

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.

OFFICE—NO. 8 JORDAN ST., TORONTO



Edited by Rev. Wm. Inglis.

TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 14, 1881.

PRESBYTERIAL CONFERENCES.

WE have only room this week to refer in briefest terms to the Conference on the State of Religion, which has been held by the Presbytery of Toronto during the past days. In the highest and best sense of these terms these meetings have been a great success. All present felt that it was indeed good to be there, and very precious and permanent results may be looked for from this and similar meetings held here and elsewhere. We expect in our next issue to be able to give in full one or more of the papers read at the Conference.

MISSIONARY MEETINGS IN TORONTO.

WE call special attention to the advertisement in another column in reference to the missionary services to be held in this city on this day week and the subsequent Sabbath. The various meetings which Dr. Mackay has been holding for some considerable time past in the eastern sections of the Dominion, have been uniformly and exceptionally successful, not only or chiefly in the numbers which have attended and in the sums which have been raised, but in the deep spiritual interest which has been awakened, and in the very blessed personal quickening which many of God's people have thereby experienced. Almost without a single exception these visits of Dr. Mackay have been felt to be times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord; and if a season of revival be simply one in which greater attention than usual is given to religion, and when the things connected with life and salvation are treated more than is ordinarily the case in accordance with what their recognized importance would seem to demand, then such a revival has been experienced in most of the congregations visited. We hope that this will be increasingly the case, not only in those localities where Dr. Mackay may still hold meetings, but all over the Church. It would be a token inexpressibly for good if in every congregation and among all its different classes, this interest were awakened and maintained—interest in one's own individual salvation and then in that of others; and that not so much by extraordinary and spasmodic efforts as in the usual course of faithful and sustained pastoral work, and in answer to united and believing prayer. The hearts of very many of God's people in our Church are greatly set upon this, and the indications all are that they will not be disappointed in their aspirations. A silent work of preparation has in many cases been going on, and such addresses as those of Dr. Mackay are greatly suited to further and develop this work. Personal interest in the man and the comparative romance of his career may have helped in some instances to intensify the excitement. But in far more we are persuaded that it has been of a higher and more substantial character, and that the more closely it is watched and the more dispassionately examined, the more will the conclusion be reached that the Spirit of the Lord has been very graciously and very unmistakably present in all His quickening and saving power. Let us hope that all which has as yet been experienced shall be only as the first droppings of a mighty and refreshing shower.

"THE CHURCH" AND "THE DENOMINATIONS."

AT the late Episcopal Conference held in this city, Provost Whittaker read a paper which has called forth a good deal of unpleasantly hostile criticism, from the writer quietly taking it for granted that the Anglican Church is by way of eminence the Church, from which all other denominations of professed Christians are dissenters, and to union with which all will need to return before they can with propriety be regarded as parts of the body of Christ, or in any de-

gree have a claim to being recognized and treated as such. Bishop Sweatman has also been greatly found fault with for saying that he cultivated "a cordial street acquaintance with Nonconformists" but could not co-operate with them in any religious or semi-religious work except that of the Bible Society.

Now, we frankly say that we find little ground for all the astonishment and indignation which have been felt and expressed about such utterances. The whimsically absurd position taken by the Provost is simply that which rigid and consistent Churchmen have always occupied. The somewhat foolishly patronizing, not to say grotesque, airs of Bishop Sweatman, like those of Archbishop Lynch, are not in the slightest degree more exaggerated or offensive than those which have always been displayed by the great mass of his co-religionists. Their Church principles naturally, and necessarily lead them to follow such a course; and, however offensive and unbecoming that may be, it is something not so much calling for indignant protest as for sorrowful regret, not unmingled it may be with a considerable tendency to something like contempt. We are not sure if Provost Whittaker allows that it is possible for anything like genuine Christian character to be found in any of those who are separated from "the Church." We shall not say that he does not, for his words are ambiguous; but if he is logical in his reasoning and consistent in his practice, he certainly could not make such an admission seeing that in that case he would have to declare that he could not, for ecclesiastical reasons, engage in the slightest act of religious worship with some who, he was persuaded, had been bought with the same precious blood, were partakers of like precious faith with himself, and were journeying to the same heavenly home.

