

THE WESLEYAN

FRIDAY, AUGUST 29, 1884.

THE FRENCH IN CANADA.

The Annual report of the Montreal French Methodist Institute, Montreal, has been issued. During the year just closed thirty-six students were in attendance at the Institute, twenty-five of them for the first time. During the five years of its history twelve students have entered the ministry in Canada or in the United States, and several are looking forward to this great work.

Few Methodists in the Maritime Provinces or in Ontario have an adequate conception of the field which the French Canadian population of the Dominion offers to the Gospel worker. Of the nearly one and a half millions who speak a foreign language but a very small proportion are Protestants. Many of their French neighbors, having embraced the purer religion, have found it necessary to cross the border, where the Catholic priesthood has less power than in the Province of Quebec.

That the French element in Canada, and the nearer states of the neighboring republic, will soon be assimilated by the predominant race is not at all all probable. No other element increases so rapidly. The device of the early French rulers to promote colonization by putting a premium on large families seems to have had an abiding influence. With the original command to "multiply and replenish the earth" was connected the consequence to "subdue it." The fulfillment of the promise seems almost literal in several parts of the Dominion and of New England, where the English population is rapidly yielding to the French. This growing population is carefully preserving its distinctness, while its increasing intelligence is adding still further to its power. Recent celebrations have clearly proved this. "Taking stock for half a century," says a Montreal paper, "they found themselves not less French than in 1834. They found their political force grown in Canada, and even commanding respectful attention from the 'machines' in the United States. They found their language adhered to devotedly by the main body in Quebec and spoken enthusiastically by their colonies throughout the continent. They found their wisely-ruled church wealthy and potent. In a word they found safe their nationality and all they prize most."

From abroad the views we have advanced get strong confirmation. This subject is discussed by Eugene Reveillard, the celebrated French Protestant lawyer of Paris, in a work he is about to publish. Will these French Canadians, he inquires, preserve the powerful vitality which they have hitherto shown, and transmit to their posterity their language, literature, and traditions, or "will they, yielding to the pressure of the Anglo-American world, lose little by little the distinctive features, confounded in the mass?" For his own part, he believes they will preserve their old national existence, and supports himself in this belief by presenting a long catalogue of instances of resurrection on the part of so many European nationalities, all quoted to impress the minds of the French Canadians in their subjection to "the purely apparent and merely nominal sovereignty of Great Britain."

No Protestant Canadian can feel otherwise than glad in the belief that the liberal or advanced school of French Canadians is likely to grow. If the patriotism of a large section of our people must be French, it is better that their sympathies should be with the France of to-day than with the France of the pre-revolutionary period. Yet the France of to-day is sadly infidel in principle. Common sense revolts against the tyranny of the priesthood, but common sense is no safe guide to a higher life, nor can it reveal the upward path. The Gospel only can do that. At a critical period, as Mr. Beaudry remarks, they must be met with the Gospel's benign influences. These only can save them from the grip of Romanism or the chill of infidelity, and make them what they are so well qualified by nature to become, a power in the service of the Lord Jesus.

The Rev. Dr. Cochran and family started on the 7th inst. from San Francisco for Japan per steamer Oceanic, expecting to reach Japan on Tuesday last.

CAPE SABINE.

An official report of the horrors of Cape Sabine has finally shown what number of bodies had been disturbed after death by starving comrades in their mortal agony. The morbid interest in the terrible sufferings of the Greeley party may therefore be expected to die out, unless aroused by a full narrative of what would be the most dreadful story of modern times. It would have been well if the world could have been spared such details, not so much in the interest of the dead, and the friends of the dead, as in that of the survivors. Theirs must be the life-long disgust. "I hope and pray that I may forget it when I die," said one of them when questioned as to the act, as if forgetfulness of the use of human flesh would be his "heaven of heavens." Indiscriminate censure of these unhappy men is unreasonable. The widow of one of the dead, when urged to have her husband's casket opened, wisely remarked in opposition that if the story were true, those who were forced to subsist upon their comrades' flesh experienced the greatest horror of the act and should be guarded and pitied. In reference to a similar accusation against Sir John Franklin's expedition, Admiral Sheard Osborne, who commanded one of the expeditions in search of the gallant Franklin, well said: "Why attempt to lift the veil with which the All Merciful has been pleased to shut out from mortal ken the last sad hours of brave men battling with famine and disease.

