

## THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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TORONTO, FRIDAY, JANUARY 13, 1882.

WE would direct the attention of all concerned to the Rev. Dr. Reid's communication, in another column, regarding alleged errors in the General Assembly's Minutes. The utmost care ought to be exercised in securing the accuracy of the returns before they are transmitted to Presbytery Clerks.

THE "Herald and Presbyter," Cincinnati, has been asked to give its opinion of the propriety of electing ruling elders as Moderators of Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly. Our contemporary says "no" most emphatically, and gives as its principal reason that though "ministers and elders have equal authority in our Church Courts, they have not equal ability." This proves too much if it proves anything. Have all ministers "equal ability?" There are ministers in the American Church who could no more preside over the great American Assembly, than they could steer a steamship through a cyclone. If want of equal ability disqualifies elders, it disqualifies ministers as well. There are greater and less among ministers as well as among elders.

THE "Christian at Work" thinks it a great pity that a Connecticut church and its pastor should have differed and separated, because they could not agree upon the form of invitation to the communion service. The pastor insisted on saying, "All who sincerely love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, and trust in Him for salvation, are invited to meet with us at the table of our common Lord." The people thought the invitation should be in this form: "All members of Evangelical churches in good and regular standing, providentially with us, are cordially invited to sit with us at the Lord's table." The people were undoubtedly right. If coming to the Lord's table is to be left entirely to the "individual conscience," there is an end to church order and discipline. Guiteau declares that he is a most exemplary Christian, and he says he committed adultery on principle and "removed" Garfield for patriotic and inspired reasons. It won't do to leave too much to the "individual conscience." Those men who have no conscience will be the first to come forward.

A BAPTIST contemporary says Guiteau was once a somewhat active member of Calvary church (Baptist), New York. While connected with this body he borrowed \$100 from his minister, which he of course forgot to pay. Our contemporary says:

"It is not strange that the creature got into the church, and it is a wonder that, in this day of loose ordaining councils, he did not get into the ministry. Had there been anything in the pulpit to gratify his inordinate vanity, he doubtless would have turned up somewhere along the line of his erratic course as a preacher."

Very likely he would, and had he come over to Canada as an Evangelist, and palmed himself off as one of Moody and Sankey's assistants, he might have got engagements here in Evangelistic work. He did act as usher at the Moody and Sankey meetings at Chicago, and made himself fussy about various religious movements. If Guiteau had gone to a church during a time of high excitement, and told a plausible story about his connection with Moody, thus

influencing the people, it might have cost a minister his position to keep him out. It is high time for all respectable churches to adopt a conservative policy in such matters.

THE Rev. A. B. Simpson began his work among the non-church-going people of New York on Sabbath evening last. A New York journal alludes to the first meeting in this way:

"He began this work yesterday evening with a service at the Academy of Music. He said that he wished to make the Academy a Sunday evening resort for the half a million of this city who have no church to attend. But it was noticeable last night that no poor folks were there, and the audience was composed of people in comfortable circumstances, all of whom seemed able to afford the luxury of a pew."

Quite so. And the same would be true if a meeting gathered in a hall in any city in America. The poor can go to church now if they are so inclined, and if not so inclined they won't go to a hall. Any fairly good preacher, with the aid of advertising and music, could gather a congregation in Shaftesbury Hall in this city. The poor, however, would not go there; for the most part the congregation would be composed of rounders, ecclesiastical dead-beats, people who wish something new, refugees from discipline, general sore-heads and grievance-mongers. People who wish to go to church can find any number of places to hear the Gospel, no matter how poor they are, in any city in America.

## CHEAP PREACHING.

REFERRING to a paragraph which lately appeared in these columns, our esteemed neighbour, the "Christian Guardian," says we indulged in a "little fling at Methodism." Not so, neighbour. No "fling" little or big, goes from this "quarter" against *Methodism*. For *Methodism* we have the greatest respect and esteem, and for the "Guardian" and its accomplished editor the most kind and neighbourly feelings. Nevertheless, it is, we believe, a fact that when that class of men—found in some of our congregations—who want "cheap preaching" are asked for their pew rent, they too frequently answer by saying that they can get sittings for a less sum in the neighbouring Methodist Church. When they go over to the Methodist Church, of course they do not tell the Methodist officials that they have come in search of cheap preaching, but they do sometimes tell the Presbyterians they have left that they have got it. Perhaps they don't always speak the truth about the matter. We are quite aware that our Methodist friends, as the "Guardian" says, draw heavily on good Methodists for "missionary, educational, and church-building enterprises," but a man in search of cheap preaching has no fear of these or any other enterprises. He can give a cent on all ordinary occasions, and on special occasions he can double his contribution.

