

The Presbyterian Review.

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TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS.

We have to thank the friends who have renewed their subscriptions to the REVIEW by prompt payment in advance. We have respectfully to request that those in arrears for renewal would take advantage of our most favourable rates. The individual amount is only ONE DOLLAR, but the aggregate is very considerable. The friends who wish to assist us in producing, at as cheap a rate as possible, a good religious weekly will help us very materially by remitting in advance.

SABBATH OBSERVANCE.

It is, we fear, no exaggeration to say that all over this continent respect for the Sabbath as a day divinely appointed for rest and worship is losing ground, and that the Christian Church itself in all its branches shows too many signs of yielding acquiescence to the presumptuous demands of mammon. Many things are tolerated in public and private that a few years ago would have been justly regarded as breaches of the Fourth Commandment. In many places this deplorable change in public sentiment is due to the so-called revolt against the stern requirements of the Puritan Sabbath, in others to the influences of a godless foreign element in the population, the supposed necessities of business, and the intense activity of the age; but from whatever source the evil arises it may with perfect safety be put down under the general head of increasing worldliness, and plain disregard of God's laws as revealed in Scripture and nature. There is evidently a growing disinclination to enforce the laws respecting Sabbath observance, framed at a period when opinion was more in accord with Scripture authority than at present, and had not reached that pitiable flabbiness which is often to be seen when great moral questions are involved. There is, therefore, to-day a well-defined contest raging between those who would secularize the Sabbath and those who wish it to remain consecrated to worship and rest. As the Committee on Sabbath Observance in their admirable report, presented at the meeting of Kingston and Toronto Synod, just closed, puts it: "The issue before us appears very distinctly to be whether a weekly day of rest shall still remain for the whole community, under sanction of the divine law, or whether the Sabbath shall be regarded and treated as an obsolete Jewish institution—in any case as an institution without direct Scriptural warrant, and which must accommodate itself to the demands and prerogatives of business and commerce." It is undeniable that even in old settled communities of the United States the Sabbath is by large portions of the population regarded and treated as an obsolete Jewish institution, and it is greatly to be feared that this idea, from a variety of causes, is spreading in Canada. For the present we may be able to institute comparisons between our neighbours and ourselves in favour of our method of keeping the Sabbath, but it is perfectly evident to any one who takes the trouble to discern the signs of the times that if we do not take great heed to our own ways we shall in time have nothing in this respect to distinguish us. It is true we have not yet the Sunday newspaper but we have the readers, and the publishers ready to supply it, if only they dared. We have not as yet open places of business and amusement, and street traffic, but we have railway traffic and travel, which directly and indirectly affects large classes of the community, and greatly hinders the proper observance of the Sabbath in many towns and cities of the land. It is perfectly evident, therefore, that with a policy of *laissez faire* on the part of the Christian Church we shall soon have everything introduced amongst us that is destroying respect for the Sabbath in the United States. The report does not put it too strongly in saying, "At no period in the history of the Church and country is there more necessity that the voice of the Church in its several judicatories should be heard on the great question involved, and that at every point the sacred day should be protected from the encroachments of worldliness."

The interest our own Church has taken in the matter during the past year is not very reassuring,

if we may judge of the state of feeling in the presbyteries, from their total failure to report upon the subject. Happily this failure would not be a good criterion to judge of the Church's interest in this most important matter. In the meetings of presbytery it was noted in the Committee's report that the matter had been discussed, and that in several of them plans had been proposed for dealing with the most flagrant instances of Sabbath desecration—traffic on the railways.

As our readers are aware, the question of Sabbath observance came prominently before the Toronto Presbytery on the enquiry: How session should deal with members of the Church who are much engaged in railway work on the Lord's Day. This phase of the evil has, from other causes, come under the notice of the Ministerial Association, and been dealt with in such a manner as shows that the clergy are fully alive to the magnitude of the evil.

