

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

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OFFICE—NO. 5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

TO CORRESPONDENTS

Letters and articles intended for the next issue should be in the hands of the Editor not later than Tuesday morning.

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The figures following name on address label indicate the date to which the paper is paid. Thus John Jones, 31 Dec. 7, shows subscription paid up to end of 1877.

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Mr. John Imrie, General Agent for THE PRESBYTERIAN, is now in Eastern Ontario pushing the interests of this journal. We commend him to the best offices of ministers and people. Any assistance rendered him in his work will be taken by us as a personal kindness.



TORONTO, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 1877.

A WORD WITH THE READER.

ACCORDING to promise, we place before our readers to-day THE PRESBYTERIAN in its new shape and dress. The improvements are so self-evident as to require no lengthy remark, and we hope they will meet the approval of subscribers.

We desire, just now, to urge on all our friends the importance of putting forth a special effort to extend the circulation of THE PRESBYTERIAN. There are still thousands of homes where it is not taken, where, if it were regularly read, the people would be benefited, and the various schemes of our Church advanced. If ministers and members who read and value the paper as an instrument for good, would let it be known that it will be furnished from this date till the end of 1878, along with a copy of the PRESBYTERIAN YEAR BOOK for the usual subscription price—\$2.00—we are sure many would send in their names. Now is the time to go about the work. A liberal premium list, advertised on the last page of this issue, offers a variety of remuneration for the labor involved.

The price of THE PRESBYTERIAN is sometimes urged against it. "We can get good family newspapers at \$1.00 and \$1.50," urges a well-to-do farmer, "and why should we be asked to pay \$2.00 for our Church paper?" The objection is not a good one. We are quite content if friends will only compare THE PRESBYTERIAN with other denominational periodicals. No other comparison can fairly be made; and such a comparison we court. Take the *Canadian Baptist*, the *Christian Guardian*, or the *Presbyterian Witness*—they are all similar publications to ours; and they are all two dollar papers. Why is this? Simply because such papers, having no daily from which to get the type for a weekly edition, like the papers to which reference is made, can not be printed at any figure below \$2.00. This has been demonstrated over and over again in Canada; and in the United States the religious weekly is usually from \$2.50 to \$4.00—the ordinary price being \$3.00. Let us hear no more complaints as to the price! But let every one help to bring about the time when we shall be in a position to even improve the very handsome sheet now sent out.

SECULAR AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION.

IT is very evident that the present system of education is not such as can be accepted as satisfactory to the religious portion of the community. Episcopalians, and Methodists as well as our own Assembly and one of our Synods have from time to time given utterance to felt dissatisfaction. And now before the Baptist convention a most carefully prepared and able paper in the same direction was read by Professor Wells, was well received, and published in full in the *Globe* newspaper. This is significant. The change of adherence to the antiquated idea of a state church and a desire for ecclesiastical aggrandizement has freely been brought against others, but what will your secularists now say, when the most pronounced antagonists of state churchism, or churchism at all, approve of the following strong statements? It is true that the object aimed at by the Baptist Essayist, as chiefly by the Methodist advocates, is to show that *Denominational Colleges* are preferable to a non-religious state college, and are entitled to a share of the Government support, nay, that such institutions are the only proper outcome of earnest Christian sentiment. Still Prof. Wells admits that the principles enunciated are far wider in their reach, and apply equally to the lowest school. From one point of view as the college for resident students takes the place of the family, it is more important that religious influences should surround the student than the child living at home; but when, it is borne in mind, first that the foundations of religious character are generally laid before a young man or woman is of age to enter a college; and also that not one in ten of our youth ever reaches the college, the school becomes an immensely greater factor than the college in the result of national intelligence, religion, and morality. After showing that education is the offspring of Christianity which seeks the elevation of every man as a brother; that the doctrines of the Bible are the most powerful stimulus ever applied to the human intellect; that Christianity has "proved itself the fountain-head of all true civilization, the very elixir of the highest intellectual life," and is still bound to control the forces which are urging resistlessly forward the great waves of nineteenth century thought, the essayist says, that this great end is best and most effectually to be accomplished by the religious denominations directing and controlling the education of the young. Then he asks what is secular education?