A single benefit may result from the removal of the veil from the struggle of these poor castaways with Arctic cold and hunger. It will be some time, in view of the terrible scene which now clouds the supposed glory of Arctic discovery, before attempts of a similar kind will be repeated. All that can be discovered in these frozen regions cannot benefit one soul on earth. "A little," says a contemporary "has been added to scientific theories, which can always be stretched at will, a museum here and there has been slightly enriched with curiosities, botanical specimens have been gathered and brought south. But the practicable Northwest passage once sought for has long been proved not to exist, and, after nearly three hundred years of effort the Pole has not been reached. Hudson went as far north as 80 degrees, Parry to 82 24 and now Greeley claims to have gone to 83.24. The old Dutchman with his rude tubs of ships in 1605 was not far from getting in advance of all our modern explorers." If this terrible scene—perhaps not the first of the kind—will but open the eyes of the world to the moral wickedness of subjecting brave men to such dire extremities for no other purpose than the gratification of scientific curiosity or national vanity, its description will not have been in vain.

HOLINESS CONVENTION.

A circular kindly sent by the Rev. G. N. Ballentine, of Woodstock, gives further information respecting the Union Meeting for the Promotion of Christian Holiness which was to be begun in the skating rink at Woodstock yesterday afternoon. The meeting is under the direction of the N. B. Bible Holiness Association. A number of noted workers will be present, among them the Rev. Dr. Watson; Dr. Pepper of the Christian Standard; Dr. Levy, a Baptist minister of Philadelphia; and Wm. McDonald, of the Christian Witness. At least three services will be held on each of eight days. Free return tickets can be procured at any station on the New Brunswick Railway.

We trust that the brethren of the Baptist Churches who constitute the committee of arrangements will find their neighboring Methodist brethren hearty and vigorous in their co-operation, and that by all the churches at Woodstock and its vicinity a rich blessing may be enjoyed. John Wesley regarded the prominence given to the doctrine of Christian holiness as the secret of the true success of any Church. Of the several Methodist and Baptist workers named, Bro. McDonald is the only one personally known to the writer. It is hardly necessary to say that his orthodoxy as tested by our standards is unquestioned.

For even brethren beloved at Thessalonica the apostle prayed, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus

Christ." High as were their attainments his eye of faith saw a greater blessedness to be won. They had light, but could have clearer light; love, and yet there were heights unexplored and depths unfathomed; they had peace, but yet a peace passing all understanding asked their acceptance; power, and yet greater power over self and sin had been purchased by "the blood of Jesus Christ His Son." But the force, the weight of his wish lay in that promise annexed: "Faithful is He that calleth you who also will do it." Without that assurance the brotherly wish would have been mere sentiment, but in view of it our brethren who long for the greater purity and more glorious power of their friends in Christ, have a warrant such as should stimulate them to tireless effort.

We have learned with regret of the death, on Saturday afternoon last, of Mr. S. D. Macpherson, of Fredericton. During a recent visit to Boston he was treated for cancer in the throat, but without permanent benefit. Since the death of Judge Wilnot, Mr. Macpherson has been superintendent of the Methodist Sunday-school in Fredericton, where he was very highly esteemed by all classes of citizens. His name is connected with an important era in Methodist history in New Brunswick. At the time he was intending to be married the Methodist ministers in that province were striving earnestly for the legal right to solemnize matrimony, till then withheld from them. Desirous to be married by a minister of their own church, Mr. Macpherson and the lady about to link her fortunes with his waited until the Rev. Enoch Wood could perform the ceremony, and were thus the first couple married by a Methodist minister in that province. Should this statement meet the eye of the Rev. Dr. Wood, now residing near Toronto, it may prompt him to furnish our readers with a sketch of the history of a somewhat lengthy struggle, in which he was a successful leader. To the members of the afflicted family we offer Christian sympathy—sympathy for their affliction, tempered by the sweet confidence that "those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him."