The Ministerial Association of Ottawa recently sought to enlist the co-operation of the Ministerial Associations of Toronto, London, and other places, in limiting Sabbath labour on railways. The Ottawa Association has been advised that the proper procedure in enforcing the law against unnecessary Sabbath work on railways is to apprehend the men all along the lines wherever they may be found employed. From this procedure, as the report states, many shrink, fearing that it would wear the appearance of a crusade against the working man, and they would prefer, if possible, to deal in a first instance with the authorities of the several railways, the principals in transgression, and in this opinion we heartily concur. "The whole question," as the report states, "is an extremely difficult one, and is rendered much more difficult and complex by the connection of our railway system with that of the United States. It seems that effective action in the case of this great and growing evil will require the co-operation of the Christian Church in Canada and the United States, in all its branches. But, as the report with great clearness and force puts it: "The entire force of the Church and of the Christian people, and of all who value a day of weekly rest, must be organized and combined, if successful resistance shall be made to this powerful antagonist of Christianity and of social well-being. And no time should be lost, for delay simply increases the strength of our enemy, while it diminishes our own. Even now it may be feared the public mind largely acquiesces in the continuance of the evil, as a thing which under our system of travel and commerce is inevitable."

The Synod, in accordance with the recommendation of the report, decided to bring the whole subject of the better observance of the Sabbath before the General Assembly, and to ask the Assembly, through its committee, to enter into correspondence with other branches of the Church both in Canada and the United States, with a view of bringing the combined forces of Christian opinion to bear upon this momentous question, and to devise means by which the inheritance of the Sabbath shall be restored to large and important classes of the community.

It appears to us that this bold and comprehensive plan strikes at the root of the matter. If the whole Christian Church of the United States and Canada can be roused to grapple with the evil, the result can scarcely be doubtful. And that it can be roused, and is even now ready to act, may be taken for granted. The prompt action of the Christian Church, under wise guidance, cannot fail to conserve the Christian Sabbath, with all its blessed privileges and opportunities, to the weary and heavy laden sons of toil.

CHRISTIAN INSTRUCTION IN THE PROVINCIAL SCHOOLS.

THE BIBLE IN THE HANDS OF THE TEACHERS—THE RECENT MISTAKE.

OUR readers will see that our contention implies that, in this Christian country, the work of public instruction should be committed to those only who are qualified to give instruction in the principles of Christianity. Our present educational system indeed assumes this; but very inconsistently, as we believe, practically ignores the teacher in its arrangements for the communication of religious instruction. Without going into details, we venture to characterize the present provision for Christian instruction as being both highly objectionable and altogether inadequate. In answer to the taunts of some who plead its sufficiency, we cannot but express our strong persuasion that the permission given to ministers of various denominations, if generally acted on, have the evil effect of impressing upon the minds of our young people notions respecting differences among Christians greatly at variance with the actual reality of the case. Apart from this, the arrangement relegating to ministers the work of Christian instruction in the national schools may be not improperly characterized as a legislative impertinence. It may have been fallen into with the best intentions; but only a great want of consideration could have led to the expectation that a body of men who, as a class, have their hands full of work, should be free to undertake a portion of school work, which the salaried officials ought to be qualified for, if the work itself is of any importance, as it is supposed to be. With about as much reason, might the giving of lessons in physiology and hygiene be relegated to physicians, and the services of other professional men called in. If it is right that, in this Christian country, Christian instruction should, because of its being a Christian country, occupy a prominent place in the public schools, the ability to give such instruction should be regarded as an indispensable qualification of the teacher.

