, her eldest son "always prays for Freddie." While mildly deprecating criticism by saying that it does not endorse every argument or illustration, the *Churchman's Gazette* commends the views maintained. It evidently goes as far as prudence will warrant. When such views are "commended," it is evident that whenever it is supposed the people are prepared for it, there will be a bold and outspoken advocacy of prayers for the dead.

The writer in the *Standard* maintains that praying for the dead is natural, and therefore is right. It is well, however, to remember, that the natural heart is not an authoritative source of revelation as to the nature and kind of worship that God requires and will accept. It is to grace, not to nature, that we look for the highest inspiration. He then goes on to argue that the state of probation is not limited to this side of the grave, therefore prayer for the dead may be efficacious. Thus we have a little more of this peculiar kind of "natural" theology. Then if we do not pray for the dead we are in a sure way of neglecting prayer for the living,—obviously a lame and impotent conclusion. After a display of subtle sophistry as to the possibility of prayer effecting a change for the better

in the case of those who have carried their sinful natures with them into the unseen state, the writer falls back on what he conceives to be his strongest argument, which is, that forbidding prayers for the dead is to discourage prayer altogether.

It will be noticed that in all this there is not a single appeal to the teaching of sacred Scripture on the subject of prayer. The writer does not adduce either a single precept or example from the words of Christ or His apostles by which this dogma is commended expressly or by implication. Prayer for the dead being unmentioned in Scripture was sufficient ground for its rejection by the Reformers and those who came after them. There is no hint of such a thing in our Lord's intercessory prayer. It has no place in that from which Christ taught His disciples, and in essence it comprehends all prayer. Probation, after death is a mere fanciful speculation. Those who die in Christ obtain a full salvation. They do not need our prayers. With those who die impenitent we can exert no more influence. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" If it is true that we do not know how to pray as we ought, and that we should pray for things agreeable to His will, then it is clear that it would be unwarrantable presumption to pray for those who have passed from the present life.

Another good reason why evangelical churches do not pray for the spirits of the departed is that this very dogma was the fruitful source of superstition and corruption which culminated in masses for the dead and trafficking in sacred things.

Now suppose that the ritualistic section of the Anglican Church adopted this distinctive feature of Romanism, prayer for the dead, will it stop there? The successive stages will be easily reached. Purgatory is not far off. Then will come requiem masses for the repose of the souls of the dead. Ritualism is a retrograde movement. It sets its face toward the Middle Ages. Evangelical Christianity looks toward the sunrise. It takes its doctrines from the inspired Word of God, not from the dim traditions of the past. Its mode of worship is that taught by Christ and His apostles. It seeks to worship God in the beauty of holiness, not with the artificial display of a gorgeous yet materialistic symbolism.

CHRISTIAN UNION.

IN a very practical article on Christian Union, the *Globe*, among many other sensible things, says:—

It may be that the idea of absolute external unity of all the sections of the so-called Christian Church is a dream, though a very beautiful and attractive one. Still the number of sects may surely be greatly reduced, and where the outward union of ecclesiastical organization cannot be accomplished the inward union of mutual respect and affection and so far of co-operation may be secured. Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, etc., may not as yet see their way even seriously to discuss the question of an incorporation which shall embrace them all. It does not, however, follow that while waiting for this which they fear will never come, they have nothing about which they can work in harmony and with success. They can at any rate look each other in the face. They can meet each other with some measure of civility and brotherly kindness. They can recognize each other as having, however mistakenly, one common work to perform and one common end to be attained. There is plenty of work for them all without intruding upon each other. Might there then not be as much Christian feeling and charity as would lead them to respect each other's fields of labour, and so to arrange matters that some districts would not be over-supplied with the ordinances of the Gospel while others were not supplied at all? Yes, the dream is very beautiful and attractive and it is more—it is very popular just now, and that is the reason why some people write articles and make speeches about union. Everybody knows that organic union at present is an utter impossibility. Moreover it has never been shown that organic union of all bodies would be an unmixed blessing even if we had it. At all events there is no use in discussing the question at present. But why may we not, as our contemporary asks, have substantial unity as matters now stand? No basis of union could be drawn up to which all denominations would agree, but something quite as good might be done. The different denominations might carry on their work without endeavouring to make proselytes from each other. It is all very well for a few leading men in each church who have no congregation to look after and who are not in any way brought into rivalry with their neighbours to speak and write about union. They forget that hundreds of their brethren are not so favourably situated. Presbyterian pastors of small congregations who have hard work all the year round to keep some of their neighbours from stealing from congregations