

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$1.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.  
Office—No. 5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JULY 25, 1883.

THE immense importance of the Sabbath labour question in the United States is seen when we become aware that no less than one million six hundred thousand of the population are railway employees. These are employed as clerks, engineers, conductors, trainmen, trackmen, freightmen and general labourers. Besides employees thus engaged there is an army of telegraph operators and expressmen who must always work when trains are running. Without counting operators and expressmen one thirty-second part of the population are connected with the railways. The real question at issue is, shall one thirtieth part of the people have no Sabbath? We cannot lay our hands upon the figures at present, but we venture to assert that the number of railway employees in Ontario is as large in proportion to our population as the number across the lines. So far as the railways are concerned the question that may come up for our early consideration is, shall one-thirtieth of our population have no Sabbath? It must be remembered too, that no Sabbath for the one-thirtieth means no Sabbath for a very large number of others directly or indirectly connected with them.

Now is the time for people who never go to church to raise a cry against ministers for taking a vacation. Every season a certain class of writers on the other side make this cry a part of their regular business. Their stock phrase is that, "The devil never takes a vacation." This is quite true; and these writers, for the most part, furnish capital illustrations of its truth. The divine Master said, "Let us go aside and rest awhile," but the critics are not so familiar with Him as with the party who takes no vacation. What difference does it make to a man who never goes to church whether there is service or not? The same absurdity is seen in other directions. Most of the men who cry loudly about extravagance in church matters never pay a cent. If they do pay anything the amount is so wretchedly small that the expenditure complained of can make no perceptible difference to them. A considerable number who cry out about the tyranny of creeds do not believe in any creed. Men who keep no Sabbath rail about "Sabbatism." Some of these who contend most strenuously against the eternity of future punishment do not believe in future punishment at all. Any number of men who never read the Bible say it is a dull book; people who never hear sermons say sermons are dull. We hear a good deal about the inconsistencies of Christians; a volume on the inconsistencies of sinners would be a good thing.

Why is it that in contests between capital and labour capital so often wins? Our reason is that capital is always better organized than labour. If the telegraphers of the United States and Canada had been as well organized last week as their employers they might have thrown the whole business of the continent into utter confusion in twelve hours. They do not act as a unit. Their employers did. Capital was thoroughly organized as it always is—labour was not. Here is a lesson for congregations and mission stations. Other things being nearly equal the congregation that has the best organization will succeed best. Of two mission stations otherwise equal, the one that has the best organization will grow soonest into a self-sustaining congregation. What we call liberality in giving is

largely a matter of organization. It is quite true as many allege that giving is a good deal a habit. Yes, but people never learn the habit without organization. A few may, but the great body of the people are never reached without proper machinery. The congregations in our Church that are noted for their liberality are those that have had for years an almost perfect organization for reaching the people regularly. Mere blind, unorganized enthusiasm is not worth much. Politicians know the value of organization. They never trust to the blind zeal of a few people. They organize. In these days when gush goes for a good deal people who really desire to see their Church prosper should remember that much cannot be done without organization.

## PRESBYTERIAN UNION IN NEW ZEALAND.

BOSSUET constructed what he firmly believed was a telling argument against the churches of the Reformation in his "History of the Variations of the Protestants." The argument has often been confronted with the facts that, within the fold of the Roman Church, the so-called union is mainly mechanical. Divergencies of opinion are repressed by the iron hand of authority. The variations of Catholic opinion are just as numerous as are those of Protestants, only the former are latent while the latter invariably find expression. Again the differences among Protestants have been very much exaggerated. On the great essential doctrines of Christianity there is substantial agreement. The real spiritual union underlying ecclesiastical divisions is slowly but surely growing in strength and influence. It is becoming more apparent. The progress of events is supplying a conspicuous refutation of the distinguished ecclesiastic's triumphant argument in favour of Roman unity based on the Variations of Protestantism.

Union among various branches of the evangelical church is growing in popular favour. Convictions as to the duty of seeking its attainment are deepening in the minds of earnest workers throughout the churches. This is one of the hopeful signs of our time. The Presbyterians in the United States fifteen years since healed the schism that divided the Old and the New School Churches. The antagonism of feeling between the Presbyterians north and south intensified by the slavery question and what came of it, has now almost subsided, and the fraternal relations connecting which so much has been heard lately will to all appearance soon lead to happy results. Scarcely a doubt is now entertained of the consummation of union among the Methodists of Canada. The feeling in favour of it is strong, and a decisive vote approving of the basis of union has been cast.

