

THE Presbyterian Review.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 1889.

REVISION OF THE STANDARDS.—"WHITHER."

"WHITHER" is a valuable and timely contribution to the discussion of the very important question of the Revision of Church Standards, in all denominations, and particularly in the Presbyterian Churches of Europe and America.

Like all that the learned professor writes, "Whither" is in its style clear, trenchant, racy, confident to a fault, radical and daring—we do not say rash or reckless, for what is written has been uttered deliberately, thoughtfully, with a purpose and under a full sense of the effect it is likely to have.

Dr. Briggs deals with not only the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Catechisms, as the exposition of the Puritan doctrine of the seventeenth century, but also with the Directory for Public Worship and the Form of Church Government.

We are glad Dr. Briggs has given his thoughts to the public. His book will help the discussion; but we fail to find in it any satisfactory answer to the question what should be done now towards improving our Church Standards.

Sacraments, the Church and State, marriage and divorce, would lead to a more charitable relation to Roman Catholicism, and afford a safer basis for the future.

In order to understand Dr. Briggs' position we must bear in mind that he longs for the organic union of Christendom, and while not blind to the impracticableness of all methods hitherto suggested, he hopes and seems to believe that common ground will be found on which not only all evangelical Protestants, but even extreme Ritualists and Roman Catholics, can be united.

We are far, indeed, from accepting Dr. Briggs as a guide in the reconstruction of Christendom. He may do good work as an iconoclast, but his mission is not to build up. We are not convinced that the best way to meet the demands for progress is to revise the Confession; rather does it seem feasible to allow greater freedom in subscription, as the American Church has done; or to prepare a new Confession in harmony with the thought and circumstances of the nineteenth century; or a supplementary statement of Articles of Belief, as the Church in England has done.

He pleads also for co-operation with the Church of Rome, as if that were possible while the Roman demand is unconditional submission or destruction. He thinks the Church should define on eschatological questions, on the salvation of infants, on the descent into Hades, the salvation of the heathen, and such questions, although God's Word affords almost no light regarding them.

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OUR SABBATH SCHOOL WORK.

WE are glad to observe, from the report of the proceedings of the General Assembly's Sabbath School Committee, that the work entrusted to it is being vigorously pushed by the indefatigable Convener, Rev. T. F. Fotheringham, and that its efforts to interest the Church in the Scheme of Higher Religious Instruction are meeting with much encouragement.

It is to be hoped that the Scheme will have a fair trial in all the Presbyteries. We are very hopeful that the high expectations of the Convener and the Committee will be realized, and that, with the judicious handling of details by those entrusted with carrying them out, the Scheme will be productive of great good to the Church, and become, in the best sense of the word, popular amongst our young people and those who are most immediately concerned with their training.

The Committee, it will also be observed, has taken steps towards obtaining fuller statistics than as yet have been presented to the Assembly. Might we here venture to suggest that success in this direction will depend very largely on the energy with which the Convener in each Presbytery devotes himself to the task of collecting and collating returns from individual schools? He is the pivot on which the statistical part of the work turns.

In its praiseworthy desire to obtain full and accurate returns, does not the Committee, however, fall into error in stating, at least by implication, that the General Assembly's system of class registers, now in use in so many schools, contains no provision for quarterly and annual summaries.

By the terms of agreement between the Association of Presbyterian Seminaries conducting the Review, it was to be under the charge of one editor from Union Theological Seminary and one editor from Princeton Seminary. As the representative of Union, Professor Briggs has served the Association for ten years as managing editor and treasurer.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

THE annual Convention of the Ontario Women's Christian Temperance Union, which met in Galt on Thursday and Friday of last week, brought together a large number of delegates from all parts of the Province. The proceedings were characterized by great enthusiasm and harmony.

dealing with the subject of social purity, it was resolved:

That ministers of the Gospel be asked to preach an annual sermon on the subject. That the thanks of the Convention be tendered to Mr. Chaiton for his efforts in behalf of this movement, as shown by the Charter Act.

The following resolutions were also adopted:

That in the opinion of this Convention, the great evils arising from intemperance can only be effectually eradicated by a law prohibiting the manufacture, importation and sale of alcoholic liquors as a beverage; and whereas, such a law can only be obtained and enforced by a Government or Governments in sympathy with the same, therefore, be it resolved that we, members of the Provincial Union, do hereby urge the necessity of using our influence to assist any Prohibition candidate to any office.

Resolved, that as Christian women, we have a duty to perform to the students in our cities, and the young men and women who are strangers in our towns. With a prayer to God for wisdom and direction, we pledge ourselves to do all in our power to remove temptation from their way.

It is officially announced that the publication of The Presbyterian Review (Quarterly), published for "The Presbyterian Review Association" by Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, of New York, ceases with the present (October) issue.

