

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON THE UNITED STATES PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLIES.

It needs only a very cursory glance, at the preceding summary of the more important matters of the sister Presbyterian Churches of the Republic, to note these few points:—

1. Notwithstanding the stringency of the times, it is cheering to notice how well, as a general thing, the *income* of the various Assemblies has kept up along nearly all the line of their varied and wide-spread operations. In one church, indeed (Dutch Reformed), there has been an increase of 24 per cent. on last year's income; while in the Presbyterian Church (North) the decrease in an income of eight millions is only some four thousand dollars.

2. In several of the churches there is very apparent a reviving interest in *family religion*, *family catechising*, and *family visitation* by Pastors. There has, evidently, a reaction begun in favour of the time-honoured and God-instituted ordinance of fire-side religious training; not as running side by side with the Sabbath School, but as keeping leagues a head of it in the eye and heart of the church. It is only by reformation here the Republic can be saved from Romanism and Communism.

3. The testimony lifted by the Assemblies against the *traffic in strong drink*, and in behalf of *Gospel temperance*, is starting in its terrible loudness and vehemence; which stands in marked contrast with the feeble chirrup of our Canadian Assembly. It is plain that the deck is being cleared for a decisive action between the saloon and the church on the other side of the Lakes. On which side victory will lie, as the closing century looks down on the battle, Christians can not for a moment doubt.

4. Grave irregularities and evils are calling the attention of Presbyterians to the question of *Lay Evangelism*. There seems also a tendency to uphold the Presbyterian practice and tradition, which insists on men who go about as preachers being able to show who sent them, and how they are qualified for their work, before their mission can be endorsed. The words "*decently and in order*," seems once again running along the lines of the Presbyterian army.

5. While the reports on the *State of Religion* indicate grave dangers on every side, chiefly from drink, worldliness, infidelity, and Jesuitism, there prevails generally a spirit of hopefulness that, on the whole, the Christian army is moving its front forward on the enemies' ground. The actual increase in membership is not as large as it ought to be, in view of the agency at work; but we feel convinced from reading and re-reading these *blue books*, so severely honest in their dry, matter-of-fact style, and comprehensive in their detailed grasp, that Presbyterianism on this continent is calmly surveying the foe, wisely arranging its forces, and prayerfully bending to a great work for Christ during the last two decades of the century.

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