As regards the admission of persons leaving our Church without certificates to membership in the Methodist Church, we have nothing more to say after the "Guardian's" explanation. If they are received, not on the ground of their former connection with ours or any other church, but because they have become "convinced of sin, and converted," we are quite satisfied. We are more than satisfied—we are grateful that they have become converted, and specially grateful that their conversion frequently takes place so soon.

We have no idea that any of our readers belong to the class who are in search of cheap preaching; but in the hope that this paragraph may meet the eye of some who do, we quote the manly words in which the "Guardian" gives its estimate of such characters:

"The kind of people that are referred to are not worth making any such effort to secure as attendants; and if the Presbyterian Church has lost any stray sheep, that have gone off in search of cheap pastures, we assure our neighbour we have seen nothing of them in this quarter; and, what is more, we have no special anxiety for the patronage of religious tramps of that class."

Nor have we; and if we find any Methodist tramp hunting around our Presbyterian fields in search of cheap pastures, THE PRESBYTERIAN will head them off.

## THE MUSKOKA SUFFERERS.

VERY shortly after the fires in Muskoka and Michigan took place, we adverted to the fact that the greater extent and more widely-spread ruin of those in the latter region had apparently made Canadians think little or nothing of what had been suffered by

their own countrymen in many of the back settlements of our own Province. We at the same time urged that while it was exceedingly desirable to help those who had lost their all in the neighbouring republic, it was but decent and becoming, in the first place, to look at home. We are glad to find that this feeling has become general, from its being discovered that there are only too many in Muskoka and elsewhere throughout Ontario who need very greatly the speedy and liberal assistance of those who have suffered no such losses. It will be simply disgraceful to our civilization and patriotism, to say nothing of our Christianity, if the needs of those poor sufferers be not supplied in a liberal and brotherly fashion. An appeal was, in the course of the summer, made through our columns for assistance to the members of a struggling congregation in the Muskoka region, in order to enable them to pay off a mortgage upon their church property. That appeal was responded to in so prompt and liberal a manner that more than double of what was needed was very soon raised. Will it be different when the object is to save many poor families from actual starvation in the midst of a Canadian winter? We shall not believe this till hard facts make it impossible for us to do anything else. There are committees of reliable persons already formed for the receipt and distribution of the gifts of the benevolent, so that it is not necessary for us to volunteer our help in the matter of collecting. But if any find it more convenient to forward their donations to us, we shall take good care to hand them to the proper parties, and acknowledge the different amounts in our columns. If, by the way, the gentleman who forwarded from the post-office of Hollin \$2 for Emsdale church, and \$3 as a contribution to a Sabbath Defence Fund, will allow us to hand over the latter amount to the Muskoka sufferers, we shall be glad. If not, will he be kind enough to tell us how to dispose of it, as we have not heard of the organization of any Sabbath Defence Association? It is an old and trite remark that "they give twice who give quickly." Will our readers bear this in mind; and as they look round upon their own many and varied comforts, will they do something for those who, last August, lost, in a good many cases, their all, and who, while not unfrequently both fellow-Christians and fellow-Presbyterians, are in every case fellow-countrymen at least, and have, therefore, good reason to expect that at such a time Canadians will very practically shew what they think about "blood being thicker than water?"

## IS IT FAIR? IS IT CHRISTIAN?

IN the life of Samuel Budgett, the Bristol "Successful Merchant," there is a sentiment recorded which we have always thought intolerably hard, and anything therefore but of the highest type of either practical benevolence or spiritual Christianity. It is to the effect that, in making a bargain, Mr. Budgett recognized and acted on the principle that he was simply to think for himself, and let the other party to the bargain do the same thing. "If," says Mr. Budgett, "I am convinced that the proposed arrangement is for my advantage, I have no business to consider whether it is also for that of 'the other man.' Let him see to that. I can't do the thinking and planning for both sides." We don't give the very words, but the principle recognized and acted on we have correctly indicated. We know that such a rule of action is generally held to be so sound and so evident as to have passed into the position of a moral axiom, on which any number of professed Christians are acting every day of their lives. And yet, when taken as a universally applicable guide, we can think of few things more utterly unchristian and detestable. The hard, merciless skinflint, and the shrewd, far-seeing, astute man of business, who has a plausible tongue and the power of dexterous management, with many others of every intermediate grade, may all plead in favour of their legalized robbery that they knew the bargain was for *their own* advantage, and it was not their business to consider whether or not it might be equally good for the other side. "They thought for themselves, and left others to do the same." Indeed! And that, therefore, would fairly permit them to take advantage of the ignorance, or simplicity, or mental weakness, or business inexperience, or of fifty other things which gave them a mighty advantage! Nay, it would justify the man who took advantage of his neighbour's necessity to get possession of his goods at almost no price at all.