

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, Proprietor.
OFFICE—No. 5, JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

ADVERTISING TERMS.—Under 3 months, 10 cents per line per insertion; 3 months, \$1 per line; 6 months, \$1.50 per line; 1 year, \$2.50. No advertisements charged at less than five lines. None other than unobjectionable advertisements taken.

WESTERN GENERAL AGENT.

MR. JOHN MACAULEY is our authorized Agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Macauley in all the congregations he may visit.

Friends favouring us with contributions for THE PRESBYTERIAN are requested to send them early. Recent improvements, such as cutting, folding, etc., necessitate going to press on Monday. In order, therefore, to insure the timely insertion of communications of interest to our readers, MSS. should be promptly forwarded.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 14, 1883.

TWO or three years ago a minister died in poverty and obscurity in one of the large cities on the other side of the lines. In his young days he had been pastor of an influential city church. A fiend in human shape charged him with a serious offence, but offered to compromise for a small sum of money. Of a very sensitive nature, and having a morbid dread of scandal, in a moment of weakness he paid the money, thinking that would end the matter. Of course he was mistaken. The blackmailer continued making further demands, and he was obliged to make further payments. Having recovered partially from the shock, he asserted his innocence, but was of course met with the question: Why did you pay the money? He was driven from his pulpit in disgrace. Later on the most undoubted proof of his innocence was produced, but produced too late. His health was ruined, his spirits broken, his prospects blasted, his opportunities gone, his life a wreck. He made one mistake—yielding to a blackmailer—and that mistake was fatal. The right course is to take the blackmailer squarely by the throat. It may seem impossible at first sight to establish one's innocence, but Providence and a good lawyer can generally bring out the truth. The natural tendency of truth is to come to the surface when the matter is sifted. A chain of lies is sure to have some weak links. A good cross-examiner can generally expose the falsehood. Moral: Resist the blackmailer as you would resist his or her father—the Devil.

WE occasionally hear good people say that everything unfit for Sabbath reading should be left out of their religious paper. It does not occur to these good people that religious papers were never intended for Sabbath reading. It is quite true that a large portion of any religious journal may be read with profit on the Lord's day, but it is equally true that there must be in every religious paper a good deal of matter not specially devotional. The late Principal Willis used to make a distinction between that which is *religious* and that which is *spiritual*. The religious is good, but the *spiritual* is the thing for the Sabbath. The report of a Presbytery meeting is more or less religious, but we don't think anybody would grow in grace by reading Presbytery reports. It is well for Presbyterians to know what the Presbyteries and Committees and Colleges are doing, but that can be digested on week evenings. A sensible devout man can easily look over his paper and select good Sabbath reading from it, but for most people it is better to have a good book on hand, a portion of which is read every Lord's day. Such books are within the reach of all. If they cannot be bought they can be borrowed. Above all, *The Book* should not be neglected. What the age needs most is *solid* reading, solid as to matter and solid as to manner. The abundance of current literature has taught too many people to "skim." Skimming leads to mental shallowness, and shallowness leads to Plymouthism and other forms of pestiferous heresy.

IT appears from the report of the convention lately held in this city, that the treasury of the Ontario Branch of the Dominion Alliance is not in a healthy condition. An appeal was made to the Churches some time ago, but the funds were not forthcoming. Another appeal is to be made to the financial managers of congregations, with what result remains to be seen. It is very easy to mention at least one reason why many congregations decline to contribute. Some years ago the country was scourged with a class of itinerant temperance lecturers, some of whom made it their special business to attack ministers and Churches in a manner that would not be tolerated at a meeting of licensed victuallers. Some of these demagogues were men of very indifferent character, and others had characters they would have been much better without. We will not be so cruel as to ask where are they now? Suffice it to say that one portion of the harangue was always directed against ministers and Churches. A better day has dawned. Temperance men would scarcely now employ a semi-infidel newly dragged out of the ditch to harangue in the old style. The old sores, however, are not healed. Ministers and Church officials who were roundly abused by these itinerants, scarcely feel like contributing, and the Alliance treasury is not filled. Probably none of the abusive lecturers alluded to were in the employ of the Alliance, but they were so-called "temperance lecturers," and they did the cause a vast amount of harm. The best possible evidence that the cause is a good one is the fact that it prospered in spite of the evil done by some of its professed and paid advocates.

THE ARROGANCE OF UNBELIEF.

TRUE Christianity is meek, gentle, and forbearing. There have been arrogant and overbearing ecclesiastics, but the average believer in the Christian faith is tolerant in thought and feeling. There have been sturdy churchmen who would not permit any departure from received modes of belief, and who did not scruple in invoking the exercise of the civil sword to cut off the heads of heretics. No candid person would, however, attribute the conduct of these men to the religion they professed. A comparison of the precepts and spirit of Christianity with the character and conduct of many of its professed friends is sufficient to show that they had grievously misunderstood the religion they had espoused. The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the Gospel of purity and love. Unaffected humility is one of its distinguishing characteristics. What a contrast to this is the general spirit of the now prevalent unbelief! What a pitiful feeling of scorn, as an undertone, pervades so many of its utterances. Those who cling to their belief in the supernatural revelation of God's will to man are summarily divided into two classes, knaves and fools, idiots and hypocrites, deceivers or deceived.

