

## CONTENTS.

	Page
ADVERTISEMENTS.....	689, 690
SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.....	690
NOTES OF THE WEEK.....	691
OUR CONTRIBUTORS—	
A Priest of the Old School—Plan of Study for Sabbath School Teachers.....	692
Tares or New Wine.....	693
"W. S. T." and the Hymn Book.....	697
PASTOR AND PEOPLE.....	694
EDITORIALS—	
Country Congregations—Presbyterian Bigotry.....	696
Temperance in Schools—Speak to Them.....	697
BOOKS AND MAGAZINES.....	697
CHOICE LITERATURE.....	698
MINISTERS AND CHURCHES.....	700
SABBATH SCHOOL TEACHER.....	701
OUR YOUNG FOLKS.....	702
ADVERTISEMENTS.....	703, 704



Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3, 1880.

OUR readers would notice that the first No. of the "Presbyterian Sabbath School Teacher's Study" was printed last week instead of, as it ought to have been, on the 24th inst. No. 2 will appear on the first of October, and all concerned had better preserve last week's PRESBYTERIAN for reference to No. 1.

## COUNTRY CONGREGATIONS.

THE remark is an old and oft-repeated one which it is said a certain theological professor first made to a graduating class of young ministers, to the effect that if they were to preach in the city they had better wear their best coat; if in the country they had better bring out their best sermon. The best sermon is everywhere and at all times in order, and it will be none the less acceptable, perhaps all the more so, if the preacher have also on the best coat. But if the professor by his suggestion meant to caution his young friends against the idea that anything in the way of a sermon would do for the country, and to suggest that if there was any difference between city and rural audiences in the way of intelligence and appreciative power the advantage in many cases rather lay with the latter, he was a wise, shrewd man whose advice was worth the following. We have no wish either to make invidious comparisons or to hint at disagreeable contrasts, but at the same time we have no hesitation in asserting that in very many cases there are no better congregations for close attention, for hearty and intelligent relish for the truth when that is earnestly and sensibly presented, and for the cordial recognition of intellectual and spiritual power, than those located in country districts. It was and is so in the old country, and the same thing holds true in Canada and all over this continent. We have no wish to set the one class of congregations against the other, but the more or less covert feeling cherished by some preachers to the effect that so long as their ministrations are confined to the country their gifts are in danger of being unappreciated is a very erroneous one. Some think it smart to refer to the number of sleepers to be found in country churches, as if in this respect things were very different in the towns and cities. As a matter of fact, however, if such references have any measure of smartness about them, they are greatly destitute of accuracy. On a warm summer's day, after having travelled some miles to church, it is not surprising that sometimes not a few should fall into a deep sleep, the more especially if there is nothing either said or done very specially calculated to keep them awake. But even in such circumstances if the preacher has really got anything to say to the people, and can manage to say it with any measure of power, he will have on an average less reason to complain of either inattention or the absence of appreciative interest in a congregation of farmers than in one of merchants and other "city folks." As one has well put it, we may say with all truth: "The earnest look they give you, as if in anticipation of something to nourish the mind and heart, and the disappointment depicted on their countenances when the bread they expected proves to be dough, and soft at that, will convince any man that the best he can do will be appreciated by such hearers." There is no reason whatever, why the members of a city congregation should be thought more intelligent on religious matters at any rate than those in the country. The stir and activity of commercial life may often impart a greater amount of apparent sharpness, but it does

not at all follow that there is any greater degree of general intelligence, and still less any deeper and more life directing acquaintance with the things of God and all that is connected with the way of salvation. A good many ministers are restless and dissatisfied because their spheres of labour happen to be in the country. They fancy that they would be more comfortable and more useful if they had a town or city charge. That their abilities would be more appreciated and that their opportunities for doing good would be indefinitely increased. Are they quite sure that in cherishing such ideas they are not grievously mistaken? In many cases, we are persuaded, they are. No one need wish for a better or wider sphere than that in which, in the providence of God, he is placed, and if he is not receiving that amount of sympathy and support to which he may think he is justly entitled is he perfectly certain that the fault lies exclusively with the pews, while the pulpit is blameless? Perhaps he has good reason for being so persuaded, but perhaps, also, he has not. Sure we are, at any rate, that the devout, competent and persevering preacher of the Gospel will not lose his reward in these days, any more than in those of the gone by, and many would, we are convinced, come nearer their purpose if, instead of casting their eyes in the direction of every eligible vacancy, and writing to this and that one to try and get them "a hearing," they were to go heart and soul into the work that lies directly under their own hands, fully convinced that it was large enough for their abilities, involved responsibilities sufficiently weighty for them to bear, and carried with it a possibility of reward far beyond their most sanguine anticipations and their utmost desert. We have not a doubt of its being the fact that many congregations are stingy and unappreciative. These, however, will not all be found in country localities, and perhaps even in those cases where the people are most freely blamed, strict impartiality would not in every case saddle them with all the responsibility attachable to congregational difficulties, and the necessity for ministerial change. If not a few ministers could hear sometimes the remark which is frequently made, and quite as often in the country as in the town, not by the fault-finding and superficial, but by the most thoughtful and devout, to the effect that it would be better if they would give more time to the preparation of their sermons, and try to bring out of their treasure things new and old, it might be better for all concerned, and the desire for change might neither be so common nor so inveterate.

