

## British American Presbyterian,

102 BAY STREET, TORONTO.

FOR TERMS, SEE EIGHTH PAGE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON

Editor and Proprietor.

## TO CORRESPONDENTS.

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

All communications must be accompanied by the writer's name, otherwise they will not be inserted.

Articles not accepted will be returned, if, at the time they are sent, a request is made to that effect, and sufficient postage stamps are enclosed. Manuscripts not so accompanied will not be preserved, and subsequent requests for their return cannot be complied with.

## OUR GENERAL AGENT.

MR. CHARLES NICOL, General Agent for the PRESBYTERIAN, is now in Western 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.

## British American Presbyterian.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1877.

We understand, says the *Sarnia Observer*, that the "Presbyterian Musical Association" is hard at work practicing for a Sacred Concert, which they intend giving in a very short time, for the purpose of providing a new organ for the Sabbath School. The Association is composed of a number, (over twenty voices we believe) of the best singers in the church, and they are taking up a different style of music from anything that has been practised heretofore in Sarnia. They propose giving one part of the concert entirely from Handel's Oratorio of the Messiah, with Mr. Fred Warrington and a lady soloist from Toronto, to take the solo parts.

A circular, signed by Rev. Dr. Cochrane, the honored Convener of Home Missions, is being sent to every minister and congregation in Ontario and Quebec, containing a valuable suggestion. It is proposed that every Church take up a collection in behalf of Home Missions on Thanksgiving Day. We observe with pleasure that, in accordance with the suggestion of the last General Assembly, the Governor-General is corresponding with the various Lieutenant-governors of provinces, with a view to having one day observed throughout the Dominion as a day of National Thanksgiving. Should the desirable result be brought about of having a National Thanksgiving Day, would it not be well to invite all the congregations of the Church to take up collections for the Home Mission Scheme? A large sum would undoubtedly be raised, which we are sure would go far to wipe off the debt already incurred in carrying on the important work of Home Missions. In itself it would be a worthy expression of thankfulness to Almighty God for crowning the year with His goodness.

We have before us a goodly volume containing the Acts and Proceedings of the Third General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. It contains two hundred and sixty pages of closely printed matter. In it are found the *res gestae* of the Assembly held at Halifax, with the various reports of standing Committees, with the narrative of religion, with the reports of Colleges and other institutions of learning connected with the Church, with obituary notices, and also with detailed reports of the contributions of all the churches to congregational, missionary and benevolent objects. It is a work that is got up with great care, reflecting much credit upon our statesmanlike agent of the Church Rev. Dr. Reid, and those associated with him. Such a book should be in the hands of every family in the Church as well as of every minister and elder. The more we dip into these minutes, we feel all the greater reason for being proud of our Noble Church, and her vast undertakings for God and the Truth.

The death of Brigham Young is an important event in the history of Mormonism, but it is of comparatively little interest to the great outside world. It remains to be seen whether he shall be succeeded by the son whom he is said to have named as his successor. But whoever be the successor of the prophet, he will have to look out for a complete change in the role which the Head of the Mormon religion is called to play. The Head centre will henceforth be something like the Pope, strip of his temporality. In fact, the Church and State cannot any longer co-exist in Utah. With a United States' Governor and United States' rule, the Mormon Church can be little more than a mere sect, while its characteristic, polygamy, is bound to disappear. An Act of toleration may be passed in the case of those who are now polygamists, but the days of polygamy are numbered. The last to complain of this, will be a good many among the Mormons themselves, who find that it is about all a decent man can do to manage one wife, let alone a number of wives. Unless, therefore, the Mormons betake themselves once more to the wilderness, the blot of polygamy is bound to disappear from American civilization. With this and slavery gone, what a chance for the better!

## THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

It is most gratifying to learn that the American Presbyterian Board is experiencing a large demand for the Shorter Catechism. It is also worthy of note that this book is being translated into a variety of languages and becoming a text book in many Foreign Missionary Sabbath Schools. In England it is taking a hold upon the people and is being freely circulated. Amongst the Presbyterians of Ireland it keeps its old honored place. It has always been highly valued in Scotland, where it is taught in the public as well as the Sabbath school. There it is a household book. Once the minister in his pastoral visits used it in catechizing old and young alike, and while this good custom may only now prevail in a few isolated parishes, it is still expected of every child that he have the catechism at his fingers' ends. It would be interesting to know the actual yearly circulation of this book. We are certain that if the facts were fully before us, it would be found that the Shorter Catechism enjoys a circulation second only to that of the Scriptures, or Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress.

The value of the Catechism cannot be over-estimated. It is an admirable compend of the doctrines of the Bible. As a logical structure it is perfect. When committed to memory, it gives strength to the mind. For grasp and finish, it can only be compared to Euclid's geometry. As a structural form, there is not a single link wanting. It is a complete chain of doctrine without rear or break, setting forth the truth of Scripture concerning God, concerning the creation of the world, the formation of man, his fall from purity, his condemnation in sin, concerning the Redeemer and his glorious work, concerning the Spirit and His work in the soul, concerning the rule of man's obedience, and also faith and repentance, the sacraments and prayer as the blessed means of grace. Whoever learns the Catechism thoroughly possesses a valuable outline, which can easily be filled up from Scripture. The Bible will then be known systematically. It will be mastered in detail. The Unity of the Word of God will be more and more felt. Without the aid of the Shorter Catechism the Bible will too frequently be read in a desultory manner. In its oneness it will not be so fully appreciated. Like the tables and measures of the science of arithmetic, with these thoroughly mastered and made our own, the most intricate problems can be solved. We can weigh planets and suns as with a balance. We can carry out the most profound calculations which are connected with science and commerce. So with the Catechism at our command, we can understand the beautiful symmetry of Scripture. We carry with us the key that will open to view the sublime truths of Holy Writ. With it we will the more easily master the Word of God, and be able to put it to practical use in our every day life and experience.

It is thought by many to be too hard and difficult a book for young minds to commit to memory. They regard the task of learning it as little less than drudgery. But such should reflect upon what it has done for the Scottish mind. Mr. Froude, the learned historian of England, traces the logical structure and capacity of the Scottish mind to the system of Calvinistic doctrine in which it has been so long and carefully trained. He might have said further, what is presupposed in such a statement, that the strength of Scotsmen lies in the fact that while young they are carefully instructed in the Catechism. It should not be forgotten that committing this book to memory, is not like committing the dictionary or a directory to memory. Such an attempt would soon impair the mind, and clog it with a useless encumbrance. There is indeed a method of learning the Catechism analogous to the task of learning the dictionary, viz.: learning it by rote, or rattling off the words without carrying with them the sense. Such a method must prove a burden, or it will be found that the words are quickly forgotten. The Catechism should be learned as Euclid is learned. Let the first question or proposition be mastered, not so much by the memory as by the reason, and it will lead to the second question or proposition. Memory is undoubtedly used, but only as an instrument by which the intellect will grasp the principle contained. Muscular fibre is thus given to the mind which it would otherwise want. Strength and capacity result from the endeavor to make the Catechism or Euclid our own. Instead therefore of enfeebling the intellect by thoroughly mastering the Shorter Catechism, it will rather make it strong. And in point of fact the feeble mind will more frequently be found where there is no attempt to systematise for it the truth—whether religious or scientific.

There is no institution of modern times which we more thoroughly appreciate than the Sabbath school. But we have found this from a pretty wide experience, that the Sabbath schools which are most distinguished for the thorough knowledge of Scripture which they succeed in imparting

