

## The Presbyterian Review

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Toronto, Feb. 11, 1897

### OUR SABBATH SCHOOL PUBLICATIONS.

IN another column will be found a statement from the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee anent the overture on the constituting of a Board of Publication and the appointment of a paid Editor. This is intended for the guidance of Presbyteries in forming their judgment as to the return they are asked to make regarding it. Whatever may be thought of the document the action of the Committee in taking the Presbyteries into their confidence and in giving the fullest possible information is to be commended. It is to be hoped that the statement will be fully studied, and the whole matter carefully examined before the Assembly meets.

It will certainly afford a good deal of relief that the Committee is able to present a more favorable financial showing on the operations of 1896 than even they themselves expected at the time of the last Assembly. Thanks mainly to increased collections from Sabbath Schools and contributions from private individuals the liabilities are now put at \$3,270 instead of \$5,000 as was then estimated. It is still more satisfactory to learn that, unless the figures given are altogether illusory, we seem to have reached a point when the liabilities might begin to diminish instead of increasing as they have done for several years past. Under these circumstances the Church will probably feel more like going forward in the line of its present action than retracing its steps and starting afresh on a new policy. It would have been cheaper and less risky if we had been able to utilize, everywhere, the publications of the Philadelphia Board which many still prefer. But certainly if the Church is willing to pay the necessary price it may have its own Lesson Helps and its own editor and make them what it pleases.

At the same time we cannot help feeling that this course will be taken by a large section of the Church somewhat under compulsion. The Committee had so far involved itself financially that retreat was almost impossible without virtual bankruptcy. It would have been much more satisfactory had the Church been able to consider its whole policy at the present time free from the entanglements that have arisen. Many who would have preferred a different course will be compelled to acquiesce, somewhat reluctantly, in the proposed arrangement.

We regret to notice that the Committee repeats, without any substantial qualification, the statement as to the failure of the negotiations with the Philadelphia Board of Publication which appeared in the report of the last Assembly, notwithstanding the further communications from its authorized representatives which were then laid before the house as to its willingness to come to terms. It is now obvious that from the beginning these negotiations were foredoomed to failure and that there was never any real desire to re-open them. This is not surprising when we remember that they were conducted wholly by the Conve-

who had other aims altogether, and who might even be said to have a personal interest in their failure.

If as the result of the returns from Presbyteries, it is judged wise to appoint a paid editor to prepare these publications there is little doubt that the Assembly will select the present Convener. But, again, it will be to some extent under compulsion and without any real freedom of choice. In many ways he deserves the appointment. His ability is undoubted, his zeal and industry have been phenomenal, he has made considerable sacrifices for the sake of the scheme. But, as he is the one mainly responsible for the existing situation by urging the premature extension of the work, it would be only fitting that some one else should be hereafter Convener of the Committee and chief adviser as to its policy. We agree with the Committee in thinking there is no need at the present time for constituting a separate Board of Publication.

### CHRISTIANITY AND MANKIND.

At a time like the present when the world and its allurements are putting forth claims on the attention and devotion of Christian men with unusual persistence and success, it is well to get back to first principles. The place and the duty of the Christian are admirably set forth by an esteemed contemporary thus:—

"Christianity came into the world to stay and to prevail. From the beginning it possessed an original, royal and dominating energy. Though encountering opposition, it held on its course undaunted and undismayed. On the one hand, it showed its superiority over Judaism, and, on the other, over heathenism, proving itself a liberalizing, beneficent, disenthraling and purifying force, by which the mind rose to loftier and grander experiences, the heart yielded to a stronger, nobler and more refining affection, and the life responded to holier, happier and worthier influences.

Coming in contact with the social, political and moral agencies of mankind, with existing diverse sentiments which had been the growth of ages and with human carnality and depravity. Christianity started new ideas and issues; questions of casuistry requiring careful consideration—problems, weighty and serious, respecting conduct. Its followers were often perplexed as to what was duty under given circumstances. To answer these inquiries, special illumination, wisdom and guidance from above, or large measures of the Holy Ghost, were necessary on the part of its apostolic propagators, who, after the death of its Founder, became the expounders of its doctrines, laws and principles.

Christ is in the soul, regulating and directing, according to the general principles of His kingdom, and it is for each Christian to be obedient to the promptings of that inward life in the relations which he sustains to the world as a member of the family, of society, of the State and of the Church. He is to be thoughtful prudent and circumspect, following the dictates of an enlightened and Christian expediency in the various circumstances in which he is placed. Jesus has not tied him down to precise rules in every case where he is to act or to assert himself, but leaves him, within due metes and bounds, to exercise an intelligent, judicious, conscientious and responsible liberty.

### WORK FOR THE YOUNG.

The annual meeting of the Young People's Union of the Toronto Presbytery brought forth much interesting material. The annual reports were quite satisfactory showing that interest in the work of the Church is being maintained among the young people