

## THE DUTY OF SYNODS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Permit me a word respecting the action of the Synod of Toronto in refusing to transmit the Overture from the Presbytery of Owen Sound and the appointment of Professors to vacant theological chairs. Mr. Bennet has already called attention to the matter in your issue of last week, and stated that Synod refused to transmit for the reason that the Overture contained no definite proposal to remedy the evil complained of. It does not seem to be the practice of the Courts of the Free Church of Scotland to refuse to transmit for such a reason. The Presbytery of Edinburgh on 27th March, refused to transmit an overture of a highly important nature, introduced by Dr. Rainy, and looking towards dis-establishment of the Churches of England and Scotland, which contained no definite proposal. The concluding words are "It is therefore humbly overturned by the Free Presbytery of Edinburgh to the Venerable the General Assembly to take the premises into their most serious consideration, and to do therein as to their wisdom may seem meet with a view to the interests of truth and the well-being of the cause of Christ in these lands."

M.

Staynes, April 17, 1878.

## CANADA PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

## PRESBYTERY OF TORONTO.

The Presbytery of Toronto met Tuesday last, at 11 o'clock, in Knox Church, Rev. William Meikle, Moderator, in the chair. After reading the minutes, a communication was read from Professor Young, stating that for several reasons he wished to be relieved from his appointment as a delegate to the General Assembly. The Presbytery agreed to receive Professor Young's resignation, and appointed Rev. Mr. Campbell, of Toronto, in his stead. A communication from the Colonial Committee of the Free Church of Scotland in favour of Rev. R. Scobie, late of the Presbytery of Irvine, accompanied by testimonials, &c., was also read, and that gentleman was received as a probationer. Rev. Mr. King, as convener of the Home Mission Committee, then read his annual report, which represented the stations and vacant congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery to be in a favourable state. Thanks were tendered to convener and treasurer, and it was resolved to have an abstract of the report printed. Rev. Mr. Pringle, convener, read a report from a committee appointed to meet and confer with the congregation of Caledonian West on the subject of public worship. The report stated that the nearest practicable point at which public worship could be regularly established was Alton village, nine miles distant, and that if the connection between Erin and Caledonian West be terminated the latter station might be supplied in the mean time in connection with Alton. The report was received and the Committee re-appointed, with the addition of Rev. A. McFee, with instructions to report further to the next meeting of the Presbytery. A petition signed by persons residing in the north-west part of the city, praying for permission to erect a new church on College-street, with a view to forming a separate congregation in that section, was read. A memorial was also read from persons residing further north, asking that such church, if erected, might be located on or near to Bloor-street. After a discussion the latter was withdrawn by the Moderator of Session; and on motion of Mr. Rattray, elder, the prayer of the petition was granted. The following students of Knox College applied to be taken on trial for license:—Messrs. W. H. Rennellson, Alex. Gilray, G. Baptie, John Scrimgeour, and D. J. Caswell. It was agreed to ask leave of the General Assembly to proceed with the more public trial for license. Pursuant to notice, Rev. Mr. King read an overture to the General Assembly relating to handing over the Kankakee (Ill.) Mission to the American branch of the Church, and the consolidation of the work of French Evangelization in Canada. An overture was also read by the same gentleman, supported by Rev. Mr. Dick, asking the General Assembly to appoint Rev. Prof. Gregg to the chair of Systematic Theology, and Rev. J. Campbell to that of Apologetics and Church History in Knox College. Both overtures were adopted and ordered to be transmitted to the General Assembly.

## RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE OF GOOD FRIDAY.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—While I have no desire to interfere in the "friendly tilt" between "T. D. P." and "A Canada Presbyterian," I should like the latter, carefully and prayerfully, to consider the following questions:

1. While it is admitted that neither Christmas nor Good Friday is enjoined in the Word of God, can we suppose it is contrary to Christ's will, or displeasing to Him, to devote one day of the year to devout meditation on His advent, and another to similar meditation on His sufferings and death; and especially when these days are placed at our disposal as days of leisure, because they are devoted to this purpose by other Christians? Can we suppose that He will not accept and bless such religious exercises, whether in social or private worship?

2. Is it sinful to hold a religious ser-

vice on any day that may be considered expedient, and especially on days when people are necessarily out of their usual employment. If it be sinful to hold such services on any day, except the Lord's Day, in regard to which the Word of God leaves us absolutely free, then it is wrong for a minister to hold a weekly prayer meeting,—wrong to have service on fast days, or preparation days, and on days of Thanksgiving. In what respect is it more blameless to hold religious service on Christmas and Good Friday?