Beyond this bare announcement neither the Association nor the publishers give any intimation as to the causes which have led to what is regarded on all hands as a great loss to the world of Presbyterian literature.

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THIS is the day appointed to be publicly observed as a Day of Thanksgiving throughout the Dominion. For manifold reasons it is meet that the day be observed with gladness.

WE are glad to learn that the canvass for the Aged and Infirm Ministers' Endowment Fund is well under way in this city, and that the Agent, Rev. William Burns, is meeting with much success in the work.

SIR DONALD SMITH, of Montreal, has been installed as Chancellor of McGill University. The new Chancellor, in reviewing the history of McGill,

lauded her benefactors and said that he would, with the generous support of his colleagues, strive to place the time-honoured institution upon even a higher plane than it now occupies.

Literary Notices.

AN interesting discovery has been made in India—nothing less than the lost books of Euclid, of which a Sanskrit translation is said to have been found at Jeypore.

WILLIAM DEAN HOWELLS takes up, in Harper's for November, "The decline of English fiction from the genuine realism of Jane Austen, through Scott, Bulwer, Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Brontë, and even George Eliot."

LAST July a story published in The Youth's Companion evoked hundreds of letters from all parts of the United States, some taking one view and others another, of the argument, but all showing an intense interest in the tale.

Wide-Awake maintains its reputation as a first-class children's magazine. The excellence of the stories and the beauty of the illustrations render it in every respect one of the best magazines of its class.

Christian Thought, for October, contains valuable papers on "The Necessity of Faith"; "The Cash Value of Conscience"; "Man's Inheritance in the Sabbath." Of the other papers that on "Woman's Work in the Modern Church" deals very finely with a question fast coming into prominence and which must be fairly considered.

ANSON D. F. RANDOLPH & Co., of New York, will publish immediately "The Imitation of Christ," (Mistica Ecclesiastica), by Thomas Kempis, now for the first time set forth in rhythmic sentences, according to the original intention of the author.

Contributed.

REVIVALS.

CANADA.—SOURCES OF INFORMATION.—PLAYTER.—DR. GREGG.—EARLY REVIVALS AMONG METHODISTS AND PRESBYTERIANS.—A CAUTION.—THE OLD COMMUNION SEASONS.—RESULTS.—THE KIND OF REVIVAL WE WANT.

ACCOUNTS of revivals in other lands have been written by inspired and uninspired men, but the narrative of "Times of Refreshing" in Canada has not yet, so far as the writer is aware, engaged the pen of any historian.

presence of the Lord, and many congregations can recall seasons when the Divine power was wonderfully manifested in the quickening of sinners and in the conversion of sinners.

The great awakening of 1800 in the United States, already described, extended into Canada, along up the shore of Lake Ontario, even to the head of the lake, to Niagara, and thence to Long Point on the northwestern shore of Lake Erie.

In 1805 was convened at Elizabethtown what has since been usually known among Methodists as "The Revival Conference." "No other Conference in Canada," says Playter, the historian, is like it, nor any other session of an annual Conference in Great Britain or the United States.

Again I quote the historian already named: "In this great revival the labours of the preachers, local and travelling, were very great; and some wrought for God beyond their strength. . . . A great impression was made on the public mind by the strange, sometimes wonderful change of character and life in so many persons, and in so short a time.

Thus the Methodist Church in Canada, as in England, was born in a revival; and from the commencement to the present day she has been pre-eminently a revival Church.

Other branches of the evangelical Churches in our land have had their times of refreshing. At present we shall refer only to those in the Presbyterian Church.

As early as 1809, Rev. D. W. Eastman of the American Presbyterian Church, preached in the Niagara Peninsula. For about twenty five years he laboured alone in a wild and comparatively uncultivated field.

In 1833 the Niagara Presbytery was formed, and from a narrative prepared by a committee of that Presbytery, and embodied in Dr. Gregg's History, I extract the following: "From that time (1830) to the present God has greatly enlarged our Zion. This He has done, so far as means are concerned, chiefly by protracted meetings. These commenced in the churches under Mr. Eastman's care; and they have been held in many places within our bounds with most blessed results."

Let us guard against a dangerous error. Many hear of a revival, and instantly there are associated in their minds a series of crowded meetings, fervid preaching, much emotional singing, many manifest conversions, many anxious inquirers, and much religious excitement. But let us beware. There may be much that is outward and demonstrative, and yet no true revival. It is no evidence that a man has wings and can fly because a tornado puts its

"Whither," a Theological Question For The Times, by C. A. Briggs, D. D., of Union Seminary, New York. Scribner's Sons, New York, 1889. Sold by D. T. McAnish, corner of Adelaide and Toronto Streets, Toronto.