"Does the phrase 'Secular Education' fairly cover this broad ground of intellectual and moral culture? Does it all refer to the moulding of the mental habit and the moral character? Does it not rather mean simply the necessary preparation of boys and girls for the duties of every-day life, by teaching them arithmetic, and geography, and history, and when desirable, Latin and Algebra, or chemistry and physiology. I hold that it is as utterly impossible to separate this lower work from the higher one of mind and heart-culture as it is to move a body without changing its place, or to hammer a malleable metal without altering its shape. They cannot be separated in time. The years during which this arithmetic, and Latin, and chemistry must be learned are, by the immutable law of nature, the very years during which, whether we will or no, the life-character, mental, moral—might I not add religious?—is generally determined. They cannot be separated in fact. The modes of thinking acquired in the study of the text-book and under the direction of the teacher will almost invariably be to a great extent the modes of thinking afterwards used in solving the most solemn problems of life (social and political, moral and religious). The habits, too, of truth or falsehood, of frankness or insincerity, of sterling, fearless honesty, or of weak, contemptible expediency, which are formed or confirmed on the college play-ground and in the college halls will, in the majority of

cases, cling to the man or woman through all the future. It is often argued or assumed that the question in regard to teachers and professors is simply a question of knowledge and ability. Mathematics and science and history are, we are told, matters of fact and demonstration, not of opinion or faith. Hence the idea of making the question of religious character or religious belief one of the tests of a teacher's fitness is denounced as the shallowest nonsense or the most contemptible bigotry. "How," it is asked, and the objection may be interrogative, but the tone is the tone of contempt, "can such subjects as these be taught either religiously or irreligiously?" "What can either religion or morality have to do with them or they with it?" The men who reason thus are often close students of the immutable laws and the subtle forces of the world of matter; but they seem quite to forget that the world of mind is subject to laws equally immutable and forces equally subtle."

Next comes the question:

"Who are the individuals primarily responsible for securing these results? The answer may be given in one word—Parents. Christianity has exalted and sanctified the family relation. If the individual is the first, the family is the second unit in its social system. At the present day the need of some education for all is pretty generally admitted, but there is a very strong tendency to throw upon the State the chief responsibility in regard both to determining its character and providing for its supply. With regard to primary education it is so essential to the best interests of society that every child should be taught to read and write, that compulsory legislation and the use of public funds, for the accomplishment of this end, are probably justifiable on sound principles of political economy. But this by no means shifts the responsibility from parents. Perhaps our present Common School system, in which the expense and the control are both divided between the Government and the people, is the best now attainable. I very seriously doubt if it be the best, absolutely. I believe that the father and mother who have a just appreciation of their own duty and of all that is involved in education, will not yield to any society or Government whether general or municipal, the right and responsibility of saying what shall be the kind of early training their children shall receive, and what the mental and moral character of the man, or woman, to whose moulding influence the plastic souls of their loved ones shall be committed. As culture becomes more general, I have little doubt that a time will arrive when no Christian parents will be willing to entrust the early education of their children to the hands of any teacher who has not, in addition to the necessary qualities of head and heart, had all the advantages the best collegiate training can bestow, and whose life does not give evidence of the indwelling power of true religion."

These are words wise, weighty and far-reaching. But more is to follow:

"I am convinced that the absolute divorce which our laws now pronounce, and claim special credit for pronouncing, between religious and intellectual culture, is an unnatural as well as an unholy attempt to put asunder what God hath joined together. I fear in thus speaking I may be committing, in the view of many, the sin of heterodoxy. Let me not, however be mistaken. The state is not to blame; it cannot do otherwise. It has no choice in the matter. Even were it not precluded, as it is most effectually, by the differences of opinions and mutual jealousies of the sects, from making provision for religious instruction in the schools, it could not attempt such a work without going entirely beyond its sphere. For any Government, as most assuredly for those which are forced to fight their way to the benches through such sloughs, and to maintain themselves there by such modes of warfare as our party-politics seem to render necessary for Governments so formed and sustained—to undertake even by proxy the work of religious instruction, would be indeed to put forth an unhallowed hand to steady the ark of God. But the logical conclusion from the impossibility of the State combining religious and secular elements in their systems of education seems to me to be not that those elements cannot be combined, but that the work of education is one which does not properly belong to the state at all. The method, then, by which I attempt to reach a clear answer to the problem set me is by showing, that as Christianity is the most powerful patron, and the most preserving strength of all sound learning and all intellectual activity, she cannot in the nature of things stand aloof from their progress—that the best interests of society and of the human race demand that she should permeate all learning with her own spirit and should lead the outgoings of all intellectual life in her own right channels; that in order to do this she must carry the might of her holy motives and influences to the fountain heads, or in other words, must dwell as a living presence and controlling power in our schools and colleges—that she cannot in the nature of things do this while those schools and colleges are so constituted and managed, that she is either forbidden to cross the thresholds or permitted to do so only formally as a stranger and a guest,—that this state of things can be changed and religion installed in her true position only in schools and colleges, built up, endowed, and managed by religious bodies, and that the present state of division in the Christian Church renders it impracticable for this to be done except by the denominations, as a rule, doing it for themselves.

Our space will not allow of further comment now, but as discussion on this all-important matter proceeds, as it is evidently destined to do in view of secret things which are coming to light in connection with our present purely secular system, we shall endeavor to do our part towards securing a moral and God-fearing education for the youth of our beloved country.