

British American Presbyterian.

Vol. 3.—No. 15.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY MAY 22, 1874

[Whole No. 119

Contributors and Correspondents

REVIVALS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Presbyterians in the Dominion have for many years taken an interest in the revival of religion. This may be seen by examining Kemp's Digest of minutes of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, where a number of pages are devoted to this matter, beginning with the year 1849 and ending with 1860.

With reference to the latter year we find, among other things, the committee, of which the Rev. John Scott, of St. Andrew's Church, London, Ontario, was Convener, states that "the present world seems to bulk much more largely in the mind than the unseen kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ. And while we have been blessed with some spiritual fruit we have not had the honour and happiness of gathering a plentiful harvest, and as we do not live in ordinary times, we should not be satisfied with ordinary results."

The *Record* and your own periodical as well as the *Canada Christian Monthly* are rightly keeping this topic before the eye of the Christian public, and it is with the hope that through the Divine blessing, of deepening the impression which may have been made that I would now add a few remarks. One thing is worthy of note, that when a revival has taken place in a locality there is apt to be a repetition of it in some after time. Dundee in Scotland was visited with it to some extent, more than thirty years ago; the same city received a gracious shower some fourteen years since, and last, though not least, revival influences are shed down on the same community in 1874. Kilsyth had a revival in 1742-3, under the ministry of the Rev. James Robe, and 1839 under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. William Burns, when his sainted son, and others, were privileged to gather in much precious fruit. In the Loch Tay quarter we find that revival work was going on in the time of Dr. McDonald, "the Apostle of the North" as he has been termed, and many years after in that region we find a remarkable work advancing in connection with the labour of the Rev. William C. Burns, Mitchell in Ontario, had a few drops some years since, and it has now a more plentiful effusion.

The following sentences from Mr. Burns' Memoir, may be profitably pondered on by us all. In 1822, the second year of his (Dr. W. Burns) ministry, we find him, along with another congenial spirit, bending over the old records of the Kirk Session, bearing on the date 1742-9, and with solemn interest, deciphering the dim and fading lines that we find to the incidents of the work as then in progress. Towards the close of the same year on two successive Sabbaths, he preached directly and fully on the subject, taking for his text those singularly appointed and impressive words in Micah, viii., 1. "Voe is me, for I am as when they have gathered the summer fruits as the grape-gleaning of the vintage; there is no cluster to eat, my soul desireth the first ripe fruit." He giving the whole case of past attainment and subsequent declension before the congregation and calling on them again to arise and seek the Lord. Do we not find in Bible history showers of blessing coming down once and again in the same locality. Take the Samaritan region as an illustration. Our blessed Redeemer discourses on the living water to the woman at the well. What glorious results followed in her own case as well as that of many of her countrymen. In the same part of the world, after our Lord's ascension, Philip the deacon, "went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them." And as one of the consequences we find it stated that there was great joy in that city.

Ought we not to pray then that the clouds which have dropped the dew of Israel in former times on congregations may do it in our time yet more and more abundantly? And ought we not also to seek that congregation, which may have been comparatively like the dry places, may now receive a plentiful rain, that there may be showers of blessing even when on Mount Zion.

The morning prayer meeting at Mitchell has been specially blessed, and the worthy pastor, when he finds any one from a distance appear to receive saving benefit sends him back to his own pastor stating the case. It is his wish not to proselytize but to christianize. One of the congregation there admitted that when the revival first came it felt like a shock of electricity, and that Mr. Mitchell could address in the German tongue he would soon gather a German congregation to him. We understand that a praying work has been in connection with the revival to the members of the family of the

late Rev. James Campbell, of the Baptist denomination who was wont many years ago to proclaim the gospel in the same village where the Rev. J. W. Mitchell is settled. In earlier days in that locality before churches were erected, it was customary for various denominations to conduct worship in a small school house. What a change in the village, outwardly and inwardly since that period. There were very few to hear Mr. Burns, when he read many years ago in one of the taverns, about the woman who came to Christ, and who washed his feet with her tears. Now, as in Samaria of old, there is great joy in Mitchell, when the joyful sound is declared.

Ministers, elders, and private men of our church, everywhere by your prayers and endeavors help on the blessed work. It is a consummation devoutly to be looked for.

"The Great Shepherd reigns
And His unsuffering kingdom yet shall come."
W. _____

Egmondville, 10th May, 1873.

