

## British American Presbyterian,

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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 accompanied by such request will not be returned, 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, NOVEMBER 24, 1876.

We are requested to correct a mistake which, inadvertently occurred in the report of the Ladies' French Evangelization Society, a fortnight ago. The address of the Mission House should have been given as 503 LaGauchetiere Street, Montreal, instead of 528. Parties forwarding parcels or clothing, etc., for the French poor, will please govern themselves accordingly.

The Presbytery of Toronto for this year make no appointments of missionary meetings. The ministers are expected to get these up according to their own convenience, and to invite pastors of other churches to take part in them as they may see fit. Hitherto the Presbytery have arranged the meetings in all the charges, and assigned the speakers. It is to be hoped that the new plan will work even better than the old one.

The American Bible Society by reducing the number of their superintendents, save about fifty per cent. of their former expenses. Retrenchment has to be practiced in all church and Christian work in order to meet the golden rule of owing no man anything. The above society calculate that congregations and individuals by voluntarily sending in their contributions, without the aid of paid agents for the collection of these, will be able to keep up the revenue of the society to its present point.

The death of the Rev. Samuel M. Waddy, D.D., has removed from the Methodist Conference of England and Wales one of its wisest and wittiest members. He was honored some twenty years ago to be the president of that remarkable body of men, and has been throughout his life one of the ablest workers in the cause which enlisted amongst its votaries such men as Jabez Bunting, Luke Wiseman, and William Arthur. He has left a son, who is, if we remember rightly, a member of the British House of Commons, and who occasionally occupies the pulpit as a local preacher.

The success of the Presbyterian College, Montreal, is every year becoming more and more apparent. The number of Students enrolled this session is seventy-one. From a Circular just issued, we learn that only thirty-one of these can be accommodated with rooms inside. This is not a desirable state of matters, and we are glad to know that there is a prospect of the building being enlarged, we trust before the opening of another Session. The Students of the present year are thus classified:—thirty-four from Ontario, thirty from Quebec, two from Prince Edward's Island, two from Scotland, and three from the United States.

A CORRESPONDENT suggests that the day which is annually set apart for Thanksgiving, would be better appreciated and observed, were the appointment made for a later period of the year than the beginning of November. The interests of farmers at such a season should be carefully considered, and if a day later on in the season would be more favorable to the due observance of thanksgiving, it would be well in another year to try if the example of our neighbors in the United States, who generally observe the last Thursday of this month as Thanksgiving Day, is entitled to be considered, and on reason shown, to be followed.

APPROX OF OUR remarks of last week on the Endowment of the Theological Colleges of the Presbyterian Church in Canada, we notice with pleasure, that a single person in Ireland has anonymously offered to contribute some twenty-five thousand pounds for the endowment of the Assembly's Theological classes, provided the Church as a whole make the amount up to one hundred thousand sterling. Cannot some of the wealthy members of our church do likewise for Knox and Queen's Colleges. It is a noble thing to build up our own memorial in our lifetime. Had Astor for example left to the Union Seminary what his sons are about to expend on a Mausoleum, what a much more splendid monument it would have proved!

## SPECIAL MEETINGS.

As we have lately read the views of Dr. Blaikie of New College, Edinburgh, on the above subject, it may interest and instruct our readers to lay these before them in a clear and concise form.

Is it ever desirable and proper to get up special meetings with a view to deepen and concentrate religious feeling, and to bring about what is called a revival of religion? For such meetings some persons have a great horror, while to others they are the objects of the utmost delight. Not a few worthy persons, of the more orderly and correct stamp, regard them as mere emanations of fanaticism, and think that if encouragement is to be given to the illiterate and impetuous men that often come to the front on such occasions, divine service will degenerate into mere sensuous excitement, and conscience and reason will be driven off the field by the surging force of spiritual passion. This, of course, is an extreme, and therefore unsatisfactory view. The subject demands to be examined with more care and candour.

