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## INTERNATIONAL LESSON SCHEMES

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## The Canada Presbyterian.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2nd, 1892.

THE *Interior* thinks that "as a rule the charities of the dead are fatal to the benevolence of the living." That may be, but when was a Church or charitable institution known to refuse a bequest? People always take the money from the dead and allow the benevolence of the living to look out for itself.

IN ten years nearly one hundred and sixty millions of passengers were carried on the New York Central Railway and only twenty-four persons were killed. Had as many people travelled as many miles on foot or on horseback or in carriages, probably ten times as many would have met death by accident. Travelling by rail is the safest as well as the cheapest and most comfortable mode.

DESPITE all their protests the High Church leaders in England are assimilating their practices as nearly as may be to those of the Roman Catholic Church. They are now urging the offering of prayers for the dead. In the papers that represent their views lengthy arguments in favour of this practice are making their appearance. It will soon be next to impossible to distinguish between Romanism and High Church Anglicanism.

THE Christian Endeavour movement is beginning to make its influence felt. Both in Canada and in the United States it has entered a strong protest against keeping the Chicago World's Fair open on Sabbath. In taking this position the members of this organization have only done what is expected of them. It is well to strengthen the hands of those who are labouring to secure the due observance of the Lord's Day, and the Christian Endeavourers may be relied on to stand firm in their adhesion to the principles they profess.

DR. PARKHURST, of the Madison Square Church, preached a ringing sermon the other Sabbath on municipal iniquity. Among other good things he said:—

Sin never gets tired; never is low-spirited; has the courage of its convictions; never fritters away its power and its genius pettifogging over side issues. What voluminous lessons the saints might learn from the sinners!

Yes, the number of lessons that saints might learn from sinners would fill a large book. The readiness with which sinners spend money on vice contrasted with the difficulty of extracting money from some saints for good purposes would supply a topic for a sermon longer than Dr. Parkhurst's. The unanimity with which sinners sin contrasted with the manner in which saints quarrel about the best

way to put down sin would furnish another good subject.

THE question of opening or closing the Chicago Exposition on Sabbath is not yet decided. A deep interest is being taken in its settlement and much earnestness is displayed. Several State Legislatures have decided that their grant is conditional on the closing of the exhibition on Sabbath. New York State and Kentucky Legislatures have resolved that their respective grants will only be given on that condition. Our Canadian Parliament has the power to determine that the Canadian exhibit can be kept closed on that day, and it is hoped that they will see their way to do so.

THE *Herald and Presbyter* has this to say about the cause of some clerical shipwrecks:—

There is a great temptation to young men in the pulpit of to-day to appear brilliant. Brilliance has its rewards. And so, some men who are at heart sound on the real questions of theology, and of the word of God, allow themselves to make use of expressions apparently contradicting the truth. They may go on to make qualifying statements and to present the truth in a proper form to their congregations in the course of the sermon. But the startling expression is reported and headlined, and the minister's influence goes, for the large part, to give comfort to the enemies of the truth. Many men have been led on and on by degrees from such a point as this to shipwreck themselves and others with them. It is too great a price to pay for the bauble reputation of originality. True, but why in the name of common sense is it necessary to be heterodox in order to be brilliant? Is there not enough of undoubted truth within the covers of the Bible on which any preacher can exercise his abilities no matter how brilliant they are. We rather incline to the opinion that a considerable number of the men who make shipwreck are consumed with a love of popularity, and not being able on their merits to get "reported and headlined," indulge in a little sensational heterodoxy to attract attention. The lack of brilliancy is what troubles some of them.

FEW preachers had more to contend against than Spurgeon had in the earlier years of his ministry. When he began to make a little stir in London he was caricatured and ridiculed by the press and the wits of the city. The *Times* was pleased to say that he "looked like a butcher boy in full mourning." Of course the most imbecile curate in that ecclesiastical establishment in which imbecility always abounds looked upon him with patronizing contempt, if he condescended to look at all. For years he was deluged with anonymous letters, some of them ill-natured and scurrilous, and some kindly though critical. He was abused on both sides of the Atlantic because he smoked cigars. The young preacher went on with his work. If these people thought sneering at him was the best work they could do for the Lord he was determined to do some better work. He stood bravely at his post and the Lord stood with him. The world knows the result. It is doubtful if any minister of fair ability and real working power was ever permanently injured by abuse. If he has the sense and the ability to go right on, as a rule he gets on. People who make a specialty of abusing clergymen or obstructing their work are seldom formidable for long. Something nearly always happens to show them up. Providence generally attends to people of that kind.

