

## Our Contributors.

### ANOTHER MAN WHO HAS DONE GOOD FOUNDATION WORK.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Dr. Robert Torrance, of Guelph, has done excellent work on the least popular part of the foundation of Canadian Presbyterianism. His speciality is statistics. The statistical and financial part of the annual Blue Book is his handiwork. It is by that book mainly that the Presbyterian Church in Canada is judged in other lands. Official people in New York, or Belfast, or Edinburgh, or London, who wished to know what kind of Christians we Canadian Presbyterians are, and what progress we are making, would turn at once to the Blue Book for the desired information. An Editor in any part of the world who wished to write an article on the Presbyterianism of Canada would spend an hour or two in looking through the Blue Book before he wrote anything for his readers about us. It is well for us that the Blue Book is a respectable volume. It is our principal representative in many influential quarters.

Making statistical and financial returns has never been regarded as a pleasant pastime by Presbyterian office-bearers. It is quite within the bounds of possibility that some sessions do not send in their annual reports to the Presbytery clerks with the same promptitude as they attend church or take their meals. In fact, there is a remote possibility that not a few annual returns are made by pastors without the aid of their elders. The pastor has a great many other things to do that must be done at once, and he would hardly be a sensible man—all Presbyterian ministers are assumed to be sensible men—if he did not do the most pressing things first. The result may sometimes be that Presbytery clerks have to wait, and send postal cards, and wait again and then send more postal cards before the annual returns are all sent in. The longer the Presbytery clerk has to wait the longer Dr. Torrance has to wait too, but in some way or another he always manages to have the returns placed before the Assembly.

The Blue Book is more used by the ministers and elders of the Church than any other book except the Bible. It lies on the study table of every minister and on the desk of every church official. Some people are more familiar with it than they are with the Confession of Faith. We have known fairly good men who could answer questions out of the Blue Book more readily than questions in the Shorter Catechism. To the Blue Book we go when we want to find "averages" and "percentages," "increases" and "decreases" and all that sort of thing. Vacancies turn to its pages to find out the record of candidates; and candidates go to the same source to ascertain the standing of congregations. Conveners study the Blue Book to see what congregations are not doing their duty in the way of sending on the funds. Presbytery clerks could not do business without a Blue Book. Missionaries, Home and Foreign, must have a Blue Book. Even grave and learned professors may be seen in the General Assembly with Blue Books in their hands. Statistics may be dry, but ten speakers in the Church court and on Church platforms use figures from the Blue Book for one that uses figures of rhetoric. Whenever you see a member of the General Assembly making notes on a little bit of paper and using a Blue Book on his knee for a desk, you may be sure that man is incubating a speech on something. In fact, the Blue Book supplies more material for ecclesiastical speeches than any other book in existence.

Dr. Torrance is a Scotch-Irishman. He was born in Ireland, but his ancestors had fled to the Green Isle from Ayrshire, Scotland, in a time of persecution. When he was fifteen years of age his parents removed to Scotland and took up their abode in Wigtownshire where Robert attended the

parish school of Glenluce, near the "clachan" in which Alexander Peden had been minister. As if to keep the two nationalities united in his person, Mr. Torrance took his arts course in Belfast and studied theology in Glasgow and Edinburgh. If these conditions do not make a Scotch-Irishman we fail to see how one can be produced. The Divinity course in the Secession Church—the branch of Presbyterianism to which he belonged—had five sessions of two months each. The students were arranged in two divisions, the first division embracing those of the first and second year, the second those of the last three years. For reasons that are not now easily discovered, the classes met alternately in Glasgow and Edinburgh. After studying theology for four years Mr. Torrance was accepted as a missionary to Canada, licensed by the Presbytery of Dunfermline in 1845, and at once started for the new country in which his long and useful life has been spent. Arriving in Toronto in September of that year he preached a number of Sabbaths for Mr. (afterwards Dr.) Jennings, who was absent in Scotland. He then spent a year visiting the vacancies and mission stations of his Church and on the 11th of November, 1846, was ordained and inducted in Guelph where he remained as pastor of the U. P. Church until he resigned in the beginning of 1882, having continued in the same pastorate for 36 years. During these years Dr. Torrance must have seen a small village grow into a substantial city; and must also have seen the splendid country stretching from Guelph to the Georgian Bay cut out of the primeval forest. Quite likely the Doctor remembers a time when there was no Mount Forest, nor Harriston nor Paisley nor Walkerton; perhaps even a time when there was no Elora nor Fergus. However that may be, there are few people in the splendid old county of Wellington who can remember Guelph when there was not a Presbyterian minister there named Torrance.