A SUGGESTION FOR UNITED PRAYER.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Permit me through your columns, respectfully to make a suggestion to your readers of both sections of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It is, that there should be a general and united offering of earnest prayer in all our congregations, for a special outpouring of the Divine blessing on the approaching meeting, in Ottawa, of the two ecclesiastical assemblies representing the two divisions of our Church. These meetings will be, we may be sure, most important and critical ones. Questions of the gravest importance will come up for discussion, and the results of their discussion may affect the highest interests of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for years to come. In regard to these questions there are sure to be very different opinions, strong feelings, and perhaps strong prejudices. It is most desirable that they should be discussed, however, "in love and the spirit of meekness," and that the reproach of acrimony and harsh words, unfair and ungenerous imputations, which has too often attached itself to religious controversies, public and private, and unfortunately in no small degree to those carried on in Church Courts, should be avoided in view of these considerations, I would beg to suggest that the last week in May and the first week of June, be especially devoted by the Christian members of both our Churches, individually and social, for the following blessings:—

That all the deliberations of the two assemblies, as well as the private intercourse of their members may be guided and pervaded by the "wisdom that is from above," which is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated."

That the members, lay and clerical, of both assemblies, may be so imbued with the love of Christ, that hostile feelings may be softened, prejudices and asperities removed, and bitterness made impossible, and that all may be drawn so closely to Christ, who is their centre, that they may of necessity, be drawn closer to each other in their common Lord. That if, as many believe, that valuable organic union which is desired, would be for the glory of God, the promotion of the cause of Christ, the good of our Church, and the filling up of "waste places;" it may, ere long, be happily and harmoniously consummated.

That if it be otherwise, the hearts of Christ's people in both Churches, may be drawn together in that "unity of the spirit," which alone, is the only true "basis" of outward union, and the presence of which would do much to make up for the lack of that outward and organic union which may not, at present, be expedient.

And, that this inward unity,—being in itself, pleasing to Him who has desired that His followers be one in Him,—may be the precursor of such a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, as has already, in answer to prayer, visited other places; such a "revival" as would gladden the hearts of all who love the Lord and seek the good of Zion. May it not be that feelings of acrimony between fellow-Christians are keeping this blessing away? Does not Christ command us, "first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gifts?"

There has been, of late, much discussion as to the proper sphere and objects of prayer. There can hardly, I think, be any question as to the propriety of such objects of prayer as these. We are told that if we ask we shall receive, but we are not told that we shall receive if we do not ask. May it not be that the great Head of the Church is waiting for our earnest and united prayers, in order to bestow those blessings abundantly upon us? Sure I am that, if

earnest prayers arise to Him from the pulpit, from the prayer meetings, from the family altar, from the private chamber, throughout our land, "they will, as certainly as He is faithful who hath promised, bring down from on high such a blessing that there shall not be room enough to receive it!" "According to your faith, so shall it be unto you."

Yours, &c.,
CANADENSIS.

May, 18, 1874.

MR. COCHRANE'S SERMONS

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—You will no doubt be taking notice of the volumes of sermons lately published by the Rev. Wm. Cochrane, of Bantford. As the book came into my hands some days ago, you will be so kind as to allow me to say a few words about these sermons. Having heard the writer preach twice, and knowing his popularity as a preacher and lecturer, with the addition of personal friendship, I felt it my duty to read the book. This labor I intended to do by stated times,—one at a time. Candour compels me to admit that I am not a sermon reader in the common sense of the word. Whatever may be the cause sermons are not materials that I care much about.

Well, Sir, I looked at the book, saw that it was very neatly got up. I read the contents and liked the texts and headings. Musing as to the contents, wondering if there was any likelihood of my reading the whole. The usual thought came to hand, Oh I shall glance over them and close the book with a quiet yawn, and a parting reflection—"All right" "Nothing particular." In this fast, on turning over the leaves, it was not very long until I came to the last sermon. For various reasons I had a fresh interest in the text. Forthwith I braced myself to read the sermon. Having finished, I neither felt sleepy nor satisfied as a man that has eaten enough. I turned to the next sermon, and the next, and what was my astonishment when I found that I had gone steadily backwards reading word and thought of eight sermons. It was midnight! Not sleepy! musing on what I had done it seemed advisable to go to bed. Being busy for a day with various matters, I again took up the book—beginning this time at the beginning, I read straight on to the close of the text "The Master is come and calleth for thee." I laid down the book and repeated the text, and took a deep tender weep.

