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The Presbyterian Review.

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NOTICE.

A large number of subscriptions to the "Review" expire during the present month. We have to thank the many friends who have already renewed promptly. We beg leave respectfully to request that all our subscribers would take advantage of our most favourable terms by remitting in advance. See time of expiry on address tab.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 14TH, 1886.

THE Rev. Dr. Torrance, Convener of the Assembly's Committee on Statistics, requests us to publish that, on the 19th December last, he forwarded to Presbytery Clerks, so far as he could ascertain their names from the minutes of the last General Assembly, parcels containing a sufficient number of blank forms for collecting the statistics of Congregations and Stations in their bounds, with a few surplus ones. On the 4th January he also mailed ten copies to each Clerk, of the sheets for engraving these returns when received. He trusts that both parcels will reach safely the parties addressed; but, should there be any failure in this respect, he asks to be advised of the same without delay. They should

have arrived at their destination before this notice has been published. As the report to be compiled for next Assembly is a most important one, covering the year which closes the first decade since the union of the Presbyterian Churches in Canada, he hopes that Presbytery Clerks will do their utmost to procure full returns from all the pastoral charges, whether settled or vacant, and stations in their bounds.

Our successful and large hearted contemporary down by the sea, the Halifax Presbyterian Witness, as the oldest Presbyterian periodical in the Dominion, in wishing its younger brethren of the press "A Happy New Year and a prosperous future" pays some handsome compliments to the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW and its management. "Next in order of time is the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW of Toronto, a weekly paper which is rapidly attaining a wide popularity," and other kind words which modestly forbids us to quote here. The Witness, however, is in error in its speculations as to the editorship of this paper. The editorship and management are in one and the same hands. We join heartily in wishing our Presbyterian contemporaries, Witness, Canada Presbyterian, Record, and Maritime Presbyterian ever-increasing usefulness and prosperity. There is, we think, room for all, and there is not the slightest need for jealousies and rivalries. We appropriate, as conveying our own sentiments, the words of the Witness: "Taken altogether, we do not think that the Presbyterian press reflects discredit on the Presbyterian Church. It is in order for our pastors and leading men to ask and answer the question whether they are doing all they fairly ought to do in the way of encouraging the efforts of the "Fourth Estate."

The case of suicide in this city a few days ago, whereby the young woman Davis ended her life in circumstances of a peculiarly distressing character, once more teaches with stern insistence the old lesson, that "The way of the transgressor is hard." The melancholy end of this young girl should be a warning to all, especially to the young, of the supreme folly, not to speak of the heinous sin of transgressing God's law with regard to the sexual relations, and a reminder that the only safeguard against the assaults of the flesh and the devil is the indwelling power of the grace of God. We have little faith in the terrors of the civil law to prevent illicit connections, but we have unbounded faith in the cleansing fear of God and His commandment which enlightens the eyes. Incidentally, this case of suicide casts a lurid light upon the life and surroundings of many young men away from home in the great cities. The scene disclosed is painful and alarming in the extreme, and should arouse the Churches to redouble their efforts both to bring the young men to a sense of their danger in voluntarily exposing themselves to temptations, and to a knowledge of Him who is able to keep them from falling and to present them faultless.

THE election of Mr. Howland, by a very large majority, to the mayoralty of Toronto, is very generally regarded as an omen of the near approach of the better administration of our civic affairs, of more earnest efforts to repress vice and crime, and the heralding of the approaching triumph of the temperance movement. It would be too much to say that the good men of all parties arrayed themselves on Mr. Howland's side, but it is an undoubted fact that very many of those most actively engaged in church and philanthropic work generally, in the city, exerted themselves to secure his return. It is not without special significance and encouragement, that, for the first time in the history of the city, women also felt called upon to take an active part in the election of the chief magistrate and that almost unanimously they arrayed themselves in favour of Mr. Howland. It is not a strained interpretation of the large majority in an unusually large vote cast at this election, that the people see in Mr. Howland a man sincerely desirous of improving the moral as well as the material condition of the city, and one not unwilling to incur odium and face opposition to attain that end. Whether Mr. Howland will be able in his endeavours to make good his promises, to overcome the active and secret opposition that unmistakably await him, remains to be seen; but of the honesty of his intentions there can be no doubt. We can only hope that the large expectations formed of his administration will be realised, and that as our chief magistrate he will in very truth be a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well.

