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The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 18th, 1891.

None of his charming letters to the *British Weekly* on religious life in Scotland, Rev. W. J. Dawson says: "The stream of religious life does not babble as it flows, but it runs deep and constant." The trouble with some types of religious life on this side of the Atlantic is that there is more babble than flow.

A WRITER in one of our British exchanges, describing Gladstone's speech on the Welsh Disestablishment Bill, refers to the part of the speech that the Grand Old Man seemed to enjoy most. That part was, of course, the most effective. It may well be doubted if ever there was a good speaker who did not enjoy speaking or a good preacher who did not enjoy preaching. In fact it may be doubted if a man can do any kind of work well if he does not enjoy doing it.

A FEW months ago the Legislature of Manitoba enacted a law abolishing separate schools in the Prairie Province. The Bill was framed, introduced and carried through all its stages by Attorney-General Martin, one of the strongest men in the Local Government. Mr. Martin was a candidate for a seat in the Dominion Parliament on the 5th, and was hopelessly beaten. If the people of Manitoba feel grateful for having separate schools abolished they have taken a way of showing their gratitude not easily understood by outsiders. It does not mend matters much to say the C. P. R. "took the Province by the throat." Assuming that to be true, are we to infer that the people care more for the C. P. R. than for Equal Rights and non-sectarian education?

A PRESBYTERIAN clergyman writing in the *Homiletic Monthly* throws a ray of light on the tenacity with which Presbyterians hold on to old customs. In this brother's congregation funeral services were held in church and the male relatives and pallbearers kept on their hats during service. The new pastor created some friction by introducing the innovation of uncovered heads during worship. The argument used against him was that he was "striking at customs sanctioned by good men who were held in high esteem by the people." Most of us have heard that argument several times. A reasonable conservatism is good in many things, but "use and wont" are driven too far when pleaded as a reason for wearing hats in public worship.

THE Washington correspondent of the *Christian-at-Work* gives this description of the closing scene in Congress:—

The closing scenes of this Congress resembled a pandemonium. The introduction of the usual complimentary resolution for the Speaker provoked a war of words, and the roll call proceeded in great disorder; sarcastic and cutting remarks were bandied between members on both sides. Finally, however, it passed by a vote of 152 to 116. Mr. Reed has this consolation, that he is the thirteenth Speaker against whom resentment has thus been manifested, and among his distinguished predecessors are the names of Henry Clay, James K. Polk and Robert Winthrop. On the announcement that the House was adjourned *sine die*, there broke forth a chorus of cheers and yells, hats and papers were flung in the air, songs were sung and the floor of the House exhibited a scene surpassing even the wildest outbreaks on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

Should political union with the United States prove to be the future of Canada, as many understood Mr. Blake to predict, those statesmen who at times turn the Dominion House of Commons into a bedlam will feel quite at home in Washington.

THE Rev. W. J. Dawson is writing his "impressions of Scotland" for the *British Weekly*. His contribution on the "Minister and

his work" is capital, and if we may judge from the following extract, it is still a good and pleasant thing to be a minister in Scotland:—

There is a good deal of human nature in humanity, and I have no doubt there are in Scotch Churches, as well as English, persons who drive a hard bargain with their minister, and expect their full pound of flesh. But, speaking out of my own limited experience, I can only say that I have found among the Scotch a degree of consideration and respect for the minister most unusual in average English church life. The people respect the pulpit, and therefore they respect the minister's studious hours. They respect the minister for his office, and, so long as he does his best to fulfil its duties, he may be sure of their confidence and affection. They do not urge him to fulfil an impossible standard of duty; they make full allowance for the strain which the weekly pulpit puts upon him. They attach themselves to ministers rather than to Churches, and the bond between pastor and people is a very affectionate one. They are not easily won, but when they once attach themselves to you, you may trust them to stay. I have met fewer of the invertebrate, gelatinous species of Church member here than anywhere else. The namby-pamby, morally flabby youth has seldom crossed my field of vision.

The youth over there are saved from being invertebrate, gelatinous, namby-pamby, and morally flabby by learning the Shorter Catechism. Calvinism when properly taught rarely fails to make a firm, clean character. Henry Ward Beecher—no great admirer of the Calvinistic system—said any other system left a man "soft and dirty."

THE movement for the enlistment of the interest and energies of the boys in mission work in connection with congregational mission bands, though recent in origin, has already met with an encouraging measure of success. Wherever such an organization has been attempted it found suitable material ready to undertake the work. The importance and usefulness of such societies are ably and clearly set forth in "A. B.'s" communication on the subject, which appears in another page of this week's issue. The value of boys' mission bands, both educative and practical, is clearly brought out and by no means overstated. The brief paper on the subject is worthy of careful perusal, and should in a number of instances lead to definite results. To all interested in this particular form of congregational activity, the form of constitution, from the pen of Rev. D. J. Macdonnell, which appeared a week or two ago, will prove very suggestive and helpful. One condition of success, next to the hearty co-operation of the boys themselves, is the self-denying devotion of older friends willing to aid by their encouragement and advice.