A minister with Dr. Torrance's aptitude for affairs does not usually remain long a pastor and nothing more. Before the union of 1861 he was appointed clerk of his Presbytery and he is clerk of the Presbytery of Guelph now. Before the first union he was convener of the Committee on the Distribution of Probationers and was secretary of that committee until the present year when he became convener through the death of Dr. Laidlaw. There may have been short intervals during the past thirty years when the Doctor was not clerk of the Guelph Presbytery or secretary of the Distribution Committee, but they were so very short as not to be worthy of notice.

To the General Assembly Dr. Torrance is best known as convener or secretary of the committee that prepares business for the Supreme Court, and as convener of the Standing Committee on Statistics. In the General Assembly, and usually in his own Synod, he prepares the grist, puts it neatly into the hopper and then lets the members grind. Like the late Dr. Reid, with whom he was long and intimately associated in the business of the Church, Dr. Torrance seldom speaks in the Church courts and never speaks at any length. Like Dr. Reid, also, he possesses the rare and happy faculty of throwing a flash of light upon a question, especially a question of procedure, with one or two short sentences, often with one. There are few officials in the Church now whose work comes down continuously through the two unions. Dr. Torrance is one of the few. He was convener of the Committee on Statistics before the union of '61 and he has been a member or convener of that committee ever since. It goes unsaid that he will be convener as long as he is able and willing to do the work. By his admirable arrangement of the statistical tables one can find out almost anything about "increases" and "decreases," and "averages" and "percentages," and find it in a minute. This part of the Blue Book is simply invaluable.

Dr. Torrance's labours have not been confined to his own church. He was secretary of the Guelph Ministerial Association for about nineteen years. He is or was secretary and treasurer to the Guelph Branch of the Evangelical Alliance and also of the Lord's Day Alliance. In fact, he seems to have been at one time or another secretary of nearly everything in or about Guelph.

He was inspector of the public schools of Guelph for 37 years. When he took office there were two teachers; when he resigned three or four years ago there were thirty. During these years the school building improved as much as the number of teachers increased.

In 1885 Mr. Torrance became Dr. Torrance by receiving the degree of D.D. from the Senate of Knox College. Dr. Gray was similarly honoured at the same time. Both were specialists in statistics and had worked together many a day in the statistical committee.

### IN DEFENCE OF THE SACREDNESS OF THE SABBATH.

BY THE REV. PRINCIPAL CAVEN, D.D., LL.D.

For the third time Toronto will be called upon to vote on the question of Sunday Street Cars. There is no reason why the decision twice rendered should be reversed; every reason why it should be renewed and confirmed. The day is not less precious than in 1892 and 1893, when the people of Toronto said that they desired to preserve a quiet and restful Sabbath, which might be devoted to the holy and benevolent ends for which it was given to the human family.

No reader of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN will, we trust, be heard to say that Sunday cars are bound to come and that resistance is useless. No man who fears God and loves His law—no man of uncorrupt fidelity—will ever so speak. This is not the language of those who are Christ's "witnesses." It is not the language of those whose steadfastness in maintaining the truth—if need be in suffering for it—has purchased for us the civil and religious freedom which we to-day enjoy, and has shed glory on the history of the Presbyterian Church. We cannot believe that in the Presbyterian Church, or in any of the churches, there are many of the faithless and faint-hearted who withhold from opposing evil on the ground that it is likely to prevail. What should we think of the patriotism of the man who should refuse to withstand the invader because he was doubtful of the issue?

