

# THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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## Notes of the Week.

AMONG those mentioned for the vacant professorship in the English Presbyterian College are the Rev. Dr. Kennedy Moore, editor of the *Presbyterian Messenger*; the Rev. Dr. Wright, of the Bible Society; the Rev. George Adam Smith, M.A., of Aberdeen; and the Rev. W. A. Walton, M.A., of Berwick.

THE elders in the Irish Presbyterian Church are taking steps for the formation of an Elders' Association, for the purpose of promoting the best interests of the Church. For the past thirty years such an association in connection with the Church of Scotland has been in existence, and it is evident that a similar institution will soon find a place among the congregations of the Irish Church.

A MEMORIAL volume of the late Professor Elmslie, containing a biography along with a selection of his sermons, will be prepared by the Rev. W. Robertson Nicoll, in co-operation with A. N. Macnicoll, and will be published early in April. It is proposed to establish a travelling fellowship, open for competition to theological students of the Baptist, Congregationalist and Presbyterian Churches, to bear the name of the deceased Professor.

THE Rev. Horace M. Bonar, 10 Palmerston Road, Edinburgh, son of the Rev. Dr. Horatius Bonar, will be greatly obliged if any persons who possess letters from his father, or unpublished hymns by him, will forward them to him at the above address. They would be carefully preserved, and returned to the sender with as little delay as possible. Mr. Bonar is particularly anxious to get his father's hymns together, as he finds there are a good many which he sent away without having kept any copy of them.

THE editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Mr. Stead made a careful study of the Propaganda while in Rome recently. In the whole institution, he says, there is not one Englishman or American. There is one antediluvian Irishman who is connected in some way with the congregation, but it is more than forty years since he visited his native land, and the very stones which surround the dead heart of O'Connell in the church of St. Agatha have more sympathy with the Irish movement to-day than has the solitary old Irish Benedictine who alone of English-speaking men has the right officially to visit the Propaganda. The permanent officials are all Italians.

IT is said a great change is noticeable this session in one class at New College, Edinburgh. Instead of the mere handful of students who sat under Dr. Smeaton, more than one hundred may be seen every morning at ten o'clock listening to Dr. Dods. This is partly accounted for by the fact that the junior and the senior class meet together this session, Dr. Dods having only had time to prepare one course of lectures, and partly by the significant fact that the fourth year's students are also present in a body, though not required by the curriculum to attend. A number of licentiates and ministers are also regularly in their places, and the class-room, which is the largest in the college, is almost overcrowded.

WE have received, says the *British Weekly*, a letter signed by the Episcopal and Methodist ministers of Singapore, and also by the agent there of the British and Foreign Bible Society, complaining that attempts are being made among them to override the decisions of the British Parliament whereby the Contagious Diseases ordinance was summarily repealed, and by changing the source of legislation in this matter from the Imperial to the municipal Governments it is sought to defeat the will of the nation in England's dependencies; and thus to re-enforce those laws which the conscience of the English people declares should not be enforced in any part of England's wide territory. They say that if the ordinances are re-enforced there, Hong Kong and Ceylon and India will follow. We hope those who are specially responsible will take heed to this word of warning.

DR. YOUNG, of Monifieth, Scotland, hopes the Presbyteries will very soon take the law into their hands and revise the whole system of representation to the General Assembly. Just imagine the Assembly of 1694 settling that for all time coming by an Act which they still recognized and went upon! The business of the Assembly has in consequence fallen into the hands of the few annual members who compose the central arena, while ministers and elders have become merely spectators. If lookers-on by any chance step into the arena they are stared at as if they were strange animals. The Assembly Hall itself Dr. Young regards as a disgrace to the Church. Scarcely a year passes but two or three ministers are sacrificed to its draughts and general uncomfatableness. The U. P. body had recently spent \$150,000 in getting a proper building, and the Established Church should at once set about erecting a hall worthy of itself.

IN a recent number of the *Scots Magazine*, now conducted with much ability and in an excellent spirit by the Rev. W. W. Tulloch, a proposal appeared from a clergyman of the Church of Scotland, that the Church question there should be settled on the basis of disestablishment without disendowment. This is a revival of the suggestion made by Lord Aberdeen some years ago, and, says the *British Weekly*, we have reason to believe it represents the mind of an important section of the Scotch Establishment. The spirit in which it is put forward must command respect and sympathy, and Dr. Calderwood, in the new number of the *United Presbyterian Magazine* deals with it in a very able, statesmanlike and generous manner. We are not very sanguine as to the possibility of the matter being arranged by compromise, but every sign of mutual consideration and of Christian forbearance should be welcomed on both sides. The point neglected, both by the writer in the *Scots Magazine* and Dr. Calderwood, is the connection of the Church question in Scotland with that in Wales and in England, and the necessity of all being settled on common principles.