DR. CUYLER thinks the following is about as *Spurgeonic* as any passage Spurgeon ever delivered:—

When a man gets to cutting down sin, paring down depravity and making little of future punishment, let him no longer preach to you. Some modern divines whittle away the Gospel to the small end of nothing. They make our divine Lord to be a sort of blessed nobody; they bring down salvation to mere salvability, make certainties into probabilities and treat verities as mere opinions. When you see a preacher making the Gospel small by degrees and miserably less, till there is not enough of it left to make soup for a sick grasshopper, get you gone. . . . As for me I believe in the colossal; a need deep as hell and grace as high as heaven. I believe in a pit that is bottomless and a heaven that is topless. I believe in an infinite God and an infinite atonement, infinite love and mercy, an everlasting covenant ordered in all things and sure, of which the substance and the reality is an infinite Christ.

Anybody familiar with Spurgeon's style could easily identify the foregoing before he had read it half through. One of Spurgeon's strongest points was his positiveness. He believed something and believed it with all the strength of his nature. Those people who wake up every morning feeling that everything is an open question never impress their fellow-men very much. To have any force a man

must have convictions. Your "nice man" who smiles and says "yes, yes" to everything soon becomes feckless and insipid.

MR. WOOD, M.P.P. for North Brant, has introduced a bill, the object of which is to prevent municipalities from giving bonuses to manufacturing concerns. Not long ago a law was passed limiting the powers of municipalities in this respect, and now it is proposed by Mr. Wood to deprive the people of the power altogether. It does seem humiliating that in this age of schools, and colleges, and churches, and newspapers, and lectures, and literary associations, and dozens of agencies that are supposed to educate the people, they cannot be trusted to take care of their own money. One cannot help asking, are we, after all, any wiser or more intelligent than our fathers? One thing is certain. Scores of municipalities would be richer to-day if this bill had passed when the bonus business began. What a howl there would have been about interfering with the freedom of the subject if years ago any Government had enacted a law forbidding the giving of a bonus. There is no one thing plainer than the fact that Ontario people have quite as many privileges in Church and State as they know how to use for their advantage. Any number of towns have helped to build railways to carry off their own trade. Too many Presbyterian congregations have called the poorest preacher they have heard in a long vacancy, and then in a year or two turned on the unfortunate man because he had not the qualities they imagined he had. Popular government in either Church or State is a long way from being a remedy for every ill.

SINCE the Emperor William has presided over the affairs of Germany there have been lively times. Every little while some new excitement arises. The impetuosity of the energetic Kaiser produces startling results. He is often indiscreet of speech and gives serious offence to various classes of his subjects. He has inspired some measures of a radical character whose objects may be excellent, but the arbitrary manner in which they are pressed inevitably rouses opposition. He has urged the repression of immorality, and he is anxious to secure the religious education of the people. This latter measure has provoked considerable resistance, which does not come exclusively from agnostic sources, but also from those who strongly object to State interference with religious matters. It is apparent that the effort to pass the religious educational measure will be vigorously opposed. The formidable riots in Berlin last week have occasioned considerable alarm. Originating with the unemployed in their desire for the authorities to provide work for them, there is little doubt that socialistic agitators took advantage of the opportunity to create serious disturbance. To all appearance matters have quieted down, and it is probable that repressive measures will be taken to prevent a repetition of these threatening and lawless outbreaks. Prince Bismarck may find the opportunity for which he has been waiting in his retirement.

SOME of our Presbyterian contemporaries across the line are protesting vigorously against what they call High Church Presbyterianism. The theory of High Church Presbyterianism is the "omnipotence of the General Assembly." Reduced to practice, this theory puts all power in the Church into the hands of a few men. A large majority of the members of any Assembly are new men. Many of them never sat in a Supreme Court before, and are ignorant of even the ordinary modes of doing business. A few members, officials of various kinds and leading men, or at least men who wish to lead, are present in every Assembly. Partly by scheming and partly by force of circumstances they soon get the control as well as the run of the whole business. Even as good natured a journal as the *New York Evangelist* describes these members as "men who are fond of control, ambitious of influence, and by nature given to intrigue." That is not a pleasant description to be compelled to give of a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus, but the most unpleasant thing about it may be its truth. Our contemporary adds that complaints are frequent about "political methods obtaining in the Assembly." Quite likely the people who practice political methods in the Assembly are the loudest in condemning the political methods that prevail outside. Undoubtedly there is a tendency towards centralization of power in every Assembly. In the nature