3. Is our Saviour's promise—*Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*—restricted to any day, or will the blessing be withheld on Christmas and Good Friday?

4. What connection is there between holding a service for devotional exercise and Christian exhortation on a public holiday, and "vestments," "lighted candles," "the sign of the cross," and "turning to the east?" Would not St. Paul have held a Christian service, even on a *Heathen festival day*, if he could thereby have got idle people to come and hear the gospel?

5. Whether are we to follow "Dr. Miller on Presbyterianism," excellent authority as he may be, or St. Paul, who tells us in regard to the keeping of particular days, to be *fully persuaded in our own mind*, and if we do observe the days, to *observe them to the Lord*? If we have to observe certain days *secularly* to a certain extent, does God's Word encourage or discourage our religious observance of them.

6. Are there not many things, unimportant details, concerning the times and modes and order of our religious services, which are not clearly laid down in the Word of God, but are left for us to arrange in the light of Christian expediency? Can "A Canada Presbyterian" advance one text which could make the conscience of any Christian man uneasy in attending Divine service on Christmas and Good Friday? Human authority must necessarily be failable. It is of the essence of our Protestantism to accept no authoritative rule but the Word of God.

I should like "A Canada Presbyterian" to read carefully the following short article, published on the eve of last Good Friday in a Canadian daily paper. While it is evidently not written by a Presbyterian, and may attach too much importance to "times and seasons," its earnest Christian and devotional tone must impress every Christian reader. It may also help to show your correspondent the effect from looking at the same thing from different points of view, for while he may possibly regard its sentiments with pious horror, the writer of the article would be quite as likely to regard his views with astonishment and grief! And to which, after all, would Good Friday be likely to bring the greatest amount of spiritual benefit, to him who should use the *lesure day* for special meditation on our Lord's sufferings and death, for him, or to him who should persistently disregard it?

Yours, &amp;c.,

CANADENSIS.

## HOW SHALL I SPEND GOOD FRIDAY?

"It is nothing to you all ye that pass by? Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto My sorrow."

Christian Brother! or Christian Sister! Good Friday is once more near at hand. It is the death-day of the Son of God. How will you spend it? In your common work? I trust not. In pleasure taking and holiday making? Oh, I trust not, I earnestly trust not. In attending Divine Service in Church, in thinking quietly in your homes of Jesus' love and sufferings, in praying to Him and praising Him? Oh surely, yes!

On Good Friday, year by year, the Church of God sets forth before the faithful children and before a sinful world the image of the Incarnate God dying in agony on the Cross for His creatures. She bids them "turn aside and see this great sight," she bids them "sit down and watch Him there," she bids them "behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow."

Brother or sister! wilt thou refuse? Wilt thou pass by as if Jesus and his sufferings were nothing to thee? Oh that he far from thee. Jesus died for thee. He thought of thee as He hung upon the Cross, naked, bleeding, and in agony; and when at any moment He could have come down, as His enemies bade Him, He stayed and endured to the uttermost for thy sake.

Shall His death-day then be a common day with thee—still less a day of feasting and merriment? Oh come and mourn with thy Saviour awhile—seek Him in His Holy House and join with thy fellow Christians in adoring His great love—seek Him in your own chambers—there bow the knees which crucified Him, and devote thyself afresh to Him, to be His and His only. Give Him the whole day—and let it be Good Friday, not only because on it He was good to thee, but because it is thy own good day.

## SABBATH DESECRATION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—It is a possible and common thing to see and feel often very keenly evils which we are powerless to remedy. And this is true of many who see and many who suffer the evils of Sabbath desecration. Sisters, wives and mothers mourn over dear ones led or driven into such sin as defiles the God of Heaven, ruins soul and body, for the sinner, and robs them of their best opportunities of leading those misguided

ones to better things.

