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TORONTO, FRIDAY, MARCH 17, 1882.

MEMBERS of the Synod of Hamilton and London who intend being present at the approaching meeting at Ingersoll, should make their intention known to the Committee *at once*, as requested by cards which have been sent to them, in order that sufficient accommodation may be provided.

DR. COCHRANE requests us to say that certificates entitling members of Synod of Hamilton and London to travel at reduced rates have been mailed to all the ministers on the roll of Synod, as published in the Minutes of last Assembly. The elders' certificates have been sent to the ministers, who will hand them to their respective elders. If any have not received them, they will please communicate at once, and certificates will be sent.

PREACHING is often hard work. Many a weary, overworked minister enters his pulpit when he is physically unfit to deliver his message. The work, however, must be done. The hour has come, and the man must appear whether in working trim or not. Still, preaching the Gospel is the most glorious work that mortal man has ever been permitted to engage in, and there is no finer picture of the preacher at his work than the following by Bishop Simpson: *"His throne is the pulpit; he stands in Christ's stead; his message is the Word of God; around him are immortal souls; the Saviour, unseen, is beside him; the Holy Ghost broods over the congregation; angels gaze upon the scene, and heaven and hell await the issue."* A preacher who manages to keep this picture continually before his mind will be likely to preach well, and have much comfort and success in his work.

THE "Globe" had a pen-and-ink picture the other day of three different kinds of preachers, supposed by the writer to be representative. Our neighbour the "Guardian" thinks a fourth should have been added. We could easily name preachers in Canada—some very good ones too—who don't belong to any of the classes described. What we intended to say, however, is that some one should now draw pictures of some of the different classes of *hearers* that are found in our churches. First on the list should be the class that have long since abandoned, if they ever had, the idea that people should go to church to worship God. Preachers sometimes get far away from the idea of their text, but we doubt if the "local brother" who said Paul wrote his epistles in plain Saxon, got any wider of the mark than many are in their views of church-going. Now that the preachers have been sketched and classified, let us have a classification of hearers.

ONE portentously foolish English lord a short time ago told the Hertfordshire labourers that if they would help the landlords to protect the land, they (the landlords to wit) would in their turn help the labourers to protect their beer. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, the well-known and recognised witty leader of the total abstainers, could not allow this to pass. He accordingly, at a late great Local Option meeting, made merry, as he well might, by manufacturing "cries" for the next election such as would meet the taste of Lord Cranbourn, the foolish speaker of the foolish speech. The following are some of his suggestions: "Land and Liquor," "Farming and Fuddling," "Ale and the Aristocracy," "The Peerage and the Beerage," "Rum and the Residium," etc. And yet even in Canada how much better than Lord Cranbourn are only too many who ought to have more sense, and besides have not the excuse for their folly that they were born in the purple or the peerage?

SOME one writes that no hearer has a right to criticize his minister unless he prays for him. True, but the most critical hearers, as a rule, are those who never pray for themselves, their minister, or anyone else. Men of prayer are never captious, heartless, snarling critics. Your nibbling critic, who cannot be pleased with any kind of minister long, and who finds some fault with every kind of sermon, is generally a hollow, heartless hypocrite; often he is a man that has failed at everything he has tried, and has become soured. Some church-going people turn censorious critics simply to attract a little attention and get a little cheap notoriety. They can't get any notice by doing good, so they try to attract attention by making miserable little snarling remarks about the pulpit. If the really Christian people in every congregation would form a Society for the purpose of stamping out fault-finders, whose sole business it is to do mischief, they would confer a blessing on their congregations. Intelligent, fair criticism is a good thing; censorious, unfair, ignorant fault-finding, often inspired by personal malice, is a nuisance and a curse.

THE ecclesiastical parliaments will soon meet. First comes the Synod of Hamilton and London, then the other Synods, and the Assembly in June. In June, too, the conferences and other ecclesiastical bodies meet. Might it not be a good move if members of these bodies "who have a thing to say" would get a condensing apparatus of some kind, and practise compressing a little before the parliaments meet? Some people, by no means slanderers, say it is impossible for a minister to be brief. We do happen to know that clergymen write rather lengthy at times. That part of THE PRESBYTERIAN which furnishes matter under the heading of "Our Contributors" has, we are afraid, occasionally shown that very minister in the Church has not a condensing machine in his study. Brethren, get a condenser, and use it on Synod and Assembly speeches, and if sermons are occasionally put through it may not do them any harm. There has been a great improvement of late years in the Assembly in this regard, and a little more condensing would not be a bad thing. A good speaker can say a great deal in ten minutes if he has his points well prepared.

THE MISSIONARY INCOME FOR THE YEAR.

