British American Bresbyterian. DE 102 BAY STREET, TORONTO.

EFOR TERMS, STO., SEE EIGHTH PAGE. 75 Bditor and Proprietor.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters and articles intended for the next issue should be in the hands of the Editor not later than Tuesday morning.

All communications must be accompanied by the writer's name, otherwise they will not be inserted. Articles not accepted will be returned, f, at the limit Asy are sent, a request is made to that affect, and sufficient posters at many are enclosed. Manuscripts not so a compenied will not be preserved, and subsequent requests for their return cannot be compiled with

OUR GENERAL AGENT.

MR CHARLES NICOL, General Agent for the PRESENTERIAN, is now in Wester Outstropushing the interests of this journal. We commend him to the best offices of interests and people. Any assistance readered him in his work will be taken by usea a personal kindness.

British American Presbuterian. FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8, 1876.

Mr. Froude, the distinguished English historian has been delighting the people of the Metropolis of Scotland with a lecture upon the landed gentry. Considerable disoussion has arisen from it. There is not much toadyism in the lecture, while it proved so conservative as certainly not to promise much in the way of a civil revolu-

THE Sabbath School Institute held in this City has proved a great success. ? The style of Dr. Vincent is attractive. The subject matter is all important away from the educational influence of the Institute. In the matter of training and benefiting teachers, it is of vast consequence by bringing to light the great numbers who are interested in the work of Sabbath Schools. The meetings have been decidedly interesting, and must do much to advance the cause of Biblical instruction.

An interesting case of mutual eligibility has occurred in Orkney, Scotland. The congregation of a parish church has given an unanimous call to a minister of the United Presbyterian Church. We are not informed as to whether the call is likely to be accepted. Should it be ac. cepted, it will be an important step towards the unification of the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland. At the same time the aspect of things must have ; greatly changed to allow a voluntary to accept of an endowment.

On Monday evening a number of the friends of Temperance met in the Temperance Hall to consider the propriety of submitting the Dunkin Act to the voters of Toronto. Letters from upwards of a dosen elergymen were read, excusing their absence, on account of other engagements. Some of these thought the time had not yet some for taking such a decided step, while others promised enthusiastic support to the earrying of the Dunkin Act, were it the mind of the meeting to precipitate action upon the matter. The meetings in Shaftsbury Hall and Knox Church interfered no doubt with the attendance at Temperance Hall. The meeting however though not large was influential, and will do much in preparing the way for steps being taken in the direction indicated as was shown by the resolution passed to canvass electors as to how they would vote in the event of the Dunkin Act being submitted.

Ray. Charles Clarke has afforded our citizens a great deal of pleasant amusement and solid instruction by his invaluable s and sermons. Tower of London was quite a masterpiece, and was certainly worthy of the large number drawn together to hear it, and of the valuable historical subjects which the lecturer undertook to portray and illustrate. We felt that Mr. Clarke was doing an importa: t work by giving solid instruction in the shape of amusing and recreative lectures. His elecution is almost too perfect. Mr. Clarke by every action and word reveals art instead of concealing it. We desiderated the absence of earnest, burning, heartfelt words in the midet of a rhetorical display so absolutely minute and perfect. Mr. Clarke would never carry us away with his eloquence, though he certainly commands our admiration, and imparis the utmost pleasure. While we would rather hear a few words from a man who bleeds at every pore in uttering them than this highly cultivated and artistic display, no one will deny Mr. Clarke the merit of pleasing and even entrancing the audience by his skilful modulations of voice, and the graceful motions of his body. Were it not for some witticisms which seem to be impromptu, the whole lecture partakes too much of the nature of a recitation, to fix itself indelibly upon an audience. Still the entertainment Mr. Clarke furnishes is worthy of the enthusiastic patronage it commands and receives.

Goom sheds are being erected at St. An-I draw's Church, Hockstone, of which Rev. A ... H. Cameron is pastor.

SYSTEMATIC BENEVOLENCE.

Systematic benevolence is being brought prominently before the churches. Every denomination is alive to its importance. The General Assembly has over and over again endorsed it, and enjoined Synods and Presbyteries to bring the matter before ministers and congregations on its merits. The Presbyteries, as a rule, have been alive to the pressing necessity of the subject, and have almost vied with one another in the introduction of plans for its accomplishment. As an instance, we refer with pleasure to the proceedings of the Presbytery of Guelph at its meeting on the 21st ult. A committee, which had previously been appointed to consider what steps should be taken to induce all congregations within the bounds of the Presbytery to contribute to the schemes of the church in some measure in proportion to their circumstances, placed upon the table an exhaustive report on the subject. The Presbytery, recognizing the extreme importance of the matter, resolved itself into a committee of the whole, and after con ference, agreed upon a resolution, which was afterwards adopted, in which these words occur :- "That Missionary Associations be formed where none exist at present, and that existing Associations be instructed to work systematically and vigorously for the schemes of the church." Every friend of the church who has this subject at heart. will rejoice that the Presbytery of Guelph has taken such an important step in the right direction, and we feel confident that an example so excellent and telling will be quickly followed by other Preshyteries who have not as yet acted upon the As. sembly's instructions.