Our boys and girls are now finding their way back to the public schools. This reminds us that at the recent educational meeting in Truro a paper was read upon the question of the health of school children—a subject which is calling forth a good deal of attention. In France the authorities have taken it up, and appointed a commission to consider it, whose report is now before the Minister of Education. For lack of care in ventilation, there can be no doubt that many children have suffered through life, while some may have even been doomed to an early death. On the other hand not a few pupils have been rendered seriously ill by exposure to draughts of air while seated at their desks. And ventilation is only one of a great many points connected with the health of our school children, which should receive more attention than in the past.

The Academies at Sackville commenced their work on Thursday. We think the outlook for both is good. We have already announced the change in the management of the Male Academy. At the Ladies' Academy, we learn from the Post, "the staff of teachers is the same as last year with the exception of changes in the musical departments. Miss Mabel Fawcett, who recently graduated with honor at the Boston Conservatory of Music, and Miss Lillie Black, a recent graduate of Mount Allison—both clever and accomplished musicians—are Professor Cranz's assistants. The art department will be under the charge of Miss Bessie Yorke, who has the reputation of possessing natural gifts of a high order, supplemented by cultivation abroad. The Academy has been repainted and refitted inside during the vacation."

The Rev. L. N. Beaudry, of Montreal, has received a copy of the Spanish edition just published at the Methodist Book-room, Mexico, of his "Spiritual Struggles of a Roman Catholic." The translator, Samuel P. Craver, who has had "special satisfaction in translating it into the beautiful Castilian idiom," remarks in a prefatory note: "If others receive, in the reading of this precious volume, as much benefit as I have received in

translating it, I shall feel highly compensated for my labors, and I will render unto God continual thanksgiving and praise." Mr. Beaudry writes to the Guardian that, with the blessing of heaven upon his efforts, he will soon be able to publish the long-promised "Sequel" of "Spiritual Struggles," to be entitled, "Work of Faith and Labor of Love: a Chronicle of Christian Experience, and of Evangelization among Roman Catholics."

We readily insert the following official notice. An invitation from the "Yarmouth brethren" means a warm welcome:

The Executive Committee of the Sunday-school Convention of the Maritime Provinces have pleasure in announcing that arrangements are being made to hold the 14th Annual Meeting in Yarmouth, on Sept. 25th, and following days:—the Yarmouth brethren having extended to us a cordial invitation. The nature and scope of our future efforts will depend in a great measure upon the action of this convention. The Committee therefore urge the attendance of their fellow-workers, from all parts of the Maritime Provinces. In addition to pastors and superintendents (who are ex officio members) the convention consists of at least one delegate from each Sunday-school throughout the Maritime Provinces. Arrangements will be made for reducing fares on main routes of travel to delegates attending the convention. Sunday-school workers who purpose to be present at the convention, will please notify the Secretary, Mr. James Forrest, at Halifax, not later than Sept. 10th, in order that arrangements may be made for their entertainment at Yarmouth.

that all party influence and the various means used at elections to influence men and gain votes, or to weaken the opponent, are a necessity and not wrong, even then it is advisable and expedient that those who lead in the church's work should refrain from active political work at the polls. It is certainly not an incentive to that unity of spirit and purpose which should characterize successful workers for Christ, to meet one's class leader, or the lay member of Conference, or the local preacher, at the polling place actively engaged in soliciting votes for the candidate to whom one is conscientiously opposed; nor is one's esteem for him or confidence in him increased or intensified should he be found engaged, in company with the average ward politician, in the cause of the candidate who has your conscientious vote and support. In a word, the cause of our Lord and Master is no gainer by the active presence at the poll, except in the exercise of the personal franchise, of those who lead in the church's ranks. We must take heed that we cause not our weaker brethren to offend. These remarks will apply to all our Christian denominations, all of whom happily are agreed as to the place of the clergy in political life: but the peculiar and close relation that official laymen bear to our Methodist Church leads us to sound a note of warning which in our own experience is not altogether uncalled for. A word to the wise is sufficient.

