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International Scheme of Lessons
FOR 1883.

Specially adapted for Presbyterian Sabbath Schools.
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C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,
5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO. PUBLISHER.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 1883

OUR good neighbour, "The Canadian Baptist," looks bright and cheerful in its handsome new dress. A most creditable exponent of Baptist principles, ably and carefully edited, it is entitled to the cordial support of the influential denomination whose interests it labours to advance.

THE first academic term in the new buildings of the Manitoba College, has just been completed by holding successful Christmas examinations. Beyond question, this institution is doing a great and good work, for the present and future of our church in the Prairie Province. By decision of last General Assembly, a special collection was appointed to be made for extinguishing the debt and carrying on the work of Manitoba College. A slight effort by the people generally will more than suffice for the accomplishment of these objects.

Do you hold your annual congregation meeting in January? Then be sure to be present, and do all in your power to give business a fresh and lively start for the year. Arrange your affairs beforehand so that you can attend. Let politics and business and the curling rink and skating and the evening party go for one evening, and go to the congregational meeting. Bring your neighbour with you—that one that never attends unless some one asks him. See that a good chairman is appointed if the minister does not preside. A stupid, dawdling chairman kills any meeting. If there is a small debt on revenue, wipe it out on the spot, if possible. A debt grows. Wipe it out. It must be paid sooner or later, and it is more easily paid sooner than later. Elect a good board of trustees—men who manage their own business well, and good men will generally manage church business well. If any man seems to think he is doing the church a great favour by taking an office, don't give him any. There is no man in your congregation large enough to patronize the Lord's work. Remember the business part of the congregational work for the year depends a great deal on the congregational meeting. Give the work a good start and you will have the happy feeling throughout the year that you did your duty.

DON'T go to the congregational meeting. If any new measures are carried for the benefit of the congregation it will be so convenient to be able to say all year "I wasn't at the meeting when that was adopted." If you do go, sit on a back seat, dumb as a tombstone, and take no interest in the proceedings. The moment you get out find fault with everything and keep on finding fault during the year. It is so much better to say nothing at the meeting, and reserve all your remarks for neighbours on the way home, and for any little gathering you may happen to meet in the corner grocery or on the street. If you do take any part be sure to find fault with the officials. That is what officials are for. Of course they are all bent on run-

ning the congregation. If you have a personal grudge at anybody present be sure to attack him during the meeting. A quarrel breaks up the monotony and gives liveliness to the proceedings. If a rival in business or politics is there assail him. What is the use in having congregational meetings if one does not utilize them? If you are elected to any office, decline it: If you are not elected, sulk. Say all the unpleasant things you can about everything and everybody. If there is any debt don't forget to say it never can be paid. Tell the people they are doing far too much. It will stimulate their liberality. Don't fail to say a number of times that you don't know where all the money goes. It will help on the cause to raise suspicion in the minds of the people. By observing these few simple rules you may do great good at the congregational meeting.

SPECIALISTS are now agreed that weak-minded children can be saved from hopeless idiocy by training in asylums properly equipped for that purpose. Such institutions exist in nearly all the great States of the Union, and wonderful progress has lately been made in training these unfortunates. The Medical Superintendent of the Massachusetts school for idiotic and feeble-minded youth says: "More than three-fifths of the five hundred and forty eight idiotic youth who have been enrolled as pupils of our school have been improved either physically, morally or intellectually." Another superintendent says: "The almost dumb learn to speak and sing; a large proportion learn to read and spell, and are taught writing and drawing; all learn something of numbers, and some make good progress in arithmetic; they are taught something of geography, and still more in regard to the objects they see about them. Some succeed well in various mechanical operations." So far as circumstances permit, a similar system of instruction has been introduced to our own asylum in Orillia, with good results. The younger patients are taught, as well as cared for. On the Saturday evening before Christmas, over one hundred of them met in the school-room of the institution, and, before receiving presents from their Christmas tree, sang half a dozen hymns, and enjoyed themselves very much as Sabbath school children do on such occasions. The order was excellent—very much better than that maintained by many Sabbath school children when a Christmas tree is within sight. A number of visitors were present at the invitation of Dr. Beaton, the superintendent, and all were astonished at the order maintained, and the neat, clean, clever appearance of the children, as well as at the affection manifested by them for the superintendent and their teachers. When increased accommodation is provided, it is proposed to give still more attention to training, and there is no reason to suppose that in this regard our institution will be behind any in the United States. The amount of misery saved by this institution, to friends of the patients, can never be known. This, however, is not all that is aimed at. Scientific men are agreed that a large proportion of these youthful unfortunates can be trained, and if it is the duty of the State to train children possessed of all their mental powers, how much more binding is the obligation to train these unfortunates who cannot care for themselves?