to the young, are those in which the Catechism is most highly honored, in which it is made a text book, and in which the scholars are led completely to master it. Where this book is not used, the result will be, even with such invaluable helps as the International Series of Lessons, that the knowledge of Scripture on the part of the pupils is most crude and incomplete. There is in fact a tendency to banish Scripture from the school altogether. This is indeed a very common result in the States. There is the beautiful school-room, with its admirable appointments for infant and all the other classes, with its organ or piano, with its blackboard and pictures, and what does it all amount to? Nothing more than a good time of singing and narrating sentimental anecdotes. We do not say that the Scottish, Irish, and Canadian Sabbath schools would not be all the better to have some of these modern improvements. But we do say that with all the disadvantages arising from bare rooms and from the want of musical and pictorial helps, there is hardly a Sunday school in Scotland or Ireland especially, where the infant class even would not give a better display of Scriptural knowledge than many of the more advanced classes in the States. In the latter the Sabbath school is far too much divorced from the church, and far too frequently in the hands of a class of teachers who look upon the school as a singing class or a place of agreeable entertainment. And we accept the statement that the Shorter Catechism is growing into popular favor in the States, as an earnest of the future, and as giving promise of a time when solid instruction will take the place of mere amusement.

The enlarged circulation of the Shorter Catechism and we may add of the Confession of Faith, is a suggestive fact, when we consider how in recent times these have been decried, and made the butt of every wit, and even attacked by those whose duty it is to defend them. In our view, all this signifies that the churches are growing wearied of the endless isms that are without form and substance, and are glad to get back to the old historic standards. With these they have something on which to rest. They have food to feed upon. They have in them positive instruction. And this leads us to remark that the young who are brought up with the Shorter Catechism and the Bible, will constitute the congregations which will not be satisfied with mere chaff but must have the solid grain. By teaching the Catechism we are not only making good hearers, but also creating good substantial preachers. People are heartily sick of the New England preaching, with its sentimentalisms, with its negations, with its distorted views of Divine truth. They are thirsting for Scriptural instruction, and we believe the more the Shorter Catechism is read and studied, the demand for evangelical preaching will be the more strongly felt.

The last number of the *Monetary Times* has the following very sensible remarks in reference to the action of some wheat growers in the western part of the Province, and which may not be without profit to farmers all over the country:—

"We see it stated that a number of wheat growers in the vicinity of Chatham have formed a combination to hold their grain till the price offered by the local buyers rises to a point which pleases their fancy, and that the buyers, not unnaturally, refuse to advance. We are not told what the price is in either case, and are unable to judge what grievance, if any, the sellers have; but we fear it is the usual story with them, and a very foolish one. The farmer takes upon himself to decide what his wheat should be worth to the dealer, and stubbornly holds out for that figure. He does not, probably, know how the British market rules, nor look at the prices in Chicago or New York. He gets some fancy about war prices, and is snared by an idea; but he often ends by taking, six months afterwards, a half less than he was previously offered. It is never safe to refuse a fair price. Thousands have been lost to individuals, and millions to the country, by just such policy."

The *Lindsay Post*, whose editor recently paid a visit to the Maritime Provinces, refers to probable political changes down there in the following terms:

"The leading question down by the sea is the feasibility and wisdom of combining the three provinces into one, and certainly the desirability of such a union is very great. The saving of expense would be considerable. One legislature, one lieutenant-governor and one staff of officials would answer all the purposes required. The movement is not actively pushed just now, but it must come ere long. There are of course many 'vested interests' that would oppose the change; there are certain financial difficulties in the way, but these could be arranged; and should two or three strong men arise they could probably carry the proposition. It would be a great political benefit; it would enlarge the field of political discussion, and questions would be looked at less from a purely local standpoint; while many small matters that now receive legislative attention could be relegated to bodies resembling our county councils. New Brunswick has, in fact, to some extent copied the municipal system of Ontario, and the change is considered for the better, so far as we could learn. Movements in this direction and towards maritime union will be watched with more than ordinary interest in Ontario."

