

Inaugural Editorial

January 1876

To the members and adherents of The Presbyterian Church in Canada throughout the wide Dominion as well as to others in distant lands to whom these presents shall come, we make our best bow and beg leave to introduce ourselves with the homely salutation of "A Happy New Year!" We hope that the relationships on which the *Presbyterian Record* is about to enter may prove agreeable and profitable to its readers; that the acquaintanceship now begun may ripen into closer friendship and confidence and that in some small degree at least this magazine may be instrumental in promoting the interests of the church and the cause of the Redeemer in our land.

Only, let not the enthusiasm of kind friends and supporters lead them to expect too much at our hands and we will do the best we can to make the *Record* such a medium of communication as the church desires it should be. And, let it be remembered that as a literary journal the RECORD must of necessity occupy a subordinate position. It cannot take the place of the daily and weekly newspaper but must rather look to them itself as valuable sources of information; and it must yield the right of way to more ambitious monthlies and quarterlies. But in its humble sphere, it will try to realize that it *has* a mission and an important work to do.

There is much in the review of the past year to call forth thankfulness. It was a time of unusual public tranquility. The world of the Lord has free course in many lands, and was glorified in the conversion of sinners and Christian people in our own and other countries were brought under the influences of religious revivals such as the world has seldom seen. Calling to mind but one of many significant changes that transpired during the year 1875—the annexation of Fiji to the British Empire—may it not be said in very deed that Christianity *has* received the "heathen for its inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for a possession." What shall we say of the goodness of God to our own Church? What can we say but this—"The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad." In the union so long looked for and now so happily accomplished, "He crowneth the year with his goodness."

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James Croil, 210 St. James St. Montreal.

*The following is a letter just received by one of
our Sabbath Schools from a little Indian orphan*

—SEALKOTE ORPHANAGE, 10th July, 1875

MY DEAR SUPPORTERS,

Many thanks for your kind letter which I have received. It was very good of you to think of me and as I want to write you and am not able to do so just yet I have asked my kind mistress to write down all I wish to say. I am very happy in my school and my dear mistress is very kind to me. Our school hours are in the morning, from half past five to half past nine. I am in the 3rd class and have to study with six others; our head-master gives us a Bible lesson for 1/2 an hour every day before closing school; he is a native Christian. We then go and have our breakfast and assemble again in the school room when the bell rings at 10 o'clock. Our mistress conducts prayers and then hears us repeat our catechism and also hears us read from some pretty story book; at present we are reading about the good women the Bible speaks of; our lesson today will be about Ruth and Naomi after which we all sit down to our work. I can make all my own clothes and at present I am learning how to knit stockings; we are also taught how to cook as we are obliged to do all household work in our own homes. On Sunday we go to the Mission Church which is quite close to hear what our dear Saviour has done for us and what we ought to do for all his goodness to us. We have no instrument in our Church, but we form the choir and one of my companions who is named Jane leads the singing. How nice it must be to see the snow on the ground! We never see it as we live in the plains; we have had very hot weather but today it is much cooler; it having rained this morning. And now I must close as I think I have told you everything. I pray God may bless you all for having us taught His Holy word and trying to make us His children and with love and respects to all my dear supporters.

I remain your gratefully little Indian sister,

ESTHER

The Sabbath School

As nearly as we can estimate, the Union brought *seventy five thousand* Sabbath school children and *seven thousand five hundred* teachers into connection with The Presbyterian Church in Canada. Recognizing the importance of the Sabbath school in itself and how essential it is to the well-being, if not to the very existence of the church, it will be our endeavour from time to time to advocate its claims, to furnish information respecting its progress and to offer such suggestions as shall occur to us or to others of larger experience for increasing its usefulness and efficiency. As opportunity occurs we shall esteem it a pleasure to have a few words with the children in a quiet littler corner of the *Record* all for themselves. We are sorry we cannot hold out the inducement of the beautiful pictures they find in their own Sunday school magazines but we shall do our best to

interest them always remembering that they have the good taste and the good sense to like short addresses very much better than long ones. We do want to introduce ourselves to the children and here is our first salutation to them.

