

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

\$2.00 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE.

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OFFICE—NO. 5 JORDAN ST., TORONTO.

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Mr. John Imrie, General Agent for THE PRESBYTERIAN, is now in Eastern Ontario pushing the interests of this journal. We commend him to the best offices of ministers and people. Any assistance rendered him in his work will be taken by us as a personal kindness.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 16, 1877.

THANKSGIVING DAY.

THURSDAY, the twenty-second day of November, will be observed throughout the Dominion of Canada as a day of national thanksgiving. The concurrent action of the lieutenant-governors has led to the satisfactory result of one and the same day being thus observed by the entire community. The twenty-second will in consequence be universally observed. There will be a complete suspension of business. It will be a universal holiday. There will be the positive gain to the people of having an additional public holiday at a period of the year when it can be utilized for the purposes of friendly and social intercourse. It will be well if this lead to the appointment of a certain day every year for thanksgiving. The present method of appointing the thanksgiving day might result in there being no such day observed, should our worthy rulers for the time entertain different ideas about thanksgiving, or should a scant harvest, or other circumstances intervene, that would cause a dark and threatening cloud to come over our commercial horizon.

There will always be good reasons for thanking God for the blessings of His providence. There may occur special harvests when it would appear as though the hand of God were upon us. But even then it will be found there is reason for specially thanking God for His goodness. Nay, we should address the throne of grace with all the deeper gratitude that notwithstanding the absence or scarcity of certain blessings, we are still preserved in health and strength, and that our bread and water are made sure. But looking over a large cycle of years—say twenty or thirty—there has not one occurred during which we were not receiving largely of the bounties of Providence. Harvests of wonderful plenty have seemingly occurred with unerring periodicity. At other times, the fruit crop has been unusually great, while it may be that grain or roots have scarcely amounted to an average production. In other years, an

abnormally plenteous hay crop may have been followed by a less than ordinary harvest in the fall. Or it may be that the unpromising yield of the earlier crops has been followed by an unprecedented abundance of the later. But whatever may be the peculiar characteristic of the harvest, it will be found in the average of years there is more than plenty for man and beast. There is consequently ground for thanksgiving every year. The Lord comes every year with His goodness. It would therefore be of advantage to have thanksgiving a fixed and permanent fact on our calendar, and not to leave it any longer at the mere caprice of some official ruler. It would then be indeed the people's day—the day of their own choice—the day of their own appointment to be devoted to the sacred purposes for which a day of thanksgiving is to be set apart.

If ever there was a year calling for special national thanksgiving, it is the one that is now rapidly drawing to a close. For one thing, in point of weather it has been most enjoyable. The snow fell in good time and in such quantity as to make the New Year's holidays a time of hearty enjoyment. The ground was most uniformly covered with its beautiful garment of snow, which while protecting and nourishing the growing wheat, appeared like myriads of brilliant jewels reflecting the sun's rays in sparkling corruscations. Such a February as we had is a rare experience, having united in itself the warmth of genial spring with such tenacity of coldness as to preserve the smooth and well-beaten sleigh roads. It was possible to take long journeys on the sleigh with its merry bell-ringing, without experiencing the biting cold of winter. Such nights for beauty and luminousness as we then had it is impossible to describe. The weather for weeks together was simply glorious. When at length Spring came, and the snow and ice melted out of sight, there followed a summer in every way as remarkable as the previous winter had been. The last summer presented such a perfect balance of rain and sunshine, of cool, refreshing nights and bright warm days, of stirring breezes and celestial calms, that it will long live in our memory as a season of unwonted beauty and pleasure, and be ranked as one most conducive to the growth and development of crops. The consequence is that to-day we are rejoicing in overflowing barns, in such crops of wheat and other grains as make the year an exceptional one, in innumerable signs of a reviving commerce and of times of great prosperity. We have only to think on the different outlook which this single harvest has given to us, to feel the untold blessings with which the present year has been crowned.

Thursday of next week will be a high day in all our churches. Great congregations will gather together all over the land to render praise and thanksgiving unto the Lord, for the rich and countless gifts of His Providence. Many words of cheer will be spoken. Grateful prayers will be offered. Ministers will speak warmly of the thankful spirit, and point to the blessings of the year as reasons for praising God with all our heart. Let us trust that in every congregation there will be presented other and higher considerations for thanksgiving—such as the spiritual prosperity of the people, the growth of the young in

the nurture and admonition of the Lord, the evidences of the divine favor and blessing of the Lord being upon them, the proofs of a growing attention to religious duties and of reverence for Christian ordinances, and also the goodly proportions to which the missionary and benevolent work of the Church has attained.

We trust to hear of the suggestion of the Rev. Dr. Cochrane to our churches to take up a special collection for the debt of Home Missions on that day being universally acted upon, and of the result being worthy of this great scheme.

EDUCATION.

THERE are some people in the world so very unsectarian, so extremely liberal towards all varieties of belief, including infidelity, that they would have their children and the children of others educated only in secular matters, leaving them to educate themselves and make their own choice in the matter of religion. In other words, in order to give Christianity and infidelity fair play they think it is necessary to train up their children in infidelity. This is the class referred to in the following extract:

"The question of the retention of the Bible in the public schools has developed some astonishing theories. The most remarkable of them is what is known as the 'absolute secular' theory. That is, that everything of a religious nature should be carefully weeded out of the schools, and that the education given in them should be made absolutely secular. This theory was invented by those who advocated the removal of the Bible to meet the exigencies of their case; and it has a specious appearance of liberality and logical force which takes captive many minds. There is no better test of any principle, however, than to see how it works, and the working of this theory has just been shown in Chicago, as we learn from the 'Advance.' It was proposed at a meeting of the Board of Education to adopt Guyot's Physical Geography as a text-book in the schools. The book is one of acknowledged excellence, and no objection could be urged against it on that score, nor could any member suggest one of more value. But it was objected to that it taught 'theology' because, forsooth, it spoke here and there of the world as the creation of God! Any one who has enough of logical training to draw a simple inference must see that this objection was a perfectly valid one, if the secular theory of education be the true one. By his own principles the secularist is bound to insist that the very name of God is to be expurgated from all school text-books. But it is to be hoped that every one of our readers has enough common sense to see that, though logical, the inference is supremely absurd. Why, the choicest passages of English literature must be excluded from our school readers; a scene from Shakespeare or a passage from Paradise lost would be as objectionable as Prof. Guyot's book. Then the classics must be expurgated; for if no reference can be made to Jehovah, surely it would be unfair to let Jupiter's name remain. And what would become of Æschylus and Demosthenes, of Virgil and Cicero under this treatment? This is 'secularism' run to seed. We can see but one outcome of the secular theory. Practically it amounts to this: The public schools must not teach religion, but they may teach no religion as much as they choose."

On the other hand some people are so very sectarian, so very much afraid of having their children led away from their own denomination that they will not allow the teacher of a public school to tell the story of a Saviour's love to his pupils, or to ask them a question when they read the Bible as he would do when they read one of their secular class-books. Of course, the teacher, if a Christian at all, must belong to some denomination. That is just where the trouble comes in. The great cause of terror is that if he be a Methodist, he will in a short time have all the children attending "protracted meetings;" or if a Presbyterian, that he will poison their minds with his "old, rotten Calvinism;" or if an Episcopalian, that he will soon have the Bishop round to hold a general confirmation; or if a Baptist, that he will certainly have the whole school in the nearest pond before summer is over. So the teacher, having been duly gagged by a cast-iron programme, is set to