But whatever may be Provost Whittaker's theories, or Bishop Sweatman's practice, what does it matter, except to those gentlemen themselves and to those ecclesiastically associated with them? Arrogant and not seldom ignorant Churchmen have never been great novelties, and in such a country as this their lofty exclusiveness or peculiar ecclesiastical theories are matters of exceedingly little importance. If they are pleased with the toy of so-called Apostolic Succession, and are satisfied to make themselves at once absurd and offensive by Pharisaic exclusiveness, why not? Their lofty ecclesiastical assumptions have times without number been shewn to be foundationless, and their personal and Church isolation is, as far as others are concerned, a fit subject possibly for criticism but certainly not for complaint. They are not the first who have said, "Stand by thyself for I am holier than thou," and it is in the greatest degree unlikely that they will be the last. Spiritual fellowship, let it never be forgotten, is not a thing to be forced, and no one with becoming self-respect ought to complain when it is refused, for the very refusal clearly indicates that the oneness of sentiment, the sympathy of feeling, and the identity of aim and aspiration, indispensable to such fellowship, are not there. How either Provost Whittaker or Bishop Sweatman could fancy that such talk as they indulged in on the occasion in question, could have any soothing or conciliatory influence upon the "separatists," is more than we can divine. Perhaps they did not think of that at all, and meant nothing but a private and confidential comparison of notes among themselves as to the proper bearing of Churchmen "towards those that are without," which somehow or other got into the newspapers from the enterprise and ubiquity of reporters. In any case it is attaching far too much importance to a very small matter to make much or any ado over it. From one cause or another some of Christ's people have often not been able to recognize the characteristics of discipleship in others, though these were very marked and unmistakable. In such cases it has been to the loss, perhaps to the discredit, certainly to the ultimate regret, of those who were affected with such disagreeable and possibly culpable blindness; but it has always only made bad worse when there has been anything like a wrangle over the matter. The world is wide enough for both; the work pressing, sufficient to call forth the utmost ability of each. Foolish and foundationless claims to ecclesiastical superiority may very properly be exposed and exploded. Refusal of anything like fraternal intercourse or recognition of Christian character can only with proper self-respect be allowed in silence and indifference to go for what it is worth.

Till a spirit very different from what has hitherto prevailed and prevails now among the great mass of

the Anglican clergy both in this Dominion and elsewhere be displayed, we have been long convinced that anything like either friendly intercourse or fraternal co-operation between these and other bodies of Christians was quite out of the question. That such should be the case must be a matter of deep regret to many, but that it is undoubtedly the fact, is becoming every day more and more manifest to all; and shutting one's eyes to its reality will not make it less the fact, or less disagreeable, and discreditable as well.

THE WALDENSES.

WE call special attention to the letter of Dr. Mathews, which will be found in another column. The Waldenses have become world-famous as those who kept the faith when all our fathers worshipped stocks and stones. The frightful character of the persecutions which they endured at the hands of the Pope and his myrmidons is, in a general way, familiar to all in any measure acquainted with the past history of the Church of Christ. Anything more atrocious than the treatment which these simple-hearted inhabitants of the Alpine valleys received at the hands of those who called themselves followers of Him who came not to destroy men's lives but to save them, could not well be imagined. We suppose it was understood to be the most effective and Christ-like plan which at that time could be thought of for the "Church" to pursue in its dealings with the "denominations." In describing these noble men and women of the valleys, one writer, so recently as 1870, says: "In every age the manners of the people have been the same. They are tall, graceful, vigorous; a mountain race, accustomed to labour, or to hunt: the chamois on his native crags. The women are fair and spotless; their rude but plaintive hymns are often heard resounding from the chestnut groves; their native refinement softens the apparent harshness of their frugal lives. Over the whole population of the Vaudois valleys has ever reigned the charm of a spotless purity. Their fair and tranquil countenances speak only frankness and simplicity; their lives are passed in deeds of charity, in honest labours, and in unvarying self-respect. The vices and the follies, the luxury and the crime, that have swept over Europe, never invaded the happy valleys unless carried thither by the papal troops. No pride, no avarice, no fierce resentment, disturbs the peaceful Vaudois; no profanity, no crime, is heard of in this singular community. To wait upon the sick, to aid the stranger, are eagerly contended for as a privilege; compassion even for their enemies is the crowning excellence of this generous race." The same writer gives the following short account of the past history of these brave and simple-hearted believers: "We may accept, for we cannot refute, the narrative of their early history given by the Vaudois themselves. Soon after the dawn of Christianity, they assert, their ancestors embraced the faith of St. Paul, and practised the simple rites and usages described by Justin or Tertullian. The Scriptures became their only guide; the same belief, the same sacraments, they maintain to-day they held in the age of Constantine and Tertullian. They relate that, as the Romish Church grew in power and pride, their ancestors repelled its assumptions, and refused to submit to its authority; that when, in the ninth century, the use of images was enforced by superstitious popes, they, at least, never consented to become idolaters; that they never worshipped the Virgin, nor bowed at an idolatrous mass. When, in the eleventh century, Rome asserted its supremacy over kings and princes, the Vaudois were its bitterest foes. The three valleys formed the theological school of Europe. The Vaudois missionaries travelled into Hungary and Bohemia, France, England, even Scotland, and aroused the people to a sense of the fearful corruption of the Church. They pointed to Rome as the antichrist, the centre of every abomination. They taught, in the place of the Romish innovations, the pure faith of the apostolic age. Lollard, who led the way to the reforms of Wycliffe, was a preacher from the valleys; the Albigenses of Provence, in the twelfth century, were the fruits of the Vaudois missions; Germany and Bohemia were reformed by the teachers of Piedmont; Huss and Jerome did little more than proclaim the Vaudois faith; and Luther and Calvin were only the necessary offspring of the apostolic churches of the Alps." Perhaps this may be a little strongly put, though it would be difficult to exaggerate the high-hearted nobility and simple Christ-like devotion of