Now, Sir, I am no Reviewer, neither have I desire to enter upon the work of criticism, properly so called. I write especially with the desire to invite those who have a prejudice against sermons, to read Mr. Cochrane's. In asking the question, Why have you read these sermons? Why at once? 1. I felt these sermons, they thought flew naturally, easily from the text and from the writer, like a fountain of water. No gurgling noise like tapping a beer barrel. No force-pump effort either of intellect or feeling. Sermons that exhaust the reader have exhausted the writer. 2. There is a fine mixture of illustrative power. Apt quotation of prose and poetry. Imagination of a high yet bridled order. Only once did I stop for a moment to attempt an improvement of a figure. 3. Singularly apt quotation of Scripture. In fine, I hope the author may be spared to preach and publish such as he has done. Whatever the critics may say, I have had a sermon treat, which I did not expect. My prayer is that young Canada may take up the natural style and leave the dram head grandiose in other lands.

Yours truly,
PFX AND INK.

DEEDS OF PRESBYTERY.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—In the reported proceedings of a meeting of the Paris Presbytery, held last month, a call was presented to one of its members, who, while he did not say that he would accept of it, the Presbytery on motion, then and there, decided that he should. At the same meeting another call was presented to another of its members, who, after a month's consideration, and at a subsequent meeting, decided that he would accept of it, yet the Presbytery, on motion, decided that he should not. Now, knowing the strong protest once and again taken, and still professedly held in regard to forced settlements, wherein, Mr. Editor, lies the great difference between a congregation being forced by deed of Presbytery to receive a minister against their will, and a minister being forced by deed of Presbytery to remain in a congregation against his will.

In the matter of calls, our book of forms declares that "any preacher or minister in

our communion is eligible; and what does this mean but that any such may be chosen, and if chosen, what is the value of his decision, when, as in the above case, it may be deed of Presbytery be set aside? And, if such be done in "the model Presbytery," why may not "any preacher or minister" be kept by deed of Presbytery, as he is, and where he is, all his days; or, why may not "any minister or probationer," by deed of Presbytery, be sent where he refuses a call, as well as be prevented from going where he accepts a call? Although being nearer the rising sun than the minister that made the motion, yet the matter is to me not a little dubious and dark. A. B. C.

EAST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH TOTAL ABSTINENCE SOCIETY.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—A reunion in connection with the above Society was held on the evening of the 14th inst., in the basement of the East Church, Toronto, and was largely attended. The President, the Rev. J. M. Cameron, in the chair. After the opening exercises, the President made some pointed remarks upon the subject of temperance, vindicating the principle of prohibition, and calling upon the friends of the cause present to work, not only for the advancement of temperance in their neighbourhood, but also in the matter of petitions, to work until our legislation can no longer say the country is not ripe for prohibition. Songs, duets, and recitations were then the order of the evening. The singing was conducted by Prof Corrigan, ably assisted by Misses Blackstone, Gough, Saunders, and Brown; also Messrs. Semple and Hodson. Mr. Scott recited in a very pleasant manner, "The Rumed Cottage," and "The Beautiful Child," Mr. Davies, "Close the Ale House Door."

After a vote of thanks were given to those who had contributed to the evenings entertainment, the Doxology was sung, and the meeting dismissed. We believe there is also a "Band of Hope" for the children in connection with the congregation. Would it not be well if there was a temperance organisation in every church. Why is it that the church leaves the temperance cause to be worked by outside institutions? Is it not a part of the Church's work?—Con.

DR. HALL'S SUNDAY SCHOOLS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—On Sunday, May 8th, the anniversary of the Sunday Schools in connection with Dr. Hall's Church, was held. There are four schools, the church schools, and the schools on 14th Street, 7th Avenue, and King Street. At a quarter past three the children came, in order, with the teachers, into the church. The usual afternoon preaching service was dispensed with, and the body of the church reserved for the Sunday Schools. It was packed with 1,500 children, and 170 teachers, while the galleries were crowded with as many of the congregation as could gain admittance. The exercises were of a very interesting character. Henry Day, Esq., gave an address to the teachers. Dr. Hall preached to the children from the words—"Shew piety at home." The sermon was full of earnestness, and contained several touching illustrations suited to children. Here is one of them. He said that one rainy day he was walking in Dublin when he saw a little girl standing at a door unable to get in. She had returned home sooner than was expected, and she could not reach up to the knocker upon the door. He said he was glad to run up the steps and give several loud raps upon it. "My dear children," he continued, "the knocker upon heaven's door is so low that the smallest child upon his knees may reach it." It was inspiring to hear children and teachers, with one heart and voice sing such hymns as—"Sun of my soul, thou Saviour dear," and "Work for the night is coming."

