

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN,

—PUBLISHED BY THE—

Presbyterian Printing & Publishing Co., Ltd.,

AT 5 JORDAN STREET, - TORONTO.

Terms: Two Dollars Per Annum, Payable in Advance.

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The Presbyterian Printing and Publishing Co., Ltd.,

5 Jordan St., Toronto.

The Canada Presbyterian.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 19TH, 1894.

THE efforts that are made at agricultural shows to amuse the people suggest the question, Are Canadians becoming frivolous?

THE good citizenship and the blackguardism of New York city, are preparing to take each other by the throat in the municipal elections. It looks as though the good citizenship might win this time.

TIMES are much harder in the United States than in Canada; but the Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian church over there has raised \$22,258 more during the last three months than for the corresponding three months of last year.

THE *Herald and Presbyter* heard of a minister who, when asked at a higher life camp-meeting whether he "had got holiness," replied, "None to speak of." That minister was right. The more holiness a man has the less he wants to speak about it. Humility is one of the undoubted fruits of the Spirit.

TIMES may be hard and collections certainly are slow, as most business men know to their cost; but nobody would have thought so at the Industrial Fair on Farmer's day or, for that matter, on any other day. A better dressed or more well-to-do looking crowd could not be gathered in any part of the world.

WHEAT is low in price as the Knox jubilee comes round and some may consider that a reason why they should not help to pay off the debt that has been on the college for many years. The men who founded the institution half a century ago got no money at all for wheat. They had to take their pay in store goods.

IF our Methodist friends are not careful they may lengthen the term of the itinerancy beyond the average time of the so-called permanent pastorate. If they make the term five years, then undoubtedly a Methodist minister who stays his full term has a longer pastorate than the average pastor whose position is supposed to be permanent.

EVERYBODY admits that Knox College has done valuable service for the church and for the cause of Christ, during the last fifty years. Everybody admits that the mortgage debt should be paid and the interest saved. But unfortunately the things that everybody admits should be done, are often just the things that are not done. Universal admission is often more dangerous than opposition. If some prominent man would make a savage attack on Knox College, the money to pay the mortgage would probably come in during the next ten days.

THE young pastor often gets peculiar surprises in his first congregation. During his college course he has been drilled in answering the arguments of all the heretics that have flourished since the first century. He has been put on his guard against heterodoxy in all its forms. He has been shown how to use his weapons against infidelity. He has "many a time and oft" been warned against Romish error. But the young man is perhaps not six months in the pastorate until he finds that nine-tenths of his hindrances come from professing Christians who ought to be his helpers. The professors did not tell him anything about that, and he is surprised.

THE one sure thing about a trial for heresy is the howl raised about persecution the moment the trial begins. People who care nothing for the church and just as little for the truth never fail to denounce a church for calling to account professors or pastors who may have walked clean across the standards they solemnly vowed to maintain and defend. And yet some of these people think it is quite right to turn an elector out of a Patron or P. P. A. lodge for not voting as the lodge directed. The church should allow its standards to be trampled in the mire; but the P. P. A. must have its most tyrannical laws respected. And that, too, towards the close of the nineteenth century of the Christian era!

THE ITINERANCY IN THE METHODIST CHURCH.

THE discussions and debates of the Methodist Quadrennial Conference now in session deserve, and will well repay the interest and careful attention of the ministers and intelligent members of our church. If we may be allowed to use such language in regard to religious work, we may say that Methodism is the closest competitor the Presbyterian Church meets with in the Dominion, as it is also our closest ally. Every movement it makes has therefore special interest to us.

The question of prolonging the itinerancy gave rise, we are told, to one of the most exciting sessions of the committee appointed to deal with that subject. The proposal was to extend the pastoral term from three to five years. A compromise to four years was proposed, and after long debate this was carried by a majority of one. It is scarcely likely that this will be carried in the conference, but the proposal to change and the tenacity with which the itinerancy and even the short term of it are adhered to by the Methodist church, suggest two considerations of practical interest to our church. The first is that they have found it to work well, and the second that many feel some modification looking to an extension of the term to be desirable. This is what we believe in, and what we have no doubt whatever a very great number in our own church hold.