THE more we hear of the Jesuits' Estates Act, especially from its authors, the more evident, says the *Christian Leader*, becomes its unconstitutional character. Mr. Mercier's latest statement on the subject shows its real significance. "It is certainly," he says, "the most important political act of the age. It is the solemn recognition of the principle of restitution; it is the official acknowledgment of the respect due to the religious authorities." In other words, it admits that the King in 1801 did an unjust and unlawful act in taking possession of these estates, inasmuch as they did not belong to him, but to the Pope of Rome; further, it implies that the Pope's *ipse dixit* and canon law are to be obeyed. This is the principle laid down in the preamble of the Act, which its sly framers no doubt regard as of more value than even the vast sum of money handed over to the Jesuits. It gives the Pope supremacy over the Queen; it places canon law above constitutional law. And Canada, which has ventured to do this thing, is part of the British Empire. So far as we know, we have stood alone in this country in exposing the real character of the Act; and in protesting against it from first to last; but the day is coming when this will become a burning question in Great Britain, and when the papal legislation at Ottawa must be reversed.

IT requires some courage for an Anglican minister to preach in a Presbyterian pulpit. Recently the Bishop of Ripon preached in the University Chapel, Glasgow. Some Presbyterians thought this an ominous sign of the time, betokening a return of prelacy. That is nothing to the abuse the Bishop has received from Episcopalians. The *Church Times*, as well as other papers, have been severe upon him for preaching to "the sons of Korah." *Truth* delivers itself on the situation in this fashion: The *Church Times*, if it knew anything whatever of Scotland, would be aware that so far as the "people" are concerned, not one in a thousand belongs to the Episcopalian sect, which is practically confined in the country to a few great land-owners, with their visitors, servants and dependants; while in the

towns there is a horridly silly, snobbish notion that Episcopacy is more fashionable a creed than Presbyterianism, and leaves a number of would-be smart simpletons and a horde of professional slip-slop to be won back to the old Church; but the people who have made Scotland what it is, and who are the backbone of the country, are still Presbyterians, and will remain so as long as the world lasts. The Bishop of Ripon, adds *Truth*, acted with good sense and good judgment in consenting to occupy Presbyterian pulpits at Glasgow and at St. Andrews.

THE following overture to the General Assembly was moved at a recent meeting of the Glasgow Free Presbytery. It is the result of a conference of Free Church ministers on the South side, at the close of the three weeks' co-operation of the Free and U. P. Churches. Fifty-two out of fifty-four of the ministers of the two Churches joined, and at a conference of those ministers it was agreed to arrange for similar united action in the future. The Federal Council of the U. P. and the English Presbyterian Churches which met at Edinburgh has adopted a minute cordially recommending the overture: Whereas the last General Assembly unanimously invited "all the ministers and members of the Church earnestly to consider the whole subject (of our relation to the U. P. Church), and also, in harmony with the deliverance of the General Assembly of 1873, to do their utmost to promote local and general co-operation between the U. P. Church and this Church; and whereas in pursuance of that recommendation there has recently been, within the bounds of this Presbytery, co-operation between these two Churches on a large scale, and with gratifying results, it is humbly overtured to the General Assembly to consider whether its aforementioned recommendation of last year should not be renewed in some effective way, and particularly to consider whether a committee of this Church should not be appointed to act along with any similar committee of the U. P. Church, in the hope of maturing some plans fitted to lessen the evils of overlapping in Home Mission work; to encourage, as opportunity shall arise, the union of small congregations in thinly-peopled and over-churched districts; and also to secure united action in planting new churches where they are needed; or to do otherwise as to the Assembly shall seem fit.

THE Brahma Somaj of India is threatened with extinction. Mr. Mozoomdar is said to have lost heart with reference to its future, and to write as if he thought it had rendered all the service of which it was capable. He is a man of great eloquence and notable powers as a religious thinker, but he never possessed Chunder Sen's ability in popular leadership, or his personal impressiveness. Since Chunder Sen's death he has been forced by circumstances to take a chief charge, and it is possible that the complications and difficulties of the position have been too much for him. In his statement of the "Faith and Progress of the Brahma Somaj" (Calcutta, 1882), he points to reabsorption into Hindooism as the great danger before the movement. It was his own disposition to insist on the features it had in common with Islam and Christianity, especially the latter. Yet his own account of the latter development of the Somaj showed that the omnipresent atmosphere of Hindooism was proving too much for it even while Chunder Sen was living. First came the introduction of devotional services copied from one of the humblest of Hindoo sects, in which twelve continuous hours were spent in rapturous singing and absorbing prayer. Then came the systematic revival of the old Hindoo forms of devotion, four in number. Then was added asceticism of the severest kind, the ministers of the sect cooking their own food, refusing to receive any service from others, and practising fasts of Hindoo extravagance. All these indications pointed one way, and emphasized the danger that Hindooism would prove strong enough to absorb this theistic movement, as it had those of Nanak and Chatainya, who had been aroused to the denunciation of idolatry by the teachings of the Moslems. The Brahma Somaj differed from them chiefly in owing so much to Christianity, and it now seems likely that it will serve as a half-way house to prepare Hindoos for the acceptance of Christianity.