

The Canada Presbyterian

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 23RD, 1896

THIS number (an extra good one in many respects) completes our twenty-fifth volume—fifty-two numbers for the year. No paper will be issued next week, thus giving those employed in the office a few days of needed recreation, which no one will grudge them at this season of the year. During the coming year, commencing on the 6th prox., we hope to be a welcome weekly visitor to thousands of homes all over this fair Dominion. The first part of our semi-jubilee issue is calling forth praise and warm encomiums from every quarter. We thank our friends for their kind words, and wish them and all our subscribers a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

THE ecclesiastics who are fighting so hard against the recent settlement of the Manitoba school question pay no taxes and have no children to educate.

A NUMBER of the leading ministers of New York held a meeting the other day and discussed the "sewer press." A step was taken in the direction of establishing a clean daily newspaper. In our opinion an ideal newspaper in New York is an impossibility. Supposing there was money enough to start one who can be sure that it would remain clean for any length of time. One of the worst journals in the city was started as a clean paper. The only way to put down gutter journalism is to stop reading and advertising in gutter journals.

REFERRING to statistics, which show that family troubles are a fruitful source of suicide and insanity, the *Halifax Witness* says:

"The lesson of these figures is, Seek a good and sensible wife and when you find her prize her as a priceless treasure.—Then, the lesson to young women is, 'Thank God for the love of an honest man, and do all in your power to make his life happy and successful.'"

That is sound doctrine for the young people. If we might add anything it would be: When the "honest man" has found the "priceless treasure" let them not try to get rich too fast nor torment themselves about getting into "society."

THE late Dr. Begg once said that young men had been a conspicuous failure in responsible positions ever since the days of Rehoboam. Doubtless there have been exceptions to this rule, but a good many people are of the opinion that if Archbishop Langevin, of Manitoba, were an older and more experienced man, he would go to work quietly and make the best of the settlement of the school question. If he thinks he can fight the people of Canada he has just about the same amount of sense that Rehoboam had.

COMMENTING on the settlement of the Manitoba school question the *Herald and Presbyter* says:

"It is manifest that no settlement is ever satisfactory to the Romanists unless it meets all their demands. The Pope has disapproved the adjustment."

As our contemporary distinguishes between "Romanists" and "Liberal Catholics," perhaps its conclusion is correct. As a matter of fact, however, a large number of Roman Catholics are satisfied with the settlement, and we believe ninety out of every hundred would be if they were let alone.

Our Bagster Bible forms a superb premium. It is given to anyone who sends us the names of eight subscribers (half new) and ten dollars. Balance of year free to new subscribers.

"Unto Us a Child is Born."

THIS is the season which, throughout the whole of Christendom, reminds all people of that wondrous birth of the Holy Child. It was not only a most marvellous event in itself, but the grandest in that sublimest of all divine purposes that we are acquainted with—the redemption of the human race from the desperate and lost estate into which it had fallen. It was also and must ever be, one of the most impenetrable mysteries, that of the incarnation and appearance in mortal form upon our earth of the second person of the adorable Trinity. That this glorious being should stoop to be born of a woman, in obscurity and poverty, amid the most humble surroundings, all add to the mystery. This One who, in such circumstances, became flesh and dwelt among us, was to the whole human family God's unspeakable gift. He,

Our great redemption from above did bring.
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That He our deadly forfeit should release
And with His Father work us a perpetual peace."

It was doubtless from this great gift of God to us that the idea arose, in some Christ-like mind, of making this a gift-giving season, and from this it has spread until it has become the chief, and by far the most outstanding feature of the Christmas season. Indeed, it is known only to many and observed only in this aspect of it, and suggests nothing whatsoever to them of God's unspeakable gift. Even at this low view of it we would not cavil, for we cannot well have too many occasions and means whereby to counteract the selfishness which is so apt to assert itself in and dominate over us. The giving of gifts spontaneously and lovingly at set seasons, does not a little to brighten life and vary with gleams of gladness what might otherwise sink into a dead, dull monotony.