The subject before us is commended and enforced by the Word of Ged. The practice of giving systematically was a question that admitted of no choice in the economy of the Jewish Church. It was incumbent upon the people to pay tithes for the support of religion. In the Book of Deuteronomy we read that "Every man shall give as he is able, according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which he hath given thee." In Nehemiah we have these words: "Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the services of the house of our God." The wise king gives his people this precious proverb, "Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first fruits of all thine increase, so shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine. In the New Testament Christians are enjoined not only to give unto the Lord, but to give systematically. The Apostle Paul, while in one place presenting the example of our blessed Lord, who, "though he was rish, yet for our sakes became poor," and gave himself to die for the ungodly, as an incentive to his followers to abound in charity; in another place commands his Corinthian converts, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store as God hath prospered him." The whole scope and genius of Christianity are in favor of an entire consecration of oneself and of his property to the Lord. The more the Bible is studied by the members and adherents of our churches, the more they will see it to be their duty to render unto God the things that are God's. In the light of the Divine Word we cannot understand how any one, who professes to have come under its influence, can close his heart and shut up his pocket against the calls of the church for the means of proseenting her wast enterprises both at home and abroad.

The value of system is a matter of common sense and every day experience. We see what it does for the merchant, z aking it easy for him to carry vast responsibilities upon his shoulders. Behold the important part it plays in the traffic by sea and land, furnishing about the only security we can get when we trust ourselves on board the vessel that is to plough the Atlantic waves; or take our ceat in the express train that numbers the miles with the moments of the journey. It is the talisman in the hands of the statesman, which enables him to take the foremost place in the guidance of a nation's affairs. It is the secret power which solves the mystery of the life of the physician, who is ever on duty, never turning a deaf ear to a single call, and smelling from afar and with desire to do good, the battle with disease and suffering. One regards with a feeling akin to awe the rows of books on the library shelf that bear the name of one author-for example, the writings of Sir Walter Scott, or of Lord Macaulay. But it is no longer a mystery when we learn that in addition to the wonderful talents of imagination and memory with which they were endewed, they had learned to work with plan and purpose, the one employing the early hours of morning, and the other giving himself doggedly from day to day to his task. The eareer of a Chalmers, a Guthrie, or a Spurgeon, which reveals se much work done, and many valuable results accomplished, is easily explained when we learn that bepowers, they had learned the value of moments, and of system in their work.

The value of system is seen in the works of God. In nature every thing is done according to plan. Nothing befalls by chance. With what unerring certainty the sun rises and sets, and the stars hide thomselves from our gaze, and again in the darkness of night come forth to charm us with their sweet and heavenly rays. The seasons come and go; Spring and Summer, Autumn and Winter; with absolute regularity following one another. The planets with their satellites ceaselessly rolling around the Sun; the Suns again with their planets moving around some greater central orb; these orbs again for anglit we know with their suns travelling in some vast orbit around some other luminary still greater than any orb and grander than many suns merged into one; all this evinces the orderliness of the Divine mind. What valuable results arise from the Divine economy. Our crops of golden grain, the rich produce of orchards and vineyards, the sustenance and multiplication of animal life, the comfort and happiness of the human race, are amongst the many gains that accrue from the Divine system. The stones with which we build our houses and churches are the results of the orderly action of the laws of matter: the coal measures are the stores of light and heat which, during the years and ages of the past, the sun has been imparting to our earth; and long before the black diamond shall have been exhausted, there is a prospect of man being able to utilize the oxygen of the air and of the water. Who can tell what all the worlds of this vast universe by their motions, and bygiving and receiving light and heat, are momentarily accomplishing. Every revolution of our planet, every movement of the ocean, the trembling of the summer's leaf, the rippling of the stream, from all these there may be issuing new forces and energies, which may be of yet greater consequence than is reen in their immediate results, and as preparatory for the further undertakings of the Divine providence.