By such means as these Dr. Hall infuses his own spirit of earnestness and zeal into the teachers and scholars. The majority of teachers are well qualified for the work. An incident mentioned by Dr. Hall will illustrate this. He said that a few Sundays before, he took a walk in the afternoon to the King street School. The teachers were engaged with their classes when he went in. Around each teacher was a circle of heads bent anxiously forward. So intent were all upon their work that he went all up one aisle and nearly down the other, before a single person noticed his presence. In how many of our schools could this be done? D. J. M.

New York, 5th May, 1874.

An obstinate man does not hold opinion but they hold him; for when he is once possessed with an error, it is like a devil only cast out with great difficulty.

Status of Retired Ministers.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—In a few weeks hence, the Remit on the Status of retired Ministers will come up again before the General Assembly. It was sent down to Presbyteries in 1872, and was partly discussed, but not disposed of in 1873. Its terms are the following:—"That, according to the constitutional practice of Presbyterianism, none but settled ministers, senior pastors, theological professors, and ordained ministers called to fill special positions in the work of the Church, should be recognized as ministers entitled to have their names entered on the rolls of Presbyteries; and such being the case, any exceptions should be made on their own merits, and therefore now legislation on this matter is uncalled for." Now, in reference to this undispensed of Remit, I have two things to say. First, that it is more than questionable if "the constitutional practice of Presbyterianism" be such as is here alleged. What the practice is in Scotland, and Canada, and Australia, may not be the practice in other countries. From one or more letters on this subject which appeared in your columns, it appears that the practice in the United States and in Ireland is to place the names of all retired ministers on the rolls of Presbyteries. Whether this latter practice deserves to be called "constitutional," I shall not inquire; and I am not disposed to enlarge on the point. Enough in the meantime that it is a "practice." But secondly, let me express the hope that the other terms of the Remit will be altered, and that such an Act will be passed as will better harmonize with Presbyterian purity. To enact that "any exceptions should be made on their own merits," were to set aside Presbyterian purity, and to enhance a distinction which has no proper warrant. It is well known that ministers who have charges have a right to speak and to vote in our church courts; that is Presbyterian purity. But, to speak of some retired ministers having a right to speak and vote, while the said right is withheld from others, to speak of exceptions being made on their own merits—as if merits were not to be thought of in others—were to over-ride Presbyterian purity. No one fancies that a settled minister with a large salary and high talents should have church power among us, which another may not have whose talents are slender, and whose salary is small. Why then countenance the notion that some retired ministers, who perhaps have laboured for many years, or have occupied prominent pulpits, should be left in possession of church power, but other retired ministers who perhaps laboured as long, or even longer, but have occupied only obscure pulpits, should not be allowed church power. And yet this very anomaly exists at present, as it has also existed for years past. Examine, if you will, our latest rolls of Presbyteries, and you will find in these the names of seven ministers or more, who have no ministerial charges, who are not Theological Professors, who are not filling special positions in the work of the church, who, in short, are not entitled to power more than others. Their names, to be sure, are on the rolls with the authority of the General Assembly. But where is the propriety of that authority? It is more than disputable; it is manifestly wrong, and so wrong is it in my estimation, as also in the estimation of not a few, that unless these exceptional names are swept away, or the names of all retired ministers are put upon the rolls, it is idle to talk of Presbyterian purity. Indeed it is more than time that decisive and equitable action were taken on this matter. I could name a number of retired ministers, who occupied charges for thirty years, some of them longer, whose names were allowed to drop from our Presbytery rolls, while others whose term of office was shorter, have their names retained on these rolls. As to why these invidious distinctions are countenanced, either by Presbyteries or by the General Assembly, I do not presume to offer an opinion. But if you, Sir, or any of your readers can vindicate these things, I should like to have the vindication. Till that is done, I cannot but hold as indicated already, that settled ministers, senior pastors, theological professors, and ordained ministers called to fill special positions in the work of the Church, should have their names entered on the rolls of Presbyteries; but that as to retired ministers not belonging to any of these charges, their names should not be entered on the rolls, or, at least, any, that all their names should be so entered, "that there may be an equality."

Yours truly,

C.

May 12, 1874.

CHICKENS v. DUCKS.—Rev. W. Wal was much distressed by a so-called flock, occasioned by an agitator raised in Dumfries on the subject of baptism; a number of Baptists attempting to set up a church being the best means to the object. One day in the month on the words, "If we have gathered the chickens, his feeling of forth; and with tear-frears, ye ken loo the words o' wisdom ye year after ye chickens, but I'd ducks among ye the water! was electrical; lip, and from the of the figure stands of that time a deny to other made the flocks.