The Presbyterian churches in New Zealand are at present earnestly considering the question of a corporate union. The latest number received of the "New Zealand Presbyterian," published in Dunedin, would encourage the inference that the time is not far distant when the Presbyterians of New Zealand will form a united church. There are obvious difficulties to be overcome, but they are by no means insurmountable. There is not a single expression to indicate that any objection to the principle of union has been urged during the consideration of the question. The obstacles are all of the minor kind. They will disappear before the earnest desire for union which prevails in the churches of New Zealand. There do not seem to be any difficulties of a doctrinal nature, or questions of ecclesiastical polity impeding the progress or disturbing the harmony of the union negotiations.

One of the obstacles in the way of union referred to is geographical. The Presbyterian Church of New Zealand includes the North Island and the Northern provinces of the South Island, and the Presbyterian Church of Otago and Southland is confined to the southern portion of the South Island. Cook's strait, forty miles wide, separates the two islands. This arm of the sea is considered by some as a barrier to union, it can hardly be a very formidable one, since the northern Church even now overlaps it. Easy means of travel are not yet very fully provided in New Zealand, and this enters into the calculations of a few as to the desirability of union at the present time. In the rapid march of progress, however, this is an objection that will speedily disappear. Another is an economic question on which the two bodies are not agreed. In the south they have a Sustentation Fund for the support of the ministry; in the north they have

not. Patience and forbearance will soon bring about a harmonious method of action in this particular. Then there are differences of opinion as to the manner in which Church extension can be best promoted, whether by one or more Assembly committees. The wisdom of the brethren in New Zealand may be trusted to devise a plan by which this important part of Church work may be efficiently accomplished. There is, however, a problem to be solved before these churches unite which requires much attention. The southern Church owns valuable properties managed by trustees appointed by the Synod. The legal authorities could no doubt render effective aid in the settlement of this matter in such a way that it will not interfere with the good feeling and harmonious action of the united Church.

Appearances are certainly favourable to the early accomplishment of a cordial and complete reunion of these distant members of the Presbyterian family. Their influence and resources will be largely increased by following the obvious path of duty. It will add to their efficiency in all departments of Christian work and usefulness, and inspire them with the hope of a most promising future. The consummation of the New Zealand union may be expected at no distant date.

## INTERVIEWING ON THE SABBATH QUESTION.

ON Sabbath week several of the Toronto ministers preached on one of the prevailing evils of the day—Sabbath desecration. It is worthy of remark that those who make a habit of criticising the utterances of the pulpit find fault with clergymen for not preaching to the times. It is more than insinuated that there is moral cowardice in avoiding the explicit denunciation of popular evils. When, however, a minister speaks out boldly and without ambiguity on some subject of immediate practical importance several of these very critics are outspoken in their disapproval of the opinions expressed, not so much in answer to challenge as in obedience to the dictates of conscience and a sense of duty.

One of the principal Toronto journals gave in its columns outline reports of the discourses on the Sabbath question preached on the day preceding, and then next day sent the inevitable interviewer on his mission of inquiry to ascertain the views of those who were for the most part indisposed to insist on a proper observance of the day of rest. The benefits of the interviewing business are not transcendent. The obvious defects of the invention more than counterbalance the limited advantages of which it is supposed to be possessed. As a form of newspaper enterprise, it is all very well in its place. This is about all that it is good for. As hitherto conducted it fails to give anything like a satisfactory impression of the opinions entertained by those whose views are of much value to the public. The hasty and crude utterances of even thoughtful men are not specially helpful to the solution of important practical questions. It sometimes happens that careful thinkers, when waylaid by the interviewer, in the endeavour not to commit themselves fail to give a tangible view of a popular question, so that the ordinary reader finds himself pretty much in the same perplexity he was in before; while those whose opinions amount to little are given with a degree of dogmatism that but ill conceals the lack of thought and intelligence on which they are based. Then again the interviewer, however conscientious in his work, is hampered by necessary limitations, that you cannot rely on the published account of the interview being anything more than approximately correct. This is too often inevitable, and does not in the least impugn the good faith of the interviewer.

These considerations are to be taken into account in judging the opinions of public men as expressed under pressure of the interviewing process. It would be unfair to hold them responsible for the light in which their thoughts are often presented. Several railway officials, names not given, were interrogated as to their views on the present aspect of Sabbath labour. Prominence is given to their expressions of opinion, while the men who have to do the Sunday work were also seen, and though they are represented as indicating their preference for Sunday as a day of rest, there is not much space wasted on them.

The railway officials, some of them at least, give it as their opinion that it is not greed of gain that impels them to take the course recently adopted in the matter of running Sunday trains. It is competition with