

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN,
— PUBLISHED BY THE —
Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Company
(C. BLACKETT ROBINSON),
AT 5 JORDAN STREET, - TORONTO.

TERMS: \$2 per annum, in advance

ADVERTISING TERMS:—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, 1.50 per line; 1 year \$3.50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 1886.

MOST heartily do we congratulate Dr. Dewart on his re-election to the editorial chair of the *Christian Guardian*. Considering the long time that he has occupied that position, and the determined manly stand he took on the University Question, a good many people more than half expected there would be a change. But our old neighbour has been fighting on the side of the large battalions, and comes back to his post with more influence than he had before. Arminian theology aside, the *Guardian*, under Dr. Dewart's management, is an admirably conducted paper, conspicuously sensible and fair on all questions of a local and moral nature. We wish our old neighbour all manner of success, and hope he may be spared and elected to conduct the *Guardian* just as long as he wants to work in that way.

A CONTEMPORARY that might have known better says that the thirty thousand dollar subscriptions conditionally offered in the Conference last week to Victoria University are the largest sums ever given to a denominational institution in this country. This is a mistake. Mr. James McLaren gave \$50,000 to Knox College without any conditions. The part of the Presbyterian College building in Montreal, known as Morrice Hall, cost Mr. David Morrice, we believe, about \$75,000. We have not the figures before us, but we feel reasonably certain that the late Edward and Joseph McKay and Mrs. Redpath have each given our Montreal institution over \$30,000. We hope our Methodist friends may get larger subscriptions than any of these, and when they do we may hear from a few more rich Presbyterians. So may it be.

BEFORE us lies a most interesting photograph. It bears the imprint, "Tan Tian Chong, Photographer, Tamsui." The workmanship is excellent; but for the legible inscription it would be difficult to determine whether it had not been produced by some of our prominent Canadian artists. It is a view of Sintiam Chapel, built of solid stone in three months under Dr. Mackay's personal supervision. The building is massive and graceful. Solidity, however, is its most conspicuous characteristic. The design is in the main a massive Gothic, though the finials are of an oriental cast. A well-proportioned spire gives completeness to the appearance of a building that would in several parts of Canada be an improvement on many of our existing churches. Behind the church building, and under the shade of a lofty mountain, nestles a commodious, comfortable and substantial looking manse, with the same style of terminals resting on the chimney tops as those gracing the church itself. We can understand the fervent thankfulness with which Dr. Mackay would hail the completion of the building. May it shelter successive generations of faithful and devout Chinese Christians.

MOST gratifying has been the testimony given by members of the Conference, especially those from Manitoba and the North-West, in regard to the progress of our missionary work in that region. It was affirmed again and again that our work there has been pushed with great skill and energy, and no

small amount of credit was given to our superintendent, Mr. James Robertson. In fact, the references to the progress of Presbyterianism in the North-West were so frequent and so emphatic that the missionary secretary, Dr. Sutherland, got the least bit riled, and declared that all things considered, Methodism was doing quite as well out there as Presbyterianism. We attach almost as much importance to the testimony of these Methodist brethren as we do to our own reports. If there is but one thing on this earth that a live Methodist preacher knows, it is successful work. He always knows aggressive work when he sees it. When these members of Conference say our mission work is well managed and vigorously pushed in the North-West, our Church may rest assured that such is the case. The Conference decided to appoint a Missionary Superintendent, whose duties will be much the same as Mr. Robertson's. There is room enough and work enough out there for all the Churches. We are glad the others are going in, but not at all sorry that we got well lodged there before some of them started. Calvinism is a good thing for these prairies but Calvinism never works better than when some of the other systems are working near it. We hope Conference will appoint a good genial man for superintendent. We almost imagine we see him and Brother Robertson starting out on a "backboard" for a 600-mile drive.

IN the matter of doing the agreeable to distinguished visitors the Methodist Conference far excels any Presbyterian Church court. Sir John Macdonald, Mr. Blake, Mr. Mulock and the Hon. G. W. Ross, visited the Conference, were introduced, warmly welcomed and made nice little addresses to the brethren. It is a matter of deep regret that the Conference was so absorbed with the University debate that they could not afford Sir John an opportunity to explain one or two matters. Our Methodist friends have always claimed that they lead the van on the Temperance question. Perhaps they do, and it would have been a pre-eminently proper thing for them to have asked Sir John how it comes about that the Scott Act has such hard lines in a parliament in which he has such a large majority, and over which he has almost absolute control. When a Scott Act boom strikes a county our Methodist friends are never backward in asking what course Presbyterian ministers are likely to pursue, nor are some of them very charitable in their criticisms if an occasional minister fails to get up the requisite amount of enthusiasm. Sir John can do more for the Scott Act than any other Presbyterian minister—he is both a Presbyterian and a minister—and the Conference should have interviewed him on the question. But the brethren didn't make any sign on the Scott Act. They might also have given him an opportunity to say what he is doing with those Indian agents in the North-West about whose conduct the missionaries complain. Had the veteran Premier been in the General Assembly when this question was being discussed the Presbyterians would have been happy to have given him an opportunity to say what he is going to do with those agents. The Conference might also have asked him something about Mr. Charlton's Seduction Bill, and the opposition of some of his colleagues to any good Sabbath law. A golden opportunity was lost, we fear. No doubt Sir John would have been most happy to have explained everything, but the Conference did not give him a chance. No time, we suppose.

