

Mr. Laurier has been before the country for many years. "The fierce light which beats upon a throne" has given him a share of its exposing power. With what result the country knows. There has not been even a whispered charge against his personal record, and surely his ability to lead and rule could be settled without any reference either to his religion or his race. We are all Canadians here, and surely if there is one motto that ought to be dear to us it is this:—"The implements to the man that can use them be his origin or his faith what it may." It still remains for Mr. Laurier to show what he can do, but we protest with all energy against these antecedent howls, come whence they may, which appeal to unreasoning prejudice and which are based alone upon feelings that ought to have neither place nor power among a people which calls itself free, and which still, at least, pretends to believe in the Sermon on the Mount.

It is just as proper a thing that Canadians should have a French-Canadian for Premier or, for the matter of that, even a naturalized Frenchman, as that the first man of the hour should be Welsh, or Dutch, an English peasant, or a Scotch or Irish talker of Gaelic.

As we have said, we are not among Mr. Laurier's *claqueurs* and are no mere worshippers of any "rising sun." But frankly, we must add, we so far "love this man for the enemies he has made," and we trust he will live up to his professions and engagements.

When a man who professes, and with apparently perfect honesty, to be a good son of the Church in which he was born and to which he still belongs, could say as Mr. Laurier said on the floor of the House of Commons, and in the face of the thunders of his ecclesiastical superiors:—

So long as I occupy a seat in this House, so long as I fill the post which I now do, on every occasion when it shall be my duty to take a stand upon any question whatever, that stand I shall not take from the point of view of Catholicism, nor from the point of view of Protestantism, but I will be guided by motives which appeal to the consciences of all men, independent of their faith—motives which animate all men loving justice, liberty and tolerance—

we say he deserves a fair hearing and a fair field.

And more than this: when such a man can be assailed by his fellow-countrymen in a French daily paper in such language as the following:—

Mr. Laurier defied their Lordships the Bishops of Quebec, refused them all submission, all obedience, all respect for their word. A sentiment of painful stupefaction thrilled the audience. They did not believe that Mr. Laurier would dare publicly to attack the mandement of the bishops of Quebec, and deny their right to dictate to him and to his followers the way for the Catholics to follow in the question of the Catholic schools of Manitoba:—

and by one of his Church dignitaries in a tirade (for it is nothing else) of the following description, there must be some *grit* in the man:—

This—says Bishop Lafleche—is the most outspoken declaration of Liberalism which has ever been made, to my knowledge, in a legislative Assembly in this country. The man who speaks this language is a *rationalistic Liberal*. He formulates a doctrine which is entirely opposed to Catholic doctrine. It means that a Catholic is not required to be a Catholic in public life. This is a fundamental error which cannot but be fraught with deplorable consequences. A Catholic cannot, without committing a grievous sin, vote for the leader of a party who has formulated such an error, nor for his partisans who support him in such an error, so long as they have not publicly repudiated this erroneous doctrine and taken the solemn pledge of voting for a remedial law accepted by the bishops.

Let all Protestants read, mark and inwardly digest these threatening words of this bishop,—evidently of the College of Cardinals, rather than of that of the fishermen,—and let them remember that as a campaign document they were circulated in the Province of Quebec by tens of thousands. Let them bear also in mind that Mr. Laurier has never retracted the words thus put under the Episcopal ban; but that, on the contrary, in the very teeth of all this and kindred Episcopal fury he carried Quebec by 50 to 15, and we think that they will conclude that such a man should have fair play at any rate, and not be condemned simply because he is, though a Frenchman, a British subject, and speaks English like a native, and a Roman Catholic who thinks for himself and claims the right in this free land to speak as he believes and thinks, "impugn it whoso listeth."