Those who profess to meet all the deeper facts of spiritual existence, all the divine mystery of being, the unstilled longings of the immortal spirit, the great hereafter, the Divine personality, with the feeble response, "I do not know," affect to know almost everything else, to speak as oracles of the progress of science, and from their fancied altitude look down with ill-disguised contempt on those who believe that God has spoken to man, and that He will yet satisfy to the full the loftiest aspirations of the human soul.

What attitude do the leaders of the present current of philosophic and scientific thought assume towards the Christian verities? Let those who are familiar with the writings of Tyndall, and Huxley, Haeckel, and Spencer reply. Their chief endeavour seems to have been so to glorify the materialistic that it might overshadow the spiritual, and, if possible, leave no room for its existence. They seek to eliminate the deepest part of man's nature, and seem to be content that the positive philosophy of Auguste Comte is about the last and best word that can be spoken to man. For whatever contributions these gifted men have been enabled to make to the cause of scientific truth, they are to be commended; but when they assume that, by leaving out of view the most vital of all truths, and that their systems embrace all available knowledge, they are deceiving none more completely than themselves. And beneath these leaders there are many smatterers, who talk in the most contemptuous and unbecoming tones about the decay of Christianity, and the sublime superiority of science. Though it is unfortunately true that many of the foremost scientific men of the day are unbelievers, we are not

to forget those who, while pursuing truth with ardent devotion on the field of science, were sincerely devoted in their worship of Him in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Buckland and Miller in geology, and Michael Faraday in the more modern phases of scientific investigation, brought powers of mind of a rare order to the pursuits that fascinated them, yet they were not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ. Why should they? Principal Dawson stands in the front rank as a scientist, yet he cordially accepts the truths of revealed religion.

This superciliousness, unhappily, not only indicates a defective sympathy with humanity, it betrays an *animus* that is anything but commendable. Suppose that one is passing through an eclipse of faith, that he fails to see the Divine beauty and worth of Christianity, from the fact that in the past it has wielded a mighty power, is it therefore not worthy of respect? His state of mind is a most unhappy one. Men look upon the stately ruins of the past with a fond regret; they moralize over the nations and institutions that have passed away. Is it not accordant with ordinary mental habits to think with respect of a mighty influence that for nigh twenty centuries has been felt most powerfully wherever civilization had reached its highest attainments?

The faith of the Nazarene is not dead, is not dying; it is immortal. A few savants, in their intellectual pride, may be so occupied with themes of congenial study that they do not perceive the need of the wisdom from on high; their temporal surroundings may be of such a nature that they do not feel the pressure of the burdens that lie on so many human hearts. It may be that a cold wave of infidelity will continue for a time to chill the moral atmosphere, but from its nature it is only temporary. Towards the end of the last century deism spread its blighting influence over many minds in England. The encyclopædists in France overturned for a time the popular religious belief. The reaction came, and vital Christianity emerged stronger and more energetic for new and glorious triumphs. So will it be again in days not now distant. The popular unbelief will melt away before the power of a more genial spring-time, and the scoffs and the sneers of agnosticism will disappear before the sacred power of Divine love. The devout Christian has no reason to doubt the future of his faith or the promises of its Founder, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world."

THE MASONIC LOTTERY.

THE drawing of prizes in the great Masonic lottery occasioned extraordinary excitement. Many displayed an eagerness of anxiety that the result of an election or the fate of an empire would have failed to arouse. It would, however, be a mistake to conclude that the many thousands, who last week were so feverish to learn the result of the drawing, were deeply interested in the principles of that reputable body of our fellow-men who are bound together by the mystic tie, or were animated with a desire for their prosperity in connection with the magnificent building recently erected in the western city. Were those excited thousands moved with pity for the orphan, the fatherless, and the distressed, whom it is the professed object of the Masonic fraternity to succour? Was it a new and mighty accession of philanthropic feeling stirred by generous impulse? Not a bit of it. The love of gain explains the unwonted excitement. The uncertainty attending all games of chance, to some extent no doubt, threw its glamour over the minds of many who parted with their money in the hope of making a big haul. Many of the disappointed, with uneasy feelings that they had staked and lost, may salve their consciences with the notion that, at all events, the half of their missing dollars has gone to wipe off the debt of the Masonic temple, but this does not remove the uncomfortable notion that they have done a rather foolish thing.

From all accounts it would appear that the affair has been conducted from first to last in a straightforward and honest way. The officials, high in the ranks of masonry, well-known and honourable men, would never have countenanced anything savouring of fraud. Those who have staked and lost are not likely to be all reasonable and philosophic, but they cannot justly blame anybody but themselves. The projectors have played their game skilfully, but they have not played with loaded dice. So far as appears, and from what might have been expected of the men who undertook