Were the Christian mind of the Province made alive to the importance of our having an educational system distinctly and decidedly scriptural or Christian, and were Christian instruction authoritatively recognized as a constituent portion of the daily work of the school, it should not be difficult to find a sufficient supply of teachers well qualified to instruct the young in the facts and principles of the Christian religion. There need, as we have said, be very little apprehension in reference to sectarianism. With the Bible in his hand and in the hands of his pupils, let the teacher have full liberty with the Bible lesson as with any other. He cannot, indeed, do more than lay a good foundation for future progress. But that he can do, if full liberty is given him. To a text-book consisting of a selection of portions of scripture there can be no objection, provided it is not intended to exclude the use of the Bible itself. A good selection, presenting a general view of God's dealings with men in connexion with His revelations of Himself as the God of Salvation, may be very serviceable in the earlier stages of instruction. But injustice, we are persuaded, will be done to the Bible, if its use is superseded by any selection however excellent. And here we must be allowed to express the opinion that a great mistake has been committed in the preparation of the selection recently authorized. We would be slow to believe, as has been suggested, that it is the outcome of any under-hand dealing, having in view the exclusion of the Bible itself from our schools. But such is the obvious tendency of it; and there are some who frankly avow the belief that there is an impropriety in placing the teachings of Scripture in our schools in any other form. We trust, in another article to vindicate the right of the Bible to a place in our schools against the objections made by these parties. But meantime we cannot but express our sincere regret that, instead of the Bible itself with suitable regulations and directions as to its use, and with perhaps a calendar of lessons, we have, at three or four times the cost, a volume of extracts which is too likely to supersede it, and the preference of which cannot fail to prejudice the Bible in the minds of the young. The mistake is all the more to be regretted, in view of the fact that the united representations of the larger religious denominations of the Province were met by the Government in such a spirit, as to warrant the hope that the general and persistent pressure of its wishes, on the part of the Christian public, would ere long secure for the Bible its proper place in the school. We greatly fear that complications have arisen to the prejudice of the cause of the Bible in our schools. It is to be hoped that those who have that cause at heart will not yield to discouragement, or be deterred from needful effort by the strife of tongue and pen that may now, perhaps more than ever, characterize the agitation of the subject. We shall do well to believe that it is not possible, in these times, for a religious newspaper to be faithful to the best interests of the community, without exposing itself to unworthy imputations.

HONOUR TO A PIONEER.

THE presentation of an overture from the Kingston Presbytery anent the proposed restoration of the old United Empire Loyalist Presbyterian Church at Fredericksburgh, Ontario, and the erection of a mural tablet to commemorate the life and labours of its first pastor—the founder, too, of Presbyterianism in this Province—the Rev. Robert McDowall, formed a very bright portion of the proceedings at the late meeting of the synod at Galt. It was a pleasant thing to see the young men of the Church seeking to recover lost ground, while at the same time perpetuating the memory of the faithful pioneer who had spent a long life in the service of our Church, and to hear the inspiring story of that life recounted by one who had associated with him in his early ministry, and whose own ripe experience has now attained to "something of prophetic strain."

The overture set forth that the Rev. Robert McDowall came to Upper Canada in the year 1798, in response to a petition sent to the Classis of Albany, by the band of United Empire Loyalists who landed in Adolphustown under Major Van Alstine in 1784; that Mr. McDowall had preached the Gospel from Brockville to the head of Lake Ontario, when the vast region lying between was an almost unbroken wilderness; that his old church is now in a dilapidated condition; that it is proposed to restore it, making it suitable to be again used as a place of worship for a number of Presbyterian families living in the vicinity, and to erect a tablet near the pulpit, commemorative of his life and labours; and that a small sum from each family within the bounds of that synod which originally constituted his parish would be sufficient to defray the expenses of the undertaking.

The overture was supported by the Rev. James Cumberland, of St. John's, who has been indefatigable in arousing public interest in the matter, and by the Rev. Dr. Reid, who in his younger days was intimately acquainted with Mr. McDowall. The overture was received with the utmost favour, and, on motion of Principal Caven, was adopted. A committee representative of the synod and its various presbyteries, consisting of Revs. W. Bennett, moderator; John Gray, D.D., clerk; W. Reid, D.D.; J. K. Smith, M.A.; E. Cockburn, M.A.; C. H. Eastman, R.A.; W. A. Hunter, M.A.; J. Campbell, M.A., and A. H. Scott, M.A., was appointed to co-operate with the Kingston presbytery in taking the necessary steps to carry out the terms of the overture. At a meeting of the committee, we understand, it was decided that a circular be prepared and sent to each minister within the bounds, setting

forth the points of interest in connection with the scheme, and that the representatives of the several presbyteries be instructed to bring the matter before their presbyteries as soon as practicable to give effect to the synod's recommendation. Rev. Jas. Cumberland was appointed treasurer. It was stated that the contemplated restoration will require an expenditure of about \$1,200. Of this sum about \$300 has been already subscribed, leaving a balance of \$900 to be provided for. It is the intention of the committee to push the work of collecting funds and restoration, so as to have the church opened in September next.

