

# THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

VOL. 21.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 14th, 1892.

No. 18.

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For the use of Superintendents and Secretaries.

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## Notes of the Week.

CANVASSES of the householders in over 1,000 towns in England, with regard to the English Sunday Closing Bill, now before Parliament, show a strong demand for such legislation, the proportion being seven to one in favour of it. Separate votes of the working classes show nearly eleven to one. Petitions in favour of the Bill have been presented to the present Parliament to the number of 11,790, with 1,703,733 signatures.

THERE is good ground for believing that the adhesion of Pope Leo XIII. to the French Republic is the result of the influence of Cardinal Rampolla, the Papal Secretary of State, who is the most influential of the advisers of His Holiness, and that it indicates a desire on their part that Italy should become a Republic, since they believe that this would solve the Roman question, and give the Pope the liberty of which he says he is deprived.

BY an absolutely unanimous vote the large selection committee of the Marylebone Presbyterian Church decided to recommend the congregation to call the Rev. Dr. Stalker, of Glasgow, as successor to the late Dr. Donald Fraser. Dr. Stalker has asked for time and full information, before making up his mind, should the call go forward. In the meantime, Rev. Dr. Pentecost, who has just returned from India, will supply Marylebone pulpit for five Sundays.

AT Dunkeld Presbytery recently an overture was moved by Rev. T. R. Ruthertford asking the Assembly to enact the observance of Christmas and Easter as a step towards Christian union. After Rev. James Mackenzie had expressed the view that it was impolitic to take such action at present, alienating as it would the greater portion of the dissenters with whom they desire to be united, the motion was withdrawn, its mover however declaring that he would reintroduce it at next meeting in another form.

AT the close of 1881 the membership of the English Presbyterian Church stood at 56,099; at the close of 1891 it had risen to 66,774. The membership in 1877 (the year after the Union) was 50,739; so that during the past fourteen years the increase has been rather more than thirty-one and one-half per cent. The total revenue in 1891 was \$1,178,250, as compared with \$1,043,030 in 1881; also a satisfactory increase. The greatest increase, however, during the decade, is in the amount raised for missionary purposes, which last year amounted to \$128,075, as compared with \$51,085 in 1881.

THE Irish Presbyterian General Assembly's College has closed its session. At the valedictory exercises the venerable president, Dr. Killen (now bordering on his ninetieth year), occupied the chair. Dr. Watts' address dealt with late developments of the school of modern critics. The Theological Faculty conferred the degree of D.D. on Rev. J. Maxwell Rodgers, Derry, O. Leitch, Letterkenny, W. Moore, Spain, and S. Robinson, Australia. The subject of the closing address at Derry, which was written by the late Dr. A. C. Murphy, and read by Professor McMaster, was "The relations which scientific and Biblical teaching sustain to one another in the ordering of our lives."

GLASGOW Free Church Presbytery has unanimously agreed to ask the Assembly to retain Rev. Dr. Douglas as Principal of Glasgow College, and nominated for the Hebrew chair Rev. Dr. Stalker, Rev. G. A. Smith, Rev. D. MacLachlan and Rev. A. Harper, of Melbourne. Dr. Stalker, however, desired his name to be dropped, as his studies had not been such as to fit him for the appointment. Rev. John Robertson, of Gorbals, tabled a motion that Mr. Smith be not nominated, and gave as his reason that gentleman's views on the inspiration of the Bible. Four voted for it, and he and two elders dissented.

THE New York *Independent* says: The postponement by the authorities of the World's Fair of the decision of the Sunday opening question till next October gives opportunity for further protest. The country is becoming aroused, and is making it apparent that Sunday opening would be regarded as an insult to the Christian conscience. Many of those who want open gates on Sunday want them because of opposition to all religion. They would hail a favourable decision as a blow at Christianity. On the other hand, many oppose open gates who are not religious, but who want a day of rest preserved to the workingman.

MR. MELLIN, a Portuguese lay missionary at Madeira, was arrested and tried for expounding the Scriptures and singing a hymn at a Protestant funeral in the Portuguese cemetery on All Souls' Day when it was crowded with Roman Catholics. A clever lawyer, engaged by Mr. William Smart, succeeded in obtaining his acquittal on the ground that the service was not an act of public worship inasmuch as Mr. Mellin was not an ordained pastor. Twelve years' banishment from the islands would have been the punishment. A fresh start with the Free Church Mission has been made under Rev. A. Drummond Paterson.