A SHORT time ago we mentioned that the Committee on the Instruction of Youth, English Presbyterian Church, proposed to award an Oxford Bible to those of the young people belonging to the churches and Sunday Schools who were able to repeat accurately on examination, the whole of the answers of the Shorter Catechism. The examinations, we notice, have been held at various centres, and the result is most gratifying. In all, 370 children earned the award, although the time for preparation was only six weeks. Every presbytery is represented by successful candidates. In the report of the Committee published in the Messenger, we find some very interesting cases: "At Houghton-le-Spring, a blind girl (Margaret Ann Fraser) repeated the Catechism with intelligent emphasis, and without a single mistake. At Islington, London, a little fellow of seven years of age (Harry C. Bailey) only made two mistakes. Quite a number of successful candidates, in various parts of the country, were only eight or nine years old. At Workington, a boy of nine repeated the whole Catechism at one sitting 'without a single error,

or omission or hesitation even.' A considerable number of children, a little older, performed the same feat. A remarkable performance is reported to us from Stratford; the daughter of our esteemed minister there, a girl ten years old, had never seen the Catechism before the public announcement of our examination. She set to work to commit it to memory, and in two or three weeks was able to present herself to the Sunday School Superintendent for examination. She repeated ninety-nine answers at a run without a single slip, and only stopped then because the examiner had not time to let her finish, which, of course, she easily did without a mistake on another day." The Committee proposes to repeat the experiment and to give the system of examination a thorough trial. We shall watch the progress of the experiment with much interest.

AGED AND INFIRM MINISTERS.

OUR Church is now upon her trial, as to the estimation in which she holds those who have spent long years in her service. The presbyteries have now before them the regulations drawn up by a special committee at last General Assembly, and along with these a pressing appeal for larger congregational aid and the speedy formation of a capital fund, the interest of which will be a factor of importance in providing for the annuitants. As many of our readers are possibly ignorant of these new proposals and have not the blue book to help them, we give a summary of them with such comments as seem necessary. We begin with the last regulation, which seems to us the most important, viz:—

"That any minister who is regularly on the fund shall become entitled to his superannuation allowance on attaining the age of seventy years, or in the event of a minister's health falling he may become entitled to the allowance by the vote of the General Assembly."

This regulation declares that, having served the Church sufficient years to entitle him to an allowance, a minister who has reached the age of seventy years will receive that allowance, whether he be still in a charge or out of a charge, and altogether independently of any private means he may be known to possess or be supposed to possess. We heartily approve of this proposal, that to a certain limited extent there should be such a pension as would show the Church's appreciation of long and faithful services, and that this sum should not be doled out as an act of charity, but bestowed as an acknowledgment of the benefits the Church has received from the recipients, so that all who were entitled to it might accept it with honour, whatever might be their private position. It is well known that the servants of the Government become entitled to superannuation by serving a certain number of years, and surely the Church should be as ready as the State to the extent of her ability to reward long and faithful labour on her behalf. We dwell upon this because there has been a tendency to consider the allowance to aged ministers simply as a charitable dole, and therefore there has been grumbling because some who had other means of support have received the pittance the Church has been able to give. We hope this regulation will be unanimously adopted and that our ministers will understand that the Church does not put a premium on thriftlessness, but will acknowledge their work without any enquiry into their private resources.

The next regulation, viz:—

"That the rates from ministers be made a uniform rate of five dollars and not a percentage on the net income as at present," has caused some discussion.

Some have asked: "Is it fair that the minister receiving only \$750 a year should pay the same rate as the minister receiving \$3,000 a year?" We answer, certainly it is fair, when both these ministers will receive the same allowance from the fund. If the minister with the larger salary received a larger pension, it would be just to make him pay a higher rate, but as it is not so, it is only right that there should be a uniform rate. We are glad the committee have seen fit to make this uniform rate so small, and we trust that the result may be that every minister in the Church will place himself on the fund at once.

The next regulation refers to the proposal of a new capital fund, which we trust may attract the notice of some of our wealthy people who could not do the Church nobler service than by a princely gift to set this scheme in motion. We have had great gifts bestowed upon our colleges. Who will lead off with a large donation to the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Fund?

The next two regulations deal with the subject of supplementary aid over and above the regular annuity, to special cases, and we consider deal with it very wisely. After providing for the regular annuity it is proposed to set apart the interest of the capital fund for the purpose of giving this supplementary aid to those who have no other, or almost no other, means of support. Here, for instance, is a case that has happened more than once in the Church: A minister has begun life with some little private means and through the inadequacy of his salary and the exigencies incident to the bringing up of a large family, and also often giving beyond his means to help on the work of the congregation, he exhausts all his little patrimony and finds himself in his old age without any resources upon which he can rely. Instances which we are not at liberty to give to the public could be adduced where a considerable private income has been thus swallowed up in the service of the Church. Now surely it is a righteous thing that the Church should consider such cases and when an old and revered minister is in the position of holding on desperately to his pulpit

simply because beggary stares him in the face if he resigns, he should be assured that he will receive such special help as the funds at the committee's disposal may enable them to grant.