It is impossible to read the statistics which have been presented to the conference without seeing that Methodism is making rapid advances within the Dominion so far as numbers are concerned. While no doubt this is due to many causes, we hold also, and the firmness with which the itinerant system is adhered to, and the strong opposition to even a slight modification of it justify us in holding that it is a general opinion in the body that itinerancy works well, and from its importance as a feature in their system, contributes in no small degree to its success. It is true that the fact of change being proposed indicates that so short a term has disadvantages, yet no one appears to think them so great as to ask for more than a short prolongation of the term, and it does not seem that there is a wish on the part of any that the office of pastor in any one place be made permanent. No one, on the other hand, will contend that the theory or the practice of a permanent pastorate in one place has all the advantages without any drawbacks. The readiness with which changes are made by ministers, the steps taken not seldom by congregations to obtain a change, and the feeling of relief experienced often by both when a change has been made settle that. Many ministers even under our system practically itinerate, and, judging by the number of letters with which Moderators of the session of any likely vacancy are deluged, making application for a "hearing," many more would be glad to practice it if only the opportunity were given. The best method we believe will be found in a modification in the theoretically permanent pastorate of our own system of polity and of the now too short pastorate of the Methodist sys-

tem. As there is nothing in the Presbyterian system necessitating permanency, nor any law in scripture upon the matter, the question resolves itself simply into one of Christian expediency.

This subject has to be looked at from the point of view of the majority of the people, as well as, or even more than from that of the minister. In this light the judgment of an intelligent secular press may often be of great value as reflecting the mind of the people. Our contemporary the *Globe* deals with this matter in one of its late issues in a manner which we regard as so sound and judicious, and which reflects also so truly, we believe, the judgment of the mass of our people that we quote it with pleasure. It says:

"The disadvantage of permanency is obvious. The minister may have been an unfortunate choice in the first place, or he may suffer such a decline in intellect and vigor that his usefulness may be seriously impaired or may depart altogether. Of course there are varying degrees of what constitutes usefulness, and the judgment of the congregation may be altogether wrong. It may be seeking after qualities in a minister which are not of the essence of religion at all; showy eloquence, social qualities or gifts of various kinds calculated to gratify what may be called congregational pride. Or the fault of the preacher may be that he has preached too faithfully against some besetting sin of his hearers. There are people who would exchange the ideal clergyman of Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village' for a showy young man whose preaching would attract more widespread notice. From the point of view of preaching only, the system of frequent changes would appear to be the better one. The minister is not so easily 'preached out'; the ideas which are familiar to one congregation may be new to another. But when we come to look at the minister in his office as the friend, counsellor and comforter of his people, there are disadvantages in severing the tie too frequently, and compelling him to relinquish the work he has begun and to break new ground. The five years' term seems to afford a reasonable compromise between the two systems."

AS OTHERS SEE US.

AN American who has lately been on a visit to Toronto from one of the Southern States, has given his impressions respecting several things which he saw and heard while here, in a letter to the *Christian Observer*, printed at Louisville, Kentucky, of which the Rev. Dr. Beattie is an associate editor. We give several extracts in order that we may "see ourselves as others see us." Speaking of Toronto the writer says:

Situated on Ontario, one of the largest, and perhaps the most beautiful of the chain of Great Lakes, there is almost everything in and around it to render it desirable to those of us who dwell inland, and farther south. The temperature rarely reaches higher than 80 degrees in midsummer. With a wealth of shade trees, and the lake breezes, there is little opportunity, at any time, for complaint of a "heated term."

There is, of course, every modern convenience in the way of street cars, electric lights, etc. The cost of living seems to have been reduced to the minimum. It would be hard to find a place where one can get more and better value for the money expended. Everything in the way of fruits and vegetables abounds in the greatest profusion. It is a remarkably clean city, and very quiet and orderly at all times.

There is a decidedly foreign air surrounding everything and everybody. The presence everywhere of the British flag is a constant reminder that here we are under the Queen.

The population is said to be 240,000, and is composed principally of Scotch and English, and their descendants. There is a conspicuous absence of the mixed and mongrel European class of citizens found in almost all of our large American cities. There are hardly any Germans or Italians here, and, comparatively, very few Irish. It is emphatically a Protestant city. There are very few Catholics, and only a handful of Jews.

Our Sabbath keeping particularly struck him and calls forth his warm approbation. He says:

Perhaps the most noticeable characteristic of Toronto—and that which is its crowning glory—is the manner in which the Sabbath is observed. I had recently seen some mention of it in the *Christian Observer*, but was hardly prepared for all that I have seen and heard in regard to the Sabbath, since coming here. On that day, there are no street cars running, no mails delivered, either at the postoffice or otherwise, and no Sunday newspapers. Except at the hours for going to church, almost absolute quiet reigns throughout the city, during the whole day. Rest and calm repose—the silence of the country—settles down and prevails universally.

At the church hours, both morning and evening, however, the streets swarm with men, women, and children, many, if not most of them, with Bibles in their hands. The whole population seems to be going to church. With the Sabbath thus observed and honored, is it to be wondered at that Toronto is prosperous and thriving in every way? "Them that honor Me, I will honor," is the language of God's Word. It is said, and believed to be true, that no other city on the globe, of anything like the size of Toronto, keeps the Sabbath so sacredly. All honor to the sturdy Scotch Presbyterians who