METHODIST. Halifax, Aug. 25th, 1884.

EFFICACY OF PRAYER.

Our readers will be glad to have an extract from a sermon by the Rev. R. Brecken, A. M., on a subject which has recently been discussed in one of our city papers:

There have been doubters in every age down to the modern deists who tell us that prayer is only subjective in its results. It has power to move us, but no power "to move the arm that moves the world." Nothing is so dangerous as a half-truth. The exercise of prayer has undoubtedly a beneficial subjective effect. The spirit of prayer tends to humbleness and submissiveness, and harmonizes with the Divine will. To compass the purpose of prayer within such confined limits is a manifest perversion of the meaning of terms and of the common understanding of the world. What do you intend by a petition to Parliament? Does the prayer of the petitioners humbly shewing a request accomplish its purpose when it makes them more loyal and harmonizes their spirit with the enactments and administration of the Government, and will they rest there without moving the Government to action? What does the world east and west, north and south, Pagan, Mohammedan or Christian, understand by the term prayer kindred to all languages. Ask the muezzin, who from the top of his mosque within sight of the ruins of the temple of Jerusalem summons the faithful to prayer, what he means by the call? Is he calling upon the Palestinian Arabs to work up their feelings like dervishes of the desert or to call upon Allah for help?

Now this term, understood by all races in all religions and in all languages throughout all ages to mean earnestly requesting a desired object, is imported into the Bible without any modification or qualification whatever. The Bible is full of it. Holy men moved by the Holy Ghost write its history. Is it possible that they were trifling with plain words or trifling with the confidence of humanity? Would they keep in the background the disheartening fact that God never interferes with the affairs of men, but allows events to shape their own inevitable course if such were the truth? Impossible! Inconceivable!

AN ELECTION HINT.

Now that the heat of a political contest has subsided and the electors are settling down quietly, satisfied or dissatisfied as the case may be, it may not be inopportune to point out a danger into which we as Methodists are liable to fall. It is well for us to recognize and accept the franchise as one of the grand and reputable gifts of our manhood and citizenship, and happy is he who clearly understands and apprehends his duty to his country, and acts a conscientious and wise part in the election of its officials and in the administration of its affairs. On the other hand, unhappily, political contests are scenes of very much that is at direct variance with a true Christian life; and while we may not and would not engage in the bribery and other corrupt practices which sometimes characterize such contests, there is still very much that is not pure with which we are liable to be brought in close contact. Pressure is brought to bear, social and commercial influence is used, and men are not permitted to act on their own convictions and judgment, and are coaxed and cajoled to an extent hardly realized at the time, acting as they do under more or less of excitement. There is a danger therefore that we come in direct contact with these evil influences, and there are positions which could be pointed out, which may not be sinful but which compromise us with the world and prejudice our church relationship. Unhappily, such is the result when a local preacher, class leader, steward or other prominent lay worker throws himself, or allows himself to be led, into a political contest; and either as a committee man, or in his more private capacity, identifies himself publicly with the working politicians of either party. There will always be those in his own "sacred constituency" who, differing from him in political opinions, will be affected and offended, and thus his influence is weakened and his usefulness impaired. Even if it could be claimed

asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh shall be opened." What does the breadth of faith? "He that cometh to God must believe that He is and diligently seek him." A praying man must have faith not only in the existence and power of God but also in His readiness to make all things work together for his good, and that if he calls upon Him in the day of trouble he will deliver him.