The San Francisco *Argonaut*, one of the ablest papers published in the United States, concludes a long article on the Manitoba School Question in the following terms:—

All honor to Wilfrid Laurier! All honor to this Liberal leader, Frenchman and Catholic though he be. And if in consequence of his taking up the battle for the right as against the wrong when the right was Protestant and the wrong was Roman Catholic, he should be excommunicated from the faith in which he was born, we congratulate him because we think that Wilfrid Laurier—honest man, brave man and one who fought for the right—would stand higher in heaven on the right hand of God than all the scowling

bishops, cowed monks and black-frocked priests who fight against civilization in the Dominion of Canada.

And, frankly, we say so too. The day is either past, or is fast passing, when the *ipse dixit* of any man, be he mitred Pope or merely simple Presbyterian, is to be taken as an end of controversy, or as a rule either of faith or conduct.

CONTRIBUTIONS FOR CHURCH SCHEMES.

AS was stated in the report of the Finance Committee presented to the General Assembly, nearly two-thirds of the entire contributions for the Schemes of the Church comes into the treasurer's hands during the last three months of the ecclesiastical year. This renders necessary the borrowing of large sums of money from the banks, for the purpose of paying salaries of missionaries, professors, etc., annuities to widows and orphans, and aged and infirm ministers, and all other expenses pertaining to the work of the Church. Take one scheme alone—that of Foreign Missions. We learn from the agent of the Church that since the beginning of the present ecclesiastical year, the expenditure exceeds \$40,000, although three months of the year have not yet expired. The receipts, outside of a contribution from the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, are only \$4,500, so that the Foreign Mission Committee have to this date expended nearly \$36,000 more than their income. This means that \$36,000 will be required to be borrowed, for this one scheme alone, and interest paid upon it all the time from now until January next. This can in a large measure be avoided were congregations to adopt the plan of forwarding their missionary contributions monthly or quarterly to the agent of the Church, instead of keeping them on hand until the end of the year.

This request seems so reasonable, that we hope all congregations will take it into consideration, and carry out the wishes of the General Assembly, as expressed last month. Unless this is done, the probability is that three months hence the Church will be in debt to the banks in the neighborhood of \$150,000.

A GRUMBLE AND TWO OR THREE SUGGESTIONS.

THE senior class in one of our Sabbath-schools was assembled; the pastor, disengaged that afternoon, took the class; the subject was "David's Coming to the Kingdom." Ten were in the class, a minority young men; three certified day-school teachers were among the number, four others high-school scholars. There were five Bibles and five "lesson leaves" in the hands of the scholars, the latter rendering reference to other parts of the Scriptures than the lesson of the day impossible on the part of those who held them. Introducing the subject of David's accession to the throne of Israel as distinguished from his seven-and-a-half years' reign over Judah, the question was asked to which of the tribes Saul and David respectively belonged; a perfect blank was on every countenance, indeed, it savoured something of a revelation to be told that Jacob had twelve sons of which Benjamin was the child of old age. Now, it is readily granted that a soul may be truly saved and a life thoroughly disciplined without the knowledge that the Christ sprang from the tribe of Judah or Saul from that of Benjamin; that a child may be truly obedient and a youth pure apart from the fact that David was crowned King of Israel at Hebron; but it does seem strange to some of us older folk to whom Scripture history was at least as vital as that of Greece or Rome, to meet with advanced students that are at sea, when with Bible in hand there is a marked hesitancy in turning up, say the Prophecy of Joel or the book of Ezra, and that in days of Sabbath-school conventions, when lesson helps come on us like a flood, and the sound of Bible readings is continually in the air; and we are disposed to enquire the wherefore, for honestly this ignorance is not rare among the scholarly youth of the day, and the fault is not theirs.

Editor Solus. We in Christian Canada have succeeded in banishing the Bible as an educator from our common schools. The perfunctory reading of a passage as religious (?) exercise at the close of the school day is little better than a parrot gabble, and affords no real instruction.

In the matter of Scripture history, in the endeavor to please everybody we have duplicated the fabled old man with his ass, we have pleased nobody and lost our history into the bargain.

In our Sabbath schools we have so "Helped" both teacher and taught as to reduce healthy searching to the vanishing point. Easy gotten easily lost. Exercise has given place to being carried; even memory is discounted; and atrophy courted.