DEAR CHILDREN, we wish you too a very Happy New Year and many returns for the season! While you delight to sing with heart and voice, "I'm glad I'm in this army" your teachers are so glad to meet you every Sunday and they are very sorry when you are prevented by sickness or any other cause from being present in your class. Think of this and how pleased the dear Saviour will be to listen to your songs of praise in the Sabbath school and make up your minds that you will try to be more regular in your attendance this year than ever before and that you will have your lessons better prepared and "if at first you don't succeed, Try, try again."

A FAIR REPRESENTATION OF TALENT

Miscellanea

The Strength of Presbyterianism

Recent events have directed more than ordinary attention to the position and prospects of the Presbyterian body throughout the world. In the first place, there have been the schemes for union, promoted in the United States, in Canada and in Great Britain; and in the next place, there has been the little excitement arising from a sort of internecine struggle in several places on various questions and foolish and unjustifiable assaults which have been made upon it by opponents outside.

No religious denomination occupies a prouder position or has before it a brighter prospect than The Presbyterian Church in Canada at the present time. For a number of years past it has steadily increased in number and strength, until now, in its various ramifications, it is one of the largest and most influential of all the Protestant churches in the world. At the Presbyterian Council held in London, England, on July 1st, to devise plans for a general confederation, there were representatives present from different Presbyterian churches, whose united pastors amounted to 13,199 and with whom there were not less than 15,116 congregations. In addition to these there were about 4,950 congregations, with at least 2,741 ministers not represented on that occasion. According to these tables there are thus a total of 15,940 ministers and 17,857 congregations. In these there is a fair representation of the talent and wealth and influence of the different countries; and it is therefore easy to form an idea of what a powerful organization it is and of what an amazing influence it may and does exert.

The history of the Presbyterian Church has ever been characterized by an unshrinking maintenance of evangelical principles; and a vigorous, enterprising spirit in the promotion of education and Christian missions. No community has done more to check the progress of infidelity and to counteract the errors of Popery; whilst in Sunday schools

and colleges and by home and foreign missions it has and is still promoting the diffusion of those principles by which alone society can be reformed. In the united forms which are now being brought about it will have still larger resources and greater facilities for fulfilling its evangelical mission and it will be cause for profound regret if through any feelings of pride or pique the beauty of the union should be marred or the efficiency of the body weakened. These are times when, above all others, unity and energy are needed on the part of the churches; and to secure these in the great Presbyterian body in a more eminent degree and thereby to render it a still stronger and more efficient organization every member should be willing to forego personal and party considerations and to consider only that by which the general interests of the body can be best promoted. *Scottish American.*

Montreal, 1st January, 1876

The statement made in the *Prospectus* respecting the price of the RECORD was somewhat ambiguous we must allow. To remove all misapprehensions, we beg leave now to state that *any number of copies will be sent to one address for 25 cents per annum – free of postage.* If that is not cheap enough, we give it up. Single subscribers must pay 60 cents. As a rule, we cannot afford to pay "the usual commissions" to canvassers and agents, but we hope that in every congregation some one will be found to work for us and further our interests—for the love they bear to the Church.

A large number of orders have already been received for which we record our best thanks and we take encouragement from the kind expressions, which accompanied them in many instance. A still larger number, no doubt, are either on the way or "under consideration;" but as we are only printing *thirty thousand* copies for January, some who may be waiting "just to see how we look" are in danger of being disappointed—not with our good looks, we hope, but what will be a great misfortune for them—in not being able by and by to get a copy of the first number for love or money. If any are expecting us to offer prizes for the largest list of subscribers, they too will be disappointed. It is only veterans in the service who can hold out such tempting inducements as Splendid Books and Chromos and Silver-plated spoons!

We have sent a few specimen numbers to Ministers of the Church whose orders had not reached us at the time of dispatching this January number and will gladly do the same for any one else on application but from this time forth we shall discard all old dispatch lists and regulate our circulation strictly by our own *bona fide* subscription list.

Contributors will bear with us if, reminding them of the numerous claims on our limited space, we ask them to condense their communications as much as possible and occasional *Correspondents* will please bear in mind that a cardinal point with the *Record* is—"There will be no place found in its columns for controversy". ☞