THE Belfast correspondent of the *British Weekly* writes: The vacant congregation of Elmwood, Belfast, of which the late Dr. A. C. Murphy was minister, has practically decided upon the Rev. Samuel McComb, B.D., late of Reading, Berks, and now of Armagh, as his successor. The committee of selection, numbering seven, are unanimously in his favour, and will, it is understood, as unanimously recommend him to a congregational meeting to be held shortly. Elmwood is the collegiate Church of the city. Its academic element is very strong; the Presbyterian Professors, both in the Queen's and Divinity Colleges, being members of it. It is a splendid position for a young minister of Mr. McComb's power and academic tastes and habits.

DR. HENDERSON, of Paisley, Moderator of the United Presbyterian Synod, addressed the students of the Theological Hall, Edinburgh, at the close of the winter's session. The fight of faith, he said, was harder in many respects than it used to be. It was in vain to fight against the spirit of enquiry, and frown upon and condemn it with stern measures of repression. It could only do harm. The way of presenting Divine truth changed, and it must be remembered that it was not error of belief that proved man to be no Christian. Men might be Christians though they were not perfect in their lives, and so men might be Christians though their faith be neither full nor in all points correct. If the Church of Christ was to prosper, there must be a wise toleration.

THE Rev. D. McKinnon, of Chalmers Church, Glasgow, died suddenly a short time since, after occupying the pulpit both forenoon and afternoon, and presiding at a meeting of Session. On reaching his residence at Craigiebank, Crosshill, he had to be assisted to a chair, where he suddenly expired. Mr. McKinnon, who was a native of the island of Mull, had been in failing health for some time, and recently applied for a colleague and successor. He was over forty years a minister of the Free Church, having been ordained in Lockerbie in 1851 and transferred to Chalmers Free Church in 1859. His wife

died suddenly about two years ago on the jubilee day of their marriage. Mr. McKinnon is survived by a son, the Rev. John McKinnon, of South Free Church, Dumfries.

THE annual meetings of the Young People's Guild were held in Dumfries recently. Rev. Dr. Stalker preached the sermon in St. George's Church. Professor Salmond presided at the business meeting. From the reports submitted by Rev. Dr. Mitchell, of Linlithgow, it appears that during the past year the number of the guilds and affiliated associations increased from 275 to 326, and that *Youth* has already attained a circulation of 15,000. Mr. D. W. Rannie was elected honorary president and Professor Salmond president for the ensuing year. Sheriff Watson, of Newton-Stewart, presided at an evening meeting, at which addresses were given by Rev. C. G. McCrie, Rev. W. Patrick, and others. Professor Drummond, speaking at the Guild conference at Dumfries, called for the abolition of one of the two or three stated Sabbath services in the Church that the young might get justice done to them. The people were sick of sermonizing, and the ministers were tired and sick of making sermons. Making a sermon was the work of Christ, but it was questionable if in 1892 the making of two a week was the best thing a minister could do for Christ.

MEDICAL Missions are one of the most fruitful branches of missionary work. In this branch the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society was the pioneer half a century ago, and still takes the lead. Within the last ten years over fifty young men have gone forth as fully-qualified medical missionaries from its Livingstone Memorial Training Institution, and sixty-nine of the Society's former students are now at work in all parts of the world, healing the sick and preaching the Gospel. All the missionary societies draw upon the Society, since it is wholly unsectarian. It has missions of its own in Palestine, at Nazareth and Damascus. The present income is little enough, barely exceeding \$30,000. The last of the founders, Rev. G. D. Cullen, died only last October. Mrs. Isabella Bishop, the famous traveller, in an introduction to the Memorial, says a survey of many mission fields and of vast unevangelized regions, specially in Asia, where Christianity comes in contact with Islam and the higher philosophical non-Christian systems, has led her to think that the multiplication of male and female medical missionaries is the most important work in connection with missions which is before the Church.

THE *Christian Leader* remarks: If the Church is fully to utilize women in her work, she must use them specially in the work for which they are fitted. A lady, speaking in Lisgar during the week, said that, except in the work of Sunday school teaching, little was asked of them, except when it came to be a question of raising money. If there were money needed in connection with a Church, then immediately the cry was, "Ask the ladies. They know how to raise money." It was strange that the men who knew best how to raise money for themselves turned to the women as soon as there was any to be made for God. The evil was that many women thought when they had worked for a bazaar that they had done all the work that was demanded of them as Church members. Most congregations include, not only upon the communion rolls, but more conspicuously in the pews, a much larger proportion of women than men. But too often women had to go outside the life of a congregation in order to find scope for spiritual work. One of the characteristics of the present time was that the democracy was willing to listen to the voices of women on social questions. They would be likewise willing to listen on religious topics. Women, therefore, ought to be encouraged in trying to rebuild the spiritual as well as the material fabric. But men must not forget that the chief work of women must, after all, lie in their homes, and it was there that they could best build up the Church by setting higher ideals of duty before their children.