Suggestions. A long subject, too long for summer reflections; only this: realize that there is need for watchfulness. That the question of Bible instruction in the common schools is one of those questions that will not down, and is capable of settlement only in one direction, that of recognizing its claim. Rest can only be secured by settlement.

Let Sabbath-school teachers realize that Helps are helps, not substitutes, and discourage the absence of the Bible on the part of the scholar. Set the example by leaving your Help behind and keep your Bible in hand.

Remember that all worthy objects must be striven for. Toil comes before rest; the cross before the crown. Ease in Zion is the sure prelude to crumbling walls and the easy entrance of the enemy.

HOME MISSIONS: PRESBYTERY OF SUPERIOR.

In the Presbytery of Superior are five missions for which students or catechists are required this autumn.

SCHREIBER is the farthest east, below a railway mission with a number of stations like White River, Peninsula, Port Caldwell, Nepigon, Jack Fish, etc., where services are conducted. Schreiber station is a divisional point on the C. P. R. Railway, with workshops, etc. Here we have a real church, and a number of earnest Christian people are connected with the congregation. White River is also a divisional point, but not so large as Schreiber. At Port Caldwell are a number of fishermen from Goderich who all the season are engaged in their calling, and shipping about ten tons of fresh fish weekly to Montreal, Toronto and other eastern cities. Along the line are found also gravel gangs, bridge gangs and the rest with a large staff of permanent employees. There are in all about forty-five Presbyterian families and quite a number of single men. An ordained missionary or a good student is needed in the autumn.

SLATE RIVER has three stations and over fifty families. In the Slate River district no Church but our own hold services, and there are about thirty families, twenty-two of whom are Presbyterians. There is about 50,000 acres of good land in the district, and population will increase. A church is in course of erection, and the people are hopeful. West Fort William and Murillo are the other stations. There is a church at West Fort William, and there is a talk of building at Murillo. This field with proper care promises soon to become a good congregation. Student required October 1st.

IGNACE is a railway mission between Fort William and Rat Portage. Ignace, Savanne and the settlement around the Experimental Farm, 210 miles west of Fort William, are the most important points in this mission. There are about twenty-five Presbyterian families here, a large number of young men who were brought up in connection with our Church, and a considerable number of people not belonging to any church. A good student is urgently needed for this mission at the end of September.

FORT FRANCES is at the foot of Rainy Lake, has 39 families connected with its two stations and quite a number of single persons. Owing to the large area of good land in the district the prospects of the mission are good. Gold mining is being prosecuted in the neighborhood and with some success. We have a church at Fort Frances and good work has been done. By the end of September a student is urgently needed here.

RAINY RIVER is a mission along the river of that name, supplied for the last 18 months by Mr. McDermid, of Knox College. There are over 50 families connected with the mission, about one-half of whom are Presbyterians. There is no other church doing work here, and the field is needy and important. Here is a large tract of country needing only a railway to open it up and the church should not neglect the people—the beginning of settlement. Who will volunteer to take Mr. McDermid's place?

Between sixty and seventy men are required to man our fields this autumn. Will not our young men come in larger numbers to our aid than in past years?

J. ROBERTSON.

Winnipeg, July 23rd, 1896.

The *Westminster* for July is an excellent number. The contents are varied and interesting. Among the leading contributions are: "The Moderator of the General Assembly," an appreciative sketch of the Rev. Dr. Gordon, by the Rev. J. S. Black, D.D., of Halifax; "Macdonnell, of St. Andrew's," by an Old Time Student, a character sketch, with several well-executed half-tone engravings of portraits taken at various dates, of the late lamented pastor of St. Andrew's; and "The Newspaper and its Critics," by James S. Brierly, President of the Canadian Press Association. There are numerous other articles of more than passing interest, with a well-written "Survey of the Month," "Minor Notes on Africa" and several poems of considerable merit. [The Westminster Co., Confederation Building. Monthly, \$1.50 per year, 15 cents per copy.]