System is necessary in the work of the Church. If everything is left to chance, nothing great will be gained, and there will be constant friction and disturbance experienced. Let two congregations in all respects as mearly as possible equal-equal in number, in social position, in wealth, in their equipments and appointments, follow out for the same length of time, the one benevolence without system, and the other benevolence with system, and we venture to say that the former would have but a mean success, while the latter would be surprised at the results. The illustration is still stronger in its application, if we take one and the same congregation in its history when no special system was followed, and in its experience after a trial of the plan of systematic benevolence. We could point to some country churches where the contributions have increased fifty and even a hundred per cent. after adopting the envelope mode of giving, and we know of city churches where the effects of system have been seen to be still much more satisfactory. Why, look at it for a moment. A farmer or artisan is asked to give twenty dollars a year for his pew in church. That looks quite a large and respectable sum inits quarterly or half-yearly payments. But adopt the weekly plan, and it will seem contemptible even to himself to put thirty-eight cents on the plate. The chances are that such a man will give a dollar, and there in one instance is a clear gain to the church of upwards of or Home Mission schemes. It doing something great by giving five dollars to one of these schemes. Let him give every Sabbath to Foreign Mi sions; and would be feel satisfied by putting less than ten cents in his envelope, and yet that is all he is doing for this grand work of the church by his munificent donation of five dollars. There are many, again, who content themselves with giving nothing to the schemes of the church, because they have to support their own church and minister. What are they doing for their own church and minister? Giving twenty or thirty dollars a yearperhaps fifty cents a Sabbath, and that is all they pay for a whole year of sermous, and prayer-meetings, and pastoral visits, and attendance at sick beds and funerals, and for the minister's presence and influence at every family gathering, and in every social meeting, and in all the reform movements with which, as a parishioner, he is proud to identify himself. Brought down to common sense, the whole thing is ridiculous, and it is time that some strong action were taken in favour of establishing systematic benevolence in all our churches.

REV. JAMES WHYTE'S congregation at Long Island Locks intend building a new shursh at Manetick this Spring. A new brick mance was finished about a month ago, and when they complete the church at a cost of \$1900, Manetick will have set an sides the consciousness of their great example worthy of imitation.

CLERICAL INTERPERENCE IN PO-LITICAL ELECTIONS.

(COMMUNICATED.)

The priests of the Church Oof Rome claim the right, whenever they have the power, as in the Province of Quebec, to determine who shall be members of Parliament; and thus the right to control the Legislature and compel it to anact laws to suit their purposes, such as the Legislature of Quebec has cuacted to prevent any Roman Catholic joining a Literary Society at peril of being refused Christian burial, so that another Guibord case cannot occur. It is held by most Protestants that the Priests of Rome should not be allowed to denounce from the altar the right of the people to vote as they please.

On the other hand, a writer in the Globe about the beginning of September last, argues that if a Protestant, whether minister or layman, was at liberty to tell an elector that by voting for a certain candidate he would endanger or loose his soul, there is no reason why a Roman Catholic Priest should not have liberty to express a similar opinion, which is really all that is meant by threatening spiritual penalties. In either case, if the electors are so weak or credulous as to be influenced by such threats, that is their misfortune, with which the law cannot interfere; nor can the law make any distinction between the right of olergymen and laymen, to express an opinion of this kind. A layman must be punished for threatening spiritual penalties just the same as a clergyman, if a law inflicting punishment for such threats is to be enacted-this line of argument evidently confounds things which widely differthis was shown in a sensible letter by "A Minister of the Gospel," which agreed with some parts of the article in the Globe, but strongly condemus its reasoning in defending the right of the priest to threaten electors who vote for certain candidates with spiritual penalties. He admits that because of intense political partisanship it is unwise and injudicious for ministers of religion to mingle actively in political contests, yet he maintains that it is the right and obligation of ministers to recognize and discharge the duties of political citzenship.

But with regard to the doctrine that the expression of a condemnatory opinion by a layman respecting an elector's vote, is as proper an object of legal punishment as the "threat of a spiritual penalty by a priest," " A Minister of the Gospel " says :---"Bvery one knows that such a threat in the mouth of a Roman Catholic Priest is altogether a different thing from the same threat in the mouth of a layman-if a voter was brought to the polls, and compelled by mere brute force to vote for a particular candidate against his wishes, those exercising that brute force could be made answerable to the law of the land, and justly. New the threat of excommunieation, or even the threat of temporal pains and penalties by a Roman Catholic priest, has a force with the loyal subjects of the Roman Catholic Church, as powerful in effecting the priest's will as the brute force above supposed. It is a lash in his hand by which he can drive the faithful up to the polls and compel them to vote as he directs. He need not be at the polls t witness their conduct; he can extract from them all that they do there."