A Canadian poet has said that—  
"Wrong, tho' cas'd in triple mail,  
Is done, or soon, or late, to feel,  
And from the earth forever fall."

and though we believe it is true, the time is not yet, and it would be worse than useless to spend our strength in efforts that could only fail. The enemy is very strong, well fortified, and has the "snows of war," and before we have any chance of succeeding we must be thoroughly in earnest, thoroughly united, and thoroughly prepared; in the words of one of our old men, "work as if all depended on ourselves, and pray as if all depended upon God." Next to the liquor trade no greater evil could be thrust upon a Christian country than this wide-spread and systematic abuse of sacred time. We are all disgraced, and our sense of right outraged to a degree that ought to arouse the greatest sorrow and indignation. But alas, we have become accustomed to this state of things. It does not seem so dreadful as it once did, and the "almighty dollar" carries the day. The resistance offered is so feeble and the indifference so manifest that we can scarce wonder at the remark I once heard that "the Christians themselves didn't think the Sabbath breakers any worse than others, else the fuss would not end in talk, as it has always done." How vain to speak to such men of either Sabbath duties or delights, and, generally speaking, it is this class who have inflicted upon us this grievous wrong. To the Bible is no authority. They reason upon different premises and view things from a totally different stand-point, and we are powerless to convert them to our way of thinking, so there remains only force to which we can appeal. If Canadian law runs parallel with Bible law and prohibits Sabbath labor, there can be but one opinion as to what is our duty. Even as patriots we sacrifice our self-respect and appear despicable to others when we allow a law of our country (just and good in itself) to be set at defiance, and as Christians it is not saying too much to declare that we are unfaithful to our own and our children's best interests, and sadly indifferent to the cause for which our Master gave His life. But how to proceed calls for the gravest thought. The Sabbath Defence Societies must do good, and Mr. McMullen's valuable suggestions ought to have great weight, and I would just say to him in explanation that there are many deeply interested in this important movement whose sex precludes them from any active share in the contest, and such a one is

EPSILON.

## STATUS OF RETIRED MINISTERS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—With the view of defining the standing of retired Ministers or rather giving them no standing at all, the following was remitted by the last General Assembly to presbyteries, namely, "That according to the constitutional practice of Presbyterianism, none but settled ministers, senior pastors, theological professors, and ordained ministers called to fill special positions in the work of the Church, should be recognized as ministers entitled to have their names entered on the rolls of Presbyteries, and such being the case any exceptions made should be made on their own merits, and therefore new legislation on this matter is uncalled for."

By this remit should it become law, an aged minister, however long and however faithfully and honourably he may have served his Divine Master and the Church, when he ceases to be a pastor and retires from the more active duties of the ministry, will be no longer entitled to be enrolled as a Presbyter among his co-presbyters and as a minister of the Church. Such is the position he must be contented to occupy, whatever may be his experience, his information, his knowledge of Church law and procedure, his wisdom and prudence and however valuable these gifts may be to others and especially to the younger and more inexperienced presbyters, except indeed he humbly asks the favour of his being made an exception. And what minister of hoary head, still honoured and esteemed by all as a minister of Christ, would care to ask this favour.

But this is "according to the constitutional practice of Presbyterianism." So it is affirmed in this remit, which I see is approved by many of the presbyteries. It is to be hoped they have well considered the "Constitutional practice of Presbyterianism" on this point. If they have, it appears very strange to me that they could approve of it; for there is not a Presbyterian church with which I am acquainted that so defines in its constitution a presbytery as is done in this remit. In the Form of government adopted by the Westminster Assembly which may be regarded as Constitutional, it is stated that "a presbytery consisteth of Ministers of the Word and such other public officers as are agreeable to and warranted by the Word of God to be church governors to join with the Ministers in the government of the church." By this, ministers of the Word, not pastors merely, are members of the Presbytery. And are not retired ministers still ministers of the Word? Or does their office of the Ministry depend on their pastorate?

Again, in the "Book of the Constitution and Discipline of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland" it is laid down that "the Pres-

bytery consisteth of ministers of a defined district, with a ruling Elder from each congregation." All ministers in the defined district—within the bounds—with or without charge, and not merely pastors, Professors of Theology, ministers called to fill special positions in the work of the church and favoured ones of whom exceptions may be made, are members of the presbytery according to the Constitutional practice of this branch of Presbyterianism.

