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The Canada Presbyterian.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON, MANAGER.

TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 1894.

JUST why people assembled to protest against Romish aggression and defend Protestantism should register under assumed names and addresses and sit behind closed doors, is one of those things few people can explain.

IT was rather rough on an ex-alderman of Toronto to refuse him admission to the Protestant Protective Association Convention because he had taken an office from Sir John Thompson. The number of people who would not take an office these hard times is small. Perhaps the Toronto man was not the only member of the order that would gladly take a good thing.

THE French papers that abuse Mr. Papineau for turning Presbyterian are doing a narrow, stupid thing. Perhaps they might reply that some Protestants abuse Sir John Thompson for turning Catholic. True. And both are wrong. Mr. Papineau had a perfect right to turn Protestant if he wished, and Sir John Thompson had an equal right to join the Catholic communion if he so desired. There is no use in talking about liberty of conscience if we do not practise it all round.

FROM some of the reports of congregational meetings we learn that Sabbath Schools, Missionary Societies and other organizations have considerable balances in their treasuries. Why was not that money put where it would do some good? The contributors who gave it never intended that it should lie for the greater part of the year in the congregational treasury while the church is paying interest for money needed for current expenses. No congregation should feel proud of an unexpended balance. The balance should have been used for some good purpose. A congregation should be a money-giving, not a money-hoarding institution.

DR. TALMAGE has given his congregation notice that he intends to resign in Spring. Several such notices have recently been served upon the people and if the business goes on they will soon get used to it. The Brooklyn Tabernacle may yet furnish another illustration of the folly of trying to build up a congregation around a man without a close connection with any denomination. Talmage is a Presbyterian, but, as the boy said about his father, he "never did much at it." The Tabernacle is deeply in debt and the crowd that attend either cannot or will not raise necessary funds. By the way, when did a crowd raise funds for any good purpose? The heavy end of the paying has always been done, and always must be done by solid church-going people. Notwithstanding all that has been said against denominational-

ism the world may be challenged to produce a congregation that has long prospered outside of a denomination. It is easy to talk against Presbyteries, Synods, Assemblies, Conferences and other church courts. What congregation gets on well for any length of time without a church connection?

ADMIRERS of uniformity in things ecclesiastical must have noticed the almost infinite variety of congregational meetings that are held each winter. Some congregations review the entire work of the past year. Reports are received from the session, managers, Sabbath School, Missionary Societies, Christian Endeavor and every other organization in the congregation. These are discussed and the years' work reviewed. Others spend the greater part of the time on the finances and little on missionary or other work. A third class do nothing but discuss and pass the congregational accounts. Some go minutely into the items and spend the whole evening on the budget. It is a suggestive fact that the congregations that spend all the time on the money question generally have the least money, while those that give attention to the Sabbath School, missionary operations and other work of that kind have the most. There is some humour in the fact that while many excellent people ask for uniformity in public worship, uniformity in the election of professors of theology and other matters, their own annual meeting, the one meeting absolutely under their control, is the most diversified thing in the whole church. And yet there is nothing in the church more important than the congregational meeting. If the congregations go wrong everything else soon goes wrong.

NOT so long ago a church "scandal" of some kind was about the only thing connected with the church that many newspapers ever published. Now the large city dailies report congregational meetings as fully as they report parliamentary proceedings and give as much attention to ecclesiastical affairs as to any other. The country weeklies report nearly everything the churches in their vicinity are doing. Some of them have a regular church column filled with ecclesiastical items. Anniversary services, church openings, Presbytery meetings, calls, inductions and other church matters receive quite as much attention from many journals as political movements receive. There is no divorce between the church and the bulk of the Ontario press. Ontario is one of the few countries in the whole world in which the press, taken as a whole, is friendly to the church. Of course there are a few journals whose ill-concealed hostility occasionally shows itself, but not many. The press being friendly as a whole, and having immense power and unrivalled facilities for reaching the people, might not the church make more use of it than is now made. Is there any reason why a minister should not give the local press an occasional extract from his sermons and thus reach a much larger congregation than the one he preached to from the pulpit. Is there any reason why a minister or any other good man should not send the local editor an occasional fresh news item. We abhor puffing, and above everything else clerical puffing, but an occasional striking paragraph from a sermon or a news item is not puffing. There is a proper as well as an improper use of the press. One of the worst varieties of improper use is badgering the local editor to insert dead-head church notices. Never do that.