It is to be remarked, then, that even where the Word of God is fully and faithfully preached, there is a tendency in congregations to remain at rest. A preacher who has preached from week to week for many years to the same people, and who has the prospect of doing the same to the end of his life, can hardly fail to fall into a less urgent tone than one who is among them but one short day or one brief week. The people, too, meeting quietly from week to week, without much outward difference between one week and another, do not ordinarily feel any necessity for immediate action in matters of religion. Accordingly, want of decision characterizes many persons who are not destitute of religious impressions, and who are not far from the Kingdom of God. Something is needed to break in on the ordinary monotony and rouse an intense feeling. In former days in Scotland, communion occasions were often turned into account in this way. They were great preaching festivals, and such communion services as those of the Erskines were often times of awakening and refreshing. In the Highlands, too, the same state of things prevailed. But in most parts of the country the extra services on sacramental occasions have lost their power, and the manifest tendency is to fewer extra services and to more frequent and simple arrangements for the communion. Those who desire to see the prevalent languor of our congregations broken in upon by special efforts to produce a livelier state of feeling resort to a succession of meetings, night after night, for prayer and evangelistic addresses. But the minister should not leave such meetings to be organized by others. He ought himself to be at the head of them, backed by the elders, and the more godly and earnest members of the flock. Good is more likely to come out of any such movement when the spiritual nobleness of the congregation are in the attitude of prayerful desire and expectation, when their feelings are deeply exercised on behalf of their unconverted brethren, and they are prepared to back the movement with much earnest intercession. To guide a religious movement of this kind wisely, is one of the highest achievements of sanctified wisdom and zeal.

The idea of bringing about a revival through any other means than prayer for the outpouring of the spirit of God, has to some minds the aspect of interfering with the sovereign prerogatives of God. But in reality there is no more reason for expecting a revival without the use of suitable means, than for expecting any other spiritual result. There are means adapted to this as to other spiritual objects. This consideration deepens very greatly the responsibility of ministers, and calls for a profounder dependence on that wisdom which alone is profitable to direct.

Meetings designed for the purpose of promoting a revival of spiritual life require to be organized with more skill and care than are often brought to bear on them. In the first place, the very word "revival" indicates that the first object is to resuscitate spiritual earnestness in those who have already been born of God. It is to rouse them to more vivid impressions of divine truth, more solemn views of sin and guilt, more soul-stirring thoughts of the love of God and the grace of Christ, more grief and more love for a world lying in wickedness, and more intense prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. And any minister of the gospel may be well assured that unless his own heart be stirred in this way, he cannot expect that he will be made the instrument of stirring up the hearts of others. If however, by God's grace, there should come to the more godly part of his flock a spirit of special sensibility, prayerfulness and expectation, he is entitled to regard the time as suitable for an effort on behalf of those who are outside the kingdom, or hovering about the door.

It is recommended by some who have made a study of such movements, that a gradation of subjects be followed in

meetings designed to awaken the careless, and bring them safe within the kingdom of Christ. For the purpose of awakening, such topics as "the wealth of the soul," the immediate and urgent claims of religion, the danger of delay, the death-bed of the sinner, the scenes of the last judgment, the first separation, the glories of heaven, and the retributions of eternity," are thought to be the most suitable. Next, it ought to be the aim to produce true convictions of sin. The false standards which men are wont to regard must be set aside, and the rule brought forward, however strict and condemning, by which God will judge us at the last day.

But awakened men are not necessarily converted men, and there is no small skill needed in guiding the awakened to conversion.

At this stage, it is of great importance to urge the freeness of the gospel offer; the completeness of the work of Christ; the call of God to the sinner to believe and live; not to work and wait indefinitely for some expected improvement of himself, but to come as he is, accepting Christ as all his salvation and all his desire.

"Among the dangers incident to the management of a revival movement, one is extreme caution, or fear of overdoing; the other is that of pushing the movement too fast, thereby injuring its character and bringing it to a speedy close. The pastor rejoices in the work of begun revival, he feels his own responsibility in regard to it; his soul is excited and quickened under its influence; and he rushes into it under the impression that he cannot labour too fast, or do too much in a given time for the promotion of so good a cause. The consequence is, that he goes beyond his strength, is soon prostrated and unable to do anything. Or in his heated, excited state of mind, he is chargeable with indiscretions, which impair his influence, and hinder the progress of the work. He changes, it may be, the whole character of the revival, and turns it into a scene of excitement and extravagance."

An acquaintance with the best narratives of awakenings, conversation with those who have had much to do with them, and experience of the work itself, are far better fitted to guide one in the management of them than any general instructions. The *Narratives of Surprising Conversions* in New England by President Edwards is one of the most interesting, impressive and instructive memoirs ever published. It is eminently worthy of the study of every minister, for it combines the view of the philosopher and the saint, calm wisdom, and deep spirituality, a burning desire for the welfare of souls, and a dread of the tares which the enemy is so ready to sow among the wheat. No single work is so well fitted to give one an intelligent view of the whole subject of a revival, its rise and progress, its crisis, and its decay; its risks and benefits, its good and evil.

We have assumed throughout, that any religious movement of the nature of a revival must be presided over by the minister himself. If he deems it his duty occasionally to ask aid from men who devote themselves to revival work, it ought to be on the distinct understanding that they are to assist and not supersede him when they come. Even when the pastor has been most deeply interested in the movement it will sometimes be difficult to guide.