There is much careless and superficial talk about the fixity of law and the omnipotence of law. This way of talking about prayers restrained by law is not some new discovery. It is as old as heathenism and the fatalism of Pantheism. It is simply Pagan philosophy vamped up a little with Christian ideas. Its argument is based entirely on an a priori assumption which is nothing short of a presumption. It begs the whole question at issue. It flatly contradicts the doctrine of Scripture and the Church's history and the experience of believers by telling you that direct answers to prayer are an impossibility. Why? you ask in astonishment. Oh because in the nature of things it is impossible. Law is inexorable. Events must take their course; the stream of tendency is sweeping on; heredity and the laws of mind determine character and history; physical laws cannot consistently be set aside by the Almighty. I call that an impertinence if God be not only imminent but transcendent. What is this reigning Law which has made such a bugbear against the prevalence of prayer? Only a convenient name for a marked feature of nature. Law is only the orderly mode of sequence of events. It tells us that events usually follow in a certain order. So far as observation takes us, if one event transpires another will follow. There is no confusion or chance about the universe. That for which Law is only a name is not explained by it. Newton discovered gravity and the laws of gravitation. That is he discovered the existence of some subtle power and the fact that it islaw abiding and orderly in its operation or governed by law. You can rely upon what gravity will do under ordinary circumstances. But Newton did not discover what gravity was. There is no one yet born who can tell what is that wonderful power which moulds a tear and guides a planet in its course. The whole thinking world however is drawing nearer by every step in the progress of science to the conviction that all the power in existence is traceable directly to the will power, and therefore to the supreme will of the Almighty. If that be true the laws of Nature can be interfered with at will.

But some one says that gravitation cannot be modified or interfered with, its action must be inexorable. You really know better. Even vital force such as a tree possesses can interfere with its action or set it aside. A tree grows and removes a huge boulder in defiance of gravity. A tree grows and makes the sap flow up in defiance of the law of gravity that it shall flow down. Man comes upon the stage of action and with his will and skill interferes with, and modifies the action of every known mechanical and physical law. Boys play cricket, and the way in which they manipulate the ball is simply playing with the usual operation of gravity. Spirit, thought, will is superior to light heat, electricity, or gravity. If man within a limited measure can interfere with or modify the laws of nature, God, who is unlimited and absolute, can interfere with them to an unlimited and absolute degree. It does not interrupt the usual harmony and order of nature for man to interfere with it locally, neither can it interrupt God's usual harmony and method, that he should vary the method or set it aside occasionally in answer to prayer.

The existence of what is called Law proves simply thought. It proves the presence of an orderly, thinking mind, superintending all things and stamping his wise and orderly thought on all events. Wherever there is thought there is a thinker. Wherever there is government there is a governor. All things are traceable back to mind. Behind and above all the seen is the unseen. The unseen world moves the visible as the soul the body. Behind, above, and through all things must be God.

Now if God is able to alter the usual course of events harmoniously, the only question can be: Will He? That is being irreverent enough to ask God to be a tyrant instead of a father. Does he dispose of men and things with the undeviating rule of despotism and with the pliability of a father? If God be love he will certainly interfere with the course of events whenever it is wisest and best so to do. In temporal matters God reserves to Himself the right of judgment as to how far he will or will not interfere; but he will withhold no good thing from those that walk uprightly. What ever God appoints is a part of Nature, and prayer and its answers are as much a part of the economy of Nature as electricity or gravitation. You can rely on the laws of prayer, as much as on the laws of gravitation.

The total receipts of the Church Missionary Society the past year were \$1,155,000. During the year twenty-four candidates for missionary service were accepted. An element of progress is the growth of the native ministry. The number now laboring in connection with the society or the native churches is 247, against a staff of 234 European ordained missionaries.

Will explain with regard to the accident from which... The Rev. Dr. Cochran and family started on the 7th inst. from San Francisco for Japan per steamer Oceanic, expecting to reach Japan on Tuesday last.