

THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

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WESTERN GENERAL AGENT.

MR. JOHN MACAULEY is our authorized Agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Macauley in all the congregations he may visit.

Friends favouring us with contributions for THE PRESBYTERIAN are requested to send them early. Recent improvements, such as cutting, folding, etc., necessitate going to press on Monday. In order, therefore, to insure the timely insertion of communications of interest to our readers, MSS. should be promptly forwarded.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 21, 1883.

ON another page readers will find the first of a series of papers on the Presbyterian Pulpit. These sketches, from the pen of an experienced correspondent, are intended to appear at stated intervals, and it is hoped will prove interesting.

ATTENTION is directed to a letter by Rev. R. Wallace, in which he pleads earnestly for immediate help for a suffering minister. Though the gentleman, on whose behalf the plea is urged, laboured in a heathen field, that is no reason why we should starve in a Christian land.

THE PRESBYTERIAN has nothing to do with party politics. We may, however, state a principle for the guidance of good men of all parties. It is this. *Vote as you pray.* A Christian citizen is under the same obligations to vote conscientiously as to discharge any other duty conscientiously. The man who declares that religion should have nothing to do with politics is an enemy to the commonwealth. Religion has *everything* to do with the security and prosperity of the body politic. If religion and politics are divorced, then so much the worse for the people that have divorced them. If political life is dirty so much the more need for all clean men to take a hand in the government of the country, at least to the extent of voting. We have no hesitation in saying to every Christian elector. Go to the polls on Tuesday and VOTE AS YOU PRAY.

THE questions sent down by the Assembly's Committee on the state of religion this year are in many respects admirable. It goes without saying that spiritual results cannot be expressed in figures. Counting converts is always dangerous work. The man who tells you at the close of any kind of service, special or otherwise, that just so many were converted by that very act, proves that he is not to be trusted. The only reliable evidence of regeneration is a Christian life. Time must tell whether any given man is converted or not. By their fruits ye shall know them. But though spiritual results cannot be expressed in figures, or the exact spiritual state of any congregation be put on paper, still, a great deal of good may be done by answering questions on the state of religion, and by having the answers read to the congregations. The session that frames the answers are brought to a position in which they must think, and think seriously, on the spiritual condition of their congregations. Then it is a great thing to have some of our people reminded by the General Assembly that running ecclesiastical machinery is not the main thing to be aimed at by a congregation. We are all too apt to suppose that if a church is well attended, and the congregation is growing in numbers and stands well financially, that congregational prosperity has been attained. That does not by any means follow. There may be increasing numbers and money, with the minimum of spiritual life.

It is gratifying to see the amount of interest that the local press takes in our Church work, inductions, congregational meetings, anniversary meetings, church openings, soirees—in fact, all meetings connected with our congregations are reported in most of our exchanges at quite sufficient length. Occasionally we see attempts at the American free-and-easy style, which may easily be overdone. Here, for example, is the way in which a western city journal describes the Moderator of the General Assembly as he appeared at a late church opening:

"Dr. Cochran is a small man, physically speaking, in comparison with the average of mankind, but in intellectual power and nervous vigour he is a giant. He resembles, taken altogether, a bar of cast steel, manufactured out of a huge mass of pig iron, which had been melted and skimmed until all the dross and slag had been taken out, and nothing left but what is useful for the manufacture of the keenest edge tools. Unlike steel, the Doctor is not charged with carbon—the action, action, action, which Demosthenes declared was the first principle in the constitution of an orator, takes its place."

Without saying anything about the figure in which the Moderator is compared to a bar of cast steel with all the "dross and slag" taken out, we consider it a good sign that the press gives increasing prominence to Church work. Such prominence shows that there are few journals under the influence of disreputable characters, and also shows that Christian congregations are becoming more clearly recognized as a powerful factor in the community. No live editor would give two or three columns to a matter that he did not consider of importance to many of his readers. It always gives us pleasure to see good reports of our Church meetings in local journals. The devil has no more right to newspaper space than he has to all the good music.

MANY of our readers can remember when Presbyterians coming among us from the other side of the line used to say that we were narrow, straitlaced, bigoted and terribly behind the times. We had no organs, no hymns, we were not progressive, and had none of the "modern improvements." American Presbyterians did not feel at home among us, and in a number of places built churches for themselves. We are getting bravely over our "fogyism" if that does us any good. Our advanced American cousins can be just as narrow as any people on earth, if their notions of democratic equality are slightly touched. A short time ago Dr. Marquis, of St. Louis, appeared in his pulpit in a gown—no very serious offence, certainly. A number of his people raised such a storm that he laid it aside. All honour to the doctor for his action; but what of the boasted liberality of the American citizens who could not stand the sight of a gown. Why many of the most straitlaced Presbyterians in Scotland, Ireland and Canada rather like the gown. The "Interior" says:

"Whether with or without good reason, the gown is regarded by many of our people as a symbol full of meaning; and its meaning, which is as offensive as possible to Presbyterians, is that the minister is a priest. This involves sacramentism and sacerdotalism, and goes to the extent of a denial of the completeness of the atonement."