Instead of allowing worldliness and avarice to encroach farther on the day of rest, there is much reason why Canada and other countries as well, should seek to reclaim what is already lost. There is no denying the fact that a great deal of unnecessary labor is done on the Lord's day. Thousands of men in Canada are already robbed of the weekly Sabbath, in whole or in part. A religious life is made to them nearly impossible, and the earthly life in its social, domestic and physical aspects is sadly impaired. Railways, canals, steamboats, post-offices, manufacturing establishments of various kinds, and many other things are permitted, more or less, to encroach upon the Sabbath. An all-encompassing atmosphere of worldliness continually presses upon us and refuses to be excluded from any place. It is surely not a time to make fresh concessions; rather should the Church be summoned, as by the blast of a trumpet, to arouse itself and, if possible, gain back from the enemy what our indolence and indifference have allowed him to capture and appropriate.

The readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN do not require to be told that the Sabbath is an institution for the world and not for the Jews alone. If at the close of creation God "blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it," and if He placed the Sabbath law in the heart of the Decalogue, the proof of its universal and permanent obligation should be held complete. Judaism has pas-

sed away, but the moral law has not passed away. As the words, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" are read to us, the response still is—"Incline our hearts to keep this law."

Our Lord has taught us that, as "the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath," works of necessity and mercy are not contrary to the commandment; beyond this He does not go. He gives no hint that the Sabbath is to be abrogated under the New Dispensation. And when Paul says, "Let no man judge you in meat or drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon or of the Sabbath days," he merely forbids us to import into Christianity the special observances of Judaism. Under Judaism the Sabbath was fenced round with many prescriptions; these are not binding on us; but the great ordinance of a weekly day of rest remains.

It would be hard to show that the running of street cars in Toronto on the Lord's day is a work of "necessity or mercy." Is it uncharitable to say that few of those who favor a Sunday service do themselves so regard it? We are told, indeed, that should the cars run, aged and feeble persons and those who live at a distance from church would be able to attend public worship; that friends and relatives who reside far apart in the city could visit each other, and that great numbers of men, women and children who, during the week, are pent up in narrow and unsanitary quarters, would have the opportunity of seeing the country and breathing pure air. But no one of these reasons for introducing the noise and bustle of the cars and for depriving many hundreds of men of their natural right to the Sabbath rest will bear examination. As to those who during six days are confined in unwholesome quarters, a much more radical and beneficent remedy than Sunday excursions is demanded. Secularizing the Lord's day will never heal the sores of a greedy and relentless system of labor. In view of the experience of cities which have Sunday street cars, it requires considerable hardihood to represent them as promoting church attendance; let Chicago, or San Francisco or Los Angeles, or any city where the cars are run, answer for the churches.

No man is ready to say: "I am a covetous man and I don't like to lose one whole day in the week," or, "I dislike to have religion so prominent, claiming each seventh day as its own." Reasons of a more respectable character must be found for interfering with the Sabbath, and hence the humane, even religious arguments with which we are so familiar.

Nor is there anything in the argument that, seeing rich men use their carriages on the Sabbath, the poor man should have his conveyance also. Any man must be at liberty to drive his carriage on the roads or streets on the Sabbath. This is a matter to be regulated by his own conscience; he may have sufficient reasons for doing so or he may not, but the law cannot properly interfere. There are cases where a conveyance may be used on the Lord's day without any offence, cases clearly under the categories of "necessity and mercy." If a minister, or physician, or any one in the discharge of duty uses a carriage there is nothing necessarily wrong in this; the circumstances may abundantly justify it. But to argue from this that a system of public transport should be organized for the Lord's day—a system fitted and intended to develop Sunday excursions—is strange logic indeed. If persons will use their carriages on the Lord's day when they should not, they are themselves answerable to the Lord of the Sabbath; but if I, as a member of the community, assist in organizing Sunday travel I assume responsibility in the case.

In this contest the interests of labor are identified with those of religion and morality. The laborer needs his day of weekly rest; and if deprived of that day, which is fenced round with sacred authority, what guarantee is there that he shall permanently enjoy another day? The benevolent Creator