This benevolent and dutiful project requires no commendation. The successful accomplishment of the committee's plans will give the Church a new congregation, revive Presbyterianism in a district once its cradle and its home, and would do something to perpetuate and keep fresh the memory of a good man to whom our Church and country are preeminently indebted. Let the committee be heartily supported.

In our efforts to show that it is both desirable and feasible to restore the Bible to its old place in the public schools it is encouraging to notice that school corporations are moving in the matter. By an almost unanimous vote the Public School Board, Toronto, has decided to remove the "Scripture lessons" from the schools, and to restore the Bible in its entirety. In this connection we notice also with extreme pleasure that the clergymen of several neighbouring towns have united to propose to the school corporations some definite plan of giving religious instruction during school hours. Religious instruction is now given in the schools of Bowmanville and Newcastle, and last week a deputation from the Ministerial Association of Port Hope consisting of Revs. Dr. O'Meara and Messrs. Cleland, Mitchell and Trotter waited upon the School Board and urged the desirability of introducing religious instruction into the schools of that town. A majority of the Board expressed themselves in favour of the idea. It does not surprise us to see the old arguments against the Bible and religious instruction in our national schools again appearing in the School Board and the secular press. Christian people in their efforts to secure a measure of religious instruction for the children attending our schools, are pretty well accustomed to hear of "bigotry," "the danger of offending the Roman Catholics," "sermonizing," "the sufficiency of Sunday schools, prayer meetings, and general church services," "partisanship," "sectarian fanaticism," "frothy rant," and other high spiced phraseology made to do duty for argument, to be dismayed by suggestions of evil motives in this matter. We trust the whole question will be kept out of the arena of party politics, but for ourselves we have such an abiding faith in the propriety of having the Bible in the schools and the value of religious teaching based thereon that we are prepared to welcome its introduction from any quarter. If it required, as some allege, a party to get the Bible out of the schools, it may require a party to get it back again, but we would prefer to see it brought back through the influence of Christian people irrespective of party. And that is what we shall labour for and expect.

On the eve of the second reading of Mr. Gladstone's Irish Home Rule Bill the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland has issued through the Moderator a declaration addressed to the Presbyterians in America stating their uncompromising hostility to the measure in its present shape, and their opinion that there are no grievances removable by legislation which cannot be removed by the Imperial Parliament. It concludes thus:

"If the Government proposals are carried into effect the Presbyterians of Ireland will feel themselves cruelly abandoned and betrayed by their fellow citizens, whose forefathers planted them in the country 250 years ago. During all that time we have contributed in no small degree to the welfare of Ireland, and, on the faith of British connection, we have enlarged our borders till we extend all over the country. We have built up our churches and schools, our houses and colleges, our factories and houses; we have bought land and constructed railways; we have created vast trusts and carried through enormous investments, all in the belief of our citizenship in the United Kingdom, and relying on the strong, just hand of British law, and now, after all, against our earnest pleading and protest, our loyalty and patriotism and self-reliance almost scorned, we who until now rejoiced in being reckoned an integral portion of the United Kingdom are to be degraded from our citizenship and our liberties, our properties and our lives are handed to the keeping of a wholly irresponsible authority. We have been appealed to to accept the proposed new order of things and make the best of it. Beyond doubt if it could be shown to the General Assembly that Home Rule was to be a benefit to Ireland, she would be found in the van of the movement demanding it, but because she believes that in every sense and every degree the granting of it would only end in disappointment and disaster, she feels bound to resist to the utmost of her power the ill-omened proposals of the Prime Minister."

SAYS the *United Presbyterian Magazine*—This subject—Term of Service in the Ministry—which is beginning to be discussed in the home churches, appear also to be exciting some interest in the Presbyterian Church of Canada. A correspondence on the question has been going on in the pages of the *Presbyterian Review*, (Toronto). In an editorial it is pointed out that the evils which may give rise to the desire of a short service term of ministry are twofold—(1) the minister may be inefficient; (2) the congregation may be unsympathetic and discordant. In cities there is some relief for the people; in country districts this relief can be secured only by leaving the congregation. Failing relief, the evil through the fault of the minister, of the congregation, or of both, may grow until it becomes "a real sore in the body ecclesiastic." The remedy is not easily dis-