THOUGHTS FOR THE SEASON.

THE beginning of a new year awakens reflections in most minds. The silent yet ceaseless flight of time makes us consider. It induces us to look before and after. We know what the past has brought; we anxiously look for what the future may bring. In reviewing what life and opportunity have enabled us to achieve, the retrospect is inevitably tinged with feelings of sadness and regret. Accomplishment may be far other and greater than former imaginings, but the actual results are far enough from the roseate dreams of earlier years. Brooding over the past, however, would be but a useless occupation—in fact day-dreams of any kind are not only ill-suited to the active demands of the present, but they disqualify for earnest endeavour, and unfit for the wise employment of the time and opportunity an all-wise Providence may yet have in store for us. The only practical value of reflecting on the past with its lost possibilities and failure is to teach us to avoid the mistakes against which a dear-bought experience emphatically warns, to gird up our loins and,

"Bating no jot of heart or hope, fare right onward."

In his prose-poem, "Hyperion," Longfellow says: "Look not mournfully into the past: it comes not back again; wisely improve the present, it is thine; go forward to meet the shadowy future without fear and with a manly heart."

The advent of a new year affords an opportunity for the formation of wise resolves. Habit coils around us its all but resistless force. If the habit is good, its possession becomes a beneficent power; if evil, its overthrow cannot be begun a day too soon. Nor must it be forgotten that there is no use in treating an evil habit tenderly. Dallying with it is sure to prostrate the will-power before the usurper. If we are to pass from our dead selves to nobler things we must fight resolutely with the foes that would enslave us. If we do not gain the fight, they will. There are no drawn battles between a man and his spiritual enemy. All the more need too for prompt and decided resolution, for the recollection of broken vows and good purposes turned awry only deepen the regretful memory of past failures.

More than the avoidance of evil is required. Effort devoted to that end would only be a negative affair after all. Life is given us that we may make the most of it—and that not only in its material side. Indefinite possibilities lie before us. Character in its many-sided completeness is the after result of toil and suffering, of success, and failure. It is something to engage in the struggles of life and yet maintain a conscience void of offence. The generous and hopeful emotions of youth are not incompatible with the lessons of experience gleaned as the years go by. There is no reason why the disappointments of life, and sometimes man's inhumanity to man should make us cold, selfish, and unloving. The course of a true life, conscious of its opportunities and responsibilities, is not downward, but upward. So let the year on which we have been permitted to enter be embraced as a golden opportunity for advancement in all that is good and true. Is there not room for improvement in fidelity to duty in the ordinary tasks of the passing day. Cannot the spare time often thoughtlessly wasted be turned to good account. Are there no burdens that press heavily on feeble shoulders that we can lighten by aid and sympathy. May not a kindly and encouraging word be spoken to the weary and desponding? As Christian citizens may we not endeavour to take a more intelligent interest in public affairs and seek to discharge conscientiously the duties we owe to the commonwealth. Canada has a grand future. If her institutions are to be worthy of her destiny there must be the felt impress of an active and intelligent Christian public spirit. Our political life is not immaculate; neither are our politicians or their measures perfect. There is plenty of room for greater devotion to principle, as there is much need for the abatement of base misrepresentation and party bitterness. Men do and will continue to differ on political methods, but why should these methods be other than manly and fair.

The Church, too, requires our devotion, and her King and Head claims our consecrated effort. In the many departments of Christian activity there is a place for each. Everyone can do something to advance the welfare of Zion. The work is urgent. May the new year be a season of active and successive effort for imbuing the mind of the people with divine truth. May Christian influence be felt more powerfully than in years gone by. May mercy and peace be on God's Israel. The swiftly passing years repeat with added emphasis, "Whosoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Work, then, in God's name, for your highest well-being, for the good of your fellow-men and for God's glory, and in truth this will be what we once more cordially wish all our readers—

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

UPPER CANADA BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY.

AMONG the many religious and benevolent institutions in Ontario, the Upper Canada Bible Society and the Upper Canada Tract and Book Society maintain a useful and an honoured place. These are more than mere offshoots from the historic institutions that have their headquarters in the British metropolis. Their work is carried on, and their affairs conducted by men of standing and influence in the various evangelical churches of this country. Most readers are aware of the important work accomplished by these organizations, whose special purpose is the dissemination of the Scriptures and Scriptural truth so that no