DR. GRIFFIN made a good point neatly in the Conference the other day. Speaking against the extension of the ministerial term to four years, Mr. John Macdonald, the well known and highly esteemed wholesale merchant of this city, stated that he had been forty-one years a local Methodist preacher, and "he hated to see the removal of old and honoured landmarks." Dr. Griffin expressed his astonishment that Mr. Macdonald should wish them to remain where they were forty-one years ago, and pleasantly remarked that if Mr. Macdonald had conducted his business on this principle, his history would have been different. Well said, Brother Griffin. Had Mr. Macdonald conducted his business on this principle he would probably now be a salesman in some store at a small salary, instead of an influential wholesale merchant. There are several thousand men on this continent who make progressive changes in their busi-

ness, in their farms, in fact in everything in which a change makes for good; but the moment you propose a beneficial change in anything non-essential about the Church they shout "innovation," "sacrilege," "unconstitutional," "incompetent," "ultra vires," or some other word about whose meaning they may have not even a dim idea. They show far more enterprise and ambition in doing their own work than in doing the Lord's. Mr. John Macdonald does not belong to this class by any means. He is a man that any city or any denomination might feel proud of and grateful for; but he just happened to use an argument that has been used too many times to block progress in many Churches. In the same speech Mr. Macdonald stated that every other Church is sighing for the itineracy. Pursuing Brother Griffin's line of illustration we might say that if Mr. Macdonald's ledgers had not shown more accuracy during his splendid business career than this statement shows, he would perhaps now be "on the road." The Presbyterian Church for its part is not sighing for the itineracy. If we wanted it we could have it. There is, however, a good deal of sighing in certain Methodist quarters. Nearly all the best preachers are sighing for an extension of the ministerial term, and many of the people are sighing for the privilege of calling their own ministers. A good many of them have got beyond the sighing stage, and "entered an invitation" to the man of their choice. Of course it would not do to say "call." That sounds too Presbyterian.

THEOLOGY PROGRESSIVE.

WHAT in other days was the Theological Seminary of the North-West is now, in compliment to the memory of its most generous donor, termed the McCormick Theological Seminary. It has done good work in the past; honoured names have been associated with its professorial chairs, and able ministers of the New Testament have graduated from its halls. Like our own and many similar schools of the prophets, the session opens with an inaugural lecture. This year Professor Curtis was the lecturer. He took for his theme "The Minister the Interpreter of God's Word." The lecture, as it is reproduced, is sound, judicious and comprehensive. It reveals a mind that fully appreciates all that has come to us from the past, the permanency of the great cardinal doctrines of our holy faith. This however does not exclude the teaching of experience in the history of the Church, the many discoveries in the various fields of Biblical research and the clearer insight into the meaning of Scripture which the Holy Spirit vouchsafes to the earnest and single-minded inquirer. While indulging in no tendency to loose speculation, Professor Curtis is keenly alive to the intellectual and moral requirements of the present time. He claims that theology is a progressive science. Thus he explains by stating that it is "progressive, not in the discovery of new material, for the sacred canon is closed, and nature is the same to-day as yesterday, but progressive in a new and fuller arrangement of that material; progressive in the new emphasis given to the truth therein found." The substance of theology, "as unfolded by candid students of the Divine Word, may always remain the same, but the light and shadow, the perspective, change in every age. God is ever leading His people into a fuller understanding of His truth."

On the subject of creeds he says several excellent things in a judicious way. Those who regard an authorized formula of doctrine arranged by fallible men as the one absolute standard for all time and for all people may be slightly disturbed by what Professor Curtis says of the Confession of Faith. No one, however, though but slightly acquainted with the trend of thought within the Churches of our time, will be surprised at the position he takes. There are some who pose as advanced thinkers, and who like to say startling things for the mere pleasure of saying them, and watching for the flutter they make. It is not to this class that Professor Curtis belongs. He is sedate, thoughtful, sober-minded. He refers to the statement in the Confession that councils and synods may err, and claiming no infallibility for itself. The Westminster Assembly superseded previous formulas and constructed one of their own. "What," asks Dr. Curtis, "did this signify? They rejected the old confessions and framed a new one, that the new might be better than the old. Did they then leave