

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

VOL. 19.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MAY 14th, 1890.

No. 20.

Notes of the Week.

THE much-vexed question of ministerial inefficiency, and how to cure it, is to be discussed by the English Presbyterian Synod at its meetings in Liverpool. A special committee has been sitting on the subject for two years, and is now bold enough to recommend that if a congregation is found to be in an unsatisfactory condition through the imprudence, inefficiency, or unsuitability of its minister, the Presbytery should be at liberty to dissolve the pastoral tie and declare the charge vacant, subject, of course, to complaint and appeal in ordinary form to the superior court. This drastic proposal is sure to excite controversy.

THE Rev. G. A. Smith has withdrawn his name as a candidate for the chair in the English Presbyterian College vacant by the death of Professor Elmslie. It was hardly thought that Mr. Smith would allow his name to go before the Synod, as he had previously declined to settle in England. Had he not withdrawn he would most likely have been elected. The two candidates before the Synod will now be Rev. J. Skinner, of Kelso, and Rev. W. A. Walton, of Berwick, and the former, it is supposed, will receive the larger number of votes. Rev. John McNeill is expected to speak in support of Mr. Skinner.

"A NATION with external pomp and show, but without moral stability, has little prospect of standing." Such was the noble and timely utterance of Lord Reay in introducing representatives of the Christian churches of Bombay to Prince Albert Victor. He further reminded him that while he had seen the military and commercial strength of India, he had probably overlooked in his travels the main supporters of its moral strength. The record of Lord Reay's work in the East adds to a reputation that stood high before he went thither. He has well sustained, says the *Christian Leader*, the best traditions of the enlightened Scottish clan of which he is the recognized head.

MR. GEORGE KENNAN, whose graphic and powerful lectures on Russian scenery and the condition of the political exiles in Siberia are arousing deep interest wherever he speaks, is announced to lecture again in Toronto this week, on the evenings of Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. His pronounced ability and his earnestness of purpose secure the attention of his audiences. As it has been stated that he is not likely to visit Toronto again in the character of a lecturer on Siberia, it is likely that all who can will avail themselves of the opportunity to hear the plain, direct and intelligent testimony of a competent witness who had rare and ample means of learning the actual condition of things in the Russian empire.

SPEAKING at a meeting in Glasgow, for the organization of women's work and the establishment of a training home for women, Dr. Marshall Lang said that all must recognize the importance of the ministry of women. This ministry, he affirmed, would become much more beneficial if women were properly trained for it. The proposal they had in hand sought to provide helpers in various departments of congregational work—helpers in the homes of the poor, in care for the soul as well as for the body; to establish an agency that would provide counsellors and advisers in the homes of the people. Some thought there would be something conventional about such an institution. This he denied. They wanted simply to help women to do better the work which only the hand, the love, the instinct, and the genius of women could accomplish.

THE annual graduation ceremony at the close of the Session of Edinburgh University took place lately. The customary address to the graduates was delivered by Professor Masson, and he dwelt specially upon the rise of three new professions—the professions of teaching, of journalism, and of applied science—which were now entitled to that name from the dimensions they had assumed, in addition to the old professions of the church, law and medicine. He defended the University from charges of decline that had been brought against it, and

pointed to the great increase which had taken place in the number of students, the material wealth of the University, and the general development of its resources as a proof that there was no decline, but the very reverse. At the subsequent commemoration service in St. Giles', the Rev. Principal Fairbairn was the preacher.

THE total income of the English Presbyterian Church, numbering 288 congregations, for 1889 amounted to \$1,170,315 as compared with \$1,051,875 in 1888, being an increase of \$121,440. The membership numbers 65,055, and shows an increase of nearly 1,000. The value of the Church's property is estimated at more than a million and a half sterling, and on it there remains now only \$425,000 of debt. The Sunday scholars number 78,490, and the teachers 7,340, being in the proportion of one to nine of the membership. The Christian workers number 13,770, or nearly a fourth of the whole membership. The progress of the Church's foreign mission work, chiefly in China, has been most encouraging. There are now 264 agents in the foreign mission field, having charge of forty-one theological students, 130 congregations or preaching stations, and 3,572 communicants. The total income for missionary purposes during 1889 was \$103,270.

THE American Institute of Sacred Literature has been organized with the single purpose of furnishing aid toward a more general and a more accurate knowledge of the Sacred Scriptures. Everything which bears directly upon the subject of the Bible will be included in the scope of its work. Its aim will be to encourage and promote the philological, literary, historical, and exegetical study of the Scriptures by means of such instrumentalities as shall be found practicable. The institute will offer, to any who may desire to take it, an examination on the Gospel of Luke; and it will cover, in general, the historical facts relating to the life of Christ and the literary facts connected with the Gospel of Luke. The examination is intended for individuals, Bible-classes and Sunday schools, and an examiner will be appointed for each locality. Mr. James McNab, of 125 Huntley Street, has been appointed examiner for Toronto, and full information may be had upon application to him.