## "PLYMOUTHISM" AND THE ANGLICAN CHURCH IN CANADA.

A recent number of the *Dominion Churchman* contains a sensible article on "Plymouthism," from which we make the following extracts:—

"Of all the dangers to which the Church is exposed at the present time, we believe there is none so great or so imminent as that belonging to the system of the so-called Plymouth Brethren. \* \* \* Under the pretence of being more spiritual, and indeed of being exclusively devoted to spiritual principles, to the entire exclusion of everything else, it veils an entire repudiation of the main features of the Gospel as given by Christ Himself, and as most strenuously contended for by the Primitive Apostles. It may present variations in different parts of England and America, but as we have met with it, its one question appears to be, 'Are you saved?' and the one and only article of its creed to be that involved in an affirmative answer. \* \* \* They disregard the Lord's Day, and deny that the Law of God is our rule of life. They teach that none of the Old Testament Saints have any part in the future glory. They deny the great doctrine of substitution in the sufferings of Christ, and teach that believers are not to confess their sins, even to God. They reject a great deal of the New Testament, terming it Jewish, as The Sermon on the Mount, The Lord's Prayer, etc. They say St. Paul's teaching was of a higher order than that of the other apostles, whose teaching was 'Jewish,' and not intended for us. They contend that part of the time Christ was on the cross, He was not there as our representative. They ignore repentance as necessary to salvation; and say they are forgiven and saved, so that they have no need to pray, 'Forgive us our trespasses.' Other developments of their system are of a character corresponding with these, making the whole of their religion consist of an internal persuasion of the mind, and of a total denial of most of the outward ordinances, especially that of the Christian Ministry."

The writer claims that the Church of England in Canada, in late years at least, has suffered more from this "mischievous heresy" than from all other defections put together.

## Ministers and Churches.

(We urgently solicit from Presbytery Clerks and generally, items for this department of our paper, so as to make it a general epitome of all local church news.)

The induction of the Rev. J. L. Robinson as minister of the Nairn congregation, takes place on the 11th inst.

Rev. S. ACKERSON has accepted a unanimous call to Wick and Greenbank. His induction will take place at an early date.

Rev. A. A. DRUMMOND, of Newcastle, being on a visit to friends in the County of Perth, occupied the pulpit of Knox church, Stratford, last Sunday.

The Rev. Mr. Moore, of Bank Street Church, Ottawa, resumed his labors last Sabbath, looking much improved by his trip up the Ottawa river.

The Rev. Mr. McRobbie, of Petrolia, who was recently granted a short vacation by his session to recruit his health, was a few days ago presented by the ladies of his congregation with a purse of \$60.

The Free Church of Scotland has inaugurated a new Home Mission Scheme for Scotland, and two subscriptions of twenty-five thousand dollars each have been made to give it a "good send-off."

The Union Church congregation, Westminster, met last Thursday evening, and discussed the propriety of the Presbyterian portion of the congregation purchasing the Baptist claim on the building, and then making an application to the London Presbytery for supply. It was also agreed to make a small donation to Dr. Campbell as an acknowledgment of their appreciation of his labors, and the Treasurer was requested to hand Dr. Campbell \$20. This is the fourth presentation made by the same people to the same gentleman inside of two years.

A Good Use of P's.—One of our exchanges indulges in the use of P's to express what it may be healthful to all subscribers to newspapers to read, meditate and inwardly digest. It says: "Persons who patronize papers should pay promptly, for the pecuniary prospects of the press have peculiar power in pushing forward public prosperity. If the printer is paid promptly and his pocket-book kept plenteous by prompt-paying patrons, he puts his pen to paper in peace; he paints his pictures of passing events in more pleasant colors, and the perusal of his paper is of more pleasure to his people. Paste this piece of proverbial philosophy in some place where all persons can perceive it. Be pleased also to ponder upon it itself patiently and perseveringly and profitably, and persistently practice its precepts personally." Readers of the PRESBYTERIAN in arrears are respectfully requested to "ponder" and put the above suggestion into practice at once.

## Book Reviews.

RAINFORD'S SERMONS. Toronto: Belford Bros. 1877.

These sermons are not published as specimens of extraordinary eloquence, neither are they put forward as possessing any great literary merit. They appear to be simply the almost unprepared utterances of one who is striving with all his might to let his fellow-men know the truth which has brought salvation to his own soul. They are well worthy of a careful perusal.

BELFORD'S MONTHLY. Toronto: Belford Bros. September 1877.