And in view of the power which the confessional gives the priest over the conscience of the devout Roman Uatholiche argues that we need a law on our statute books which will inflict severe one hundred per cent. And so with our penalty on every religious teacher of whatever denomination, who may be found guilty looks to many a man as though he were of threatening spiritual pains and penalties against electors for the use of their franchise. This is met by an article in the Globs, which argues that the Roman Catholic religion, like every other, is only a matter of opinior, and that any such law would prevent liberty of action, on the part of both minister and laymen-of all churches-and would prohibit them from using moral and religious considerations as a reason for urging any one to vote for any person or party. As the power of the priest depends on the credulous faith of the people, there is no other remedy but to enlighten the people, and the proposal to punish priests for threatening to inflict penalties which Protestants deem unrealis represented as analogous to the burning of witches for the supposed exercise of imaginary powers of mischief-and the threat of the priests are deemed similar to the declaration of the Old Scotch Minister that ill fortune befell all his enemies.

What is implied in enlightening the Roman Catholic people as to the absurdity of the claims of the priests and the efficacy of excommunication, but a mission against the whole Popish system as false, for this claim is a part and parcel of the whole system. Such a method of freeing the people from the control of the pricets, however right in itself, political parties and papers are searcely prepared to advecate. We will not here discuss the propriety of such a law as has been referred to; but we enunct admit that suck priority threats are nothing more than the Globe represents

them to be. When that paper insinuates that similar threats are made use of by Protestant ministers and laymen, as a means of inducing electors to vote for certain candidates, the main difference being that Roman Catholics believe and are influenced by them, we maintain that serious injustice is done to Protestant ministers and laymen by such a representation, as we do not believe there is any ground for such a charge. When or where have Protestant ministers used threats of expulsion from the church to deter an elector from voting for one candidate, or to induce him to vote for another? But even if this uiterly, groundless allegation were well founded, the effect of it would be entirely different from that complained of in the case of the threats made by Romish Priests.

In the case of the Protestant minister or layman it would be a merely foolish expression of opinion or passion rather, and would be universally laughed at and only expose the offender to ridicule as acting contrary to the principles of Protestantism. But the threat of Romish Priests is not a mere expression of opinion as to the moral consequences of voting for a certain person or party. 1. It is the threat of ex. comomunication from the church on earth and in heaven, by ecclesizatios who claim to have, and who are by many of their adherents believed to have, the right and the power to inflict this fearful penalty. 2. The priestly act also differs from the mere expression of opinion by a Protestant, in that it does really interfere with the independence and liberty of choice of Roman Catholic electors, whereas no one will pretend that such a result follows the expression of Protestant opinion. 8. Apart from spiritual penalties, ecclesiastical censure from Roman priests, who claim to possess the keys of heaven, brings upon the object of it real temporal loss, socially and in business, such as may naturally deter an elector from voting in a way that exposes him to such serious disadvantages. Any one asquainted with Roman Catholic communities knows that excommunication has even yet a real and practical power over the masses, and nowhere perhaps is this the case to a greater extent than in our own Canada. The history of the Province of Quebec is full of such infinences. The question is not whether the spiritual is real or imaginary, but whether it is a real interference with the freedom of the people. Now it cannot be disputed that to those who believe in the spiritual nower and authority of the Romish pricets, their threat has a real power to interfere with the freedom of the voters, the same as a bribe or threat of bodily injury.

Besides, the maledictions of the clergy have real disadvantages, such as would influence the votes of those who have me faith in the spiritual power of the priests, as well as of those who had. If the threat of the priest has the same effect on the voter as a bribe or a threat of bodily injury, why should not the law take cognizance of it, the same as it does of them? We are told that its power to injure depends on the opinions of the people. So also, when a swindler tells a plausable story, or when a false and damaging slander about any one is circulated, it might be said that if nobody believed the falsehoods they would injure nobody. This is true; but it does not prevent the .law from protecting those who are injured by such falsehoods being believed by themselves or others. To say that Protestant ministers and laymen may also be restrained from using religious considerations as a motive to induce slectors to vote in any particular 1 from the point altogether. Do they claim the right or the power to exclude from the kingdom of heaven those who will not do their bidding? Do they even forbid church members from holding fellowship with them, or doing business with them? We

The plea that a law which would prevent the priests from anathematising those who repudiated their political views, will interfere with liberty of conscience, will not bear examination. Every man has a right to carry out his religious convictions, so far as he does not infringe upon the right and interest of others, but no farther. No one has the right to plead liberty of conscience, in order to enjoy the liberty of inflicting injury upon either individuals or communities. No man is bound to govern himself by snother man's conscience. Nor are our legislative bodies bound to govern themselves-in their legislation for the general good of the opuntry-by the Roman Catholic canscience, as the Globe's reasoning seemed to imply. It is certainly a surprising thing to see the Globe pleading the sacred right of conscience on behalf of those Roman Catholic priests, who desire to enjoy the plone laxury of cursing the independent members of their flocks, with the orthodox church by maledictions. If such priestly interference and control prevailed go ally, it would corrupt and porvert the fountain of our laws, and make our par-liament the tools of a serrupt and retrograde church, which has ever been ready