THERE is a good deal of unnecessary comment on the manner in which Dr. Talmage's congregation pay, or, perhaps we should say, don't pay. They report about 4,000 members, but do very little for missions, and it is understood that the Doctor has refused to take his salary until they make some headway with the new church building. Though the membership is perhaps the largest in America, appeals were made to the general public to help the congregation to rebuild. There is no reason in the world why anyone should wonder at the finances of the Tabernacle. It is quite true that Dr. Talmage preaches to immense crowds, but when did crowds ever pay liberally. Rounders never pay. The crowds that run after sensational preaching are hard to please with seats, and write letters to the newspapers if front pews are not given them, but they rarely get beyond five or ten cents when the collection plate comes round. The men who pay are the men who go to their own church every Sabbath as a matter of principle. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred the amount of a collection depends not on the number of strangers present but on the number of your own paying parishioners. Talmage is a great man in many ways but neither he nor any other man can take money out of the crowds that go around among the churches. Still, if there are 4,000 members in the Brooklyn Tabernacle they should raise large sums of money without any help from the crowd.

IN common with many others after a careful reading of Mr. Blake's famous Durham letter we came to the conclusion that the honourable gentleman considers political union with the United States the ultimate destiny of Canada. Believing annexation to be unpopular with a great majority of Canadians, we were prepared to give Mr. Blake great credit for honestly making known his views to his countrymen. Courage is a virtue we all admire. It now appears, however, from a letter published in the *Globe* the other day, that Mr. Blake does not look upon political union with the United States as our "ideal" or "as yet inevitable" future. Perhaps the honourable gentleman may

find time before long to take his countrymen into his confidence and tell them what he does think would be our ideal state of political existence. No one should know better than the Honourable Edward Blake that destructive criticism of proposed remedies will not cure the ills of the body politic. When he has hurled his last shaft at the N.P., and said all that can be said against Unrestricted Reciprocity, there will still be five millions of people here who must be governed in some way. If Mr. Blake knows of any thing better than our present state of political existence, he should lay his plan before his countrymen at once. A patriotic citizen is always willing to say what he thinks is best for his country.

WONDERFUL the difference that all Churches, especially the Presbyterian, make between heterodoxy in doctrine and heterodoxy in practice, if we may be allowed to use such a term. A minister may preach the glorious Gospel of the blessed God in such a way as to repel many of his hearers and put asleep those who are so good that he cannot drive them away, and though he preaches in that way for years no Church will interfere with him. Let him run across the Standards in one sermon, even on a point not fundamental, and, if the Presbytery knows, he may perhaps be cited forthwith. Surely preaching the Gospel repulsively for twenty years is as serious an offence as combatting some non-essential though generally received doctrine. An elder may have been utterly useless for a quarter of a century. During all that time he may never have done an hour's work except on communion Sabbath. Nobody has said a word to him about his uselessness. Uselessness in the eldership or even in the ministry is not a matter about which Church Courts are supposed to concern themselves. But let that useless elder go wrong on a doctrinal point and most likely he is immediately dealt with, even though the point may not be a vital point. Why in the name of common sense should we attach so much more importance to doctrine than to practice. By all means let there be the utmost care in regard to doctrinal matters, but it should never be forgotten that religion is a life as well as a creed. The most useless as well as the most dangerous of professing Christians is the man whose creed is strictly orthodox but whose life is a libel on the religion he professes.

THE GOSPEL IN ITALY.

THE emancipation of Italy from the thralldom of Papal rule encouraged high hopes in the minds of all who prize civil and religious liberty. It was the general expectation that the new nationality for which so many remarkable men lived and died would take high rank among modern States. After the long and inglorious career imposed upon it by a so-called theocratic despotism it was hoped that the country would rise like a giant refreshed, and be able to regain much of its former glory. Ambition on the part of its distinguished rulers has not been wanting, but from that ambition has come some of the dangers that now interfere with the progress of the Italian kingdom. As a member of the triple alliance it has been compelled to stagger under burdens too heavy for its strength. Its naval and military development has taxed its resources to the utmost. Its colonial policy has resulted thus far in the addition of little renown and much debt. Its present condition calls for the exercise of the wisest statesmanship, and the patient forbearance and hopefulness of the people. That the Sardinian dynasty has had a full measure of popular confidence and support is apparent, yet there are disturbing elements that occasionally make themselves felt. It is well known that some of the prominent leaders in the movement that culminated in the unification of Italy did not look upon monarchy as the ideal form of government they desired. Several of the most noted of them, such as Garibaldi and Mazzini, were republican in their aspirations, and many who gave their adhesion to Victor Emmanuel shared their opinions. Republicanism in Italy still has many adherents, and the present strain on the resources of the country are favourable to the spread of republican sentiments. The irredentists also give occasional trouble to the ruling powers. Another element of weakness is the instability of the Cabinet. Signor Crispi held office for a long time and the impression that he will soon regain the position from which he was recently displaced is not altogether improbable, still the subtle intrigues by which ministries are made and unmade have not a tranquilizing effect on the country, and weaken the