THE financial year is drawing to a close, and much still requires to be done in order to make the different funds at all adequate to meet the claims upon them. We are quite aware that most of the congregations allocate their missionary gatherings about this time, and that the sums thus apportioned have, in a good many cases, not as yet come into the hands of the treasurers of the Church. But making allowance for all this, there is still some considerable ground for anxiety, and great room for the liberal-souled devising liberal things, so that the Church may meet all its engagements and be able to take advantage of the many and most inviting openings that are being presented on every side.

The past year has been an especially prosperous one with many. Some who, at the beginning of last year, were comparatively poor and struggling, are now positively wealthy; and others, who have been very well to do, have during the past twelve months added greatly to their store. What are many of these favoured ones rendering back unto the Lord, from whom—in words at any rate—they acknowledge they have received it all? In too many cases it would be difficult to say. One thing is certain. They have not given, and have not the slightest intention of giving, either the tenth or the twentieth of their incomes. Aye, or even a very much smaller percentage than either. The other day we overheard a worthy, good man, when coming from church, saying to his neighbour that he had bought a property some short time before for two thousand dollars, and had just sold it for ten. Let us see. That would be four hundred per cent. of profit at any rate. Wonder how much of that, as a thank-offering, found its way into the treasury of the Lord. Is such a solitary instance of prosperity or luck? Everyone knows the reverse. There are not a few, not only in Toronto, but all over the Province and over the Dominion—good staunch Presbyterians—who, at the very lowest calculation, have within the year made their five, ten, fifteen, twenty thousand dollars, and in some cases a great deal more

than that. In how many cases has the cause of truth and righteousness felt the benefit from the reflex influence of such prosperity? It is not for us to determine. We leave it with the consciences of the prosperous ones to say. Only this is evident, that the benevolent and missionary funds of the different sections of the Christian Church show no such "boom" as that which is so conspicuous in other spheres.

HALF-DAY HEARERS.

THOSE who are inclined to take an unfavourable view of the present condition of the Christian Church in all its branches, are often found crying out, among other things, about the general prevalence of half day hearing, and the consequently languid and supposedly dying interest in the services of the sanctuary. Now, before going further in the consideration of this matter, it might be well to settle whether or not there is any greater amount of this shortcoming, or sin, than there was in those former days which are so frequently referred to as models to be remembered and mentioned with regret. That there is a large amount of non-church-going is notorious, but we are inclined to think that the absence of reliable statistics, and the natural tendency on the part of many to exaggerate the excellences of the past lie very greatly at the root of much that is said about the modern degeneracy in this respect. Was there ever a time in the history of the Church in which the non-church-goers were not a very formidably large proportion of the population, both relatively and absolutely? We more than doubt if there ever was. And then as to half-day hearers, must there not necessarily be always a very large number of such in all churches? The different members of many a family have always had to take their turns in staying at home, and have, in so doing, been as directly and as fully serving God as when attending public worship. Then, even apart from this, may it not be found that many more who may have only been once at public worship, have been present at two or more religious services, and have been taking a very active part in these, so that they may not only be excused, but justified, in spending the evening of the Lord's day with the younger members of their families? We are never to forget that many fathers are all the week to a great extent strangers to their own children. They are away to their regular employments before the young ones are out of bed, and in many cases they have not returned when these little folks are again in the land of dreams. The various church and school meetings on Sabbath morning and throughout the day tend also to keep father and children so far apart. In many cases there is the bustle to get ready for Sabbath morning school; after which there is church service, and after a hurried interval there is often Sabbath school again. Well, what is left for the cultivation of family life and family religion but what remains of the Sabbath evening? Is it not then part of many a Christian father's duty, and his privilege as well, to spend those few remaining hours with the children, of whom he necessarily sees and knows far too little? We can easily believe that very often it is, even though, in order to its being done, attendance on the second public service may have to be sacrificed. Will any one say that even to hint at such a thing is to introduce a loose and dangerous principle, to the adoption of which at any rate many are only too prone? We cannot see this. Oh! but then, it is said, those people who don't attend church in the evening, do not spend the time in any such fashion as that just indicated. How do you know that they don't? They might at any rate do so, and in a good many cases we are convinced they do.

Yes, but it may be urged that, after making the necessary allowance for all such, is there not still a very large number who, without any reasonable excuse, never manage to attend church more than once, while they never bother with Sabbath schools or with any other work either of religion or mercy? We make no doubt that there are; but is the number of these within the pale of the Church greater than it was thirty or forty or fifty years ago? Those who say so had better give their reasons for what they allege. When was the attendance on church services better in Toronto than it is to-day? When better all over Ontario, taking the relative entire population into account? We acknowledge that a good many wander