ON this continent a bear story would excite but comparatively little interest, yet one whose scene is laid in the vicinity of London, England, is certainly a novelty. But here is the story as the *Christian World* tells it: A huge bear on Sunday morning entered a chapel situated on the high-road between Barnes and Mortlake. Bruin, it appears, had escaped from the stable of a public house in which his master, a travelling showman, was staying. When the unwelcome intruder entered the chapel, the minister was preaching from the appropriate text, "Be not afraid." The bear calmly walked up the aisle to some empty choir-stalls, where it lay down and surveyed the scene. Women shrieked and children cried, and more than one female member of the congregation rushed into the pulpit to share along with the minister the safety of that elevated position. The sermon was of course brought to an abrupt termination. Fortunately the anxiety of both pastor and people was set at rest by the arrival of the animal's master. Bear and master embraced, and then quietly walked out of the chapel together. The congregation reassembled for general hand-shaking and mutual congratulation.

THE *Daily News* has this to say concerning Rev. John McNeill's Sunday afternoon services at Central Hall, Holborn, London: Mr. McNeill's sermon, like his comments on the story of the prodigal son, was pithy and racy, and at times humorous, though by no means strikingly original. The new evangelist from Glasgow is evidently not greatly disturbed by any phases of modern thought, though he did, it is true, make one little concession to the critics yesterday when, having quoted something that David had said, he parenthetically complained that nowadays they wouldn't even admit that David had written the psalms; "so," he said, "we'll say the man who wrote the Psalms. They can't drive us out of that." Again and again a ripple of laughter

ran through the hall at the dry humour of the speaker, to which his broad Scotch brogue gave great piquancy—as, for instance, when he told of one who had come to speak with him, and had begun by saying that he, the stranger, was, according to the doctors who had been attending him, the most wonderful man in all Glasgow. "That was saying a great deal," observed Mr. McNeill. "Glasgow is a very large place, and there are some wonderful people in it," and there was laughter all round the house when he added "and there are some wonderful people come out of it." Ready of speech, colloquial in style for the most part, now and again rising to eloquence, not very graceful in action, but earnest and honest, and not displeasing in appearance, Mr. McNeill held his large audience well to the end of rather too long a sermon.

AT the meeting of the General Synod of the Episcopal Church of Ireland, the Bishop of Derry, who got into trouble by preaching at the Cardiff Church Congress in an extremely ritualistic church, laughed at the idea of their being any danger of Ritualism in the Church of Ireland. The people, he said, were Protestant to the very core. It reminded him of a humorous comparison he had recently heard; as if, during the flood, when the ark was high above the earth, somebody had put his head out and called, "Fire, fire!" He declared that in these days everybody must see clearly that the National Church, to hold its own, must be largely tolerant. He deprecated this kind of talk as it would do harm in England. There were two divisions of Protestantism in England: there were the Protestant Evangelical Dissenters, of whom some of the members of the Synod thought so much, and to whom they would like to approximate the doctrines and services of the Church of Ireland, if they could. He would tell them a secret about the Evangelical dissenters in England. To a man, or almost to a man, they hated everything connected with Irish Church Protestants. Why that was he could not tell, but it was so. Then there were the Protestants of the Church of England, but while Protestantism was strong in the Church of England, ultra-Protestantism was very weak indeed. Another speaker, Dr. Quarry, said that Plymouthism was doing more harm to the Church of Ireland than Ritualism. Dean Chadwick said that the existence of organized confession, regular confession, in the Church of Ireland, meant sacerdotalism, and that they must therefore feel uneasy.

AT a private meeting of lay members of the United Presbyterian Church, held in Glasgow recently for the purpose of considering the position of the Synod's Committee in regard to Disestablishment, a memorial was drawn up for presentation to the Synod, which stated that, while in fullest sympathy with the principles and testimony of the United Presbyterian Church, we (the members signing the petition) have had during recent years forced on us the conviction that the existence and action of the Synod's Committee on Disestablishment and Disendowment have not tended to promote the interests of the Church, nor even to advance the cause which the committee seeks to further. The ministers and office-bearers of the Church have, in common with all its members, ample opportunity as citizens to advocate and support by their votes the views they hold on the question of the relation between Church and State; and we feel that it is therefore inexpedient for the supreme Court to delegate to any committee authority to issue from time to time, and often on slight occasion, manifestos on a question that necessarily comes within the domain of party politics. We hold, as by the constitution of the Church we are at liberty to hold, various opinions as to the wisdom of the policy of Disestablishment and Disendowment, but we are at one in the belief that agitation in support of that policy by a committee acting under ecclesiastical authority is inexpedient. Such agitation embitters the relations between the Churches, hinders their co-operation in their proper work, and, if persisted in, will render it impossible to realise the comprehensive union which might otherwise follow Disestablishment, if Disestablishment should eventually take place.