The first article in this number, "Up the Thames," is a spirited sketch, profusely illustrated. "Siddartha; or the Gospel of Despair," by the Rev. James Carmichael, will be read with intense interest by the thoughtful. "Fragments of the War of 1812," by Dr. Canniff, contains many particulars, valuable to the historian, and interesting to old residents in this country. The remaining articles sustain the character of this magazine as a publication well worthy of being patronized.

THE CANADIAN MONTHLY. Toronto: Hart & Bawlinson. September, 1877.

The paper in this number on "The Greater or Lesser Britain," by Sir Julius Vogel, may be read as a pendant to the articles of Prof. Goldwin Smith, Sir Francis Hincks and Elihu Burritt, recently published in this magazine. There is a lengthy but feeble reply by Mr. Allen to *Fidèle* on the "Temperance Problem." The remaining part of the matter in this number is interesting and important, and well calculated to aid in making this magazine the literary representative of the Dominion of Canada.

## Ordination and Induction at Dundee, P.Q.

The Presbytery of Montreal met in Zion Church, Dundee, on Wednesday, the 20th ult., for the purpose of ordaining and inducting the Rev. John C. Cattaneach, B.A., to the pastoral charge of the above congregation. The Rev. J. B. Muir, of Huntingdon, preached from Phil. iii. 8. Suffice it to say that the sermon was characterized by the well-known eloquence, force, and ability of the popular minister of Huntingdon. Rev. Mr. Watson put the necessary questions to the candidate. To these Mr. Cattaneach gave satisfactory answers, and was thereafter ordained by solemn prayer by Mr. Watson, and laying on of the hands of the Presbytery, and inducted into the pastoral charge of the congregation of Dundee. The newly-ordained pastor was suitably addressed by Mr. Watson as to his duties, and the congregation was in an able manner exhorted as to their duties to their pastor and to one another by the Rev. G. McKay, Laguerre. We wish Mr. C. every success in his important charge.—*Com.*

## Church Unionism in Canada.

The services on Sunday last in Blackfriars Church, Jeddburgh, were conducted by Rev. Professor Murray, of Montreal, who in the course of his remarks in the forenoon referred at some length to the state of religion and of union in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Mr. Murray, who has labored in his adopted country for fifteen years, took a retrospective glance at the efforts which had been made to effect a union among the churches of the Dominion which, after some delay, were two years ago crowned with success, the Established, Free, and United Presbyterians being now included in the Union. The benefits derived therefrom were very great, and through it the cause of religion had been greatly benefitted throughout the whole country. Now, they could present a united front, and though they at times were unfairly assailed by the Roman Catholic element, they were hopeful of greater things than had been accomplished before the Union. The obstacles to union they had found to be more illusive than real, and experience had shown them that the flesh, not the spirit, or rather men's squabbles about small or insignificant things, were the main hindrances, and he thought that the attempts made in this country had been much hindered by the same cause. They in Canada had come to see how really trifling their differences were, and to him the Union was one of the happiest events in his career in that country. By its ministers were saved much travel, as oftentimes previously they had two congregations to minister to, the one often far apart from the other, while perhaps alongside was a church of another denomination, and both sparsely attended. By the Union this was done away with, and in calling a minister the distinctive appellations of U.P., Free, and Established were forgotten, as from each the call could equally be made. Missionary work had similarly benefited from the same cause, and in all things they now worked harmoniously together. While deploping the schism in the churches of this country, he had hopes of brighter days, and he earnestly counselled union among the different churches as the wisest and best course for the attainment of this end.—*Jeddburgh Advertiser, 4th Aug.*

WHILE Death is reaping a frightful harvest in the struggle between Turkey and Russia, that is still more frightful which is gathering in the famine districts in India. A dispatch states that at a public meeting held at Madras on the 9th inst. to take steps to procure aid from England, the Governor of the Madras Presidency said that the famine area contained eighteen million people. There were now one million and a half being fed at public expense, and 500,000 had died of starvation. "More people are found dead in Madras alone in a single morning than died in the whole Bengal famine." An urgent appeal had been made to the principal cities of England for aid.