## PRESBYTERIAN BIGOTRY.

WITH certain individuals and classes there is not a more common or a more favourite exercise than that which consists in the denunciation of Presbyterian bigotry and Scottish clannishness. The people who indulge in this pastime are not generally careful to define what they mean by the terms, or to lead proof in support of what they regard as very detestable and unworthy, but they make up for any vagueness of utterance and any absence of evidence by the vehemence of their condemnation, the vigour of their assertions, and their general disregard of all argument and all decency. They have settled in their own minds that Presbyterians are bigots above all the bigots that ever were or ever will be, and they forthwith become eloquent, indignant and pathetic by turns over this supposed unpardonable iniquity. They know intuitively that the Scotch have always been guilty of clannishness, and from that one fact, which they fondly imagine "nobody can deny," they are positively sure that they can, beyond a doubt, account for all that Scotchmen have ever been or done without the slightest credit being given to one redeeming characteristic either of their heads or their hearts. "John Calvin burned Servetus;" "the Scotch clergy caused that poor boy Aikenhead to be hanged," and no wonder, you know, for Presbyterians are "awful bigots!" Scotchmen are a very small minority of the world's population, but they are always pushing themselves forward and getting into places of trust and honour and emolument for which it seems they are ridiculously unfit; but then they are so clannish, which fact accounts for it all. Their feebleness of intellect, their poverty of thought and acquirement, their hopeless mediocrity of resource, and their general want of energy and perseverance are beyond all reasonable question, but they stand by each other and thus jostle aside those who are in every way their superiors, so that

this one single fact accounts for all the success which they have ever achieved or ever will!

Is it not about time that this foolish and incoherent way of talking should cease? Or, if not, that those who indulge in it should condescend on particulars and give some small modicum of evidence in support of what with them has hitherto been but groundless and offensive assertion? Leaving Scotch clannishness in the meantime untouched, we affirm that instead of the Presbyterians of the present day, whether in Scotland or in any other part of the world, being to be characterized and denounced as bigots their fault has lain, and lies still, all in the opposite direction. For what is a bigot? The dictionaries tell us that it is one who is "obstinately and blindly attached to some creed, opinion, or practice, with an unreasonable zeal or warmth in favour of a party, sect or opinion." Now whether the disposition of mind thus indicated be right or wrong, a shining virtue or a discreditable vice, we assert, without fear of anything like reasonable contradiction, that it is not specially characteristic of the Presbyterians of the present day, nor for the matter of that of those in the times past. Presbyterians have ever held fast, and do so still, by the great central doctrines of the Gospel, which they profess in common with all evangelical Christendom; but instead of being blindly, ignorantly and unreasonably attached to these, they have ever been ready and rejoiced to give to every one who asked them a reason of the hope that was in them, while as to their attaching undue importance to their peculiarities as Presbyterians, whether of doctrine or discipline, or as to their dragging these forward before the public, whether for statement or defence, with undue or disagreeable frequency, there is, perhaps, not a single denomination in Christendom that says less about these peculiarities or makes them less frequently the subjects for public exposition and enforcement or for private discussion and defiance.

In ordinary cases how long would an individual have to attend upon the services of a Presbyterian place of worship, whether on week or Sabbath days, before he heard any exposition of Presbyterian Church government, or any answer to the usual objections to its claims? In very many instances he might do so all his days without having to listen to anything of the kind even once, and in the others such references would not occur once for every ten times that the changes would be rung on the peculiar excellences and the scriptural authority of their forms of Church government in the churches and chapels of every other denomination which could be mentioned. Instead of doing too much in this way we hold that Presbyterians have done, and are doing, far too little, and that they have lost ground by not expounding and magnifying the special excellences of their system of Church government to anything like the extent required both by sound policy and scriptural obligation. In other words, instead of in this respect being justly chargeable with what is usually called bigotry, it would have been well for the Presbyterian Church, and well for the world, had there only been a great deal more reason for the accusation and the taunt.

Roman Catholics and others most foolishly and most groundlessly imagine that Presbyterians spend most of their Sabbath services in attacks upon the errors of this Church or the short-comings of that; while they ask, with affected compassion, what would be done if there were no Romanism, or some other *ism*, to denounce and assail? Instead of there being even a shadow of excuse for this kind of talk we affirm that in this connection also it will be found that there is less properly controversial discussion in Presbyterian pulpits than in any other which could be mentioned. We are not saying whether this is an excellence or a defect, though to a good degree we think it is the latter; we are at present taken up with the one point, that it is a fact.

Presbyterians hold very strongly by the doctrine of infant baptism for instance. Nothing then surely would be more natural or more becoming than that they should ever and anon discuss that whole subject *ex professo*. Yet is this done with a tithe of the frequency or a hundredth part of the vehemence with which the "other side" is all at it and always at it? So much is this the case that when some Presbyterian brother turns aside for a little to speak the "present truth" on the subject, though in language of the most studiously moderate description, he is assailed with accusations of having made unjustifiable "attacks" or of having been guilty of something like profanity, by raising,