But if the gift of God in His Son for our redemption has suggested the observing of this as a gift-bestowing season, what we would plead for is that it should be more closely observed as a model with respect to those who should be made the recipients of gifts. God's gift was bestowed upon those who, because they were lost, and wretched, and helpless, and hopeless, were the objects of divine pity, and for these reasons made the recipients of His greatest gift. Society, the circle of our acquaintance, or Church, or neighborhood, or even the wide world has always furnished a sufficient number of the needy, the destitute, the suffering, the neglected and out-cast to awaken the pity and provide suitable objects upon whom to bestow our gifts. We only plead that at this season these should be made conspicuously the objects of compassion and kindness, and so our gifts be made more like the great pattern gift which we have in that of God to all men when He gave His Son to them in their utmost destitution and need. There is no happiness more pure than that which comes to us by causing happiness to others. Amid all gift-bestowing let not this form of it be forgotten, which consists in giving to those from whom we can expect nothing in return but gratitude, and the thought that in our giving we have been following the example of Him who gave His greatest and best gift at the time of our utmost need, moved only by motives of infinite love and pity. We wish all our readers the brightest kind of a Christmas, made bright to ourselves and others by following the example of Him whose birth and boundless beneficence this glad season commemorates.

The Indian Famine.

WE ask the special attention of our readers to the letter of the Rev. Mr. Wilkie, of Indore, published in another column of this issue, and addressed to the Rev. R. P. Mackay, Foreign Mission Secretary, setting forth the state of things arising out of the famine extending over that part of India, and which, in its severity, is just beginning to be felt. What the condition of these poor people all around our missionaries may yet become we recoil from dwelling upon, only we may say, that anything more terrible than famine, and the diseases which follow in its wake, it is difficult to conceive, and those who have

not actually seen it, can form no adequate conception of it. We trust that the appeal of Mr. Wilkie will at once open up all the floodgates of Christian sympathy, and to Mr. Mackay, from every part of the Church, will come up the message to tell Mr. Wilkie and his co-laborers to welcome every child deserted by its parents or left an orphan by the famine. Now as never before, there comes a call to our Church for self-denial, to preserve alive those whom it is in our power easily to save from death by denying ourselves many things that we can all well do without. This is the time and the occasion to win to Christianity by the exhibition of an object lesson which all can understand, those who might not be won by the ordinary methods. Not only Christianity, but humanity, call aloud to us from India at this time for help, which we trust will be forthcoming abundantly sufficient for the need.

General Assembly's Remit on Sabbath School Board of Publication.

IN view of the remit to Presbyteries in reference to the establishment of a Board of Sabbath School Publication, it seems to us that the attention of the Church ought to be called to the very successful work carried on by the Assembly's Committee on Sabbath Schools and reasons urged why that work should be prosecuted with all the encouragement the Church can give it. The remit referred to is in the following terms:

"Resolved,—That the Sabbath School Committee be authorized to arrange for carrying the debt of \$5,000 incurred for another year: that, in the meantime the work of publication be continued; and that the question of establishing a Board of Sabbath School Publication, and the appointment of an editor, be referred to Presbyteries to be reported on to next Assembly."

A reference to the committee's financial statement, appended to its report, and to which we would direct the attention of all our Presbyteries, will show that the "debt," which some made so much of, is not a matter of discouragement but the reverse. It represents the capital borrowed, so far as it remains unpaid, with which their successful work of publishing lesson helps has been started. The profits from these publications would alone, in a year or two, wipe it all out. This work has all along been carried on under the instructions of the Assembly, and has now reached a magnitude which makes it necessary to set apart some one whose whole time can be given to its editorial management. Before making any such appointment the Assembly, following the precedent set in the case of the Foreign Mission Secretary, takes the advice of Presbyteries. The view of some in the Assembly seemed to be that the demands of our schools were sure to cause this branch of our work to expand very much and that some more business-like machinery than a committee should be set up. We do not agree with this idea, and feel that the mention of a "Board" will prejudice somewhat the real question before the Church. To many imaginations it implies a large outlay for offices, staff, etc. But there is no reason why the publication of our lesson helps should not be managed by a small sub-committee of the Sabbath School Committee, very much as the *Record* and the *Hymnals*. There is no need of new machinery, or the erection of another Church agency. Those who have built up the business are surely the proper parties to carry it on. At the present stage of the work all that is required is the appointment of an editor, who could also act as convener and general business manager. His salary and all the expenses of publication will probably be met by the profits of the lesson helps as soon as the borrowed capital is paid up. Such an appointment must, almost of necessity, be made by next Assembly, since it may be assumed as a settled fact that the work will no longer be performed gratuitously once it yields a revenue, and the Church should not expect such an amount of labor to be done gratuitously.

Club Offers For Next Year.

Young and old should read our liberal club offers as announced on page 550. We expect five thousand new names by the 30th day of December. If friends all along the line only make a little effort we shall not be disappointed. Let the subscriptions pour in day by day until this number is reached; and thus help us to a glad celebration of this semi-jubilee season.