Congregations have sometimes been brought to the verge of extinction through the injudicious management of revivals. In other cases they have been singularly built up by the adoption of a wise course. We have known instances of both. In one instance of the latter sort, where the congregation was doubled in numbers, and more than doubled in fervour and fruitfulness, the minister has told us that he kept his eye open to two opposite dangers—that of discouraging the development of life on the one hand, and that of fostering the extravagances often adhering, but not necessarily cohering to revival, on the other. He found a great benefit in a recipe which he called the three s's—substitute, suggest, supplement. If any one wishes a hymn of a somewhat ranting kind to be sung, he would invite the people to unite in singing, quietly substituting a more suitable hymn; if some proposed an additional meeting at a late hour of the night, he would suggest that a meeting should be held next evening; if any gave a one-sided address, he would supplement it himself by presenting the other side of the question. Thus avoiding collision with the rushing stream, he continued to guide it in a useful direction, and when the waters subsided a valuable deposit was left, and richer clusters have hung ever since on the branches of his vines.

We hope that the above remarks may be of some interest and profit to those who may not have already had the opportunity of reading the views of Dr. Blaikie as presented in his recently published work entitled "For the Work of the Ministry."

Men's lives should be like the day, more beautiful in the evening; or, like the Spring, aglow with promise; and the Autumn, rich with golden sheaves, where good works and deeds have ripened on the field.

## THE VERDICT NOT REACHED.

The present year is bound to make itself felt all over the United States as one peculiar and memorable. It is the Centennial Year, and in consequence it is bent on marking itself in every event and undertaking. It might well have been satisfied with the distinction it obtained through the exhibition at Philadelphia, without further asserting itself in the Presidential election. In addition to all the other celebrations of American Independence, the election of the Chief Magistrate has proved itself something unusual and extraordinary.

There never was such another Political Campaign. The loud mutterings regarding the third term, and the re-election of General Grant were still echoing through the press, when the nomination of Tilden and Hayes was announced at Conventions and in State elections. During the lengthened occupation of the White House by the present President, the Democratic party has been growing in strength. Questions affecting the currency, general trade, public credit, the condition of the Southern States and other matters, have kept the public mind in an excited and dissatisfied condition, and have given scope to opposing political parties to test their relative strength. While the Democratic party had become stronger and had the vantage ground of attacking the weaknesses and errors of the Government, it was not felt that the Republicans had been seriously diminished in numbers, or weakened in their vigor, or impaired in integrity. The names of Tilden and Hayes almost divided the entire country into two equal but opposing sections. During the past few months, the War of Parties has been fiercely waged, nor was either side free of the charge of resorting to base and unworthy means for the accomplishment of their object. The village and the city alike were divided into two armies, who were determined to fight to the bitter end, not so much for principle, as for Party Victory. When the beginning of the end came, namely, the polling day, the contest was keenly and vigorously kept up. President Grant, and his secretaries and officials were described as jubilantly counting the returns which came in by the wires during the day, but when evening came they sat down to the sumptuous repast, which was intended to do honor to the Republican victory, with demure countenances and voices silenced by the probabilities of the hour. During the entire day there was nothing but the cry of party heard, or the utmost excitement and confusion visible. The returns from the various States were eagerly watched, and keenly scrutinized by the people, crowding around the bulletins. Uncertainty was the result. While even now it is believed by many that Tilden has received a majority of the electoral votes, grave doubts as to the result of the election are expressed. The end has not yet come. Tilden has undoubtedly the highest number of votes as reported. But it is even yet possible for the Republicans to claim equality with their opponents. The election of Tilden is probably assured, but the actual result cannot definitely be known till the end of the week.

The religious and independent newspapers in the United States profess to regard the condition of things as satisfactory. It is claimed that the contest is marked by the absence of embittered feeling—that the people are calmly and contentedly awaiting the issue. It is said that the country will be equally fortunate, whatever candidate should be declared the victor. With either Tilden or Hayes at the helm, the State ship is sure to have a prosperous and successful voyage. It may safely be allowed what is further claimed, that with such an equally divided vote, the dominant party will be so restrained and governed by the powerful minority acting in opposition, as to render it impossible for it to carry legislation with a high hand.