The people who regard the wearing of a pulpit gown as a denial of the completeness of the atonement, must have rooms to let in their upper story. A large proportion of the Presbyterian ministers in Scotland and Ireland wear gowns, and they are quite as orthodox on the atonement as their brethren in the United States. The Genevan reformers wore gowns, and they were as orthodox as our friend the "Interior." John Knox wore a gown, and John Knox is greatly needed in Chicago just now. That peculiar imaginary thing called "democratic simplicity" has more to do with gown rebellions than the atonement.

DEATH OF HON. JOHN McMURRICH.

THE Hon. John McMurrich died on the afternoon of Tuesday week. For months the event was looked for as inevitable. A long and tedious illness prepared relations and friends for the close of a well-spent life. With unwavering patience and resignation he awaited his final hour. During his illness he enjoyed a happy and peaceful state of mind. Trusting in the Divine promises, he died a devout believer in Christ. A consistent life was crowned in a happy death, having the well-grounded hope of a blessed immortality.

Mr. McMurrich was born at Knock Farm, in the neighbourhood of Paisley, Scotland, in 1804, and his early years were spent at Old Kilpatrick, on the north

bank of the Clyde. His business life began in the service of the well known Glasgow firm of Playfair, Bryce & Co. That firm having resolved on forming Canadian branches, entrusted young Mr. McMurrich with the task of establishing an extensive business in this country. After various endeavours he finally established himself in Toronto in 1837, since which time he has remained the principal partner in the oldest dry-goods firm in the city, that of Bryce, McMurrich & Co. His business career has been characterized throughout by integrity and uprightness, affording an example that younger men would do well to emulate. His business interests were extensive. When the Dominion Telegraph Company was formed he was elected its first president. He was also connected with various railway companies and financial institutions.

Like a good citizen, Mr. McMurrich took at one time an active part in public affairs. He served one year in the civic council, retiring at the end of the term without offering for re-election. He took an active and prominent part in the work of education, holding office in the School Board almost continuously up till 1870, having filled the office of chairman four terms during his connection with the educational interests of the city. Prior to Confederation, when Senate representation was elective, in 1862 Mr. McMurrich was the successful candidate for Saugeen, of which constituency he was the representative for two years. At the general election of 1867 he was elected member for North York, in the Ontario Legislature. When the first Provincial Parliament was dissolved he presented himself for re-election, but was defeated by five votes. After this he declined to compete for parliamentary honours.

The interest he took in religious work was the deepest, as it was the most sustained of all his endeavours. His Christian activity ceased only when the shadows gathered around him. He was one of the active founders of Knox Church congregation in 1844, and from that time to his death his love for and devotion to the welfare of that congregation suffered no decline. Mr. McMurrich was ordained to the eldership in 1851, and continued faithful in the discharge of its duties as long as he was able. He was from the first a zealous worker in the Sabbath school, willing to advance the efficiency of that institution by every means in his power. He took an active part in the formation of the West Church congregation, and remained its warm supporter in the days before it reached its present vigorous growth. He was frequently appointed representative elder of Knox Church congregation, and from his business experience, his natural sagacity, and genial temperament, was a valued counsellor in the various courts of the Church. He took a lively interest and an active part in the union of the various branches of the Presbyterian family in Canada, the last of them culminating happily in 1875. While Mr. McMurrich was devotedly attached to his own denomination, he was no sectarian bigot. He loved all who loved the common Saviour, and delighted to co-operate in good deeds with all who sought to advance the well-being of the people, and the alleviation of distress. Quiet and unobtrusive in manner, he gained the love and esteem of an ever-widening circle of friends. The deep feeling of respect in which he was held was testified by the large and sympathetic assemblage that attended the funeral services on Thursday last. There was no display of tawdry funereal ostentation; but the entire arrangements were quiet and becoming, as befitted the life and character of the deceased. There was no funeral oration even, rendering the impressive simplicity of the Presbyterian service the more conspicuous by its absence. Devout men carried him to his burial. In his death Toronto has lost one of her pioneer Christian merchants, and honoured citizen, and her charitable institution a warm and sincere friend. The name of John McMurrich will be long and lovingly remembered.

THE BRADLAUGH AFFAIR ONCE MORE.

THE position occupied by Robert Ingersoll in America is similar to that held by Mr. Bradlaugh in England. There is, however, this slight difference. The former, an able lawyer, lives by his profession, though he largely augments his income by infidel lectures; while the latter makes his livelihood altogether by his spoken and published attacks on Christianity. Naturally enough a strong prejudice was entertained against him, and when he became a can-