In "The practice of the Free Church of Scotland," the last work issued on the subject, it is stated that "A Presbytery consists, (1) of all pastors of Congregations within the bounds, colleagues and successors being included; (2) of the Professors of Theology whose appointed sphere of labour is within the bounds; (3) of such ordained ministers within the bounds and not having charges, as had been received in the capacity of members thereof previously to the meeting of the General Assembly in 1847, or who may since have been, or may hereafter, by authority of the General Assembly be received; and of a representative Elder from each Kirk session within the bounds." According to this Constitutional practice ministers without charge within the bounds are members of the Presbytery. Of course if they leave the bounds of one and go into those of another they cannot be received by this Presbytery without the authority of the General Assembly. But there is nothing here depriving them of their rightful and scriptural status as presbyters of the New Testament, of having their names enrolled with those of the other presbyters of the bounds, of meeting with them and deliberating with them on the affairs of their Master's house.

The following was passed in the General Assembly of the late Old School Presbyterian Church of the United States and reaffirmed in 1863, and I presume, is now the law of the United Church, namely, "A Presbytery consists of all ministers and one ruling Elder from each Congregation within a certain district." Thus all the ministers within the bounds, whether they be pastors or ministers without charge, are in this church, and constitutionally so, members of this Presbytery.

The Synod of the Presbyterian Church of Canada, in connection with the Established Church of Scotland, passed the following on this point in 1869, namely, "The Synod permits retired ministers to retain their full status as members of Presbytery and Synod, so that these courts may continue to enjoy the benefit of their experience and counsel."

In the Canada Presbyterian Church it self the practice has not been uniform. Some Presbyteries, as a matter of course and as what their offices as ministers entitle them to, have retained the names of retired ministers on their rolls, while others have sought permission from the Supreme Court to do so. And it was this variety in practice which led to the present remit on the subject. And if there was any meaning in the late induction of the Rev. John Black, there was not a single settled pastor in the Presbytery of Manitoba and as far as I know there is yet but one.

From these references to the Constitution and practice of other Presbyterian Churches it may be seen how far it is "according to the constitutional practice of Presbyterianism" to drop from the roll of his Presbytery the name of a retired minister and strip him of the keys with which he is invested, not by his relation to a particular congregation as their pastor, but by virtue of his office as a minister of Christ. I think it may be fairly affirmed that this remit is, in point of fact, not true. It is not true that it is "according to the constitutional practice of Presbyterianism" to deprive retired ministers of their status as members of the presbytery within whose bounds they may reside. I hope in another communication to show that it is as unscriptural and unPresbyterian, in point of principle, as it is untrue in point of fact.

Yours, &amp;c.,

T. B. P.

April 16th.

## NEWS OF THE CHURCHES.

SCOTLAND ON STATE CHURCHES.—The Edinburgh Presbytery of the Free Church of Scotland had under discussion, on the 27th ult., an overture to the General Assembly, asking that body to take into consideration the present unsatisfactory condition of the Established Churches of England and Scotland, and to adopt some such measures as the circumstances of the case warranted. The speeches of Dr. Rainey who proposed the overture, and of Dr. Candlish, who seconded, pointed in the direction of disestablishment; and both proceeded on the ground that it was hopeless to look for any adequate reform of the Church of England from the Evangelical party, and that reform of either Establishment was out of the question.

An attempt has been made by the Rev. Dr. Horatius Bonar and Professor Macgregor, of the Edinburgh Free Church College, to bring about a conference between them and the Rev. Dr. Duff and the Rev. Dr. Charles J. Brown, for the purpose of securing the abandonment of the Mutual Eligibility Scheme, the principal anti-Union leaders having stated that if it be carried by next General Assembly it will lead to the breaking up of the Free Church of Scotland. Dr. Brown, on his own part and that of the Union leaders, declines the conference, and states that his mind is fully and finally made up that it will be the imperative duty of the Assembly at all risks to pass the scheme, as now sanctioned by the Presbyteries, into law. For the sake of peace, he says, the Union leaders are willing to allow the Union Committee to be discharged, and the Union negotiations adjourned sine die. Things have now reached a crisis, and Dr. Begg and his friends are virtually told to do their worst. There can be little doubt that when they

find that the threatened resort to civil courts for the purpose of securing the ecclesiastical fabrics of the Church is a more brutal fulmen they will reconsider their position, and consent to remain a protesting minority. As regards the question of the Union of the English Presbyterian congregations with those of the United Presbyterian Church in England, we are glad to learn that the result of the conference in Liverpool last week between the two committees that met on the subject is of a most satisfactory nature. Things indicate the effecting of the amalgamation by the middle of next year.—*Presbyterian Union*.

