

are said to be exceptionally high. It may be interesting to those who are considering the matter to know that Mr. MacFadzean is spoken highly of by the Scottish press. He was recently called by the Troon Free Church to be its pastor, but declined the call. The *Christian Leader* pays a tribute to his scholarship saying that he was a most distinguished student, both at Glasgow and at Oxford, and that he graduated with the highest marks over all the Free Church.

A PRESBYTERIAN CENTENARY.

IT is to be hoped the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the landing of Rev. Robert McDowall at Fredericksburg, will be participated in by a large number of the ministers and members of the church. Mr. McDowall was the pioneer missionary in Upper Canada, and his services, pioneer in character, were greatly owned of God and honoured by the people. His travels were long and tedious, but those were the days of toils and hardships not now dreamed of, and the back was made for the burden. From Brockville to Toronto Mr. McDowall worked in the vineyard, settling in the course of time on the Bay of Quinte, at Fredericksburg. He is described by Rev. Professor Gregg in his history as an able, faithful and laborious minister of the Gospel. For a time he was the only minister of his denomination in the central part of Upper Canada and the demands on his services for baptisms, marriages, as well as preaching and visiting the sick, were very numerous indeed. It is said that he had solemnized 1,100 marriages previous to the year 1836. He died in 1841. He was sent to Canada by the Dutch Reformed Church Presbytery of Albany. The arrangements for the centenary are conducted by a committee of the Presbytery of Kingston of which the Rev. James Cumberland is convener.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

This question has been up so often and threshed out so frequently that it might seem gratuitous to raise it again. Politicians of all parties are especially anxious to avoid stirring it up, for it has ever proved a troublesome and thorny question to deal with. But nothing is ever settled until it is settled right, and as we do not believe that the position of matters in Ontario is one that the people ought to be satisfied with, we venture to broach it once more, not for the purpose of stirring up strife but for the purpose of suggesting a very much better solution of it.

The present regulations, in addition to allowing the schools to be opened with prayer and the reading of the Scriptures, permit the clergy of the different churches under certain reasonable limitations to give religious instruction at fixed hours to the children of their own denomination. So far so good. This has quieted the clamor; but it has not secured religious instruction, for the simple reason that save in a few sporadic cases, the clergy do not avail themselves of it. Nor do we believe they are ever likely to do so. The truth is most of them have too many other pressing duties and fixed appointments to take on this additional burden unless under pressure of a different kind from that they now feel.

What we suggest is that the teacher should be authorized, or perhaps required, to go a step further than he now goes and give, not religious instruction, indeed, but instruction in Old and New Testament history. This makes an admirable discipline in itself and it furnishes the best foundation for religious instruction elsewhere. It can be done without involv-

ing any denominational teaching whatever or exciting denominational jealousy. In a discussion which took place in the Synod of Montreal and Ottawa last week attention was called to the success of this experiment in the Protestant schools of Quebec. In an experience of twenty years and more, during which it has been tried, there has not been a single serious case of friction over the matter either from teachers, children, or parents. Of course there is a conscience clause exempting any who object, but this is rarely invoked, though there are both Roman Catholics and Jews in many of the schools. The system has given complete satisfaction and the children get an acquaintance with the facts of the Bible history such as no other is likely to give them. Why should it not work in Ontario as well?

We should be very unwilling to do anything to disturb the harmony that now prevails, but we cannot consent to leave things as they are now without protest. In the long run we believe that some such course will be found necessary to prevent the demand for denominational schools from gaining a following such as might wreck the present system altogether.

COLLEGE EXAMINATION BOARD.

THERE will be general satisfaction, we believe, at the action of the Synod of Toronto and Kingston respecting the formation of a Board of Examiners to deal with theological students. The question was raised by an overture from the Presbytery of Guelph which submitted a carefully elaborated plan for transmission to General Assembly. The Synod put its imprimatur of approval on the scheme, subject to possible modifications which will not affect the principle, but details, and the welcome accorded the proposed measure, if an augury of its reception by the General Assembly bodes favourably for the scheme. The Board, if constituted, will have power to set an entrance examination for students intending to enter upon a theological course: also an Exit examination which will be the final collegiate test before license. Broadly the Board will occupy a position, as was stated in the Synod debate, somewhat similar to that occupied by the Medical Council of Ontario with respect to Medical Students.

Many cogent reasons were advanced in favor of the proposed change, the strongest, perhaps being the raising of the standard of education, which would gradually result. There can be no manner of reflection intended so far as the work of the Colleges is concerned. The intention seems to be, to aid the Colleges by the support and services of such a Board as is proposed. Professors must deal with the material which comes to college. The Entrance Examination would, if properly conceived and carried out, result in a selection of candidates and by gradually raising the standard, as the condition of things in the church might allow, the calibre of students would certainly improve. Therefore, there need be no overlapping of work nor conflict of effort as between the examiners and the Faculties of theology.

The argument of an overcrowded ministry is less conclusive and less satisfactory. Every worker in the vineyard is to be welcomed. Adequate qualifications being provided for, all coming forward ought to be encouraged and kindly received. This is a young and growing country, its future must, in the course of things, be great, and the need for well-equipped, sturdy and sterling ministers of the Gospel is and will be great. Besides, the general principal of demand and supply may be counted upon to regulate fairly,