We believe that the Church has now an equitable plan and a simple one before her, and that there will be hearty approval on the part of the presbyteries and hearty co-operation on the part of the people. We are greatly pleased to see the part the elders of the Church are taking in the furtherance of this scheme, and we feel that a deep debt of gratitude is due to Mr. J. K. McDonald, of this city, for the time and attention he has given to this subject. If any of the presbyteries are in need of enlightenment they could not do better than write Mr. McDonald to pay them a visit such as he has already paid to the presbyteries of Toronto and Hamilton. The Scheme, we beg leave to say, is eminently a question for the laymen of the Church, and we are sure they only need to have their attention turned to it to give a most generous response. We will be highly delighted to hear of some large donations promised through the discussion of the subject in our columns, and we heartily endorse the view of the Rev. F. McCuaig, of Kingston, as expressed in his letter in another column. We believe the Church will remove this great reproach now and that at next meeting of Assembly a very different report will be presented by the worthy convener than he has yet been enabled to make.

MISCONCEPTIONS OF CALVINISM

By REV. JAMES MIDDLEMIS, ELORA, ONT.

UNCONDITIONAL SALVATION—ALLEGED INCONSISTENCY WITH STANDARDS.

THE papers on "Misconceptions of Calvinism," that appeared in the REVIEW a few weeks ago, are, it seems, believed by some to have been occasioned by adverse criticisms of Calvinism in the Christian Guardian. The writer, as a matter of fact, did not know of anything in that paper calling for animadversion, but had in view only misconceptions that he believed to be widely prevalent, and that he had not infrequently come in contact with. He is not in the habit of reading the Guardian, and had not seen it for two or three years, when, after his work was done, a copy of the issue of the 9th of September was put into his hands, containing an article referring to the fact that the first of his papers had appeared in the REVIEW, and assailing Calvinism in a way that, he could not but think, only further illustrated the need of such an attempt to obviate misapprehension as he had been making for some time.

The writer of the article in the Guardian has not followed it up by any reference to my treatment of the subject. The first paper being introductory and of a general character, I thought it not altogether improbable that, seeing my purpose was so early taken notice of, the writer might have something more to say when the series was complete. Beyond a quotation, however, referring to Christ's vicarious work, in which there is a mistake, though probably accidental, omission, the Guardian has not seen cause to take further notice of my endeavour to remove misapprehensions. To what extent I have succeeded in my endeavour it is not for me to say. While I have received communications that refer to it in terms which, I feel, are too complimentary, I would have been glad if some one, who believed that my attempt had been a failure, had dealt with the subject in a line that I have endeavoured to follow, as being the line in which, I believed, I could best secure the intelligent and candid judgment of Christians on a subject which, I know, perplexes many minds only because they are under misapprehension. The writer in the Guardian should be considered fully competent to deal with the subject; and I cannot help wishing that he had assailed my fundamental position and endeavoured to show that the representation I have given of Calvinism is either unscriptural, or, if allowed to be scriptural, inconsistent, in any respect, with the symbols of Calvinism. Nor can I help thinking that there is a significance in the fact that subsequent reference to the subject is confined to the quotation above referred to. I cannot but suppose that the writer has reasons for maintaining a total silence in regard to everything in my papers, with one exception, and reasons for making the one exception and for making it in the way he does. But, as I can only conjecture what his reasons are, and I may easily be mistaken in my conjectures, it is well I should keep them to myself, and leave others to form their own.

The Guardian while declining, for reasons of his own, to endeavour to show that the papers on "Misconceptions of Calvinism" contain anything inconsistent either with the Scriptures or with our symbolical books, has taken occasion to indulge in the very style of representation whose general prevalence was referred to as calling for such dealing with the subject as I have attempted. I confess I am somewhat unwilling to deal with a specimen of misapprehension hardly behind the worst I have had occasion to refer to. But I am not without hope that, avoiding repetition as much as possible, a little reiteration of explanations already given, varied in adaptation to a fresh utterance illustrative of the prevailing tendency to present distorted views of Calvinism, may be serviceable to some who are interested in the subject and not wanting in candour.

In my introductory paper I quoted a representation of Calvinism by Tulerus of Sedan, which I characterized as a foul caricature, closing my remarks upon it with the statement that "we cannot without some difficulty understand how any intelligent Christian can allow himself to be responsible for such a representation. In view of my use of such language, fully warranted as I believe it is in reference to the representation of Tulerus, I cannot but greatly regret that the Guardian should have indulged in a similar style of representation. While expressing his belief that Presbyterians and other "Evangelical Calvinists" teach and act inconsistently with Calvinistic "principles or dogmas," he affirms unhesitatingly that their symbolical books, the Westminster Confession and Catechisms, teach, by "inevitable logical consequence," "necessitarian fatalism," inasmuch as they "make salvation unconditional," and "declare" in such terms that God "has ordained some to life" and "appointed others to perdition," as to "represent Him as consigning to eternal perdition for not believing in Christ those whom He had by His own decree ordained to unbelief."