THE PROTESTANT PROTECTIVE ASSOCIATION CONVENTION.

ACCORDING to a city contemporary, many members of the Protestant Protective Association which has lately been holding its sessions at Hamilton, entered themselves in hotels registers under assumed names. If this be the case, it does not speak well either for those who did so or for the P. P. A. Why should men belong to any society which they feel, for any reason, renders concealment of their names as members desirable or necessary? What is there in the nature of the P. P. A. as an organization, or in the objects it is seeking to attain, that should make honest men afraid or ashamed to acknowledge their connection with it? It is on the face of it a condemnation of the P. P. A. by those who are its professed friends. While we say this, and have no sympathy with the methods or aims of this association, so far as we know them, but understood generally to be the

boycotting, to a certain extent, of the members of one religious body purely because of their ecclesiastical connection, we would also say that, the members, and especially the dignitaries of the Roman Catholic Church are largely, if not solely, to blame for the existence of the P. P. A. and for the objects it is generally understood to have in view. There is no secret organization against Methodists, Presbyterians or Anglicans as such. Why? Because they are purely spiritual organizations, existing for purely spiritual ends, the instruction and upbuilding of men in Christian doctrine and life. While the Roman Catholic Church does this also, it aims besides at other objects of a political or semi-political nature, whereby it seeks to obtain for itself power and privileges in the state which no purely religious society seeks. This leads it continually to interfere either openly or secretly in its organized capacity through its leaders, in government and political affairs, and thereby to acquire power for itself which its past history shows it not only as willing to use for its own aggrandizement, but which it sets before it as a definite and persistent object so to use at the expense of those who have equally as good claims to every privilege which good citizenship implies. This is so well known that to give specific instances of it is wholly unnecessary. So long as this is the case there will arise periodically organizations of men, and women as well, who will not have patience to wait for the more slow but more sure way of meeting the spirit and the doings of popery by the spread of intelligence and the power of truth, but will hasten to employ as a means to counteract them the apparently more speedy methods now followed by the P. P. A. The leaders, it may be added, of our political parties must also take their full share of blame, who for the sake of power and office will make concessions to obtain the Roman Catholic vote, always to be paid for in some way, sooner or later; concessions of which a very large number of voters disapprove, although for the time being they may not be able to shake themselves free from the trammels of party so far as, because of these concessions to cast their vote against either or both parties, or abstain from voting altogether.

COMMUNION SEASON.

WE know not how it may be among other bodies of Christians, or why it should be different with them from what it is amongst Presbyterians, but certain it is, that with us the communion season and communion Sabbath are always times of peculiar solemnity and sacredness. Though much, we are aware, may be said in favor of more frequent communion than is usual amongst us, yet no doubt its being set apart from all ordinary religious acts of worship by being observed only at an interval of some months, contributes in a measure to give it its special sacredness. But this is only one, and not a very important, one of the elements which go to make up its distinctively sacred character. There is the anxious anticipation of it in the hearts of Christian parents, pastors, Sunday school teachers and other members of the congregation. There is the serious thoughtfulness of those who desire for the first time to make public profession of their faith in Christ by sitting down at the table of the Lord. There are the mingled feelings of those who have severed old and dear church ties to form new and untried ones. There is the usual prayer meeting taking on a special character suited to the occasion, the public reception very possibly of new members, the tender and loving counsel to them of the pastor spoken in sympathetic tones, feeling that he himself is compassed about with infirmity. Naturally on such an occasion also there recur to the mind the blanks that time and death, or change of home has made, to those shut up in sick rooms, or whom the growing infirmities of age keep from the place of prayer. "The touch of the vanished hand, and the sound of the voice that is still" are missed especially at such seasons. A deep and tender interest is lent to the whole scene. Later on is the day of preparation marked by the sermon specially fitted to reach the conscience and life, to encourage, to warn, or inspire; the prayers are marked by an unusual unction and tenderness, and tokens are distributed to "intending communicants" coming forward in due order with serious mien. In the quiet, spare hours that intervene before the Sabbath, the thoughts naturally turn to the day and its sacred feast. When it has come it has several features which mark it off from the usual routine. The elders are seen moving about and more engaged than on other days with the arrange-