The evils of these Presidential elections are so many and obvious, that we believe the present system will yet be greatly modified. With the progress of the country, and the increase of its population, this mode of electing is felt to be cumbersome and inefficient. In former times, it might be well enough to change the President and his satellites every four years, when men the most worthy of becoming their successors could easily be seen and appreciated. But now the Presidential election is almost synonymous with revolution. It is no longer with the object of putting the best man in the foremost place, that such conflict of parties is carried on. There is no propulsion forward in these elections for commerce, for business, for social improvements, or even for religion. Everything is at a stand-still until the election is over. Stagnation in every thing but political conflict, is the necessary result. It is amusing, for example, to find a paper like the *Evangelist* congratulating its readers that they have reached the first Sabbath after election. It heads its leader with the caption, "A welcome Sabbath," and remarks: "To a nation so tortured by alternations of hope or despondency, the Sabbath came with its blessed peace and its grateful rest."

Such language sounds strangely in our ears, and reveals that beneath the boasted superiority of Republican institutions, the utmost rottenness and corruption are concealed.

What a fine contrast to all this we have in the system of Government which pertains in this Dominion. While still maintaining and cherishing our connection with the Mother Country and with the Government of the good Queen, we have our own Governor-General, our ministry and Parliaments, our Provincial Legislatures, and civil rulers. The appointment of the Governor-General by Her Majesty gives dignity to the office, while it removes it from the arena of political strife. With a nobleman like Lord Dufferin, whose high position and education remove him far above the contests of faction, and invested as he is with Vice-Royal Authority, he commands the greatest respect and influence. His entrance upon office, or demission of it, takes place independently of the people. These are not marked by terrible revolutions which frequently threaten to fall little short of civil war. The Governor-General rules, but not as the responsible head of a ministry. He is independent of all parties, whig or tory, conservative or liberal, republican or democrat. The change of ministry effects not the occupant of the vice-royal throne. The permanence of the ministry, that is their not being required to go out at a set time, prevents the stated marshalling of forces to secure the high offices of the land, and keeps commerce and business from the evil strain of political strife, while the occasional change of the Government, not necessarily happening at a fixed date, gives zest to our politics, and life to opposing parties. A parliamentary election, unless it degenerate into the strife of faction is calculated to rouse latent talent and keen competition for a noble end, and certainly need not interfere with the prosperity of business, or with the work of the church, nor bring to a stand still the energies and enterprises of the people. We feel that these contrasts ought to make us love our Dominion well, and lead us to become more and more loyal as her citizens and defenders.

The *Nation* seems to have been having a fling at such writers as Rev. Dr. Wm. Taylor and Rev. Joseph Cook for undertaking to meddle with such investigations as Huxley, Darwin and Tyndall. Dr. Taylor's letter in the *N. Y. Tribune* fairly squelched the Huxley philosophy. The *Nation* takes it to heart very much, and charges that clergymen are never independent investigators, but are partisan advocates of a certain system they have received in their training. In the *Christian at Work* Dr. Taylor replies, showing that it is not a question of science, but one of logic, and when such men as Huxley violate the rules of logic, clergymen are about as able as any other class of men to point out fallacy. So say we all.

The Presbytery of New York has appointed a collection to be taken up by all the congregations within the bounds to aid the funds of the Presbyterian Hospital. This is an excellent plan. The Hospital and the Home standing almost side by side are monuments of the benevolence of James Lennox. The work they are doing for the amelioration of suffering, and for the comfort of aged and infirm women, speaks for itself. It is only fair that the churches should do as much as they can to provide the necessary funds for carrying on the work of the Hospital. This Hospital collection on Thanksgiving Day is evidently the suggestion of the Hospital Sunday in England, and shows how an idea once started is bound to multiply itself over the entire world.

## Ministers and Churches.

Mrs. E. W. RATHBURN presented the congregation of Mill Point, with a handsome Communion Service and Baptismal Font.

The Rev. W. Mitchell, B.A., of Oshalmer's Church, Montreal, has been called to the St. Andrew's Congregation of St. John, N.B., the stipend offered being \$2,600. This is one of the most influential congregations in the Province of New Brunswick.

The new French Presbyterian Church, in the City of Quebec, was opened on last Sabbath, the 19th inst. Among those who took part in the exercises, were Rev. D. Langel, the pastor; Rev. Messrs. Pariere and Beandry, in French; and Dr. Cook, Rev. W. B. Clark, and P. Wright, in English. A full report of the interesting service will appear in our next week's issue.

The Congregation of St. Joseph Street Church, Montreal, under the pastorate of Rev. J. Striminger, M.A., has had most encouraging progress. On Thursday last a Social gathering was held in the Church which was well attended. In the early part of the evening tea was served in the basement, and an hour pleasantly passed in social intercourse, after which the company moved up stairs to the Church to listen to