Two or three of his own Presbyters lately prosecuted Bishop Wordsworth of St. Andrews for "heresy," &c., before the Bishop's court. It is said that some time ago the Bishop in a charge had strongly condemned the extreme ritualism of some of his clergy. Hence the complaint which the court of Bishops unanimously refused to entertain. They must have been very pronounced Ritualists; in fact, when Bishop Wordsworth would condemn even in the mildest language.

The case of the Rev. Mr. Knight of Dundee has advanced another stage. It was thought that the explanations given would obviate the necessity of all further proceedings. This hope, however, has been disappointed. Mr. Knight strongly adheres to his previously expressed opinion, and the members of Presbytery have felt themselves shut up to the extreme course of libelling him. At last meeting three members were appointed to prepare the libel.

On the 25th of March a very interesting meeting was held in Dalk, a Scotch town, in celebration of the jubilee of the Rev. Dr. McFarlane, Free Church minister of that town.

RITUALISM.—Ritualism, says the *Rock*, is not to be had without paying for it. There is the choir, which in some of the more fashionable churches absorbs its annual £1,000, and there are the flowers (a very expensive item), the dresses, the decorations, &c., all of which cost money. And then comes the heaviest pull of all, the clergy themselves. On this head, Mr. Chope, of St. Augustine's, South Kensington, has just been explaining his views and has proved to his own satisfaction—if not to that of his congregation—"that every Christian man is bound, as a minimum of devotion, to pay over one-tenth of his income to the parson at the church at which worships, and that this, their professional income, the clergy have a right to spend as they please," lay interference being entirely scouted. Now, as there are in England four and a half million of adult men, and as the ministers of religion muster only thirty thousand, Mr. Chope's modest claim is equivalent to his "asking for every clergyman the income of about 150 families!" "Pretty well," as the *Church Times* rather tartly remarks, "for a minimum." And we confess we think so too.

## KNOX CHURCH HAMILTON.

## MISSIONARY MEETING.

There was a very fair attendance in Knox Church at the anniversary services of the Missionary Society of this congregation. The chair was taken by the Pastor the Rev. Wm. Simpson a little before 8 o'clock. After devotional exercises, he stated the object of the meeting, and called upon the Rev. Mr. Grant, of Ingersoll, to give the first address. Mr. Grant referred specially to the collegiate work of the Church. He vindicated the high character of the Canadian ministry, and urged the indebtedness of the Church to the College for some of the best of our ministers to-day. He believed the ministry of the Canada Presbyterian Church would compare favorably with any similar body of men in the world, both in scholarship and pulpit power. He referred specially to the need for a new College building and the proposed plan for the erection of such a building. Fifteen thousand dollars had already been subscribed in Toronto for the purpose, and he hoped Hamilton which had given three Professors to the College would now handsomely do its share in assisting to provide an edifice which would do credit to the Canada Presbyterian Church. His address was full of pleasant humor and practical good sense, and was well received by the meeting. After the choir and congregation had sung another hymn, the Chairman called upon the Rev. Mr. Warden, of Bothwell, to speak on the Home Mission work of the Church. Mr. Warden began by referring to the sacredness attached to the last injunctions of a friend, and stated that Christ's last command was warrant of all mission work. "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." He referred to the danger of giving way to false sentiment, and overlooked the claims of Home Missions in the more romantic interest of the foreign field. He sketched the nature and extent of the work of the Canada Presbyterian Church from the scattered settlements of Quebec to the vast regions of the great Northwest. He referred to the want of anything like proportionate liberality among the wealthier members of the Presbyterian Church, and urged the importance of a denominational spirit among our people, and a more enlarged and elevated missionary zeal. He closed an earnest and eloquent address by urging our obligation to Him who had come from a far distant country to die for us, and who, looking out over the world, pointing to His cross, appealed to His people: "All this I did for you; what will you do for me?" The choir sang the 67th Psalm as an anthem; after which, the Chairman called upon the Rev. Mr. Nisbet, the Missionary among the Indians on the Saskatchewan, and now on a visit to Canada. Mr. Nisbet gave a very interesting outline of the history and results of the Mission; showing especially, that though the fruits had not as yet been very numerous, it was a foundation work and would exercise a mighty influence on the future of that land both in preparing the way for settlement by white population, as well as in the direct results to the native tribes. After the collection, Mr. McColl moved and Mr. Fletcher seconded a vote of thanks to the speakers, and the meeting terminated about half-past ten by the singing of the Missionary Hymn, and the benediction by Mr. Nisbet.—*Hamilton Times*.